

## On the origin of Berbice Dutch VO: a substratist explanation

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**Abstract:** Intriguingly, Guyanese creole Berbice Dutch is a VO language, whereas both its substrate languages (Ijo languages, in particular Kalabari) and its superstrate (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch) are OV (see Kouwenberg (1992)). Ever since the introduction of Bickerton's bioprogram (Bickerton (1984) et seq), universalist creolists have taken Berbice Dutch to be a perfect illustration of VO as a default setting for basic word order.

We argue that the VO emergence in Berbice Dutch directly results from the grammatical structure of Kalabari and 17th century Dutch and therefore counts as an argument against this universalist claim that Berbice Dutch word order must result from a UG default setting.

Closer inspection on Kalabari and 17th century Dutch reveals (i) that, contrary to what has been assumed in. Kouwenberg (1992) and Lightfoot (2006), Kalabari does not exhibit any Verb Second effects and (ii) that 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch still allowed VO object leakages. Given these facts, VO emergence in Berbice Dutch directly follows:

First Kalabari had no movement causing VO in their native language. Since Kalabari had no way of recognizing the V2 property, Kalabari speakers learning Dutch must have misinterpreted Dutch VO surface strings and subsequently overgeneralized VO to all sentence types. Further input however did not lead Kalabari speakers to reject their initial VO hypothesis and adopt a more complex OV+V2 hypothesis as the VO overgeneralizations were in compliance with the existing Dutch VO leakages. Finally, this explains why Dutch planters adopted counterintuitive VO in depth orderings: those VO constructions were not considered fully ungrammatical in those days. This opened up the way for the next generation to interpret this linguistic input as VO with exceptional leakage to OV. With the loss of syntactic flexibility, finally, word order for Berbice Dutch was set on VO.

**Key words:** Berbice Dutch, Substratism, Universalism, VO/OV, Creoles

## ***1. Introduction***

Earlier stages of research within creolistics often assumed that pidgins and creoles, as they emerged on the plantations of European colonies, were severely simplified versions of the European language that had been the superstrate in a given situation (see Bloomfield (1933) for example). This hypothesis soon proved untenable: on closer inspection, creoles turned out to be as complex and structured as any natural language (see, for example, Holmes (1992) for discussion) and other ways of accounting for their existence had to be explored. From this necessity, several new theories arose, of which we will discuss two of the most prominent in the following. Subsequently, we will apply the polemics brought about by these new theories to a case study of a specific, often discussed creole: Berbice Dutch. Among others, the VO property of this language has been the topic of quite some debate. In the upcoming sections we will clarify the content of this debate and shed new light on various aspects of the discussion.

### ***1.1 Universalism versus substratism***

In this first section, two of the leading theoretical views concerning creole language emergence will be discussed: universalism and substratism. Both terms describe the far end poles of a sliding scale. Purely universalist or purely substratist linguists are marginal; mostly, scholars take an in-between position, inclining either towards the universalist or the substratist pole.

#### ***1.1.1 Universalism***

Universalism in its utmost consequence takes the grammatical properties of creole languages to be representations of universal aspects of a uniquely human language capacity. So-called ‘unmarked’ properties put forth by that innate capacity should provide an explanation for the genesis of grammatical structure in creoles *and* for the relatively uniform outcome of creolisation processes throughout the world. Combined with lexical elements mainly originating from the language of the European coloniser, this should account for most creole characteristics.

The present day discussion about what constitutes creole languages has to a large degree been determined by the work of Derek Bickerton (most notably Bickerton (1980/1974), Bickerton (1981) and Bickerton (1984)), one of the first to present universalist creolist hypotheses.

Bickerton attempts to resolve the mystery of language evolution by looking at data from first language acquisition and exploring possible evidence creole languages have to offer. Concerning the latter, he puts strong restrictions on the creoles that he considers suitable for this purpose. First, only languages qualify of which the preceding pidgin did not last longer than one generation. Second, he does not allow languages into his definition of 'creole' that emerged in a situation where more than twenty percent of the population spoke the superstrate language. Third, he demanded the remaining eighty percent to have a diverse linguistic background, making large groups of substrate speakers unintelligible to one another (though see Den Besten (2002) for a critical evaluation of this third requirement). These restrictions were motivated by his claim that the innate language capacity could become fully active only in such a situation, with minimal interference from other linguistic environments.

Furthermore, Bickerton proposes that in this specific situation a creole language would emerge that to a large degree is a blueprint of what the innate language capacity in its purest form looks like. According to Bickerton the plantational pidgin in this context would be a linguistic system with only very basic grammatical properties. Nevertheless, because of the large diversity in linguistic background of the substrate speakers, this pidgin would become the primary means of communication on the plantation and thus a mother tongue for the next generation. Confronted with the absence of much of the structure regular natural languages possess, children fall back on an innate language competence which they use to transform a pidgin into a grammatically fully-fledged creole.

For his theory Bickerton, among others, builds on Chomsky's parameter theory (e.g. Chomsky (1981)). He proposes that each innate parameter may have an unmarked or default setting, i.e. the value a parameter 'naturally' has in a newly born child and that will only be shifted to another setting if linguistic input requires this. Though if linguistic input lacks grammar and a child is unable to discover a structure in the data it is confronted with, as would be the case when a pidgin is offered to it as a mother tongue, it will fall back to the default settings of the parameter system. Even though linguistic input in this context is extremely chaotic, the child still converts it into a perfectly structured output.

Bickerton acknowledges that it is difficult to determine for isolated creole languages whether a certain structure is the result of sub- or superstrate influence or comes from what he calls the 'language bioprogram', the innate language capacity, but claims this

problem can be overcome by studying larger groups of creoles. Bickerton sees many structural similarities between creoles that are far beyond the possibilities of chance. For his bioprogram he constructs twelve parameters and deduces their defaults from his selection of creoles. Perhaps the most prominent and most often discussed example is the word order parameter: Bickerton claims VO to be default, whereas OV is assumed to be marked.

### ***1.1.2 Substratism***

Substratist approaches (e.g. Lefebvre (1998) and Lumsden (1999)) dismiss Bickerton's hypotheses and instead propose that creole languages owe their grammatical structure mostly or exclusively to the influence of substrate languages, being, in the case of colonial plantations, mostly African languages spoken by the slaves. The uniformity Bickerton sees in creoles, substratism attributes to substrate effects, although often doubt is cast on the uniformity thesis as a whole as well (see, for instance Muysken (1988) for discussion). But even if the languages Bickerton compares are as similar as he claims, this similarity is due to the fact that they all emerged under very similar conditions and in very similar language contact situations: one or several mostly West African substrates meeting a European superstrate. Substratist views hold the African languages responsible for most of a creole's grammatical features whereas European languages presumably provided most of its vocabulary (see Muysken and Law (2001) for discussion).

