TENSE AND ASPECT IN GUYANESE CREOLE:
A SYNTACTIC, SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

BY

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Thesis submitted in partial requirement
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.)

Language Department
University of York
June, 1982.
Dedicated to

My Parents
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express sincere thanks to the University of York for granting me a scholarship to pursue a higher degree and broaden my academic perspective.

I owe great debt to Professor Robert B. Le Page who not only suggested the topic, but who also supervised the research and writing of this thesis. His influence does reveal itself at times in this work, but the fact that I was still able to formulate my own ideas, is, I think, a tribute to his supervision.

I wish to record my gratitude to Professor Walter F. Edwards who very kindly allowed me to use his data. His generosity saved me a great deal of time and expense.

I wish to express my gratitude to the members of staff and students of the Language Department, in particular Dr. Patrick Griffiths, Dr. John Green, Dr. Joan Russell, Jo Kamanyire, Lioba Moshi, Kit-ken Loke, Ludwig Metuge, Geoff Harris, Hugh Rose, Jo Gower and Susie Roberts. Special thanks must go to Dr. Anthony Warner for giving his time so liberally in the last months.

It is not possible to acknowledge the help of everyone in York who made my stay comfortable and very interesting. I enjoyed the company of Launita Delsol and her family, Vilma Gordon-Walker and her family, Ed and Angela Johnson, John Niklaus, and the many people I met while playing squash and tennis.

I owe my parents, Daphne and Benjamin Gibson, immense
gratitude in the four years I have been in York. I thank them not only for their financial assistance which enabled me to spend a fourth year in York to complete this thesis, but for their love, faith and encouragement throughout my life. I must also remember the love and encouragement of my sisters Joyce, Jean, Beverley and Debra.

Finally, I wish to thank my typist, Mrs. Muriel Pirozek, for having done such a competent job.
The aim of this thesis is to find alternative tense and aspect systems to those proposed by Bickerton (1975a) for Guyanese Creole, and to review the notion of the creole continuum.

Firstly, there is a discussion of the notions involved in an analysis of the grammatical categories of tense and aspect, paying attention to the role of nonlinguistic factors. Secondly, there is a critique of Bickerton's analysis of the Guyanese verb, revealing the weaknesses of his tense and aspect systems, and his proposals regarding grammatical change. Thirdly, I propose an alternative grammar for tense and aspect, indicating that all variation is not necessarily indicative of change, and that the changes in Guyanese are more likely to be lexical rather than grammatical. Finally, I propose an alternative view of the creole continuum based on the analysis. I have made use of extensive oral data collected and transcribed by another native speaker of Guyanese, Professor Walter F. Edwards, as well as my own intuitions as a native speaker.
1. Aims

This thesis is primarily concerned with the tense and aspect systems of Guyanese Creole. My analysis of the tense and aspect categories is preceded by a critique of Derek Bickerton's analysis of the Guyanese verb as exemplified in *Dynamics of a Creole System* (1975a) — an analysis which I have found wanting in many respects. I have also briefly taken his *Roots of Language* (1981) into account, although in that book he does not materially change his presentation of tense and aspect in Guyanese, and indeed refers readers to the 1975 treatment.

The Guyanese speech community is extremely complex as the works of Allsopp (1958; 1962), Bickerton (1971; 1973a; 1975a), Edwards (1975), Devonish (1978) and Rickford (1979) exemplify. There is a language variety which can be identified as 'English', a variety acquired through education. There is also a variety which can be identified as an 'English-based' Creole and is the vernacular of the community. But there seems to be a great deal of mixing between the Creole and the English variety. Communities which reveal this sort of phenomenon here have been labelled by DeCamp (1971:349) as 'post-creole speech communities', i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with its lexically related standard variety. This process has been described as 'decreolization'.

Rickford (1980:176-178), however, calls for a review
of this concept of a creole continuum, and states that we must remember Haynes' (1973:1) indictment of the continuum notion. She describes the notion as:

'... an abstract construct which places people in the Caribbean on their hillsides, rolling the stones of phonological, syntactic and lexical mastery to a European summit, getting there, but never quite ...'.

Bickerton subscribes to the view that post-creole communities reveal a process whereby the creole is merging with the standard. Following Stewart (1965) he attempts to deal with the Guyanese situation by dividing the speech continuum into ranges which he assumes recapitulate diachronic changes: the basilect is the most extreme and archaic creole; the acrolect approximates to standard English and represents nearly complete decreolization; the mesolect includes all intermediate varieties. Thus the Creole is moving towards English by a series of grammatical changes. Bickerton illustrates the grammatical changes by examining the tense and aspect systems of the community.

But not only do I find his tense and aspect systems wanting, I also find his grammatical changes extremely suspect. In my thesis I aim to establish alternative tense and aspect categories, and address myself to the question of whether the Creole reflects grammatical changes to the standard with which it is in contact, or whether the changes are only lexical. If the changes are only lexical, it follows that there are primarily two languages in the community, English and Creole, and not several languages or
'lects' as Bickerton refers to them.

There is a great deal of linguistic variation in the community. To account for the variation, Bickerton assumes that variation 'is indeed none other than the locomotive of linguistic change' (1973a:643) - a point of view disagreed with by Devonish (1978); Rickford (1979; 1980), Sankoff (1977; 1980), Washabaugh (1977) and myself (see my chapters II et al.). Although I must account for the variation, I will not address myself directly to variation or consider it a major problem; neither do I propose to deal explicitly with variable rules and implicational scales; nor find an alternative for them.

2. **Theoretical orientation**

My analysis of the Guyanese speech community is a linguistic analysis - to be precise, it is a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic analysis. Fillmore (1974:1) provides a succinct characterization of the realms of syntax, semantics and pragmatics:

'Syntax ... characterizes the grammatical forms that occur in a language, while semantics pairs these forms with their potential communicative functions. Pragmatics is concerned with the three-termed relation which unites (i) linguistic form and (ii) the communicative functions which these forms are capable of serving, with (iii) the contexts or settings in which those linguistic forms can have those communicative functions.'

Such an analysis reflects my general theoretical
orientation which is in keeping with Wunderlich (1979). He says (p. 90-91) that every grammar is a system of procedures that the speaker of a language uses (or follows) in various communicative situations. Particular utterances (phonic or graphic patterns) carry meanings relative to an existing situation, especially with regard to its continuation. Wunderlich goes on:

'It is therefore important that the speaker be able to distinguish typical and atypical features of utterances and situations together; by typical I mean, among other things, expected and (under the given circumstances) capable of being carried out. The speaker and hearer understand concrete utterances as realizations of sentences (or sentence-like expressions, sentence-sequences, etc.) of a language, i.e. as arrangements of lexical units in particular constructions. The lexical units in each case have a particular phonological structure and a particular meaning (in the sense both of factual reference and relation to other meanings). Correspondingly, sentences also have phonological structures and meanings, which among other things derive from the lexical units and their formal arrangement and modification (e.g. inflexion). The meaning of typical utterances in a given typical situation arises inter alia from the meaning of the uttered sentences.'

He further explains that the notions 'understand as', 'have phonological structure and meaning', 'derive from' are in each case to be understood in such a way that we are dealing with particular socially valid conventions, which we can reconstruct in the form of rules. We can, thus, identify a linguistic system as a whole with a system of rules which operate on certain units and allow the possible manifestations (utterances) of the language in question to be produced and understood. Wunderlich summarizes this in
a model of a linguistic system:

A certain part of a linguistic system can be called its GRAMMATICAL SYSTEM, namely that structure which does not contain the components 'Situational meanings' and 'Utterance-tokens/Phonetic structures'.

This schema is in contrast with the Chomskyan (transformational-generative) schema for the components of a grammar. Wunderlich (p. 92) diagrams the transformational-generative model.
According to the Chomskyan (1965) approach, the LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE of speakers and hearers resides in the fact that they make use of a grammatical system. The central part of this is a syntax - rules for generating base structures, filling these with lexical units to produce deep structures, transformational rules for converting deep structures into surface structures; semantic and phonological structures are obtained by interpretation of syntactic structures. The utilization of competence results in situations of action and utterance (performance).

Bickerton used a variety of transformational-generative grammar in his analysis of the creole verb. To quote him, his theoretical orientation is 'broadly
generative' (1975a:201).

One of Wunderlich's criticisms of the transformational-generative approach is that it remains unclear how and in what contexts the abstract linguistic competence is relevant for human communicative behaviour (p. 93). It is in this area that Sankoff (1977) strongly criticizes Bickerton (1975a). He frequently claims in his analysis of the creole verb that discourse factors, style shifting, co-occurrence possibilities etc. ('extralinguistic factors' in Sankoff's terminology) do not influence language in any meaningful way. But as Sankoff (p. 303) rightly notices, Bickerton contradicts himself by 'all the while smuggling such factors through the back door when the reader is not looking'.

3. Data

This study is based on data collected by Walter Edwards (see Edwards, 1975). The informants were forty-eight male Guyanese randomly selected from two communities, one rural and one urban. The sample population was stratified according to race (Indian/Black), socio-geographical situation (urban/rural) and age group (21-30/45+). These social stratifications do not play a significant role in the analysis since I aim to write a grammar for the Guyanese speech community.

The speech of the informants was recorded in conversation with Walter Edwards, himself a Guyanese native speaker,
and transcribed by him. The utterance-tokens exemplified are identified by a tape number, then the line numbers from which the tokens were abstracted, and this is followed by the page number - thus, for example, 21B/25 - 26/3.

The tokens were selected first of all on a formal basis. Thus, I began with the past tense form bin, abstracted every possible manifestation of the form, noting semantic interpretations, and contextual factors which may influence a particular interpretation. Then the data was perused for possible variants, formal as well as semantic equivalent categories, again taking note of possible non-linguistic information. The form bin and the variants were then compared and contrasted with respect to other forms in the utterance-tokens, semantic interpretations and contextual settings. The same process was repeated for the other tense and aspect forms. The data was supplemented by my native-speaker intuition. (My contributions are un-marked).

4. Plan of thesis

The plan of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter I discusses the notions involved in an analysis of the grammatical categories of tense and aspect. It includes an examination of the universal tense theories of Jespersen (1924; 1933), Reichenbach (1947) and Bull (1960), and a discussion on aspect as exemplified by Comrie (1976). A major purpose of this chapter is to show the
role of non-linguistic factors in the interpretation and analysis of verb forms.

Chapter II is a critique of Bickerton's (1975a) analysis of the Guyanese verb. It reveals the inadequacy of Bickerton's tense and aspect categories and grammatical changes. It stresses the fact that all variation does not necessarily imply change.

Chapter III is a syntactic and semantic description of the Guyanese tense and aspect forms \(\text{a, de, don, bin, gu}\) and their variants. The forms also have several homonyms, and I found it necessary to describe the homonyms (and their variants) so as to distinguish them from the tense and aspect forms. The importance of this chapter is that it describes the combinatorial powers of the above forms (and their variants) thus illustrating the interdependence between form, structure and meaning in the language. Devonish (1978) illustrates some co-occurrence patterns. But the weakness in his description, I find, is that he leaves us with the impression of a great deal of formal variation quite unaccounted for. This chapter aims to find some sort of order for the forms and their variants. The chapter also provides a linguistic mechanism for describing the change process. Most of all, it illustrates that the changes are more likely to be lexical than grammatical. Chapter III, therefore, gives a general overview of the grammar of Guyanese.

Chapter IV describes the tense and aspect systems of Guyanese Creole, and proposes possible explanations for the
variation between categories. Furthermore it illustrates the interdependence of the tense and aspect systems.

Chapter V revisits the creole continuum notion, and proposes an alternative view based on the analysis exemplified in Chapters III and IV.

5. General aims

In this analysis I hope to achieve some positive feedback between data and theory. According to Passmore (1962) a 'good' explanation has to meet the requirements of intelligibility, adequacy and correctness. An explanation is intelligible if and only if it refers to modes of connection which have come to be familiar to us. An explanation is unintelligible if we see no connection between explanation and explicandum. It is inadequate if the connection is not 'strong enough' - the conditions given in the explanation must be truly sufficient in the concrete situations in which the explicandum arises. Finally, we must make sure the explanation is correct - that there are no errors or deceptions.
CHAPTER I

THE NOTIONS INVOLVED IN AN ANALYSIS OF

THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES OF TENSE AND ASPECT

1.1 Introduction

The category of tense has to do with time-relations in so far as these are expressed by systematic grammatical contrasts. Lyons (1968a:305) explains:

'The essential characteristic of the category of tense is that it relates the time of the action, event or state referred to in the sentence to the time of utterance (the time of utterance being "now"). Tense is therefore a deictic category, which is simultaneously a property of the sentence and the utterance.'

Tense, therefore, fits among the deictic categories of language to which also belong the personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and words such as here, there, present, past, now, then.

Aspect, on the other hand, differs from tense as a grammatical category in that it is non-deictic, having to do with such distinctions as 'extensions' in time versus 'instantaneity', 'completion' versus 'non-completion' and 'iteration' versus 'non-iteration' (Lyons 1977:687). Comrie (1976:3) generalizes the notion: 'aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation'.

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1.2 Role of Pragmatics

Before making a closer examination of the relationship between time and the verb, I will examine the role of contextual detail in solving problems of verb analysis. McCoard (1978:4) points out that in answering deeper questions about how verbs realize meanings, it is necessary to direct close attention to the contexts in which individual acts of communication are performed, and to grant that there are many elements of belief and knowledge in the speaker/listener which have a potent but indirect bearing on the selection of forms and interpretation of messages. Context, he points out, has an influence which cannot easily be mapped onto the customary sorts of grammar-based semantic analyses of sentences.

Let me exemplify this argument by reference to Lawler (1972; 1973), Binnick (1971; 1972) and Scheffer (1975).

It is often claimed that the present tense form in English can be used generically. Lawler (1972:247 ff) comes to the conclusion, however, that no single description suffices of the phenomenon of generic use of verbs in English. He points out that there are several types of generic meaning and that they interact in different ways with other poorly understood phenomena such as mood. They also make critical use of non-linguistic material. For example, the meanings of the following three sentences can be termed 'habitual'.

(1) Delmer walks to school
(2) Nephi's dog chases cars
(3) Garth drinks coffee
But, according to Lawler, when we ask 'how often?' for no easily discernible reason the answer varies. (1) means that Delmer walks to school regularly. (2), on the other hand, means that Nephi's dog has been known on occasion to chase cars, and does not mean that every car that comes within chasing distance is molested. (1) is false if Delmer walks to school one day out of five, but (2) is certainly not false if Nephi's dog chases one out of every five cars. Then, too, (1) has a universal reading, while (2) has an existential one, and the problem is further compounded by the observation that (3) is ambiguous between a universal reading: Garth drinks nothing but coffee - and an existential one: Garth is not averse to drinking coffee. On the basis of this sort of phenomenon Lawler (1973:8 - 9) concludes that an analysis of the generic,

'must take into account pragmatic matters ... the belief and knowledge about the world on the part of the speaker, the cultural and customary assumptions that the speech community holds in common ... pre-suppositions and entailments, as well as other logical and quasi-logical relationships are inextricably mixed up with the phenomenon of the English generic use ...'.

Binnick (1971; 1972) contrasts will and be going to on the basis of an elliptical condition presupposed in discourse. He claims that the contrast

'is not based on a difference in meaning. There is none, the modal uses of the two expressions apart. Rather there is a difference in presupposition, and the apparent differences in meaning which students of the English future have catalogued are only superficial reflexes of this deeper phenomenon: [students have catalogued] that be going to expresses certainty or
inevitability, whereas will is uncertain; that be going to is non-contingent, will contingent; that be going to refers to a near future, but will to a distant one; and that be going to is "definite" whereas will is "indefinite" — all these superficial differences are a function of the presuppositional difference between the two future expressions.' (1972:8)

Scheffer (1975) claims that the basic function of the English progressive is not 'duration' or 'habituality' or 'heightened temporary relevance' as is usually claimed, but its use is derived from the basic meaning of 'emphasizing contextually-defined temporal relevance (p.40)'. By arriving at this conclusion Scheffer avoids attaching what is basically contextual information to the verb form itself.

Recognition of contextual influences on meaning implies a programme of pragmatic analysis. According to Morgan (1978) this term was formerly applied to the analysis of expressions like indexicals whose meanings can be fully specified only relative to context. Recently, however, the term has been extended to cover matters like Grice's 'conversational implicatures', aspects that are not part of the literal meaning of a sentence.

Grice (1975) claims that what an utterance conveys in context falls into two parts. What is SAID is the logical content, the minimum necessary to specify truth conditions of the sentence. For the remainder, Grice has coined the term IMPLICATURE which he divides into 'conventional' and 'nonconventional'.

The dichotomy, Sadock (1978) points out, concerns the grammarian in a fundamental way. He claims it is the grammar of the language that is the repository of the
conventional aspects of language. The non-conventional, while of interest to the linguist, does not need to be mentioned in the description of the language which is the conventional sign system. Sadock (1978:284) goes on:

'Rather, the account of conversational implicature is best understood as a partial description of the USERS of the language and hence truly deserves the name 'pragmatics'. Therefore, given the fact that the utterance of a particular linguistic form on a particular occasion conveys some particular submessage, the grammarian must be able to decide whether that submessage is conveyed conventionally or non-conventionally.'

Grice (1975) provides six characteristics of 'conversational implicature':

(a) Conversational implicata are capable of being 'worked out' on the basis, inter alia, of the Cooperative principle. That is, they are CALCULABLE.

(b) Conversational implicata are CANCELLABLE.

(c) Conversational implicata are NONDETACHABLE.

(d) Conversational implicata are not part of the meaning of the uttered forms. They are NONCONVENTIONAL.

(e) Conversational implicata are not carried by what is said, but by the saying of it.

(f) Conversational implicata may be indeterminate.

But, Sadock claims, the last three principles cannot be substantiated empirically.

The inability to substantiate some of the characteristics of 'conversational implicature' does not detract from the fact that the theory is useful if one wants to account
for more than just literal meaning. Crystal (1966), for example, emphasizes the importance of adverbs and stress in explaining temporal reference. But McCoard (1978:47) illustrates that adverbs and stress are not fully adequate for constructing a theory on the use of verb forms. He believes, and I agree with him, that Grice's notion of 'cooperative principle' tends to show that the speaker's choice of verb form and the hearer's inferences as to the significance of that choice are based on a principle different from and more fundamental than the distribution of stress or specific adverbs.

The 'cooperative principle' is expressed in four maxims (Grice 1975:45 ff):

(a) Quantity - be as informative as required but not more.
(b) Quality - be truthful and do not overstep your evidence.
(c) Relation - be relevant, recognize the immediate needs of the interlocutor.
(d) Manner - avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity, be brief and orderly.

As long as the hearer assumes the speaker is communicating in good faith, the hearer will generate whatever ideas he deems necessary to fill in unstated details or make unstated connections so as to make the speaker's utterances accord with the conversational maxims. The speaker, meanwhile, is mindful of what conclusions are likely to be drawn by the hearer in the particular context of interaction, so the
speaker contrains his messages to invoke only the intended inferences as far as possible. If someone says I'm meeting a woman this evening for dinner, he would normally be understood to be referring to someone other than his wife - assuming he has a wife. To say a woman where someone could say my wife is, ordinarily, to give less information than is conversationally expected, and if the hearer assumes the speaker is adhering to the maxims, the hearer will take it that the wife is not the intended dinner partner. If the hearer knows that the speaker is talking about his wife, then the hearer concludes that the speaker is deliberately flouting the maxims for some or other reason. But, if a speaker says I broke a finger yesterday, we take it that the finger is one of the speaker's own, not somebody else's. A finger in this context is usually regarded as my finger in the absence of added information. But the statement I have been sitting in a car all morning leaves us wondering whether a car is the speaker's or not.

Morgan (1978), like McCoard (1978), sees a natural connection between conversational implicature and the interpretation of indexicals and thinks they should be placed together. Morgan (1978:264) says:

'... the problem of indexicals is naturally subsumed under the problem of the interpretation of intentions behind the use of linguistic expressions. If we mean that a pragmatic treatment of demonstrative pronouns and of deictic terms like "here" and "now" should include a recapitulation of the principles we use in determining referents for these terms, then it is clear that it is the same sort of problem, depending on such matters of context as our interpretation of the speaker's goals in the conversation,
his intentions, interests and so on."

Some linguists see pragmatics as a dumping ground for unsolved problems. But if we fail to recognize the importance of contextual detail, our grammatical theories will be beset by interminable examples which 'don't fit' due to variability in the real world. Since variability is a natural phenomenon, a grammatical theory which pays scant attention or no attention to contextual information is open to refutation. Thus one should come to terms with contextual matters before moving on to linguistic structure—especially so in the analysis of verb forms.

1.3 Time and the Verb

Traugott (1975) takes as fundamental to the analysis of tense and aspect, the distinction made by Bull (1960) between three types of time. They are 'physical', 'chronological', and 'linguistic' time.

Physical time is the time we experience and which we conceive as flowing in an irreversible direction. Chronological time designates fixed calendrical periods of time, such as seconds, weeks or years, and specifies how they are ordered. Insofar as chronological time is calendrical it is atemporal since calendrical units do not participate in the nature of time and are devoid of temporality. But since chronological time orders these units it is relatable to the irreversible notion of physical and psychic time. Linguistic time, being not time itself but the expression of our
experience of time, is an independent system only partially related to time as studied by physicists and philosophers. The most important subsystems of linguistic time are tense, sequencing and aspect.

Tense, Comrie (1976:2) explains, can be subdivided into absolute and relative time. The English sentences John is singing; John sang, John was singing; John will sing, John will be singing, have absolute time reference in that they relate the time of the situation described to the present moment of speaking. With relative time reference, however, the time of a situation is located relative to the time of some other situation, rather than to the present moment. Non-finite participial constructions in English, Comrie (p. 2) claims, involve relative rather than absolute tense.

In the sentences (a) when walking down the road, I often meet Harry and (b) when walking down the road, I often met Harry, the present participle walking in both cases indicates a situation located simultaneous with the time of the main verb, irrespective of the tense of the main verb. In the (a) sentence, the situation described by walking holds at the present, given the present tense meet, while in the (b) sentence it held in the past, given the past tense met; the relevant factor in the choice of the present participle is thus relative time reference, not absolute time reference.'

Sequencing, on the other hand, involves the relation of two events A and B as overlapping, preceeding or following. Sequencing is closely related to tense since the 'past' of tense can be interpreted as earlier than now/before now, the 'future' as later than now/after now.
Nevertheless, sequencing and tense should not be confused since tense involves speaker deixis while sequencing involves the anchoring of events with respect to each other, but not to the speaker. For example, as Traugott (1975: 208) illustrates, terms such as today, yesterday, tomorrow constantly shift reference with respect to the moment of utterance. So that if on February 15th X said I am going back to work tomorrow, on February 16th it can be reported X said she was going back to work today. The notions earlier/before and later/after do not normally shift with respect to the moment of utterance. So that if X said I am going to take a two week vacation before going back to work, after two weeks it can be reported X said that she would take a two-week vacation before going back to work and that is exactly what she has done.

Aspect designates whether the relationship of what is talked about on the imaginary time line is one of duration or not, whether it is bounded by some point on the time-line or not, whether it recurs or not. For example, Traugott (1975:208) points out, in She has planted the flowers the action is seen as bounded at the end of the axis of 'now' or some point before it, whereas in She is planting the flowers no time boundary is referred to. In The mouse ran in and out of the hole for three hours we have iterated acts lasting over a specified period. In contrast, Wherever the mouse runs he leaves a trail specifies no limit to the repeated action of leaving a trail. Thus the meaning BOUNDED or UN-BOUNDED in time lead to inferences of 'completion', 'non-
completion' or 'iteration' in particular contexts. (See also Kirsner and Thompson, 1976).

I will now examine three universal models which attempt to correlate tense with time: Jespersen (1924 and 1933), Reichenbach (1947), and Bull (1960); and I will take a brief look at the semantic definition of aspect given by Comrie (1976). The discussion will highlight objective and subjective factors which may govern verb choice.

1.4 Jespersen's Model

Jespersen (1933:230) claims it is important to keep the concepts of time and tense apart since the former is independent of language while the latter is the linguistic expression of time relations insofar as these are indicated in verb forms. He points out that temporal relationships are conceptually one dimensional:

'Time is universally conceived as something having one dimension only, thus capable of being represented by one straight line.'

The main divisions may be in the following manner:

A : PAST   B : PRESENT   C : FUTURE

Or, according to Jespersen, we may say that time is divided into two parts, the past and the future, the point of division being the present moment 'which, like a mathematical point, has no dimension, but is continually fleeting (moving to the
Jespersen further assumes that the present is contemporaneous with the theoretical zero-point (the 'now' of the time of utterance), the past as 'before now' and the future as 'after now'. He then subdivides the 'past' and 'future' by secondary notions so we have the following construct (p. 231):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aa</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Ac</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Ca</th>
<th>Cb</th>
<th>Cc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before-past</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>after-past</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>before-future</td>
<td>future</td>
<td>after-future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lyons (1968a: 305–306) points out, however, that although the directionality of time is given in nature, this may or may not be relevant to the analysis of time in a particular language. Lyons goes on:

'Various categorizations are possible. The 'theoretical zero point' (the 'now' of utterance) might be included with either 'past' or 'future' to yield, on the one hand, a dichotomy between 'future' and 'non-future', or, on the other, a dichotomy (based on the distinction of 'now' and 'not-now' without reference to the directionality of time) could be 'present' v. 'non-present'. Other possible categorizations might depend upon the notion of 'proximity' (with or without reference to directionality): e.g. a dichotomy of 'proximate' v. 'non-proximate' (with respect to time of utterance), a trichotomy of 'now' v. 'proximate' v. 'remote'. And these distinctions might be combined in various ways, and not merely as suggested in Jespersen's scheme.'
Jespersen, according to Traugott (1975:214), makes the error of placing temporal relations on the timeline, which in itself has no direction. Traugott further explains that even the temporal relations have no directionality in themselves. Direction is interpretable from sequencing, deictic tense orientation and aspectual orientation to boundaries.

Another problem with Jespersen's model concerns his definition of 'present' - 'which, like a mathematical point, has no dimension, but is continually fleeting' moving into the 'future' (Jespersen 1933:230). The problem is highlighted by his definition of the distinction between the preterit and perfect tenses in English:

'The Preterit refers to some time in the past without telling anything about the connection with the present moment, while the Perfect is a retrospective present, which connects a past occurrence with the present time, either as continued up to the present moment (inclusive time, ...) or as having results or consequences bearing on the present moment.' (p.243)

He gives the following examples (p.245):

In 1941 I lived at Chelsea
I lived there about ten years
also
'I have lived about ten years at Chelsea' (and I still live there).

In these examples the preterit is indeed used when there is separation from the present time, and the perfect is used when there is no such separation. But other examples may be constructed as Diver (1963:143) illustrates:
'I lived in Chelsea until 1914, but since then I have lived in London'.

'I have lived in Chelsea, but since 1914 I have lived in London'. (1)

According to Diver the difference is not separation or lack of separation from the present, since either the preterit or perfect can be used when the action is separated from the present.

Diver's criticism is indeed valid, but he does not state the causes for the invalidity of Jespersen's rule.

Jespersen's rule can be broken as it is, first of all, based on contextual information. Secondly, and more important, it is falsifiable because of his interpretation of 'present' - the 'now' moment of utterance. In defining 'now', Sedey (1969:75-6) tells us that the term 'is not used to ascribe a characteristic to any object in the way the use of a nonrelational term such as 'red' might be said to do so. 'Now' is used by a speaker to state a relation he has to an object. Due to this fact, 'now' can be classified as subjective since it, unlike the other terms already introduced (simultaneity and sequence) stands for a relation between a subject (the speaker) and an object rather than a relation between two objects. That is, simultaneity is a relation that holds between any two mental or physical events occurring at the same time. But obviously, standing in a relation of simultaneity does not provide a sufficient condition for saying of any event that it is occurring now. What makes the difference, (1) Although Diver is apparently unaware that 'Chelsea' is London, his argument is still valid. The validity can be shown if we replace 'London' with, for example, 'York'.

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Russell points out, is the introduction of a subject, not in the trivial sense that there must be a subject (a language user) in order to say that events are occurring now, but in the essential sense that the semantics of 'now' are such that the word is used correctly only if an event instituted by the subject is one of the terms in the simultaneity relations connoted by 'now'.

Thus the notion 'present' can represent not only the moment from which relations are inferred, it can also represent the time interval between the recalled event A and the anticipated event A. Bull (1960:12) refers to the latter concept as the 'extended present' and the former as 'point present'.

The English perfect, McCoard (1978:123) claims, is the marker of prior events which are nevertheless included within the overall period of the present - the extended 'now' - while the preterit marks events assigned to a past which is concluded and separate from the extended present.

1.5 **Reichenbach's Model**

Reichenbach (1947) learnt from Jespersen that in seeing how tenses work we have to consider three elements: a speech act, an event, and a 'reference point'. He considers how they work by reference to the English past perfect:

'Let us call the time point of the token the point of speech. Then the three indications, 'before the point of speech', 'simultaneous with the point of speech', and 'after the point of speech', furnish only three tenses; since the number of verb tenses is obviously greater, we need a more complex interpretation. From a sentence like 'Peter had gone' we see that
the time order expressed in the tense does not concern an event, but two events, whose positions are determined with respect to the point of speech. We shall call these time points the point of the event and the point of reference. In the example the point of the event is the time when Peter went; the point of reference is a time between this point and the point of speech. In an individual sentence like the one given it is not clear which time point is used as the point of reference. This determination is rather given by the context of speech.' (p.288).

He goes on to explain that in some tenses two of the three points are simultaneous:

'Thus, in the simple past, the point of the event and the point of reference are simultaneous, and both are before the point of speech; ... This distinguishes the simple past from the present perfect. In the statement 'I have seen Charles' the event is also before the point of speech, but it is referred to a point simultaneous with the point of speech; i.e., the points of speech and reference coincide .... The difficulties which grammar books have in explaining meanings of the different tenses originate from the fact that they do not recognize the three-place structure of the time determination given in the tenses.' (p.289 - 290).

In Reichenbach's representation

\[ \begin{align*}
    E &= \text{point of event} \\
    R &= \text{point of reference} \\
    S &= \text{point of speech}. \\
\end{align*} \]

Time is ordered from left to right from past to present (across spaces), while commas represent simultaneity:

\[ \begin{align*}
    \text{(Present)} & \quad \text{(Simple Past)} \\
    \text{I see John} & \quad \text{I saw John} \\
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
    S,R,E & \quad \rightarrow & \quad R,E,S \rightarrow \\
\end{align*} \]
Prior (1967) sees this model as superior to Jespersen's as it helps to deal with the future perfect. Whereas with the present perfect the pastness expressed by 'have' represents the event's preceding a point of reference which coincides with the point of speech, with the future perfect the pastness expressed by 'have' represents the event's preceding a different point of reference even if it does not represent it preceding a different utterance. But, Prior (1967:13) goes on, Reichenbach's schema is at once too simple and too complicated. It is too simple because we can easily construct more complicated tenses than the future perfect, for example, 'I shall have been going to see John'. Here there are two points of reference:

He tells us:

'once this possibility is seen, it becomes unnecessary and misleading to make such a sharp distinction between the point or points of reference and the point of speech, the point
of speech is just the **first** point of reference.'

This knowledge therefore makes Reichenbach's formula for distinguishing the simple past and the present perfect suspect. McCoard (1978:92) asks:

'In what sense could we speak of 'simultaneity' of the point of speech with some other reference point except as an artifact of description?'

Pastness and futurity, he goes on, are 'always relative to a point of reference'. Reichenbach's analysis falls short on this generalization.

McCoard (1978:90) also points out that since Reichenbach works with three independent components - S, R, and E - it is possible to construct a number of formulae for which we could not expect any specific grammatical realization as, for example, where S, E--R-- speech and event points are the same, but the reference point is in the future. This contrasts with S--E--R when the event will take place before some future reference, but subsequent to speaking, and with E--S--R when the event is in the speaker's past, but the reference point lies in the future. McCoard explains that all of these meanings are realized by the future perfect with adverbial supplements, and it is no accident as Reichenbach's schema makes it appear to be that English does not have a set of grammatical forms to express these distinctions. The set of point-orderings implies a systematic richness which outstrips the actual resources of natural languages.

Reichenbach, like Jespersen, falls into the trap of
placing temporal relations on the time line, which in itself has no direction.

1.6 Bull's Model

In contrast to Jespersen and Reichenbach, Bull (1960) makes a distinction between the imaginary time line and actual linguistic temporal relations. He attempts to build a system of tense analysis which will reflect the actual range of ordering relationships which are found in human languages. Bull sets up an axis on a non-directed time line, and temporal relations which are, at the minimum 'vectors' - that is 'fixed directions of observations.' (p.14)

According to Bull (p. 18) this model demonstrates that there are only two possible conceptualizations of points, time intervals and aspects - that is, they may or may not be axis bound. Thus,

'a day, a point, a terminated (perfected) event, or an imperfective event is not bound to any
axis of orientation. On the other hand, today, this point, an event already terminated, an event going on now, an event yet to begin, is axis-bound."

To the familiar past, present and future reference-points which Bull terms 'axes' he adds a separate axis for events which were anticipated at a past time, that is, were future at a past time.

'If RP (Retrospective Point) can be recalled at PP (Prime Point) and if AP (Anticipated Point) can be anticipated from PP, then total recall would be impossible unless one could remember at PP that he once anticipated an axis from RP. This retrospective anticipated axis, which will be symbolized as RAP is the fourth axis needed to complete the hypothetical tense system.' (p.23)

Given these four axes, an event can be located by means of a 'vector' from one of the axes. Thus anterior, simultaneous, or posterior are represented as -V, OV and +V respectively. With E standing for event the tenses for English are laid out as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E(PP-V)</th>
<th>E(PPOV)</th>
<th>E(PP+V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has sung</td>
<td>sings</td>
<td>will sing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E(AP-V)</th>
<th>E(PPOV)</th>
<th>E(AP+V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will have sung</td>
<td>zero</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E(RP-V)</th>
<th>E(RPOV)</th>
<th>E(AP+V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>had sung</td>
<td>sang</td>
<td>would sing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E(RAP-V)</th>
<th>E(RAPOV)</th>
<th>E(RAP+V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>would have sung</td>
<td>zero</td>
<td>zero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stem: s—ng, sing  
Minus vector: sung  
Zero vector: will, would  
PP: has, will, sings  
RP: had, would, sang.

