French and Creole in Louisiana

Edited by

Albert Valdman

Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Plenum Press • New York and London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

French and Creole in Louisiana / edited by Albert Valdman.
p. cm. -- (Topics in language and linguistics)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-306-45464-5
1. French language--Dialects--Louisiana. 2. Creole dialects, French--Louisiana. 3. Cajun French dialect. 4. French language--Social aspects--Louisiana. I. Valdman, Albert. II. Series.
PC3681.U7L7346 1997
447'.9763--dc21 97-26221
CIP

ISBN 0-306-45464-5

A Division of Plenum Publishing Corporation
233 Spring Street, New York, N. Y. 10013

http://www.plenum.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction 1

Albert Valdman

1. Introduction 1
2. Contents of the Volume 2
3. French-Related Varieties of Louisiana in Their Social Context 3
4. Describing the Vernaculars 5
5. Language Planning in Louisiana 8
6. Variation 12
7. A Rose by Any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet: The Problem of Labeling Speech Varieties 17
8. On the Origins of Louisiana French 18

References 22

Chapter 2

The Sociolinguistic Situation of Cajun French: The Effects of Language Shift and Language Loss 25

Carl Blyth

1. Introduction 25
2. Profile of Cajun French Louisiana 26
3. Language Shift: From French to English 29
4. Acquiring and Losing Linguistic Proficiency 34
5. Linguistic Consequences of Language Contact and Shift 36
6. Future of Cajun French 42

References 52

Chapter 3

Field Method in Four Cajun Communities in Louisiana 47

Sylvie Dubois

1. Introduction 47
2. Linguistic Situation of the Cajun Community: Methodology 48
3. Conducting the Fieldwork 55
4. Preliminary Distribution of the Data 59
5. Hypotheses Concerning Linguistic Attitudes in Louisiana 60
6. Preliminary Quantitative Results on Linguistic Attitudes 61
7. Discussion 68

References 69

Chapter 4

A Structural Sketch of the Cajun French Spoken in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes 71

Robert A. Papen and Kevin J. Rottet

1. Introduction 71
2. Review of the Literature 72
3. Phonology 73
4. Grammatical Categories 78
5. Syntax 105

References 108

Chapter 5

The Structure of Louisiana Creole 109

Albert Valdman and Thomas A. Klingler

1. The Distribution and Sociolinguistic Status of Louisiana Creole 110
2. Phonology 112
3. Grammar 116
4. Sentence Structure 132
5. The African Element in Louisiana Creole 139
6. Conclusion 143

References 144

Chapter 6

The Lexicon of Louisiana French 145

Thomas A. Klingler, Michael D. Picone, and Albert Valdman

1. Introduction 145
2. Existing Studies 146
3. Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Describing the Lexicon of Louisiana French 153
4. Sources of the Louisiana French Lexicon 157
5. Lexicogenetic Strategies 160
   References 177

Chapter 7

The Louisiana French Movement: Actors and Actions in Social Change 183

Jacques Henry

1. Introduction 183
2. Review of the Literature 184
3. Mobilization and Context 185
4. The CODOFIL Movement 188
5. Conclusion 207
   References 209

Chapter 8

The Development of a Louisiana French Norm 215

Becky Brown

1. Introduction 215
2. Language Planning and Types of Norms 216
3. Social versus Community and Cultural Norms in Louisiana 221
4. The Issue of Norms in Louisiana French Language Planning 227
5. Conclusion 231
   References 233

Chapter 9

French and Creole on St. Barth and St. Thomas 237

Julianne Maher

1. Introduction 237
2. History of the St. Barth Colony 240
3. The People of St. Barth and Their Languages 242
4. Language Varieties of St. Barth 246
5. Comparisons between St. Barth and Louisiana 250
6. Conclusion 252
   References 253

Chapter 10

Structural Aspects and Current Sociolinguistic Situation of Acadian French 255

Karin Flikeid

1. Introduction 255
2. Social and Historical Context of Contemporary Language Use 257
3. Maintenance and Transmission of Traditional Acadian Features 264
4. Sociolinguistic Variation 269
5. Language Contact Phenomena 275
6. Language Attitudes and Linguistic Insecurity 280
7. Conclusion 282
   References 284

Chapter 11

Sociolinguistic Heterogeneity: The Franco-Ontarians 287

Raymond Mougeon

1. Introduction 287
2. The Franco-Ontarians 288
3. Variation in the Demographic Strength of Local Franco-Ontarian Communities 290
4. Variation in Patterns of French Language-Learning 291
5. Variation in Language-Use Patterns 292
6. Variation in French Language Competence 293

7. Taped Interview Excerpts 299
8. Conclusion 309
References 312

Chapter 12

Towards a Lexicography of French in Louisiana: Historical and Geographic Aspects 315

Pierre Rézeau

1. Origins of Cajun and Creole 315
2. Written Documentary Resources for the History of the Language 316
3. Word Study 319
4. Perspectives 330
References 331

Chapter 13

The Origin and Development of Louisiana Creole French 333

Margaret M. Marshall

1. Introduction 333
2. Historical Setting with a Focus on Demographics 334
3. Linguistic Influences during the Formative Period of Louisiana Creole 337
4. Social Conditions of Language Use 339
5. Linguistic Evidence from the Written Records of the 18th Century 341
6. Nineteenth-Century Documents in Louisiana Creole 342
7. Implications of the Historical Perspective for Modern Louisiana Creole 344
8. Conclusion 346
References

Chapter 14

Research on Louisiana French Folklore and Folklife 351

Barry Jean Ancelet

References 357

Name and Title Index 361

Subject Index 367

CHAPTER 5

The Structure of Louisiana Creole

ALBERT VALDMAN AND THOMAS A. KLINGLER

Arguably, Louisiana offers the most complex linguistic situation found in the Caribbean rim.[1] In the so-called "Francophone Triangle," one finds a finely meshed continuum in which it is possible to delineate two idealized speech norms: Standard French (SF) and Louisiana Creole (LC). During particular speech events, however, speakers modify their linguistic behavior according to various factors in the communicative situation, for example, participants, location, topic, and it is difficult for the external observer to assign particular features to any one of the speech varieties in contact.[2] The reintroduction of SF through the French revival program of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) has complexified the linguistic situation. Moreover, English, which has already eliminated Louisiana French from its main focal centers in New Orleans and along the Mississipi coasts, is exercising strong pressures on the only two varieties that show any signs of vitality, Cajun French (CF) and LC.

That there remain few monolingual speakers of these two varieties and the continuum situation that exists between them renders difficult the description of LC, which explains the paucity of such descriptions. At present, there exist only two major studies, each limited to a geographically restricted variety of LC: Ingrid Neumann's (1985) study of the grammar of Breaux Bridge speech and Thomas Klingler's (1992) description of the lexicon of New Roads LC. This chapter presents some remarks about the sociolinguistic situation of the language and offers a sketch of its phonological and grammatical (morphosyntactic) structure; tangentially, it also addresses the issue of the putative African origin of some features that appear to

ALBERT VALDMAN • Creole Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. THOMAS A. KLINGLER • Department of French and Italian, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.

French and Creole in Louisiana, edited by Albert Valdman. Plenum Press, New York, 1997.

diverge radically from corresponding ones in SF. The structural description is based primarily on the two varieties of LC best documented, the Bayou Teche region (including St. Martinsville and Breaux Bridge) and Pointe Coupée Parish, although we have incorporated material on the German Coast supplied by Margaret Marshall.

1. DISTRIBUTION AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC STATUS OF LOUISIANA CREOLE

Compared to CF, which is spoken throughout the Francophone Triangle, LC is attested in three relatively isolated areas: to the east, in the former Acadian and German Coasts (Saint James and Saint John parishes) between New Orleans and Baton Rouge (Marshall, 1982, 1987, 1990); to the north, around New Roads in Pointe Coupée Parish (Jarreau, 1931; Klingler, 1992); and in the center, in the Bayou Teche region in Saint Martin Parish (Morgan, 1959, 1960, 1972, 1976; Neumann, 1984, 1985). The language is reported in use to the west, in the Lake Charles area (Calcacieu Parish), but no descriptive studies exist.

Ingrid Neumann (1985) estimates that the number of speakers of LC is between 60,000 and 80,000, of whom about a quarter are white. These figures probably need to be revised downward. Thomas Klingler, who has conducted extensive fieldwork in New Roads (Pointe Coupée Parish), has failed to discover a single monolingual speaker in that area. Klingler (1992) cited a study undertaken by CODOFIL: In a group of 1020 respondents, 25% declared speaking CF at home and 14.3% SF, but only 8.9% LC.

The severe language loss that the LC-speaking community is undergoing results from the position of the language at the bottom of the range of language varieties in use in Francophone Louisiana. From the perspective of power and prestige, the top position is occupied by English and SF, the latter reintroduced through the various revitalization actions launched by CODOFIL and the bilingual education programs of the 1970s. Colonial French and CF are located in the middle. The devalorization of LC, reflected by the pejorative terms that even some of its own speakers use to refer to it—for example, *nèg, français nèg, nigger French, couri vini, gumbo*—stems in large part from its association with slavery. The low esteem in which it is held by white speakers explains why they are reluctant to use it in front of strangers and why they will often deny their habitual use of it. In the last half-dozen years, however, a middle-class African-Louisianan group, Creole Inc., centered in Lafayette, has attempted to revalorize LC. This movement, which may be viewed as the counterpart of the consciousness raising in the Cajun community under the aegis of CODOFIL and young Cajun intellectuals, has led to the creation of an English monthly, *Creole Magazine*.[3] This periodical contained a regular section, "La leson kreyòl," in which Herbert Wiltz provided sample conversations in LC and grammatical statements, and an occasional column, "Creole Linguistics," written by Albert Valdman, Margaret Marshall, and Thomas Klingler. One of the

noteworthy features of *Creole Magazine* was the large place given to zydeco music. It seems that this Africanized version of Cajun folk music serves as a vector for a limited revitalization of the speech variety that symbolizes membership in the African-Louisianan community. Nonetheless, the term "Creole," when used to refer to language, has not lost its stigma, nor does it refer only to LC. On numerous occasions, we have heard African-Louisianans claim that they spoke "Creole," whereas in fact they were using a form of CF containing occasional features of what will be referred to here as *basilectal* LC.

As will be pointed out in this chapter, LC is probably the French-based Creole that is closest to French structurally. In addition, because it is spoken by whites, many of whom have competence in CF, and enjoys low prestige even among its speakers, LC is often perceived as a deviant, corrupted, and mongrelized form of French. The dwindling number of habitual speakers of the language will tend to "move up" to CF or SF, to the extent that their mastery of these other varieties permits it. As a result, there exists no clear line of demarcation between CF and French or between LC and the more prestigious CF.

The pressure exerted by English, which stands at the apex of the sociolinguistic pyramid, also tends to blur the lines between that language and the French-related varieties. English, or American in local usage, invaded Louisiana long before the official cession of the territory to the United States. Many of the large plantations along the Mississippi were taken over or established by American owners who came from the Carolinas or Georgia with their English or English-based Creole-speaking slaves. For example, Hall (1992:181–183) mentioned that a certain Dr. Benjamin Farar, a native of South Carolina, moved to New Roads with 153 slaves, of whom 72 adults were natives of South Carolina or Virginia. On the large riverine plantations, these "American" slaves most likely adopted the local vernacular, LC, as a lingua franca, but also retained their version of the speech of their masters.

Today the pressure of English manifests itself, as it does in the case of CF, by massive borrowing, calques, and code switching. The following is a short sample of discourse from Klingler (1992) that shows the high level of lexical borrowing from English[4]:

> *Je te kɔ̃ nɛ̃ prɑ̃ ɛ̃ bari, avɛk ɛ̃ but lapo, e je te gɛ̃ ʃofe lapo pu li vini* **stiff.** *Kɑ̃ li vini* **stiff, then** *je* **bang** *li. Mo pɑ̃s se de zafɛ je mɛ̃nɛ̃ isi dɑ̃* **slavery.**
>
> They used to take a barrel with a piece of skin, and they used to heat the skin until it became stiff. When it had become stiff, then they banged on it. I think these are things that were brought over here [from Africa] with slavery.

