Instructor's Note

This paper, entitled *Nou Se Lengwist*, is the final draft of Kate Freeman's semester-long work in her capstone course on Haitian Creole (LIN 400). As Kate explains, her objectives in this paper were, first, to provide the data she elicited from a speaker of Haitian Creole and describe it. Then, she was to make generalizations about the data and from these, generate hypotheses about the structure of Haitian Creole. Finally, she was to test her hypotheses to see if the data supported them or not. What made me value this paper so highly was that, first of all, Kate followed linguists' conventions in terms of presentation and explanation of data. For example, throughout, Kate put phonetic material (meaning pronunciations of Haitian Creole words and phrases for consideration) in square brackets. And she provided a morpheme-by-morpheme translation of her data, and glossed it in English. She also established a numbering system for examples, and a numbering system for sections. A joy to read!

But beyond learning to follow those important conventions are deeper things. For one, Kate’s final product is written in the true spirit of science, which holds that we test our hypotheses openheartedly, without worrying whether they turn out to be true or false. Being right is awesome. But being wrong serves as a rudder to guide us to develop better ways to ask our questions and make discoveries. Kate is exactly where we all need to be when we investigate linguistic structure- enjoying every moment without fear of being right or wrong. And Kate’s lively writing style shows her enthusiasm for her subject.

And perhaps the best part of the story of how this paper came to be is not visible here, now that the imperfections in Kate’s first and second drafts have been made right. I remember holding Kate’s first draft in my hands, and, perhaps a bit worriedly, telling her that it didn’t seem quite like her. She said she hoped Spring Break 2012 would be her chance to crank out a great second draft. Once back at school, she handed me what she had. When I read it, I thought “uh-oh.” I asked her what was up and she said that instead of writing on Spring Break, she had sat on the couch and stared at the wall. She knew she wasn’t on target yet...but she promised to keep at it. Not long after this, Kate came into my office absolutely on fire. She’d figured it all out- why she’d had such a hard time writing the thing, how she now would approach it. She’d started the whole business again, she said, and she was just here to ask one little question. When she left, she was on Cloud 9. Upon reading her final draft, I thought, “Yes! She did it! The real Kate is back!”

When you're a professor, it doesn’t get better than this. As hard as we push our students, we ourselves get pushed. And just like our students, when we have difficult projects marinating and we can’t quite figure out how to take the next steps, we need to sit on the couch and stare at the wall. Through it all, *nou se lengwist*, Haitian Creole for 'we are linguists' and eventually, we get the breakthrough!

Dr. Jean Ann, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
1.0 Introduction

In what other class would it be appropriate to begin your capstone presentation at Quest with a rap in Haitian Creole? Your answer is no other class, and this is why linguistics is a beautiful thing. My peers and I walked into this class with no knowledge of what language we were studying, but with the intention of actively participating in linguistic analysis. Our course was centered around a challenge, perfectly articulated by Bickford (1998:3) who asked, “When faced with a language which no linguist has ever studied, what can you do to figure out the grammar yourself?” Haitian Creole has been studied by linguists, but in this course we were not allowed to use any outside materials, and our only source of information was our consultant, Teddy. In other words, we behaved as if there were no other resources that existed in the world besides our own knowledge of linguistics.

I believe our class as a whole was unbelievably excited to jump right into the challenge of asking our consultant numerous tedious, repetitive questions to gain data and working to discover patterns from there. According to Hyman (2001), we are not exactly participating in the linguistic research known as “fieldwork” because we are lacking three of the major features: distance, exoticism and duration. We are limited to one speaker of Haitian Creole, in a college classroom in the United States, for only one semester. Despite this, I believe that both myself and my peers are dedicated to our research by setting goals, actively participating in generating data, and being committed to our research both in and out of class meetings. Hyman (2001:15) states a general definition of linguistic research as an “attempt to assemble a lexicon, establish the phonetic and phonological properties, and analyze the grammar and discourse functions by means of elicitation, observation, and possibly, participation”. By engaging ourselves in such research, many of us are getting a first look at a non-European language, diligently studying the numerous, vast differences in languages, as well as learning to avoid the narrow mindset that results from having a European native language.

Gil (2001:102) discusses how because modern linguistics has been so developed by speakers of European languages, it is common that these linguistic traditions are “being imposed, often inappropriately, on languages spoken in other parts of the world”. By studying Haitian Creole, I’ve learned to get excited about discovering and recognizing unexpected and exotic findings within a language that I have never seen in any of the European languages I’ve dealt with in my lifetime. In beginning my investigation, I saw that my own knowledge of English and Spanish, as well as many of my classmates’ knowledge of French, was getting in the way of our ability to discover things that we may have never thought possible in a language. In other words, as Hyman (2001:103) said, “Our native language imposes a strait-jacket from which it is often difficult to break free, in order to realize that certain grammatical categories,
obligatory in our own language, may be absent in the language under investigation.” All in all, our work with Haitian Creole has been a truly enriching experience that has made me fall in love with linguistics and the process of unearthing patterns and complexities in a language that many of us cannot see without extreme dedication to linguistic analysis. In the next sections, I will introduce our consultant, Teddy, as well as a brief overview of the process of how we make hypotheses and work to support them by obtaining data.

1.1 How do we do it?!

Linguistics is comparable to any sort of scientific study. We begin with making observations and collecting data for weeks at a time, finally sort through and analyze the data, make a strong hypothesis and then determine if our hypothesis was supported or not by the data we gathered. When our hypothesis is supported, we are able to build off of the data we have collected, and draw conclusions from there. When our hypothesis is not supported, believe it or not, it is not the end of the world. When we begin to make our hypothesis, we are basing it off of common patterns we have discovered thus far, hoping it can be proven true by collecting more data to support it. When a hypothesis turns out to be incorrect, we are able to move on in our investigation and dig deeper into the language, trying out other patterns and ideas.

We began our first meeting with our consultant by going over the Swadesh 100 word list, which incorporated 100 vocabulary words including pronouns, body parts, animals, common verbs, nature words, colors, etc. From here, we were already able to distinguish tones (more accurately, the lack thereof), nasal assimilation, allophones and even sociolinguistic aspects of Haitian Creole. We then moved on to longer phrases, beginning with greetings in Haitian Creole, determiners, the verb “to be”, the use of the copula, and so on. Each class we built off of what was found the class before, testing hypotheses that we may have made after going over our notes, looking for more data to support any findings we may have had.