Because much of what substratism accredits to substrate influence overlaps with what universalism claims to be bioprogram defaults, it is hard to determine with some degree of certainty which of the given is really hidden behind these phenomena. For this reason the discussion has reached somewhat of an impasse. As Muysken and Smith (1986) rightly point out, only linguistic and historical information with regard to individual creole languages could prove any possible substrate influence. Exactly this is a problem, since this would concern information dating back to the earliest periods of the creoles in question, a period both linguistically and historically poorly documented.

That leaves only those cases in which marked structures, structures opposite to defaults in Bickerton's bioprogram, are both part of the creole *and* the substrate language concerned. Indeed, for that particular property that would prove with a large degree of certainty that substrate influence played a substantial role. Clearly, if a creole displays a marked structure which is also found in the substrate, this can not be attributed to any

universal bioprogram and thus must be inherited from the mother tongue. However, if this can not be proven for the other properties of that language, i.e. if most, if not all other structural qualities are in compliance with unmarked proposals within bioprogram theory, Bickerton's hypothesis is hardly affected. Bickerton agrees that it is inevitable that some substrate influence will be attested in almost every language contact situation. It would be, for instance, very much possible that the structure in question was already present in the preceding pidgin and that the children simply adopted it. However, any other grammatical feature could still originate from an innate default setting.

### ***1.2 Berbice Dutch: the strongest evidence for universalism?***

As a response to substrate theory, examples were put forward of creoles that exhibit grammatical properties which correspond to a proposed default parameter, but whose sub- and superstrate languages have this parameter set for the marked value. Such examples would constitute the strongest evidence in favour of universalist approaches. The most popular instance comes from word order rules in Berbice Dutch creole.

Universalist creolists have claimed that the linguistic environment can not be responsible for Berbice Dutch word order, since both its super- and its substrate language use the marked OV ordering which has not been adopted by the creole. Instead, the default setting of some innate linguistic word order parameter has been proposed to be at the root of Berbice Dutch' rigid VO structure (the universalist default for the word order parameter). Berbice Dutch applies SVO to almost every type of sentence.

(1)	<i>o</i>	<i>sartε</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>gut</i>	Berbice Dutch
	3SG.S	pour.PST	ART.DEF	thing.O	
	He/she poured the stuff <sup>1</sup>				

(2)	<i>wat</i>	<i>rul-a</i>	<i>jεndε</i>	Berbice Dutch
	what.S	rul-IPFV	2PL.O	
	What is ruling you? <sup>2</sup>			

(3)	<i>in</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>musu</i>	<i>kεnap</i>	<i>dang</i>	Berbice Dutch
	3PL.S	have	many	person.PL.O	there	

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<sup>1</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 33)

<sup>2</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 39)

<i>wat</i>	<i>biça</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>Arwak</i>
what.S	speak.IPFV	ART.DEF	Arawak.O

There are many people there who speak Arawak<sup>3</sup>

This word order deviates from both the substrate Ijo languages and the Dutch superstrate in this situation. Nigerian Kalabari, Berbice Dutch' most dominant substrate language is SOV (as shown in examples (4)-(6) taken from Jenewari (1977)) and cannot be responsible for Berbice Dutch word order. In addition, Berbice Dutch superstrate, 16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch, also employs an SOV word order (see (7) – (9)), albeit it also exhibits Verb Second (V2) effects with respect to finite verbs in main clauses, a point that we will return to in more detail later on, and therefore also seems to rule out the scenario of superstrate influence here. It thus looks as if Berbice Dutch creole is a prototypical example of a creole that has ignored its linguistic environment and allegedly has maintained some property default to the language bioprogram.

(4)	<i>o</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>biari</i>	Kalabari
	3SG.NOM.M	thing.O	want	

He wants something<sup>4</sup>

(5)	<i>o</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>anga</i>	<i>muari</i>	Kalabari
	3SG.NOM.M	what	place.O	go	

Where is he going to go?<sup>5</sup>

(6)	<i>i</i>	<i>ani</i>	<i>juu</i>	<i>mu-a</i>	Kalabari
	2SG.NOM	DEM.DIST	place.O	go-NEG	

<i>kuma</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>bobi-aa</i>
if	3SG.NOM.M	come.FUT-NEG

If you don't go there, he won't come<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 57)

<sup>4</sup> Jenewari (1977: 425)

<sup>5</sup> Jenewari (1977: 112)

<sup>6</sup> Jenewari (1977: 132)

(7) *is 't=bedde van me man,* 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch  
*be.3SG ART.DEF.N=bed of 1SG.GEN husband*

*daer ick te nacht in laij-de-Ø*  
*which 1SG.NOM at night in lay-PST-SG*  
 It is the bed of my husband in which I lay at night<sup>7</sup>

(8) *met stoutig-heit ducht ick* 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch  
*with bold-NLMZ fear 1SG.NOM*

*dat het haer kom-t steuren*  
*COMP 3SG.N.S 3SG.ACC come-3SG disturb.INF*  
 I fear that they boldly come and disturb her<sup>8</sup>

(9) *wat schepsel heeft zo klein geweldt* 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch  
*what creature.S have such small power.O*

*dien quaad-t doen grote moeite val-t?*  
*COMP evil do.INF.S big effort.O fall-3SG*  
 What creature has such small powers that evil doing costs great effort?<sup>9</sup>

To make Berbice Dutch a viable Bickertonian creole, it needs to satisfy the demands Bickerton has set concerning sub- and superstrate population and promptitude of emergence. Indeed, the Berbice plantation did constitute one Dutch colonist for every fifteen slaves keeping the percentage of superstrate speakers well within the range of Bickertons twenty percent. Also, although due to limited documentation it is not clear whether the pidgin preceding Berbice Dutch creole has lasted for more than one generation, generally, creolists tend to assume that it has not (see Bickerton (1984) for a general discussion about the duration of pidgins in those circumstances). Finally, Berbice Dutch' linguistic background was heterogeneous as not only Kalabari, but also other Ijo varieties, exhibiting SOV, were present. Moreover, lexical influences from the neighbouring Arawak population have been attested, although the influence of this

<sup>7</sup> Huygens (1658: 48)

<sup>8</sup> Hermkens and van de Ketterij (1980: 159)

<sup>9</sup> Hermkens and van de Ketterij (1980: 158)

language is much more limited than the other substrate languages and has not had any traceable non-lexical influences.

Hence, both Dutch and Kalabari are SOV in their word order, yet Berbice Dutch ended up being an SVO language, a structure in perfect agreement with Bickerton's bioprogram default for this parameter.