Current research on code mixing and switching suggests that borrowing or code switching cannot be explained only in terms of need filling. Bilinguals dip into the respective lexical inventories of the languages they speak and alternate between them on the basis of a variety of sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors: to express a change of attitude toward the message or the interlocutor; because of a change in the situation, for example, the arrival of another person who might not understand one

of the languages; or because of the need to stress a certain part of the message. Code switching constitutes one of the linguistic resources at the disposal of bilinguals, and they switch between speech varieties the same way and for the same reasons monolinguals alternate among styles.

Nonetheless, in explaining code switching, one should not discount the effect of memory gaps and the pressures from the dominant language, which alone provides terms for many of the realities of everyday life. It is accordingly inappropriate to label as borrowing or code switching the use of terms or expressions for which the base language—here LC—provides no corresponding equivalents. This fact makes it difficult to classify apparent English forms as loans or code switches.

Sometimes, pronunciation can provide an indication, as in the cases of *tivi,* pronounced */tivi/* with short and nonglided */i/*, which marks the item as part of LC. On the other hand, the code-switch interpretation is favored by the retention of English phonological features in the following code switches: *Li te* ***good-looking*** ("He was good-looking") or *Li* ɛ̃ ***school board president*** ("She is president of the school board"). The identification of English code switches is facilitated by the retention of the syntactic structure from that language, as in *Je se* ***hang li up*** ("They could hang him"), which contains the discontinuous structure verb + adverb, or of discourse shifters such as *boy* in ***Boy,*** *mo te gɛ̃ hõt!* ("Boy, was I ashamed!"). The most insidious anglicisms, though, are calques in which English concepts are dressed up in LC forms. In *Li galɔp* ɛ̃ *ʃɔp* ("He runs a store"), the word *shop* represents an integrated loan but, more important, the LC verb *galɔp* ("to run") mirrors the English idiomatic expression "to run a store." Similarly, in *Mo va wa komõ sa va travaje* ("I'll see how it works"), the meaning of the verb *travaje* is extended from its basic meaning, "to work," to include the sense "to fare" that is contained in the corresponding English verb.

2. PHONOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

The fact that the lexicons of CF and LC are each treated in this volume in a single chapter underscores the fact that the two languages differ little at the lexical level. In LC, there are few words that cannot be traced either to some dialect of French or to English loanwords. The close relationship between LC and CF also surfaces at the phonological level; these two languages in contact show few differences in their phonological inventories or in phonological processes.

2.2. Vowel System

The only major difference in the vowel inventories is that, as is the case for the other New World French-based Creoles, the contrast between front unrounded and front rounded vowels is unstable (see Table 1). Stated differently, words that in SF

Table 1. Vowel Inventory of Louisiana Creole

Position	Front rounded		Back rounded
High	*i*	(*y*)	*u*
High-mid	*e*	(ø)	*o*
Low-mid	ɛ	(œ)	ɔ
Low	*a* (ɑ)		
Nasal	ɛ̃	ɑ̃	ɔ̃

are pronounced with the front rounded vowels /*y*/, /ɔ/, and /œ/ are often produced with the corresponding unrounded vowel: /*siʳ*/ or /*syʳ*/ ("sure"), /*pe*/ or /*pœ*/ ("little"), /*sɛʳ*/ or /*sœʳ*/ ("sister").

- Corresponding to SF /*a*/ is a vowel ranging from /*a*/ to /ɔ/, although the vowel tends to be produced with retraction before /*r*/, /*l*/, and /*s*/: /*mɑl*/ ("mail"), /*pɑrl*/ ("to speak"), /*pjɑs*/ ("piastre" ["dollar"]). Both Neumann and Klingler observe at least partial complementary distribution between /*a*/ and /ɑ/, the latter occurring after /*w*/ and in syllables ending with /*s*/, /*r*/, and /*l*/: /*mwɑ*/ ("me"), /*pjɑs*/ ("dollar"), /*pɑrl*/ ("speak"), and /*mɑl*/ ("mail"), and the former elsewhere.
- As is the case in SF, the distribution of high-mid and low-mid vowels tends toward the *loi de position* of SF, namely, the low-mid vowel occurring in checked syllables and the high-mid vowel occurring in free syllables: The form corresponding to SF *pauvre* ("poor") is pronounced /*pov*/, /*pɔv*/, or /*pɔ:v*/; that corresponding to SF *bœuf* ("cow") is /*bef*/ or /*bɛf*/. Neumann claims partial complementarity between the members of each of these pairs. In the case of the front unrounded pairs, /ɛ/ occurs before /*r*/ and after nasal vowels: /*klɛr*/ ("clear"), /*kɔnɛ*/ ("to know"). The mid-low vowel is more frequent in final checked syllables and the mid-high one in final open syllables, but variation exists in both environments: /*mɛt*/ or /*met*/ ("to put"), /*freme*/ or /*fremɛ*/ ("to close"). Klingler notes cases of contrasts: /*fre*/ ("cold") versus /*frɛ*/ ("brother"). For the back rounded pair, /ɔ/ is more frequent in checked syllables and /*o*/ in free syllables, although there is considerable variation, for example, /*lekɔl*/ or /*lekol*/ ("school"). Only /ɔ/ occurs before /*r*/: /*fɔr*/ ("strong").
- For the high vowels, Klingler notes a laxed variant of /*i*/, /ɪ/ in English borrowing or as a reflex of SF /*y*/: /*kɪdni*/ ("kidney"), /*kɪltivatɛ*/ *cultivateur* ("cultivator"); such words are also pronounced with the corresponding front rounded vowel: /*kyltivatɛ*/.
- A central vowel /ə/ alternates with zero, /*i*/, and /*e*/ in internal open syllables: /*ʒile*/ /*ʒile*/, /*ʒele*/, /*ʒəle*/, /*ʒle*/ ("to freeze," "frost"), /*ʃemiz*/ /*ʃemiz*/, /*ʃimiz*/, /*ʃmiz*/, /*ʃəmiz*/ ("chemise").

- There are basically only two nasal vowels: a front vowel /ɛ̃/ contrasting with a back vowel produced variably as /ɑ̃/ or /ɔ̃/: */dipɛ̃/* ("bread"), */kɑ̃/* or */kɔ̃/* ("when"). Contextual nasalization of vowels is just as pervasive in LC as in CF. Mid and low vowels may be optionally nasalized before a nasal consonant: */fam/*, */fɔm/* or */fɑ̃m/* ("woman"); */kone/ /kɔne/*, */kone/*, */kɔ̃ne/* or */kɔ̃nɛ̃/* ("to know"), */menɛ/ /menɛ/*, */menɛ̃/* or */mɛ̃nɛ̃/* ("to bring"). Neumann lists some cases of denasalization: */kamɛm/* for */kɑ̃mɛm/* ("even though"), */patalɔ̃/* for */pɔ̃talɔ̃/*. In some rare cases, the high vowels may also be nasalized (Klingler, 1992): */fĩmɛ̃/* or */fỹmɛ̃/* ("fertilizer"), */mũn/* ("person").

2.2.1. Glides

- The palatal glide /j/ occurs in all positions, including word-final, where it contrasts with /i/: */jɛr/* ("yesterday"), */pajas/* ("straw mattress"), */pje/* ("foot"); */pei/* ("country") versus */pej/* ("pay"). This precludes its analysis as the prevocalic alternant of /i/. An intervocalic glide automatically occurs between two consecutive vowels: */krejɔl/* ("Creole").
- The velar glide /w/ occurs intervocalically or prevocalically and thus may be interpreted as the glide allophone of /u/: */uɛ/ /wɛ/* ("yes"), */marɛ̃guɛ̃/ /marɛ̃gwɛ̃/* ("mosquito"), */ʃaui/ /ʃawi/* ("raccoon"). For the sake of convenience, however, the glide will be represented by /w/ in cited forms.
- The rounded palatal glide /ɥ/ rarely occurs but has been documented in the word */ɥit/* ("eight") (Klingler, 1992).

2.3. Consonants

The consonant system of LC differs little from that of CF (see Table 2). LC also has affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ generally absent from French: */tʃõmbo/* ("to hold"), */motʃɛn/* ("mine"), */dʒab/* ("devil"), */ladʒɛl/* ("mouth"). Dental stops are slightly palatalized: */pitˢi/* ("child"), */dᶻife/* ("fire"). The velar nasal /ŋ/, which corresponds to /g/ preceded by a nasal vowel in SF, functions as an autonomous phoneme: */lalãŋ/* ("language"), */zepɛ̃ŋ/* ("pin"). Unlike its matching phoneme in SF, the palatal nasal /ɲ/ occurs initially: */ɲɔ̃ɲɔm/* ("food," "to eat"), in addition to intervocalically and finally: */beɲɛ/* ("doughnut"), /siɲ/ ("sign"). When it occurs in the immediate context of a nasal vowel, /ɲ/ is realized as the palatal glide: */zɔ̃ɲɔ̃/ /zɔ̃jɔ̃/* ("onion"). The spirant /h/ occurs in areas, notably the German Coast, where LC is exposed to greater pressure from varieties of French. Compare, for example, Pointe Coupée */laaʃ/* and German Coast */lahaʃ/* ("ax").[5] Finally, the liquid /r/ is realized by a wide array of variants ranging from the apicodental trill /r/ to the velar fricative /ʁ/ of SF. It is weakened after a vowel and lengthens the preceding vowel: */paʳle/* or */pa:le/* ("to speak"), */sɛr/* or */sɛ:/* ("sister").

Table 2. Consonant Inventory of Louisiana Creole

Class	Labials	Dentals	Palatals	Velars	Glottal
Stops					
Voiceless	*p*	*t*		*k*	
Voiced	*b*	*d*		*g*	
Affricates					
Voiceless			*tʃ*		
Voiced			*dʒ*		
Fricatives					
Voiceless	*f*	*s*	*ʃ*		
Voiced	*v*	*z*	*ʒ*		
Nasals	*m*	*n*	*ɲ*	*ŋ*	
Lateral		*l*			
Resonant		*r*			
Aspirate					*h*
Semivowels	*w*	*ɥ*	*j*		

2.4. Morphophonemics

2.4.1. External Sandhi

Many function words and verbs show final vowel deletion; this phenomenon will be treated under the particular form or form class. More general phenomena not contingent on form class are vowel harmony and elision phenomena occurring in normal speech.

- Two or more consecutive identical vowels are replaced by the corresponding long vowel: */nu te ne e elve* ã *kreol/* → */ne: lve/* ("We were born Creoles and raised speaking Creole").
- The high vowel */u/* is replaced by the corresponding glide */w/* before a vowel: */nu (h)ale li/* → */nwaleli/* ("We pulled it"). This change also occurs within words: */bui/* → */bwi/* ("to boil").
- The low vowels assimilate in tongue height to the following vowel: */mo wɑ* ɛ̃ *fɔm/* → */mo wɛ* ɛ̃ *fɔm/* ("I see a woman").

2.4.2. Agglutination

A salient feature of LC, as compared to Haitian Creole, for example, is the large number of nouns that contain an agglutinated etymological article or the last consonant of the latter, for example, */*ɛ̃ *lamɛ̃/* ← *la main* ("a hand"), */*ɛ̃ *defig/* ← *des figues* ("a banana"), */*ɛ̃ *gro lefœj/* ← *les feuilles* ("a large leaf"), */so dezo/* ← *des os* ("his bone"), */*ɛ̃ *bɔ̃ divã̄/* ← *du vent* ("a strong wind"), */vu nepol/* ← *(u)ne épaule*

("a shoulder"), */zorɛj/* ← *(les)s oreilles* ("ear"). For nouns that begin with */la/*, */le/*, */de/*, or */di/*, the initial constituent is ambiguous because, in Frenchified forms of LC, it may represent an article occurring before a noun. It is only when this constituent occurs after a determiner (an article or a possessive adjective) that this phonological material can be unambiguously analyzed as agglutinations. Compare */ɛ̃ mal de tɛt/* ("a headache") versus */so latɛt/* ("his/her head"), */ave la mɛ̃/* ("by hand") versus */so lamɛ̃/* ("his/her hand").