Our consultant is very knowledgeable in linguistics, and because of that we had to work to avoid the “good informant paradox”, which as described by Gil (2001: 115), is when “the better s/he is, the worse s/he is”. We often found that when we asked Teddy to translate an English sentence, he was working to provide a translation closest to the structure of the English sentence, as well as its meaning. Once we learned this, we tried to act out phrases with the intention of avoiding an unnatural translation.

In the next section, I will introduce our consultant Teddy so as to give you a better understanding of our source of Haitian Creole.

1.2 Teddy who?!

Our consultant is informally known as Teddy, a native Haitian from the island of Hispaniola. He is a 22 year old senior at SUNY Oswego, double majoring in French and Spanish, who has done work alongside the FBI for 3 years and hopes to one day become an interpreter. He is a lover of language, as are all of us linguists, and he has a grasp on what makes up a language.
Teddy moved from Haiti to Manhattan, NY when he was 13 years old. As a young child in Haiti, Teddy was raised by his paternal grandparents, and was fortunate enough to attend an expensive, more prestigious school, in which Teddy was taught and spoken to in French. I believe him to have a “Frenchified” Haitian Creole, as a result of his knowledge of the language. Teddy went to public school after his time in private school where he was able to more frequently use Haitian Creole. When Teddy moved to New York, he attended a bilingual school where he learned English and was grouped with speakers of many different languages. He was also fortunate to study abroad in Paris, which I also believe lead to the heavy French influence on his own spoken Haitian Creole.

According to Teddy, Haitian Creole functions as a more familiar way of speaking than French, and it’s used in the home or with family and friends. He also feels that if he spoke to his family in French, especially his father, it would come off as him acting as though he is better than them because he is so well educated.

In this next section I will give some basic facts about Haiti, as well as introduce the sociolinguistic situation of Haitian Creole in Haiti according to Teddy.

1.3 Haiti and its Creole

Haiti, which is officially known as the Republic of Haiti, is a country in the Caribbean located on the western portion of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. The largest city and capital is Port-au-Prince, and its two official languages are Haitian Creole and French. Haiti has faced much political violence and governmental instability throughout its history. In 2010, Haiti was struck with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that destroyed Port-au-Prince, with a death count of 220,000. Many government buildings were destroyed, along with homes and business, leaving hundreds homeless and the country still in recovery.

According to Teddy, when the Spaniards and French were discovering these lands, Hispaniola was their favorite island and they brought over West Africans who
were speakers of French. The island was divided and the Republic of Haiti was taken over by the French, and at this time slaves had no right to an education and therefore had to listen to the French speakers, and as a result were greatly influenced by them.

Haitian Creole is a written language; our consultant has come into class with a Haitian Creole and English dictionary, and he told us that there are bookstores and libraries in Haiti with books written in Haitian Creole. There are different dialects of Haitian Creole, based off of a combination of age, education, and socioeconomic status. Teddy’s father has a spoken idiolect that is different from how Teddy speaks, most likely as a result of language evolution, as well as Teddy’s education. He has told us that there are minor differences in the way people speak in the north versus the south, and the closer you are to the Dominican Republic, the more Spanish influence there is on your dialect. When I asked Teddy about the possibility of tone or intonation having an influence on words, he said that although it does not affect meaning, northerners and southerners speak in different ways. In the North, he says it’s as if they’re “singing”, by starting with a lower tone and going up as they speak. In the South, he says they have more of an up and down flow in how they produce their sounds throughout a sentence. Teddy told us that Haitian Creole is more common amongst informal situations, including positions such as street vendor or waiter/waitresses, while French is used in more formal positions such as a bank teller and so on.

Racism is prevalent in Haiti, and according to Teddy there is racism amongst black people, the lighter skinned people being racist against the darker skinned people. There is a term in Haitian Creole, [neg], which can be used for any man in Haiti, without any sort of negative connotation. There is only an issue when it is obvious that somebody is using this word in a hurtful way. Teddy seemed as if he has no problem using this term freely with friends and family, but there are Haitians who believe this label to be offensive and associate it with racism.

In this next section I will finally begin to discuss Haitian Creole, beginning with phonetics and an inventory of the consonants and vowels found in Haitian Creole.

2.0 Phonetics (so it begins..)

Phonetics is the study of the minimal units of sound, such as consonants and vowels, that make up a language. We begin to examine the phonetics of Haitian Creole by figuring out what sounds are attested in this language. We first list the consonants and vowels, and then break them down into smaller parts, and group them based on their characteristics and any patterns we may have revealed.

2.1 Inventory of Consonants in Haitian Creole

Having collected some data by asking Teddy for some words on the Swadesh 100 word list, I arrived at a chart of the attested consonants in Haitian Creole. In (1), the left side of the table lists the different manners of articulation, while the top lists the place of articulation for each consonant. The symbols that are bolded, and on the right side of a pair, are voiced consonants, while the unbolded symbols that are on the left side of a pair are voiceless. These three aspects of articulation (where the airstream is
constricted, how the airstream is constricted, and if they are voiced or voiceless) are what we examine to understand the articulation of a consonant.

In making this table, I did my best to gain a foothold of the situation regarding consonants in Haitian Creole by making some reasonable assumptions based off of the evidence of my own perception of sound. My classmates and I are great at speaking and understanding English, so we used this knowledge and ability as a basis to define the sounds we heard from our consultant. Although this method isn’t perfect, it is the best way to define the consonants in Haitian Creole, given the nature of the task and our time limit.

(1) Consonants of Haitian Creole

| State of the Glottis: For symbols in pairs; symbol on the left, unbolded is voiceless. Symbol on right, bolded is **voiced**. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stop | Bilabial | Labiodental | Interdental | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
| | p | b | | t | d | k | g | ? |
| Fricative | f | v | | s | z | f | ţ | h |
| Affricative | | | | | | | | |
| Flap | | | | | | | | |
| Nasal | m | | | n | | | ŋ |
| Lateral Liquid | | | | l | | | | |
| Retroflex Liquid | | | | r | | | | |
| Glide | w | | | | | | j |
sounds we were hearing as closely as possible. (2) lists the consonantal diacritics I used in Haitian Creole.

(2) Consonantal Diacritics found in Haitian Creole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Aspirated</th>
<th>pʰ, tʰ, kʰ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Syllabic</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Affricated</td>
<td>tˢ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aspirated voiceless stops in (2a) are found in Haitian Creole in words such as [sitʰa] and [kʰone]. Aspiration occurs when air rushes out of the mouth after releasing a stop and before beginning the onset of a vowel. This can be seen clearly by the fact that both of the aspirated stops are directly followed by a vowel. This aspiration is a part of strengthening- fortition- which makes sounds “stronger.” The voiceless stops in these words are at the beginning of a stressed syllable, and by aspirating the stops we are lengthening the period of voicelessness, which makes the stop stronger.

