

William J. Kezerian

Curriculum Vitae

Syracuse University, NY
MA Candidate in Linguistic Studies
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Broad Syntax, NLP, French-based Creoles, fieldwork, morphology, and bilingualism.
Narrow Language contact, Guadeloupean Creole, complementation, reduplicative focus fronting, experimental methods, computational linguistics, and subordinate structure.

EDUCATION

2025- **MA, Linguistic Studies**, Syracuse University
Dual concentration in NLP and Linguistic Theory
Thesis: Leveraging NLP for Empirical Syntactic Data Analysis. *Supervisor: Jaklin Kornfilt*
GPA: 4.00 / 4.00

2021-2024 **BA, Linguistics; Comparative Literature**, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Summa Cum Laude; 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
Exchange student; TA in Intermediate English

PUBLICATIONS

Chapters in Edited Volumes

pending **Kezerian, W.¹**, Jeannot-Fourcaud, B., Barrière, I., & Govain, R. (in press). *Focus and fronting in Guadeloupean Creole: The role of complementation in focus*. O. Duplâtre & P.-Y. Modicom (Eds.), *Issues in the formal and functional typology of focus*. John Benjamins.

Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

2024 **Kezerian, W.¹**, Wyner, L. A., Ansari, S., & Yu, K. M. "Ye Olde French: Effect of Old and Middle French on SIGMORPHON-UniMorph Shared Task Data." In *Proceedings of the 21st SIGMORPHON Workshop on Computational Research in Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphology* (pp. 39–50), Mexico City, Mexico. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Edited Volumes

2023 Nguyen, K., **Kezerian, W.**, Weaver, S., & Iwanicki, L. (Eds.). (2023). *mOthertongue 2023 (Full Issue)*. mOthertongue, 28(1). Comparative Literature Program, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

¹First author

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2026 **Kezerian, W.**, Jeannot-Fourcaud, B., Barrière, I., & Govain, R. “Relative Attachment: Long-distance PP adjunct attachment in Guadeloupean Creole.” Presented at the *Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics Winter Meeting 2026*, in conjunction with the *LSA 2026 Winter Meeting*, New Orleans, USA.
- 2025a. **Kezerian, W.**, Tselioudis, V., Jeannot-Fourcaud, B., Barrière, I., & Govain, R. “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.
- 2025b. **Kezerian, W.**, Tselioudis, V., Jeannot-Fourcaud, B., Barrière, I., & Govain, R. “Focus and Fronting in Guadeloupean Creole: Examining the role of complementation in focus.” Presented at the *SLE 2025 Workshop: Issues in the formal and functional typology of focus*, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, Bordeaux, France.
- 2024 **Kezerian, W.**, Wyner, L. A., Ansari, S., & Yu, K. M. “Ye Olde French: Effect of Old and Middle French on SIGMORPHON-UniMorph shared task data.” Presented at the *SIG-MORPHON Workshop*, ACL 2024, Mexico City, Mexico.

INVITED TALKS

- 2025a. “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.
- 2025b. “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 translangual practices in multicultural contexts*, The University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy.
- 2025c. “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.
- 2025d. “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*, University of the Antilles, Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe.

RESEARCH

NSF Research Fellowship

- Current **Focus Constructions, Complementizer Dropping, and Definite Clause Deixis within Subordinate Clauses in Guadeloupean Creole.**
Field 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. (NSF Award No. 1952501) *Supervised by Isabelle Barrière, Béatrice Jeannot, and Renaud Govain.*

Master’s Thesis

- Current **Leveraging NLP in Syntactic Data Analysis.**
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 Jaklin Kornfilt.*

Relevant Graduate Projects

2025	Referent Tracking and Nonbinary “They” in Apparent Time: Age Effects and the Role of Gender Cues. Designed a psycholinguistic storyboard narration task examining referent tracking strategies with nonbinary they. I reveal a generational gap in usage, with older speakers producing more errors and greater reliance on pronoun avoidance strategies.
2025	NLP methods for low-resource language documentation: A case study on Guadeloupean Creole. 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. 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.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2025-2026	Instructor of Record , FRENCH 102, Syracuse University
2025	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

EMPLOYMENT

Current	NSF-IRES Research Fellow - Experimental Linguistics in the Caribbean , University of the Antilles, Guadeloupe
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

2024	ToBI Prosody Course , MIT
2023	Programming for Everybody (Python) , University of Michigan
2023	Data structures (Python) , University of Michigan

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 Fellowship, \$1,500
2023	Luise Bonner Scholarship Fund, \$1,420
2023	Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society
2022	Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society

LANGUAGES

Native	English
Advanced	French
Intermediate	Haitian Creole, Japanese
Fieldwork	Guadeloupean Creole

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Programming	Python, R, JupyterLab, JavaScript, Bash, HTML
Technical Skills	L ^A T _E X, Praat, PsychoPy, MS Office, Canva, ToBI
Certifications	CITI Program - IRB/Human Subjects Research (Social & Behavioral)

SELECTED COURSEWORK

Graduate

Linguistics:	Transformational Grammar (A), Syntactic Analysis (A), Morphological Analysis (A), Advanced Syntactic Analysis (A), Topics in Sociolinguistics (A), Structure of Japanese (<i>pending</i>)
Computation:	Natural Language Processing (A), Text Mining (A), Understanding LLMs: Theory and Practice (<i>pending</i>)

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)