3. GRAMMAR

According to the classic model for the genesis and development of creoles, when a creole language coexists with its base (or lexifier) language, because of the greater prestige and power that the latter possesses, the creole language will adopt its structural features and lexicon. This process, termed decreolization, leads to the creation of a continuum of variation in which it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two varieties in contact. One can only abstract two idealized poles, the *basilect* (the creole forms most different from the base language) and the *acrolect* (the base language itself). Between these two poles lies a continuum of variation, the *mesolect.* The general practice in these circumstances is to select forms from the pole most distant from the lexifier language in describing the grammar of the creole—in the case of LC, French. This practice will be adopted here, and the term *basilectal* used to refer to forms and structure selected; intermediate forms will be labeled *mesolectal.*

Except for final vowel deletion, external sandhi phenomena, alternation between verb stems, and occasional free variation such as *ku/kuri* ("to run"), LC lexical forms are invariable. In other words, morphology is nearly nonexistent in the language. This section will deal first with the structure of the noun and verb phrases and then with selected syntactic features: negative and interrogative sentences, the expression of reflexivity, passivity, emphasis and complex sentences.

3.1. Noun Phrase Structure

3.1.1. Noun Specifiers

3.1.1.1. Definite Article. Basilectal varieties of LC, for example, that are spoken by many blacks in Pointe Coupée do not show any gender distinction. All specifiers occur in a single grammatically undifferentiated form. The definite article *la* and the plural marker *je* occur after the noun:

*Sʃɛ̃ **la** trape lɔdɛ lapɛ̃ **la.***	The dog picked up the scent of the rabbit.
*Mo sukuje dibwa **je.***	I shook the trees.

In the German Coast, *la* varies freely with *lø* (see Chapter 13 in this volume).

Strictly speaking, the postposed element *la* is not equivalent to the French or English definite article. Its meaning is intermediate between that of the definite article and the demonstrative adjective of these languages. Also, its domain of reference is the entire noun phrase rather than the noun itself:

mo frɛr ki muri ***la*** this brother of mine who is dead

In Pointe Coupée, Klingler has noted variation in form of the definite determiner conditioned by the nature of the last sound of the word that it precedes that parallels the complexity found in Haitian Creole: *chat la* ("the cat"), *dolo a* ("the water"), *vje mũn nã* ("the old people), *lakrɛm lã/nã* ("the cream").

Mesolectal forms involving gender differentiation and the use of preposed determiners occur in noun phrases. The examples below compare the mesolectal distinction between masculine and feminine nouns, affected by preposed definite article forms with corresponding basilectal structures consisting of undifferentiated nouns accompanied by postposed forms:

Mo se rãtre dã ***la*** *ʃɔp. (. . . ʃɔp* ***la****)* I used to go into the shop.
Mo te lese dã ***l*** *klo. (. . . klo* ***la****)* I used to leave the field.

It is not rare to find mesolectal forms evidencing the use of both the basilectal and the acrolectal system:

Eske ***l*** *kuto* ***la*** *se pu twa?* Is that knife yours?

3.1.1.2. Indefinite Article. The indefinite article, generally realized as ɛ̃, precedes the noun: ɛ̃ *tas kafe* ("a cup of coffee"). This specifier is also realized as ɛ̃*n* and ɛ*n*. For Klingler, the alternants are in free variation, but for Jarreau (1931) and Neumann (1984), ɛ̃ modifies masculine nouns and ɛ̃*n*/ɛ*n* feminine nouns: ɛ̃ *dʒab* ("a devil") versus ɛ̃*n vjɛj fɔm* ("an old woman"). Neumann notes, however, that ɛ̃ may also precede a feminine noun: *Li te gɛ̃ ɛ̃ bɛl rɔb* ("She had a nice dress").

3.1.1.3. Semantics of Specifiers. From a semantic perspective, basilectal LC conforms to the prototypical creole determiner system, in which only specific nouns are marked by a specifier: The definite article appears if the noun is presupposed, that is, assumed by the speaker or known to the interlocutor; the indefinite article if it is not presupposed. Abstract and mass nouns appear without any specifier:

Li mɔ̃de pu ki l kuto. She asked whose knife it was.
Lɛs mwɑ rakɔ̃te ɛ̃*n ot zistwar.* Let me tell another story.
Diri bɔ̃ pu to lasãte. Rice is good for your health.
Je kɔ̃m ʃjɛ̃ e ʃat. They get along like cats and dogs.

But both Neumann and Klingler found instances of nonspecific nouns accompanied by the determiners that, as the former author suggests, may be evidence of decreolization:

N a plõte *le pistaʃ*. We'll plant peanuts.
Mo te fe le frikase patat. I made hash.

Interestingly, most of the examples adduced to illustrate this departure from the prototypical semantic system contain a preposed plural article.

3.1.1.4. Demonstrative Determiner. The postposed demonstrative determiner *sa* obligatorily co-occurs with the definite article *la: gõbõ sa la* ("this gumbo"). There are two variants for the plural, both of which entail adjoining the mesolectal plural definite article *le* in front of the noun: *le kokodri sa/le kokodri sa je.* On the German Coast, the most common postposed form contains three elements: *gõbõ sa a la* or *gõbõ sa a lø.*

Table 3. Personal Pronoun System of Louisiana Creole

Number and person	Subject	Possessive	Object
Singular			
1st	***mo/mõ*** *vini*	***mo*** *pitit je*	*li tãn* ***mwa/mõ/mwɛ̃.***
	I come.	my children	He/she waited for me.
	m *ole*		
	I want		
2nd	***to*** *di sa.*	***to*** *labuʃ*	*nu gete* ***twa***
Familiar	You say that.	your mouth	We're looking at you.
	t *a kõnɛ̃*		
	You'll know		
Formal	***vu/ou*** *se vini*	***vu/vo*** *fij*	*mo wa* ***vu***
	You would come.	your daughter	I've seen you.
	v *ote lekaj je*		
	You removed the scales.		
3rd	***li/i*** *mãde*		
	He/she asked		
	l *a vini bɛk*	*so mun je*	*to di* ***li***
	He/she will return.	his/her people	You told him/her.
Plural			
1st	***nu/no/nuzɔt*** *isit*	***nu*** *lamezõ*	*je te prãn* ***nu/nuzot/no***
	We're here.	our house	They took us.
	n *e grene defɛv*		
	We're shelling lima beans.		
2nd	***zot/zo/uzot/vuzot*** *galope*	*zo lalãg*	*mo don* ***zot/uzot*** *sa*
Informal	You ran.	your tongue	I gave you that.
Formal	***vu/vuzɔt*** *di*	***vu*** *pitit*	*m a don* ***vu/vuzɔt***
	You said	your children	I'll give you
3rd	***je*** *te pron nuzot*	***je*** *nõk je*	*mo kone* ***je***
	They took us.	their uncles	I know them.
	j ole		
	they want		

3.1.1.5. Possessive Determiner. One salient difference between LC and its Caribbean congeners is the use of a set of possessive determiners preposed to the noun that are distinct from the personal pronoun set. These are listed with the personal pronouns in Table 3. They alternate with emphatic forms containing *-kɛn* (also realized as *-kɛ̃n, -tʃɛ̃*, or *-tʃɛn*). There are also analytical constructions employing the prepositions *a* and *pu:*

Li leve so lamɛ̃ aprɛ mwɛ̃.	He signaled to me with his hand.
Mo fe ***mokɛ̃n*** *rekɔt.*	I made my harvest.
Sa se ***vokɛn*** *ku!*	It's your neck!
Mo te gɛ̃ bɔ̃ lɛ̃ʒ ***a*** *mɔ̃.*	I had my own good clothing.
Kabãn la se ***pu*** *mwɛ̃.*	That's my house.

3.1.1.6. Quantifiers. In LC, quantifiers occur in the same position as in SF. They include the absolute quantifier *tu* ("all") and relative quantifiers, representatives of which are: *tro* ("too much"), *boku, plɛ̃* ("many," "lots of"), *sitɔ̃/tɛlmɔ̃/si tɛlmɔ̃* ("so much," "so many"), *ase* ("enough"), *tɔ̃/otã* ("so much," "as much"), *plis* ("more"), *mwɛ̃s* ("less"), *ʃak* ("each"), *kɛk, de trwa* ("a few"), *ɛ̃ pe, ɛ̃ ti brɛ̃ ("a little"), sɛl* ("the only"), *okɛ̃* ("not any"). A few illustrative examples are:

tu *lɔt kiʃɔz*	all sorts of other things
Je te fe li ***si tɛlmɔ̃*** *lamizɛr.*	They had given her so much trouble.
Alɔ̃ ɛ̃vite ***ase*** *mũn.*	Let's invite enough people.
Mo parle avɛk ***de trwa*** *bug.*	I spoke with a few guys.

Cardinal numbers differ little from those of SF, except for *1,* which, unlike the indefinite determiner, is always pronounced *ɛ̃n.* Cardinal numbers also have liaison forms: *dez ɛr* ("two o'clock"), *siz ã* ("six years"), *nɛv ɛr* ("nine o'clock").

3.2. Adjectives

3.2.1. Form of Adjectives

Except for a few prenominal adjectives, LC adjectives are invariant. In addition to indefinite adjectives and ordinal numbers, the membership and form of which differ little from those of SF [e.g., *mɛm lane* ("the same year"), *tu lɔt frɛr je* ("all the other brothers"), *vjɛ̃ nɛ̃pɔt ki tɔ̃* ("come any time")], the following are the most frequent prenominal adjectives; some have sporadically marked feminine forms, listed second:

bɔ̃/bɔn ("good")	*Mo popa te bɔ̃ nɔ̃m* ("My father was a good man").
	Pitit la gɛ̃/ɛ̃n bɔn metrɛs lekɔl ("The child has a good schoolteacher").
ʃɛr ("dear")	*mo ʃɛr padna* ("my dear friend")
defɛ̃ ("late")	*so defɛ̃ frɛr* ("his late brother")

fo, fos ("false")	*Li fɛ fo ʒyʒmã* ("He made an error in judgment"), *fos kuʃ* ("miscarriage")
futi ("damn")	*To ɛ̃ futi kokɛ̃* ("You're a damn rascal").
grã/grãn ("big," "tall," "fat")	*ɛn gro sykleri* ("a large sugar mill")
	ɛn gros fɔm ("a large woman")
grɔ̃/grɔn ("large," "long," "high")	*ɛ̃ grã klo* ("a large field")
	ɛ̃ gran fɔm ("a tall woman")
ʒɛn/ʒœn ("young")	*tu ʒɛn bug je* ("all the young people")
ʒɔli ("beautiful," "pretty")	*ɛ̃ ʒɔli piti* ("a pretty child")
mɛjɛ ("better")	*Se mɛjɛ parol* ("It's a better word").
move, movez ("bad")	*ɛ̃ move lide* ("a bad idea"), *ɛ̃ move fɔm* ("a bad woman")
nuvo/nuvɛl ("new")	*ɛ̃ nuvo rɔb* ("a new dress")
	Nuvɛl Ane ("New Year")
pɔv ("poor")	*pɔv fij* ("poor little girl")
ti/tit ("little")	*ti nɔm la* ("the small man")
	ɛ̃ tit lekɔl ("a small school")
tris ("sad")	*ɛ̃ tris nuvɛl* ("a sad [bit of] news")
vɑjɔ̃/vɑjɔ̃t ("nice," "pretty")	*ɛ̃ vɑjɔ̃ tomat* ("a nice tomato"), *ɛn vɑjɔ̃t fɔm* ("a pretty woman")
vilɛ̃ ("ugly," "nasty," "vulgar")	*Mo te gɛ̃ ɛ̃ vilɛ̃ figyr* ("I had a funny expression on my face").
vje/vjɛj ("old")	*vje mũn* ("old people")
vrɛ ("real")	*Sa se ɛn vrɛ flɛr* ("It's a real flower").