The syllabic [m] in Haitian Creole is found most commonly as the shortened form of the pronoun 'I', which is [mwẽ]. In a sentence such as [mwẽ bwe], which translates to “I drink”, we are able to shorten the first word and get the attested phrase [m bwe]. Teddy informed us that this shortened version is more common and often preferred in Haitian Creole, as Teddy considers it to be shortened 99.9% of the time. We are unable to shorten any of the other pronouns, but [mwẽ] is able to be shortened in every instance that it is directly followed by a verb.

The [tˢ] is used after [t], for example in the word [pitˢi]. This affricated version of [t] occurs when a stop, such as [t], takes on a little bit of a fricative such as [s], but not the whole sound. Because the stop has taken on the fricative, it is as if the stop [t] almost turned into an affricate [ts]. Linguists represent the sound created in this situation as [tˢ]. This was not at all surprising to us, because this affricate is a common characteristic in Montreal French, as well as other dialects of French.

2.2 Inventory of Vowels in Haitian Creole

I began making the inventory of vowels in Haitian Creole similarly to how I gathered the consonants, and then organized what I heard into a table in (3) below. The characteristics of a vowel are based off four different criteria; the raising or lowering of the tongue, the advancing or retracting of the tongue, rounding or not rounding the lips, and using a tense or lax movement. The top row of table (3) regards the advancement of the tongue, using the terms front, central and back. For example, in a front vowel such as [i], the tongue is pushed forward in the mouth and is placed under the hard palate. The left side of the table regards the height of the tongue, using the terms close, close-mid, open-mid and open. A close vowel such as [i] is made with the mouth less open because the body of the tongue is raised.

(3) Vowels of Haitian Creole
Tense and lax are not included in the table, but the only tense vowel in Haitian Creole is [i]. A tense vowel has a bigger change in position of the tongue or lips than compared to a lax vowel, and generally has a longer duration. This would mean that the high, front, tense vowel [i] is more high and more front than its lax counterpart.

I will now examine the vowel diacritics found in Haitian Creole, which are listed in the table (4) below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-Mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>õ, â</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) Vowel Diacritics in Haitian Creole

a) Nasalized ̆, ĕ, ė, ĕ, ā, ħ
b) Umlaut ̄, ü

Haitian Creole, unlike English, is a language with oral vowel and nasal vowel counterparts. Oral vowels are produced with the velum raised, causing the nasal passage to be closed, while nasal vowels are produced with the nasal passage open. When a vowel is nasalized, it is often contrasted from its oral vowel counterpart and can distinguish meanings of words, as is common in French. Haitian Creole has many nasalized vowels, some which are only found in their nasalized form such as [˘], and many which have both the oral vowel [e, e, c, a, o] and the nasal vowel [ē, ĕ, ě, ā, ĕ]. The vowels which do not have a nasalized counterpart are [i], which is a close, front vowel, and [u] which is a near close, near back vowel. Because both of these vowels are closed or almost closed, it is logical that unlike the close mid, open mid and open vowels, they would not open the nasal passage to make these sounds.

The umlaut is found in the word [mōsjūs], which I find to be a very French characteristic of Haitian Creole. At one point in French, there were diphthongs that were written with two vowels that were eventually reduced to monophthongs. The umlaut is now often used to indicate what used to be two vowels, and this seems to be the case in this instance of Haitian Creole.

2.3 Inventory of Tones in Haitian Creole

Tone languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, are languages in which the way the pitch of a syllable is pronounced can affect the meaning of a word. When we tested tones with our consultant, he did not necessarily like the way they sounded, but they did not make a difference in the meaning or his ability to understand the word. Consider the data in (5).
(5) Tone Test in Haitian Creole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>[bwê]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>[bwê]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>[bwê]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>[bwê]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling</td>
<td>[bwê]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there were tones in Haitian Creole, Teddy would have noticed the differences in pronunciation noted in (5) and linked them to differences in the meaning of each word. But, if the word [bwê] were to be pronounced in any of the ways indicated in (5), the word would still mean “to drink”, and would just sound funny to a native speaker. There are tones in many West African languages, which have an influence on Haitian Creole, but as far as we could see, Haitian Creole is not a tone language.

After acquiring an inventory of the consonants, vowels, diacritics and lack of tones found in Haitian Creole, we are able to analyze these sounds and how they work together by examining phonology.

3.0 Phonology

Phonology, although similar to phonetics in that both study speech sounds, is the study of the interactions between sounds as they are distributed in a language. Phonology focuses on the organization of sounds in a language and how they may affect the identities of words.

3.1 Syllable Structure

We can begin looking at the syllable structure of Haitian Creole by examining the phonemes and allophones that exist. I discovered a minimal pair in Haitian Creole involving the word for ‘a’, which is [jö], and ‘they’, which is [jö]. A minimal pair is a pair of words whose pronunciations differ by exactly one sound, and as a result, each word has a different meaning. In this instance, the two phonemes /ö/ and /o/, are separate phonemes because they are allophones of different phonemes. These two sounds are in contrastive distribution because replacing one sound with the other would change the meaning of the word, and therefore they are not interchangeable.

I found an example of a word in which two different sounds are allophones of the same phoneme, [t]. The two sounds are in two different, yet attested, pronunciations of the verb ‘to sit’. The first pronunciation has the dental [t], as in [sitə], while the other has the aspirated [tʰ], as in [sitʰə]. Both the dental [t] and the aspirated [tʰ] come from the same phoneme class /t/, and therefore are non-contrastive. These two sounds are in free variation, meaning that they are found in the same phonetic environment (between two vowels), and the choice between these two sounds does not change the meaning of
the word. These two sounds are often perceived as the “same” sound, and as a result of this conclusion, I wonder if in every instance where a [t] or a [tʰ] is found between two vowels, are they interchangeable? I don’t have the data to support this hypothesis, but it is an interesting question to ponder.

From studying syllable structures across all of the data in Haitian Creole, I was able to make numerous hypotheses and support them with examples. For the remainder of this section, I will discuss the hypotheses that I have made and provide the data I have found that has supported the hypotheses.

I found that nasalized vowels must be next to, either preceded or followed by, a consonant, as can be seen in (6) below.

