William J. Kezerian

Syracuse University, NY
MA Candidate in Linguistics Studies
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Website

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Broad	NLP, syntax, French-based Creoles, fieldwork, experimental methods, and bilingualism.
Narrow	Syntactic focus marking, Guadeloupean Creole, language documentation, language contact, computational linguistics, subordinate structure, and argument structure

EDUCATION

2025- **MA, Linguistics**, Syracuse University, NY
Dual concentration in NLP and Linguistic Theory
Thesis advisor: Jaklin Kornfilt
GPA: 4.00 / 4.00

2024 **BA, Linguistics and Comparative Literature**, Summa Cum Laude, University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA
Double major; minor in French and Francophone Studies
GPA: 4.00 / 4.00

2023 Certificate in TESOL

Summer Schools, Exchanges

2025 VII International Summer School Language Policy and Language Planning, The University for Foreigners of Siena, Siena, Italy

2025 NASSLLI, the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

2024 ESSLLI, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

2019 Lycée Dumont d'Urville - LaPlace, Caen, France
TA in Intermediate English

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

2024 **William Kezerian**[1], Lam An Wyner, Sandro Ansari, and Kristine M. Yu. "Ye Olde French: Effect of Old and Middle French on SIGMORPHON-UniMorph Shared Task Data." In Proceedings of the 21st SIG-MORPHON workshop on Computational Research in Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphology, pages 39–50, Mexico City, Mexico. Association for Computational Linguistics. LINK

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

pending **William Kezerian**[1], Béatrice Jeannot-Fourcaud, Isabelle Barrière & Renauld Govain. "Focus and Fronting in Guadeloupean Creole: Examining the role of complementation in focus." John Benjamins.

Edited Volumes

2023 Kami Nguyen, **William Kezerian**, Savannah Weaver, and Livia Iwanicki, "mOthertongue 2023 (Full Issue)," *mOthertongue*, Vol. 28, Article 1, Comparative Literature Department, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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[1] First author

Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations

2025   **William Kezerian**, Vasily Tselioudis, Béatrice Jeannot-Fourcaud, Isabelle Barrière & Renauld Govain. "The Role of *kè* in Guadeloupean Creole Complementation: A comparative syntactic analysis." Presented at *Syntax of the World's Languages X*, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany.

2025   **William Kezerian**, Vasily Tselioudis, Béatrice Jeannot-Fourcaud, Isabelle Barrière & Renauld Govain. "Focus and Fronting in Guadeloupean Creole: Examining the role of complementation in focus." To be presented at *SLE 2025 Workshop: Issues in the formal and functional typology of focus*, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France.

2024   **William Kezerian**, Lam An Wyner, Sandro Ansari, and Kristine M. Yu. "Ye Olde French: Effect of Old and Middle French on SIGMORPHON-UniMorph shared task data." Presented at the *SIGMORPHON Workshop*, ACL 2024, Mexico City, Mexico.

Invited Talks

Presented

2025   "Testing Clause Boundaries: Focus and Complementation in Guadeloupean Creole." Presented to *The Research Group on Creole Grammars (GRGC)*, Structures Formelles du Langage, Université Paris 8, France.

2025   "Creole for the Classroom: Linguistic documentation and NLP in empowering native-language education in Guadeloupe." Presented at *the VII International Summer School Language Policy and Language Planning: Bilingual minds and translingual practices in multicultural contexts*, The University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy.

2025   "NLP in Language Documentation: A case study on Guadeloupean Creole focus and fronting." Presented at the *Linguistic Studies Program Research and Creative Scholarship Fest*, Syracuse University, NY.

2025   "Linguistic interaction in Guadeloupean Creole oral histories: Call and response to facilitate the tradition's survival." Presented at the *French Graduate Colloquium*, Syracuse University, NY.

2024   "Subordinate clauses in Guadeloupean Creole: Complementizer dropping, NP/VP focus, and PP focus attachment." Presented at the *NSF-IRES Conference*, INSPE, Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe.