3.2.2. Position of Adjectives

As in SF, most adjectives occur after the noun: *patat tufe* ("smothered potatoes"), *dolo fre* ("cool water"), *ɛ̃.ʃemɛ̃ krɔʃ* ("a crooked path"). For adjectives with variable position, the meaning of the adjective differs: *pɔv bɛt* ("poor [unfortunate] one") versus *ɛ̃ nɔm pɔv* ("a poor [lacking money] man"), *ɛn gros fɔm* ("a large woman") versus *ɛn fɔm gros* (" a pregnant woman").

3.2.3. Adjectival Phrases

Adjectives may be modified by adverbs of degree or adjectival complements. Among the adverbs of degree are *bjɛ̃* ("very"), *pli* ("more"), *ʒolimɔ̃* ("rather"), *tro* ("too much"), and *ɛ̃ pe* ("a little"). These are placed immediately before the adjective, whether it is pre- or postnominal: *Se ɛ̃ piti ki ɛ̃ pe dusmɔ̃* ("That's a somewhat retarded child"), *Sa se ɛ̃ t i fi ki bjɛ̃ kanaj* ("That's a somewhat mischievous little girl"). Degree may also be expressed by reduplication: *Enave ɛ̃ **gro gro** bwa* ("There was a very large tree"). Adjectival phrases also include a variety of complements introduced by prepositions such as *de* or *pu: Li prɔʃ pu gɔn* ("She's ready to go"), *Li fjɛr de nuzɔt* ("She's proud of us").

3.2.4. Comparison of Adjectives

Like its New World congeners, LC shows the use of the expression *pase* ("past") to form the comparative degree of adjectives:

Li ply vjø pase mɔ̃. She's older than I am.
Mo grã pase mo sɛ. I'm taller than my sister.

This construction alternates with another similar to the corresponding one in French, namely, noun phrase + adverb of comparison + adjective + *ke* + noun phrase. The adverbs of comparison are *pli* ("superiority"), *mwɛ̃s* ("inferiority"), and *osi* ("equality"): *Li pa **pli** riʃ ke nuzɔt* ("He isn't richer than we are"), *Li **osi** gro ke mɔ̃* ("He's as fat as I am"). The use of the adverb of inferiority in adjectival comparative contructions is rare. Usually, as shown in the first example above, the comparison of superiority is used with a negative.

3.3. Pronouns

3.3.1. Personal Pronouns

In its personal pronoun system, LC belongs to the conservative group of French-based Creoles that also includes French Guyana (Cayenne) Creole and the varieties spoken in the Indian Ocean. This system is more complex than that of the Caribbean varieties in that it shows a three-way distinction between a subject set, a preposed possessive set (or possessive determiners), and a postposed set functioning as direct object and object of prepositions (see Table 3).

The short form of the personal pronouns, that is, the one that shows deletion of the final vowel, generally occurs obligatorily before a vowel: *t a ʒamɛ kɔ̃nɛ̃* ("You'll never know"), *v ote lekaj je* ("you removed the scales"), *si j ole* ("if they want"). It is also used variably before a consonant, provided a vowel precedes: *apre j te mɛt* **screen** *la* ("after they installed the screen").

In sequences of personal pronouns, the indirect object pronoun precedes the direct object: *Li dɔn **mw**ɛ̃ li bak* ("He gave it back to me").

The emphatic form of personal pronoun is formed by adjoining *-mɛm* to the object form, except for the first person singular and the second person plural: *twa-mɛm, li-mɛm, nuzɔt-mɛm, je-mɛm,* but *mo-mɛm* and *vu-mɛm.* Another emphatic construction, more frequent in LC than in SF, is the use of an extraposed copy of the subject pronoun: ***Li** li gɛ̃ ɛ̃ vajɔ̃ mezɔ̃* ("**He**'s got a nice house"), ***Mwa** m apɛl sa de lɔ̃glɛ* ("**I** call that English").

3.3.2. Demonstrative Pronouns

The most basilectal form of the demonstrative pronoun, widely attested in Pointe Coupée (Klingler, 1992), is identical to the demonstrative determiner: *sa la* in

the singular and *sa je* in the plural: ***Sa la*** *bɔ̃* ("That one is good"), ***Sa je ka*** **read** *e je ka ekri* ("Those people can read and they can write"). *Sa* occurs alone with the relative complementizer *ke,* occurring in its truncated form in the following example: ***sa*** *k ole bat* ("those who want to fight"). In the Breaux Bridge area investigated by Neumann, the most common variants of the demonstrative pronoun are *sila* in the singular and *sez la, lez la,* and *lez la la* in the plural: *Komɔ̃ je pɛl* ***sila?*** ("What is this one's name?"), *tu* ***sez la*** *ki katolik* ("all those who are Catholics").

3.3.3. Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronouns are identical to the emphatic form of the possessive determiners:

	Singular	*Plural*
1st	*mokɛn*	*nokɛn*
2nd	*tokɛn*	*zotkɛn*
	vokɛn (polite form)	
3rd	*sokɛn*	*jekɛn*

A variant containing the affricate /*tʃ*/ instead of /*k*/ occurred freely in the speech of black speakers interviewed by Neumann and categorically among her white informants: *Sa se* ***totʃɛn*** ("That's yours"). These possessive pronouns alternate with the prepositional construction introduced by *pu: Sa se pɑ pu nuzɔt le* **bus** ("The busses are not ours").

3.3.4. Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns differ little from those of SF. The most frequent is *sa: plys kø* ***sa*** ("more than that"). It may be reduplicated for emphasis: *Sa sa arive mɔ̃ ɛ̃* **round** ("It happened to me once"). Other indefinite pronouns include:

ɛn/ɛ̃n ("one")	*Je te ot ɛn dɔ̃ mɔ̃ ʒɔ̃m je.* They amputated one of my legs.
ɛ̃ lɔt, dɔt ("another")	*Gato sa a pli mal pase lɔt la.* This cake is worse than the other. *Mo krwa pa m ale ʒwe dɔt.* I don't think I'll play another.
ɛnalɔt ("one another")	*Je te tʃɔ̃bo la mɛ̃ ɛnalɔt.* They held one another by the hand.
lezɔt ("the others")	*Li di sa a lezɔt.* He said that to the others.
zɔ̃ ("some")	*Na tuʒur zɔ̃ ki kɔ̃prɔ̃ pa.* There always some who don't understand.
kiʃɔ/kɛkkiʃɔʒ/kɛkʃɔʒ ("something")	*Li fɛ kɛkkiʃɔʒ.* He does something.

kɛkɛn ("someone")	*Na kɛkɛn isit?* Is someone here?
ɛ̃ mũn, ɛ̃ dimũn ("someone")	*Lɔt but la ina ɛ̃ dimũn ki gɛ̃ plizjœr.* On the other side there's someone who has several.
ʃakɛ̃ ("each one")	*ʃakɛ̃ te gɛ̃ nuvras.* Each one had his/her chores.
plɛ̃ ("a lot")	*Nu te aprɔ̃n plɛ̃.* We learned a lot.
boku, ɛ̃ ta ("many")	*ɛna tro boku.* There are too many.
plizjœr ("a few")	*Na plizjœr ki te fɛ sa.* There are several who did it.
tu ("all," "everyone")	*Tu vini izi pu twa.* Everything was easy for you. *Tu vini pu bal la.* They all came to the dance.
pɛrsɔn ("no one")	*ɛna pɛrsɔn ki e galope pu plas astɛ.* No one is running for office now.
arjɛ̃ ("nothing")	*Lapɛ̃ te pa di arjɛ̃.* Brer Rabbit didn't say anything.

3.4. Verb Phrase

3.4.1. Nature of the Verb System

The structural break between LC and all varieties of French, including CF, appears especially in the verb system. In French, verbal categories such as tense and aspect are expressed by a combination of inflection and the selection among function words (auxiliaries and modal verbs); in French-lexifier Creoles, only the latter grammatical mechanism is used. From a typological perspective, the verb system of LC is characterized by analyticity: Temporal, aspectual, and modal distinctions are expressed by a set of function words or verb markers occurring before an invariant verb base.

3.4.2. Short and Long Stems

LC differs from its Caribbean congeners in having verbs with two different verb stems. Neumann (1985) believes that this is a recent change resulting, presumably, from contact with CF. She observes that 19th-century texts (Neumann, 1987) reflect the general pattern found in the other New World French-lexifier Creoles.

In putative mesolectal LC, there are two classes of verbs: those that show two stems and those with an invariant stem. The first class includes verbs that correspond to French *-er* and *-ir* verbs and those with stems ending in *-ɛn* and *-ɔn*. For

most of the reflexes of the *-er* verbs, the two stems differ by the presence versus the absence of the final vowel: *mãʒe/mãʒ* ("to eat"), *blije/blij* ("to forget"), *ʒwe/ʒu* ("to play"). For many of these verbs, though, there are phonological changes: *marje/mari* ("to marry"), *trɔ̃ble/trɔ̃m* ("to tremble"). For reflexes of the other classes of French verbs, the two stems may differ significantly in form, for example, *sɔrti/sɔr* ("to leave"), *repɔ̃n/repɔ̃* ("to answer"); *uvɛr/uv* ("to open"), *vini/vjɛ̃* ("to come"). Verbs with an invariable stem correspond to French irregular verbs and those belonging to the *-ir/-iss-(finir)* class: *asi* ("to sit"), *vo* ("to be worth"), *bwa* ("to drink"), *viv* ("to live"), *dormi* ("to sleep"), *muri* ("to die"). Verbs borrowed from English also belong to the single-class stem: *draiv* [drive ("to drive a car")], *reze* [raise ("to collect money")], *gɛ̃ble* [gamble ("to gamble")].

For nonstative (action) verbs, the choice between the two stems distinguishes the habitual or universal present from the completive: *Vu lav li* ("You wash it") versus *Mo lave mo figi ave dolo fre* ("I washed my face with cold water"); *To mɔ̃ʒ sa ɛk de gratɔ̃* ("You [always] eat that with cracklings") versus *Lapɛ̃ mɔ̃ʒe tu lafɛr* ("Brer Rabbit ate everything"). In general, the short stem expresses the imperative, the habitual, or the universal present. It is sometimes used with the expression *i fo* ("it is necessary"). The long stem occurs in all other cases, in particular with verb markers.

This generalization is only an approximation, for there is considerable free variation. For the speech of Pointe Coupée parish, which is more basilectal than that of Breaux Bridge, the short form is used to express the informal imperative and the long form, the formal imperative: *Aʃte ʃa sa la* ("Buy this car!") versus *Rɛs la* ("Stay there"). Both stems may occur with the marker *te: No te kuʃ pa ave popa e momɔ̃ . . . nu tu kuʃe ɔ̃sɔ̃m dɔ̃ de li* ("We didn't sleep with Mom and Dad . . . we all slept together in two beds").[6] The short form is preferred to express the habitual/universal present, although there is free variation: *Mo kup je . . . mo kupe je* **by cube** ("I cut them . . . I cut them into cubes"). In all other cases, including use with other verb markers, the long stem is more frequent: *Nu aʃte ɛ̃ ʃarjɛ* ("We bought a car yesterday"), *Mo ku(r) dɔrmi* ("I went to sleep"), *Je se aʃte diri* ("They bought [used to buy] rice"), *Mo plɛ̃ kiʃɔ pu aʃte* ("I have a lots of things to buy").

3.4.3. Stative versus Nonstative Verbs

The meaning of the stem for verbs with a single stem depends on the verb's semantic properties, specifically whether it expresses a state (stative) or an action (nonstative). For stative verbs, the stem carries the meanings of habitual/universal present: *to kɔnɛ̃* ("you know"), *Astɛr na tuʒur mun ki trɛt sa* ("Today there still are people who treat this"). Adjectives refer to states and pattern like stative verbs when they constitute the predicate: *Li las* ("he's tired"), *Mo malad* ("I'm ill"), *Je kɔ̃tɔ̃* ("They're happy"). For nonstative verbs, the meaning of the stem is variable, but generally it expresses completed actions in the past: *Nu kuri mene le flœr o simitjɛr* ("We took flowers to the cemetery").

3.4.4. Verb Markers

Verbal semantic distinctions are generally effected by the choice among seven verb markers, many of which show elided forms: *ape,* progressive; *te,* anterior; *ale,* definite future; *va, sa,* indefinite future; *se,* conditional; *bin,* present perfect. The variations in form and the meanings of these markers are illustrated by the sample sentences in the following sections.