(6) Words with nasalized vowels in Haitian Creole

| [mwē]    | I        |
| [piʒc]   | pigeon   |
| [kœpe]   | to stand |
| [mœtain] | mountain |
| [ʃjœ]    | dog      |
| [ʃjœjo]  | dogs     |
| [amœikœ] | American |
| [etœdœ]  | student  |
| [œpœ]    | little   |

I do not have an example in which the nasalized vowels of the examples above are replaced with the oral vowel counterpart, and therefore cannot determine if the two vowels are in contrastive distribution (in other words, that interchanging the two sounds would change the meaning of the word, therefore creating minimal pairs), complementary distribution (two sounds are never found in the same phonetic environment, as they are allophones of the same phoneme) or free variation (interchangeable in the same phonetic environment and have the same meaning). To test this, I would need to ask our consultant about instances in which the nasalized vowel and its oral vowel counterpart can occur in the same phonetic environment, and if so, what can be attested and what cannot.

Another pattern I had noticed is that generally [œ] must be preceded by a vowel in Haitian Creole, with only one exception found. The table in (7) shows examples which support this hypothesis.

(7) Words with [œ] in Haitian Creole
The examples in (7) all show instances in which [v] must be preceded by a vowel. The only exception I found to this rule is the word [gʷɛn] ‘seed’. I do not have data to support why this occurs, but I can predict that this word is either an exception to the rule, or this rule is really a mere coincidence and is in fact not relevant in Haitian Creole. If I were to gather more data from our consultant surrounding the usage of words with [v] in Haitian Creole, I would be able to acquire more support for my hypothesis, or possibly prove that it is unsupported.

The next pattern I discovered was that any consonant that is aspirated must be followed by a vowel.

(8) Words with aspiration in Haitian Creole

| [sitʰa]   | to sit |
| [kʰone]  | to kill |

Aspiration is a part of the rules of strengthening, which make a sound stronger, and often occurs with voiceless stops that are at the beginning of a stressed syllable. I predict that these voiceless stops are aspirated to make the sound stronger, as a result of being followed by vowels.

Because the aspirated [tʰ] is an allophone of the phoneme /t/, I am curious as to whether or not the other allophones of /t/ found in Haitian Creole, which are [t], [ti] and [tʲ], are interchangeable with the other allophones. To test this, I would take numerous examples of words with these allophones, and replace them with the other allophones to see if they are attested in Haitian Creole and can support my hypothesis.

A broad hypothesis I was able to make about Haitian Creole is that vowels rarely begin a word or syllable. I could only find two exceptions from all of the data I have collected, and they are [ämpil], meaning ‘many’, and [u], meaning ‘you’. Besides these two words, I did not collect a single word that began with a vowel, nor did I discover a syllable that began with a vowel as well.

To further examine the syllable structures that exist in Haitian Creole, I broke them down to discover what types of syllables are attested in this language. The majority are open syllables, which are syllables without a coda, such as V, CV, CCV. There were a much smaller and more limited amount of closed syllables, which are syllables with a coda, such as VC, CVC, CVCC. The presence of mostly open syllables left me to hypothesize that perhaps because Haitian Creole is a creole, which is considered a “simpler” language, it naturally has smaller syllables. A simpler language
does not mean that a language is less intelligent, but that it has less complicated parts. Japanese is an example of a language with no big consonant clusters, with its biggest being CVC. English is an example of a language with huge consonant clusters, such as the word ‘strengths’, which is a CCVCCCC, with an extremely complicated onset and coda. There are many questions we can ask regarding this simple syllable structure not the least of which involve questions about the syllable structures of the influencing languages. It is possible that Haitian Creole expanded a smaller syllable structure of one of the languages that influenced it, and in that case would be more complicated than one of its even more simpler influences.

If we examine the table in (9) below, we see that the closed syllables that exist in Haitian Creole provide us with many interesting onsets, as well as support for the Sonority Hierarchy.

(9) Closed Syllables in Haitian Creole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Onset</th>
<th>Nucleus</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>ƞ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ƅ</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>ƶ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ƅ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ƅ</td>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sonority Hierarchy is a ranking of speech sounds by amplitude, beginning with vowels as the most sonorous, as they have the weakest consonantality, ending with complex plosives as the least sonorous with the strongest consonantality. The sonority of a sound focuses on the loudness and capability of voicing a sound relative to that of other sounds of the same length. The Sonority Hierarchy states that the nucleus has maximal sonority, because it holds a vowel, and the sonority should decrease as you move from the nucleus to the coda. This hierarchy is found in the closed syllables of Haitian Creole because all of the consonants in the coda have been less sonorous as you move away from the nucleus. The coda of these syllables have consonants that are voiced nasals, voiced fricatives, voiced plosives and voiceless plosives, which are on the least sonorous side of the spectrum. When I asked Teddy if he could think of any longer syllables or any syllables with more consonants next to one another, he had a hard time doing so. The data we acquired, along with Teddy’s struggle, tells me that
Haitian Creole must be a language without large consonant clusters or any long syllables, as open syllables were the most prevalent in this language.

3.3 Nasal Assimilation

Assimilation is a common phonological process that occurs when one sound becomes more like a nearby sound, and can occur within a word or between words, and Nasal Assimilation occurs when this deals with nasals. I found a case of this with the word “many” in which many of my classmates heard [apil] when I feel I heard [ampil]. I believe this to be a case of nasal assimilation in the place of articulation because it is difficult to say [p] after [a] without an [m] between as a result of the natural positioning on the lips. The vowel [a] is an open, back vowel and the [p] consonant is a bilabial stop which is a sound that is made by bringing the lips closer together. To go from an open, back vowel to a bilabial stop without making a bilabial, nasal [m] in the process would be very unnatural. This is a truly interesting case and can rely on how carefully Teddy pronounces the word, ultimately differing in how people hear this pronunciation.

In the next section, we will begin to examine syntax, as well as syntax combined with morphology, to start looking at how sentences and phrases are organized in Haitian Creole.

4.0 Syntax (and a bit of Morphology)

Syntax concerns the study of the organization of words into phrases, as well as phrases into sentences. There are many similarities in how languages across the world organize their sentences because of the language instinct that is stored in our mind. In studying syntax, we can determine the lexical categories, or parts of speech, that exist in a language, along with the word order and the connection between syntax and morphology. We’ll first take a look at the lexical categories in Haitian Creole.

4.1 The Noun Phrase

The part of speech a word belongs to tells us about the way the word can function within a sentence. In English, nouns are pluralized by taking the affix -s at the end of the word, and can show possession with the -’s affixed to the end as well. A good method to determine if a word is a part of a certain category is to compare it with a word within that category and see if it is interchangeable. Let’s first look at nouns and adjectives together.