A problem with Bull's model becomes evident when he claims:

'once the speaker has moved from PP to RP in recollection, PP ceases to be a relevant entity.' (p.22)

But surely the forms the speaker uses in moving from PP to RP do mark the movement. The forms would indicate that the retrospective reference point is retrospective with respect to PP. And even when we retrospect we can create another PP within that abstraction, as the notion of relative tense
exemplifies:

'when walking down the road, I often **met** Harry.'
(Comrie 1976 : 2)

or in non-standard English:

'I **saw** Tom last week and he says to me ...'.

We would therefore have a structure E(RP PP OV) - the axis being a prime point within a retrospective past. This creates an overlapping of axes, and in Bull's schema each axis is separate from the other.

McCoard (1978:95) notices problems concerning Bull's choice of a structural slot for a particular form. The form **will sing** is put only in the E(PP+V) slot, but it could also be justifiably put in the E(APOV) slot which stands empty. Similarly, **would sing** can go in both E(RP+V) and E(RAPOV). This, McCoard says, would reduce the oddity of having two axes (AP and RAP) where there is never any verb form to fill two of the three slots, including the 'prime' slots APOV and RAPOV. Thus, he concludes, Bull's schema has the same defect as that of Reichenbach in that it has excessive symbolism.

The difficulty in correlating tense and time has driven Weinrich (1970:34 ff) to reject altogether the idea that tenses express time. He claims that

'all these difficulties and all the apparent paradoxes disappear ... when one no longer interprets tense as an expression of time.' (p.34)

He suggests that a basic dichotomy is set up between
'narrative' and 'discursive' communication with the preterit as the 'zero' form of narrative and the present as the 'zero' form of commentary. The use of other forms within the narrative and discursive tense groups indicate 'prospection' and 'retrospection'. So the use of the perfect in the discursive group and the pluperfect in the narrative group indicate 'retrospection', and by the same process the future in the discursive group, and the conditional in the narrative group indicate 'prospection'. Tense usage which is unpredictable and surprising in some cases, Weinrich refers to as 'tense-metaphors'.

But, as I have already illustrated, it is possible to correlate tense with time even if it is only in a very abstract sense. That is, to assume tense is a deictic structure, and that tense can be subdivided into absolute and relative notions.

1.7 Comrie On Aspect

According to Comrie (1976:3 f) the difference between French il lisait and il lut, or in English between he was reading and he read is not one of tense, since in both cases we have absolute past tense. The difference is an aspectual opposition between perfective and imperfective meanings.

Defining aspects as different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation, Comrie gives the examples below to illustrate the notion.
He explains that in each of these sentences, the first verb presents the background to some event, while that event itself is introduced by the second verb. The second verb presents the totality of the situation referred to - 'my entry' - without reference to its internal temporal constituency:

'... the whole of the situation is presented as a single unanalysable whole, with beginning, middle, and end, rolled into one; no attempt is made to divide this situation up into the various individual phases that make up the action of entry.' (p.3).

Verbal forms with this meaning, are said to have perfective meaning. The other forms, those referring to the situation of John's reading, do not present the situation in this way, but rather make explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of the situation - reference is made to an internal portion of John's reading, while there is no explicit reference to the beginning or to the end of his reading. This is why the sentences are interpreted as meaning that my entry is an event that occurred during the period that John was reading.

Comrie (1976:4) claims that in discussing aspect,

'... it is important to grasp that the difference between perfectivity and imperfectivity is not necessarily an objective difference between
situations, nor is it necessarily a difference that is presented by the speaker as being objective. It is quite possible for the same speaker to refer to the same situation once with a perfective form, then with an imperfective, without in any way being self-contradictory.'

Thus: John read that book yesterday; while he was reading it, the postman came.

The different forms of the verb 'to read' all refer to the same situation of reading. But, in the first clause, John's reading is presented as a complete event, without further subdivision into successive temporal phases. In the second clause, this event is opened up, so that the speaker is now in the middle of the situation of John's reading, and says that it was in the middle of this situation (which he had previously referred to using the form with perfective meaning) that the event of the postman's arrival took place.

Bickerton (1981:90-91) claims that Comrie's approach to aspect is idealized. But Bickerton presents no arguments to counter Comrie's theoretical stance - and as will be evident in the following three chapters, Comrie's approach to aspect is far superior to Bickerton's approach.

1.8 Summary

It can be concluded that although tense and aspect

2. Other semantic aspectual notions such as 'durativity', 'progressivity', 'habituality' etc., will be defined as the need arises.
cannot be reconciled with a time base, they are correlatable with time since tense and aspect are the expressions of our experience of time. But it has become obvious that the temporal facts by themselves are insufficient to explain tense and aspect usage. The speaker's conceptualization of events and their relationships intervenes constantly in the choice of forms in particular speech acts. It would seem, therefore, that before the linguist can embark on an analysis of tense and aspect usage, the linguist has to first identify the relevant conceptual systems and the manner of their intervention between real-world phenomena and linguistic expression. Le Page (1980:332) points out:

"... although a grammatical theory is one logical objective for linguistic studies, it must be seen as representing one of the targets in a process by which abstract systems develop out of individual and social behaviour."

Like Bickerton (1975a), I also will be attempting to find context-free logical systems. But since I observe that his systems do not stand the test of context-bound data or my native-speaker intuition, I will therefore return to speech-act data and try to arrive at logical systems, all the while attempting to achieve a positive feedback between data and theory. I intend to establish theories which will not rely on such wastepaper basket notions as 'performance errors', or 'deviant' or 'confused' speakers.
2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will show that Bickerton's analysis of the creole verb is based on a series of ad hoc and contradictory arguments to get around various difficulties. Some of the difficulties are caused by a misunderstanding of the data. Most of the difficulties are caused, however, by his view of the relationship between variation and change, and his view of decreolization.

That linguistic change in progress is manifested as synchronic variation few of us would doubt, but Bickerton takes the position that all variation implies change. He

1. Bickerton's basic analysis of the creole verb is exemplified in Dynamics of a Creole System (1975a). He uses this analysis to support his universal claims for the tense and aspect systems of creoles as stated in Bickerton 1975b, 1979 and 1981. In this critique I will make references to the latter works when necessary.

2. In criticizing the work of Bollée (1977), Bickerton (1981:83) claims that Bollée conforms to 'the First Law of Creole Studies'. This Law states that 'Every creolist's analysis can be directly contradicted by that creolist's own texts and citations.' As this critique will illustrate, Bickerton himself does not seem to have learned from his own law - he himself exemplifies it.
claims (1975a:16)

'... linguistic variation is the synchronic aspect of linguistic change, and linguistic change is the diachronic aspect of linguistic variation.'

He does not cater for variation that may indicate style shifting. But, as Sankoff (1977:304), (following Fasold (1973) and Berdan (1975) ), points out, 'change implies variability, the reverse implication does not necessarily hold'.

The second major source of a problem concerning the analysis is his view of decreolization in communities where the creole is in contact with its superstrate. He claims that change in these communities is externally motivated and at first the lexical changes are not accompanied by a shift in the grammar. But then there is a radical shift in the grammar and the creole acquires the categories of the superstrate variety. (See Bickerton 1975a; 1980.) I agree that there are externally motivated lexical changes, but I seriously doubt whether these changes are accompanied by a shift in the grammar.

I have examined Bickerton's analysis of the creole verb and found it wanting in many respects. First, his tense system for the basilect, $^{\dagger}$ anterior, covers only the realis on the grounds that the irrealis forms (sa ~ gu ~ gon) simultaneously function as modals and future tense markers. The irrealis is thus a 'performance feature' and therefore not a part of the grammar. On the other hand, the only
function of the realis tense marker bin is to mark anteriority. But I have discovered that bin also functions as a locative, directional and noun copula. By Bickerton's criteria, then, bin is also a 'performance feature'. We must therefore have doubts not only about the tense system since it excludes the future, but also about the grammatical changes which lead to future acquisition.

Second, with respect to the aspectual system of the basilect, he claims that grammatically there is only one a, the a which occurs before non-stative verbs. The instances of a before stative verbs are dismissed as 'performance errors'. But it is a fact that a can occur before stative verbs, and grammatically there are two aspectual a's and not just one. The fact that grammatically there are two a's also upsets his position that in the mesolect there is a division in the basilectal [-punctual] category into [+continuative]. I have also discovered that unmarked non-stative verbs can have habitual meaning. We must then have doubts about his aspectual system for the basilect, [+punctual], where [-punctual] refers to an extended or repeated action and [+punctual] refers to a single action.

Third, his grammatical changes are also dubious. Features which he claims are basilectal to mesolectal or mesolectal to acrolectal acquisitions are in fact features of the basilect but for which he found different explanations in the basilect. He found explanations such as 'performance features', 'performance errors', or that stativity is a semantic and not a lexical notion.
2.2 Summary of Bickerton's Systems

Bickerton divides the Guyanese speech continuum into three ranges which he assumes recapitulate diachronic stages. The **basilect** is the most extreme and archaic creole; the **acrolect** approximates Standard English and represents nearly complete decreolization; the **mesolect** is the intermediate variety. Between these 'major' varieties is a series of 'lects' in which each stage represents a minimal adaptation of its predecessor, thus indicating the gradual transition between the levels.

The basilectal tense and aspect systems depend on the division of predicates into stative and non-stative. The stative class is roughly equivalent to Standard English statives plus modals, passives and other contexts of stativization which include temporal and conditional subordinate clauses. Two features are needed to describe the tense and aspect categories of the 'realis' system (see below p. 45): **Anterior** and **Punctual**. The stem form of a stative verb usually corresponds to Standard English non-past, the stem form of non-statives corresponds to a simple past. Marked tense and aspect categories are indicated by the forms **a** and **bin**. **a** before non-statives, [- Punctual], marks continuative and iterative aspect. **bin** is the [+ Anterior] marker and it indicates simple past before statives, and past-before-past with non-statives. **bina**, a combination of **bin** and **a**, is [+ Anterior], [- Punctual].

The mesolectal 'realis' system involves a series of restructurings. Morphemes are reanalysed and Anterior is
replaced by Past, $[\pm \text{Punctual}]$ becomes $[\pm \text{Continuative}]$. Past tense inflection and number concord are acquired, and this paves the way for the acquisition of the acrolectal system, which, like Standard English, requires the features Past, Continuous and Perfective (Perfect). There are changes in negation, but these are only formal. The changes are important, however, since their acquisition introduces and aids the spread of the English tense and aspect categories.

The basilectal parameters are (1975a:47):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stative</th>
<th>Non-stative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Pt</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>- A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pt</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Pt</td>
<td>bin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bin</td>
<td>+ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pt</td>
</tr>
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The mesolectal parameters are (1975a:162 - 163):

1. + past - punct + cont $\rightarrow$ (waz) - ing
2. - past + punct + cont $\rightarrow$ (iz) - ing
3. + past - punct - cont $\rightarrow$ Ø
4. - past - punct - cont $\rightarrow$ (doz)
5. + past + punct $\rightarrow$ (-ed)
6. + ant + punct - cont $\rightarrow$ did³
7. + ant - punct + cont $\rightarrow$ did/been - ing

3. In the text rule (6) reads: ' + ant punct - cont $\rightarrow$ did'. The absence of the '+' mark is probably a printing error.
The acrolectal parameters are (1975a:163):

(13) + perf→have (- en)
(14) + past + punct - temp→(- ed)
(15) + past + punct→(- ed)
(16) + past - cont→(- ed)
(17) - past - cont→Ø (- s)

To describe the tense system of Guyanese creole, Bickerton, following Voorhoeve (1957), makes the distinction 'realis' versus 'irrealis' (factual versus non-factual). Bickerton's tense system, $[±\text{Anterior}]$, covers only the realis category on the grounds that the irrealis is less structured. There are two basilectal irrealis variants, sa ~ gu, and they function as future tense markers as well as conditional modals. The fact that the forms simultaneously indicate futurity and modality is held to render the irrealis a performance feature - it is in the flux of change and therefore cannot fit into the grammar. The Anterior marker bin is much more stable since its only function is to mark anteriority. But as I illustrate in Chapter 3, the form bin not only marks anteriority, it is also a locative copula with past meaning, a directional copula with past meaning, and a noun copula with past meaning. Therefore, the linguistic explanation for deleting the irrealis from the tense system does not hold since bin, like sa ~ gu, is also a 'performance feature'. We must then not only have doubts about Bickerton's $[±\text{Anterior}]$ tense system which does not accommodate the future, but also about the subsequent disappearance of the $[±\text{Anterior}]$ category in the movement from basilect to acrolect.
The postulation of a tense system which only covers the realis category creates problems even for Bickerton as he is forced to exclude the irrealis category from his rule changes showing the movement from basilect to acrolect. He deletes the irrealis (as well as the aspect marker don) so as 'To avoid irrelevant complications ...' (1975a:112). In Chapter 4 I postulate a tense system which includes the past as well as the future.

2.3 Stem Form in the Basilect

Bickerton begins the analysis of the creole verb by looking at the 'stem form' in the basilect - a form which exceeds 'marked forms' in frequency because it has 'several quite distinct functions' and 'often result from marker deletion' (1975a:28). He explains that the stem form of the Guyanese verb is identical with the English stem form, but there are three exceptions. In these exceptions the stem forms are derived from English strong past forms: lef 'to leave', los 'to lose' and brok 'to break'. He further explains that the English verb 'to get' is the source of two Guyanese verbs, get 'to obtain' and gat 'to have, possess'. For a more 'distinct distinction' we must refer to Bickerton 1971. (See section 3.10 for my critique of Bickerton's analysis of get and gat, and my reanalysis. It was a vital reanalysis as it gave me a clear insight into the aspectual categories of Guyanese Creole.) He continues by
explaining that English 'to do' yields 'four distinct
Guyanese forms': a main verb du of similar meaning; a main
verb don 'to finish'; a completive aspect marker don; an
iterative aspect marker doz. English 'to go' yields 'three
distinct forms': a main verb go of similar meaning; an
irrealis aspect marker go; and 'a specialised completive
aspect form, unique to this verb, gaan ...'. He
illustrates the use of gaan by the example below:

'2.1 yu na go si mi, mi go komaut, mi go
gaan (148/24(191).
'You won't see me, I'm leaving, I'll
have gone.' (p.28)

He continues:

'It is, in other words, equivalent to don go,
which seems in consequence seldom or never to
occur; thus while i go a tong 'he went to town'
is devoid of presuppositions as to the person's
present whereabouts, i gaan a tong pre-
supposes that he has not yet returned.' (p.28)

I agree with the semantic distinction Bickerton draws between
the use of go and gaan in the examples quoted above, but gaan
is not equivalent to don go. gaan means 'left' or 'gone',
but don go means 'stopping going' - in which case don is
functioning as a main verb and go is functioning as a
nominal4. This of course indicates that gaan is not merely
a completive verb. In Chapter 3 I suggest that gaan is a
stative-resultative verb and it belongs to the same class as

4. I have interpreted go as a nominal on the basis of a
morpheme-for-morpheme translation. But see also
Bickerton.(1975a:74)
the above mentioned lef, los and brok.

I find it strange that Bickerton should refer to irrealis go as an 'aspect marker', if, as he later explains (1975a:42), irrealis go functions as a future tense marker and a modal.

2.3.1 Non-stative stem forms in the basilect

Bickerton points out that the functions of the 'stem form' depend on the stative : non-stative distinction. He explains:

'In its commonest function, with non-statives, it signifies 'unmarked past' - that is, a (usually) single action that happened at a moment in the past that may or may not be specified but should not predate any action simultaneously under discussion.' (p.28)

Therefore, he concludes, the stem contrasts with 'past-before past' (in which case bin precedes the verb), and with continuative-iterative forms. In narratives, he claims, continuative-iterative forms are used for the speaker's generalizations and comments. Thus, we have a morphologically unmarked past and marked non-past. Bickerton illustrates these claims with the narrative below:

'2.2 Well a - we get up, a - we wake up, L - run out. Me wake up them pikni and so, all of them hold on 'pon me. Well all a - we de - a - we de - a - we say 'Oh God, a what go happen now with this - trouble?' Well, a - we stand for a time. A - we frighten because you i.e. L- left the house and go 'way and a - we left in the house. Well a - we de till morning. When morning meet, well, a - we get up, a - we make little tea and so, eat and so, not eat properly ## You a always get this thing in you mind steady stand, how you go eat properly? You not eat - you a eat
you' little food but you not feel satisfy. Well one night more we hear drum a knock again. Well that night me just go and me and L -, a - we two sit down ... (28/9-19/28). ' (p.29)

He explains:
'In the first and third sections, practically every verb denotes a past single action and is therefore in the stem form. In the second section, every verb is morphologically marked, one with irrealis go the others with a. The absence of surface a with negated verbs comes about because the phonological shape of the negative particle is na and an obligatory rule assimilates consecutive low vowels.' (p.29)

According to Bickerton, unmarked non-stative verbs are used to illustrate a single action that happened in the past. But in the narrative quoted above there are unmarked non-stative verbs and unmarked stative verbs. There are three examples of unmarked stative de, and one example of unmarked stative stand - 'Well, a - we stand for a time'⁵. Thus Bickerton's rule applies to non-stative verbs and stative verbs, and not just to non-statives as he claims. It is interesting that he did not italicize the marked non-stative verb knock in the third section: 'Well one night more we hear drum a knock again'. Highlighting a knock would create problems for him since he claims that the third section is a narrative. A part of the third section is indeed narrated and then the events are sequenced. But the speech act 'Well one night more we hear drum a knock again', seems to be a tensed construction in that it is tied to the moment of utterance, and the use of a knock indicates not only that the 'knocking' went on for a period of time, but that they also heard it going on for a period of time.

⁵. See section 3.4.3, p.105 for a definition of stativity.
I also disagree with his statement that there is an obligatory phonological rule which assimilates consecutive low vowels. In my data there is:

(1) mi na a get wuk no wee
    I was not getting work anywhere. (21A/14/3)

(2) in di kontrii yu na a sii non a dem gyal wid lipstik
    In the rural areas you do not usually see any of the girls wearing lipstick. (21A/10-11/6)

If Bickerton's phonological rule does apply, there should be assimilation in the second section of the quoted narrative: 'you a always get ...' . The speaker should have said 'you always get ...' . The truth is that the marked verb is in variation with the unmarked verb when making generalizations.

2.3.2 Stative stem forms in the basilect

Bickerton continues by explaining that with stative verbs, however, the stem form signifies non-past. (But as we saw above, unmarked stative verbs can also have past meaning.) He illustrates with the following sentences:

'2.3 mi na no wai dem a du dis ting (5/25/3)
   'I don't know why they are doing this.'

'2.4 di rais wok get mo iizia fi du bika trakta a plau am (9/21/9) 'Rice farming becomes easier to do because tractors do the ploughing.'

'2.5 naufram wa mi ekspiirians, yu si, piipl a jelas dem iitsh. an ada (221/2/276) 'Now from what I've experienced, you see, people get envious of one another.'

'2.6 wi a pak am op hai laik haus an wi kaal di plees karyaan (168/6/215) 'We pile it up as high as a house and we call the place the threshing-floor.' (p.29)
Here, he claims, the stative verbs no, get, ekspiirians and kaal are non-past and carry no marker of tense and aspect, while the non-statives du, plau, pak which are equally non-past are all preceded by the continuative-iterative a. I accept that no is a stative verb, but certainly not get, ekspiirians and kaal: get, to be more precise, is a change of state verb, and change of state verbs are not stative.

a jelas in 2.5, he continues, is not the counter-example it might seem. In the Guyanese basilect, 'adjectives' are in fact stative verbs but will take a when a 'process' rather than a 'state' is indicated. Bickerton does not define or explain the difference between a 'process' and a 'state', so it is difficult to understand in what way a + adjective can refer to a 'process'. At this point, he states it should be noted that:

'the stative - non-stative distinction in Guyanese Creole is a semantic one entirely: that is to say, it is not the case that specific lexical items are marked unambiguously [+ stative] or [- stative], rather that these categories apply to propositions irrespective of their lexical content. For instance, in the next two examples, though the surface verb is identical in each, the first sentence contains a stative proposition and the second a non-stative one:

2.9 tu an tu mek fo 'Two and two make four.'

2.10 dem mek i stap 'They made him stop.'

Since 2.9 has a stative sense, mek here follows the rule for stative verbs (stem only for non-past). But 2.10 has a non-stative meaning, and in it, mek must therefore follow the non-stative rule (stem only for simple past).'

(p.30)

If, as Bickerton claims, 2.9 has a 'stative' sense, and the sentences in which get, ekspiirians and kaal occur are also
stative, why then, we may ask, are the verbs du, pla, and pak preceded by a? Surely the sentences in which they occur are just as 'stative' as the sentences in which get, kaal and ekspiriins occur, and especially when a pak and kaal occur in the same construction (2.6)? I agree that mek in 2.9 must be unmarked since in Guyanese the verb is obligatorily unmarked in timeless propositions. But in referring to situations that are characteristic over a period of time, the verb is optionally marked. (See my Chapters 3 and 4.) It should be mentioned too that if get in example 2.4 is preceded by a, the meaning would be getting (a process) rather than become (a change of state). Thus the reason for a not preceding get is certainly not of stativity. Also, mek in 2.10 can be preceded by the tense marker bin and still yield a simple-past meaning. Therefore, the stem form of non-stative verbs is not obligatory for simple past meaning. The stem form is obligatory if events are sequenced, but in tensed constructions non-stative verbs (and stative verbs) are optionally preceded by bin.

2.3.3 Other contexts of stativization

Other areas for the use of the stem form, and therefore contexts of stativization, are in passives, temporal and conditional clauses and before modals.

There are, Bickerton claims, two types of passive in Guyanese. One is where the object of the active sentence is non-animate:

'2.12 yu laan nau lef wid di rais dok (175/24/225)
'Your land is now left with the rice flooded.'
On the basis of my knowledge as a native speaker, both 2.13 and 2.14 are acceptable. By using a dok in example 2.13 the speaker is making overt reference to the length of time the field is flooded. By using a lef the speaker is making overt reference to the fact that the land is usually left with the rice flooded - it is a characteristic state.

The second Guyanese passive, he claims, applies usually when the object of the active sentence is animate, though sometimes when it is not, and it 'inverts subject and object and deletes agent, but replaces aspect markers (or zero, if they are none) with get' (p.31).

'It is possible to place a before get but the speaker would then be referring to a 'process' rather than to a 'change of state'. Thus, 'Boy you are being stabbed' and 'Well a lot were being beaten up'.

Other sources of stativization, he claims, are in temporal and conditional clauses and before modals.

Temporal clause:

'Well when you arrive you'll get this boy to open the door.'
Conditional clause:

'2.24  bot if reen faal, yu a go neks de (9/1/8)  
'But if it rains, you go on the following day.'

Before modals:

'2.26  yu gatu hosl fu go kot rais somtaim, su yu a 
hosl fu get monii fu bai op rachin (28/4-5/29) 
'You have to hurry to go and cut rice sometimes, 
so you rush to get money to buy food with.'

'2.27  wen di weda drai i a go gud  [Int : bot wen it 
reen nau?] i kyaan go bikai a faal dong 
(129/6-7/178)  'When the weather's dry he can 
go all right.  [But when it rains?] He can't go 
because he keeps falling down.' (p.31)

(The modals are gatu (2.24) and kyaan (2.27)

It is possible to use a in the above environments, and it is  
possible because the constructions are referring to 
situations which are characteristic over a period of time 
(habitual aspect).  It is not possible to use a before 
modals such as wud, kud, shud, mait, but this is related to  
the word-order pattern in the auxiliary.  (See Auxiliary  
Structures in section 3.4.5).

However, Bickerton goes on, an alternative to the  
'deletion' analysis is suggested by the fact that while contin-
uatives and iteratives are deleted, completives (i.e.  
completive aspect marker don, and past tense marker bin) are 
not.  Thus:

'2.28  wen i don plau, put yu laan fi sook wan-tu de 
(192/18/221)  'When it's been ploughed, let 
your land flood for a day or two.'

'2.29  wen i plau, put yu laan fi sook wan-tu de  
'When it's being ploughed, let your land flood 
for a day or two.'

'2.30  wen mi bin yong, yu no hau awi yuus tu wok  
(119/24/150)  'You know how we used to work 
when I was young.'
'2.31 wen mi yong, yu no hau awi yuus to wok

'2.32 if mi bin no' a wan afta-blo [Guyanese proverb, quoted Abrams 1970:13] 'The thought if only I'd known is an "after-blow". [i.e. rubs salt in the wound, adds insult to injury].'

2.33 **if mi no a wan afta-blo

'2.34 injan piipl bin kyaan waak baut in jaajtong (22/30/21) 'Indians couldn't walk about in Georgetown.'

'2.35 injan piipl kyaan waak baut in jaajtong 'Indians can't walk about in Georgetown.' (p.32)

In example 2.29 wen i plau cannot be glossed 'when it's being ploughed'. For a process meaning, a must be placed before the verb plau. It is obligatory not only because I reject it as a native speaker, but because you cannot represent a situation as an event (use of a punctual or perfective verb) to provide the background to another event. The verb which provides the background must be imperfective, thus representing the background situation as a process or state. (See section 1.6; Comrie 1976:3; Lyons 1977:709) 6. In fact 2.29 has the same meaning as 2.28. Therefore don in 2.28 is optional. Furthermore, 2.31 is possible, and 2.33 is not objectionable because of stativization. (See section 3.8.1.) Out of context 2.35 can have only a present meaning, but in context the meaning can be present or past. Thus bin is optional.

6. Lyons (1977:707) gives a brief characterization of the difference between classifying a situation as an 'event', a 'process' or a 'state': 'Events ... are non-extended dynamic situations that occur, momentarily, in time; processes are extended dynamic situations that last, or endure, through time; states are like processes in that they too last, or endure, through time, but they differ from processes in that they are homogeneous throughout the period of their existence ...'
2.3.4 Stem form and stativity in the mesolect

Bickerton does state that the stem form can be used for past and non-past meanings, but it is a rule of the mesolect as 'some speakers may simplify their grammar.' (p.112). Thus instead of two rules:

\[(16) \text{ + past - punct - cont} \rightarrow \emptyset\]
\[(17) \text{ past - punct - cont} \rightarrow \text{doz.}'\]

there is only one:

\[(21) \text{ past - punct - cont} \rightarrow \emptyset (-s)).' (p.113).\]

This supposed rule simplification results because the stative category begins to weaken in the mesolect as the language is adjusting for the acquisition of acrolectal categories (p.72-75). (More will be said about this change below.) But as my counter-arguments and Bickerton's contradictions have indicated, stativity is not a category in the basilect. It seems that the stativity category was introduced to account for variation which could not be associated with linguistic change. I say 'introduced' for as Nichols (1976:993) in her review of Dynamics points out, we are not told whether stativization itself is a transformational deletion of morphemes, neutralization in the structuralist sense, or even a semantic constraint on deep structures.

2.4.1 Continuative/Iterative a in the basilect

In discussing the continuative/iterative aspect marker a, Bickerton says:

'One of the strongest rules in basilectal Guyanese Creole is that which restricts the use of a to
non-stative verbs ... One seldom if ever encounters sentences such as *mi a no, *dem a waan "I am knowing", "they are wanting". (pp.34-35)

But in my data there are:

(3) pippl na a biliiv mi
    People do not believe me (624/28/2)

(4) dem a waant sting yu wan bil
    They want to take money from you (to go to the cinema) (189/9/6)

He does mention, however, that some speakers say a de (p.35), (de is a locative copula), but this is because 'speakers are unevenly divided on the question whether de is a stative or non-stative verb' (p.38)7. In discussing bina (a combination of past tense marker bin and continuative/iterative a), he again illustrates the use of the form before statives, but this, he claims, 'illustrates one way in which the exigencies of discourse can affect otherwise categorical rules.' (p.38). One example, he points out:

'can be written off as a performance error, as shown by its utterer's self-correction:

'2.63 evriting bina chip - evriting bin chiip
    (198/19/261) 'Everything was cheap.' '(p.39)

Another token was collected

'by a student interviewer whose basilectal competence may have been eroded by contact with

7. By claiming that speakers are unevenly divided on whether de is a stative or non-stative verb, Bickerton appears to be contradicting his earlier statement that stativity is a semantic and not a lexical notion.
standard English. This interviewer used bina with a sub-class of stative verb, and promptly secured an 'echo effect' ...

'2.64 Int.: lang taim piipl bina baad o gud?
219: no, lang taim piipl bina ova gud, tumoch gud. (199, 219/1-2/272) 'Were people in the old days good or bad? 'No, in the old days people were very good, extremely good.' (p.39)

He continues:

'An almost identical echo, though this time with a slight hesitation, is secured from Speaker 220. However, a third speaker, 222, produces four tokens of bina + 'adjectival' verb in a single sentence, without any stimulus from the interviewer, and this leaves open the possibility that the form may be a regional phenomenon of limited distribution rather than a mere performance error and its echoes.' (p.39)

This explanation of bina + 'adjective' contradicts an earlier explanation of a + 'adjective'. In the case of a jelas (pp.28-29) he claims that a will occur before an 'adjective' when a 'process' rather than a 'state' is indicated. Contrary to what Bickerton may believe, it is a fact that a can occur before stative verbs and adjectives.

In the basilect Bickerton notes that a functions as a continuative aspect marker, and as an iterative aspect marker and claims, incorrectly as I have noted, that it only occurs before non-statives. On this basis he sets up an aspectual category of [+Punctual] for the basilect. He says (p.46) that to ask whether a stative is [+punctual] or [-punctual] makes no kind of sense since states have by definition an extended duration. The distinction, however, is meaningful for non-statives: [+punctual] would imply a single action, [-punctual] an extended or repeated one.
Thus for Bickerton, semantically there are two a's: 
[+ continuative] a, and [+ iterative] a; but grammatically there is only one a, since it can only occur before non-natives. In my reanalysis, however, grammatically there are two a's: progressive a (continuative in Bickerton's terminology), and habitual a (iterative in Bickerton's terminology).

2.4.2 Iterative doz in the mesolect and acrolect

In the mesolect, Bickerton points out, a is replaced by doz for iterative meaning, and -ing is suffixed to the verb for continuative meaning. This therefore indicates a division in the [-punctual] category and the acquisition of the [+continuative] category and thus movement towards the acrolect.

But as I state, grammatically there are two a's. Therefore the lexical changes that take place in the mesolect do not indicate a split in the [-punctual] category. There is indeed a formal differentiation but the aspectual category remains the same as in the basilect.

doz as an iterative aspect marker, he claims, follows the same main stative rule as a, and consequently 'it seldom or never appears before modals or stative verbs or in conditional or temporal ('wherever'-type) clauses.' (p.68). I do not accept this (note his use of the adverb 'seldom'), and in my data there is:

(5) de doz gat a waata lefin dong biloo
    There is usually a liquid left under it. (54A/32-33/4)
Five pages previous to stating this doz rule, Bickerton gives an example of das (a phonetic variant of doz) before the modal gatu (p.63).

3.3 lang taim wen awi: bina plant rais ova kriik awi das gatu plau wid kau (15/11/15) 'In the old days when we used to plant rice over the creek, we used to have to plough with oxen.'

In the movement from mesolect to acrolect, doz deletion begins (p.117). Apart from being excluded from stativized environments, he says, 'doz now begins to disappear from hypothetical or generic utterances (in particular those with generic 'you' as subject).'</n
'This process starts fairly early on in the mesolect; 125, for example, is variable on 'you' sentences:

4.2 You does price them, put on them extra, half-cent extra. (125/27/173)

4.3 You lick it [sc. the cane-stalk] down and you can cut two by the time that fall down - by the time the man lash one. He take the time, you just scramble and knock and gone. (125/6-7/173)

In the upper mesolect, deletion is categorical in generics and hypotheticals, and doz is inserted only where actual behaviour by named persons is being described. Finally, it becomes variable even here:

4.4 They sent a plane and pass overhead so nothing pass through Bartica now, the only pork-knocker that does pass here is what we call the bad pork knocker. (111/4/142)

From this point, it is only a step for the complete elimination of doz. (p.117).

It seems that Bickerton has selected particular examples to support supposed rule changes. The variation between marked and unmarked verbs in the basilect was, he claims, due to
stativity. Similar variation in the mesolect indicated elimination of the aspect marker, and thus the language moves closer to the acrolect, for as marked non-pasts decrease, so marked pasts increase and with them the acquisition of the acrolectal [+past] category.

In the description of the mesolect to acrolect range, he points out some 'odd' doz tokens - i.e. doz before adjectives (p.119):

'4.6 son doz hat he bad 'The sun gets very hot here.' (160/15/198).

4.7 People does jealous him. (99/4/117) (p.118).'

In the movement from mesolect to acrolect, he explains, this is acceptable as long as 'we interpret hot and jealous as adjectives and not merely the Guyanese forms of the verbs 'to heat' and 'to envy' (p.118). If this analysis is correct, he goes on, then 'is frequently sick' is the meaning of doz ill in example 4.5.

'4.5 If the husband know that the mother does ill ... (43/7/35) (p.118)'.

Bickerton may or may not have realized it, but 'frequently' is also the meaning in the basilect when a occurs before stative verbs and adjectives. Thus neither the occurrence nor the meaning of doz before adjectives need indicate a grammatical change. Bickerton encountered a before stative verbs and adjectives in the basilect but chose to call the occurrences 'performance errors'. He probably took this position as he could not find a suitable explanation.

Bickerton states that bij is introduced in the mesolectal to acrolectal phase of the continuum, but like
Allsopp (1962) and Rickford (1974) has chosen to treat \textit{bii} as a syntactic unit with \textit{doz} - thus \textit{doz bii}. Devonish (1978), however, treats \textit{doz} and \textit{bii} as separate items, and for syntactic reasons I do the same in my reanalysis.

2.4.3 Iterative \textit{yuuz tu} in the mesolect

In the mesolect Bickerton states that iterative \textit{doz} becomes restricted to non-past environments and a form \textit{yuuz tu} is introduced to cover \([+ \text{ iterative}], [+ \text{ past}]\) environments and thus a straightforward past : non-past time distinction is gradually introduced (p.69). In the absence of any contextual indication of time reference, \textit{doz} indicates non-past, but with an appropriate temporal adverbial it can be past or non-past. \textit{yuuz tu}, on the other hand, is restricted to a past environment. His claim that \textit{doz} and \textit{yuuz tu} introduces a past : non-past time distinction is very doubtful, since in the basilect the past tense marker \textit{bin} can be used with statives and non-statives to yield a simple-past meaning. \textit{yuuz tu}, therefore, is probably a relexification of basilectal \textit{bin} + a (habitual a).