Research

NSF Research Fellowship

Current   **Focus Constructions, Complementizer Dropping, and Definite Clause Deixis within Subordinate Clauses in Guadeloupean Creole**.
Field linguistics research documenting syntactic phenomena in Guadeloupean Creole. Combined expertise in computational linguistics and syntactic theory to create three experiments, evaluating speaker intuitions and eliciting complex constructions. *Supervised by Dr. Isabelle Barrière, Dr. Béatrice Jeannot, and Dean Renauld Govain.* LINK

Ongoing Master's Thesis

Current   **Leveraging ASR for improving data analysis in language documentation**.
Developing an ASR model for Guadeloupean Creole using field-collected speech data to aid language documentation and analysis of syntactic features such as focus and complementation. Integrating NLP with field linguistics to address data processing bottlenecks and promote language technology access for speakers of understudied languages. *Supervised by Dr. Jaklin Kornfilt.*

Relevant Graduate Projects

2025   **NLP methods for low-resource language documentation: A case study on Guadeloupean Creole** Natural Language Processing.
Developed a custom grapheme-to-phoneme (G2P) model for Guadeloupean Creole to evaluate NLP methods for low-resource language documentation, achieving a 2.8% Phoneme Error Rate—significantly outperforming pre-trained models.

2024   **The Passives were Analyzed: Comparing model performance in classifying passive use in news headline bias** Applications of NLP.
Fine-tuned BERT and ChatGPT models to classify media bias in headlines about the 2004 Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on passive voice and agent omission. Achieved 89% accuracy with fine-tuned ChatGPT, outperforming baseline heuristics and LLMs.

EMPLOYMENT

Current	**NSF-IRES Research Fellow,** University of the Antilles, Guadeloupe LINK
Current	**Teaching Assistantship,** French and Francophone Program, Syracuse University
2022-2024	**Teaching Internship,** ESL Program, UMass Amherst
2023-2024	**French Translator,** UMass Daily Collegian
2023	**Multilingual Editor,** mOthertongue Journal of the Arts, UMass Amherst
2023	**French Translator,** the International Rescue Committee

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2025	**VII International Summer School Language Policy and Language Planning**, The University for Foreigners of Siena, Siena, Italy
2025	**NASSLLI**, the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
2024	**ESSLLI**, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
2024	**ToBI Prosody Course,** MIT
2024	**Intro to R,** Harvard University
2023	**Programming for Everybody (Python),** University of Michigan
2023	**Data structures (Python),** University of Michigan

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2024	**Instructor of Record,** FRENCH 201, Syracuse University
2023-2024	**Instructor,** Advanced American Culture and English Language, UMass Amherst
2022-2023	**Instructor,** Intermediate American Culture and English Language, UMass Amherst
2022-2024	**ESL Tutor,** UMass Amherst ESL Program
2019	**EFL Teaching Assistant,** Lycée Dumont d'Urville, Laplace, Caen, France

LANGUAGES

Native	English
Advanced	French
Conversational	Haitian Creole, Japanese, Italian
Research	Guadeloupean Creole

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Programming	Python, R, JupyterLabs, JavaScript, Bash
Technical Skills	Praat, LaTeX, MS Office, PsychoPy, Canva, ToBI, DARLA, MFA
Certifications	CITI Social and Behavioral Research

Awards & Fellowships

2025	PAC Grant, GSO, Syracuse University, $600
2025	CAS-LLL Summer Research Fellowship, Syracuse University, $375
2024	French Teaching Assistantship, Syracuse University
2024	Tuition Scholarship, Syracuse University
2024	National Science Foundation IRES Grant, $1,500 LINK
2024	Summa Cum Laude graduation honors, UMass Amherst
2023	Luise Bonner Scholarship Fund
2023	Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society
2022	Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society
2022	Linguistic Society of America
2021-2024	Dean's List, UMass Amherst

Selected Coursework

Graduate

Linguistics: Transformational Grammar (A), Syntactic Analysis (A), Morphological Analysis (A), Advanced Syntactic Analysis (*pending*), Topics in Sociolinguistics (*pending*)

Computation: Natural Language Processing (A), Text Mining (*pending*)

Undergraduate

Linguistics: Syntax (A), Semantics (A), Linguistic Theory (A), Speech Sounds (A) and Structure (A), The Sounds of Englishes (A), Interpreting and Translation Research and Practice I (A) and II (A)

Computation: Applications of NLP (A), Advanced Computational Linguistics (A), Computational Linguistics (A), Object-Oriented Programming (A)