One important advocate of universalism in creolistics is Roberts (1999), who, with regard to the creole word order, claims that these languages display a major preference for SVO, showing that this must be a reflection of some unmarked UG property. Roberts follows Kayne (1994), who claims that all languages, whichever their (surface) basic word order, have underlying SVO syntax. He assumes that this pattern is the only order which does not involve verb movement, thereby explaining UG's bias toward this structure. Bickerton (personal communication) seems to assent to the analysis that SVO is the only ordering which does not involve a transformation, therefore making it a default characteristic of UG. He refers to bioprogram theory to clarify why SVO is predicted even for cases such as Berbice Dutch, in which, on the basis of the linguistic environment, one might sooner expect SOV. According to Roberts then, Berbice Dutch clearly shows just how marked OV is. In spite of its OV environment, Berbice Dutch supposedly has maintained the VO default. According to Muysken (1983) Berbice Dutch for this reason provides "[p]erhaps the strongest evidence thus far that the creole SVO order does not simply result from the contributing languages, but is typical of language genesis in general."

However, it should be acknowledged that Muysken (1983) and Roberts (1999) (as opposed to Bickerton, who never elaborately discussed Berbice Dutch word order) did not really explore the implications of this claim or take into account the full complexity of the linguistic environment which gave rise to Berbice Dutch, already casting doubt on the tenability of any such proposal.

In the remainder of this paper we will argue that in fact the earlier-mentioned V2 property of Dutch, in combination with two other observations (one from Ijo, one from 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch) that thus far have not been taken into consideration in the study to Berbice Dutch genesis, is actually responsible for the emergence of Berbice Dutch VO. However, before exploring substratist alternatives to Berbice Dutch VO, we first look more closely at the basic Berbice Dutch, Ijo and 16/17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch word order facts.



### ***1.3 A structural analysis of Berbice Dutch, Kalabari, and 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch***

In the following sections, syntactic properties of both languages involved in Berbice Dutch emergence will be discussed. We will successively focus on the rigid OV quality of Kalabari and the relative flexibility of word order patterns in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch. First, we shall briefly discuss Berbice Dutch properties, in order to establish this creole's rigid SVO structure.

#### ***1.3.1 Word order in Berbice Dutch Creole***

If we want to study Berbice Dutch syntax, we are limited to a relatively recent variety of the language. The earliest source containing Berbice Dutch utterances that has been handed down, is a text dating back to 1827, written by Swaving. This text shows some differences in word form and meaning compared to contemporary Berbice Dutch, but syntax does not appear to have undergone drastic changes (see Kouwenberg (1992)). Therefore, and since no further historical information is available, in the description of Berbice Dutch the contemporary variety will be the guideline.

Berbice Dutch is very rigidly SVO. Nearly all clause-types could be taken as 'basic', since variation in ordering is limited to a minimum. Take the following simple main clauses, showing word order with a single verb and a verbal cluster respectively:

(10)	<i>o</i>	<i>sartε</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>gut</i>	Berbice Dutch
	3SG.S	pour.PST	ART.DEF	thing.O	
	He/she poured the stuff <sup>10</sup>				

(11)	<i>εk</i>	<i>j□rma</i>	<i>kan</i>	<i>mj=o</i>	Berbice Dutch
	1SG.POSS	woman.S	can	make=3SG	
	My wife can prepare it <sup>11</sup>				

In this sentence type SVO constituent order is apparent, an order which is seen throughout the language. Let us look at some stereotypical clause-types that tend to induce word order deviation:

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<sup>10</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 33)

<sup>11</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 33)

(12) *wat      rul-a              jɛndɛ* Berbice Dutch  
 What.S    rul-IPFV            2PL.O  
 What is ruling you?<sup>12</sup>

In (12), an ordering SVO emerges for question word interrogatives. Here, the question word functions as the subject of the clause. However, were it to be the object argument, it could still be placed sentence initial, showing Berbice Dutch, like Dutch, has a tendency to front its wh-phrases (in some instances of wh-questions, focus marking is added, indicating the word order divergence caused by the movement of the wh-phrase to the Focus position of (split) C, see Rizzi (1997) for a discussion of this phenomenon):

(13) *fan      wan=s=in              kum-tɛ* Berbice Dutch  
 from    where.O=FOC=3PL.S    come.PRF  
 Where have they come from?<sup>13</sup>

Interrogatives without question words are entirely similar to regular main clauses, except for their rising intonation:

(14) *ju      waf-te              ju              bara?* Berbice Dutch  
 2SG.S    wash-PST            2SG.POSS    hand.O  
 Did you wash your hands?<sup>14</sup>

Equally, subordinate clauses remain SVO under all circumstances:

(15) *in      ha      musu    kɛnap              dang* Berbice Dutch  
 3PL.S    have    many    person.PL.O    there

*wat      biça              di              Arwak*  
 what.S    speak-IPFV            ART.DEF            Arawak.O  
 There are many people there who speak Arawak<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 39)

<sup>13</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 35)

<sup>14</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 34)

<sup>15</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 57)

Clause types that deviate slightly from the regular Berbice Dutch order, are those expressing focus:

- (16) *ore      ek      bugraf-t=o* Berbice Dutch  
          3SG.O 1SG.S bury-PST=3SG.O  
          As for him/her, I buried him/her<sup>16</sup>

In this type of clause, the constituent placed in focus, in this case the object, is hosted in sentence initial position. However, as the basic object position is still filled by an additional clitic *o*, the structure remains SVO and is just a plain example of Clitic-left dislocation, thus not providing any counter evidence to the observation that Berbice Dutch exhibits rigid SVO.

Now that we have established that Berbice Dutch can rightfully be called an SVO language, we can move on to a discussion of properties of Kalabari syntax that are relevant to our account.

### 1.3.2 Word order in Kalabari

In order to fully understand how Berbice Dutch came to be, we now discuss the syntax of Kalabari, the dominant Ijo language spoken in the linguistic environment where Berbice Dutch arose. Special emphasis will be on syntactic qualities concerning the clause level and the supposed absence of any V2-like properties, resulting in the interpretation of SOV with V2 as simple SVO.

For apparent reasons, this overview will concern contemporary Kalabari, as no description of its seventeenth century counterpart is available.

Kalabari basic word order is SOV, and it exhibits this pattern in a vast majority of sentence types (see Jenewari (1977)). Consider, for instance, the following main clauses:

- (17) *o                      ye      biari* Kalabari  
          3SG.NOM.M    thing.O want  
          He wants something<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Kouwenberg (1994: 49)

<sup>17</sup> Jenewari (1977: 425)

(18) *o ye fibe muari* Kalabari  
 3SG.NOM.M thing.O eat go  
 He is going to eat (something)<sup>18</sup>

This SOV order holds for most main clauses. First, let us again look at some sentence varieties which tend to deviate with regard to surface word order. Kalabari shows no variation in this respect: (19) and (20), instances of interrogatives (respectively with and without a question word) and (21), containing a subordinate clause, all maintain their SOV ordering, proving Kalabari to be very rigid in this sense.