3.4.4.1. Progressive Marker: ape. This marker, also realized by the truncated forms *ap* and *e* (the latter is attested only in Pointe Coupée),[7] expresses ongoing events. It is thus generally incompatible with statives:

Na prɔʃ de zɔ̃ la la ke m ***ape*** *travaj astɛr.*	I've been working now for about two years.
M ***ap*** *repɔ̃n.*	I'm answering.

It may also be used to express the definite or indefinite future; thus, its functions overlaps with those of *va:*

M ***e*** *kuri travaj apremidi la.*	I'm going to work this afternoon.
M ***ap*** *vin(i) bɛk bjɛ̃ vit.*	I'm returning right away.

3.4.4.2. Anteriority Marker: te. This marker, usually elided before a vowel, denotes anteriority. With statives, it corresponds to the French imperfect and expresses a state existing in the past or preceding the moment of utterance:

Li ***te*** *gɛ̃ ɛ̃ ʃar.*	He used to have a car.
Je ***te*** *ka lir ave ekri.*	They could read and write.

With nonstative verbs, *te* expresses completed events in the past and corresponds to the French pluperfect:

Apre li ***te*** *vini, nu bwɑ kɑfe.*	After he had arrived, we drank coffee.
Li mete sa ave medikamɔ̃ li ***te*** *aʃte.*	He put that with the medicine that he had bought.

It also expresses habitual events in the past:

Blɑ̃ kom nwa ***te*** *vini asi a mo latab.*	Whites as well as blacks came to sit at my table.

This marker is also used after the conjunction *si* to express hypothetical states or events:

Si mo ***te*** *kɔ̃nɛ li* ***te*** *la, mo se pa vini.*	If I had known she was there, I would not have come.
O si mo te ka turnɛ̃ motʃɛ̃n lalɔ̃ŋ kɔ̃m sa!	Ah, if I knew how to turn my tongue [i.e., speak] like that!

Finally, combined with the progressive marker *ape,* it expresses ongoing states or events in the past:

Li t ap ʒwe kɔ̃ mo vini. He was playing when I came.

3.4.4.3. Future Markers: va, ale, sa. The verb marker *va,* realized also as *a,* carries the meaning of nondefinite or remote future. In Pointe Coupée, it occurs only in its truncated form:

*Vu pa kwa l **a** ʃinɛ̃?* You don't think he'll win?
*Nu **va** fe la rekɔl, mwɛ̃ e twa.* We'll do the harvest, you and I.

Klingler observes that *va* may also express hypothetical future events:

*T **a** mete twa ɛ̃ ti brɛ̃ lafarin ɔ̃ndɔ̃.* You might put a little flour in there [i.e., if you happen to cook the dish in question].

Neumann lists the marker *ale* with the meaning of definite future:

*Nom la di: "Sa k **ale** mɔ̃ʒe le ʃat? E Vjø Dʒab di: "T **ale** mɔ̃ʒe li, nɛg!"* The man said: Who is going to eat the cat? And the Old Devil said: You're going to eat it, man!"
*Si je ɛ̃ bɔ̃ **gang** le nom ɔ̃sɔ̃m, je **ale** parle krejɔl.* If they're a good group of men, they'll speak Creole.

In negated predicates, *ale* is the most frequent of the future markers in Breaux Bridge, but Klingler (1992:205) reports that *e,* which is the progressive marker in that variety, occurs most frequently in Pointe Coupée LC:

*No p **ale** gɛ̃ ɛ̃ bal.* We won't have a dance.
*Je pe **e** fe li.* It won't get done.

The combination *te* + *ale* is used to express the future perfect:

*To di buki **te** p **ale** ʒwe.* You said Bouqui wouldn't play.

The marker *sa* serves two functions. It expresses the indefinite future with stative predicates:

*Mo swat mo **sa** la.* I hope to be there.
*Nu **sa** gɛ̃ ɛ̃ gro dine.* We'll have a big dinner.

With nonstative verbs, it functions as a future perfect:

*Kɔ̃ t a vini demɛ̃ mo **sa** deʒa parti.* When you arrive tomorrow, I'll already be gone.

3.4.4.4. Conditional Marker: se. The marker *se* functions as a present and past conditional:

*Mo **se** kɔ̃tɔ̃ kɔnɛ sa.* I would like to know that.
*Nu te p ole je **se** fute nuzɔt.* We didn't want them to make fun of us.

In complex sentences, *se* may occur in the clause that states the condition or in both clauses:

Si vu se vini apepre dø semɛn pase nave de bɔ̃ budɛ̃.	If you had come two weeks ago, there would have been some good boudin.
Mo se kɔ̃je li si li se pele mwa fu.	I would have beaten him, had he said I was crazy.
Li s ape peʃe astɛr, si la pli se pa tɔ̃be.	He would be fishing now were rain not falling.

Klingler reports that the use of *se* indicates habitual action:

Kɔ̃ lɔt **gang** *se vini, nuzɔt se kite.*	When the other group of men arrived, we used to leave.[8]

3.4.5. Auxiliary Verbs

Like the verb markers, auxiliary verbs accompany verbs and express tense, aspect, or mode. As Valdman (1978:220ff) shows, the distinction between these verbs and verb markers is not always clear in Creole French languages. Using data from a variety of French-lexifier creoles, however, he offers several criteria for identifying auxiliary verbs, some of which apply to LC. For instance, unlike verb markers, auxiliary verbs do not occur in stative predicates containing a noun phrase: *Li te ɛ̃ bɔ̃ kupɛr de kɔn* ("He was a good sugarcane cutter") is possible, but not **Li ka bɔ̃ kupɛr de kɔn'* (*"' He is able to be a good sugarcane cutter"). Auxiliary verbs usually occupy an internal position in a verb phrase; that is, they occur between verb markers and the main verb.

Like its congeners, LC offers a large array of auxiliary verbs. The following list is not exhaustive, but is quite representative. It is organized in terms of semantic characteristics.

3.4.5.1. Modal Auxiliary Verbs

3.4.5.1.1. Obligation. Obligation is expressed by the auxiliary verbs *bezwɛ̃/ bezɔn, bliʒe, dwat, fe mjɛ, gɛ̃ (pu),* and *sipoze:*

To bezwɛ̃ la ʃɛʒ sa la?	Do you need this chair?
To bezɔn gete li.	You have to watch him.
Mo bliʒe pɛj sa.	I have to pay for it.
Li dwat kɔ̃nɛ pasø li ʒa bat ase.	He ought to know because he's fought enough.
To fe mjɛ pu wɑ to mɔ̃mɔ̃, piti.	You'd better go see your mother, child.
Je te gɛ̃ bat pu sa.	They had to fight for that.
Li gɛ̃ fe li **sure.**	He'll make it for sure.
Mo pɑ sipoze ɛt la nɔ̃.	I'm not supposed to be here.

3.4.5.1.2. Capability. The most frequently occurring auxiliary verbs of capability are *kapab,* usually occurring in its truncated forms *kab* and *ka,* and *pe/pø.* In the German Coast, *kɔnɛ̃* also expresses this meaning, as does *futi* in Pointe Coupée:

Se ʒis twa kapab ede nuzɔt.	You're the only one who can help us.
Mun ka aprɔ̃n.	People can learn.
To pø pa galope avɛk mwɑ.	You can't run with me.
Mo pa kɔnɛ̃ poze.	I can't rest.

Klingler reports that some of his Pointe Coupée speakers use variants forms of *pe* with past or future meaning:

Li puvɛ pa parle lɔ̃gle ditu.	He couldn't speak English at all.
La vu pura mɛt vu liv pare.	Then you'll be able to get your book ready.

Neumann indicates that *pe* may also express eventuality:

Li pø ɛt malad.	She could be ill.

Futi is always accompanied by a preceding negator:

To pɑ futi gɛ̃ ɛ̃ lamezɔ̃ kɔ̃m sa.	You can't get a house like that.

3.4.5.1.3. Volition. The auxiliary verb *ole* expresses wishes and determination. It has fewer frequently occurring mesolectal variants, *ve/vø*, that occur only in negated predicates and forms marked for past and future, *vule* and *vudre,* respectively:

Je pa ole sa.	They don't want that.
Mo vø pa sa.	I don't want that.
Li vule pale ave je.	He wanted to talk to them.
Mo se vudre wa to madɔ̃m.	I would like to see your wife.

Related to auxiliary verbs of volition are *se di* followed by the negative *pa, pito,* and *vomje,* the last two of which express preference[9]:

Li se di pa fe sa.	He shouldn't have done that.
Mo pito pɛje vu.	I'd prefer to pay you.
Je vomje sa.	They prefer that.

3.4.5.2. Aspectual Auxiliary Verbs

3.4.5.2.1. Completive and Inceptive. This group includes the completives *fini* and *sɔrti* and the inceptive auxiliary verbs *kɔ̃tine/kɔ̃tiɲe, prɔ̃n/prɔ̃,* and *tɔ̃be:*

To gɛ̃ glase to gato apre to fini fe li.	You have to ice your cake after you've finished making it.
Boss *la sɔrti peje je.*	The boss has just paid them.
Je te prɔ̃n galope.	They started to run.
Li tɔ̃be krije.	She started to cry.

Linked semantically with these auxiliaries are those that refer to events that almost occurred, such as *mãke* and *ʒis pa:*

Mo mãke kase ma ʒɔm.	I almost broke my leg.
Li ʒis pa twe mã.	He almost killed me.

3.4.5.2.2. Habitual. The auxiliary verb *kɔ̃nɛ̃/kɔnɛ* expresses habitual events and actions, as well as capability:

Li kɔ̃nɛ̃ dɔrmi apremidi.	He [usually] sleeps in the afternoon.
Li te kɔ̃nɛ̃ lir le swar.	He used to read in the evening.
Mo te kɔ̃nɛ̃ kɔ̃mɔ̃ (pu) fe ɛ̃ gombo.	I used to know how to make a gumbo.

3.4.5.2.3. Causative. In causative constructions, the object of the main verb serves as the subject of the subordinate clause. These include *fe, lese,* and *kite.*

Fe li vini di.	Make it become thick.
To kite li vini eg	You let it ferment
M ole lese uzɔt konɛ sa mo kapab fe.	I'd like to show what I can do.

3.4.6. Linking Verbs

LC has a zero copula and three overt copulas, *se, je,* and *dɛt.* They are discussed below.

3.4.6.1. Zero Copula. A feature erroneously considered a defining typological characteristic of creole languages is the absence of a linking verb (copula) in equational sentences. There is, indeed, a zero copula in equational constructions containing an adjective, a complement of place, or a prepositional phrase:

Li fɛb.	She/he is weak.
Je deɔr.	They're outside.
Kuto sa la pu ki?	Whose knife is this?

Predicates such as *fɛ̃* and *swaf* are adjectival and are also characterized by zero copula:

Mo swaf.	I'm thirsty.

Verb markers may appear with these predicates. As they are stative, *ape* is generally excluded, and the anteriority marker *te* is the one that appears most frequently:

Pitit la te pɛr.	The child was afraid.

3.4.6.2. Copula: se. The overt copula *se* occurs with noun phrases, but in this type of construction, it is usually deleted when the verb phrase contains the anterior marker *te:*

Zriɔ̃dɛl se de ti zwazo nwar.	Swallows are little black birds.
Kɛl se to liv?	Which one is your book?
Nu te *sɛt frɛr.*	We were seven brothers.
Mo pɛr se te ɛ̃ Brusar.	My father was a Broussard.

When *se* appears with the anteriority marker, the latter is postposed:

Mo pɛr se te ɛ̃ Brusar.	My father was a Broussard.

3.4.6.3. Copula: je. In interrogative sentences, where the copula finds itself in final position, it is realized as *je* or, among white speakers (Neumann, 1985), as *e*. That form also appears with predicates that take zero copula:

*Au to **je**?*	Where are you?
*Ki nasjɔ̃ to **je**? Mo **se** frɔ̃se.*	What's your nationality. I'm French.