2.5.1 Past tense in the basilect

The stative parameter, according to Bickerton, affects not only the meaning of the stem form in the basilect, it also affects the past tense. Unmarked statives mean 'now', but \textit{bin} before statives means 'not now' (1975a:46). But in my data there are also unmarked statives which mean 'not now':
He called two of the boys in the village who had time - small boys who had nothing to do. (62A/15-16/9)

My grandmother, no one, knew my plan. (18A/5/8)

With non-statives, he claims, the stem form has past reference, but with bin, non-statives have a past-before-past meaning. But in my data there are examples of bin before non-statives with a simple-past meaning:

I made a lot of money on them. (62A/15/1)

She came and her fellow Indians were trying with her. (16A/13-14/5)

In Bickerton (1979), he again reiterates his claims of bin and past meaning in Guyanese creole - unmarked statives mean 'now' and bin + non-statives means past-before-past. In a section of the extract he quotes to illustrate that statives mean 'now', there is the unmarked stative verb no (know) with past meaning:

'... well mi na bin wan sen mesij hoom tel dem da mi in jaajtong in hospital - wel, nat noin dat som piiple mosi no [my emphasis] mi a di kajalti, an dem sen mesij hoom ...'

Well, I didn't want to send a message home to tell them (his family) that I was in Georgetown in hospital - not knowing that some people in the Casualty (Ward) must know me, and they sent a message home ...' (1979:310).

But Bickerton has misunderstood the data. mosi in Guyanese is not a modal of necessity - mosi is a modal of probability. mos is the modal of necessity. Thus instead of a gloss
'must know me', we read 'probably knew me'.

He further explains in this paper that **bin** + non-stative cannot always be translated by English pluperfect:

'(3) dem bin get wud plau lang taim - bina plau raisfiil an deez tu kom deez tu kom, dem... bin get aksn an dem bin get plau an dem a plau an dem a mash wid aksn. 'In the old days they got wooden ploughs, they ploughed the rice-fields and then later on, later on they got oxen and (iron) ploughs and they ploughed and threshed with oxen.'

Why is **bin** used here? We must understand the context, which is that of a comparison between ancient and modern methods of rice-farming: iron ploughs and oxen have now been outdated by tractors and combine harvesters.' (1979:310).

The speaker is indeed comparing ancient and modern methods of rice farming, but this does not detract from the fact that the meaning is simple-past and not past-before-past.

The observations above seem to jeopardize Bickerton's [- Anterior] tense system which he posits for the basilect (1975a; 1979). For stative verbs, [- anterior] would mean 'now', i.e., that the state of liking, knowing, wanting etc., though it may have commenced in the past, would still be in existence at the present moment. For the same verbs [+ anterior] would mean 'not now', 'no longer' i.e. a terminated state. These are the meanings of Ø and **bin** with statives. But, as I have illustrated above and will illustrate further in Chapters 3 and 4, unmarked stative verbs can mean 'now' and 'not now'. The use of **bin** is optional for a 'not now' meaning.

Non-stative verbs, on the other hand, [+ punctual] implies a single action, and [- punctual] represents an extended or repeated one. He continues (1975a:46):
'If we speak about a single, non-extended action, it can hardly be taking place in the immediate present (unless we are giving a running commentary, a rather unusual type of speech event!). However, it does not follow that because an action is [+ past] it must therefore be [+ anterior], provided that our point of reference is another action or actions rather than the present moment. A [+ past] action can then be [+ anterior] in that the past action was the last to occur, or the last of its kind to occur, or the second of two in which the speaker is interested. Likewise, a [+ anterior] action does not have to be a 'past-before-past', since it could be regarded as both related and prior to a state of affairs at present in existence.'

Bickerton claims that a [+ past] action can be [+ anterior] in that the past action was the last to occur. If this is the case how does he account for an example such as:

(10) shi kom an shi matii kuulii bina trai wid shi
    She came and her fellow Indians were trying with her. (16A/13-14/5)

where the first action is unmarked for tense and the second action is marked for tense? According to Bickerton's theory trai should have been unmarked for tense, and kom should have been marked. He further claims that [+ anterior] does not have to be 'past-before-past' since it could be regarded as both related and prior to a state of affairs at present in existence. This explanation, he says, accounts for the examples below:

'2.91 hau awi dis bina wok des na eebli fi wok bikaz
dem gro saaf (188/3/246)
'They can't work like we worked because they've grown soft.' (p.47)

2.53 dis fut bin swel he si di tu a saiz (185/26/236)
'This foot has swelled up, compare the size of the two.'
2.54  wen mi bin smaal laik a dem pikni dis den
mi bin faal a trensh ...(198/2/262)
'When I was as small as these children, I
fell in a canal.' (p.36)'

But in his 1979 paper he contradicts the above by saying:

'... if [+ punctual] actions are always past as
well as usually [+ anterior], then bin with non-
statics will indicate a past-before-past
whether or not the English pluperfect would also
apply.' (1979:311)

Bickerton seems to have got himself into this dilemma for
possibly two reasons: first, he wrongly believes that
stative verbs must be preceded by *bin* for past meaning; and
secondly he omits the future from the grammar on the grounds
that the future is a 'performance feature' since the future
form simultaneously functions as a future tense marker as
well as a modal. A more plausible explanation for *bin*
usage is that *bin* is an optional past tense marker and
depending on the context we can obtain a past-before-past or
simple-past meaning.

In his most recent book, and in support of his bio-
program argument, in order to accommodate what appears to be
deviant data in Seychelles creole, Bickerton (1981:91) finds
it necessary 'to refine the concept of anterior, which we
can provisionally define as 'prior to the current focus of
discourse'. But, he goes on, current focus may be explicit -
where the tenses of an earlier and later event are directly
contrasted; or implicit - where the relationship between the
earlier and later events is simply assumed; or there may be
nothing prior to current focus. He illustrates this refine-
ment by contrasting English and Guyanese creole (GC):
'/103/Current focus, nothing prior:

Eng.: Bill has come/came to see you  
GC: Bil (don) kom fi sii yu

/104/Prior event, current focus implicit

Eng.: Bill came/*has/*had come to see you yesterday, too  
GC: Bil bin kom/*don kom/*kom fi sii yu yestide an aal

/105/Prior event, current focus explicit

Eng.: When I got home, Bill had come/*has come /*came already  
GC: Wen mi riich, bil bin kom/*don kom/*kom aredi

In /104/ current focus is on the present, second visit of Bill implied by too; this, English can handle by one of the means available for /103/, but the anterior system of GC cannot. Example /104/ has to be treated exactly like /105/ in GC, /105/ must be treated differently from /104/ in English. This illustrates just one of the many differences between past-nonpast and anterior – nonanterior systems.' (1981:91-92)

With respect to example /103/ it is possible to say either:

Bil kom fi sii yu

or

Bil don kom fi sii yu

for the meaning 'Bill has come to see you'. The use of aspectual don emphasizes that Bill is there waiting to see you. But for a meaning 'Bill came to see you', it is possible to say any of the following:

Bil kom fi sii yu
Bil don kom fi sii yu
Bil bin kom fi sii yu
Bil bin don kom fi sii yu.
If the speaker chooses to emphasize the pastness of the situation, the speaker will use the tense form *bin*; if the speaker chooses to emphasize the aspectual nature of the situation, the speaker will use *don*. If the speaker chooses to emphasize neither the tense nor aspectual nature of the situation, he will use plain uninflected *kom*. The speaker can emphasize both the tense and aspectual nature of the arrival by using both *bin* and *don*.

In example /104/ it is possible to say either

- Bil bin kom fi sii yu yestide an aal
- or
  - Bil kom fi sii yu yestide an aal.

Aspectual *don* cannot be used. *don* would have been possible without an *aal* 'too', since you will be saying that 'Bill came to see you yesterday, but at the time of utterance he is not there'.

With respect to example /105/ it is possible to say any of the following:

- wen mi riich, bil kom aredi
- wen mi riich, bil don kom aredi
- wen mi riich, bil bin kom aredi
- wen mi riich, bil bin don kom aredi.

The explanation for the variation is the same as given above for example /103/, 'Bill came to see you'.

I agree with Bickerton that the above examples illustrate the differences between the English past-nonpast tense system, and the creole system. But my refutation otherwise of Bickerton's arguments indicates that the tense system of
Guyanese creole is not anterior-nonanterior; nor do I think Bickerton can maintain that the variation is due to language change in progress.

2.5.2 Past tense in the mesolect

In the movement from basilect to mesolect, Bickerton claims, *bin* is replaced by *did* in the identical syntactic and semantic slot. But then a syntactic shift begins. In the basilect 75% of *bin*-occurrences are with statives. The figure is reversed for *did* - 75% of *did*-occurrences are with non-statives (1975a:72). This shift, he claims, indicates the weakening of the basilectal stative category and he attributes this change to several factors. *did* continues to be used by some speakers above the mesolectal level and their use of *did* differs from that of truly mid-mesolectal speakers in several ways. For instance, such speakers have all acquired *had* so that one of the most favourable environments for *did* - i.e. before stative *gat* - disappears. Further, the distinctively [+ anterior] character of *did* weakens shortly before its disappearance, so that it occurs a number of times in simple-past non-stative environments. Thirdly, a number of stative *bin*-occurrences precede 'adjectival verbs'; in the mid-mesolect, these are reanalysed as predicate adjectives, and are never (at least in his data) preceded by *did*.

However, a fourth and 'more critical' explanation for a reduction in the incidence of stative *did*, is that:
'Some of the rules which most sharply differentiate the basilect from standard English are those which, on a formal level, equate non-past statives and past non-statives (giving both zero marking) as well as past statives and past-before-past non-statives (marking both with bin). These rules must yield at some stage before standard rules can be established, and it is at this level that they begin to weaken ... with increasing frequency, stative verbs are left unmarked even where there is a clear [+ anterior] reference and even where non-statives have [+ anterior] markings ..' (p.73).

But as I have illustrated, unmarked stative and non-stative verbs can both have a past-before-past meaning in the basilect, and both classes of verbs are optionally preceded by bin to yield a simple-past meaning. Therefore this supposed grammatical change is in fact not a change. The grammatical change Bickerton posits here is similar to the change he posits for aspect marking. In the basilect the use of unmarked non-stative verbs in variation with marked verbs for habitual meaning was due to the stative category, the identical variation in the mesolect indicated elimination of the aspect marker.

2.5.3 Past tense in the acrolect

In the movement from mesolect to acrolect, did, Bickerton claims, ceases to be a specifically [+ anterior] marker and is reduced to simply another alternative for expressing [+ past] (1975a:121). The 'precise' changeover is as follows: first, forms tied specifically to [- anterior, + past] - i.e. neva, had, waz - are introduced into the lexicon. Bickerton defines [- anterior, + past] as a past action that was the last to occur. But the form neva can
have past and non-past meanings:

(11) shi neva sing - she never sang
(12) shi doz neva duu it - she never does it.

The form had in the examples below refer to 'past-before-past' situations: (had is a past mesolectal form of the basilectal possessive, existential and locative copula gat).

An informant describing a situation when he first began to teach:

(13) aal mi bin noo a wa mi had from hai skuul
    All I knew (when he began to teach) was what I had learnt (what he 'possessed') from high school. (16A/31-32/1)

(14) an wen ii kom hoom, ii had about oova four touzan daala
    And when he came home, he had about over four thousand dollars. (18A/25-26/13)

waz in the example below also has a non-[-anterior, +past] meaning:

(15) wen mi waz a lil bai, mi did laik dis hairy dory biznis
    When I was a little boy, I liked to play a game called 'hairy dory'. (15A/5-6/4)

The second change is that the form didn - the negative past tense form - (as opposed to did) - spreads from [+anterior] to [-anterior, +past] environments; third, the first -ed forms appear, and as these spread to finite verbs, the grammar is restructured to replace [-anterior] by [-past]; fourth, did is reinterpreted to conform with this underlying shift (i.e. as a 'pure' [+past] marker); fifth, did, now the disfavoured competitor of other forms of past marking,
is abandoned (1975a:121-122). I do not agree with this supposed grammatical shift since, in my opinion, did like bin is a past marker and depending on the context we can obtain a simple past or past-before-past meaning. Also, I find too many flaws with Bickerton's \([\pm \text{anterior}]\) tense system to believe that it adequately describes the basilect, far less that it actually changes to \([\pm \text{past}]\). Finally, I find his claims unconvincing since he provides no linguistic evidence to support his position that did disappears via these five stages.

2.5.4 Acquisition of past tense morpheme -ed

In the movement from basilect to mesolect the form -ed is acquired in \([\pm \text{anterior}]\) environments (1975a:109). But the majority of -ed occurrences must be interpreted as learning of a category new to the Guyanese system, that of English simple past. Thus:

'3.110 When tractor come in we started now with big quantity plant. (183/24/231)' (p.109)

But my example (10) on p.65, and the examples below show instances of bin in simple-past environments:

(16) mi bin du big gyardenin
    I did farming on a large scale. (63A/16/1).

(17) de ribz boon hee bin plat
    The ribs here were plaited. (62B/12/7).

The first area of acquisition of -ed forms are the past participles of +syll verbs - such as 'populated', 'accommodated', 'admitted', 'innoculated', 'excited' etc.
(1975a:107). For the majority of speakers, these are 'learned words' and are not indicative of a grammatical change. The second environment for the acquisition is V + syll (and this indicates acquisition of the English simple past). In the movement from mesolect to acrolect past tense acquisition moves to completion by the inflection of 'strong verbs' and the 'V - syll'. Thus the rank order is: V + syll, Strong, V - syll. In Bickerton (1972) he also claims that this is the order of acquisition of the standard English past tense. But Edwards (1975:251) says:

"As far as my informants are concerned, Bickerton is clearly wrong. They seem to be more familiar with the strong past forms. A conclusion similar to that shown in my table was arrived at by Bobb-Semple (1972) who studied the 'mistakes' made by forty secondary school children (from a Georgetown school) in their written compositions."

Bobb-Semple found that:

"irregular (i.e. strong) verbs were inflected for past tense 93 per cent of the time, whereas regular verbs were inflected 65 per cent of the time." (1972:33)

2.6 Loss of Stative Category

In the movement from mesolect to acrolect past stative verbs are unmarked (1975a:122-132) and this indicates that stative is lost as a distinct category. This loss creates a category [a past, - punctual] in opposition to [+ punctual, + past] for some speakers (p.136). But as I have already
illustrated, stative verbs are unmarked for past meaning in the basilect, so this 'supposed' mesolectal to acrolectal development does not indicate a grammatical change. I have also indicated that stativity is not a valid category in the basilect, therefore it cannot be lost in the movement from basilect to acrolect.

Bickerton gives a 'possible alternative explanation (p.125)' for the loss of the stative - non-stative distinction in the case of 'have':

'Speaker 223's you have cow was smashing rice is a morph-for-morph translation of basilectal dem gat kau bina mash rais. 'There were oxen threshing the rice.' (p.125)

The use of unmarked 'have' is due to the fact, he claims, that:

'There is apparently a basilectal rule which deletes tense-marking in higher (possessive or existential) sentences. It may be that ... past - non-past neutralisation of have should be attributed to this rule rather than to the general unmarking of anterior statives.'

(p.126)

But earlier, (p.72), Bickerton explained that 'stative gat' is 'one of the most propitious environments for did' - the mesolectal past tense marker.

2.7 'Performance Feature' don

In the basilect, Bickerton is unable to fit the completive aspect marker don into the parameters of \([\pm \text{anterior}]\) and \([\pm \text{punctual}]\) and dubs the form a 'perform-
ance feature' (p.39). He, however, finds a means of fitting don into the grammar in the movement from basilect to mesolect. He claims (p.85) that don could not root firmly in the grammar until it can combine with other verbal markers, and 'this stage had been cut off by the decreolisation process'. He continues by explaining that:

'... puzzling forms in decreolised lects could only satisfactorily be accounted for by appeal to less decreolised ones; there is no need to assume identity of sense or function between lects, but where a form exists in both, at least some plausible type of change-process must be invoked to account for any differences.' (p.85)

Bickerton assumes an identity between Guyanese don and standard English have. The function of don in temporal subordinate clauses,

'3.51 When you done peel the top straw you get other straw. (15/2/6).' (p.85).

is equated with its lexical force 'completely' as used in main clauses:

'2.74 mi don gat wan dag.
'I have a dog' still, and therefore don't need another one .

2.76 mi don se da
'I said that' and I stick to it .' (p.41).

And the whole is associated with the perfect. Thus in his analysis, Completely = + Completive = + Perfect . In the movement from mesolect to acrolect, don 'vanishes altogether' (p.122) since,

'don would be hard put to it to exist in a grammar that contained an established
perfective aspect with have; the two forms, though by no means synonymous, would be in competition for the same semantic niche.'

Nichols (1976:993) in her critique of Dynamics points out that a glance at traditional and structural literature (for example, Kuryłowicz, 1964) shows that [+ Completive] is at best a substantive implication of [+ Perfect]. This suggestion seems reasonable especially in light of the fact that don is an aspect marker, and I tend to agree with Ridjanović (1969) and McCoard (1978) that have in English is a carrier of tense. The two forms, therefore, grammaticalize different concepts. In Chapters 3 and 4 I will illustrate that it is possible to fit don into the grammar without equating it with the perfect, or appealing to decroolization.

Proof that don vanishes, according to Bickerton, is that at this point in the continuum have + en 'begins to establish itself'. I agree that some speakers use have + en but it seems to be use of a feature which can be identified as 'English' rather than a grammatical change from 'Creole' to 'English'.

In Bickerton (1981:80), he points out that an overview of the creoles indicates that completive aspect markers can have three distinct distributions:

'First, they may remain as marginal particles, occurring optionally in clause-final position. This state is exemplified in SR, [Srana'] in which kaba can only occur clause-finally and is never incorporated into Aux. The same is true of PP [Papiamentu] caba. In basilectal GC, don often occurs clause-finally ...

Second, they may be incorporated into Aux...
but without its being possible to combine them with other Aux constituents. This state is exemplified by mesolectal GC don and possibly also JC [Jamaican Creole] and other Caribbean don and by HC [Hawaiian Creole] fin.

Third, they may be incorporated into Aux where they may combine with other Aux constituents quite freely. This state is exemplified by Krio (KR) don, and IOC [Indian Ocean Creoles] (fin), among others.

He continues by explaining that these three states constitute stages in a diachronic development and exemplify a gradual process of incorporation which is well advanced in some creoles and has not begun in others. Basilectal Guyanese creole has both postclausal and preverbal don, the latter becoming obligatory in the mesolectal varieties. Thus Guyanese creole represents the transition between states one and two. He says that evidence for Indian Ocean creoles is conflicting, but by some accounts, stages intermediate between noncombinability and free combinability (states two and three) are to be found there.

In Guyanese creole (basilect and mesolect), don can indeed occur before or after the predicate, and this variation is probably due to the fact that it never co-occurs with a predicate inflected for aspect. Thus

Basilect:  (a) * shi don a sing  
           (b) * shi a sing don  

Mesolect:  (c) * shi don doz sing  
           (d) * shi doz sing don  
           (e) * shi don singing  
           (f) * shi singing don.

(Example (e) is acceptable, but then don is interpreted as a
main verb, and singing as a nominal.)

But:  
\[
\begin{align*}
(g) & \text{ shi don sing} \\
\text{or} & \\
(h) & \text{ shi sing don}
\end{align*}
\]

\( \text{don} \) can combine with tense and modal auxiliaries in the basilect and mesolect. When it co-occurs with other auxiliaries, it must occur before the predicate:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Basilect: } & (i) \text{ shi wuda (bin) don sing} \\
\text{she would have sung} \\

\text{Mesolect: } & (j) \text{ shi wuda (did) don sing}
\end{align*}
\]

Therefore, we can claim that \( \text{don} \) in Guyanese creole has nothing to do with Bickerton's three states. Again he seems to have gone on the wrong path with his assumption that variation implies change. Note, too, that the ordering of the elements is mood, tense, aspect (MTA) and not TMA as he proposes for Guyanese Creole and other creoles.

2.8 'Performance Feature' \textit{go}

Another 'performance feature' is basilectal \textit{go} (which varies with a form \textit{sa}). \textit{go} has been dubbed a performance feature since it simultaneously functions as a future tense marker and a conditional modal (p.42-43). In the movement from basilect to mesolect \textit{gon} replaces \textit{go}, and another form \textit{would} is introduced to vary with \textit{gon} for past probables. Thus 'the scope of \textit{gon} is gradually being narrowed to that of
a pure future' (p.91). I agree that *would* can indeed be used for past probables, but like *gu* and *gon* it can also have future meaning:

(18) *yu tink shi wud duu it.*
Do you think she will do it?

(19) *she wud bii a gud styuudent.*
She will be a good student.

Bickerton provides no linguistic evidence to support his claim that *gon* becomes a pure future. In the movement from mesolect to acrolect, he claims that *will* is acquired and the acquisition of the acrolectal future is complete. He illustrates with the example below (p.133):

'4.54 If you remember you will see, if you consider.
(122/16-17/163)

4.55 If I happen to live your age I will have - at seventy-five I'll have no fears, at seventy-five you closer to you coffin but you braver than anybody. (241/26-8/312)

And he finds it necessary to say:

'Though control of the acrolectal future is complete, the speaker still retains many non-standard forms, e.g. zero copula before adjectives and non-standard second-person possessive adjective before consonants.' (p.133-134)

On the basis of my knowledge as a native speaker, it is possible to use basilectal *gu* or mesolectal *gon* and *wud* where Bickerton's speaker uses *will*. We can therefore question whether it is true to say that the basilect and the mesolect do not have a grammatical 'future'.

In Bickerton (1981:93) he claims that counterfactuals
are expressed by a combination of anterior and irrealis because current focus in such cases is always on the consequences of not having done whatever one didn't do; and irrealis because the action or event in question is an imaginary one.

Thus

'/113/GC: if mi bin sii am mi bin go tel am
    'If I had seen him I would have told him'.

Bickerton's example is quite acceptable, but it is also possible to say:

if mi bin sii am, mi wuda tel am

and an informant says:

if mi bin liv a tong, mi kuda duu beta
    If I were living in town, I could do better.

Thus it is possible to obtain a modal meaning by combining bin + go or to use the other modals wuda, kuda, shuda, maita. However, bin + go can only give the meaning expressed by wuda.

He further points out that complementizer fi can also function as an auxiliary in basilectal Guyanese creole:

'/120/ mi fi go
    I should/ought to go' (1981:95).

He explains that fi in general does not combine with other auxiliaries, but in Guyanese creole it does occasionally occur with bin:

'/121/ mi bin fu nak am
    'I should have hit him' or 'I was about to hit him'

'The construction is not common in GC, and native speakers are more or less evenly
divided as to which gloss is the more appropriate.' (1981:95-96).

I am not surprised that native speakers are more or less evenly divided as to which gloss is more appropriate since the utterance means neither of the two. The gloss should read, 'I went to hit him', in which case bin is a directional copula and fu is a complementizer. According to Bickerton there is only one bin in Guyanese creole, that is, the past tense morpheme. But as I illustrate in Chapter 3, there are four bin morphemes in Guyanese creole, and Bickerton's example /121/ above is one of the morphemes that is not the past tense marker.

The utterance mi bin:fu nak am means 'I went to hit him'. But the utterance

\[ \text{mi gu fu nak am} \]

can be glossed 'I went to hit him' or 'I was about to hit him' depending on the linguistic and situational context. Both glosses indicate movement towards a person to strike him, but the first gloss lacks the inceptive meaning. When bin is used, it is not possible to have an inceptive reading. In order to have a 'I should have hit him' reading, we can say either:

(a) mi shuda nak am

or

(b) mi shuda bin nak am

or

(c) mi fu bin nak am.

In examples (b) and (c) the modal precedes the tense form, thus indicating an MT(A) ordering, rather than a TM(A) order-
ing as Bickerton claims.

2.9 Negation

Negation, Bickerton claims, has implications for the tense and aspect systems. In the basilect, na is the negative marker for all verbal forms (1975a: 431; 91). In the mesolect, the forms en, doon(t), di(d)n(t) and neva make their appearance and are soon followed by izn(t), wazn(t), wudn(t), en etc. (1975a: 91-102). The changes that come about in the mesolect serve as levers for more widespread grammatical changes in the tense and aspect systems. So that, for example, 'Until neva is acquired, the category of 'simple past' simply does not exist in Guyanese Creole.' (p.103). But as my example (12) illustrates, neva can also have non-past meaning:

(12) shi doz neva duu it.
She never does it.

I agree with Bickerton that formal changes do take place in the negation system and that these changes have implications for the co-occurrence relations with the lexical substitutions that take place in the tense and aspect systems, but in my opinion the tense and aspect grammar does not change.
A Further Examination of Bickerton's Process of Change

We can further examine Bickerton's overall process of change by looking at earlier documents in Guyanese. In Rickford (ed.) (1978) there are reprints of texts first published between 1881-1940. In two of the early extracts, McTurk (1881) and Speirs (1902), there is a form da which functioned as a topicalizer, progressive aspect marker, habitual aspect marker, demonstrative pronoun, definite article. In McTurk (1881), there is also a form a which functioned as a topicalizer, progressive aspect marker, habitual aspect marker, locative preposition, indefinite article and first person pronoun. Synchronically, the only function of da today is that of a demonstrative pronoun, while a has continued as a focalizer, progressive aspect marker, habitual aspect marker, indefinite article, locative preposition and pronoun. On the basis of the data, I have not observed any grammatical changes with the replacement of da by a - the changes I observe are lexical. According to Bickerton's theory the lexical changes should have been followed by a change in the grammar. In his description, Bickerton does not refer to earlier tense and aspect forms to see what possible changes there may have been or to note whether the changes may have been purely lexical, or lexical followed by a shift in the grammar.

8. In the basilect he states that a form sa which is in variation with gu, was the principal irrealis marker in Quow (1877) and proverbs, and in his data only five sa tokens were used - gu is currently more frequently used. (In my data there is only one sa token.) If gu has replaced sa, we can ask why there has not been a grammatical change; even Bickerton states that 'there is apparently no distinction in meaning between the two.' (1975a:42).
2.11 Other Discrepancies in Text

Sankoff (1977:296) notes that Bickerton treats his data 'in an irregular, even cavalier fashion'. An examination of his tables and figures shows that many of them contain discrepancies, 'a weakness which may be due to some combination of faulty editing, printing errors and careless proofreading.' For example, Table 2.1 lists outputs for sixteen heavy users of basilectal items (1975a:24-25). Figures are given for various forms, including \textit{-ing}, \textit{doz} and \textit{a}. In the movement from basilect to mesolect, \textit{doz} replaces \textit{a}, and Table 3.1 (1975a:64) repeats the \textit{a} and \textit{doz} figures for eleven of the speakers of Table 2.1. For three of the speakers there are discrepancies between the two tables. Speaker No. 178 has 6 \textit{doz} and 56 \textit{a} in Table 2.1; 8 and 56 respectively Table 3.1. Speaker No. 198 has 8 \textit{doz} and 15 \textit{a} in Table 2.1; 4 and 15 respectively in Table 3.1. Speaker No. 176 has 12 \textit{doz} and 39 \textit{a} in Table 2.1; 11 \textit{doz} and 39 \textit{a} in Table 3.1. Also, Speaker No. 99 appears in Table 3.3 as having 3 tokens \textit{Ving} and 2 tokens of \textit{Ning}, but in Table 3.2 he is shown with a total of 23 \textit{ing} forms.

There are also instances of speaker omission. For example, Table 3 is said to contain those speakers who have both \textit{doz} and \textit{a}, and who use at least one of them 5 times. But Speaker No. 242, shown in Table 3.3 as having 2 \textit{doz} and 6 \textit{a}, is not listed. In the discussion of the phonological conditioning for past marking, the text tells us that of the 14 speakers of Table 4.7, there are 9 who produce past forms in weak \textit{-syll} verbs. Their data are grouped in terms of phono-

9. The examples noted here are from Sankoff (1977).
logical environment in Table 4.11. This would be fine except that there are 10, not 9, such speakers shown in Table 4.7. Speaker No. 125 is inexplicably missing from Table 4.11, so we are unable to find out whether his data would have obeyed the regular conditioning shown in Figure 4.3. (See Sankoff (1977) for further discrepancies in Bickerton's tables.)

Since Bickerton's analysis is based on the distribution of data, the errors noted above are very disquieting.

2.12 Summary

In this critique I have illustrated the observational, descriptive and explanatory inadequacies of Bickerton's analysis of the Guyanese tense and aspect systems. On the basis of the criticisms I am therefore faced with two tasks:

(1) Find alternative tense and aspect systems.

(2) Attempt to see whether it is the case that we are dealing with grammatically similar coexistent varieties, rather than Bickerton's continuum of grammatical change.
CHAPTER III
THE SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE TENSE
ASPECT ITEMS IN GUYANESE CREOLE

3.1 Introduction

In this analysis I will be describing a variety which on formal grounds can be identified as 'basilect' and another variety which formally can be identified as 'mesolect', and together they constitute 'Guyanese Creole'. The 'acrolect' is not described, since, grammatically, if not totally formally, it can be identified as 'English'. I adopt the analysis of the English tense system as [+ Past] and the aspectual system as [+ Progressive]. There is a perfect tense which is in opposition to the preterit.¹

(See McCoard 1978 for categorization of the English perfect.) I observe in the data that speakers can switch between 'English' and 'Creole' - but I will not assume the switching implies that sooner or later the Creole will

¹. The English perfect is often categorized as 'aspect'. (See, for example, Palmer 1965; Allen 1966; Bickerton 1975a; Quirk et al. 1973; Leech and Svartik 1975.) Lyons (1968 a : 316) categorizes the perfect as 'aspect', but notes that 'in certain circumstances at least, it is a secondary, or relative, tense, rather than aspect'. (See also Lyons 1977.) Comrie (1976) discusses the English perfect but mentions that the 'difference between the perfect and the other aspects has led many linguistics to doubt whether the perfect should be considered as an aspect at all.' (p.52). Palmer (1974) notes that the perfect seems to have tense and aspectual functions and creates a category 'phase' to accommodate it. But Ridjanović (1969) and McCoard (1978) have put forward arguments for considering the perfect as 'tense'.
acquire the categories of English as Bickerton assumes. By not making such an assumption I will not have to postulate the disappearance of forms and categories, especially since it will mean postulating that disappearance without linguistic evidence. The fact that a Creole speaker can utter an English form is in itself no proof that the Creole language is acquiring the categories of English.

It is not unusual for speakers to vary between 'English' and 'Creole' in their speech acts. Thus in response to the question 'What job do you do?' an informant replied to Edwards:

(1) at prezent ai am not working. mi na a wok nau

'At present I am not working. I am not working now.'

(62A/2/l)

The forms, word-order, and the overt marking of tense ('am'), and aspect ('-ing') identifies the first part of the utterance as 'English'. The second part of the utterance can be identified as 'Creole' (basilect, to be precise) on the basis of the forms used, word-order, and the fact that the utterance is only marked for aspect ('a'). At times the distinction is not so clearly defined. Thus an informant speaking about the cultivation of plants:

(2) wen de kom tu a seerteen saiz, yu plau dem around - dis iz di ruut - yu plau dem til about hee, an den yu troo di kau mool around it

'When they (the plants) come to a certain size, you plough around them - this is the root - you plough them to about here, and then you throw the manure around it.'

(21B/5-7/2)

The above verb forms could be 'English' since in generalizations and sequencing of the kind exemplified the uninflected verb form is used. In Guyanese Creole, the plain uninflected
verb form is also used in generalizations, but it can be optionally marked by a or doz for habitual aspect. We seem to have in example (2), therefore, an instance of neutralization between two different varieties.

Another instance of neutralization is exemplified in example (3) below:

(3) wel, hii waz a nais maan tu mii, an wen hii had tu lef hee, mi sarii, bot di wok bin finish

'Well, he was a nice man to me, and when he had to leave here, I was sorry, but the work had finished.'

Formally and syntactically the utterance 'hii waz a nais man tu mii could be English or mesolect. It could be mesolect since the mesolectal past tense form did cannot be used in copular constructions because of a *did a word constraint in Guyanese Creole. It would have been possible to say:

(4) hii did nais tu mii
or
(5) hii waz nais tu mii

he was nice to me

but not
(6) *hii did a nais maan tu mii.

Therefore, if a Guyanese speaker chooses not to use basilectal bin + a in a noun copular construction, he must use waz. had tu can be identified as English or mesolect (bin gat fu is the basilect construction). lef, however, and the rest of the construction can formally and grammatically be identified as Creole. Since hii waz a nais maan and had tu can be instances of neutralization, and since the rest of the speech act can be identified as 'Creole', I would consider the entire speech act to be 'Creole'.
There are instances which are English and not Creole.

For example:

(7) aal ai tel dem, 'wel, ai am not afreed ov yor dadii, ar enibadii laik dat. soo, bikaaz yor dadii mos noo ai wudnt biit yuu witout a kaaz, deerfoor, ai'l bii glaad tu miit dadii ar momii

'The only thing I told them, 'Well, I am not afraid of your daddy, or anybody like that. So, because your daddy must know I wouldn't beat you without a cause, therefore, I'll be glad to meet daddy or mommy.' (4B/24 - 27/1).

The first four items, aal ai tel dem, would be considered a Creole construction - the use of the plain uninflected verb for past time reference, and even ai (which could otherwise be classified as English). (In section 3.5.9 I present arguments for considering ai as part of the Creole as well as the English pronominal system.) But the rest of the speech act can formally and grammatically be identified as English.

Example (8) below would be considered as Creole (mesolect, to be precise):

(8) a doz stitch baag
    I stitch bags. (22B/2/1).

And so would example (9), although we can say that the use of 'biiheevyu' and 'sityuueeshanz' can be English. The use of ga_a would be considered as basilect.

(9) yu ga a luk at piipl, hau de biiheev, studii de biiheevyu, sii hau de aplai deself tu ada sityuueeshanz an ting

'You have to look at people, how they behave, study their behaviour, see how they apply themselves to other situations and thing.' (18B/17 - 18/1).

This brief discussion indicates that in selecting Creole utterances from my corpus of data, not only do I have
to consider forms, word-order, and possible instances of neutralizations, but that my native-speaker intuition plays a major role in the selection process.

3.2 Models

My aim is to provide an account of the semantics of the Guyanese tense and aspect systems. For this a necessary preliminary is a grammatical description but it need not be of much sophistication. To provide a complete description is a very large task. I use the universal sentence pattern schema proposed by Lyons (1977) as a starting point.