(19) *o to anga muari* Kalabari  
 3SG.NOM.M what place.O go  
 Where is he going to go?<sup>19</sup>

(20) *i o sinba* Kalabari  
 2SG.NOM 3SG.ACC call.FUT  
 Will you greet him?<sup>20</sup>

(21) *i ani juu mu-a* Kalabari  
 2SG.NOM DEM.DIST place.O go-NEG

*kuma o bobi-aa*  
 if 3SG.NOM.M come.FUT-NEG  
 If you don't go there, he won't come<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Kalabari also remains SOV in the case of left dislocation for focus. The phrase in focus is placed in sentence initial position, but is then repeated, often in the form of a (bound) pronoun, in the main clause, leaving the SOV ordering intact.

(22) *iyeri kuma ari=i belemam* Kalabari  
 2SG.NOM FOC 3SG.NOM.F=2SG.NOM love  
 As for you, she loves you<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Kouwenberg (1989: 1)

<sup>19</sup> Jenewari (1977: 112)

<sup>20</sup> Jenewari (1977: 131)

<sup>21</sup> Jenewari (1977: 132)

Only under one condition, Kalabari allows a word order SVO: if the object of any given sentence is a verbal clause, this constituent must be extraposed to sentence final position, thus creating an SVO surface ordering:

- (23) *imbo biari imbo ingeri ibii* Kalabari  
 person.S want person alone be.good.O  
 The person wants only himself to prosper<sup>23</sup>

However, as in virtually all languages, complement clauses are banned from central-embedded position, examples like (23) do not provide any reasons to cast doubt on the rigidity of Kalabari, and Ijo varieties', SVO status.

### 1.3.3 Word order and finite verb placement in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch

With regard to Berbice Dutch superstrate language, a review of the verb second transformation phenomenon in sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch should make clear how the superstrate population in this linguistic situation must have unconsciously analysed their own language, *and* what the linguistic input for the substrate speakers L2 acquisition must have looked like. It should also show where Kalabari speakers might have run into acquisition difficulties.

Modern day Dutch differs in various respects from 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch, but its most structural characteristic has remained unaltered: verb second placement and SOV. Basic word order in both linguistic phases is that of the subordinate clause, which is SOV, as illustrated below (repeated from (7)):

- (24) *is 't=bedde van me man,* 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch  
*be.3SG ART.DEF.N=bed of 1SG.GEN husband*  
  
*daer ick te nacht in laij-de-Ø*  
*which 1SG.NOM at night in lay-PST-SG*  
 It is the bed of my husband in which I lay at night<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Jenewari (1977: 136)

<sup>23</sup> Kouwenberg (1992: 292)

<sup>24</sup> Huygens (1658: 48)

However, in main clauses, the application of V2 makes for an SVO-like surface structure, thus explaining why in Dutch main clauses word order may deviate from SOV. Note that in this sense, Dutch is different from (more rigid) Berbice Dutch and Kalabari Ijo:

(25)	<i>ic</i>	<i>beminne</i>	<i>mijn</i>	<i>Vader</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch
	1SG.NOM	love.1SG	1SG.GEN	father.O	
	I love my father <sup>25</sup>				

Note, however, that this clear SVO surface structure only concerns sentences with a single verb. Since only the finite verb is moved to the second position and all other (infinite) verbs remain in their base generated sentence final position, wherever a verbal cluster is involved, Dutch SOV is apparent again.

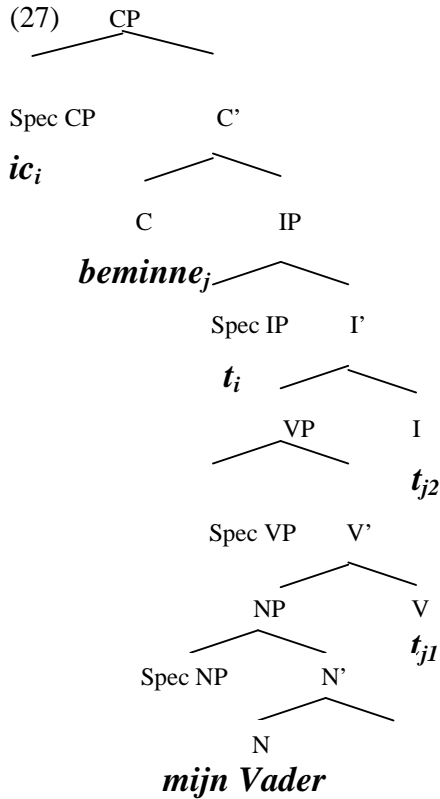
(26)	<i>mijn</i>	<i>vader</i>	<i>wort</i>
	1SG.GEN	father.S	AUX.PFV
	<i>van</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>bemin-t</i>
	of	1SG.ACC	love-PRF
	My father is loved by me <sup>26</sup>		

Following Den Besten (1983) the transformation rules for the formation of Dutch main clauses can be analysed as head movement from V to C. Note that other proposals have been put forward as well (e.g. Müller (2004), but they take V2 to be instances of leftward movement as well:

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<sup>25</sup> Hermkens (1973: 116)

<sup>26</sup> Hermkens (1973: 116)



In (27) it is shown that the subject, which in the basic subordinate order fills the Spec, IP (assuming that the subject has been base-generated in Spec,IP and not Spec,VP, a question that is tangential to the analysis of Berbice Dutch that we propose), has moved to the sentence initial position and that in addition, the finite verb has moved from sentence final position to the head of CP.

Moreover, it should be noted that not only V2 is the reason why 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dutch exhibits surface SVO structures. In section 3.1 we will show that the Dutch spoken in this era allows for more word order flexibility than standard Dutch and that objects for that reason could more easily show up in postverbal position. In fact, we will argue that this combination of V2 and object leakages (i.e. objects appearing in non-canonical position) the key to the explanation of Berbice Dutch VO origin.

We can conclude that in the language spoken by the plantation holders on the Berbice plantation, both SOV and SVO (surface) structures must have been present. Since both substrate as well as superstrate speakers are unlikely to have been aware of the underlying transformations responsible for these alternations, Dutch word order must have been perceived as having, at least, a mixed character, which may have caused

misinterpretations of Dutch structures by both populations present on the Berbice plantation.

#### ***1.4 Concluding remarks***

What the previous sections were meant to illustrate, is that Berbice Dutch word order has evoked several universalist explanations, claiming this creoles VO property can not be explained by looking at the linguistic environment, which has always been OV. This characteristic has been used to show the markedness of OV and the default status of VO. Although at first sight universalist claims may seem fairly convincing, substratist accounts of Berbice Dutch have been attempted as well. The subsequent sections will discuss two of these accounts, whereas in the third section we will propose our own insights, maintaining a substratist point of view, but dealing, amongst others, with the flaws and weaknesses of previous explanations.