4.1.1 Nouns and Adjectives

A noun refers to a broad category of things, people, places, and events. In Haitian Creole, nouns are identified by two of their characteristics; they can occur with articles, be modified by adjectives, and can be pluralized. In (10) below, the two nouns bird ([zwazo]) and pigeon ([pijɔ]) take the form of ‘the’ ([waj]) and are modified by the adjective ‘sad’ ([twist]).
The adjective [twaist] above is being used to describe a thing or idea that a noun refers to, which is a characteristic of adjectives in Haitian Creole. In English, it is possible to use adjectives with the form of the verb ‘to be’, but this is not the case in Haitian Creole. The adjective is placed directly after the noun it is describing, or after the corresponding determiner, without the use of the verb [se], which is ‘to be’. Consider (11).

(11) a) [mwè twaist]
    I am sad.
    I am sad.

b)*[mwè se twaist]
    *I am sad.
    *I am sad.

The form of (11b) ‘I am sad’ with the copula present between the noun and the adjective is not attested in Haitian Creole. So far from the data we have collected, we have not looked into the usage of adjectives in comparative forms, such as attaching the affix -er to the adjective or using the word ‘more’, as well as the usage of the superlative, using the affix -est or the word ‘most’, therefore I have no data to support if these affixes are used or not.

4.1.2 Determiners

Determiners are a complicated part of speech in Haitian Creole, but we will begin with the determiner ‘a’. In Haitian Creole, the determiner ‘a’ is [jô] and is placed between the verb and the noun.

(12) a) [mwè se jô doktô]
    I am a doctor
    I am a doctor.

b) [mwè se jô me?]
    I am a teacher
    I am a teacher.

c) [mwè se jô etûdjô]
    I am a student
I am a student.

So far in the data we have gathered, the form of ‘a’ has not changed for person, number or any other reason thus far. The case for the determiner ‘the’ is very different, and we will examine that next.

We have found five different forms of the determiner ‘the’ in Haitian Creole: [ʔa], [ja], [la], [lɔ] and [ɔ]. One pattern we have discovered for all five of these forms is that this determiner follows the noun, as opposed to ‘a’ which precedes the noun. In (13) below, I provide an example of ‘the’ with just a noun in (a), ‘the’ being used as a part of a sentence in which an adjective is describing a noun in (b), as well as the same sentence in (b) with the presence of the form of the verb ‘to be’, [se], in (c).

(13)  a) [bagai la]
  thing the
  The thing.

b) [bagai la  gwo]
  thing the huge
  The thing is huge.

c) *[bagai la  se gwo]
  *thing the is huge
  *The thing is huge.

We can see from (13) that the determiner comes after the noun in a phrase (the thing), as well as an entire sentence (The thing is huge). We can also see in (13c) that [se] is not needed in a sentence in which an adjective is describing the noun, even with the presence of a determiner, and therefore is unattested.

We have determined the placement of the determiner ‘the’, but a question we have not completely figured out the answer to is when we use which form of ‘the.’ There have not been many significant patterns in when each form is used, but a pattern we have discovered is that there are 2 sets of interchangeable forms of ‘the.’ Both [ʔa] and [ja] are interchangeable, as well as [la] and [lɔ]. The table below shows attested usages of each of these forms interchangeably, as well as instances in which [ɔ] is the only form of ‘the’ that can be used.

(14) Attested uses of ‘the’ in Haitian Creole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[ʔa] or [ja]</th>
<th>[la] or [lɔ]</th>
<th>[ɔ]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) [mōsjū ʔa] man the ‘the man’</td>
<td>d) [mōsjū ja] man the ‘the man’</td>
<td>g) [fam la] woman the ‘the woman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) [vale ʔa] valley the ‘the valley’</td>
<td>e) [vale ja] valley the ‘the valley’</td>
<td>h) [bagai la] thing the ‘the thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) [tʰu wɔ] hole the ‘the hole’</td>
<td>n) [klu wɔ] nail the ‘the nail’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the patterns that I hypothesized as a result of this table is that there may be a different determiner depending on gender, as can be seen in (14a), (14d), (14g) and (14j). In these examples, [mōsjū] can take both [ʔa] and [ja], while [fam] can take [la] or [lɔ]. It’s possible that certain nouns have assigned genders and therefore take certain determiners that correspond with their gender. But, where does the form [s] fit in this hypothesis? I believe that we have not gathered enough data to support this hypothesis, or any hypothesis surrounding when each form of ‘the’ is used.

We were able to gather data to support the hypothesis that when the noun is plural in a sentence with the determiner ‘the’, the determiner is dropped and replaced with the plural marker [jo], as can be seen in (15c) and (15d) below.

We can see that in the singular sentences (15a) and (15b) the respective forms of ‘the’ are used between the noun and the verb. In the plural sentence (15c), [ja] is dropped and replaced with the plural marker [jo], as is the same case for [lɔ] in (15d). Along with being a plural marker, [jo] can be used for the pronoun ‘they’ in the sentence ‘They are sad’, which is [jotwist]. My hypothesis, as a result of the data, is that [jo] serves both as a plural marker and a pronoun in Haitian Creole.

The next determiners that we will examine are ‘this’ and ‘that’. Similarly to the determiner ‘the’, both ‘this’ and ‘that’ are placed after the noun they qualify. And as we can see in (16) below, the word for ‘this’ and ‘that’ are exactly the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[ʔa] or [ja]</th>
<th>[la] or [lɔ]</th>
<th>[s]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c) [doktɛʔa]</td>
<td>i) [ssz la]</td>
<td>o) [fu s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor the ‘the doctor’</td>
<td>chair the ‘the chair’</td>
<td>stove the ‘the stove’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This thing.

b) [bagai sa]
   thing  that
   That thing.

Because there is only one form for both of these determiners, I hypothesize that there are no changes in form for gender. The data I have to support this hypothesis can be found in (17) in which the attested forms for ‘this’ and ‘that’ being used in a sentence with both a man or a woman as the subject.

(17)  a) [mōsjūw sa bwɛ]
       man  this  drinks
       This man drinks.

b) [mōsjūw sa bwɛ]
   man  that  drinks
   That man drinks.

c) [fam sa bwɛ]
   woman  this  drinks
   This woman drinks.

d) [fam sa bwɛ]
   woman  that  drinks
   That woman drinks.

The form of ‘this’ and ‘that’ does not alter for any of the forms in (17), but you are also unable to differentiate between which word is being used. Teddy gave us more specific examples of ways you can more accurately and easily differentiate between the two.

(18)  a) [zwazo si la tsist]
       bird  this  sad
       This bird is sad.

b) [zwazo sa la tsist]
   bird  that  sad
   That bird is sad.

c) [zwazo sa la ba tsist]
   bird  that  sad
   That bird (over there) is sad.
These sentences are examples of ways you might differentiate between ‘this’ and ‘that’ in your everyday speech. Example (18a) is the most specific, and you may use it while physically pointing out a bird that is in the distance.