My model of lexical change is partially that of Bickerton (1975a:1980), but mostly that of Kuryłowicz (1964) which illustrates the persistence of categories in the face of formal innovation. According to Kuryłowicz's theory, before there can be change there must be first of all formal identification of morphemes. There is then a formal renewal which subdivides the categories. This he calls the principle of differentiation. There is then integration with subsequent extension to the entire range. Thus in Classical Latin, the form amabo functioned as a modal and future tense form (identification); then in Vulgar Latin amare habeo functioned as a modal, and amabo as the future tense form (differentiation); in Romance amare habeo functioned as the modal as well as the future tense form (integration). My description stops at the level of differentiation since I have not observed integration (or even a grammatical change as Bickerton posits). Kuryłowicz's model, however, postulates that the initial changes are a purely internal phenomenon, and the subsequent changes are externally
motivated (i.e. spread via imitation). Bickerton's initial changes are externally motivated, thus on this point my description of Guyanese is more in keeping with Bickerton than Kuryłowicz.

3.3 Sources of Synchronic Variation

This chapter is concerned with the items which mark tense and aspect in Guyanese Creole. It is necessary, however, to set out not only the syntactic and semantic constraints on these forms within the tense and aspect systems, but also their functions other than tense and aspect marking since there is a considerable degree of homonymy between different functions and variations in the forms used for particular functions. There is substantial homonymy in that a form a can function as a progressive aspect marker, habitual aspect marker, modal, copula, preposition, first person subject pronoun etc. There is variation in that a form a is in variation with pan as a locative preposition, a is in variation with mosii as a modal, a is in variation with wan as an indefinite article etc.

3.3.1 Lexemic categories

Some of the homonymy and some of the variation is a consequence of the extent to which the language employs selective or lexemic categories. Whorf (1956:93) defines selective categories:
'A selective category is a grammatical class with membership fixed, and limited as compared with some larger class. A PRIMARY selective category, or LEXEMIC category, is one compared to which the next larger class is the total lexicon of the language. Certain semantic and grammatical properties are assured in the word by selecting it from a certain class of fixed membership not coterminous with the whole vocabulary. In order that a certain grammatical property may be "in the lexeme", it cannot be in all lexemes. The familiar "parts of speech" of most European languages, but not of English, are lexemic categories.' [my emphasis].

Whorf (p.94) further explains that lexemic categories may be overt or covert. In French, Latin, Aztec and Navaho, for example, they are overt. So that in French, ange and mange belong to different compartments of the vocabulary (noun and verb) and there is always a feature in the sentence that tells which. In Hopi, on the other hand, the lexemic categories are covert. For example, there is no distinction in the 'simplex (base-stem) forms' between nouns and verbs, and sentences are possible in which there is no distinction in the sentence. Thus le'na or pam le'na means 'it is a flute', and pe'na or pam pe'na means 'he writes it'. Therefore, Whorf goes on:

'... nouns and verbs MAY BE alike in overt characteristics. But it is easily possible to make sentences in which le'na appears with case suffixes and in other forms quite impossible for pe'na and vice versa. One has to know, and cannot always tell from the sentence, that le'na and pe'na belong to different compartments of the grammar.' (p.94).

Whorf (p.95) also explains that lexemic categories can include not only nouns, verbs, adjectives and other 'parts of speech', but also 'full' words and 'empty' words or stems.
(grammatical functors), as in, for example, Chinese. He defines an 'empty' word or stem as one 'that is highly specialized for grammatical or syntactic indication, perhaps in a way that does not admit of being assigned a concrete meaning'. Thus such a word may function as an indicator tense, mood, voice etc.

The reliance of Guyanese Creole on lexemic categories can be expected from the assertion made by Bailey (1966:6) based on her work on Jamaican Creole. She says:

'One of the most striking features to be noted in any study of the Creole languages is the fact that, compared with the source language from which they draw their lexicon, their inflectional content is exceedingly meagre, so that the grammatical information is carried almost entirely by the syntactic system. Typologically, these languages, like Chinese, are characterized by having syntactically independent elements which account for the total grammatical structure. Creole words are invariable, with no inflectional endings, and grammatical relations are expressed by means of particles or purely tactical devices.'

In my treatment of the grammatical function classes a, de, don, bin and gu I have been influenced by my native-speaker intuition as to certain areas of semantic overlap between each member of each of these classes. I have also been influenced by B.L. Whorf's arguments concerning lexical categories, referred to above. I would wish to argue that there are derivational relationships between each member of each of these classes, although one can map fairly distinct syntactic functions for each member. Thus I distinguish for grammatical purposes twelve uses of the form /a/, seven of /de/, two of /don/, four of /bin/ and three of /gu/.
(Comparable, though not exactly similar, uses of some of these forms are distinguished lexically in the Dictionary of Jamaican English (1979).)

My semantic intuition, used in my analysis of Edwards' texts, is that all the \{DE\} morphemes are deictic, all the \{DON\} morphemes are completive; all the \{BIN\} morphemes are associated with marking predication about the past; all the \{GU\} morphemes imply movement towards a goal or destination.

The case of the \{A\} morphemes is more complex; the semantic range here includes the marking of a noun copular, of a focalizer, pronominal use, modal use, prepositional use etc. Out of context, however, we frequently find ambiguities about \{A\}; for example, in the case of mi a tiicha 'I am a teacher', we postulate the neutralization of an underlying a from mi a a tiicha with the sense that the remaining surface form carries the meaning of both underlying morphemes, just as The in 'The man's hat' does.

If we assume a morpheme unity, we can have simple explanations for the variation between a and mosii as a modal, a and pan as a preposition, a and wan as an indefinite article etc., in that the variation is due to these overlaps in semantic functions I have described. Guyanese speakers exploit their knowledge of these overlaps for stylistic purposes. If we do not accept this fact not only will we be hard pressed to explain the origins of the various morphemes, but we will also have difficulty in explaining which member of each class is in any particular case varying with mosii, wan, pan etc..

My intuitions seem to provide a simple explanation of
why an earlier form /da/ which functioned as a noun copula, progressive/habitual aspect marker, preposition, topicalizer was replaced by a form /a/ in the above functions. The class of \( \{ A \} \) morphemes was extended to cover the range of functions of the class of \( \{ DA \} \) morphemes and ultimately replaced it. The class of \( \{ DA \} \) morphemes was not lost, but synchronically today is limited to the demonstrative pronoun.

3.3.2 Externally motivated lexical changes

Some of the synchronic variation is due to externally motivated lexical changes - that is, changes resulting from the imitation of Standard English forms, and their use alongside the Creole forms. For example, in the basilect, a functions as a progressive and as an habitual aspect marker. In the mesolect there is a formal differentiation in that -ing is suffixed to non-stative verbs for progressive aspect, and doz occurs before all classes of verbs for habitual aspect. There is also the example of the form bin which in the basilect functions as a past tense marker, a locative copula with past meaning, a directional copula with past meaning, and a noun copula with past meaning. In the mesolect, did replaces bin as past tense marker, waz as the past form in noun copular constructions, but bin continues to function as a locative and directional copula.

See Rickford (1978:197-221) for reprints of texts first published between 1881-1902 in which the variation between the forms /da/ and /a/ in the above functions is observed.
3.3.3 Variation between varieties

Although on formal grounds and internal consistency we can identify a variety which can be called 'basilect' and another variety which can be called 'mesolect', it should be noted that neither is homogeneous, and their non-homogeneity is another source of synchronic variation. For example, the basilectal locative copula de is in variation with mesolectal bii. bii, however, can only occur in habitual constructions with the mesolectal habitual aspect marker doz. de, on the other hand, can occur in non-habitual constructions, and habitual constructions with basilectal habitual a, and with mesolectal habitual doz. Also, whereas the basilectal past tense form bin can co-occur with basilectal progressive a, and mesolectal progressive -ing, the mesolectal past tense form did can only co-occur with mesolectal progressive -ing.

The variation noted between the basilect and mesolect above is predictable. But there are times when it appears to be random.

(Basilect underlined with double lines, mesolect with a single line.)

(7) yu ga a luk at piipl, hau de biiheev, studii de biiheevyu, sii hau de aplai deself tu ada sityuueeshanz an ting.

You have to look at people, how they behave, study their behaviour, see how they apply themselves to other situations and things. (18B/17-18/12)

(8) yu gat tu bii raang, ar yu gat tu bii rait, wan out a di tuu. if yu raang, piipl gon korek yu. bot if yu na taak, noobadii na qu noo wu yu waant fu se at aal.

You have to be wrong, or you have to be right, one out of the two. If you are wrong, people will correct you. But if you do not talk, nobody will know what you want to say. (18B/27-29/4)
Then there is variation between a variety which can be identified as 'Creole' (basilect/mesolect) and a variety which can be identified as 'English'. This variation is unpredictable. ('Creole' is underlined.)

(9) soo yuur puting aan door freemz an su aan. wat doz dat involv. wu yu gat tu duu.
So you're putting on door frames and so on. What does that involve? What do you have to do?

(26B/14-15/1)

(10) ai tink dat aal ov us gat tu surv owu kontrii in som wee or di ada, and ai biliiv dat edyuukeeshan iz a vaital aspek.and ai also hav a kaaling fu children.
I think that all of us have to serve our country in some way or the other, and I believe that education is a vital aspect. And I also have a calling for children. (18B/20-22/1)

3.3.4 Summary on synchronic variation

The three sources of synchronic variation - overlap in classes, diachronic lexical changes, and overlap between the basilect and mesolect (but not variation between 'Creole' and 'English') - will be further exemplified below. The assumption of lexemic categories, besides coping with the data exemplified in Rickford 1978, provides a substantially simpler and better integrated account of Guyanese than Bickerton's.

The forms I am concerned with are basilectal *a, de, don*, *bin, gu* and their variants. In the illustration of the forms, I will refer to the mesolectal variants usually on the grounds of a formal relationship between the forms used in Guyanese Creole and those used in Standard English.
First, it is necessary to give a brief description of the simple indicative declarative sentence in the language. To illustrate the syntactic structure of the simple sentence, I have decided to use the kernel sentence schema proposed by Lyons (1977:467-475) which operates with a set of terms and concepts that comes partly from traditional grammar and partly from more recent grammatical theory. I have chosen this model as it allows me to treat tense and aspect as extranuclear categories, and also because of the inter-dependence between form, structure and meaning in the language, as highlighted below in sentence pattern (6). On the basis of my data, I therefore deem it best to begin with syntactic structures which can be identified on purely formal grounds.

The sentence patterns will be followed by a simple statement of the syntactic distribution of the basilectal forms a, de, don, bin, gu and their variants. This will be followed by a statement on the classification of verbs, and other 'verb' classes, and a statement on the auxiliary when the above forms and their mesolectal variants are functioning as markers of tense and aspect.

3.4.1 Kernel sentence patterns

Below are six basic kernel sentence patterns. (The symbols that occur in the sentence schemata are as follows: NP = noun-phrase (including nominals); V = verb; ADJ = adjective; COP = copula; LOC = locative (adverbial) expression; ADV = adverb. The brackets () indicate optional elements.)
1. NP + V:
   (In this pattern, V indicates verb, adjective and adverb.)
   da gyal wok (haard) (a skuul)
   NP + V + (ADV) + (LOC)
   That girl worked hard at school
   da gyal brait
   NP + ADJ
   That girl is intelligent
   shi aalweez
   NP + ADV
   She is frequently like that

2. NP + V + NP:
   di bai plee di piyana (pan a aaftanuun)
   NP + V + NP + (LOC)
   The boy played the piano in the afternoon

3. NP + COP + NP:
   paal a wan (brait) bai
   NP + COP + NP
   Paul is an intelligent boy
   (mesolect: paal iz a (brait) bai)

4. COP + NP:
   a tii-taim
   COP + NP
   It is tea-time
   (mesolect: iz tii taim)
5. NP + COP:
   
   laiyan de
   NP + COP
   Lions exist

6. NP + (COP) + LOC:
   
   hii (de) hoom (nau)
   NP + (COP) + LOC + (ADV)
   He is at home now

With regard to sentence pattern (6) there are instances when the locative copula is obligatory:

(a) shi de a chorch - she is in church (basilect)
(b) it de a teebl - it is on the table "
(c) hii de a shap - he is at the shop "

But de is optional in the sentences below:

(d) shi (de) in chorch - she is in church (mesolect)
(e) it (de) pan di teebl - it is on the table "
(f) hii (de) at di shop - he is at the shop "
(g) hii (de) hoom - he is at home (basilect + mesolect)

On the basis of the above constructs it can be generalized that if the locative phrase begins with a form other than a, de is optional. If, for example, de is deleted from a sentence such as shi de a chorch, the meaning would be no longer locative, but 'she is a church' with a syntactic structure NP + COP + NP instead of NP + (COP) + LOC.
3.4.2 Distribution of the forms /a/, /de/, /don/, /bin/, /gu/ and their variants

Distributional criteria point to the need to recognize several a, de, don, bin and gu morphemes respectively. On the assumption of lexemic categories, the separate morphemes reflect classes which are a part of the basic morpheme class. Thus the morpheme class $\{A\}$, for example, is comprised of twelve classes - the classes being identified on syntactic distribution.

The postulation of morpheme classes simplifies problems concerning diachronic lexical change. Thus if a morpheme class has several morphemes, and one or more of the morphemes is formally renewed, it is not the morpheme class which is being renewed, but only a morpheme corresponding to a part of the class's functional range. Therefore, the changes are only lexical and not grammatical. Bickerton, for example, posited one a which functioned as a progressive and habitual aspect marker. When the a occurred before non-stative verbs, the positing of one morpheme a was fine. But it is also a fact that a can occur before stative verbs, which suggests that there may be another aspectual a. Bickerton chose to ignore such occurrences and referred to a + stative verbs as 'performance errors'. The formal renewal of his one basilectal a into -ing and doz - yuuz tu in the mesolect, indicated the formation of two categories. However, syntactically there are two aspectual a's in the basilect. Thus the formal renewal in the mesolect is indicative of a lexical change and not a grammatical change. By positing a morpheme class $\{A\}$ not only will it be possible
to safely classify two aspectual a's (as the data indicates), but it will also maintain the unity that there seems to be between the two morphemes.

3.4.2.1 Distribution of the form /a/ and its variants

1. \{A\} - \{doz\} - \{yuu tu\} - \{-s\}
   Between subject and predicate as an habitual aspect marker. The morpheme \{-s\} is suffixed to the verb.

2. \{A\} - \{ing\}
   Between subject and predicate (\{-ing\} is suffixed to the verb) as a progressive aspect marker.

3. \{A\} - \{mosii\}
   Between subject and predicate as a modal of probability.

4. \{A\}
   Occurs after the modals kud, wud, shud, mait in referring to past possibilities.

5. \{A\} - \{fu\} - \{tu\}
   Occurs after the copula gat as a complementizer to form a modal of obligation.

6. \{A\} - \{bin\} - \{iz\} - \{woz\}
   Between subject and predicate in noun copular constructions.
7. \{A\} - \{-iz\}
   Before noun-phrases as a focalizer.
   Before nominals in predicate clefting.
   Before noun-phrases in impersonal constructions.

8. \{A\} - \{pan\}
   Before noun-phrases as a locative preposition.

9. \{A\} - \{wan\}
   Before noun-phrases as an indefinite article.

10. \{A\} - \{ai\} - \{mi\} - \{mii\}
    Before predicate as a first person subject pronoun.

3.4.2.2 Distribution of the form /de/, represented phonetically as [də], and its variants.

1. \{DE\} - \{bii\}
   Between subject and predicate as a durative aspect marker.
   Between subject and predicate as a copula.

2. \{DE\}
   After predicate as a locative adverb.
   After predicate as a focussing locative adjunct.

3. \{DE\} - \{dee\} - \{dem\} - \{den\}
   Before predicate as a third person plural subject pronoun.
   Before noun-phrases as a third person plural possessive pronoun.

4. \{DE\} - \{dee\} - \{dem\} - \{den\} - \{ii\} - \{yu\}
   Before the copulas gat and get as an existential pronoun.
3.4.2.3 Distribution of the form /don/ and its variant

1. \{ DON \}
   Between subject and predicate, or after predicate, as a punctual (completive) aspect marker

2. \{ DON \} - \{ finish \}
   A main verb.

3.4.2.4 Distribution of the form /bin/ and its variants

1. \{ BIN \} - \{ biin \} - \{ en \} - \{ did \} - \{ -ed \}
   Between subject and predicate (\{ -ed \} is suffixed to the verb) as a past tense marker.

2. \{ BIN \} - \{ biin \}
   Between subject and predicate as a locative copula.
   Between subject and predicate as a directional copula.

3. \{ BIN \} - \{ a \} - \{ woz \}
   Between subject and predicate in noun-copular constructions.

3.4.2.5 Distribution of the form /gu/ and its variants

1. \{ GU \} - \{ gon \} - \{ wud \}
   Between subject and predicate as a future tense marker/modal.

2. \{ GU \} - \{ gaan \}
   A main verb.

3. \{ GU \} - \{ fu \}
   Infinitival complementizer.
3.4.3 **Syntactic classification of verbs**

Three classes of verbs have been identified in the data: (a) non-stative; (b) stative; (c) stative-resultative.

The *stative/non-stative* classification relates to the semantic distinction between a 'state' and an 'event' or 'dynamic' situation. According to Leech (1971:14):

'A state is undifferentiated and lacking in defined limits. An event, on the other hand, has a beginning and an end; it can be viewed as a whole entity, and can also make up one member of a sequence or plurality of happenings.'

To this succinct definition can be added Comrie's (1976:49-50) claim that states, like a dynamic situation, can also start and cease. But with a state, unless something happens to change that state, then the state will continue. With a dynamic situation, on the other hand, the situation will only continue if it is subject to a new input of energy.

Stative verbs refer to 'states', non-stative verbs refer to 'events' or dynamic situations.

The following are a selection of non-stative verbs: run 'run', tel 'tell', sing 'sing', get 'get', staart 'start'.

The following are a selection of stative verbs: noo 'know', biliiv 'believe', waant 'want', stand 'stand' gat 'have'.

**Stative-resultative** is a term I have introduced (and which I have borrowed from Kuryłowicz (1964) to classify the problematic, and as yet unclassified, group of verbs brok 'broke', lef 'left', laas 'lost', marid 'married', gaan 'gone' and deed 'dead'. That they may be stative is stated by Le

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Page (1974:48) who says the forms brok, lef, laas

'may derive from the adoption of (English) broken, left, lost as stative predicates distinct from the normal verb-classes, as perhaps happened also with gone (/gaan/), and the use of their Creole reflexes as, apparently, action-verbs as a back-formation from this stative use under the influence of the grammatical thinking of the model language.'

But I have discovered the group of verbs is also resultative in that they also refer to the successful completion of a situation. Unmarked non-stative verbs, unless contextually defined, have past meaning - i.e. they refer to a situation which is complete at the time of utterance. It is probably this semantic overlap between stative-resultative verbs and their unmarked non-stative counterparts which makes them variable in some contexts. Thus:

1. shi liiv or shi lef - she left or she has left.
2. it breek or it brok - it broke or it has broken.

3. See section 3.9.2 for a description of gu as a main verb and which includes a discussion of gu being variable with gaan in constructions with past meaning.
3.4.4 Other 'Verb' classes

By 'verb' is meant any word which can be modified by the negative markers na, n, en and doon, and which can serve as the predicate or the centre of the predicative expression. 'Verb' in this broad sense is then synonymous

4. In Guyanese Creole, na and n are basilect negatives, and n, en and doon are mesolect negatives.

Co-occurrence with progressive/habitual a (basilect) and the negative forms:

(a) i shi na a duu it - she is not doing/does not usually do it.
   *ii shi an duu it
   *iii shi en a duu it
   *iv shi a doon duu it
   (Example (a)*iii is possible, but then en is interpreted as a past tense form.)

Co-occurrence with mesolect habitual doz and yuuz tu:

(b) i shi na doz duu it - she does not usually do it.
   ii shi dozn duu it
   iii shi en doz duu it
   iv shi doz doon duu it

(c) i shi na yuuz tu duu it - She did not usually do it.
   ii shi yuuzn tu duu it
   iii shi en yuuz tu duu it
   iv shi yuuz tu doon duu it

Co-occurrence with basilect/mesolect durative de:

(d) i shi na de a duu it - she is not doing it.
   *ii shi den a duu it
   iii shi en de a duu it
   iv shi doon de a duu it

Co-occurrence with basilect/mesolect punctual don:

(e) i shi na don duu it - she has not done it
   *ii shi donn duu it
   iii shi en don duu it
   *iv shi doon don duu it

Co-occurrence with basilect past tense form bin, and mesolect past tense form did:

(f) i shi na bin duu it - she did not do it.
   *ii shi binn duu it
   iii shi en bin duu it
   *iv shi bin doon duu it

(g) i shi na did duu it
   ii shi didn duu it
   iii shi en did duu it
   *iv she did doon duu it
4. (cont'd.)

Co-occurrence with basilect future tense form gu, and mesolect future tense form gon:

(h) i shi na gu duu it - she will not do it.
   *ii shi gun duu it
   iii shi en gu duu it
   *iv shi gu doon duu it

(i) i shi na gon duu it
   *ii shi gonn duu it
   iii shi en gon duu it
   *iv shi gon doon duu it

Co-occurrence with the basilect and mesolect modal wud:

(j) i shi wud na duu it - she would not do it.
   ii shi wudp duu it
   *iii shi en wud duu it
   iv shi wud doon duu it

Co-occurrence with the basilect and mesolect modal kyan

(k) i shi na kyan duu it - she cannot do it
   *ii shi en kyan duu it
   *iii shi kyan doon duu it
   iv shi kyaan duu it

(In example (k)iv, negation is signalled by vowel lengthening.)

With verbs, the semantic difference between na, n, en and doon is revealed:

(l) i shi na sing - she did not sing; she does not sing.
   *ii shi n sing
   iii shi en sing - she did not sing; she does not sing.
   iv shi doon sing - she does not sing; *she did not sing.

The fact that doon cannot have a punctual meaning, implies that it is semantically non-punctual. The inherent non-punctual meaning would therefore make it possible to co-occur with habituats yuuz tu and doz, durative de, and the modal wud, but non-occurrence with the tense forms bin, did, qu, gon, and the modal kyan if we assume that the latter five forms are punctual. The negatives na, n, en are probably semantically 'empty' hence their wider co-occurrence and semantic potential.
with 'predicate', which will include verbs in a narrow sense, as well as adjectives and adverbs.\(^5\)

In footnote 4 we see that 'auxiliary verbs' and 'main verbs' can occur in the position of predicate and can be negated.

'Adjectives' are also verbal in that they can occur in the predicate position without a distinctive class mark:

1. \(\text{shi taal} \) - she is tall.

Like main verbs, adjectives can be modified by 'auxiliary verbs':

2. \(\text{shi wuda jelos} \) - she would have been jealous
3. \(\text{shi bin jelos} \) - she was jealous
4. \(\text{shi doz jelos} \) - she is usually jealous
5. \(\text{shi don jelos} \) - she is already jealous

Like verbs, adjectives can also be negated:

6. \(\text{shi \{na\} jelos} \) - she is not jealous
7. \(\text{shi doon jelos} \) - she is not usually jealous

But adjectives differ from verbs in that they can occur attributively:

5. This general definition of 'verb' is borrowed from Chao (1968:663) in his description of Chinese.
8. dis a wan **smaal** teebl - this is a small table.

*dis a wan sing teebl<sup>6</sup>*

Adverbs are also like verbs in that they can occur in the predicate position without a distinctive class mark:

9. shi **aalweez** - she frequently behaves in a particular manner.

They can be modified by 'auxiliary verbs' and negatives:

10. shi doz somtaimz de a sing - she sings sometimes
11. shi did neva de a sing - she was never singing
12. shi wuda aalweez de a sing - she would have always been singing.

Adverbs are like verbs, and thus functioning as an adjective, in that they can occur before some nouns:

13. shi a wan **prapa** gyurl - she is a decent girl.

But adverbs differ from verbs in that they can modify adjectives:

14. shi **prapa** nais - she is really nice
   or
   she is really ugly (sarcastically)<sup>7</sup>.

6. Main verbs and adjectives overlap if the modified noun is 'girl', 'boy', 'man', 'lady'.

(a) shi a wan **jelos** gyurl - she is a jealous girl.
(b) shi a wan **sing** gyurl - she is a singer.

The intonation signals the semantic difference. Or, adjective + noun can be attributive or non-attributive.

(c) hii a wan **baad** bai he is a bad boy
    he is a criminal

The intonation signals the semantic difference.

7. Adjectives can also function adverbially:

(a) hii **bad** - he is bad (adjective)
(b) hii **bad** bad - he is very bad (adverb)
(c) it **hat** hat - it is very hot (adverb)
Within the larger class of 'verb' we can also include the copula verbs a and de. They can both be modified by 'auxiliary verbs' and negatives:

15. shi a wan tiicha - she is a teacher
16. shi bin a wan tiicha - she was a teacher
17. shi de hoom - she is at home
18. shi doz de hoom - she is usually at home
19. shi wuda de hoom - she would have been at home
20. shi did de hoom - she was at home
21. shi na a wan tiicha - she is not a teacher
22. shi na de hoom )
     she is not at home
     shi en de hoom )
23. shi doon de hoom - she is not usually at home

8. Unlike copula de, copula a cannot co-occur with modals or aspectuals:
   (a) shi a nors - she is a nurse.
   (b)* shi doz a nors
   (c)* shi don a nors
   (d)* shi wuda a nors
   (e)* shi a a nors

   For nors to occur with modals and aspectuals, it must be interpreted as a verb:
   (f) shi a de a nors - she is usually nursing (she is usually a nurse)
   (g) shi mait de a nors - she may be nursing (she may be a nurse)

   If the predicate cannot be verbalized, the form de functions as the verbal marker:
   (h) dem a di seem - they are the same.
   (i) dem a de di seem - they are usually the same.
   (j) dem mait de di seem - they may be the same.

The copula a, which is basilect, cannot co-occur with the mesolect negatives en or doon. iz and waz are the mesolect noun copulas. de is a copula in both the basilect and mesolect.

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The copula de is in variation with adverbs in predicate position:

24. shi de hoom ) she is at home
    shi hoom )

25. shi de in di shap ) she is in the shop
    shi in di shap )

Predicate nouns, on the other hand, are distinguished from the other classes by an obligatory verbal marker:

26. da a shurt-jak - that is a shirt-jacket.

So that nouns are not in the same class as verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

Therefore, it seems that the primary classification for the Guyanese 'parts of speech' is NOUN:VERB with VERB being sub-categorized into VERBS, ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS. Thus:

With this hierarchical classification we can explain the similarities and differences between the classes, and thus
have a neat way of explaining the creole problem of 'multi-functionality'. The category VERB in Guyanese Creole is therefore that which Whorf (1956:93) calls a PRIMARY selective category (see section 3.3.1).

3.4.5 Simple syntactic statement of the auxiliary

To establish the auxiliary group of verbs, I have decided to use the universal criteria proposed by Steele (1978:13-20).

The auxiliary comprises the notions modality, tense and aspect. By modal is meant elements which mark any of the following: possibility or the related notion of permission; probability or the related notion of obligation; certainty or the related notion of requirement. Aspect includes such notions as perfective, progressive etc. Tense includes notions such as past, present and future. On the basis of these semantic requirements, word-order patterns in the data, and difficulties in accounting for aspectual a and doz before the modals kyan, gat fu, and get fu, and the need to separate habitual a from progressive a, I postulate the following idealized auxiliary structures for the Guyanese basilect and mesolect:
**Idealized basilect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>+ Predicate A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(mosii)</td>
<td>wud(a)</td>
<td>(mos)</td>
<td>(bin)</td>
<td>(don)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(gat fu)</td>
<td>(kyan)</td>
<td>(get fu)</td>
<td>(gu)</td>
<td>(de)</td>
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**Idealized mesolect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>M</th>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>+ Predicate A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(mosii)</td>
<td>wud(a)</td>
<td>(mos)</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>(don)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(hav tu)</td>
<td>(kyan)</td>
<td>(get fu)</td>
<td>(gon)</td>
<td>(de)</td>
<td>(-ing)</td>
<td>(bii)</td>
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<td>kud(a)</td>
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<td>shud(a)</td>
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<td>(yuuz tu)</td>
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The notions expressed in the first MMTAA pattern are in semantic opposition to the notions expressed in the recursive MMTAA structure. As we can see, the pattern differentiates habitual a from progressive a, the pattern explains why habitual a or doz can occur before the modals gat fu, get fu and kyan - a phenomenon which caused Bickerton to make contradictory statements. The ordering also accounts for the possibility of bin qu, attested in Guyanese by Bickerton (1975a:43), Mufwene (1980:5), or bin sa (sa is the more archaic future tense/modal form) attested by Alleyne (1980:11). But the structure is indeed unusual for an auxiliary, so I will attempt to support the assignments formally. Some of these are perhaps best taken to be verbs, and others form a distinct sub-group of adverbs.

Beginning with the modals, one test we can devise for auxiliary membership is Subject-Aux inversion since verbs cannot invert:

(1) yuu mosii iit di keek - you probably ate the cake.
    mosii yuu iit di keek - it is probably you who ate the cake.

(2) yuu wud ii t di keek - you would eat the cake.
    wud yuu ii t di keek - would you eat the cake?

(3) yuu kud a iit di keek - you could have eaten the cake.
    kud yuu a iit di keek - could you have eaten the cake?

(4) yuu shud iit di keek - you should eat the cake
    shud yuu iit di keek - should you eat the cake?

(5) yuu mait a iit di keek - you may have eaten the cake.
    mait yuu a iit di keek - might you have eaten the cake?
(6) **yuu mos iit di keek** - you must eat the cake.
    **mos yuu** iit di keek - must you eat the cake?

(7) **yuu kyan iit di keek** - you can eat the cake.
    **kyan yuu** iit di keek - can you eat the cake?
    
    But **gat fu**, **get fu**, **hav tu** and **had tu** cannot be inverted.

(8) **yuu gat fu iit di keek.**
    **yuu get fu iit di keek** you have to eat the cake.
    **yuu hav tu iit di keek**
    
    ***gat fu yuu** iit di keek
    
    ***had yuu tu** iit di keek (This construction is acceptable in the acrolect.)

(9) **yuu get fu iit di keek** - you are allowed to eat the cake.
    
    ***get yuu fu** iit di keek
    
    ***get fu yuu** iit di keek

The inability of **get fu**, **gat fu**, **hav tu** and **had tu** to invert, seems to indicate that they are not members of the auxiliary group. In fact they are best classified as copular verbs. Lyons (1967:390) defines the copula as a 'purely grammatical element which carries distinctions of tense, mood and aspect in the surface structure of certain classes of stative sentences'. That they are in the class of verbs can be seen if we substitute **gat**, **get**, **hav** and **had** by other verbs.

(10) shi (**get**
    **gat**
    **hav**
    **had**
    ) fu iit di keek

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(11) shi gu fu iit di keek - she went to eat the cake.  
shi disaid fu iit di kook - she decided to eat the cake.  
shi noo fu kot di keek - she knows (how) to cut the cake.

Like get, gat, hav and had, verbs cannot invert with the subject:

(12) *gu shi fu iit di keek  
*disaid: shi fu iit di keek

Thus get, gat, hav and had are best classified as copular verbs and it is get, gat, hav, had + infinitival complement which give modal meaning.  (See Section 3.10 for a critique of Bickerton's analysis of get and gat and my reanalysis.)

By positing get, gat, hav, had as verbs, we no longer have to worry about the occurrence of aspectual a and doz before them.  Furthermore, the re-categorization of these forms leaves us with an auxiliary pattern MMTAA/MTAA.

The remaining modals, except mosii, can occur in the predicate position without a complement:

(13) kyan shi sing - can she sing?  
yes, shi kyan - yes, she can.

(14) mos shi sing - must she sing?  
yes, shi mos - yes, she must.

(15) wud shi sing - would she sing?  
yes, shi wud - yes, she would.

(16) kud shi sing - could she sing?  
yes, shi kud - yes, she could.
(17) **shud** shi sing - should she sing?
    yes, shi **shud** - yes, she should.

(18) **mait** shi sing - might she sing?
    yes, shi **mait** - yes, she might.

**mosii**, however, cannot occur alone in the predicate position:

(19) mosii shi huu sing - it was probably she who sang.
    *yes, shi mosii

But it is possible to say:

(20) **mosii** shi - it is probably her.

In this syntactic position **mosii** is similar to the copular verb **a** which occurs before nominals and in impersonal constructions.

(21) **a** shi huu sing - it is she who sang.
    **a** shi - it is her.

(22) **a** sing hii sing - it is sing, he sang.
    **mosii** sing hii sing - it is probably sing that he sang.

Like the copular verb **a**, and verbs, **mosii** can be predicated by noun complements:

(23) dis leta **a fu yuu** - this letter is for you
    dis leta **kom fu yuu** - this letter came for you.
    dis leta **mosii fu yuu** - this letter is probably for you.

The other modals cannot occur in the above syntactic position:

(24)* **kud** sing shi sing
    *shi **mos** fu sing
    *dis leta **kyan** fu yuu
On the basis of the above, therefore, it seems best to eliminate mosii from the auxiliary group and reclassify it as a modal verb.

We are thus left with an auxiliary structure MMTAA/MTAA. Unlike the remaining modals of possibility, the modals kyan and mos can be preceded by the tense forms:

(25) yu gu kyaan de a iit di keek \{you (surely) will not be eating the cake.
   yu gon kyaan bii iiting di keek \{you (surely) will not be eating the cake.

(26) yu bin mos noo di aansa \{you must have known the answer.
   yu did mos noo di aansa \{you must have known the answer.

In this syntactic position, the modals are similar to the adverbs aalweez 'always' and neva 'never'.

(27) shi gu aalweez de a iit di keek - she will always be eating the cake.
   shi did neva noo di aansa - she never knew the answer.

Like these adverbs, kyan and mos can be preceded by aspect markers.

(28) shi a \{
   \{ kyaan \} de a sing - she usually cannot be singing
   \{ aalweez \} she is usually always singing
   \{ neva \} she is usually never singing

(29) shi doz \{
   \{ mos \} iit di keek - she usually must eat the cake.
   \{ aalweez \} she usually always eats the cake.
   \{ neva \} she usually never eats the cake.

Whereas kyan and mos can be preceded by tense and aspect markers, the remaining modals of possibility cannot be preceded by tense and aspect markers:
On distributional grounds, therefore, it seems best to classify kyan and mos as modal adverbs.