### ***2. Substratist accounts of Berbice Dutch***

The development of Berbice Dutch Creole seems to make a strong case for a bioprogram approach to language genesis, but alternative scenarios are not inconceivable. Instead of the universalist assumption of default parameter settings underlying Berbice Dutch syntax, the specific linguistic situation on the Berbice plantation may be the cause for the shift from OV to VO. In this second section we will first elaborate on some other substratist contributors to the discussion concerning Berbice Dutch and discuss some problems these accounts have been facing, after which we will propose an alternative explanation of the development to the emergence of this creole.

#### ***2.1 Kouwenberg (1992)***

Kouwenberg (1992) is a substratist proposal to the explanation of Berbice Dutch linguistic properties, baring the main claim that similarities between sub- and superstrate surface features are at the core of the genesis of Berbice Dutch. What speakers perceived as being common to both languages has been retained. Kouwenberg suspects that both speakers of Kalabari, as well as those of Dutch, were willing to compromise to some extent, a process she refers to as linguistic negotiation; a situation emerged in which mutual intelligibility was the target. She argues for instance that the fact that Berbice Dutch is head-initial in only some phrases (e.g. VP's, DP's and CP's),



but not in other phrases (head-final PP's and NP's) points to the effects of this process of linguistic negotiation: for the areas for which there was no overlap between Kalabari and Dutch, Kouwenberg assumed that situationally defined unmarked features, i.e. features that, due to the specific combination of linguistic properties of the sub- and superstrate languages, would have been either most salient or easiest to fit into the system, have been adopted into Berbice Dutch, for the simple reason that these would have been easiest to learn. So again, the linguistic background of the speakers is a crucial factor, whereas universal markedness does not enter into the equation.

The question now rises why word order had to be negotiated if both 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch and (Kalabari) Ijo exhibit OV. However, although Dutch in depth structure is SOV, in many cases it displays an SVO surface ordering due to its V2 property, which moves finite verbs to the C position in main clauses. In addition, the slave population, according to Kouwenberg, would most likely not be exposed to the full inventory of Dutch sentence types, as she assumes that in this specific situation mostly imperatives, simple sentences (i.e. without subordination or multiple verb constructions) and emphatic speech forms were used. This then may have led the slaves to assume SVO to be basic to Dutch word order.

Although this account is plausible to a certain degree, it also seems too easy to simply explain away all OV evidence like this. For there to have been no indications at all for OV in Dutch is not only highly unlikely, but assuming this based on no prove at all will simply not do when trying to explain how Berbice Dutch came to be VO. Kouwenberg is correct when claiming that the sociolinguistic environment may have triggered more SVO surface constructions. However, there must still also have been abundant SOV evidence. Any Dutch construction involving more than one verb (28), a negation (29), a (certain type of) adverbial (30), a separable verb (31) or an infinitival imperative (32) would evoke an overt V-trace:

(28)	<i>je</i>	<i>moet<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>katoen</i>	<i>t<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>plukken</i>	Dutch
	2SG.NOM	must.SG	cotton.O		pick.INF	
	You have to pick cotton					

(29)	<i>ik</i>	<i>zie<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>het</i>	<i>niet</i>	<i>t<sub>i</sub></i>	Dutch
	1SG.NOM	see.1SG	it.O	NEG		
	I don't see it					

(30) *hij*                      *zie-t<sub>i</sub>*                      *hem*                      *vaak*    *t<sub>i</sub>*                      Dutch  
          3SG.NOM              see-3SG                      3SG.ACC              often  
          He sees him often

(31) *ruim<sub>i</sub>*                      *dat*                      *eens*    *op*                      *t<sub>i</sub>*                      Dutch  
          clean.IMP              DEM.DIST.O              once              up  
          Would you clean that up

(32) *katoen*                      *plukken*                      Dutch  
          cotton.O                      pick.INF  
          Pick cotton!<sup>27</sup>

Any of these sentences, especially the imperative ones, are entirely imaginable to have been uttered in a plantational setting, and many other instances can be conceived of. Linguistic evidence for the usage of particle verbs (as in (31)) also comes from Berbice Dutch expressions such as (33) – (35), where new verbs are created on the basis of Dutch particle verbs out of which the verb has moved.

(33) *pasopo*                      Berbice Dutch  
          take.care  
          To take care

(34) *maklara*                      Berbice Dutch  
          prepare  
          To prepare

(35) *maskono*                      Berbice Dutch  
          clean  
          To clean<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Note that in Standard Dutch infinitival imperatives may also have their objects in postverbal position (e.g. *wegleggen, die bal* ('take away, that ball')), but in all those cases an intonational break is required between the verb and the object.

<sup>28</sup> All three examples taken from Kouwenberg (1992: 275)

The explanation Kouwenberg offers is attractive, but also problematic in a number of respects: first, it only partially accounts for misinterpretations by Kalabari speakers but, second and more importantly, it does not seem to offer any explanation for the fact that speakers of Dutch let go of their SOV subordinations and multiple verb constructions and switched to a counter-intuitive SVO.

Moreover, Kouwenberg goes on to say that Kalabari, like Dutch, has an in depth SOV ordering. To explain how these speakers then would still have perceived SVO as common to both their languages, instead of SOV, Kouwenberg proposes that Kalabari, again like Dutch, makes abundant use of SVO surface structures as well. First, she points out, as we did before, that in Kalabari any object containing a verb is extraposed to the utmost right position, indeed creating SVO. This simply means that any complement clause which happens to be the object of the sentence is moved away from sentence medial position, not unlike many other languages (amongst which Dutch) throughout the world tend to move complex constituents to the periphery of the sentence. However, if it is unproblematic that complement clauses may shift to a postverbal position, why would Berbice Dutch not simply have adopted this possibility, maintaining an SOV ordering in all other situations? Extraposition of complement clauses can hardly be said to explain a tendency of the Kalabari toward SVO; in any other situation their language exhibits rigid SOV.

In addition, Kouwenberg points at auxiliary constructions which seem to display behaviour somewhat similar to Dutch verb second. She claims that a subset of Kalabari verb cluster constructions demand certain auxiliaries to be placed before the object of the sentence, whilst the main verb remains in sentence final position, consequently producing surface word order very similar to Dutch main clauses that contain an auxiliary.

(36)	<i>ini</i>	<i>ine</i>	<i>ofunguru</i>	<i>ba-aa</i>	Kalabari
	3PL.NOM	be.able	rat.O	kill-NEG	
	They can't kill rats <sup>29</sup>				

This verb second-like word order only occurs in combination with a limited set of auxiliaries, though among these are quite frequent ones such as equivalents of 'can', 'be able', 'begin' and 'repeat'.