Our next question would be if the form alters for changes in number in the subject, in the instance of ‘these’ and ‘those’. Teddy provided us, similarly to ‘this’ and ‘that’, with examples of instances in which you can not differentiate between ‘these’ and ‘those’, as well as examples that are much more specific.

(19)  

a) [zwazo sa jo tœist]  
   bird this plural sad  
   These birds are sad.

b) [zwazo sa jo tœist]  
   bird that plural sad  
   Those birds are sad.

The examples in (19) are identical, and therefore you are unable to identify in speech whether ‘those’ or ‘these’ is being used. In (20), Teddy gave us examples that allow us to differentiate between the two.

(20)  

a) [zwazo si la jo tœist]  
   bird this plural sad  
   These birds are sad.

b) [zwazo sa la jo tœist]  
   bird that plural sad  
   Those birds are sad.

This data supports many hypotheses. The word [sa] can be used for ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘these’ and ‘those’ in their least specific examples, with the only difference being the presence of the plural marker [jo] for ‘these’ and ‘those’. In the more specific instances, [sa la] can be used for both ‘that’ and ‘those’, with the only difference being the presence of the plural marker for ‘those’. For ‘this’ and ‘these’, [si la] can be used for the more specific examples, with the only difference, again, being the presence of a plural marker for ‘these’.

We can now examine the usage of ‘this’ and ‘that’ as pronouns in Haitian Creole. In (21a), ‘that’ is used as a determiner to qualify the noun ‘car’, while in (21b), ‘that’ is serving as the pronoun and the subject of the sentence.

(21)  

a) [maʃin sa se amešikʌ]  
   car that is american  
   That car is American.
b) [sa sɛ jɔ̃ maʃɪn amɛʁikã]
   that is a car american
   That is an American car.

In (21a), ‘that’ is serving as a demonstrative adjective/determiner, and because the word [amɛʁikã] is following the verb [sɛ], I hypothesize that it is serving as a noun and not an adjective, because adjectives cannot follow [sɛ] in Haitian Creole. Therefore, in (21b), ‘that’, or [sa], is serving as a pronoun, and [amɛʁikã] is an adjective that is describing the noun [maʃɪn]. This data supports our hypothesis that [sɛ] cannot be followed by adjectives, and in this next section we will further examine word order in Haitian Creole.

4.2 Word Order

The order of the syntactic constituents of a language, or the word order, is a characteristic that varies amongst languages. Haitian Creole, similarly to English, French and Spanish, has a subject-verb-object, or SVO, word order. The word order of a language is vital in determining the grammaticality of a sentence, and because of this, is a large part of the syntax of a language.

Words must have a certain morphological marking that allows for agreement between two words in a sentence, making the word order grammatical. In Haitian Creole, adjectives and nouns do not agree in gender because there has been no variation in adjectives when used to describe a man and a woman, as can be seen in (22) below.

(22)  a) [mɔʃjʉs jɔ̃ twɪst]
      man the sad
      The man is sad.

        b) [fam lɔ̃ twɪst]
           woman the sad
           The woman is sad.

In these two examples, the adjective [twɪst] does not change at all when describing a male or female noun. But, as you can see, the determiner does vary for these two sentences; the determiner ‘the’ for the man is [jɔ̃], while it is [lɔ̃] for the woman. From this data, I hypothesize that determiners and nouns must agree in gender in Haitian Creole, as was discussed in section 4.1.2. I also predict that ‘the’ must occur after the noun. I gathered more data in support of this hypothesis, as well as to support another hypothesis stated in section 4.1.2 that the determiner ‘a’, which is [jɔ̃] does not vary for person, number, or gender, and is placed before the noun.

(23) Usage of determiners ‘the’ and ‘a’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘the’</th>
<th>‘a’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[mɔʃjʉs jɔ̃ bwɛ]</td>
<td>[fam lɔ̃ bwɛ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[jɔ̃ mɔʃjʉs bwɛ]</td>
<td>[jɔ̃ fam bwɛ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in (23) supports my hypotheses thus far about the determiners ‘the’ and ‘a’ in Haitian Creole. But, my next question is about how the determiner ‘the’ functions with plural nouns; does this determiner need to agree in number with the noun it is qualifying? Let's look at the data in (24) below.

(24) a) [zwazo jo tʁist]
   bird ? sad
   The birds are sad

   b) [fam jo tʁist]
   woman ? sad
   The women are sad.

   c) [mɔsju̯ jo tʁist]
   man ? sad
   The men are sad.

As we can see in (24), there is a bit of a mystery going on here. The determiner is placed after the noun, which we proved to be a rule in Haitian Creole, but [jo] is not any of the forms of the determiner ‘the’ we discussed in 4.1.2. From here, I hypothesized that because we have not dealt with plural nouns thus far, [jo] is a plural marker in Haitian Creole, and the determiner is dropped in sentences with plural nouns. As a result, we can decide that nouns are pluralized by a plural marker that is placed directly after a noun, and does not alter in gender. In the next subsection of syntax, we will examine the differences between transitive and intransitive sentences in Haitian Creole.

4.3 Transitive vs. Intransitive sentences in Haitian Creole

A transitive sentence is a sentence with a transitive verb, meaning it requires a direct subject and at least one object, while an intransitive sentence is a sentence with an intransitive verb that does not require an object. In Haitian Creole, there seems to be no difference in the word order for transitive versus intransitive sentences. The verb does not change, and it functions the same with or without an object. Verbs that can be used as both transitive and intransitive verbs are considered ambitransitive, which is the case for most verbs in Haitian Creole.

(25) Haitian Creole Intransitive Sentences
I drink | [mwê bwê], [m bwê]
---|---
You drink | [u bwê]
He/She/It drinks | [li bwê]
We drink | [nu bwê]
You (plural) drink | [nu bwê]
They drink | [jo bwê]

The sentences in (25) illustrate that the intransitive sentences, which do not have an object, are ordered subject followed by verb. The transitive sentences in (26) take on the object ‘water’, or [dlo], and are ordered subject, verb, and object.

(26) Haitian Creole Transitive Sentences; with the object ‘water’ or [dlo]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I drink</th>
<th>[mwê bwê dlo], [m bwê dlo]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You drink</td>
<td>[u bwê dlo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She/It drinks</td>
<td>[li bwê dlo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We drink</td>
<td>[nu bwê dlo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You (plural) drink</td>
<td>[nu bwê dlo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They drink</td>
<td>[jo bwê dlo]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these intransitive and transitive sentences support the hypothesis that most verbs in Haitian Creole are ambitransitive and there is no change in word order, we do not have any data on any real intransitive verbs, such as the English examples *to die* and *to sleep*, which do not take any objects. The verbs we examined in Haitian Creole have the ability to function with or without an object, and cannot show us what differences may have occurred in word order in regards to intransitive sentences that can not take an object.