Note that *je* is homophonous with the third person plural pronoun and the postnominal plural marker:

*Se kɔm sa mo pitit **je** **je**.* That's how my children are.

This copula and the verb markers are mutually exclusive: Either it is deleted or it is replaced with the copula *dɛt,* realized as *ɛt* in the second example below:

Au to sa demɛ̃?	Where will you be tomorrow?
*Au to va **ɛt** demɛ̃?*	

Neumann (1985), however, notes combinations of *je* and the anteriority marker *te:*

*dɔ̃ l mezɔ̃ u nuzɔt **te** **je*** in the houses where we were

3.4.6.4. Copula: dɛt. LC is the only French-based Creole to show the copula form *dɛt* (alternating with *ɛt*) in limited syntactic contexts, for example, with modal verbs of obligation, with the imperative, and in passive constructions. Neumann believes that this form results from decreolization because it is not attested in 19th-century texts:

*Le piti sipoze **ɛt** deɔr.*	The children are supposed to be outside.
*Sa gɛ̃ **dɛt** fe.*	That has to be done.
*Mo va **ɛt** la.*	I'll be there.
***Dɛt** la a siz ɛr!*	Be there at six o'clock!
*La le pralin je pare pu **ɛt** wete ɔ̃ndo to ʃodjɛr.*	Then the pralines were ready to be removed from the pot.

The copula *dɛt* also appears in sentences with passive meaning; in this context, it corresponds to the English *get:*

*Mo te kɔne **dɛt** byʃe par ma momɔ̃.* I used to get beaten by my mother.

3.4.6.5. Introducer: se. The copula *se* is homophonous with the sentence introducer *se,* and it is often difficult to determine which of the two forms occurs in a particular environment. The typical position for the latter is as a sentence (or clause) opener:

***Se** dekɔ̃n la: **se** la disik la je.*	That's sugarcane; that's where there is sugar.
***Se** li ki t ape vole l mai.*	He's the one who was stealing the corn.
***Se** te fe ʃo.*	It was hot.

When the form *se* occurs in noninitial position, its status is also indeterminate, for it could be analyzed as a copula, even when it appears in adjectival or adverbial predicates, such as those listed in Section 3.4.6.1:

Le **meeting** *se aswar.*	The meeting is tonight.
Tu le nɛg se te dɔ̃ lafrik.	All the blacks were in Africa.
Mo kwa se te li, se pa li.	I thought it was him, it wasn't him.
Mo frɛr se ɛ̃ travajɔ̃.	My brother is a worker.

The introducer may be preceded by *sa,* in which case it mirrors the corresponding French structure:

Anɔ̃ dizɔ̃, sa se no plas.	Let's say, it's our property.

In these constructions, *se* may be deleted, and *sa* serves as the introducer:

Sa pɑ fe avɛk diri?	Isn't it made with rice?

3.4.6.6. Other Linking Verbs. The other linking verbs correspond in meaning and position to their French etyma. They include *vini* ("to become"), *sɔ̃m* ("to appear," "to look"), *gade* ("to look"), *gɛ̃ lɛr* ("to appear," "to look like"), and *rɛste/rɛs* ("to remain," "to stay"). These verbs occur with verb markers[10]:

Li e vini vjø.	He's getting old.
Mo sɔ̃m gaja.	I look healthy.
Sa gɛ̃ lɛ li malad.	It looks like she's sick.
Nu rɛste pri ɔ̃dɔ̃ la bu la.	We got stuck in the mud.
Rɛs trãkil!	Stay quiet.

3.4.7. Serial Verbs

Verb combinations that superficially resemble the serial verbs of other Creole languages also appear in LC. These combinations always involve a verb of motion as the secondary verb, that is, the one that is the least semantically salient. It is debatable, however, whether these combinations constitute genuine serial verbs. First, the only productive combinations contain the verbs *kuri* ("to go") and *vini* ("to come") as secondary verbs. The high frequency of these verbs, incidentally, accounts for the use of the expression *kuri vini* as one of the pejorative labels for LC. Second, in verbal combinations, these two verbs retain their meaning so that the combinations are more properly analyzed as sequences of two verbs rather than serial verbs in which the total meaning is not derivable from that of the two individual constituents. Third, it appears that the use of *vini* or *kuri* only adds emphasis to the main verb:

Mo pa wa lœr li ***vini*** *rive.*	I didn't see what time she arrived.
E kɔ̃ mo ***vini*** *kɔnɛ. . .*	And when I realized. . .
Nu te ***kur*** *trape fil naɲe.*	We went to get a spiderweb.
Lɛs nu ***kuri*** *fini balje lɔt but la.*	Let us finish sweeping the other end.
Mo ***vini*** *koze ave li.*	I came to speak with him.

These sequences of two verbs are to be distinguished from coordinated verb constructions:

Je marʃe kuri e vini. They were walking back and forth.

In certain combinations containing a verb of motion as the main verb, the second verb serves to modify the first and functions like a present participle in SF:

Li parti galope. He left running [i.e., He ran as he left].

4. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

With regard to sentence structure, six features are noteworthy: negative sentences, specifically, the position of the negative particle *pa;* the imperative; emphatic constructions; interrogative sentences; passive constructions; and subordination.

4.1. Negative Sentences

In French-based Creoles, *pa* generally occurs before the verb, but in LC, its position is subject to various factors. First, it occurs after the short stem of verbs but before the long stem:

Mo mãʒ ***pa*** *diri.*	I don't eat rice.
Sa mo ***pa*** *sɛrvi, mo mɛt li dɔ̃ ɛ̃ dʒa.*	What I don't use, I put it in a jar.

In stative, single-stem verbs, the position of the negative particle allows a differentiation between the completive and the present:

Mo m ***pa*** *wa "slavery."*	I didn't see [experience] "slavery."
Li wa ***pa.***	He doesn't see.

Except in the case of the progressive marker *ape,* the negative particle is placed after verb markers:

Sa se ***pa*** *arive.*	That wouldn't happen.
Mo te ***pa*** *fe arjɛ̃.*	I didn't do anything.
Mo va ***pa*** *fe sa.*	I won't do that.
Li te ***p*** *ape garde ke kote l t ale.*	She wasn't looking where she went.
Li te ***pa*** *kɔ̃te kɔ̃t.*	He didn't tell stories.
Li te pal ***pa*** *kreɔl.*	She didn't speak Creole.

Interestingly, although it appears before modal verbs, the position of *pa,* here realized with elision of the vowel, shifts when the Frenchified variant of these forms is used:

No ***p*** *ole li. . .*	We don't want. . .
To vø (← veut) ***pa****?*	Don't you want to?
Li se dwat ***pa*** *fɛ sa.*	He shouldn't do that.

4.2. Imperative Sentences

The imperative of the second person singular and plural is formed by deleting the subject pronoun:

Kute! Listen!

For verbs with two stems, as pointed out in Section 3.4.2, the short one is favored in the imperative:

Frem(e) laport!	Shut the door!
*Si to **kup** twa, **trap** ɛ̃ lɛ̃ʒ **mar** li sere, sa va rete.*	If you cut yourself, take a piece of cloth, tie it around real tight, it [bleeding] will stop.

Often, the short form is preferred to express the informal imperative and the long one to express the formal imperative:

Aʃte ʃar sa la! Buy this car! (formal)

versus

Rɛs la! Stay there! (informal)

Some verbs have special imperative forms: *garde* = *ga* ("look"), *tʃɔ̃bo* = *tʃɛ̃* or *tʃom* ("hold on," "grab"). For *vini* ("come"), that form alternates with *vjɛ̃*. The copula imperative form is *dɛt:*

Dɛt la witɛr! Be there at eight o'clock!

The imperative of the first person plural is formed by inserting the exhortative modal *anɔ̃* (alternating with *anu*) or *alɔ̃* before the stem:

***Anɔ̃** di, vu plãte dekãn la, estɔ̃nɛ̃ la.*	Let's say you plant sugarcane this year.
***Anu** wa sa nu pø plãte ãkɔr!*	Let's see what we can still plant!
***Alɔ̃** rɛste isi, alɔ̃ fe ɛ̃ dine!*	Let's stay here and cook a meal!

In negative imperative constructions, the particle *pa* precedes the long stem but follows the short stem of two-stem verbs. It precedes the stem of single-stem verbs. It is also inserted after the exhortative modals:

Pa tuʃe mwɛ̃!	Don't touch me!
*Kɔl **pa** apre mɔ̃!*	Don't come near me!
*Anɔ̃ **pa** pale pu sa!*	Let's not speak about that!

Finally, related to the imperative is the exhortative *prɔ̃ga* ("take care," "watch out"):

***Prɔ̃ga** to gɛ̃ tɔmbe la!* Watch not to fall there!

4.3. Emphatic Constructions

As is the case for vernacular varieties of French, LC emphatic structures involve mainly dislocation and embedding in main clauses introduced by *se.* The dislocated element usually appears at the end and is replaced in the base sentence by a pronominal copy:

*Li pa gɛ̃ lespri, **la fɔm!***	She is not very bright, this woman.
*Le kadʒɛ̃ **se** te ʒis parɛj kɔm le nɛg.*	Cadjuns were considered just [as low] as blacks.
***Se** pa li ki di sa.*	She's not the one who says that.

When the emphasized element is a pronoun, the dislocated element is the corresponding stressed pronoun:

***Mwa,** mo parle krejɔl.*	Me, I speak Creole.

Verbs and adverbs are emphasized by reduplication. The emphasized element usually appears three times:

*Je **galope, je galope, je galope,** e je rive ora ɛ̃ ʃiko narbr.*	They ran and ran, and they arrived near a tree stump.
*To bras li ʒiska li vini **ʒɔn, ʒɔn, ʒɔn.***	You mix it until it turns yellow.

A type of reduplication characteristic of French Creoles involves copying the verb, moving the copy to the front of the clause, and embedding the clause in a higher one introduced by *se.* The meaning of this construction differs from that which results from the simple reduplication illustrated above:

*Se **malad** mo malad.*	What I am is really sick.
*Se **gɔ̃fle** li gɔ̃fle.*	It's really pumped up.

Some forms serve mainly to indicate emphasis. They include the adverb *mɛm* and the particles *dɔ̃, la, wi,* and *nɔ̃.* The adverb *mɛm* emphasizes nouns, pronouns, and adjectives (see Section 3.3.1 for the emphatic form of personal pronouns):

*Sa se sa je pele ʒwe la mizik **mɛm!***	That's what they call playing real music!
*Je te ramase sa je **mɛm.***	They used to do the harvest themselves.
*Se bɔ̃ **mɛm!***	It's really good!

The particle *dɔ̃* occurs following a verb or at the end of a sentence; the other three particles are expletives placed sentence-finally. *Wi,* alternating with *we,* occurs in affirmative sentences and *nɔ̃* in negative sentences:

*Fe **dɔ̃** sa pu mɔ̃!*	Do it for me!
*Buki tu fu, li fu **la!***	Bouqui is completely crazy!
*Me li t ale ʒwe, **wi!***	He was really going to play!
*Se pa tuʒur le mun kulœr ki trɛt, **nɔ̃!***	It's not only colored people who are faith healers!

Finally, the particle *do/du,* most likely derived from English *though,* is also used in final position with emphatic function:

*E to kɔnɛ ki, **do?***	And you know who, do you?

4.4. Interrogative Structures

4.4.1. Global Questions

Global (yes/no) questions, in which the interrogation bears on the full predicate, are formed by the use of a final rise in pitch or the use of the interrogative marker *eske* at the beginning of the clause:

Ena ɛ̃ lɔt mãjɛ?	Is there another way?
***Eske** to mɔ̃de to tãt?*	Did you ask your aunt?

The final particles *ɛ̃* and *nɔ̃* are used in final position for confirmation questions, analogous to English tag questions:

*Sa se vajɔ̃ **ɛ̃?***	This is nice, isn't it?
*Se bjɛ̃, **nɔ̃?***	It's good, isn't it?