With the elimination of five modal notions from the auxiliary group, we are left with an MTAA/TAA pattern. Unlike the modals, the tense and aspect forms cannot occur before the subject. In this respect, the tense and aspect forms are like verbs.

\[(30)\] *shi \textit{bin} wud noo
*shi \textit{did} shud noo
*shi \textit{a} kud noo
*shi \textit{doz} mait noo.

\[(31)\] shi \texttt{\{bin\}} \texttt{\{did\}} iit di keek - she ate the cake.
* (\texttt{\{bin\}}) shi iit di keek

\[(32)\] shi \texttt{\{gu\}} \texttt{\{gon\}} iit di keek - she will eat the cake.
* (\texttt{\{gu\}}) shi iit di keek

\[(33)\] shi \texttt{\{do\}} iit di keek - she has eaten the cake.
*do\texttt{\{do\}} shi iit di keek

\[(34)\] shi \texttt{\{a\}} \texttt{\{do\}} iit di keek - she usually eats the cake
* (\texttt{\{a\}}) shi iit di keek

\[(35)\] shi \texttt{\{de a\}} iit di keek)
) she is eating the cake.
shi \texttt{\{de a\}} iitting di keek
*de\texttt{\{de a\}} shi iit di keek\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{9}. Interrogation with the tense and aspect forms is carried by intonation. With the modals, however, interrogation is carried either by Subject-Aux inversion, or by intonation, or both.
Punctual don, however, can occur before or after the predicate:

(36) shi don iit di keek) she has eaten the cake
    shi iit di keek don

Tense and aspect forms differ from modals and from verbs in that they must be followed by a verb complement:

(37) shi {bin|did} sing - she sang
    *shi {bin|did}

(38) shi {gu|gon} sing - she will sing
    *shi {gu|gon}

(39) shi a riid - she is reading
    *shi a

(40) shi de a riid } she is reading
    shi{ de riiding }
    *shi de a

(41) shi { a | doz} riid - she usually reads
    *shi { a | doz}

10. Aspectual don can probably occur before or after the predicate because it never combines with any of the other aspectual forms. When the form does combine, don is interpreted as a main verb.
(42) shi don riid - she has read

*shi don

(Example 42* is acceptable if don is interpreted as a main verb.)

Unlike verbs, the tense and aspect forms (and the modals of possibility) cannot be followed by an infinitival verb complement or a noun complement:

(43) shi \{bin\} sing - she sang

\{did\}

*shi \{bin\} fu sing

\{did\}

(shi bin fu sing 'she went to sing' is acceptable, but bin is interpreted as a directional copula.)

*shi \{bin\} fu yuu

\{did\}

(shi bin fu yuu is acceptable with bin interpreted as a directional copula.)

(44) shi \{gu\} sing - she will sing

\{gon\}

*shi \{gu\} fu sing

\{gon\}

*shi \{gu\} fu yuu

\{gon\}

(shi gu fu sing and shi gu fu yuu are acceptable but gu is then interpreted as a main verb.)

(45) shi a sing - she is singing

*shi a fu sing

*shi a fu yuu

(46) shi don sing - she has sung

*shi don fu sing

*shi don fu yuu
(48) shi (a) sing - she usually sings
   *shí (a) fu sing
   *shí (a) fu yuu

Although the modals of possibility and tense and aspect forms belong to separate classes as distributional differences indicate, they form a 'group' in that they have a fixed word-order, and they cannot be followed by infinitival verb complements or noun complements. Therefore, I will posit an auxiliary structure type $M(T_1) [A_1] \{ T_2 \} [A_2]$ for
   $A_3$
   $A_4$

Guyanese Creole. (The pattern is exemplified on the following page.)
Idealized basilect

Subject + M T T A A A A A A + Predicate (A)

\{ wud(a) \} \{ bin \} (gu) (don) (a) (de) (a) (don) 
\{ kud(a) \} 
\{ shud(a) \} 
\{ mait(a) \}

Idealized mesolect

Subject + M T T A A A A A A + Predicate (A)

\{ wud(a) \} \{ did \} (gon) (don) \{ doz \} yuuz tu \{ de \} bii \{ -ing \} (don) 
\{ kud(a) \} \{ -ed \} 
\{ shud(a) \} 
\{ mait(a) \}
3.4.5.1 Is there an AUX constituent?

There is a controversy at the moment concerning whether the AUX is a constituent. Steele (1978) and Akmajian, Steele and Wasow (1979) claim that the AUX is a constituent in universal grammar. Muysken (1981:186) accepts their position and sets up a universal base rule for creoles:

\[ S \rightarrow NP, AUX, VP \ldots \]

He says:

'This base rule states that in every natural language there is a category AUX. While pidgins may or may not have an AUX, as soon as they become creolized, i.e. become native languages, they must have one.'

Guyanese Creole, however, does not really support this claim. One of the criteria for a category AUX is that 'the notional categories which are realized separate from the verb cannot be positioned in a number of positions in the sentence (Steele 1978:13).' In Guyanese Creole, the modals can preceed the subject:

1. yuu wud duu it - you would do it?
   wud yuu duu it - would you do it?

Also, the punctual aspect marker don can occur before or after the predicate:

2. shi don get tuu piknii ) ) she already has two children
   shi get tuu piknii don )

Secondly, the constituent AUX is an obligatory feature of the sentence, but in Guyanese Creole it is optional:
3. shi bin sing 
) she sang 
shi ø sing 

4. shi yuuç tu sing evriidee) 
) she used to sing everyday 
shi ø sing evriidee 

It is evidence such as that exemplified above, which has influenced the decision to treat tense and aspect as optional categories, and not as a part of the sentence. (See Pullum 1981 for arguments against positing a universal AUX constituent.)

3.4.5.2 Ordering of notions in the auxiliary

The basic ordering in the auxiliary posited on p.123 is MTA. This ordering differs from Bickerton (1975b; 1981) who proposes α anterior β irrealis δ nonpunctual T M A and the TMA orderings posited by Thompson (1961) and Taylor (1971) for creoles. Muysken (1981:188) also conforms to TMA ordering for creoles and says it is 'a principle of universal grammar that specifies that aspect is interpreted before mood, and mood before tense'.

Alleyne (1980:81) posits an MTA ordering for Guyanese and other 'Afro-American Creoles'.

VP → (Modal) + (Particle) + (Auxiliary) + Predicate

Pred → {Pred Vb + (NP)}
       {Pred Adj}

11. Included in the Afro-American group are creoles such as Jamaican, Sranan, Papiamentu, Haitian, Krio, etc.
The above underlying structure is illustrated by an example from Jamaican Creole (p. 78):

\[
\text{VP} \quad (\text{Modal}) + (\text{Particle}) + (\text{Auxiliary}) + \text{Predicate} + (X)
\]

\[
\text{JA} \quad \text{(mos)} \quad \text{(bin)} \quad \text{(wan)} \quad \text{kom} \quad \text{(yeside)}
\]

\[
\text{(they)} \quad \text{(must)} \quad \text{(have wanted to)} \quad \text{come (yesterday)}
\]

But the problem with this underlying structure is that it does not account for Guyanese durative and punctual aspects, it does not differentiate habitual and progressive aspects, and he fails to explain what he means by 'Auxiliary'. However, his implicit MTA ordering coincides with my ordering of the notions.

Although Muysken (1981) states that a TMA ordering is a principle of universal grammar, my data dictates differently. That an MTA ordering is superior to a TMA pattern is suggested by the fact that the tense and aspect categories behave syntactically in an identical manner, but the modals behave differently. Furthermore, aspectual reference is dependent on the syntactic classification of the verb. Tense, in turn, is sometimes dependent on the aspectual categorizations. Mood is not dependent on the verb or tense and aspectual categorizations. So it is natural that tense and aspect are contiguous, rather than 'interrupted' by mood.
3.5 Syntactic and Semantic Functions of the Form /a/

/a/ is the formal realisation of the following morphemes in Guyanese Creole:

(i) progressive aspect marker
(ii) habitual aspect marker
(iii) modal of probability

(1) occurs after the modals wud, kud, shud, mait, to indicate past reference
(2) occurs after the copula gat as a complementizer
(3) noun copula
(4) introductory verb in predicate-clefting, and impersonal constructions
(5) focusizor
(6) preposition
(7) pronoun.

3.5.1.1 Progressive aspect a and habitual aspect a

a occurs before non-stative verbs as a progressive and habitual aspect marker in the basilect: S - V. Progressive aspect is a combination of continuousness with non-stativity; habitual aspect refers to a situation which is characteristic over a period of time. (See Comrie 1976.)

(a) at present mi a du faarmin
   At present I am doing farming. (62B/2/1)

(b) mi na a wuk nau
   I am not working now. (62A/2/1)

(c) mi na a get wuk noo wee
   I was not getting work anywhere. (21A/14/3)

(d) dem a chuuz dem oon kompanii
   They usually choose their own company. (21A/3-4/7)
The people of Ann's Grove do not usually do cassava planting on a large scale. They do not usually do it.

(18A/2-3/4)

It is there where you usually get starch from.

(18A/34/1)

The situational context, as in the examples above, usually specifies when a before non-stative verbs is functioning as a progressive or as an habitual aspect marker. But the syntactic difference between progressive a and habitual a is exemplified in example (g) below:

(g) shi a de a sing
She is usually singing.

From left to right, the first a is the habitual a, and the second a is the progressive aspect marker. (See Idealized basilectal auxiliary structure, section 3.4.3, p.123.)

Basilect progressive a is in variation with mesolect -ing for progressive aspect: -ing is suffixed to the verb.

(h) de fiiling sik
They are feeling ill. (54A/15-16/3)

(i) a freeming picha
I am framing pictures. (62A/5/6)

Basilect habitual a is in variation with mesolect doz, -s and yuuz tu as an habitual aspect marker. yuuz tu is marked for past reference.
(j) de doz gat a waata lefin dong biiloo
There is usually a liquid left under it. (54A/32-33/4)

(k) ai selz miit
I sell meat. (54A/2/1)

(l) wel, of kors, mi na yuuz tu chaarj dem
Well, of course, I never used to charge them. (16A/22-23/2)

The morphemes a, doz and -s can also have past reference but this is defined by the linguistic (i.e. adverbs) and situational context. Basilectal habitual/progressive a can be preceded by the basilectal past tense morpheme bin, but doz and -s cannot co-occur with a past tense morpheme. Thus doz and -s rely solely on the context for past meaning.

(m) shi bin a sing
She used to sing/she was singing.

*shi (bin) doz sing
(did is the mesolectal past tense morpheme)

*shi (bin) singz
(did)

Although yuuz tu can only have past reference, it can still co-occur with the past tense morphemes:

(n) shi {bin} yuuz tu sing
(did)
She used to sing.

This co-occurrence possibility seems to indicate that the primary function of yuuz tu is to mark habitual aspect.

Mesolectal progressive -ing can have present or past reference depending on the linguistic and situational context.

(o) shi singing
She is singing/was singing.
Uninflected non-stative verbs can also have habitual meaning in the basilect and mesolect:

They pay you a part, and when they have finished doing their work, you know, made their starch and finished selling, the next week they come back for more cassava and they pay you the balance (of money). (18A/6-8/4)

In describing generalities the inflected form is in variation with the uninflected form:

Sometimes, now and then, you usually 'sour' (i.e. detoxify) water - we call it 'sour' water in the country. (54A/31-32/4)

Only the uninflected form, however, is used in timeless propositions, such as:

Two and two makes four

The context, linguistic and situational, specifies when uninflected non-stative verbs are referring to situations which are characteristic over a period of time. Context is an important factor since, out of context, uninflected non-stative verbs have past meaning, thereby aspectually 'Perfective'.

- 130 -
3.5.1.2 Habitual aspect a

a occurs before stative verbs, stative-resultative verbs, and adjectives, as an habitual aspect marker in the basilect: S - \{V\} \{A\}

(a) piipl na a biliiv mi
People do not usually believe me. (62B/32/6)

(b) dem na a waant dem riid
They never usually wanted them to read. (62A/28/2)

(c) dem na a gat ... dem na a gat seen
They do not usually have ... they do not usually have seins. (62A/16-17/3)

(d) dem a waant sting yu wan bil
They usually want to take money from you to go to the cinema. (18A/19/6)

(e) hii na a satisfai wid notn
He is never usually satisfied with anything. (16A/7/6)

(f) bai taim mi get de, shi a gaan hoom
By the time I get there, she has usually gone home.

We need to make a distinction between stative and dynamic adjectives. If the predicate adjective is dynamic, e.g. ruud 'rude', jelos 'jealous', kruuwel 'cruel' etc., it can be preceded by a if the subject NP refers to a singular or plural subject, or a plural subject in the sense of a class of people. Thus:

(g) hii a jelos
He is usually jealous.
(h) dem a jelos
   They are usually jealous.

(i) bos-draiva dem a jelos
   Bus drivers are usually jealous.

But if the predicate adjective is stative - e.g. taal 'tall',
big 'big', fat 'fat' etc., it can only be preceded by a if
the subject NP refers to a class of people. Thus:

(j) *hii a taal
    *dem a taal

(k) bos-draiva dem a taal
   Not all bus drivers are tall, but some of them are
   usually tall.

   The mesolect habitual forms, doz, and yuuz tu can
   occur with stative verbs, stative-resultative verbs, and
   adjectives.

(l) de doz gat a waata lefing dong biiloo
   There is usually a liquid left under it. (15A/32-33/4)

(m) bai taim a get de, shi doz gaan hoom
   By the time I get there, she has usually left for home.

(n) hii yuuz tu jelos
   He used to be jealous.

Mesolect habitual -a can be suffixed to stative verbs, but not
to stative-resultative verbs and adjectives.
(o) ai nooz him
I know him.

(p) *bai taim a get de, shi gaanz hoom
*hii ruudz

3.5.1.3 Summary on habitual and progressive aspect markers

basilect

progressive a : before non-stative verbs
habitual a : before non-stative verbs
          stative verbs
          stative-resultative verbs
          adjectives

mesolect

progressive -ing : suffixed to non-stative verbs
habitual doz yuuz tu : before non-stative verbs
                      stative verbs
                      stative-resultative verbs
                      adjectives
          -s : suffixed to non-stative verbs
               stative verbs

In both basilect and mesolect, uninflected non-stative verbs can have habitual meaning.

3.5.1.4 Modal a

a occurs before verbs as a modal of probability in the basilect: S - V

(a) mi doz lef hee about 5.30/6.00 an mi a gu riich op de ...
    mi gu riich op de about 9.00 ar 8.00

    I usually leave here about 5.30/6.00 and I would probably arrive there ... I would arrive there about 9.00 or 8.00.
    (18A/12-13/1)

- 133 -
(b) bikaa mi biliiv hii nak mi, mi a deed

Because I thought he had hit me, (and) I would probably
die. (21B/21/6)

The situational context usually defines whether a is functioning as a modal or an aspect marker in this syntactic position. A second modal of probability used in the basilect and mesolect is mosii. When a is functioning as a modal of probability the only auxiliary form it can co-occur with is future tense/modal qu (example (a) above). mosii, on the other hand, can be followed by any other auxiliary form, verbs, noun complement, infinitival verb complement.

(c) shi { a
mosii
} gu sing di saang
She will probably sing the song

(d) shi { * a
mosii
} bin sing di saang did
She probably sang the song.

(e) shi { * a
mosii
} wuda sing di saang
She would have probably sang the song.

(f) di leta { * a
mosii
} fu yuu
The letter is for you.
(Example (f) is acceptable with a, but then a is interpreted as a noun copula.)

(g) shi { * a
mosii
} fu sing
She is probably to sing.
3.5.2 a after modals kud, wud, shud, mait

a occurs after the modals kud, wud, shud, mait in the basilect and mesolect, when referring to a situation which may possibly have occurred in the past. In hypothesizing about a future event the modal alone is used.

(a) dem wa a had bifoor tu, a kud a disiplin dem
Those I had before too, I was able to discipline them. (16A/19-20/6)

(b) yu wud a tink dat dis maan H-- wud a giv op
You would have thought that this man H-- would have given up. (1/10-11/7)

(c) shi shud a duu it
She should have done it.

(d) shi mait a did noo di aansa
She may have known the answer.

3.5.3 a after copula gat

a occurs after the copula gat as a complementizer in the basilect S + gat a V.

(a) yu ga a ga monii
You have to have money. (21A/6/7)

(b) yu ga a get siksns injekshans
You have to get six injections. (21A/26/8)

(c) ii tel mi mi ga a rait noots a lesons
He told me (that) I had to write notes of lessons (16A/2/2)
Although *gat* is in variation with *get* in this syntactic position, *get* cannot be followed by *a*. *Get* must be followed by *fu*, which is the general infinitival complementizer:

(c) i *yu get* a ga
   ii *mi get* a rait

(d) i yu get *fu* get
   ii mi get *fu* rait

*Gat* can also co-occur with *fu*

(e) yu doz *gat fu* kyerii it rait de
   You would have had to carry it right there. (54A/3/3)

But while it is possible to say:

(f) shi *gat fu*
   She has to

it is not possible to say:

*shi ga a*

It is possible for *tu* to vary with *fu* in this syntactic position. On formal grounds the variation between *tu* and *fu* seems to be indicative of a lexical change. But the variation between *a* and *fu* seems to be an overlap in morpheme classes.

3.5.4 **Noun copula a**

*a* occurs as a noun-copula in the basilect: *S-NP*.

(a) elefant *a* cheerman
    Elephant was the chairman. (16A/36/8)

(b) hii *a* rich maan da taim
    He was a rich man (at) that time. (16A/17/2)
(c) som a dem bai a klerk

Some of the boys were clerks. (21A/16/3)

_a_ is in variation with mesolectal _iz_ and _woz_ in noun copula constructions. But unlike _a_, _iz_ and _woz_ are marked for tense. _iz_ indicates present tense, _woz_ indicates past tense.

(d) wen mi _woz_ a lil bai, mi did laik plee dis hairii doorii biznis

When I was a little boy, I liked to play a game called 'hairy dory'. (15A/5-6/4)

(d) abiir _iz_ fu plee di pagwa

Abir (a red powder) is for playing the Phagwah (an Indian festival). (62A/7-8/4)

3.5.5 Predicate-cleft _a_

_a_ occurs as an introductory verb in predicate-clefting in the basilect: _a_ + _P_, _S_ - _P_.

(a) _a_ sing hii a sing

It is singing he is singing

(b) _a_ taal hii taal

It is tall he is tall.

Bynoe-Andriolo and Sorie Yillah (1975) analyse the predicate copy as a nominal sentence since the copy is introduced by a form which introduces NP's. This seems a plausible solution especially in light of the fact that _a_ is the form used in impersonal constructions in the basilect.

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(c) somtaim shi tel mi, 'wel bai, a tii-taim
Sometimes she tells me, 'Well boy, it is tea-time'.
(21A/21-22/1)

(d) a pyuur indiya piipl
There were only Indians.

a is in variation with mesolectal iz in predicate clefting
and impersonal constructions:

(e) iz sing hii singing
It is singing he is singing.

(f) iz tii-taim
It is tea-time.

3.5.6 Focalizer a

a occurs before subjects as an optional focalizer,
usually in sentence-initial position in the basilect: a + S.

(a) a hii pee mi paseej kyer mi a bush
He paid my passage and took me into the interior.
(18A/33/8)

(b) an nof blakmaan na a sii laika a mii
And a lot of blackmen do not see like me. (18A/36/5)

(c) a bai hit mii
That boy hit me.

(d) a we yu a gu
Where are you going?
In contrast with the other examples of focalizing a, the a in example (c) is stressed. This is necessary because focalizing a is in contrast with indefinite a in this syntactic position (before count-nouns). Another example is (f) below:

(f) hii jomp pan a teebl
    He jumped on to (a specified or unspecified) table.

If the table is specified, a is stressed (focalizing a). If the table is unspecified, a is unstressed (indefinite a). a is in variation with mesolect iz as a focalizer.

(g) iz hoom hii de
    He is at home.

(h) iz hii tel me
    He told me.

(i) shi gain åan laik iz mii iit di keek
    She is behaving as if it were I (who) ate the cake.

But if the noun iz precedes is a count-noun, the demonstrative pronoun da must occur between iz and the noun. Thus:

(j) iz da bai tel mii
    That boy told me.

(k) *iz bai tel mii

da is optional before count-nouns if a is the focalizer. Thus:

(l) a (da) bai tel mi
3.5.7 Preposition a

a occurs before noun-phrases as a locative preposition in the basilect: a + NP. The meanings are 'at', 'to', 'in', 'on'.

(a) mi baarn a klanbrok
   I was born at Clonbrok. (18A/19/5)

(b) mii kud gu a yuu, yuu kud gu a mii
   I could come to you, you could come to me. (21A/9-10/7)

(c) da taim, dem don de somwee a big maarkit
   (By) that time, they are already somewhere in Big Market. (23A/23-24/2)

(d) dis maan tek hii gitaar an gi hii wan lash a hii heed su.
    nak di jombii a hii heed
   This man took his guitar and gave him a lash on his head like this. (He) knocked the ghost on his head.
   (21B/15-17/9)

(e) mi bin esikwiboo riva an wok a graant
   I went to the Essequibo river and worked on a (timber) grant. (18A/22/7)

   Where the spatial location means 'on', a can vary with a form pan (-pon). But there are syntactic restrictions. In example (e) it is possible to say pan a graant and obtain the same reading as a graant. In example (d) it is not possible to say *pan a hii heed, one must say pan hii heed. The reason is that in Guyanese creole a functions not only as a locative,
but also as an indefinite article before nouns. When pan is the locative and is followed by a, the only function a can assume is that of an indefinite article. And since you would never have an indefinite article followed by a pronoun, *pan a hii heed is unacceptable. It is acceptable, however, if the a is focussing a, and then it is stressed.

pan and not a is used if the prepositional phrase is functioning as:

(f) an adjunct

wen a goo hoom pan iivning
When I go home in the evenings. (21B/29/1)

(g) a conjunct

pan a aaftanuun, mi doz gu hoom
Every afternoon, I usually go home. (21A/18/3)

(h) postmodifier in a noun-phrase

di piipl pan di bos bina sing
The people on the bus were singing.

(i) a verb complement

wii diipend pan yuu
We depend on you.

a, and not pan, is used as head of a partitive prepositional phrase postmodifying a noun:

(j) di amount a ting wa mii sii pan di teebl
The amount of things which I saw on the table. (21A/14/5)

Prepositional a is in variation with mesolect in, at,
on, to, of:

(k) hii de in di maarkit
    He is in the market.

(l) hii gaan tu di shap
    He has gone to the shop.

But as Rickford and Greaves (1978:47) note, creole speakers tend to use the 'wrong' prepositions. Thus:

'18. when I arrived to the fire
20. the smaller ones come over in my house
21. anytime at the day'.

The variation between a and pan in the basilect seem to indicate an overlap in morpheme classes rather than being indicative of change.

3.5.8 Indefinite article a

a occurs before nouns and adjectives as an indefinite article in the basilect and mesolect: a + (ADJ)N.

(a) evrii dee a maan doz get a kuk dee
    Every day a (different) man usually gets a day for cooking. (54A/27/6)

(b) mi klaas mos bii a disiplin klaas
    My class must be a disciplined class. (16A/24/6)

As an indefinite article, a varies with wan which is also the numeral 'one', but this overlap is primarily in the basilect.
(c) ii heer *wan maan a plee *wan gitaar
He heard a man playing a guitar. (21A/6-7/9)

There is an *a a word constraint in Guyanese creole. Thus whenever an indefinite article is required following the basilectal noun copula a, wan is used.

(d) da a wan red stoon
That is a red stone. (18A/1/2)

*da a a red stoon

It is possible to say:

(e) da a red stoon
That is a red stone

but it is not as emphatic as example (d). Another example is:

(f) mii a meel nors
I am a male nurse. (21A/2/1)

It is possible to say:

(g) mii a wan meel nors
but only if being a 'male nurse' is a special occupation. Thus wan is used for emphasis.

The 'neutralization' between the indefinite a and the copula a in examples (e) and (f) seems to provide supportive evidence for my description of indefinite a as a member of the morpheme class \{A\}. 

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3.5.9 Pronoun a

a occurs before predicate verbs and adjectives as a first person subject pronoun in the mesolect: a + P.

(a) weI, a mos kova ... a gon tel yu from di staarting
   Well, I must cover ... I will tell you from the beginning. (54A/4-5/1)

(b) a jelos
   I am jealous.

a is in variation with the basilectal morphs mii/mi/ and mi/mix/ as a first person subject pronoun. But since there is an *a a word constraint only mii or mi can co-occur with the basilectal progressive/habitual aspect marker a:

(c) mii - mi a sing
   I am singing/I usually sing.
   *a a sing

When a is the pronoun, it can only co-occur with the mesolectal aspect markers -ing, -s, doz and yuuz tu.

(d) a singing
   I am singing.

(e) a doz / yuuz tu sing
   I usually/used to sing.

The basilectal morphs, however, can also co-occur with mesolectal aspect markers:

(f) mi singing
   I am singing.
I usually/used to sing.

A fourth first person subject pronoun morph is mesolectal ai. Allsopp (1958), Bickerton (1973a) and Rickford (1979) treat mesolectal a as a phonological reduction of ai. Bickerton (1973:663) analyzes the difference as 'a function of the difference between fast and slow speech'. Rickford (1979:323) claims that 'a must clearly be derived diachronically from ai, regardless of the fact that monophthongization seems to be restricted, synchronically, to this single form' in the Guyanese pronominal system. a must be derived from ai, he further points out, because ai is obligatory under primary stress, and in his data only one speaker used one variant to the exclusion of the other. The speaker's output included two a's and seventy-seven mi's, but no ai's.

Edwards (1975), however, finds a phonological solution to a/ai alternation unsatisfactory. He bases this opinion on counter-examples in his data. He claims it is quite plausible 'that for some people (a) and (ai) are in free variation as alternative, semantically identical, items with (a) being a reinterpretation of (ai) (1975:177)'.

A phonological solution to the use of a as a pronoun is very tempting in view of the phonetic and semantic resemblance between ai and a. But I support Edwards' position that a is an alternative form of ai. My agreement is based on the observation made by Edwards (1975:177-178) that a as a pronoun was in widespread use at the turn of the
century; and as I have observed from reprints of texts first published between 1881 and 1902, (see Rickford 1978:197-221), the widespread use of a as a pronoun coincides with the time period when a form a was replacing a form da as a copula, locative, focalizer and aspect marker. Thus, in my opinion, pronominal a is derived diachronically and synchronically from the form a which functions as a copula, aspect marker, locative etc.. This opinion is reinforced by the fact that a form de which functions as a locative copula, locative adverb, focussing adjunct, aspect marker, also functions as a third person pronoun. Furthermore, according to Khan (1973:20,40), it is possible for the copula to function as a pronoun in some languages. And of course, this interpretation is in keeping with the view that the grammar of Guyanese relies on lexemic categories.

The implication of this interpretation is that basilectal mii - mi are to be treated as allomorphs rather than as phonetic variants. Rickford's (1979) reason for treating the variation as phonetic is mysterious since /i/ and /I/ are separate phonemes in Guyanese creole:

/hit/ - heat /sit/ - seat /fit/ - feet
/hIt/ - hit /sIt/ - sit /fIt/ - fit.

Furthermore, he states that the tense form is obligatory under primary stress - which emphasizes that the variation is allomorphic rather than phonetic. That the tense form is obligatory under stress can be shown by the fact that only mii can be focussed:
(h)  a mii duu it
    It is I who did it
   *a mi duu it

In the mesolect only ai can be focused:

(i)  iz ai duu it
    *iz a duu it\(^{12}\).

Treating the variation between mii and mi as allomorphic simplifies the problem of whether a is a morph or a phonetic variant for ai: for a is the mesolect lexical replacement of mi, and ai is the mesolect lexical replacement for mii. Thus the system would be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>basilect</th>
<th>mesolect</th>
<th>acrolect (English)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mii</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>ai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mii and mi, ai and a are optional forms in unstressed position, but only mii and ai can be stressed.

Thus in Guyanese creole there are four first person subject morphs, and not just two, mi and ai, as Rickford (1979; 1980:176) posits.

\(^{12}\) It is possible for the mesolect focalizer iz to co-occur with basilect mii, but basilect focalizer a cannot co-occur with the mesolect pronoun ai. Thus iz mii but not *a ai.
3.5.10 Summary of functions of the form /a/

1. **Aspect**
   - Progressive/habitual
     
     \[ S + a + P \]

     - hii a taak
     - He is talking/usually talks.

2. **Modal**
   - Modal of probability
     
     \[ S + a + P \]

     - mi a deed
     - I probably would have died.

     Occurs after modals kud, wud, shud, mait
     
     \[ S + MODAL a + P \]

     - shi shud a riid
     - She should have read.

     Occurs after the copula gat
     
     \[ S + gat a \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{verb} \\ \text{adj} \end{array} \right. \]

     - shi ga(t) a gu
     - She has to go.

3. **Copula construction**
   
   \[ S + a + NP \]

4. **Impersonal construction**
   
   \[ a + NP \]

5. **Predicate clefting**
   
   \[ a + P \]

6. **Focalizer**
   
   \[ a + S \]

   - a taal hii taal
     - It is tall he is tall.

   - a da bina hapn
     - That was happening.
7. **Preposition**
   \[ a + NP \]
   
   mi baarn a jaajtong  
   I was born in Georgetown  
   
   tuu taip a jaab  
   Two types of jobs

8. **Indefinite article**
   \[ a + (ADJ)N \]
   
   a (brait) bai  
   An (intelligent) boy

9. **Pronoun**
   \[ a + P \]
   
   a tel ii  
   I told him

3.5.11 **Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with form /a/, from basilect to mesolect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progressive aspect</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow -ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habitual aspect</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow \text{doz}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ \text{bin} + a ] \rightarrow yuuz tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal of probability</strong></td>
<td>[ a ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After the modals</strong></td>
<td>[ \text{kud, wud, shud, mait} ] \rightarrow a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After the copula gat</strong></td>
<td>[ a ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noun copula</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow iz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ \text{bin} + a ] \rightarrow waz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predicate cleft</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow iz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impersonal constructions</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow iz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focalizer</strong></td>
<td>[ a ] \rightarrow iz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.12 Summary of variation due to overlap between morpheme classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Variant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progressive a, -ing</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual a, doz, -z, yuuz tu</td>
<td>Uninflected non-stative verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal of Probability a</td>
<td>mosii (only in basilect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the modals a, kud, wud, shud, mait</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the copula gat a</td>
<td>fu, tu (tu is due lexical change of fu in mesolect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun copula a, iz, bin + a, waz</td>
<td>bin (only in basilect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicate cleft a, iz</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal constructions a, iz</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focalizer a, iz</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition a, &quot;on&quot;, on</td>
<td>pan - pon (used in basilect and mesolect - pon is mesolect pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite article a</td>
<td>wan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun a</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Syntactic and Semantic Functions of the Form /de/

/de/ is the formal realisation of the following morphemes in Guyanese Creole:

(1) auxiliary: durative aspect marker
(2) copula
(3) locative adverb
(4) focussing adjunct

(i) existential pronoun
(ii) third person plural subject pronoun
(iii) third person plural possessive pronoun

3.6.1 Durative aspect de

/de/ occurs as a durative aspect marker, in the basilect and mesolect, before an adjectival predicate which is aspectually CONTINUOUS; or before a predicate which is aspectually PROGRESSIVE - a or -ing + non-stative verb. Durative aspect refers to the fact that a given situation is conceived of as lasting for a certain period of time. (See Comrie 1976:41.)

(a) haaf-past faiv mi de a wok
   (At) half-past five I am working. (21A/4-5/1)

(b) mi de a freem mi lil picha an su
   I am framing my little pictures and so on. (62A/2/2)

(c) an mi de a spin
   And I was spinning. (21B/15/6)

(d) su ai de wislin
   So I was whistling. (17B/10-11/4)
All the situations described in examples (a) - (d) are aspectually progressive, and thus make reference to their internal temporal structure. But the added use of de implies that the situations went on for some time, or are likely to go on for some time.

Durative de cannot co-occur with stative verbs which are aspectually CONTINUOUS\textsuperscript{13}.

(e) *shi de noo di maan
   *shi de waant di buk
   *shi de biliiv di stoorii\textsuperscript{14}

But it can combine with adjectives which are also aspectually CONTINUOUS:

(f) shi de kwaiyit
   She is quiet

(g) yu get fren wid hii, yuu an hii de nais
   You become friendly with him, you and him will get along well. (21B/18-19/10)

(h) mi bin de qud qud aal di taim
   I was in good health all of the time. (62A/25-26/8)

\textit{de} is in variation with mesolect \textit{bii} as a durative aspect marker. But \textit{bii} can only be used if:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Continuous aspect is imperfectivity that is not occasioned by habituality. (See Comrie 1976.)
  \item \textsuperscript{14} The possible explanation for the semantic rejection of durative \textit{de} with stative verbs, stative-resultative verbs and non-stative verbs is given in Chapter 4.
\end{itemize}
i. the construction is habitual with mesolectal doz and yuuz tu as the habitual aspect marker

ii. the mesolect progressive aspect marker -ing is suffixed to non-stative verbs.

(i) i. hii de a sing - he is singing
   ii.*hii bii a sing

(j) i. hii de singing - he is singing
   ii.*hii bii singing

(k) i. hii a de a sing - he is usually singing
   ii.*hii a bii a sing

(l) i. hii doz de singing - he is usually singing
   ii. hii doz bii singing

(m) i. hii \{bin\} de singing - he was singing
   \{did\}
   ii.*hii \{bin\} bii singing
   \{did\}

(n) i. hii yuuz tu de singing - he used to be singing
   ii. hii yuuz tu bii singing

(o) i. hii yuuz tu de sik - he used to be ill
   ii. hii yuuz tu bii sik

Durative de and bii are obligatory before PROGRESSIVE predicates in constructions which make reference to the future, but bii can only be used if:

i. mesolectal gon is the future tense form

ii. mesolectal progressive -ing is suffixed to non-stative verbs:
(p) i. wen yu get de, shi gu de a sing - when you get there, she will be singing.
    ii. *wen yu get de, shi gu bii a sing

(q) i. wen yu get de, shi gu de singing
    ii. *wen yu get de, shi gu bii singing

(r) i. wen yu get de, shi gon de singing
    ii. wen yu get de, shi gon bii singing

In examples (p) - (r), progressive aspect provides the background to some event, in this case, your arrival. The meaning would be inceptive if non-stative verbs were unmarked for progressive aspect:

(s) wen yu get de, shi {gu} sing fu yu - when you get there, she will sing for you.