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<sup>29</sup> Kouwenberg (1992: 292)

One might propose that Kalabari speakers on the Berbice plantation would have recognized Dutch verb second on the basis of instances such as (36), calling into question the assumption that the lack of this specific feature in Kalabari is what made Berbice Dutch SVO.

At first sight Kouwenbergs claim seems valid, but closer inspection casts considerable doubt on her proposition. First, this construction is relatively marginal in Kalabari. But, more importantly, as Kouwenberg suggests herself, these auxiliaries are base-generated in left-peripheral position, a claim that seems to be confirmed by the observation that these alleged auxiliaries lack any kind of verbal inflection. The mentioned auxiliaries cannot be considered verbal at all, but rather temporal, modal or aspectual (TMA) particles generated right in a higher slot (in the I or C domain). Jenewari (1977) does not discuss this lack of inflection in his description of Kalabari, but examples in his grammar as well as the examples and explanation given by Kouwenberg herself, point firmly toward a particle analysis in that no TMA features are ever marked on these elements, whereas the sentence final verb does always show feature marking. Moreover, other Ijoid languages display exactly the same pattern of base generation of a particle whilst the finite verb remains sentence final, as an example from Williamson's (1965) description of the North Central Ijo language Kolokuma makes clear:

- (37) *eri kurei bani saramo tobou deni-mi* Kolokuma  
 3SG.S can run fast child surpass-T  
 He could run faster than the child<sup>30</sup>

Like in Kalabari, Kolokuma finite verbs remain sentence final, whereas its particles are generated in a higher position.

Considering what we know about constituent order in Kalabari and taking into account that what Kouwenberg calls auxiliaries, are indeed so called 'TMA' particles, independent particles which indicate the tense, modality and/or aspect of the clause outside of the verb, we can conclude that Kalabari speakers had no constructions comparable to Dutch verb second in their native tongue.

Therefore, it remains unclear, why the process of linguistic negotiation turned into the emergence of Berbice Dutch SVO. Under the situation Kouwenberg sketches, a result where Berbice Dutch would have become an SOV language with (some kind of) V2

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<sup>30</sup> Kouwenberg (1989: 2)

would be much more likely: it does not follow from the account she presents why the Dutch speakers would overgeneralize to VO and why the Ijo speakers would make all kinds of misinterpretations. The claim that Ijo languages have alleged V2 (which we hold to be incorrect) would, ironically, rather speak in favour of a universalist approach than a substratist view.

## 2.2 *Lightfoot (2006)*

Lightfoot (2006), in a response to Roberts (1999), also opposes the claim that creoles have adopted some kind of unmarked value in the expression of their word order. Instead, he proposes a cue-based, degree-0 learnability approach to acquisition, which should account for the VO feature of Berbice Dutch without having to rely on UG defaults.

As Lightfoot implies, a degree-0 learner would, in a normal SOV with verb second placement situation, deduce the underlying structure based on unembedded data which indirectly reveal the initial position of the verb, e.g. sentences (28) - (32) with negative elements, multiple verbs, verbs with a separable particle and infinitival imperatives. Since all these elements would, in Dutch, remain in their original position to the right of the object they mark the underlying movement of the verb. If this evidence is obscured in some way, speakers may not recognize the OV starting point any longer and assume VO without movement. One possible instance of this, and the only one which Lightfoot elaborates on, is the instance of negative elements. These, in Dutch, as (29) (repeated in (38)) shows, mark the original position of the verb as they occur to the right of the object. In Kalabari, however, negative particles are adjoined to the verb and move along with it:

(38)	<i>ik</i>	<i>zie<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>het</i>	<i>niet</i>	<i>t<sub>i</sub></i>	Dutch
	1SG.NOM	see.1SG	it.O	NEG		
	I don't see it					

(39)	<i>i</i>	<i>mu-ø-a?</i>	Kalabari
	2SG.S	go-FAC-NEG	
	Didn't you go? <sup>31</sup>		

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<sup>31</sup> Jenewari (1977: 120)

Since Kalabari has provided the negative marker for Berbice Dutch, namely ‘kane’, which inherited the Kalabari feature of being a clitic to the verb, this would have obscured one of the indicators of Dutch SOV. Of course Lightfoot is right in saying that it is impossible to show exactly how other OV cues might have been obscured since we lack relevant historical records, but it is too great a leap from there to the claim that no, or hardly any OV evidence has been present on the Berbice plantation. In fact, it is hard to conceive of a scenario in which Kalabari managed to obscure every kind of construction which would provide proof for Dutch OV. Verbal clusters are very common in Dutch, even in the simplest linguistic environments (e.g. child speech or speech directed to children). Furthermore, verbs with a separable particle are possibly even more frequent than verbal clusters. This would leave a vast amount of OV evidence to draw from, even if the Kalabari did manage to obscure some of it.

Of course, also if the degree-0 hypothesis turns out to be untenable (and this is not at all an uncommon assumption in the field, see Roberts and Roussou (2002), Hale (2007) amongst many others for discussion), and children do in fact consider embedded clauses when they acquire the structure of their language, Lightfoot’s claim turns invalid, since embedded clauses are always SOV in Dutch.

To account for Kalabari speakers, Lightfoot refers to Kouwenberg (1992) who claims that Kalabari, like Dutch, is in depth OV but exhibits an overwhelming amount of VO surface orderings. But as we have shown in the previous section, when discussing Kouwenberg’s account of Berbice Dutch, this claim can actually not be made, and so the assertion that Berbice Dutch has almost exclusively had surface SVO constructions as its input needs to be revised.

The scenarios Kouwenberg and Lightfoot sketch are by no means exhaustive. Claiming that both Kalabari and Dutch, at least in this setting, both have been almost exclusively SVO in their surface structure, oversimplifies the situation and does not account for a significant part of the linguistic reality on the Berbice plantation. Moreover, the examples that prove Dutch underlying OV order form a substantial segment of Dutch clause structures and cannot be disregarded. Additionally, both proposals do not explain why the Dutch would have adopted SVO, even if the Kalabari initially did overgeneralize this ordering. In the next section, we provide a viable alternative for the substratist explanations of Berbice Dutch given so far. We will attempt to refute universalism’s claim to Berbice Dutch and propose a substratist alternative, other than the ones already discussed, by taking a more detailed look at the

sub- and superstrate which made up this creole's linguistic input. We will conclude that Berbice Dutch's VO status is a direct consequence of the syntactic properties of these languages and the situation at the plantations.