4.4.2. Partial Questions

In partial questions, bearing on adverbial complements or objects, the interrogative element always occurs in initial position:

***Sa ki** pa kɔnɛ̃ mo?*	Who doesn't know me?
Kɔfɛ to vini?	Why did you come?

Interrogative adverbs include *kote, au, eu* ("where"), *ekɔ̃* ("when"), *kofɛ* ("why"), *kɔmã/kɔ̃mɔ̃* ("how"), and *kɔ̃bjɛ̃/komje* ("how many"), as well as compound forms, such as *depi ekɔ̃* ("since when") or *kɔ̃mɔ̃ lɔ̃tɔ̃* ("how long").

There is a profusion of interrogative pronouns used to question a noun phrase serving as subject or object: *ki, ki k(i), sa, sa k(i), ki sa, ki se, ki se k(i), ki se sa k(i).* There does not appear to be any clear differentiation corresponding to the categorization of the referent, that is, human versus nonhuman, or to syntactic function, that is, subject versus object:

***Ki ki** di sa?*	Who said that?
***Sa ki** aʃte kãdi la pu vu, garsɔ̃?*	Who bought this candy for you, son?
***Ki se ki** gɛ̃ ɛ̃ ʃar?*	Who has a car?
***Ki se sa k** ape pale?*	Who's speaking?
***Ki se sa ki** nɔm la?*	Who is that man?
***Ki se sa** li te trete?*	Whom did she heal?
***Ki ki** gruj la?*	Who/what is moving there?
***Sa ki** sã kɔ̃m sa?*	What smells like that?
*Li mɔ̃de li **ki se sa** li t ape pale pu.*	She asked him what he was talking about.

However, ***sa*** seems to be more frequent to question nonhuman noun phrase function as direct object:

***Sa** to wa?*	What did you see?

To konɛ̃ sa ɛ̃ **pint whisky** *te kut?* Do you know what a pint of whisky costed?

In equative constructions, *ki* is used:

Ki *nɔm la (je)?* Who is that man?
Ki *li je?* Who is she?
Ki se *ɛ̃ brɛm?* What's an eggplant?

The form *ki* serves both as subject interrogative pronoun and as interrogative adjective. The following are frequently occurring combinations with the latter: *ki mũn* ("who"), *ki kalite* ("what sort"), *ki lɛ* ("what time").

4.5. Passive Constructions

Like its congeners, LC has no construction corresponding to passive sentences in SF or in English. In the various LC constructions that have passive meaning, the patient, that is, the noun phrase that receives the action, occurs in the subject position:

Mo *ɛlvɛ ã la vjãn?* I was raised on meat.
Tu kiʃo *se aʃte astɛr la.* Everything is bought these days.

Generally, the passive meaning is expressed by the use of impersonal expressions or the use of the third person plural pronoun *je:*

Tu kiʃo se aʃte aster la. Everything is bought now.
Li bøzɔ̃ lave. It needs washing.
apre ***je*** *mule dekɔ̃n je* after the cane has been ground
Je *te pele ti ʃjɛ̃ la* **Jif.** The puppy was called Jif.

It may also be expressed with the use of prepositional phrases introduced by *par,* although Klingler (1992:203) estimates these to be rare cases:

Mo rekɔ̃ny ***par blã e nwa.*** I'm well considered by blacks and whites.
Mo kudpje ***par*** *li tultɔ̃.* I'm always kicked by him.

The modal verbs *truve* ("to happen") and *soti* ("immediate past") can also be used to convey the passive meaning:

Li ***truve*** *tʃuwe.* He was killed [in an accident].
Li ***soti*** *tʃwe.* She was killed [murdered].

Neumann (1985:282) states, however, that speakers she consulted considered the use of *truve* dated, and Klingler (1992:203) recorded only one instance of the use of *soti* in his corpus. Neumann does list a fair number of examples illustrating passive sentences constructed with the copula verb *dɛt* in the present and *ite* in the past[11]:

Mo ***dɛt peje*** *pu sa mo te fe.* I was paid for what I was doing.
Mo ***ite elve*** *dɔ̃ la mezɔ̃ le blɔ̃.* I was raised in a white people's home.

These verbs are absent, however, from Klinger's corpus collected in Pointe Coupée. Neumann also considers these constructions to be induced by decreolization, inasmuch as they are absent from 19th-century texts. She also states that her informants claim there is a semantic distinction between constructions that contain the copula *dɛt* or *ite* and those that express the passive meaning in other ways.

4.6. Complex Sentences

In the construction of complex sentences, LC conforms to the general pattern of French-based Creoles: Embedding of clauses operates by parataxis, and the use of complementizers is limited. The function of noun phrases is indicated by their position in the embedded clause. Following the description of coordinated complex sentences, three types of complex sentences involving embedding will be discussed: completives, adverbial subordinate clauses, and relative clauses.

4.6.1. Coordinated Clauses

Whereas both *epi* and *e* may conjoin clause constituents—for example, two nouns or two verbs—as well as sentences, *avɛk(ave)* cannot assume the latter function:

Mo ***epi*** *ma momɔ̃ e ma sœr.*	Me and my mother and my sister.
Te gɛ̃ ɛ̃ mile ***ave*** *ɛ̃ ʃval.*	I had a mule and a horse.
Je te prã je ɛ̃ labrɔs e se brose sa tu prɔp ã de kote.	They would take a brush and brush it clean on both sides.
Mo mule mo lavjãn ***epi*** *mo pase li—kwi li ɛ̃ pe e la mo mɛt li ãt, e la mo* **bake** *li, mo fure li dã* **stove.**	I grind my meat and then I cook it a little—and then I put it between, and then I bake it, I stick it in the stove.

Among the other coordinating conjunctions are *mɛ* ("but"), *o* or *obɛ̃* ("or"), *kɔm* ("like"), *swa . . . swa* or *swa . . . u swa* ("either . . . or"), *sa fe* ("so then"), *la* **well** ("O.K."):

Mo p ole di twa mo laʒ ã **guess,** *mɛ mo gɛ̃ mo batistɛ.*	I don't want to tell you my age by guessing, but I have my baptismal register.
Mo mɛt ***swa*** *le pakon,* ***u swa*** *le pistaʃ.*	I take either pecans or peanuts.
Mo t ape vini las tɔn sɛz istwar; ***sa fe*** *mo mɔ̃de li pu parti.*	I got tired of listening to her stories; that's why I asked her to leave.

4.6.2. Subordinate Clauses

4.6.2.1. Completives. Completive subordinate clauses function as object of the main (matrix) clause. Simple parataxis is the most common mechanism for

constructing complex sentences, although the complementizer *ke,* which Neumann (1985) ascribes to decreolization in contact with CF, may appear. In the examples below, the absence of a complementizer is indicated by the symbol Ø:

Vu pa kwa Ø l a ʃinɛ̃?	Don't you think he'll win?
Mo te p ole ke je te kɔnɛ ***ke*** *mo te parle [kreɔl].*	I didn't want them to know that I speak [creole].

4.6.2.2. Adverbial Subordinate Clauses. Adverbial subordinate clauses are introduced by a variety of conjunctions, and they may occur before or after the matrix clause:

Sa mo aprɔ̃ mo aprɔn sa pito ***apre*** *mo sɛ kuri lekɔl.*	What I learned I learned mainly after my sister went to school.
Fɛrm la pɔrt ***pu pa*** *li wa nuzɔt.*	Close the door so he won't see us.
Pɔ̃dɔ̃ *li kwi mo gɛ̃ brase mo patat.*	While it's cooking I've got to stir my potatoes.
Osi vit *mo gɔ̃bo pare, no va dine.*	As soon as my gumbo is ready, we'll have dinner.
Kɔm *to kɔnɛ mo byʒe kuri a Lafayette demɛ̃.*	As you know, I have to go to Lafayette tomorrow.

Klingler (1992:247) notes adverbial subordinate clauses without any introducing adverb:

Me e lave, Ø mo gɛ̃ lɛ̃ʒ prɔp demɛ̃.	I'm doing the wash so I'll have clean clothes tomorrow.

4.6.2.3. Relative Clauses. Relative clauses are embedded in the noun phrase they modify without any obligatory relative pronoun. For relative clauses that serve as direct objects, the relative pronoun is the general complementizer *ke:*

Tu la mizɛr Ø je te fe li.	All the hardships they made her endure.
La tit fij ***ke*** *t ape wa la se ma fij.*	The little girl you see there is my daughter.

Klingler found an instance of the use of the demonstrative pronoun *sa* and the relative pronoun *ki* in his Pointe Coupée corpus and Neumann found a case of the use of *sa* alone. Both cases are common in the German Coast:

Mo pa gɛ̃ di li ***sa ki*** *vu fe dã la kizin.*	I won't tell her what you do in the kitchen.
mai ***sa*** *Frɔ̃swa te kɔnɛ mɛt deɔr*	the corn that François always used to put outside
Vuzot pa kɔnɛ̃ ***sa*** *li lɛm.*	You, you don't know what she likes.
Li kɔ̃prã pa ***sa k*** *ap rive.*	She doesn't understand what is happening.

Relative clauses functioning as prepositional complements do not require any complementizer, and the preposition is usually placed at the end of the relative

clause. The only exception are relative clauses that serve as possessive complements:

mɛ̃m mũn je mo travaj ***pu*** *astɛr la*	the same people I work for now
Persɔn te pø pa wa ***au*** *li kuri.*	Nobody could see where she was going.
tu le piti nu te kuri lekɔl ***avɛk***	all the children we went to school with
Piti ***ke (ki)*** *sa momɔ̃ muri rɛs ɛk mwa.*	The child whose mother died is living with me.

Relative clauses that function as subjects are linked to the matrix sentence by the relative pronoun *ki* occurring in its elided variant before either a vowel or a consonant and, rarely, the complementizer *ke:*

Mo gɛ̃ le piti ***ki*** *parl krejɔl.*	I have children who speak creole.
Gɛ̃ ɛn ã dɛ mũn ***ki*** *fe tu, k e labure tu la tɛ la.*	There are a few people who do everything, who cultivate all of the land.
Se mo popa ***k*** *te kɔ̃nɛ̃ di sa.*	It was my father who used to say that.
Li blije larʒã ***ki*** *te ãlɛr latab.*	He forgot the money that was on the table.

5. AFRICAN ELEMENT IN LOUISIANA CREOLE

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (1992) offers solid evidence for an unusually cohesive and heavily Africanized culture in lower Louisiana. She claims that it was in fact the most Africanized culture in the United States in the 19th century (1992:161). According to Hall, because of the heavy African cultural influence, primarily Bambara in the early years of Colonial French Louisiana, one would expect the language devised by the slaves also to be Africanized. This is in fact the conclusion drawn by Hall (1992:188): "The vocabulary of Louisiana Creole is overwhelmingly French in origin, but its grammatical structure is largely African."

This is not a novel point of view. Nearly 60 years earlier, Suzanne Combaire-Sylvain (1936), a Haitian linguist, characterized Haitian Creole (HC) as French vocabulary shaped by the mold of African syntax, specifically that of Ewe, a Kwa language spoken in present-day Benin (formerly Dahomey). More recently, Claire Lefebvre (1982) of the University of Quebec in Montreal, views Haitian Creole as being composed of the grammar of Fongbe, another Kwa language, clothed in French vocabulary. In Louisiana, however, only toward the end of the 18th century did a large part of the servile population originate from Kwa-speaking areas in the Gulf of Benin (Hall, 1992).

All specialists in Creole linguistics agree that the vocabulary of French-based Creole languages is derived mainly from French. Even in HC, which contains many African-based words from voodoo, more than 90% of the vocabulary can be traced to present-day French or regional dialects. There is considerable debate, however, about the source of the grammar. So far, no scholar has demonstrated, with support from carefully documented studies comparing the various French Creoles and various African languages, a clear link between the grammar of a specific African

language or groups of African languages and a particular French-based Creole language or the entire group. In judicial terms, we would say that the evidence for the African origin of Creole grammar is mainly circumstantial: The languages were created mainly by African slaves, and it stands to reason that it should show the influence of their various native languages.