With CONTINUOUS (adjectival) predicates in future constructions, DURATIVE de and bii are optional.

(t) i. hii gon taal - he will be tall
    ii. hii gon bii taal - hii gon de taal

In fact hii gon bii taal could also have a non-durative aspectual meaning as hii gon taal, but the context differentiates whether or not the meaning is durative. hii gon de taal never has the same meaning as hii gon taal.

3.6.2 Copula de

de occurs as a locative copula and a noun copula in the basilect and mesolect:
NP + (COP) + LOC\textsuperscript{15}, \hspace{1cm} NP + COP + NP

(a) wen mi de a kontrii
When I am in the country. (21A/6/6)

(b) yu doz sleep wen yu de pon sii
You usually sleep when you are at sea. (54A/25/6)

(c) hii stil de de nau
He is still there now. (18A/30/13)

With copula a, we have a sentence pattern COP + NP.

With copula de we have a sentence pattern NP + COP.

(d) laiynz de
Lions exist.

(e) a de
I am. When asked 'how are you?', by saying a de, the speaker is implying he is 'existing' - nothing 'dynamic' is happening to him.

(f) plentii yuu doz de
A lot of you are usually there. (62A/31-32/4)

With respect to example (f) it is also possible to say:

(g) plentii yuu doz de de
and obtain the same meaning - the first de being the locative

\textsuperscript{15} Note that LOC includes 'adverbial expressions'.

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copula, the second de is the locative adverb. Example (f) provides good evidence for claiming that the locative copula de, and locative adverb de are derived from the same morpheme class.

de is in variation with mesolectal bii as a locative copula. bii, however, can only be used if:

(i) the construction is habitual with mesolectal doz or yuuz tu as the habitual aspect markers;
(ii) the locative phrase begins with a locative preposition other than basilectal a.

(h) i. hii de a shap - he is in the shop
   ii. *hii bii a shap

(i) i. hii de in di shap - he is in the shop
   ii. *hii bii in di shap

(j) i. hii a de a shap - he is usually in the shop
   ii. *hii a bii a shap

(k) i. hii doz de a shap - he is usually in the shop
   ii. *hii doz bii a shap

(l) i. hii doz de in di shap - he is usually in the shop
   ii. hii doz bii in di shap

(m) i. hii yuuz tu de in di shap - he was usually in the shop
   ii. hii yuuz tu bii in di shap

In examples (l) and (m) de or bii is obligatory probably because the location is 'concrete'. If the location is 'abstract', de or bii is optional.
(n) hii doz \(\{ de \ bii \}\) in chaarj ov evriibadii

He is usually in charge of everybody.

de is obligatory in example (h)i. since deletion of de would indicate that a is a copula and not a locative preposition. (See section 3.4.1, sentence pattern 6.) de is obligatory in examples (j)i. and (h)i. because of an *a a and a *doz a word constraint respectively.

It was noted in section 3.4.4, note 8, that the noun copula a cannot be preceded by modals or aspectuals:

(o) i. shi a tiich - she is a teacher
   ii. *shi a a tiich
   iii. *shi doz a tiich
   iv. *shi don a tiich
   v. *shi wuda a tiich

In these instances the form de functions as the verbal marker:

(p) i. dem a di seem - they are the same
   ii. dem a de di seem - they are usually the same
   iii. dem doz de di seem - they are usually the same
   iv. dem don de di seem - they are already the same
   v. dem mait de di seem - they may be the same.

Mesolect copula bii is in variation with de in these examples, except examples (p)ii. and (p)iv. because of an *a bii and *don bii constraint respectively.

3.6.3 locative adverb de

de occurs as a locative adverb within the predicate in
the basilect and mesolect: \( S + P \).

(a) several taimz (maan) mi bin de

Several times (man) I have been there. (18A/19/4)

(b) hii stil de de nau

He is still there now. (18A/30/13)

(c) yu mosii paas am de

You probably passed it there. (18A/37/3)

(d) a de dem liv

It is there they live. (18A/29/4)

This is a transformation of

dem liv de

(a is the optional topicalizer).

When locative adverb de is an adjunct and is fronted for emphasis, the main clause is relativised by the introduction of the adverbial pronoun we (where):

(e) de we yu get dis intareeshal somting

There is where you get this inter-racial something.

(16A/28-29/4)

A transformation of:

yu get dis intareeshal somting de

3.6.4 Focussing adjunct de

d\(e\) occurs within the predicate as an optional focussing adjunct in the basilect and mesolect: \( S + P \).

(a) wel di fors dee wu de bat de

Well the first day which they have batted (there)

(21B/16-17/7)
(b) su dem gu de wid yu de
So they would be with you (there). (16A/6/4)

(c) wii bin in abarrii de workin
We were in Abary (there) working. (23B/26/8)

de in example (c) could be functioning both as a focusing adjunct and a durative aspect marker. It is functioning as a focusing adjunct since it occurs within the predicate; and it is functioning as a durative aspect marker since it occurs before the progressive construction working. This neutralization seems to indicate that focusing de and durative de are derived from the same morpheme class.

3.6.5.1 Existential pronoun de

de occurs before the copulas gat and get, hav and had as an existential pronoun: - + P. de is a mesolect pronoun.

(a) de gat a taim
There was a time ... (54A/22/6)

(b) de doz gat a waata lefin dong biloo
There is usually a liquid left under it. (54A/34/4)

As an existential pronoun de varies with mesolectal dee, basilectal pronominals dem - den - ii, and basilectal and mesolectal yu - yuu.

(c) dem gat wan romshap a di kaarna
There is a rum-shop at the corner.
3.6.5.2 Third person plural subject pronoun de

de occurs before the predicate as a third person plural subject pronoun; sometimes used impersonally as a pseudo-passive construction- or in generalized impersonal senses. de is a mesolect pronoun.

(a) de na a gu
They do not usually go ... (23A/32/2)

(b) de bring'wii bak tu tong
They brought us back to town. (54A/13/1)

(c) de did waant faarm a koo-op
They wanted to form a Co-op. (54A/29-31/2)

de varies with mesolectal dee, and basilectal dem - den.

(d) dem na a gu
They do not usually go.

3.6.5.3 Third person plural possessive pronoun de

de occurs before noun-phrases as a third person plural possessive pronoun followed optionally by oon. de is a mesolect pronoun:
(a) de ga de oon kompanii
They have their friends. (21A/3/7)

(b) de gat a taim piipl doz tek it in de oon haan; de oon laa in de oon haan ...
There was a time when people took it into their own hands, their own law into their own hands ...
(54A/22-23/2)

de can vary with mesolectal dee and basilectal dem - den in this function:

(c) dem a chuuz dem oon kompanii
They usually choose their friends. (21A/4/7)

3.6.5.4 Derivation of pronominal de

I have been positing de [əɛ] as a mesolectal pronoun in variation with dee [əɛ] (they are allomorphs with dee being obligatory under stress), and de as derived from the morpheme class \{DE\}. Rickford (1979:15) posits a variety of sources for pronominal de16:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>dem-dən-dəŋ-ðə</td>
<td>dəm-dem-dən-dəŋ</td>
<td>dəm-dən-dəŋ-ðə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dən-də-ðə-d₁</td>
<td></td>
<td>de-ðə-d₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dər-ðer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Morphological variants are arranged vertically, phonological variants horizontally.)

Although he posits a morpheme de in the possessive category,

16. IPA symbols are used for the rest of section 3.6.5.4
is posited as a phonetic variant of the possessive morphemes dem and de; and in the subject category de is posited as a phonetic variant of the morpheme dem while de and are posited as phonetic variants of English de. He posits a morpheme de in the possessive category and not as derived from the morpheme de because of the rarity of final -r deletion in Guyanese speech (p.305). Consequently, with de's and de's being derived from a variety of sources and no real arguments supporting the derivations, I find his system rather confusing.

On the basis of Kuryłowicz's principles of identification and differentiation, and using arguments similar to those explaining pronominal [mi] - [mi] - [ai] - [a] variation, (see Section 3.5.9), it is possible to arrive at a neater and more explanatorily adequate system. We could posit that in the basilect there are two morphs [dem] and [den] in the subject, object and possessive categories, but only [dem] can be used in stressed position. Thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 PL (stressed)</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>dem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unstressed)</td>
<td>dem-de-n-deŋ</td>
<td>dem-de-n-deŋ</td>
<td>dem-de-n-deŋ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the mesolect there is a formal differentiation with stressed [dem] being replaced by [de] and unstressed [den] replaced by [de]. [de] and [de], like the pronouns [dem] and [den] and the first person allomorphs [mi] - [mí] - [ai] - [a], are in free variation in unstressed contexts, but only [de], [dem], [mi] and [ai] can occur in stressed positions.
and be focussed. Similar to the case with [mi] and [ai], basilect [dem] can be focussed by the basilect focalizer a and the mesolect focalizer iz, but mesolect [de] can only combine with mesolect iz.

(a) i. a dem sing di saang  
   ii. iz dem sing di saang  
   iii. *a de sing di saang  
   iv. iz de sing di saang

It is noted that I have posited [den] and [de] as phonetic variants although [n] and [e] are separate phonemes in Guyanese Creole - [sin] 'sin', [siq] 'sing'. Since [den] and [de] are in free variation, in this instance we may have to speak of free variation among phonemes. (See e.g. Hyman 1975:66.) We can posit the system below for Guyanese Creole:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 PL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basilect</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>dem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>den-de</td>
<td>den-de</td>
<td>den-de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mesolect</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>de-d1</td>
<td>den-de</td>
<td>de-d1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acrolect (English)</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>dem</td>
<td>der</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mesolect form [de] is derived from English [oe], and [de] is an extension of the Creole form [de] – the morpheme class \{DE\}.
3.6.6 Summary of functions of the form /de/

1. **Durative aspect**
   
   S + de (a) + P
   
   hii de a taak
   
   He is talking.

2. **Copula constructions**
   
   NP + (COP) + LOC
   
   mi de a kontrii
   
   I am in the country.

   NP + COP + NP
   
   it doz de di seem
   
   It is usually the same.

   NP + COP
   
   laiyanz de
   
   Lions exist.

3. **Adverb**
   
   S + P
   
   de de de
   
   They are there

4. **Focussing**
   
   S + P
   
   da saang de sing de
   
   That song they sang there.

5. **Existential pronoun**
   
   de + P
   
   de gat tuu klaas a piipl
   
   There are two classes of people.

6. **Third person plural subject pronoun**
   
   de + P
   
   de taal
   
   They are tall.

7. **Third person plural possessive pronoun**
   
   de (oon) + N
   
   de fren dem sing a saang
   
   Their friends sang a song.
3.6.7  *Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with form /de/ from basilect to mesolect*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durative aspect de</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copula</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focussing</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential pronoun</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject pronoun</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive pronoun</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.8  *Summary of variation due to overlap between morpheme classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Variant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durative</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copula</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focussing</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural subject pronoun</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural subject pronoun</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3.7 Syntactic and Semantic Functions of the Form /don/

/don/ is the formal realisation of the following morphemes in Guyanese Creole:

(1) auxiliary: punctual aspect marker
(2) main verb.

3.7.1 Punctual aspect /don/

/don/ occurs before or after the predicate as a punctual aspect marker in the basilect and mesolect: S + (don) P (don). Punctual aspect refers to a situation that is not conceived of as lasting in time. (See Comrie 1976:41.)

The utterance has a punctual meaning when /don/ co-occurs with non-stative verbs which are aspectually Perfective - i.e. non-statives make reference to situations which are viewed as a whole entity with the beginning, middle and end rolled into one.

(a) wen yu /don put/ am pan triitment, yu gat tu sii di peeshent get di triitment

When he has been put on medication, you have to see that the patient gets the treatment. (21A/1-2/2)

(b) yu /don avrij a wat a drom ii a sel fu

You have averaged at what price per drum it will probably sell for. (18A/27/3)

(c) shi /don staart/

She has begun.

When /don/ co-occurs with stative verbs, stative-resultative verbs and adjectives, it is referring to a
temporally restricted but non-punctual situation. Stative verbs, stative-resultative verbs and adjectives are aspectually Continuous. Thus their co-occurrence with don refers to a situation which began in the past (it is 'temporally restricted'), but which is still going on in time (it is 'non-punctual').

(d) shi get tuu piknii don
She already has two children. (15B/34-35/3)\(^{17}\)

(e) da taim dem don de somwee a big maarkit
(By) that time they are already somewhere in Big Market. (23A/23-24/2)

(f) wen dem gu de, di maan don deed
When they got there, the man was already dead. (18A/11/18)

(g) bai taim mi lef de fu kom hee, som a dem don marid
By the time I was ready to leave there to come here, some of them were already married. (16A/27/2)

(h) shi don taal
She is already tall.

don cannot occur with predicates which are inflected for habitual or progressive aspect:

(i) i.*shi don (a) sing (habitual)\(\{doz\}\)

17. The copula get is a non-stative verb, but it overlaps with the stative copula gat. See section 3.10 for an analysis of get and gat.
ii. *shidon a sing  (progressive)
   *shidon singing

shidon singing is acceptable, but only if don is interpreted as a main verb, and singing is interpreted as a nominal\textsuperscript{18}.

Aspectual don is in variation with plain uninflected non-stative verbs for punctual aspect. Thus examples (a), (b) and (c) would still have a 'completive' meaning without don, but don emphasizes the punctuality of the situation.

However, don is obligatory in constructions with the future tense forms qu and gon

(j) wen yu get de, shi (qu) don sing (gon)

When you get there, she will have sung.

If don is not used the reading is inceptive ('she will begin to sing') rather than completive.

3.7.2 Main verb don

don occurs as a main verb meaning 'to finish' in the basilect and mesolect: S + - (NP).

\textsuperscript{18} shidon singing is a mesolectal construction where nominalization is overtly marked by the suffixing of -ing to the verb. In the basilect, shidon sing can be interpreted as NP + ASPECT + V or NP + V + NP depending on the linguistic and situational context. In the mesolect, the suffixing of -ing to verbs to mark nominalization overtly distinguishes nominals from verbs. (See also Bickerton 1975a:74.)
(a) su wen di dee don, somtaim mi get trii foor daala
   So when the day ended, sometimes I got three or four dollars. (15A/14-15/3)

(b) an kontinyuu laik da, su til di bed don
   And continue like that, until the (garden) bed is finished. (15A/13-14/2)

(c) wen dem monii don, mii oon de pakit
   When their money has finished, mine is in my pocket. (17B/26-27/5)

(d) ii get maan a don wan bed dee
   There are men (who can) usually finish one bed in one day. (18A/17/2)

(e) shi doning
   She is finishing.

(f) shi mosii gon don suun
   She will probably finish shortly.

In example (d) there is an instance of the habitual aspect marker preceding don, and in example (e) there is an instance of progressive -ing suffixed to don. Note, too, that in all the examples above don is not modifying a verb predicate - as aspectual don and the other aspect markers do. It is examples like these which differentiate aspectual don from main verb don. I had stated above that aspectual don can occur before or after the predicate, it is not possible for a main verb in serial verb constructions to occur after the predicate:
(g) i. hii ron tel di maan di stoorii
    He ran to the man and told him the story.
ii. *hii ron di maan tel di stoorii
iii. *hii ron di maan di stoorii tel
iv. *hii tel di maan di stoorii ron

As a form don can vary with finish. From Bickerton (1975a:85) there is:

'3.53 After you finish cut you draw out the straw.
(15/27/15)'

The use of finish may be an attempt to differentiate aspectual don from main verb don.

3.7.3 Summary of functions of the form /don/

1. Punctual aspect marker
   S + (don) + P (don)
   shi sing don
   She has sung.

2. Main verb
   S + (don) NP
   shi don
   She has finished.

3.7.4 Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with form /don/, from basilect to mesolect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctual aspect</td>
<td>don</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main verb</td>
<td>don</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>finish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7.5 Summary of variation due to overlap in morpheme classes

Punctual aspect  don     Uninflected non-stative verbs
Main verb       don

3.8 Syntactic and Semantic Functions of the Form /bin/

/bin/ is the formal realisation of the following morphemes in Guyanese Creole:

(1) auxiliary: past tense marker
(2) locative copula
(3) directional copula
(4) noun copula.

3.8.1 Past tense bin

bin occurs before the predicate as a past tense marker in the basilect: S - P.

(a) a bin de in a fait
I was in a fight. (23A/11/10)

(b) awii bin a fiftiin broda an sista
We were fifteen brothers and sisters. (16A/33/2)

(c) kaa mii an wan bai bin laik waak leet
Because a boy and I liked to walk late (at nights). (21A/4/9)

(d) mi se hau wakenaam piknii heed bin haard an hau dem bin disgostin
I remarked 'how Wakenaam children were hard-headed and how they were disgusting'. (16A/24-25/5)
an aafia mi faal bak flat, mi kunt a bin eebl ... mi na
bin eebl ... mi na bin gat monii fu staart di gyaroon bak
And after my collapse, I was not able ... I was not able
... I did not have the money to restart the farm.
(62A/26-28/1)

wen mi bin a wok a hag ailan
When I was working on Hogg Island. (21A/26/8)

wen di porsn gaan ar su den de gon se, 'mi bin a waant
se su'
When the person has left or so, then they would say, 'I
had wanted to say so'. (18B/22-23/4)

bin is used in contra-factual constructions:

if mi na bin kom, mi na bin noo
If I had not come, I would not have known.

if mi bin liv a tong, mi kud a duu bata
If I were living in town, I could do better. (62A/6/8)

(Lyons (1977:818) claims that in many languages 'the grammatical category of past tense is regularly used to convert a
non-factive into a contra-factive utterance'.)

Past tense bin can co-occur with habitual a (example (g)),
progressive a (example (f)), or durative de or punctual don.

she bin de a sing
She was singing

she bin don sing
She had sung.
bin can be preceded by the modal constructions wud a, kud a, shud a, mait a.

(1) shi shud a bin noo di aansa
She should have known the answer.
(See Idealized basilectal Auxiliary Structure, section 3.4.5.)

bin is in variation with en, biin and mesolectal did as a past tense marker. en and biin are allomorphs of bin.

(m) hii en de wid shi
He lived with her. (16A/18-19/5)

(n) di machiin wa mi en a yuuz a di treed
The machine which I was using in the trade. (18A/12-13/8)

(o) bot if woz mi oon yaard, a mait a biin enkoreej
But if it were my own yard, I might have been encouraged (to plant). (20A/20/9)

(p) de biin teling mi fu plaant di yaard an ting
They were telling me to cultivate the yard and thing. (20A/16-17/9)

(q) it did shaart an nais
It was short and nice.

(r) wel G.M.C., de did waant - nat G.M.C., govament - de did waant faarm a koo-op wid dis pig ting
Well G.M.C., they had wanted - not G.M.C., government - they had wanted to form a Co-op with this pig thing. (54A/29-31/2)
Basilectal *bin* can co-occur with the basilectal progressive *a*, and the mesolectal progressive *-ing* (example (p) above), the mesolectal past tense form *did* can only co-occur with mesolectal progressive *-ing*:

(s) i. *shi did* singing
   She was singing.
   ii. *shi did a sing*

Basilectal *bin* can co-occur with basilectal habitual *a*, and mesolectal habitual *yuuz tu; did* can only co-occur with *yuuz tu*:

(t) i. *shi did yuuz tu* sing
   She used to sing.
   ii. *shi did a sing*
   iii. *shi bin yuuz tu* sing.

*bin* and *did* are in variation with *uninflected verbs* for past meaning:

(u) *mi noo mi* get wan big kot a mi said
   I knew (that) I had got a big cut in my side. (21A/11-12/18)

(v) ii *kaal tuu a dem bai a vilij wa* gat taim, smaal baiz wa na gat nofn fu duu.
   He called two of the boys from the village who had time, small boys who had nothing to do.

(w) bikaa mi *biliiv hii nak mi, mi a deed*
   Because I thought he had hit me, (and) I would probably die. (21B/21/6)
(x) di amount a ting wa mi sii pon di teebl
The amount of things which I saw on the table. (21A/14/5)

Uninflected verbs, bin and did are in variation with
the mesolectal use of inflected verbs for past meaning:

(y) shi weetid ontii ai keem hoom, an shi staart kukiing
She waited until I came home, and (then) she began to
cook. (20A/33-34/5)

(z) faiv ov us went, an wii oonlii sii wan igwaana
Five of us went, and we only saw one iguana. (20A/20/4)

3.8.2 Locative copula bin

bin occurs as a locative copula with past meaning in
the basilect and mesolect: NP + - + LOC

(a) an mi fos kwaata bin a 1950
And my first quarter was in 1950 (18A/30/13)

(b) it bin wid wan chap neem ...
He was with a fellow (whose) name ... (18A/8-9/8)

(c) ai bin at di poblik hospital
I was at the Public Hospital. (23B/7/8)

(d) an a bin 'in di sadl'
And I was 'in the saddle' (everything was fine).
(16A/9-10/2)

bin in in variation with biin and mesolectal woz as a
locative copula with past meaning. biin is an allomorph of
bin and woz:
(e) hii biin in de tu  
He was in there too.

(f) hii woz in de tu  
He was in there too.

(g) hii woz wid wan chap neem ...  
He was with a fellow (whose) name ...

But woz cannot function as a locative copula if the locative phrase begins with basilectal a:

(h) *an mi fos kwaata woz a 1950

Locative bin can be used not only in referring to a state which at the time of utterance is complete, but also in referring to situations which had begun in the past but are still going on at the time of utterance:

(i) i. hau laang yu bin hee  
How long have you been here?

   ii. a bin hee mosii bout tuu houwaz nau  
   I have been here about two hours now.

In example (i) it is possible to use the locative copula de. But by using bin the speaker is making explicit reference to the fact that the situation began some time in the past. de simply refers to the fact that the situation is lasting for a period of time.

For examples (b), (c), (d), (e) and (i) it is possible to say bin de, with de as the locative copula and bin as a past tense marker. We could then argue for de
deletion. However not only do I find the deletion argument counter-intuitive, but it would be ungrammatical to insert de in example (a):

(j) *an mi fos kwaata bin de a 1950

3.8.3 **Directional copula bin**

bin occurs as a directional copula with past meaning in the basilect and mesolect: NP + - (NP)

(a) mi bin gold-digging a bush. mi bin esiikwiboo riva an wok a graant
I went gold-digging in the interior. I went (to) the Essequibo river and worked on a (timber) grant. (18A/19-20/7)

(b) bot na de ii bin an get di monii
But it is not there he went and got the money. (18A/23-24/8)

(c) dis seem bonds we yu bin
The very same Bonds to whom you went. (18A/14/9)

Directional bin has an allomorph biin.

(d) da wan griin taim mi biin
It was during the non-harvesting season that I went. (17B/15-16/15)

As a directional copula, bin is in variation with the uninflected non-stative verb gu. It is possible to use gu in all the examples above, but the past meaning that is evident in using bin, would be absent with gu.
3.8.4 Noun copula bin

_bin_ occurs as a noun-copula with past meaning in the basilect, but only if the following noun-phrase begins with the form _wan_.

(a) da _bin_ wan rii1 ting

That was a real thing. (21A/36/7)

From Edwards (1975:254) there is:

'mi _bin_/bina wan tiicha

I was a teacher'

_bin_ also occurs before impersonal _a_ in COP + NP constructions:

(b) 1aang taim _bin_ a pyuur treen

Long ago there were only trains. (62A/10/3)

(c) 1aang taim in dis seem vilij, a _bin_ a pyuur indiya piipl

Long ago in this very village, there were only Indians. (62A/23/2)

(The _a_ preceding _bin_ is a focussing _a_.)

3.8.5 Summary of functions of the form /bin/ 

1. **Past tense marker**

   S + bin + P :

   shi _bin_ sing

   She sang.

2. **Locative copula with past meaning**

   NP + bin + LOC :

   shi _bin_ in skuul

   She was in school.
3. **Directional copula with past meaning**
   
   NP + bin (NP) :
   
   a bin esiikwiboo
   I went (to) Essequibo

4. **Noun copula with past meaning**
   
   NP + bin + NP
   
   da bin wan riil ting
   That was a real thing

3.8.6 **Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with form /bin/, from basilect to mesolect**

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<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
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3.8.7 **Summary of variation due to overlap between morpheme classes**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Function</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Noun copula bin</td>
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3.9 Syntactic and Semantic Functions of the Form 
/go – gu/

/go – gu/ is the formal realisation of the following morphemes in Guyanese Creole:

(1) auxiliary: future tense/modal
(2) main verb
(3) infinitival complementizer.

3.9.1 Future tense/modal go

go occurs before the predicate as a future tense marker/modal in the basilect: S + gu + P.

(a) dem gu a asooshiieet an su wid yu
They will usually associate and so on with you. (16A/3-4/4)

(b) mi dout weda de gu gi op out de, bikaaz de gu gu fu di ronz
I doubt whether they will give up out there, because they will go for the runs. (21B/27-28/7)

(c) su mi gu kyaan mek um
So I will not be able to make it. (16A/14-15/7)

gu is in variation with mesolectal gon as a future tense marker.

(d) wel di west indiiz gon win
Well the West Indies will win. (21B/4-5/8)

(e) a gon tel yu from di staarting
I will tell you from the beginning. (54A/4-5/1)
(f) yuu jos aask fu di feemos futbaal maan, an yu _gon_ fain mii
You just ask for the famous footballer, and you will find me. (54A/15-16/8)

gu and _gon_ can also have modal meaning:

(g) mi doz lef hee about 5.30/6.00 an mi a _gu_ riich op de...
mi _gu_ riich op de about 9.00 ar 8.30.
I usually leave here about 5.30/6.00 and I would probably arrive up there... I would arrive up there about 9.00 or 8.30. (18A/12-13/1)

(h) wel wi taat de _gu_ sel di daiman an divaid di monii
Well we thought they would have sold the diamonds and (then) divided the money. (21B/20-21/4)

(i) di kontrii piipl _gon_ se 'kom le awii gu nu maan'
The rural people would say, 'Come let us go, why not man'. (62A/31/3)

Lyons (1968a:310) points out that in some languages the forms that are used in referring to the future can also have modal implications. This, he claims:

'may be regarded as a 'natural' consequence of the fact that statements made about future occurrences are necessarily based upon the speaker's beliefs, predictions or intentions, rather than upon his knowledge of 'fact'. '

Examples (g), (h) and (i) do indeed have a 'predictive' meaning, and example (j) below carries a meaning of 'intention'.

(j) shi se 'aarait bai, a _gu_ giv yu di monii'
She said, 'Alright boy, I will give you the money'. (21B/2-3/4)
It is possible to use the conditional modal wud in examples (h) and (i) and the second part of example (g)\(^{19}\), without any meaning difference:

(k) di kontrii piipl wud se ...

(l) wel mi taat de wud a sel di daiman...\(^{20}\)

or even in referring to future possibility:

(m) a tink shi wud bii a gud styuudent

I think she will be a good student.

But wud cannot substitute for gu in example (j) and still yield a meaning of 'intention'. If wud is used the meaning would be 'conditional'. There would also be meaning differences if wud substituted for gu in examples (a) or (c), or if wud substituted for gon in examples (d) or (e). In example (a) wud followed by a would yield a meaning 'would have' - past conditional - instead of 'will usually' - non-past habitual; and the meaning of (c), (d) and (e) would be 'conditional' or 'predictive' rather than 'future'.

Thus, formal as well as semantic differences indicate

---

19. wud cannot occur in the first part of example (g) since probability a can only co-occur with gu (see section 3.5.1:3).

20. The form a must co-occur with wud since we are referring to a past possibility (see section 3.5.2).
that \textit{gu} and \textit{gon} be placed in a separate category to \textit{wud}. Lyons (1968:311) also posits that mood and tense may interact in such a way that either one or the other label is appropriate. Syntactically (see auxiliary structures, section 3.4.3), and from the point of view of the semantics of the tense system, 'tense' appears to be the most appropriate label for \textit{gu} and \textit{gon}.

\textit{gu} and \textit{gon} are in variation with \textit{non-stative verbs} inflected for \textit{progressive} aspect, in making reference to the \textit{future} - but future reference is dependent on the linguistic (i.e. adverbs) and situational context:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(n)] neks wiik dem \textit{a staart} di wuk
      \begin{itemize}
        \item Next week they are starting the work. (22B/12-13/1)
      \end{itemize}
  \item[(o)] shi \textit{going} hoom tomaroo
      \begin{itemize}
        \item She is going home tomorrow.
      \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

### 3.9.2 Main verb \textit{go}

\textit{go} functions as a \textit{main verb} in the basilect and mesolect: \textit{S + P}. \textit{go} implies movement in respect of a goal or destination.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] a \textit{doz gu}
      \begin{itemize}
        \item I usually go. (23A/23/3)
      \end{itemize}
  \item[(b)] hii se 'mi na a \textit{gu}'
      \begin{itemize}
        \item He said, 'I am not going'.
      \end{itemize}
  \item[(c)] if a hadnt helt, a woon \textit{gu}
      \begin{itemize}
        \item If I were not healthy, I would not have gone. (20B/31-32/5)
      \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
(d) a gu bak di neks dee  
I went back the following day. (20A/8/3)

(e) mi jos bin gu an laarn wid di keen kota dem  
I just went and learnt with the cane-cutters.  
(23A/6-7/5)

Uninflected gu is in variation with gaan as a main verb with past meaning. The variation is illustrated in example (f) where it is possible to use gu or gaan:

(f) somtaimz wii de, wii gaan op makenzii aal about, sand hil. draiv from tong hee, yu noo, gaan street op, go an get a nais taim  
Sometimes we had nothing to do, we went up to Mackenzie, all around, Sand Hill. (We) drove from town here, you know, went straight, went and had an enjoyable time.  
(23B/17-19/6)

(g) i. dem gaan dem wee nau  
They have gone their way now. (62A/34/1)  
ii.*dem gu dem wee nau

Example (g)ii. is acceptable but with a punctual rather than a stative meaning: 'They went their way now'.

(h) i. ii yuuzziz tu gu tu 16, 15. ii a drap, ii a drap nau. ii gaan tu 13 somting  
It used to go to 16, 15 (dollars). It is dropping, it is dropping now. It has gone to 13 something.  
(18A/28-30/3)

ii *ii yuuzziz tu gaan tu 16, 15 ... ii gu tu 13 somting

That gaan is stative is indicated by its co-occurrence with the aspect markers a and don. When gaan

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co-occurs with a the meaning is habitual; when gaan co-
occurs with don, you are referring to a temporally
restricted but non-punctual situation - the same meanings
as when a and don co-occur with stative verbs and adjectives.

(i)  
  i. shi a gaan skuul bai taim mi get de
      She has usually gone to school by the time I get
      there.
  ii. shi don gaan
      She has already left.

The stativity of gaan is further substantiated by the fact
that it can co-occur with the mesolectal habitual doz, but
not with mesolectal progressive -ing - remembering that
progressive aspect is a combination of continuousness with non-
stativity.

(j)  
  i. shi doz gaan skuul bai taim mi get de
  ii. *shi gaan ing skuul

Both gu and gaan imply movement towards a goal or destination.
But gaan also implies that you have reached your destination,
that the movement from one state to another is complete.
Thus gaan is a stative-resultative verb. Non-stative gu
is void of such implications. Therefore, wherever a
resultative meaning is required gaan must be used. gu must
be used in constructions where only movements towards a goal
or destination are intended. They are in variation, how-
ever, where the distinction between resultative or non-
resultative meaning is unimportant. Thus they are in
variation in (k) but not (l):

- 185 -
Every afternoon this man left, he returned, he brought a large bottle of whisky. (21B/23-24/5)

I said, 'Look the ghost has gone. Let us go home'. (12A/30-31/10)

The progressive basilectal construction a gu is in variation with the mesolectal forms gain - goin:

He said, 'Where are you going today?' I said 'Man, I am not going anywhere'. (54A/17-19/6)

He would say, 'I am not going'. (62A/1-2/4)

3.9.3 Infinitival complementizer gu

gu occurs as an infinitival complementizer in the basilect, but only if one of the main verbs is a movement verb: S + V - V.

I leave it and go to do something else now. (18A/1/3)

You would tell them, 'You go back and buy more, or go and wash the dishes. (17B/11-12/8)
(c) an kontrii piknii na gu waant gu gu laarn da nu moo
And (the) rural children would not want to go and learn
that any more. (54A/17-18/10)

*gu* is in variation with *fu* as an infinitival complementizer in the above syntactic environment. *fu* is the complementizer in other syntactic environments. Informants vary between *gu* and *fu*:

(d) su if yu ron *gu* kom op hee nau
So if you run up here now ... (17B/27/8)

(e) yu gu ron *fu* kom op nau
You would run up now ... (17B/26/8)

*gu* and *fu* are in variation with mesolectal *tu* as a complementizer.

(f) wel yu had *tu* see wen de goo *tu* work
Well, you had to say when they went to work. (4B/20-21/2)

3.9.4 Summary of functions of the form /go - gu/

1. Future tense/modal
   \[ S + gu + P : \]
   a *gu* giv yu di monii
   I will give you the money.

2. Main verb
   \[ S + gu \ (NP) \]
   a doz *gu*
   I usually go.

3. Infinitival complementizer
   \[ S + V gu V : \]
   de gu *gu* bai di buk dem
   They went to buy the books.
3.9.5  **Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with form */go~qu/ from basilect to mesolect**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Future tense/modal</td>
<td>go → gon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main verb</td>
<td>go → go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitival complementiser</td>
<td>go → tu</td>
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</table>

3.9.6  **Summary of variation due to overlap between morpheme classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Main verb</td>
<td>go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitival complementizer</td>
<td>go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.10  **get and gat**

Before describing the tense and aspect systems of Guyanese Creole, I will criticize Bickerton's analysis of the Guyanese verbs and *get* and *gat* and then set out my re-analysis of *get* and *gat*. This is essential since it not only gives an insight into the structure and overlap of the Guyanese aspectual system, but it also highlights the inter-relationship between concepts and structure, and the relevance of context in the interpretation of verb forms in Guyanese Creole.
3.10.1 Bickerton's description of get and gat

In *Dynamics of a Creole System* (1975a:18), Bickerton tells us that the English verb *to get* is the source of two distinct Guyanese verbs, *get* 'to obtain' and *gat* 'to have, possess', and for a sharper distinction we must refer to Bickerton (1971:479-480). He explains in this article:

'Broadly speaking, *gat* may carry the sense of 'possessing' as well as 'being obliged':

(24) i gat pyoo daata - 'he has daughters only'
or an impersonal stative equivalent to there is/are:
(25) dem gat wan romshap a sikstitree - 'there's a bar in Sixty-Three (village)'.