### ***2.3 Concluding remarks***

As illustrated above, substratism is in several ways capable of accounting for Berbice Dutch VO property without relying on universal linguistic properties. Although in many respects these accounts do explain how Berbice Dutch word order came to be, they fail to explain in full the development that took place. In the next section, we will take these gaps and propose an explanation which will fully account for the OV to VO shift in Berbice Dutch Creole.

### ***3. Towards an explanation of Berbice Dutch SVO***

The alternative account that we propose contains two new claims which are crucial to the present discussion. First, countering what Kouwenberg has said about Kalabari syntax, we stress that none of the Ijoid languages have any significant SVO structures. As we have shown in the previous section, no verb movement is attested in any instance of Kalabari clause structure, making this language rigidly SOV. Second, we will demonstrate that 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch is far from strictly SOV: considerable amounts of object leakages have caused this language to be (surface) SVO not only in its superordinates, but also in a large percentage of its embedded clauses.

Partly, our analysis does follow Kouwenberg: we will adopt her views concerning surface word order in Dutch, which is SVO in subordinates because of its verb second transformation property. In addition though, as we mentioned earlier, we reject her analysis of Kalabari being SVO in a great many instances; in our view, this language is rigidly SOV. Also, Kouwenberg does not explain how planters came to adopt a structure which, if we follow her analysis of Dutch, must have been entirely counter-intuitive to them. If Dutch was SOV in subordinate clauses, we don't expect plantation holders to shift to SVO just because the Kalabari produced these structures. Our analysis is meant to account for those facts earlier analyses lack to explain.

#### ***3.1 Sixteenth and Seventeenth century Dutch: rigid or less rigid SOV?***

For obvious reasons, especially word order in subordinate clauses in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch is relevant to the present discussion. Kalabari speakers' utterances would

be far more acceptable for Berbice plantation holders if their own language already exhibited SVO subordination. For this to be the case, we want Dutch word order in this period to be less rigid than it is today, allowing for flexible VP patterns, i.e. basic OV as well as surface VO orderings. It is a known fact that earlier stages of Dutch displayed case morphology, a property which begun eroding in the Middle Ages due to the unstressed character of most, if not all of the suffixes responsible for case marking (see, for example, Van Der Wal and Van Bree (1992) for discussion). Therefore, what we may want to look for here are possible remnants of case marking in this period in the form of flexibility of word order, a quality which we indeed encounter when studying 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch.

As opposed to modern studies of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch, grammars actually dating back to the sixteen hundreds tend not to discuss word order phenomena. Focus is mainly on phonology and phonetics, spelling and morphology. Where word order is discussed, the discussion mostly concerns word order within constituents, e.g. the position of adjectives within the noun phrase.

Overall, diachronic descriptions agree that word order in sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch was more flexible than it is today. Differences concerning intonation patterns, in addition to an increase in the use of adpositions (especially to cover dative case) as well as other contextual information, might explain instances of word order flexibility where no case morphology is involved. Of course, there is no way of retrieving information with regard to intonation, but since flexible syntax is a given fact, probably as an artefact from days of richer case marking, one will have to assume speakers employed at least some strategy to mark grammatical relations. To that end, use of intonational differences seems as good an assumption as any. However this may be, the most relevant and important conclusion has to be that 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century speakers of Dutch had flexible word order patterns in their repertoire, causing (surface) structures to vary between SOV and SVO (see Weerman (1989) and Van Kemenade (2007) for an overview and discussion of this word order flexibility).

Hermkens and Van De Ketterij (1980) discuss, among others, word order in seventeenth century subordinate clauses. Indeed, SVO word order is found repeatedly in seventeenth century texts. Take, for instance, the following sentence:



(40) *tsint dat de gierigheid* 17<sup>th</sup> cent. Dutch  
 since COMP ART.DEF greed.S

*maeck-te-Ø onderscheidt van have*  
 make-PST-SG difference of possession.O  
 Since greed differentiated possession<sup>32</sup>

In modern day Dutch a construction such as (40) would be ungrammatical, as shown in (41).

(41) *\*omdat gierigheid maak-te-Ø* Modern Dutch  
 because greed.S make.PST.SG

*onderscheid van bezit*  
 difference of possession.O  
 Since greed differentiated possession

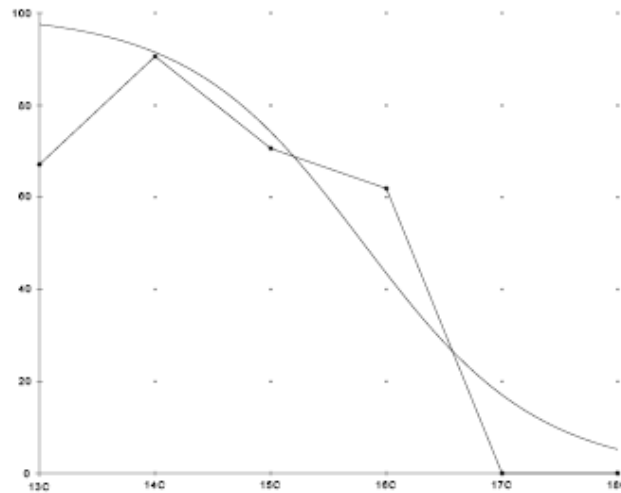
This type of subordination would demand a clear SOV ordering. These examples prove that the Dutch colonizers of the sixteen hundreds must have had at least some SVO subordinates in their repertoire.

New insights by Cloutier (2008) strongly confirm this tendency: a detailed count of VO surface orderings in subordinate clauses shows that not until the eighteenth century did object leakages in Dutch disappear, as illustrated below for directional phrases. It is apparant that in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the era in which the plantation holders acquired their mother tongue, DP leakages were still highly common.

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<sup>32</sup> Hermkens and van de Ketterij (1980: 149)

(42) *Logical function of directional phrases in Dutch*<sup>33</sup>



In the period in which the planters acquired their language (i.e. the end of the sixteenth century), VO surface subordinations were still very frequent, an observation that forms the last piece to the puzzle of solving Berbice Dutch word order.

### 3.2 A substratist alternative

One element that is characteristic for the history of Berbice Dutch is that it has one group of substrate languages which contributed significantly to its morphosyntactic structure. Any grammatical feature that can not be explained by looking at Dutch, is most likely of Ijo (most notably Kalabari) origin. Hence, the process of creolization was driven mostly by the Kalabari trying to acquire seventeenth century Dutch as a second language.