Three structural features of LC might be attributable to grammatical calquing from African languages: the postposition of the definite determiner *la* and of the plural marker *je,* serial verbs, and the interrogative adverb *kofɛ*. HC, which on the surface appears to be the most Africanized of the French-based Creoles, provides the best starting point for building a case for direct African influence. In HC, all determiners occur after the noun; this feature is also found in Ewe and various Western African languages, such as Igbo and Yoruba. For the sake of convenience, we provide in the following examples, in addition to English and French equivalents, the interlinear translation that gives the meaning of each constituent element:

5.1. Postposed Noun Phrase Determiners

HC	*kay-**sa-a*** ("that house"); Fr. ***cette** maison (**là**)*
LC	*kabãn **sa la** (mezɔ̃ **sa a la**)*
Ewe	*afe **a***
Yoruba	*ile **yen***
	house ***that***
HC	*moun **sila yo*** ("these people"); Fr. ***ces** gens* (**là**)
LC	*mun **sa je***
Ewe	*ame **sia wo***
	people **that** PLURAL

Interestingly, in both HC and Ewe, the definite article appears at some distance from the noun it modifies, for example, at the end of a relative clause:

HC	*oto li vann mouen **an*** ("the car that he sold me")
	car he sold me DEFINITE
	Fr. ***la** voiture (l'auto) qu'il m'a vendue*
Ewe	*evu si wòdra nam **la***
	vehicle that he sold to me DEFINITE

As was shown in Section 3.1.1.1, this feature also occurs in LC. For convenience, we repeat the example given there:

*mo frɛr ki muri **la*** this brother of mine who is dead

But if we compare HC and LC to vernacular French, improperly labeled *français populaire* ("Plebian French"), the postposition of the definite determiner is not particularly surprising. In that type of French, "that house" would be *cette maison-là.* The use of *là* to emphasize definiteness is even more frequent in Québec French and in CF. For example, we find in Revon Reed's (1976:73) *Lâche pas la patate:*

On avait beaucoup plus d'ouragons dans ***ces jours-là qu'aujourd'hui.***

There were many more hurricanes in those days than today.

In Québec French, the postposed *là* co-occurs with the definite article: *la maison-là.*

Thus, the placement of the determiner is probably best accounted for as a *convergence* between a feature found in the French target speech the slaves heard and that of their native language or some other African languages with which they may have been acquainted.

5.2. Serial Verbs

The second feature of French-based Creoles often traced to African languages is *serial verbs* (see Section 3.4.7). Compared to HC, the frequency of serial verbs is relatively rare in LC. In HC, the meaning of the combination cannot be derived from the individual meaning of the constituent parts. One of the verbs, usually a verb of motion, adds a nuance to the main verb. For example, in the combinations *mennen ale* ("to lead" + "to go" = "to take someone away"), *pote ale* ("to carry" + "to go" = "to carry away"), and *pote vire* ("to carry" + "to turn" = "to bring back"), the second verb, a verb of motion, appears to have an adverbial function. It indicates the directionality of the action. In other types of serial verb combinations, the verb *ba* ("to give") carries the benefactive meaning and functions like the preposition "for" of English or *pour* of French:

HC	*M kuit manje* ***ba*** *ou.*	I cooked the food for you.
		I cook food give you.
		J'ai cuit la nourriture [le manger] pour toi.
Ewe	*Meda nu* ***na*** *wò.*	

5.3. Interrogative Pronoun *kofɛ*

The third putative African feature in LC is the interrogative adverb *kofɛ* ("why"). M. Roy Harris (1973) traces the semantic model of that form to the combinations "why" + "make" of the Kwa languages and of Yoruba, which is also reflected in Atlantic English-based Creoles, *wa mek* in Jamaican Creole and *mek* in Gullah. He also finds, however, that the combination *quoi* ("why") + *faire* ("make") in the western French dialect Saintongeais has influenced CF (see Chapter 12 in this volume). Finally, this combination also surfaces in CF: *Quoi faire vous dit ça?* ("Why do you say that?"). Again, this is best explained as a case of convergence between the vernacular and dialectal varieties of French spoken by the white settlers of colonial Louisiana and the languages spoken by the African slaves.

Although language and culture are closely linked, the relationship is not direct. While many aspects of Louisiana culture such as music, folklore, and food have their roots in the slaves' native cultures, there is little evidence that the grammar of the new language that developed in Colonial French Louisiana was shaped by the

languages they spoke, but this is not to deny any African influence on LC. A dozen years ago, when talking about the Creole of his island, the great Martinican writer Aimé Césaire (personal statement) gave in French what stands as the most profound statement about the African element in Creole: *Le créole est une langue dont le corps est français mais l'âme africaine* ("Creole is a language in which the body is French but the soul is African"). Many linguists have made the mistake of equating the soul of a language with its grammar. Gwendolyn M. Hall (1992:188) comes closer to the truth when she points out that members of the Louisiana Creole community, which includes whites as well as blacks, share speech rhythms and intonation and ways of using language—for example, the use of proverbs. It is perhaps these aspects of language and language use, which have received scant attention from linguists, that constitute the soul of LC where the permanence of African modes of expression and communication might be sought.

6. CONCLUSION

LC is a fast-disappearing speech form. Because there are for all intents and purposes no remaining monolingual speakers and a diminishing number of fluent speakers, it will be increasingly difficult to document the language. Unfortunately, available descriptions are partial in the sense that not all three focal areas are covered uniformly. The field research of Morgan and Neumann has yielded material that gives a good idea of the phonological and morphosyntactic structure of the Bayou Tèche area, although the lexicon of the LC-speaking communities of that region was never systematically investigated. For Pointe Coupée, on the contrary, Klingler (1992) provides excellent coverage for the lexicon but does not provide the same level of detailed treatment for the other aspects. The German Coast variety awaits a comprehensive treatment that will complement Marshall's observations scattered in several article-length publications. One of the important by-products of the lexicographic project undertaken by Valdman, Klingler, Marshall, and Rottet is a computerized reference corpus that will provide contextualized attestations of some of the features reviewed in this chapter.

Despite some gaps resulting from an incomplete database, this structural sketch has pointed up some noteworthy aspects of the structural of LC, some of which have implications for an understanding of the genesis of French-based creoles and creole studies in general. One point that emerges from this attempt at a global description is the illusory nature of that attempt. While all three varieties of LC show features that clearly set them apart from other French-lexifier creoles, they still show significant differences among themselves. For Bayou Tèche LC, the line of demarcation between it and CF is very tenuous: For many variables, most speakers appear to access a continuum. For example, in the nominal system, they alternate between a postposed determiner and a plural marker and prepositions marked for gender and number: *dã l klo* versus *dã klo la, le dibwa* versus *dibwa je.* In the same system,

German Coast speakers, many of whom are whites, appear to have maximized postpositions: The common demonstrative determiner *sɑ* is backed up by ɑ + *lø:/lɑ*, *kokodri sɑ ɑ lɑ* or *kokodri sɑ ɑ l*: ("this alligator"), as compared to Pointe Coupée and Bayou Tèche *le kokodri sa* or *le kokodri sa je*. In Pointe Coupée, there has emerged a progressive marker variant of *ape* unattested in any of the French-lexifier creoles *e*. These facts suggest that theories for the genesis of Creoles must provide for the central role of internal development factors, some of which are highly localized.

Acknowledgments. We acknowledge with gratitude the suggestions and comments provided by Margaret M. Marshall, in particular for additional data for the German Coast. This structural sketch is based on material collected with research funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (RT 21614-94) and the Lurcy Charitable Trust.

NOTES

1. There is no general agreement about what linguistic reality is described by the term "Colonial French." Margaret Marshall (Chapter 13 in this volume) uses it to describe the variety of French used during the colonial period in contrast to CF and the developing LC. Given the heterogeneity of the Louisiana population during that period (settlers from different parts of France, from New France to the north, settlers with diverse social background, foreigners, such as those who settled the German Coast), Colonial French was highly variable and did not offer the slaves introduced into the colony at that time a stable target for acquisition. Whether there still exists today a variety of French distinct from both CF and SF that traces its origins directly to Colonial French is very much of a moot question. The authors of this chapter believe that the leveling undergone by all varieties of French in intimate contact renders difficult today a clear demarcation between two varieties of French opposed to LC.
2. It was long believed that LC existed in the Lake Charles region bordering on Texas. In a recent visit to that area, T. Klingler reports, he failed to identify individuals who spoke the language. However, he has identified a community of LC speakers in Bayou Lacombe (St. Tammany Parish) north of New Orleans.
3. It appears that this monthly magazine has ceased publication.
4. Apparent English loans appear in **boldface** type.
5. Unlike in CF, there are few occurrences of alternations between */h/* and */ʒ/*. Only two instances occur in the field data collected for the Louisiana Creole Dictionary Project: */hiʃka/ jusqu'à* ("up to") and */hɔ̃li/ joli* ("pretty"). In older stages of LC, judging from 19th-century texts, */ʒ/* merged with */z/*.
6. In the German Coast, only the long stem occurs with *te*.
7. This variant form of the progressive marker does not appear to be a reduced form of *ape*. Whereas *ape* and its shortened form *ap* are derived from the French periphrastic construction *être après* (e.g., *il est après partir* "he's leaving"), *e* probably originates in the synonymous construction *être à* (e.g., *il est à partir*).
8. In Pointe Coupée, there occurs a marker *bin* that gives every indication of being an English loanword. Because it is usually pronounced with a lax */ɪ/*, *bin* may be analyzed as an instance of code switching. This view is supported by the fact that the marker carries a meaning closest to its English etymon:

Mo ***bin*** *ap travaj isi dø smɛn* "I've been working here for two weeks"
Je ***bin*** *e kwi tu je ʒu* "They've cooked all of their lives."

9. In the German Coast, *vomje* means "would be better."
10. Attested in Pointe Coupée is the expression *gad mal* (*Sa gad mal*) "It looks bad", which appears to be an English calque.
11. In the German Coast, the copula is realized as *te.*

REFERENCES

Comhaire-Sylvain, S. (1936). *Le créole haïtien: Morphologie et syntaxe.* Port-au-Prince: Wetteren, Belgium: De Meester.

Hall, G. M. (1992). *Africans in colonial Louisiana: The development of Afro-Creole culture in the eighteenth century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Harris, M. R. (1973). Kofê "Pourquoi," un africanisme parmi d'autres en créole louisianais. *Revue de Louisiane, 2*(2), 88–102.

Jarreau, L. (1931). *Creole folklore of Pointe Coupée Parish.* Unpublished master's thesis, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Klingler, T. A. (1992). *A descriptive study of the Creole speech of Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Lefebvre, C., et al. (1982). *Syntaxe de l'haïtien.* Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma.

Marshall, M. M. (1982). Bilingualism in southern Louisiana: A linguistic analysis. *Anthropological Linguistics, 24*(3), 308–324.

Marshall, M. M. (1987). A Louisiana Creole speech continuum. *Regional Dimensions, 5,* 71–94.

Marshall, M. M. (1990). The origins of French Creole in Louisiana. *Regional Dimensions,* 23–40.

Morgan, R. J. (1959). Structural sketch of Saint Martin Creole. *Anthropological Linguistics, 1,* 7–29.

Morgan, R. J. (1960). The lexicon of Saint Martin Creole. *Anthropological Linguistics, 2,* 7–29.

Morgan, R. J. (1972). L'ordre des mots dans la syntaxe du créole de Saint Martin. *Revue de Louisiane. 1*(1), 65–81.

Morgan, R. J. (1976). The Saint Martin copula in relation to verbal categories. In S. Emile & A. Valdman (Eds.), *Identité culturelle et francophonie dans les Amériques* (pp. 147–165). Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Neumann, I. (1984). Le créole des Blancs en Louisiane. *Etudes Créoles, 6*(2), 63–78.

Neumann, I. (1985). *Le créole de Breaux Bridge, Louisiane: Etude morphosyntaxique, textes, vocabulaire.* Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Neumann, I. (Ed.). (1987). *Textes anciens en créole louisianais: Avec introduction, notes, remarques sur la langue et glossaire.* Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Reed, R. (1976). *Lâche pas la patate: Portraits des Acadiens de la Louisiane.* Montreal: Editions Parti Pris.

Valdman, A. (1978). *Le créole: Structure, statut et origine.* Paris: Klincksieck.