But in my data there are examples of *get* with the same meaning that Bickerton claims are restricted to *gat*. For example there is the 'sense of possession' in the following example:

(a) mi get plentii children
I have a lot of children. (62A/30/6)

And an informant talking about various semi-precious stones switches between *get* and *gat* in what Bickerton calls an 'impersonal stative sense' which he claims is restricted to *gat*:

(b) ii gat wan ada ting dem a kaal 'brong ai'. ii get wan nekst wan dem a kaal 'maika'
There is another thing they call 'brown eye'. There is another one they call 'mica'. (18A/1-2/12)

*get*, on the other hand, he claims, functions as an auxiliary in the human-subject passive:

'(26) i get lik' dong - 'he was knocked down'. (p.479)
I agree that *gat* is rejected in the passive. He further explains that *get* also functions in a sense similar to 'be able to, manage to' (p.479). He illustrates with the example below:

"(27) so di rais kan get tu draa i milk - 'so that the rice will be able to derive its nourishment' (p.479)'.

But it is not *get* that is carrying a sense of 'be able to', it is the modal *kan* that is conveying this sense. If *kan* is deleted there would no longer be a 'be able to' reading, but there may still be a 'manage to' reading as this reading is conveyed by *get* + infinitival complement, a unit which is a modal of requirement. If *get* is deleted the sentence would be ungrammatical as it is not possible for modal *kan* to be followed by complementizer *tu* - *so di rais kan tu draa i milk*. However, I do agree that *gat* is not possible in this example.

Bickerton continues:

'Indeed, the two verbs are quite distinct (though the fact that they share an English etymon, as well as being phonologically similar, sometimes causes confusion between them ...' (p.479-480)

He illustrates:

'(12) lang taim na bin get bul fu mash - 'in the old days there were no oxen to thresh with.'

(13) yu ga tu mek biari fi troo bia - 'you have to make a nursery to raise young rice plants.' (p.469)

Bickerton's example (12) illustrates one instance of variation between *get* and *gat* - although I disagree that it is caused by speaker confusion; but there is a semantic difference between *gat* followed by *tu* in example (13) and *get* followed
by tu in example (27) above. If we assume that Bickerton is correct in saying that get in example (27) means 'be able to, manage to', there is a great deal of semantic difference between that meaning and 'have to' which is the reading he gives for gat in example (13). Also, it is not gat, which is carrying a meaning of 'have to' but gat + infinitival complement which is the modal of obligation. (See Auxiliary Structures, section 3.4.3.)

However, he explains that gat is a 'state' verb, and get is an 'action' verb. He illustrates 'the similarities and differences' by the constructs below:

'(28a) yu get haksn fi haal am - you get oxen (in order) to carry it
(28b) yu gat haksn fi haal am - you (already) have oxen to carry it
(28c) yu gat fi haal am wid haksn - you have to use oxen to carry it
(29a) dem bina get plau - they were obtaining/used to obtain ploughs
(a9b) *dem bina gat plau - *they were possessing ploughs.' (p.480)

With regard to example (28a) the construction can have two readings: the reading given by Bickerton, in which case get is dynamic (or an 'action' verb); and the reading given for gat in (28b), in which case get is stative. In (28b) and (28c) I can use gat or get without any meaning difference. For (29a) he gives a progressive meaning - obtaining - and an habitual meaning - used to obtain. This is fine except that it can also have an habitual stative reading - used to possess. He regards (29b) as unacceptable, but it is acceptable with an habitual and not a progressive meaning.

The problem is why get and gat can occur in identical
structures when it appears that \textit{gat} is a stative verb and \textit{get} is a dynamic verb. Bickerton claims that speakers who alternate between \textit{get} and \textit{gat} are 'confused' since they are 'moving away from the basilect' and 'would find it progressively harder to keep the two verbs apart' (p.480). Bickerton cites no evidence to show that the speakers are confused. On the basis of my intuitive knowledge the speakers are not confused and the variation is common across styles. Furthermore, there are syntactic and semantic constraints on when \textit{get} can vary with \textit{gat}, a fact which Bickerton did not investigate\(^{21}\).

3.10.2 \textbf{Reanalysis of get and gat}

To begin the reanalysis I will assume that \textit{gat} and \textit{get} are copulas. Lyons (1967:390) defines the copula as a 'purely grammatical element which carries distinctions of tense, mood and aspect in the surface structure of certain classes of stative sentences'. I will look at three classes of sentences that linguists describing the copula in various languages define as copular constructions. The three classes of sentences are existential, locative and possessive.

\textbf{Existential}

(i) de \textit{gat} laiyanz (in afrika) - There are lions (in Africa)

(ii) laiyanz de - Lions exist.

\(^{21}\) In his most recent publication, Bickerton (1981:250) claims that \textit{get} is the form of 'possession' and 'existence' in Guyanese Creole. There is no mention of the form \textit{gat}.
Locative
(d) i. de gat a buk pan di teebl - There is a book on the table
   ii. di buk de pan di teebl - The book is on the table.

Possessive
(e) i. jaan gat a buk - John has a book
   ii. di buk a jaan oon - The book is John's.

Lyons (1967; 1968b) claims that existential and possessive constructions are derived (synchronically and diachronically) from locatives. In Guyanese Creole we can find evidence for this if we look at the existential and locative sentences on the basis of the morphological unity of the phrase de gat. But we can see a clearer relationship between the three classes of sentences from the example below:

(f) de gat a shap a di kaarna - (a) There is a shop at the corner.
    (b) They have (own) a shop at the corner.

Only the context can indicate whether the sentence is locative or possessive. We can also have an existential interpretation.

In existential, locative and possessive sentences gat can vary with get and there would be no meaning difference. But there are sentences in which get can occur but not gat:

(g) i. shi get sik - she became ill
   ii.*shi gat sik
   (This is acceptable only if she has a particular illness known as sik.)
(h)  i. mi get awee - I got away  
    ii.*mi gat awee  

(i)  i. a get into di 'G' - I got into the groove  
    ii.*a gat into di 'G'  

(j)  i. hii get stab - he was stabbed  
    ii.*hii gat stab.  

It is noticeable that all the sentences containing get have a dynamic meaning in that they are referring to situations which have changed - get is therefore a change of state copula. In the sentence below (k), we can have two interpretations:

(k)  mi get a buk - (a) I have (possess) a book  
     (b) I received a book  
     
     (a) is stative, (b) is dynamic.  

We should now note the relationship between the syntax and the meanings. When the construction is:

\[
\text{NP } + \text{get } + (\text{verb } ) \\
(\text{adjective}) \\
(\text{adverb })
\]

get has a dynamic meaning - a change of state function.

But when the construction is:

\[
\text{NP } + \text{get } + \text{NP}
\]

get can have either a stative or dynamic meaning depending on the linguistic and situational context. The situational context aids the interpretation of get as stative in the examples below:
(1) mi get mi famili. mi get ada relativz in tong
    I have my family. I have other relatives in town. (18A/10-11/7)

(m) ii gat wan ada wan neem 'kapa-tin'. ii get 'jaspa'
    There is another one called 'Copper tin'. There is jasper. (18A/39-1/11-12)

(n) wii get a nais biich hee tu, bot oonlii wii een gat di waata
    We have a nice beach here too, but we do not have the water. (23B/14-15/7)

(Nota that in examples (m) and (n) the speaker switches between get and gat.)

The punctual adverbial phrase, three o'clock, gives get a dynamic meaning in example (o):

(o) mi get di buk at trii a klak
    I received the book at three o'clock.

In gat sentences it is always
    NP + gat + NP

and it is always stative.

We can test the dynamic and stative nature of get and gat by looking at their co-occurrence with the progressive and habitual aspect marker a. When a precedes gat the meaning is habitual; when a precedes get the meaning is progressive or habitual - habitual if get is referring to a state, or to a dynamic situation which is characteristic over a period of time.

(p) dem na a gat seen
    They do not usually have seine nets. (62A/17/8)
(q) yu na a get dat kain a ting de
You do not usually have that sort of thing there. (18A/1/3)

(r) ting a get deer a shap
Things are becoming expensive in the shops. (62B/31/6)

Because *gat* is a stative verb, Bickerton would claim that it is not possible to say (p) above, just as he claims it is not possible to say (29b) above. He takes this position since in *Dynamics* (1975a:46) he points out that states have by definition an extended duration. Therefore you cannot ask whether a stative verb is [+ punctual] or [- punctual]. But for non-stative verbs [+ punctual] would imply a single action and [- punctual] an extended or repeated one. Comrie (1976) and Lyons (1977), however, point out that there is a relationship between states and dynamic situations in that they are both durative. That is, the situations last for a period of time. They, therefore, both have a beginning and an end, and between their beginning and end they will have indefinitely many temporal phases. But states differ from dynamic situations in that states are homogeneous and unchanging throughout their successive phases, whilst dynamic situations are not. Thus, the conceptual overlap between states and dynamic situations explains why it is semantically possible for the habitual aspect marker *a* to occur before stative verbs.

We can further substantiate that *a* + *gat* gives an habitual meaning by an example of the mesolectal habitual aspect marker *doz* co-occurring with *gat*. 
There are no examples of *gat + ing - the mesolectal progressive aspect marker.

Stative gat and stative get are in variation with mesolectal hav and had. had is marked for past tense.

The possible explanation for get being able to vary with gat when referring to states although gat is a stative verb and get is non-stative, is given in the discussion on Aspect in Chapter 4.

It should be noted that gat + infinitival complement (gat + fu (- tu) can vary with get+fu (- tu) as a modal of obligation, but only get+fu (- tu) can function as a modal of requirement. For example:

(v) i. mi gat fu diil wid nof chilren
    I have to deal with a lot of children. (16A/4/1)
    ii. mi get fu diil wid nof chilren

(3) i. shi get fu gu picha
    She was allowed to go/had to go to the cinema
    ii. shi gat fu gu picha
    She had to go to the cinema/*she was allowed to go to the cinema.
gat+fu and get+fu are in variation with mesolectal hav tu and had tu (marked for past tense) as a modal of obligation.

3.10.3 Summary of get and gat

When the structure is NP + get + (verb )
   (adjective)
   (adverb )

get has a dynamic meaning - it is referring to a change of state.

In a structure NP + get + NP

get can be referring to a state, or a change of state with
the linguistic and situational context specifying the meaning.
gat can only occur in structures NP + gat + NP and it always
refers to a state.

gat + infinitival complement can vary with get + infinitival
complement as a modal of obligation, but only get +
infinitival complement can function as a modal of requirement.

3.10.4 Summary of formal renewal of the morphemes with
the forms /gat/ and /get/, from basilect to mesolect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilect (Identification)</th>
<th>Mesolect (Differentiation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locative copula</td>
<td>gat → hav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bin + gat → had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive copula</td>
<td>gat → hav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bin + gat → had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential copula</td>
<td>gat → hav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bin + gat → had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative copula</td>
<td>get → hav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bin + get → had</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Basilect (Identification)  Mesolect (Differentiation)

Possessive copula  get → hav
bin + get → had

Existential copula  get → hav
bin + get → had

Change of state copula  get → get

3.10.5 Summary of variation due to overlap between morpheme classes

gat  get

get  -
CHAPTER IV

THE SYSTEMS OF ASPECT AND TENSE

IN GUYANESE CREOLE

4.1 Aspect

I will postulate two primary aspectual oppositions for Guyanese Creole: (i) IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE

(ii) DURATIVE - PUNCTUAL

The IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE opposition depends on the syntactic classification of verbs; the DURATIVE - PUNCTUAL opposition relies on the inherent aspectual properties of the predicate phrase thus either prohibiting certain combinations or restricting their meaning.

4.2 IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE

Imperfective aspect makes reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation without explicit reference to beginning or end. Perfective aspect lacks explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation, with beginning, middle and end rolled into one. For example:

(1) jaan bin a sing wen paal kom in di ruum

John was singing when Paul entered the room.

1. The terminological system used in this analysis is that established by Comrie (1976).
The first verbal construction, *a sing*, has 'imperfective' meaning in that it represents the background to some event. The second verb, *kom*, presents the totality of the situation referred to - Paul's entry - without reference to the internal temporal structure. The 'entry', therefore, has 'perfective' meaning.

4.2.1 Realization of PERFECTIVE aspect in the basilect and mesolect

Uninflected non-stative verbs are categorized aspectually as PERFECTIVE in the basilect and mesolect. Non-stative verbs view a situation as a whole entity. Thus, without contextual modification, non-stative verbs refer to situations which are completed:

(2) *shi sing* - she sang
(3) *shi staart* - she began
(4) *shi waak tu di shap* - she walked to the shop
(5) *shi get di buk* - she received the book.

Therefore, the morphological category PERFECTIVE is in the verb.

4.2.2 IMPERFECTIVE

The Imperfective category of Guyanese Creole is subdivided into four distinct categories: HABITUAL, CONTINUOUS, PROGRESSIVE and NONPROGRESSIVE. Habitual aspect describes a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is
viewed not as an incidental property of the moment, but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period. Continuous aspect is defined negatively as imperfectivity that is not habituality. Progressive aspect is a combination of continuousness with non-stativity. Nonprogressive aspect is a combination of continuousness with resultativity in the case of Guyanese.

4.2.2.1 Realization of IMPERFECTIVE aspect in the basilect

Uninflected stative verbs are aspectually CONTINUOUS. Stative verbs refer to situations which are undifferentiated and lacking in defined limits. Thus, without contextual modification, stative verbs refer to situations which are going on in time:

(6) shi noo (de aansa) - she knows (the answer)
(7) shi waant (di buk) - she wants (the book).

Non-stative verbs inflected by the imperfective aspectual a are aspectually PROGRESSIVE. Inflected non-stative verbs refer to situations which are going on in time, thus CONTINUOUSNESS is a part of the meaning of PROGRESSIVE. But PROGRESSIVE aspect differs from CONTINUOUS aspect in that it refers to situations which will only continue if subject to a new input of energy. This is a reflex of the non-stativity of the verb which views a situation as a whole entity. Therefore:

(8) shi a sing - she is singing
(9) shi a ron - she is running.
Uninflected stative-resultative verbs are aspectually NONPROGRESSIVE. CONTINUOUSNESS, resulting from the stativity of the verb, is a part of the meaning of NONPROGRESSIVE aspect. But it differs from PROGRESSIVE aspect in that it is non-dynamic, and it differs from CONTINUOUS aspect since it refers to a situation which is complete. The completive meaning is a reflex of the lexical resultativity of the verb. Thus, without contextual modification NONPROGRESSIVE aspect refers to situations which are complete, but still going on in time. Therefore

(10) shi gaan hoom - she has gone home
(11) di glaas brok - the glass has broken.

There is an HABITUAL aspect marker a in the basilect. HABITUAL aspect refers to a situation which is characteristic over an extended period of time. Consequently, it is possible for the HABITUAL to combine with the PERFECTIVE, CONTINUOUS, PROGRESSIVE and NONPROGRESSIVE aspects.

(12) HABITUAL a + PERFECTIVE aspect
    shi a sing - she usually sings.

The linguistic (use of a subordinate adverbial clause) or situational context specifies when a before non-stative verbs is functioning as a PROGRESSIVE or HABITUAL aspect marker. The meaning is PROGRESSIVE without contextual modification.

(13) HABITUAL a + CONTINUOUS aspect
    shi a biliiv - she usually believes
(14) HABITUAL a + NONPROGRESSIVE aspect
shi a gaang hoom - she has usually left for home.

(15) HABITUAL a + PROGRESSIVE aspect
shi a de a sing - she is usually singing

4.2.2.2 Realization of IMPERFECTIVE aspect in the mesolect

In the mesolect there is a formal differentiation in the IMPERFECTIVE category: -ing is suffixed to non-stative verbs for PROGRESSIVE aspect; -s is suffixed to stative and non-stative verbs for HABITUAL aspect; doz and yuuz tu (yuuz tu can only have PAST reference) precede all classes of verbs for HABITUAL aspect. Thus:

(16) PROGRESSIVE aspect -ing
shi singing - she is singing

(17) HABITUAL aspect -s
shi singz - she usually sings
shi biliivz - she usually believes

(18) HABITUAL aspect doz
shi doz sing - she usually sings
shi doz biliiv - she usually believes
shi doz gaan - she has usually left

(19) HABITUAL aspect yuuz tu
shi yuuz tu sing - she used to sing
shi yuuz tu biliiv - she used to believe
shi yuuz tu gaan - she used to have left.
4.2.3 **Diagram of IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE opposition**

We can diagram the IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE opposition and subdivisions thus:

```
PERFECTIVE
(non-stative verbs)

HABITUAL
(a, -s, doz yuuz tu + verbs)

CONTINUOUS
(stative verbs)

NONPROGRESSIVE
(stative-resultative verbs)

IMPERFECTIVE

PROGRESSIVE
(a, -ing + non-stative verbs)
```

4.2.4 **Aspect and adverbial co-occurrence**

The aspectual categories exemplified above are the basic aspects of verbs, or a combination of verb and an auxiliary verb. According to Friedrich (1974:54) aspect is also always in part handled by adverbial elements with variously linear or punctual meaning. Such adverbial elements are part of the underlying verb phrase. He goes on:

'The possibility of cooccurrence (or selectional combination) between verbal and adverbial subcategories is the **universal** criterion for aspect. In fact, the non-primary functions of aspect always depend on contexts of this sort in all languages, and in many cases, even the primary functions do...'

I will test the co-occurrence of the aspectual categories exemplified above with some adverbs which are aspectually
± PUNCTUAL. The co-occurrence possibilities will reinforce the functions of the categories exemplified above, as well as modify these basic aspects. The adverbs are:

+ PUNCTUAL - PUNCTUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wans bifoor</td>
<td>'once before'</td>
<td>aalweez</td>
<td>'always'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 3.00</td>
<td>'at 3.00'</td>
<td>neva</td>
<td>'never'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jos den</td>
<td>'just then'</td>
<td>oova an oova</td>
<td>'over and over again'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yestudee</td>
<td>'yesterday'</td>
<td>dyuurin di</td>
<td>'during the past year'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>paas yeer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4.1 Punctual adverbs and PERFECTIVE aspect

(20) (wans bifoor)
(   ) shi sing di saang - she sang the song
(at 3.00   ) shi waak tu skuul - she walked to school
(jos den   ) shi get di buk   - she received the book
(yestudee  )

Without contextual modification, PERFECTIVE verbs refer to situations with the beginning, middle and end rolled into one. The possibility of their co-occurrence with punctual adverbs without semantic change, supports this primary function.

4.2.4.2 Nonpunctual adverbs and PERFECTIVE aspect

PERFECTIVE verbs can also have imperfective meaning as illustrated by their co-occurrence with nonpunctual adverbs.
(21) oova an oova ageen /shi sing di saang
Over and over again/she sang the song

(22) dyuurin di paas yeer/shi waak tu skuul
During the past year/shi has walked to school

(23) shi /aalweez /waak tu skuul
she /always /walked to school

(24) shi /neva /waak tu skuul
She has never walked to school

(25) dyuurin di paas yeer /shi get di buk
During the past year /she has had the book

(26) oova an oova ageen /shi get di buk
Over and over again /shi received the book

It is possible for PERFECTIVE verbs to have imperfective meaning, as Comrie (1976:21-22) points out, because perfectivity involves lack of explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation, rather than explicitly implying the lack of such internal temporal constituency. Therefore, it is possible for PERFECTIVE verbs to be used for situations that are internally complex such as those that last for a considerable period of time, or include a number of distinct phases. The internal structure of such situations cannot be referred to directly by the choice of a PERFECTIVE verb, since this is what PERFECTIVE verbs cannot indicate. But such reference can be made explicit by the
linguistic and situational context.

The examples above (21–26), illustrate PERFECTIVE verbs having HABITUAL and CONTINUOUS meanings. It is also possible for PERFECTIVE verbs to have NONPROGRESSIVE meaning as noted in the variation between non-stative *qu* (PERFECTIVE) and stative-resultative *gaan* (NONPROGRESSIVE) – see section 3.9.3, or in the example below:

(27) \[
\text{shi lef tuu houwaz agoo )}
\]
\[
\text{shi liiv tuu houwaz agoo)}
\]

she left two hours ago

It is not possible, however, for PERFECTIVE verbs to have PROGRESSIVE meaning.

Since PERFECTIVE verbs rely on the linguistic and situational context for IMPERFECTIVE meaning, IMPERFECTIVE reference is a non-primary function of PERFECTIVE verbs.

4.2.4.3 Nonpunctual adverbs and IMPERFECTIVE aspect

4.2.4.3.1 HABITUAL aspect

(28) \[
\text{oova an oova ageen /shi } \{ a \} \text{ waak tu skuul (doz)}
\]
Over and over again / she usually walks to school

(29) \[
\text{dyuurin di paas yeer /shi } \{ a \} \text{ waak tu skuul (doz)}
\]
During the past year / she has been walking to school

(30) \[
\text{shi } \{ a \} \text{ /aalweez/waak tu skuul (doz)}
\]
She usually / always / walks to school
Note that HABITUAL aspect not only co-occurs with adverbial phrases which are + HABITUAL \( (aalweez, oova an oova ageen) \), but also with phrases which are + CONTINUOUS \( (neva, dyuurin di paas yeer) \). This is possible since HABITUAL aspect refers to situations which are characteristic over an extended period of time.

### 4.2.4.3.2 CONTINUOUS aspect

(32) oova an oova ageen / shi biliiv di stoorii
    Over and over again / she believed the story

(33) dyuurin di paas yeer / shi biliiv di stoorii
    During the past year / she has believed the story

(34) shi / aalweez / biliiv di stoorii
    She has / always / believed the story

(35) shi / neva / biliiv di stoorii
    She has / never / believed the story.

CONTINUOUS aspect can have HABITUAL meaning as noted by its co-occurrence with the + HABITUAL \( (aalweez, oova an oova ageen) \) adverbs. Therefore, HABITUAL meaning is a non-primary function of CONTINUOUS aspect.

### 4.2.4.3.3 NONPROGRESSIVE aspect

(36) oova an oova ageen / shi brok di windoo
    Over and over again / she has broken the window
(37) dyuurin di paas yeer / shi **brok** di windoo
During the past year / she has broken the window

(38) shi / **aalweez** / brok di windoo
She has / **always** / broken the window

(39) shi / **neva** / brok di windoo
She has / **never** / broken the window.

The co-occurrence possibility of NONPROGRESSIVE aspect with CONTINUOUS adverbs seems to support the position that NONPROGRESSIVE aspect has CONTINUOUSNESS as a part of its meaning. Its co-occurrence with HABITUAL adverbs, indicates that HABITUAL meaning is a non-primary function of NONPROGRESSIVE aspect.

4.2.4.3.4 **PROGRESSIVE aspect**

(40) oova an oova ageen / shi { **a** } waak tu skuul { -ing }
Over and over again / she has been walking to school

(41) dyuurin di paas yeer / shi { **a** } waak tu skuul { -ing }
During the past year / she has been walking to school

(42) shi / **aalweez** / { **a** } waak tu skuul { -ing }
She is / **always** / walking to school

(43) shi / **neva** / { **a** } waak tu skuul { -ing }
She is / **never** / walking to school.
The co-occurrence possibility of PROGRESSIVE aspect with CONTINUOUS adverbs supports the position that PROGRESSIVE aspect has CONTINUOUSNESS as a part of its meaning. Its co-occurrence with HABITUAL adverbs indicates that HABITUAL meaning is a non-primary function of PROGRESSIVE aspect.

The combination of IMPERFECTIVE aspect and non-punctual adverbs supports the categorizations and hierarchy posited in the diagram (section 4.2.3) above.

4.2.4.4 Punctual adverbs and IMPERFECTIVE aspect

4.2.4.4.1 HABITUAL aspect

(44) *(wans bifoor)  
(at 3.00 ) shi { a } waak tu skuul  
( ) { yuuz tu }  
(jos den )  
( )  
(yestudee )  

The inability of HABITUAL aspect to co-occur with punctual adverbs is not surprising since HABITUAL aspect makes reference to a situation which is characteristic over an extended period of time.

4.2.4.4.2 CONTINUOUS aspect

(45) (wans bifoor)  
( )  
(at 3.00 ) shi biliiv di stoorii  
( )  
(jos den )  
( )  
(yestudee )
It is possible for the CONTINUOUS category to co-occur with nonpunctual adverbs and punctual adverbs, but there is an aspectual meaning difference. With nonpunctual adverbs we are referring to the internal temporal constituency of a situation without explicit reference to beginning or end, therefore imperfective meaning. But with the combination of CONTINUOUS aspect and punctual adverbs, we are making reference not only to a situation which is going on in time, but also to its inception. Therefore, the combination of CONTINUOUS aspect and punctual adverbs gives an aspectual meaning of + INCEPTIVE, - PUNCTUAL.

4.2.4.4.3 NONPROGRESSIVE aspect

(46) (wans bifoors) (at 3.00) shi brok di windoo (jos den) (yestudee)

(Once before) (at 3.00) she broke the window (just then) (yesterday)

Again there is a meaning difference when NONPROGRESSIVE
aspect combines with punctual adverbs. Stative-resultative verbs are aspectually NONPROGRESSIVE. It was stated above, that stative-resultative verbs refer not only to an ongoing state, but also to the successful completion of an action. When NONPROGRESSIVE aspect combines with punctual adverbs, we have a + COMPLETIVE, - PUNCTUAL aspectual meaning.

4.2.4.4.4 PROGRESSIVE aspect

(47) *(wans bifoor)
    (at 3.00)
    (Jos den)
    (yestudee) shi {a} waak tu skuul

It is possible, however, for PROGRESSIVE aspect to co-occur with punctual adverbs, as long as the TIME of the occurrence is explicit or implicit in the context.

(48) [wans bifoor [wen paal {a} riid di buk] meerii kom in di ruum]

Once before [when Paul was reading the book] Mary came into the room

(49) [yestudee [wail meerii {a} sing di saang] paal drap ii buk]

Yesterday [while Mary was singing the song] Paul dropped his book

Thus, Paul's reading, use of PROGRESSIVE aspect, provides the background to Mary's entry into the room. Similarly, Mary's singing provides the background to the time when Paul dropped
his book. Therefore, the co-occurrence of PROGRESSIVE aspect with punctual adverbs, gives a - PUNCTUAL aspectual meaning.

The CONTINUOUS, NONPROGRESSIVE and PROGRESSIVE categories, but not the HABITUAL category, can combine with punctual adverbs. This co-occurrence possibility supports the subdivision exemplified in the diagram (section 4.2.3) where the CONTINUOUS, NONPROGRESSIVE and PROGRESSIVE categories are marked CONTINUOUS.

4.2.5 Summary of the primary and non-primary functions of the IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE aspectual categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERFECTIVE</td>
<td>PERFECTIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HABITUAL</td>
<td>HABITUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUOUS</td>
<td>CONTINUOUS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONPROGRESSIVE</td>
<td>NONPROGRESSIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRESSIVE</td>
<td>PROGRESSIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Since the PERFECTIVE category can encompass that of the IMPERFECTIVE category (except for PROGRESSIVE aspect), it implies that the PERFECTIVE is the unmarked member of the IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE opposition. We can therefore posit an aspectual system of \[ \ast \text{IMPERFECTIVE} \] for Guyanese Creole.

4.3 DURATIVE - PUNCTUAL

A second grammatical aspectual opposition observed in Guyanese Creole is the DURATIVE - PUNCTUAL opposition. DURATIVE aspect refers to a situation that is conceived of as lasting in time. PUNCTUAL aspect refers to a situation that is not conceived of as lasting in time. Whereas the IMPERFECTIVE - PERFECTIVE opposition relies on the syntactic classification of verbs, the DURATIVE - PUNCTUAL opposition relies on the inherent semantic aspectual properties of the predicate phrase, either prohibiting certain combinations, or restricting their meaning.

4.3.1.1 DURATIVE aspect in the basilect and mesolect

de is the DURATIVE aspect marker in the basilect. It occurs before PROGRESSIVE (a or -ing + non-stative verbs) predicates and CONTINUOUS (adjective) predicates.

(50) shi de a sing \text{PROGRESSIVE} \\
She is singing
CONTINUOUS

She is getting on well.

In the mesolect there is a formal differentiation in the DURATIVE category. The form bii is used as a DURATIVE aspect marker, but only in constructions that are marked for HABITUAL aspect. de, on the other hand, continues in HABITUAL and NONHABITUAL constructions:

(52) shi doz bii singing) she is usually singing
    shi doz de singing )

(53) shi de singing ) she is singing
    *shi bii singing)

(54) shi doz bii sarii) she usually has the appearance of
    shi doz de sarii ) being sorry

(55) shi de sarii) she has the appearance of being sorry.
    *shi bii sarii)

When DURATIVE de and bii co-occur with PROGRESSIVE and CONTINUOUS predicates, you are making reference to the fact that the situation went on for a period of time, but you are not specifying how much time. Thus the combination of de and PROGRESSIVE or CONTINUOUS predicate gives an aspectual meaning of UNSPECIFIED QUANTITY.

de + PROGRESSIVE predicate

(56) i. shi de \{ a } sing\} \{-ing\} she is singing
    ii. shi \{ a \} sing\} \{-ing\}
de + CONTINUOUS predicate

(57) i. shi de aalrait) she is alright
   ii. shi Ø aalrait)

Examples (56) i. and ii. make reference to someone who is in the process of singing. But example (56) i. with de, makes explicit reference to the fact that you are unaware for how long the singing was going on, and for how long it will continue. The utterance is therefore marked for an UNSPECIFIED QUANTITY of time. The same applies to examples (57) i. and ii.

But the meaning can change if the main clause combines with a subordinate adverbial clause of TIME.

de + CONTINUOUS predicate

(58) i. wen yu sii di blada, it gon de big) When you see the ) balloon, it will
   ii. wen yu sii di blada, it gon Ø big ) be big

de + PROGRESSIVE predicate

(59) i. wen yu sii meerii, shi gon de singing)When you see ) Mary, she will
   *ii. wen yu sii meerii, shi gon Ø singing ) be singing.

Example (58) ii. without de, is referring to the fact that when you see the balloon it will be 'big', and that size will not change or is unlikely to change. But by using de in example (58) i., you are implying that the balloon will only be 'big' for the period of time you are seeing it. Thus the length of time is SPECIFIED. The length of time is also SPECIFIED in example (59) i., but example (59) ii. is un-
It was noted in section 3.6.1 that DURATIVE aspect cannot co-occur with predicate stative and stative-resultative verbs (CONTINUOUS and NONPROGRESSIVE aspects respectively) although both are marked for CONTINUOUS aspect, but it can combine - as noted above - with predicate adjectives which are aspectually CONTINUOUS. It is quite possible that stative and stative-resultative verbs are already inherently marked UNSPECIFIED QUANTITY. This inherent semantic meaning would indicate that adjectives belong to a different sub-class to stative, stative-resultative (and non-stative) verbs. Examples such as:

(60) shi gaan a shap  (stative-resultative verb)
    She has gone to the shop

(61) shi noo di aansa  (stative verb)
    She knows the answer

are not specific on how long the person has been at the shop, or for how long the person has known the answer. But the time can be SPECIFIED by a subordinate adverbial clause of TIME:

(62) shi gaan a shap/sins tuu a klak
    She has gone to the shop/since two o'clock

(63) laas yeer/shi noo di aansa
    Last year/she knew the answer.

DURATIVE aspect cannot co-occur with non-stative verbs which are aspectually PERFECTIVE and thus lacking in internal structure.
4.3.1.2 Nonpunctual adverbs and DURATIVE aspect

(64) oova an oova ageen } 
    dyuurin di paas yeer) } shi de { a } sing 
          { -ing }

Over and over again ) she has been singing
During the past year)

(65) shi /aalweez/ de { a } sing 
     neva / { - ing } 

She is /always/ singing 
never /

(66) oova an oova ageen ) 
    dyuurin di paas yeer)

Over and over again ) the balloon has been big
During the past year)

(67) di blada /aalweez/ de big 
     neva / 

The balloon is /always/ big 
never /

4.3.1.3 Punctual adverbs and DURATIVE aspect

(68) (wans bifoors)
    ( )
    (at 3.00 ) shi de { a } sing 
    ( ) { -ing }
    (jos den )
    ( )
    (yestudee )

(Once before)
( )
(at 3.00 ) she was singing
( )
(just then )
( )
(yesterday )

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DURATIVE aspect can combine with punctual adverbs, but the punctual reference indicates a point in time during which the action was taking place.

*de* is optional in example (70) below, which is a combination of subordinate punctual adverbial phrase, and an adverbial phrase of time. The punctual adverbial phrase indicates the point in time during which the action was taking place, the use of the temporal phrase specifies the quantity of time.

(70)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Once before} & \quad \text{when Paul was reading the book} \\
&wans bifoor [\text{when Paul was reading the book}] \quad \text{Mary came into the room} \\
&(\text{wen paal (de) \{a\} riid di buk} \text{meerii kom in} \{\text{ing}\} \text{di ruum})
\end{align*}
\]

The use of *de* emphasizes the action of 'reading'; without *de*, the focus is on Mary's entry into the room, exemplified in
the main clause².

4.3.2.1 **PUNCTUAL aspect in the basilect and mesolect**

Don is the PUNCTUAL aspect marker in the basilect and mesolect. It occurs before PERFECTIVE (non-stative verbs) predicates, CONTINUOUS (stative verbs and adjectives) predicates, and NONPROGRESSIVE (stative-resultative verbs) predicates.

When don combines with PERFECTIVE verbs, the utterance is referring to a situation which has ended. The utterance, therefore, has a **COMPLETIVE** aspectual meaning.

(71) i. shi don sing) 
   she has sung
ii. shi Ø sing )

Whereas example (71)ii. implies completion, in example (71)i. completion is overtly marked.

When don combines with CONTINUOUS and NONPROGRESSIVE predicates the utterance is referring to a temporally restricted but nonpunctual situation. The utterance therefore has a + COMPLETIVE, - PUNCTUAL meaning.

**don + CONTINUOUS aspect**

(72) paal don noo di aansa

Paul already knows the answer.

(Paul found out the answer some time in the past, + COMPLETIVE, but at the moment of utterance he is still in possession of that knowledge, - PUNCTUAL.)

² This example supports the point made by Friedrich (1974: 38) that aspect has certain emphatic or intensifying functions. See also Scheffer (1975).
(73) paal don taal
Paul is already tall.

don + NONPROGRESSIVE aspect

(74) paal don gaan hoom
Paul has already left for home.

don cannot combine with predicates which are inflected for HABITUAL and PROGRESSIVE aspects. The predicates with which don can combine are uninflected.