Except for being SOV, Dutch makes use of the V2 rule. The movement of the finite verb then makes for a surface structure SVO in main clauses:

(43)	Piet	zegt	<i>dat</i>	<i>ik</i>	<i>hem</i>	<i>zag</i>	Dutch
			COMP	1SG.S	3SG.M.O	see.PST	
			That I saw him				

<sup>33</sup> Taken from Cloutier (2008: 44)

(44) <i>ik</i>	<i>zag<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>hem</i>	<i>t<sub>i</sub></i>	Dutch
1SG.S	see.PST	3SG.O		
I saw him				

If Dutch, besides being a contact language, was also a target language on the Berbice plantations, learners were confronted with a language that must have been SVO-like in a majority of its utterances. In this sense we follow Lightfoot (2006), whose claims we discussed in section 2.2. The SVO percentage on the plantation may even have been higher than it would be in any other setting, considering plantationers must have been inclined to use relatively simple and short constructions, often avoiding the usage of auxiliaries and subordination when addressing the slaves (following Kouwenberg (1992)). But even if this were not the case, research on second language acquisition of German (see Clahsen and Muysken (1986) for discussion), like Dutch an SOV language with verb second, shows that adult learners of that language misinterpret the superficial SVO word order of main clauses as a depth structure, not because VO should in some way be seen as unmarked, but because German (and Dutch) verb second transformation causes extensive SVO surface structures in main clauses. Second language learners tend to overgeneralize this structure to subordinate clauses, making all of their utterances SVO. There is no reason to assume that this situation would have been different for Ijo speakers learning Dutch.

According to Weerman (1993) something similar happened when Old English came into contact with other languages. He hypothesizes that the misinterpretation of the structural qualities of this language eventually changed it from SOV with verb second to SVO. It is not at all unthinkable that something similar happened in the history of Berbice Dutch. But although this may partially explain the Kalabari speakers' shift from SOV to SVO, it does not explain why Dutch plantationers would adopt this structure (which they clearly must have done, as Berbice Dutch ended up an SVO language). If SVO utterances were considered ungrammatical by the Dutch speakers, what we know about hierarchical relations on the slave plantations would suggest that they would have been very likely to have disregarded these utterances as infantile jabbers of their primitive slaves, who were apparently unable to learn something as sophisticated as a European language.

However, as we have shown, the idea that the Dutch would take SVO word order as being ungrammatical is too strong. Early seventeenth century Dutch actually allowed

for flexibility in word order patterns as a remnant of the freer word order in Middle Dutch due to the fact that Middle Dutch had overt morphological case marking. If it was possible for the object to 'leak' to the right side of the finite verb (just like current Dutch prepositional objects may still occur to the right of the final verb), the SVO utterances of the Kalabari speakers would not have been entirely counter intuitive; they were even, to a considerable degree, already present in the plantation holder's own language. Contact with the Kalabari speakers may then have caused an increase in the frequency of SVO subordinate clauses, in turn confirming Kalabari's SVO hypotheses and allowing next generations to interpret their language input as SVO with occasional leakage to SOV instead of the other way around. When finally flexible word order died out, so did the possibility of leakage, rendering Berbice Dutch SVO. The development of the language thus has passed through the following stages:

- i. Dutch plantation holders spoke Dutch with SOV and V2 and leakages to SVO. The slaves spoke Ijo languages (mostly Kalabari) with SOV and made first attempts to learn Dutch.
- ii. The Ijo second language learners of Dutch did not recognize the V2 rule, which their native tongue lacked, and overgeneralized these superficial SVO orders, as well as the instances of object leakages, of the language of the plantation holders to all word orders.
- iii. The linguistic environment influenced the Dutch plantation holders in that their usage of SVO leakage increased, until the percentage of SVO subordinates may even have out numbered the SOV utterances.
- iv. A next generation interpreted this linguistic input as SVO with exceptional leakage to SOV.
- v. With the loss of the last remnants of object leakages, word order for Berbice Dutch was set on SVO.

Now, with the genesis of a creole, syntax of both super- and substrate languages are responsible for the structure of the end result. From the Berbice Dutch example we extract the hypothesis that when an SOV superstrate language with V2 and object leakages meets a language that is SOV, but without verb second, the resulting creole will be SVO. This would be the result of the frequently described phenomenon of second language learners mistaking surface structure for depth structure in the

acquisition of languages of this type. For speakers of SOV languages that lack V2 this is especially understandable, since they have no way of recognizing the verb placement rule from their own language. The fact that the superstrate in this situation still has a more or less flexible word order, making SVO subordinates acceptable to speakers of this language as well, makes the emergence of this structure in the contact language even more probable.

#### ***4. Final remarks and discussion***

Berbice Dutch very specifically seems to be the product of the linguistic situation on the plantation it emerged on. The Ijo speakers were confronted with a language which not only appeared to apply a (superficial) SVO ordering in main clauses, but also in a substantial share of its subordinates. Since Ijo languages lack SVO surface structures it is understandable that these speakers would struggle to grasp Dutch underlying syntax and the substrate population must have started applying SVO to all sentence types. The fact that the Dutch plantation holders still had a fair amount of SVO subordination in their repertoire, must have made them infinitely more accommodating to this ordering from the Ijo speakers, and in response to this linguistic interference, these speakers are likely to have increased the use of this structure in their own speech. This then provided the Ijo speakers even more VO evidence and in this interaction SVO instances must have become increasingly more common.

We can conclude that the development sketched in points i through v is indeed feasible: the Dutch started out with SOV and V2, but with leakage causing SVO surface ordering in subordinations as well. The Kalabari then did not manage to recognize the V2 rule and overgeneralized SVO to all sentence types. The Dutch plantation holders, in response, increased the amount of leakages to SVO until eventually SVO surface order outnumbered the SOV alternative, leaving a next generation to interpret this input as SVO in depth ordering with some occasional leakage to SOV. As there would really have been no use for these exceptions in the system, SOV surface ordering must finally have died out all together.

It is likely that the situation as we outlined it for Berbice Dutch, be applicable to other language contact situations and instances of creole genesis. It may very well be a general tendency for these languages to turn out SVO in a setting where the superstrate is SOV with SVO surface structures (caused by e.g. verb second movement and object leakages), and the substrate is SOV, but without such transformations, making it likely

for the substrate population to misinterpret the linguistic input. In our view, the object leakages we indicated to be so crucial in the emergence of Berbice Dutch, are indeed crucial in causing an SOV to SVO shift in general language emergence. If we want to explain why superstrate speakers would not reject the SVO structures, at least some kind of word order flexibility is very likely to have been present in the superstrate language. Den Besten (2002) shows that Cape Dutch, another Dutch descendant, has maintained the superstrate SOV with V2 property. This may very well be due to the fact that Cape Dutch substrate, Khoekhoe, did, as opposed to Kalabari, exhibit other second position phenomena, which facilitated recognition of Dutch V2.

It may lead to interesting insights to see whether, everything else being equal, a more rigid superstrate would produce an SOV creole language. If it should, word order flexibility is indeed as crucial a factor as we hypothesised in this paper. Application of the suggested tendencies to a large sample of contact languages would provide a further test of our proposals.

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