William J. Kezerian

Syracuse University, NY
MA Candidate in Linguistics Studies
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Broad   NLP, syntax, French-based Creoles, fieldwork, and bilingualism.
Narrow   Syntactic focus marking, Guadeloupean Creole, language documentation, left displacement, language contact, computational linguistics, 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

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	"The Role of *kè* in Guadeloupean Creole Complementation: A comparative syntactic analysis." To be presented at *Syntax of the World's Languages X*, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany.
2025	"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	"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

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: Theater and Cinema: Staging Challenges in the Francophone World*, Syracuse University, NY.
2024	"Subordinate clauses in Guadeloupean Creole: Complementizer dropping, NP/VP topicalization, and PP attachment in focus constructions." Presented at the *NSF-IRES Conference*, INSPE, Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe. Based on fieldwork conducted in elementary schools and universities after five weeks of data collection.

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

2025	PAC Grant, GSO, Syracuse University
2025	CAS-LLL Summer Research Fellowship, Syracuse University
2024	French Teaching Assistantship, Syracuse University
2024	Tuition Scholarship, Syracuse University
2024	National Science Foundation IRES Grant 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

RESEARCH

NSF Research Fellowship

Current   **Focus Constructions, Complementizer Dropping, and Definite Clause Deixis within Subordinate Clauses in Guadeloupean Creole**.
Field linguistics research aimed at documenting syntactic phenomena in French-based Creoles in the Lesser Antilles. Combined expertise in python and computational linguistics to create three experiments to test speaker intuitions and elicit grammatical constructions in Guadeloupean Creole. *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 and fine-tuned BERT and ChatGPT models to classify media bias in headlines about the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on passive voice and agent omission. Achieved 89% accuracy, outperforming baseline heuristics and zero-shot LLMs.

2024   **The Passives were Analyzed: Comparing model performance in classifying passive use in news headline bias** Applications of NLP.
Developed and 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	**NASSLLI**, the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
	Courses in computational linguistics, NLP, and tree-adjoining grammars.
2024	**ESSLLI**, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
	Courses in NLP, computation, AI, statistical typology, LLMs, semantics, etc.
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
2022-2024	**Instructor,** Advanced American Culture and English Language, UMass Amherst
2022-2024	**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/Fluent	English
Advanced	French, Haitian Creole
Conversational	Japanese, Italian

Skills and Certifications

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

Selected Coursework

Graduate

Linguistics:	Syntactic Analysis (A), Morphological Analysis (A), Advanced Syntactic Analysis
Computation:	Natural Language Processing (A), Text Mining (*pending*)

Undergraduate

Linguistics:	Transformational Grammar (A), 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)