4.3.2.2 Punctual adverbs and PUNCTUAL aspect

(75) (wans bifoor)
    (at 3.00 ) shi don sing
    ( )
    (jos den )
    ( )
    (yestudee )
    (Once before)
    ( )
    (at 3.00 ) she had sung
    ( )
    (just then )
    ( )
    (yesterday )

(76) (wans bifoor)
    (at 3.00 ) shi don gat di buk
    ( )
    (jos den )
    ( )
    (yestudee )
    (Once before)
    ( )
    (at 3.00 ) shi already had the book
    ( )
    (just then )
    ( )
    (yesterday )
When PUNCTUAL aspect combines with punctual verbs, the utterance has a COMPLETIVE meaning, irrespective of whether the verb is PERFECTIVE or IMPERFECTIVE. The emphasis is on the completion of the action, rather than on whether it is still going on in time.

4.3.2.3 Nonpunctual adverbs and PUNCTUAL aspect

4.3.3 Summary of functions of the DURATIVE and PUNCTUAL aspectual categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DURATIVE</td>
<td>UNSPECIFIED QUANTITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPECIFIED QUANTITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since DURATIVE de has wider contextual co-occurrence possibilities than PUNCTUAL don, I would posit don as the marked member of the DURATIVE-PUNCTUAL opposition. Guyanese Creole, therefore, has a second aspectual opposition of \([\pm\text{PUNCTUAL}]\).

### 4.4 Summary on Aspect

I have postulated two aspectual oppositions for Guyanese Creole:

(i) \([\pm\text{IMPERFECTIVE}]\)

(ii) \([\pm\text{PUNCTUAL}]\)

The \([\pm\text{IMPERFECTIVE}]\) opposition depends on the syntactic classification of verbs, the \([\pm\text{PUNCTUAL}]\) opposition relies on the inherent aspectual properties of the predicate phrase, thus either prohibiting certain combinations or restricting their meaning.

This reanalysis highlights the inadequacy of the \([\pm\text{punctual}]\) aspectual parameter that Bickerton set up for the Guyanese basilect: \([+\text{punctual}]\) implies a single action, \([-\text{punctual}]\) an extended or repeated action. Unmarked non-stative verbs are \([+\text{punctual}]\), and marked non-stative verbs and stative verbs are \([-\text{punctual}]\). But as I have illustrated unmarked non-stative verbs can have habitual and continuous meanings, and there is also the class of stative-resultative
verbs to account for. Therefore, Bickerton's punctual category is lacking in observational, descriptive and explanatory adequacy. I have also illustrated that it is possible to fit the form don into the grammar of Guyanese without referring to it as a 'performance feature', appealing to decreolization, or equating it with the English perfect. Furthermore, Bickerton failed to realize that de is a durative aspect marker.

It also follows from this analysis that the series of grammatical changes Bickerton posits as occurring in the movement from basilect to acrolect cannot apply if his basilectal system is inadequate. I think that I have quite reasonably shown that the basilect and mesolect operate with the same underlying categories, although there are some formal differences between the two systems.

4.5 Tense

The tense system of Guyanese Creole relies not on the directionality of time (as for example Standard English past-nonpast), but on the relationship between a speaker and events in the sense of whether it is 'now' or 'not now'. The formally marked 'past' and 'future' are 'not now', and the formally unmarked 'present', 'past' and 'future' denote things in the deictic 'here-and-now'. The primary tense distinction is therefore PRESENT-NONPRESENT, with NONPRESENT being subdivided into PAST and FUTURE.
4.6 **FUTURE Time Reference in the Basilect and Mesolec't**

There is a future tense marker *gu* in the basilect. *gon* is the mesolect form.

(79) su mi *gu* kyaan mek um  
So I will not be able to make it. (16A/14-15/7)

(80) a *gon* tel yu from di staarting  
I will tell you from the beginning. (54A/4-5/1)

The future tense forms may only co-occur with adverbs which make reference to future time.

(81) mi *gu* giv yu di buk/tumaroo  
I will give you the book/tomorrow.

(82) mi *gon* giv yu di buk/jos nau  
I will give you the book/just now.

(83) *mi *gu* giv yu di buk/a fyuu minits agoo  
I will give you the book/a few minutes ago.

(84) *mi *gon* giv yu di buk/at prezent  
I will give you the book/at present.

Future time reference can also be made by the use of PROGRESSIVE aspect combined with a temporal adverbial clause marked for future time.

(85) neks wiik/dem a staart di wok  
Next week/they are going to start the work.

(86) we yu *going*/tumaroo  
Where are you going/tomorrow?
PERFECTIVE aspect can also have future time reference, but then as part of a subordinate temporal adverbial clause, and not of the main clause.

(87) wen yu ꞌw✿ hoom, yu ꞌgon sii jaan

When you arrive home, you will see John.

4.7 PRESENT and PAST Time Reference in the Basilect and Mesolect

There is no formally marked present tense grammatical category in Guyanese Creole. There is a formally marked past tense category which is optional. Guyanese Creole, then, relies on the IMPERFECTIVE-PERFECTIVE aspectual opposition for present and past time reference.

4.7.1 IMPERFECTIVE aspect and present meaning

Where the rest of the sentence contains no overt specification of time reference, the IMPERFECTIVE category has present meaning in Guyanese Creole. Non-stative verbs are preceded by the progressive/habitual aspect marker ꞌa, the habitual aspect marker ꞌdoz, or habitual ꞌs or progressive -ing is suffixed to the verbs. Stative verbs, being aspectually CONTINUOUS and thus IMPERFECTIVE, are unmarked.

(88) a mii ꞌa tel yu

I am telling you. (18A/35/2)
(89) mi tiiching nau
  I am teaching now.  (17B/2/1)

(90) a doz duu tuu taip a jaab
  I do two types of jobs.  (18A/2/1)

(91) ai selz meet
  I sell meat.  (54A/2/1)

(92) az yu noo, op da said, yu gat plentii kuulii pipl
  As you know, up that side, there are a lot of Indians.  (16A/15/2)

4.7.2 **PERFECTIVE aspect and past meaning**

PERFECTIVE aspect, without contextual support, gives past meaning. Thus non-stative verbs are uninflected.

(93) yes, bond tel mi hii mek 14 kwaata
  Yes, Bond told me (that) he made 14 quarters.  (18A/18/9)

(94) shi staart tel mi di stoorii
  She began to tell me the story.

4.7.3 **IMPERFECTIVE aspect and past meaning**

Stative verbs, and non-stative verbs inflected for PROGRESSIVE and HABITUAL aspect can also have past meaning. Past reference, however, is dependent on the linguistic (i.e. subordinate adverbial clauses of time, or co-occurrence with PERFECTIVE verbs) and situational context.
I did not tell my grandmother anything because I knew they would not have wanted me to leave the trade.

They wanted two men to stitch bags, and then Ramjass came, and he recommended me and another boy.

That meant you were looking out, your friend was rolling coming.

You told them to go and buy tickets, they would not usually go.

Stative-resultative verbs are aspectually IMPERFECTIVE, but since lexically they refer to the successful completion of a situation, they can only have past meaning. Thus:

She has broken the glass.

She has gone home.

Well, when they went to work in the mornings, I was left alone at home there.
4.7.4 IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE aspects and nonpast meaning

Both IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE categories are used in generalizations which have nonpast meaning.

**IMPERFECTIVE**

(102) dem na a laarn, mi na a duu notn, su in di end mi a achiiv notn

They do not usually learn, I do not usually do anything, so in the end I usually achieve nothing.  
(16A/29-30/6)

(103) piipl na a biliiv mi

People do not usually believe me. (62B/32/6)

(104) evrii taim ai get de, shi doz gaan

Every time I get there, she has usually gone.

(105) shi doz de singing

She is usually singing.

(106) hii laik plee nof saal

He likes to play a lot of 'salt' (a game). (17B/30/8)

(107) evrii taim ai gu de, hii gaan hoom

Every time I go there, he has gone home.

(108) shi aalweez riiding

She is always reading.
PERFECTIVE

(109) an help dem dat de mos get somting fu duu wen dem lef skull

And help them that they must get something to do when they leave school. (16A/5-6/1)

The use of IMPERFECTIVE aspect in nonpast constructions is natural if we see a relationship between 'present' and 'nonpast': they overlap in that the 'present' is any expanse of time the speaker wants it to be. (See Russell 1915; Bull 1960; Sedey 1969.) But why can PERFECTIVE aspect have nonpast meaning? It can because it lacks explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation. We noted above in the discussion on Aspect that the PERFECTIVE can have habitual meaning, although habitual meaning is dependent on the linguistic and situational context. In nonpast constructions you are referring to situations which are characteristic over a period of time.

4.7.5 Summary of the IMPERFECTIVE-PERFECTIVE aspectual opposition and time reference

FUTURE time reference : PROGRESSIVE aspect + context
PERFECTIVE aspect + context

PRESENT time reference : CONTINUOUS aspect
PROGRESSIVE aspect
HABITUAL + PERFECTIVE aspects

PAST time reference : PERFECTIVE aspect
NONPROGRESSIVE aspect

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### 4.7.6 Syntactic evidence of present, nonpast and past neutralization

In sections 4.7.1 - 4.7.4 we observed the neutralization of present, nonpast and past meanings. We can test the neutralization by adverbial co-occurrence. As a preliminary we can postulate three classes of adverbs subcategorized for *TIME*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ Past</th>
<th>† Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>laang taim (long ago)</td>
<td>neva (never)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in dem deez (in those days)</td>
<td>aalweez (always)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wans bifoor (once before)</td>
<td>jos nau (just now)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yestudee (yesterday)</td>
<td>tudee (today)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Past

soo faar (so far)
az yet (as yet)

fu di paas trii yeerz (for the past three years)
at prezent (at present)
4.7.6.1 + Past adverbs and PERFECTIVE aspect

(110) laang taim / mi fait baad in skuul
Long ago / I fought a lot in school

(111) in dem deez / mi fait baad in skull
In those days / I fought a lot in school

(112) wans bifoors / mi riid di buk
Once before / I read the book

(113) yestudee / mi get di buk
Yesterday / I got the book

4.7.6.2 + Past adverbs and PERFECTIVE aspect

(114) shi / neva / hit di bai
She / never / hits the boy
She / never / hits the boy

(115) shi / alweez / hit di bai
She / always / hits the boy
She / always / hits the boy

(116) shi waak tu tong / jos nau
She walked to town / just now

(117) shi waak tu tong / tudee
She walked to town / today

Examples (116) and (117) reject an habitual and thus nonpast reading because the adverbs are aspectually + PUNCTUAL. Furthermore, the combination can only refer to situations which occurred before the moment of utterance.
4.7.6.3 - Past adverbs and PERFECTIVE aspect

The PERFECTIVE rejects adverbs which indicate a background contemporaneous with the speaker at the moment of utterance.

(118) *at prezent/soo faar/az yet/shi sen di bai fu di buk
At present/so far/as yet/she has sent the boy for the book

The adverbs are acceptable, however, if the verb is negated:

(119) at prezent/soo faar/az yet/shi na sen di bai fu di buk
At present/so far/has not sent the boy for the book

Thus the boy's presence is not a background contemporaneous with the speaker at the moment of utterance.

But the PERFECTIVE can combine with -Past adverbs in a positive and a negative sense, if the adverbial phrase is also PUNCTUAL.

(120) fu di paas trii yeerz/shi sen di bai fu di buk
For the past three years/she has sent the boy for the book

(121) fu di paas trii yeerz/shi na sen di bai fu di buk
For the past three years/she has not sent the boy for the book

4.7.6.4 + Past adverbs and CONTINUOUS (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(122) laang taim/in dem deez/mi waant di buk
Long ago/in those days/I wanted the book

(123) wans bifoor/yestudee/mi waant di buk
Once before/yesterday/I wanted the book
4.7.6.5 Past adverbs and CONTINUOUS (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(124) shi/neva/biliiv di stoorii
She/never/believed the story
She/never/believes the story

(125) shi/aalweez/biliiv di stoorii
She/always/believed the story
She/always/believes the story

(126) shi waant di buk / jos nau / tudee
She wanted the book/just now/today
She wants the book/just now/today

4.7.6.6 Past adverbs and CONTINUOUS (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(127) at prezent/soo faar/mi biliiv di stoorii
At present/so far/I believe the story

(128) fu di paas trii yeerz / mi noo shi
For the past three years/I have known her

The punctual adverbial phrase az yet can only combine with CONTINUOUS aspect if the verb is negated:

(129) *az yet / mi noo shi
As yet/I know her

(130) az yet / mi na noo shi
As yet/I do not know her
4.7.6.7 +Past adverbs and PROGRESSIVE (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(131) laang taim / in dem deez / mi \{ a \} waak tu di shap \{-ing\}
Long ago / in those days / I was walking to the shop

(132) wans bifoor / yestudee / mi \{ a \} sing di saang \{-ing\}
Once before / yesterday / I was singing the song

4.7.6.8 +Past adverbs and PROGRESSIVE (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(133) shi / neva / \{ a \} sing \{-ing\}
She was never singing
She is never singing

(134) shi / aalweez / \{ a \} sing \{-ing\}
She was always singing
She is always singing

The co-occurrence of PROGRESSIVE aspect with the punctual adverbs tudee and jos nau gives the utterance an 'after now' meaning. This is in contrast with PERFECTIVE aspect which only gives a 'before now' reading. (See section 4.7.6.2.)

(135) shi \{ a \} gu hoom / tudee / jos nau \{-ing\}
She is going home / today / just now

4.7.6.9 -Past adverbs and PROGRESSIVE (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(136) soo faar / az yet / shi \{ a \} riid plentii \{-ing\}
So far / as yet / she has been reading a lot
At present/for the past three years/she has been reading a lot

4.7.6.10 + Past adverbs and NONPROGRESSIVE (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

Long ago/in those days/she did her work and (then) she went home

She left home/once before/yesterday

The co-occurrence of NONPROGRESSIVE aspect and the punctual adverbs tudee and jos nau gives the utterance a 'before now' meaning. This is similar to the co-occurrence of PERFECTIVE aspect and these adverbs.
(142) hii brok di windoo / tudee / jos nau
He broke the window / today / just now

4.7.6.12 - Past adverbs and NONPROGRESSIVE (IMPERFECTIVE)
aspect

(143) soo faar / at prezent / fu di paas trii yeerz / shi gaan
de
So far / at present / for the past three years / she has
gone there

The NONPROGRESSIVE can only combine with the adverb az yet if
the verb is negated. In this respect the NONPROGRESSIVE
category is like the CONTINUOUS category. (See section
4.7.6.6.)

(144) *az yet / shi brok di glaas

az yet / shi na brok di glaas
As yet / she has not broken the glass.

4.7.6.13 + Past adverbs and HABITUAL (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(145) laang taim / in dem deez / mi \{ a \\
\{ doz yuuz tu \}
fait baad in
skuul

Long ago / in those days / I used to fight a lot in
school

The HABITUAL category rejects punctual adverbs

(146) *wans bifoor / yestudee / mi \{ a \\
\{ doz yuuz tu \}
sing

4.7.6.14 + Past adverbs and HABITUAL (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(147) shi \{ a \\
\{ doz yuuz tu \}
/neva / ron tu di shap

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She/never/used to run to the shop
She/never/runs to the shop
(yuuz tu can only have past meaning.)

(148) shi/neva/ronz tu di shop
She/never/used to run to the shop
She/never/runs to the shop

(149) shi\{\[\frac{a}{\text{doz}}\] /aalweez/ron tu di shap
She/always/used to run to the shop
She/always/runs to the shop

The HABITUAL category rejects the punctual adverbs *jos nau
and tudee

(150) *jos nau/tudee/shi\{\[\frac{a}{\text{doz}}\] waant di buk

4.7.6.15 - Past adverbs and HABITUAL (IMPERFECTIVE) aspect

(151) soo faar/at prezent/fu di paaz trii yearz/\{\[\frac{a}{\text{doz}}\] -s\} biliiv di stoorii
So far/at present/for the past three years/I usually believe the story

The HABITUAL category can only combine with the adverb az yet
if the verb is negated.

(152) az yet/\{mi na a ron tu di shap
/\{mi dozn ron tu di shap
As yet/I do not usually run to the shop

(153) *az yet/\{mi ron z tu di shap.
4.7.7 Summary on adverbial co-occurrence with aspectual categories for time reference

This section, illustrating the co-occurrence of the IMPERFECTIVE-PERFECTIVE aspect categories with three semantic classes of adverbs supports the present, nonpast and past neutralization exemplified in the data. It also reveals the close interaction between inherent meaning of adverbs, aspect categories, negation and the meaning of the utterance.

4.8 PAST Tense Category in the Basilect and Mesòlect

The basilect past tense form is bin, and the mesolect form is did. The two forms are in variation with the mesolectal use of inflected verbs for past meaning.

(154) 'maan, wen mi bin a liv, yu shud a heer mi, yu mait a did daans'

'Man, when I was alive, you should have heard me, you may have danced.' (A ghost is speaking) (21A/12-13/9)

(155) di ribz boon hee bin plat

The ribs here were plaited. (62B/12/7)

(156) bot mii miself, a did waant lef bikaaz maneejment did baad at di taim

But I myself, I had wanted to leave because (the) management was bad at the time. (54A/16-17/1)

(157) bot a went op, an a baara mi broda kyaas net

But I went up, and I borrowed my brother's fishing net. (20A/9-10/6)
(158) shi weetid ontil ai keem hoom, an shi staart kukin
She waited until I came home, and (then) she began to cook. (20A/33-34/5)

4.8.1 **PAST tense category and adverbial co-occurrence**
Constructions with past tense forms can only combine with adverbs which are semantically + Past.

(159) laang taim / mi bin sii shi
Long ago / I saw her

(160) yestudee / mi did riid di buk
Yesterday / I read the book

(161) wans bifoor / mi keem hoom
Once before / I came home

(162) mi bin / neva / biliiv di stoorii
I / never / believed the story

(163) shi did / aalweez / gaan bai taim ai get de
She had / always / gone by the time I got there

(164) shi tuk di buk / tudee
She took the book / tudee

(165) *at prezent / mi bin sii shi

(166) *soo faar / mi did sing di saang

(167) *neks wiik / mi keem hoom
It was explained in Chapter I that the 'present' can represent not only the moment from which relations are inferred, it can also represent the time interval between the recalled event A and the anticipated event B. The former concept is referred to as 'point present' and the latter concept as 'extended present'. The possibility of a 'point present' and an 'extended present' is related to the semantics of the 'now' moment of utterance. Sedey (1969: 75-6) explains that the term 'now' is used by a speaker to state a relation he has to an object. Consequently, 'now' can be classified as subjective since it stands for a relation between a subject (the speaker) and an object rather than a relation between two objects. Standing in a relation of simultaneity does not provide a sufficient condition for saying of any event that it is occurring 'now'. What makes the difference as pointed out by Russell (1915), is the introduction of a subject, not in the trivial sense that there must be a subject (a language user) in order to say that events are occurring 'now', but in the essential sense that the semantics of 'now' are such that the word is used correctly if an event instituted by the subject is one of the terms in the simultaneity relations connoted by 'now'.

I described above the neutralization of present, non-past and past meaning. We can therefore say that the neutralization exemplifies a PRESENT ('now') conceptual framework. The use of future tense forms and past tense forms indicate a conceptual division between the moment of utterance
and the event, thus a NONPRESENT ('not now') framework.

Although Edwards (1975) makes the same error as Bickerton in believing that bin is obligatory before statives for simple-past meaning, and that bin with non-statives yields a past-before-past meaning, his semantic explanation for the optional use of bin before non-statives in simple-past constructions seems to support my conceptual analysis for the use of the tense forms. He says:

'When the speaker wants to draw attention to the pastness of a non-stative action he uses bin but if the time dimension is not focussed the verb stem alone indicates past reference with non-stative verbs..' (1975:244).

We can diagram the tense system of Guyanese Creole:

```
PRESENT               NONPRESENT
     |                     |
     |                     |
PAST (bin, did, -ed)  FUTURE (gu, gon)
```

Since the PRESENT is not formally marked, and it can have present, past, non-past and future meanings depending on the context, the PRESENT is therefore the unmarked member of the PRESENT - NONPRESENT opposition. We can therefore postulate a tense system of [± NONPRESENT] for Guyanese Creole.

4.10 Relative Time Reference

The tense system described above relates the time of the situation to the moment of utterance. Such time
reference is referred to as 'absolute time reference'. It forms the core of any tense system and serves to establish the formal and semantic contrasts involved. (See Ultan 1978). In discourse it is possible for Guyanese speakers to set up a relative time frame in that the situation is being located relative to the time of some other situation rather than to the moment of utterance. The relative framework accounts for the use of IMPERFECTIVE aspect and thus 'present' meanings in the examples below:

Describing an incident during a past occupation:

(168) mi de a learn fu raid dis haars

I was learning to ride that horse. (31B/7/3)

Lit.: I learning to ride this horse

Talking about plans the Government had for a pig-rearing Co-op.:

(169) wen taim kom fu slaata yu doz ga fu kyerii it rait de, an den dem a dedokt fu dem, an den yu a get wan smaal ting

When the time came for slaughtering, you would have had to carry it right there, and then they would have deducted for themselves, and then you would have got a small payment. (54A/1-4/3)

Lit.: When the time comes for slaughtering, you usually have to carry it right there, and then they deduct for themselves, and then you get a small payment.

The interviewer (using more standard forms) asks the interviewee about a job which the latter had finished four years previous to the interview:
How long had you been doing this kind of work?  
Lit.: How long have you been doing this kind of work?

4.11  Sequencing

Sequencing involves the anchoring of events with respect to each other and not to the speaker. In Guyanese Creole, verbs are uninflected for tense or aspect if the events are sequenced.

An informant describing the catching of wild pigs in the canefield:

(171) wii jes chap dem wid di kotlas, an wii pik op som keen liif, an jes roos dem klin, an wii divaid am bitwiin wii paatna, tek a piis, iit, and kom hoom  
We just chop them with our cutlasses, and we collect some (sugar)-cane leaves, and just roast them cleanly. And we divide it with our partner, take a piece, eat, and return home. (31B/9-13/2)

(172) nau di chap push an ai push, an hii hool a piis a mangoo an ai hool a piis a di mangoo. wel, at a sudn, ai get straanga dan di maan. su wen ai pul di ting, di chap let goo di mangoo. an wen hii let goo di mangoo ai faal aan di kotlas an mi hool said oopn  
Now the chap pushed and I pushed, and he held a piece of the mango and I held a piece of the mango. Well, suddenly, I got stronger than the man. So when I pulled the thing, the chap let go of the mango. And when he let go of the mango I fell on the cutlass and split my side. (12A/21-26/9)
4.12 Summary of Tense

I have posited a primary tense opposition of $[\pm \text{NONPRESENT}]$ for Guyanese Creole. The fact that the PRESENT is not formally marked, its use for present, past, nonpast and future meanings, and its use for relative time reference and sequencing, indicates that the PRESENT is the unmarked member of the PRESENT–NONPRESENT opposition.

Unlike Bickerton's $[\pm \text{Anterior}]$ tense system, my system accommodates the future and it adequately explains the data.
In evolving his dynamic model to describe the Guyanese creole continuum, Bickerton (1973a) refers to Le Page's (1966: vi-vii) call for a model in which there is no sharp dividing line between synchronic and diachronic studies. He quotes Le Page:

'The descriptive analyst freezes for a moment what is in fact a highly dynamic system, and describes it in static terms ... Until we have evolved descriptive techniques somewhat analogous to those of quantum mechanics, however, the best we can do is to describe the two ends of the linguistic spectrum in a country like Jamaica and give some indication of the nature of the continuum in between.'

Bickerton (1973a) claims that he has found the answer to this demand. He marries the Neo-grammian 'Wave theory' resuscitated by C-J. Bailey (1973), and the Implicational Scale relationships of DeCamp (1971), and arrives at a new metatheory. The new metatheory takes linguistic variation as the centre rather than the periphery of language study, and seeks consistency between theoretical abstractions and data. To achieve the stated ends, the metatheory breaks

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1. The 'wave theory' is based on the assumption that changes in language spread outwards from centres of innovation in much the same way that a wave spreads from the place where a stone is dropped into a pool. See Hudson (1980:41-43) for a neat characterization and criticism of wave theory.
down the Saussurean dichotomy between synchronic and diachronic studies:

'Language is then seen as a dynamic process evolving through space and time; 'leaky' grammars, variants that fit no system, conflicting native-speaker intuitions - all the problems that vexed previous formulations are now seen as the inevitable consequences of spatial or temporal segmentation of what is really a seamless whole.' (1973a:643)

It therefore follows, Bickerton goes on, that to speak of 'dialects' or even perhaps 'languages' may be misleading as these terms merely seek to freeze at an arbitrary moment, and to coalesce into an arbitrary whole, phenomena which in nature are ongoing and heterogeneous. A more appropriate unit to work with, he claims, is the ISOLECT which may be defined as 'any possible set of rules such that it will differ from adjacent sets of rules on a panlectal (implicational) grid by only a single rule-conflict or resolution of such conflict'. A PANLECTAL grid may be defined as 'the totality of possible sets of rules for an (arbitrarily limited) area in space and/or time, which in turn constitutes a selection from the totality of possible sets of rules for human language'. A RULE CONFLICT may be defined as 'a situation where, between an isolect A which contains a rule x and an isolect C which contains a rule y, there is a lect B wherein application of rule x alternates with the application of rule y'. Thus, 'inherent variability', as Labov calls variation, 'is indeed none other than the locomotive of linguistic change' (1973a:643).

For a speech community that is not unequivocally bi-
or multilingual, that is where there is a speech continuum with no clearly defined breaks between 'languages' or 'language varieties', Bickerton writes a 'polylectal' grammar. The grammar consists of a series of rules which should be capable of generating all varieties of language in communal use. The rules are similar in form to existing types of generative rules, but some which are in effect re-writings and re-rewritings of 'earlier rules'. In addition, a polylectal grammar will contain a 'rule-shift' component which will specify the selection from the overall series to generate each successive isolect. It will therefore contain no 'switching-rules' since a grammar based on implicational scaling 'must generate theoretically-equal isolects sequentially, and presumably in the order in which they first occurred in time'. (1973b:21).

How well does Bickerton manage to apply such a view of a 'grammar'? In Dynamics of a creole system (1975a) he states his goal: 'The present study ... is solely concerned with the ways in which grammars of individuals relate to the polylectal grammar of the community' (p.15). He chose to describe three stages along the continuum, the basilect, mesolect and acrolect with a series of rules which set out the transition from basilect to mesolect and from mesolect to acrolect. He is now faced with the problem of the competence of speakers who command more than one 'lect' - and this means, most Guyanese. In the case of his 'single-range' speakers, their lects are contiguous. But speakers may command lects which are not contiguous - for example, acrolect speakers who
also have a command of the basilect. These are 'split-range' speakers and are somewhat like bilinguals, (see p. 187 ff). Once Bickerton has abstracted his lects from the data, it is difficult to write grammars of the competence of individual informants. He could write two grammars for each bilingual - but this of course carries him counter to the concept of Guyanese language.

But even more important, the full scale of synchronic variation is a hearer competence model. The grammar of the hearer's competence that results must however, still be neutral between speaker and hearer since to suppose differently would be to complicate linguistic theory unduly (p.19).

Bickerton feels that he has successfully dealt with the problem of synchronic and diachronic linguistics (and with it the fact that people can code-switch) by relegating 'System' to the faculte de langage alone. He says:

'Acceptance of the fact that there are no systems but only System, and that any arbitrary interpretation of that system (i.e. any so-called 'natural language') has the potential of merging into any other in a principled way, will enable us to reconcile the apparent paradoxes which arise from the four best-attested facts about human language: that all languages seem different, but that all are somehow alike, and that all languages are systematic, and yet that all are subject to continuous change.' (1975a:180).

But even in the faculte de langage there is no order, for speakers may have rules for negation that are different from the rules they may have for the tense and aspect systems; or they may have rules for the noun-phrase that belong to a different lect from those they may have for the verb-phrase.
I will now compare and contrast my analysis (as exemplified in Chapters 3 and 4) with Bickerton's analysis to see whether we can account for synchronic variation in a consistent manner without banishing everything into the unknown *faculte de langage*.

(a) i. Bickerton has described a basilect, mesolect and an acrolect.

ii. I have described a basilect, mesolect, but not an acrolect.

(b) i. Bickerton claims there is a surface difference and underlying difference between the basilect, mesolect and acrolect - the acrolect having the same underlying categories as English.

ii. I postulate a surface difference (though not total) between the basilect and mesolect, but underlying same-ness. I assume that the acrolect has the same underlying categories as English, but probably some surface difference from English. I therefore agree with Bickerton that some lexical variants are indicative of change, but for me these are only lexical, and not lexical-grammatical.

(c) i. Bickerton claims that the acrolect results from a gradual grammatical transition from the basilect. He was able to support his grammatical changes and acrolect development by claiming, first, that all variation implies change; secondly that basilect
speakers were sometimes making errors, some were therefore deviant and not to be included in the grammar. Thirdly, he put forward a number of ad hoc and contradictory arguments. (See Chapter 2.)

ii. By positing an underlying sameness for the basilect/mesolect, I cannot account for the acrolect in the same manner as Bickerton. There is no linguistic evidence to support such a transition—evidence such as the disappearance of forms and categories which also entails a parallel transition in the conceptual categories of grammar. By taking the view that the basilect/mesolect (Creole) operate with the same grammar, and the grammar of the acrolect (Guyanese English) is different, I can only account for the variation between 'English' and 'Creole' as 'code-switching'. The acrolect 'English' system is acquired through education. But, depending on extra-linguistic factors such as who is speaking to whom, when, where, speaker motivation etc., and depending on their knowledge of the superstrate variety, speakers can speak more 'English' or more 'Creole' as they desire. Some speakers are in control of the superstrate variety, but all speakers have at least a passive control of the Creole vernacular, and thus communication is no difficulty. Furthermore, the acrolect 'English' system can generate 'progressive', 'habitual', 'continuous', 'past' and 'future' categories similar to the Creole system, although the
categories are generated by different grammars. Thus the overlap between the varieties, combining with other facets of the linguistic and situational context would also ease any communicative difficulties there may be. Thus it is possible to account for some of the variation in a simple and consistent manner, without saying that the variation constitutes an observable transition between conceptually different grammars, and then having to discard data that does not fit the theory.

(d) i. After placing speakers along the continuum depending on the forms they were using, Bickerton still had to account for the fact that speakers were obviously code-switching. He eased himself out of the dilemma by appealing to the abstract nature of his analysis, and therefore circumventing the problem of accountability of a theory to data. But since his theory is based on data, and his analysis has been shown to be contradictory, 'abstractness' is not the source of his difficulty. The source of his difficulty is a faulty analysis, his view that variation necessarily implies change, and his view that the Creole is necessarily moving towards English.

ii. My analysis is also 'abstract', but it accounts for all of my available data. I have achieved accountability without using such notions as 'performance errors', 'performance features', 'confused speakers',
'deviant speakers' or appealing to the faculte de langage, but by paying close attention to data and real world phenomena. Consequently, I have achieved a positive feedback between theory and data. Then again, I do not take the view that all variation implies change, and neither am I constrained by the opinion that the Creole must eventually become English. Maybe, in a few generations the Creole may be replaced by 'English', but at this point in time there is no evidence to support such a view.

(e) i. Bickerton's description is based on the concept that speakers must say A and only A. If the speaker says A as well as B, the use of B is indicative of a different grammar, the variation being indicative of change, or, at worse, the speaker is being 'deviant'.

ii. But I have shown that speakers can say A or B and it can be predicted by the same grammar. For example, the use of inflected and uninflected verbs for past meaning, or the use of PERFECTIVE aspect for perfective and habitual meanings. Therefore, I do not have to appeal to change, claim that all variation is indicative of change, or seek order in the unknown faculte de langage when a speaker operates with more than one variant.

(f) i. In Bickerton's description there is often a great deal of dependence between the lexical item and the under-
lying grammar, so that the use of item A entails one grammar, and the use of item B entails another grammar. This is in keeping with his principle that the lexical changes are accompanied by a change in the underlying grammar. But not only are his arguments supporting the grammatical changes inconsistent, there is also the added problem that a speaker can operate with several grammars and still communicate with another speaker who may not be in control of the same grammar. Of course, the explanation is in the faculté de langage.

ii. In my description I use Kuryłłowicz's principles of Identification and Differentation whereby the lexical changes are not accompanied by a change in the underlying grammar. Consequently, my description is simpler, unified, and consistent. If it is the case that speakers are operating with the same underlying grammar, not only do we have a simple explanation for communicative ease, but we also do not have to seek linguistic explanations for why some speakers may be operating with different forms in different social contexts. This implies that social and linguistic explanations are separate on one level, but in use, there is interaction between the two factors. Social factors may trigger the use of the acrolect, rather than the mesolect or basilect; or they may explain why a speaker is more basilect than mesolect or acrolect. Social factors are instrumental in
motivating linguistic change - (see, for example, Labov 1963; Antilla 1972; Samuels 1972) - and probably explains why basilect progressive *a* was replaced by the English form *-ing*; or the basilect past tense form *bin* was replaced by the English forms *did* and *-ed*. But social factors won't explain why the changes were only formal and not formal and grammatical; or the variation between marked and unmarked verbs for past reference, or the variation between marked and unmarked verbs for habitual aspect. Those explanations are linguistic. They could be termed 'social' in that language is a form of social behaviour.

(g) i. Bickerton claims he has successfully dealt with the problem of the distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics in relegating 'System' to the faculté de langage alone. He was forced to do this, since according to his description, speakers were operating with several grammars.

ii. I do not profess to solve the problem of the synchronic-diachronic distinction. I doubt whether I regard it as a problem. But I have managed to combine the two concepts, and at the same time kept them separate. The synchronic aspect is maintained by having a unitary grammar for the basilect and the mesolect. The diachronic aspect is expressed in having a basilect variety which in some respects
differs lexically from the mesolect. The lexical differences are indicative of diachronic change. The synchronic grammar explains communicative case, and the diachronic changes explain why some speakers are more in control of the basilect variety, and others are more in control of the mesolect variety.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, my position differs from that of Bickerton in that I do not take the view that all variation is indicative of change. Some of the variation is indicative of change, but some can be classified as 'inherent variability'. Also, my view of the continuum is not one whereby the Creole is merging with the superstrate variety by a series of lexical and grammatical changes. There is some lexical merger, but the lexical changes are not accompanied by a change in the grammar - at least, not with respect to the tense and aspect systems.
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