**4.4 Sentences with the verb ‘to be’**

The copula, or the linking verb ‘to be’, generally follows a complicated set of different rules across many languages. In gaining data from our consultant, we made many hypotheses that ended up not being supported, and we worked through our issues with this complicated verb until we came to some legitimate conclusions. In this section I’ll take you through the journey, starting from the beginning.
The first set of data we gained regarding the verb ‘to be’ was the verb [sɛ], which we determined to be equivalent to the English ‘is/am/are’, as can be seen in (27) below.

(27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[mwè sɛ ted]</th>
<th>[u sɛ ʒuli]</th>
<th>[li sɛ zak]</th>
<th>[jo sɛ etüdıć]</th>
<th>[nu sɛ længwist]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am Teddy</td>
<td>you are Julie</td>
<td>he is Zack</td>
<td>They are students</td>
<td>we are linguists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am Teddy.</td>
<td>You are Julie.</td>
<td>He is Zack.</td>
<td>They are students.</td>
<td>We are linguists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (27) we tested the use of [sɛ] as the copula, using different persons and numbers in the subject, and a noun as the object. From this supporting data, we made the hypothesis that [sɛ] is equivalent to the English ‘is/am/are’, until we collected more data in which [sɛ] was being used to describe a subject as an adjective, and we discovered this was unattested in Haitian Creole, as can be seen in (28).

(28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>[mwɛ sɛ tsïst]</em></th>
<th><em>[bagai la sɛ gwo]</em></th>
<th><em>[fam lɔ sɛ tsïst]</em></th>
<th><em>[u sɛ dwol]</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I am sad</em></td>
<td><em>thing the is big</em></td>
<td><em>woman the is sad</em></td>
<td><em>you are bizarre</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I am sad.</em></td>
<td><em>The thing is big.</em></td>
<td><em>The woman is sad.</em></td>
<td><em>You are bizarre.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in (28) does not support our hypothesis that [sɛ] serves as the copula and can precede both nouns and adjectives, but rather our new hypothesis would be that [sɛ] can only be used when we are saying that a noun is a noun, but not if we are saying a noun is an adjective. These rules are stated in (29).

29) Rules regarding [sɛ] in Haitian Creole

a) **Noun** [sɛ] **noun**. (teacher, professor, student, etc.)

b) * **Noun** [sɛ] **adjective**. (sad, big, bizarre)

c) **Noun** **adjective**

This rule states that [sɛ] can be used to describe a noun as another noun, but cannot be used to describe a noun as an adjective. In this instance, the adjective is placed directly after the noun, and this is the attested word order in Haitian Creole. In the next section we will look at the properties of the verb ‘to have’ that we have uncovered.

### 4.5 Sentences with the verb ‘to have’

The verb ‘to have’ in Haitian Creole has two different, but similar, forms: [gæ] and [gae jæ]. These forms seem to be interchangeable, and the only examples I have of the usage of this verb are instances in which you are describing an emotional state, such as “I am sad”.

```plaintext
4.5 Sentences with the verb ‘to have’
```

```plaintext
The verb ‘to have’ in Haitian Creole has two different, but similar, forms: [gæ] and [gae jæ]. These forms seem to be interchangeable, and the only examples I have of the usage of this verb are instances in which you are describing an emotional state, such as “I am sad”.
```
This data supports the hypothesis that the verb ‘to have’ can be used to say that somebody has a noun, such as ‘sadness’, but not that they have, or in essence ‘are’, an adjective. Although, Teddy provided us with two examples that may disprove this hypothesis, or are the bases for a different hypothesis in (31).

The examples in (31) show us that ‘have’ can actually be paired with either an adjective or a noun to describe someone’s emotional state. I predict that the example in (30) is an exception to this rule, and that ‘sadness’ is preferred and possibly more logical than using ‘sad’.

If I were to have had more time, I would have loved to have gathered more information about the verb ‘to have’, such as sentences where the verb has an object, such as “I have a pet”. I also would have enjoyed to examine sentences such as “I have fun” or “I have to go”, as I’m sure they would allow for many hypotheses and further investigation to discover any sort of pattern for such a complicated verb.

4.5 Tense markers in Haitian Creole

Thus far in our analysis we have only focused on the present tense, so in this section, we will be focusing on how Haitian Creole creates tense in its language. In all instances of the present tense the verb itself has not been inflected in any way, so we must wonder how tenses are expressed in Haitian Creole? We soon discovered after questioning our consultant that Haitian Creole uses tense markers, rather than conjugations, to indicate a change in tense. In this section, I will discuss the past, future and progressive tense, when and how they are used, and their respective symbols.

Let’s begin with the past tense which uses the tense marker [tɛ], placing it after the subject and before the verb, to indicate an action that occurred in the past.
According to Teddy, this form of the past does not refer to the immediate past, such as something that happened anywhere between a few seconds to a few hours ago, but it refers to a more distant past. For the immediate past, Teddy would use the present tense along with a word such as ‘just’, as in “I just drank the coffee”. This form of the past tense refers to something that was done anywhere from 12 hours ago, yesterday or last month. The table in (32) shows a paradigm of inflections for the past tense of the verb [muɾi], which means ‘to die’.

(32) Past Tense of [muɾi]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[mwẽ tɛ muɾi]</th>
<th>[u tɛ muɾi]</th>
<th>[li tɛ muɾi]</th>
<th>[nu tɛ muɾi]</th>
<th>[jo tɛ muɾi]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I past die</td>
<td>you past die</td>
<td>she past die</td>
<td>we past die</td>
<td>they past die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I died.</td>
<td>You died.</td>
<td>She died.</td>
<td>We died.</td>
<td>They died.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see in (32), the past tense marker is between the subject and the verb, and the verb remains uninflected. As we continue to look at the future and progressive tenses, we will see that their respective tense markers are in the same position as they are for the past tense.

The first future tense marker we will examine is [pɾal], which when placed in context literally translates to ‘going to’. This tense marker is used for the more near and definite future, and is often used in more specific cases, such as “I’m going to drink tomorrow”. The table (33) below shows three different, attested forms of the gloss “I am going to die” in the first person singular form. The first inflection is the standard subject, tense marker, followed by uninflected verb. The second inflection has the same word order, but there is an [ɛ] inserted between the tense marker and the verb. According to Teddy, the presence of the [ɛ] is considered more grammatical, but is less commonly used than the first inflection. The third inflection shows the same word order as well, but the subject [mwẽ] is shortened to [m], which is also the more commonly used form of this pronoun.

(33) Future Tense of [muɾi] using the marker [pɾal]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[mwẽ pɾal muɾi]</th>
<th>[u pɾal muɾi]</th>
<th>[li pɾal muɾi]</th>
<th>[nu pɾal muɾi]</th>
<th>[jo pɾal muɾi]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I future die</td>
<td>you future die</td>
<td>she past die</td>
<td>we future die</td>
<td>they future die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am going to die.</td>
<td>You are going to die.</td>
<td>She is going to die.</td>
<td>We are going to die.</td>
<td>They are going to die.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next future tense marker that we are going to look at it is the marker [va], which translates to ‘will’, as in “I will drink”. This differs from the future tense marker
[pəal] in that they correspond with different times in the future. Similarly, this form also has a shortened form of the pronoun in the first person singular, but it also has different forms for each of the pronouns in the paradigm.

(34) Future tense of [muʃi] using the marker [va]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[mwe va muʃi]</th>
<th>[u va muʃi]</th>
<th>[li va muʃi]</th>
<th>[nu va muʃi]</th>
<th>[jo va muʃi]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ma va muʃi]</td>
<td>[la va muʃi]</td>
<td>[na va muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[n va muʃi]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[wa va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[li va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[na va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ma va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[la va muʃi]</td>
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<td>[n va muʃi]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[u va muʃi]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[wa va muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I future die   you future die  she past die  we future die  they future die

I will die.    You will die.    She will die.  We will die.  They will die.

My hypothesis regarding the shortened pronouns is that Haitian Creole is a language which prefers shortened forms wherever possible. This could be because as a creole, it is a more “simple” language and therefore prefers the shortened forms, or Haitian Creole, at one point in its history, was a more complex language and naturally became simplified as the language changed over time.

The next tense we will examine is the progressive tense in (35), which also has shortened forms for the pronouns that are also more preferable for native speakers of Haitian Creole. This tense refers to an action that is in progress, such as “I am drinking”.

(35) Progressive Tense (prog) of [muʃi]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[mwe ap muʃi]</th>
<th>[u ap muʃi]</th>
<th>[li ap muʃi]</th>
<th>[nu ap muʃi]</th>
<th>[jo ap muʃi]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[m ap muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[w ap muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[l ap muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[n ap muʃi]</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[j ap muʃi]</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I prog die     you prog die    she prog die  we prog die  they prog die

I am dying.    You are dying.  She is dying.  We are dying.  They are dying.

I hypothesize that the shortened forms of the progressive tense are as a result of the same predictions I made for the shortened forms of the future tense marker [va]. These forms are more commonly and preferably used by native speakers of Haitian Creole, and because of this, as descriptive linguists, we are interested in how speakers actually speak the language as opposed to how they may feel they should speak.

Using this syntactical data as my evidence and support, I would say that Haitian Creole is an example of a relatively isolating language. An isolating language has a low ratio for morphemes per word, and is said to lack morphology because there is no internal compositional structure inside of a word. I came to this conclusion about Haitian Creole because it does not modify its verbs internally. One thing I found that is not in support of Haitian Creole as an isolating language, is that its tense markers may possibly be affixes, as will be discussed in further depth in the next section. Despite this, I still believe that Haitian Creole fits the criteria for an isolating language, and it is
possible that some of the African languages influencing Haitian Creole could be isolating languages as well.

In the next section, using the data from the paradigms above, we are able to test the placement of adverbs in Haitian Creole to also determine if the tense markers used above are separate words or suffixes that attach to the beginning of a verb.

4.6 Adverbs; let us in!

In the last section, we determined the presence of tense markers to indicate a change in the tense of verbs in Haitian Creole. Our next hypothesis to test is whether or not these tense markers are affixes that attach themselves to the beginning of the verb, or if it is a completely separate word. How can we test this? My classmates created the “interruptibility” test which changes the placement of adverbs throughout a sentence to figure out what word order is attested in Haitian Creole. If an adverb is placed between the pronoun and the tense marker, it is likely that the tense marker and verb form a single chunk, such as [apmuʁ]. Now, if the adverb is placed between the tense marker in the verb, it is likely that they are two different entities, such as [ap] and [muʁ]. We can test this by “interrupting” the sentence with the adverb [ʁapidmɔ], meaning ‘quickly’, in different places throughout a sentence. Consider (36).

(36) The “Interruptibility” Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Attempt</th>
<th>Second Attempt</th>
<th>Third Attempt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*[mwe ʁapidmɔ tɛ muʁi]</td>
<td>*[mwe tɛ ʁapidmɔ muʁi]</td>
<td>[mwe tɛ muʁi ʁapidmɔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I quickly past die</td>
<td>*I past quickly die</td>
<td>I past die quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I quickly died.</td>
<td>* I di quickly ed.</td>
<td>I died quickly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are numerous conclusions we can come to from the data in (36). The first conclusion is regarding word order; adverbs follow verbs in Haitian Creole. The second conclusion, more directly related to morphology than syntax, is that the tense markers are affixes and attach to verbs to make longer chunks that cannot be separated by an adverb, as can be seen in the second attempt.

5.0 Conclusion

As mentioned earlier in the paper, Teddy shared with us that if he were to speak to his family in French, he would come off as acting like he is better than them because he is well educated. This is a result of sociolinguistic beliefs that Creoles are not as legitimate as “real” languages because they are more “simple” and less refined or sophisticated. After completing this linguistic analysis, I find it unfortunate that one language can be overpowered by another and deemed less respectable to its own speakers. Haitian Creole is a vital aspect of the culture of Haiti, and I feel that a population should be proud of something as powerful as a language that is shared across a country. Haitian Creole has a completely legitimate, and even complicated
grammatical structure, and because of that I believe that Haitians should embrace a unique and beautiful piece of what makes them who they are.

Our work with Haitian Creole was a phenomenal experience. We were able to proudly put our linguistic knowledge and skills into practice, and enjoy the outcome of our hard work and patience. I will never forget my first experience working with such an amazing language, and I definitely will not lose my interest in Haitian Creole. When completing linguistic analyses, it is amazing to collect data and create hypotheses, have them be disproved, and then work again to figure out another possibly hypotheses. It is with your own knowledge that you are examining a language and working to gain data to support your very own hypothesis. It is a tremendous feeling shared by all linguists, and I am thankful to be a part of something so wonderful.

References

