The development of the nominal domain in creole languages: A comparative-typological approach
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Chapter 9

Definite determiners:
specificity and topicality

In chapter 4, definiteness was defined in terms of identifiability and uniqueness: an NE is definite when its referent is assumed by the speaker to be uniquely identifiable to the hearer in a given discourse or situational context. This definition of definiteness is based on the distribution of the definite article in languages like English. The literature on definiteness identifies a large array of factors that grammatical definiteness in languages like English may rely on. The most comprehensive overview of these factors is provided by Hawkins (1978) (see section 4.1.4). These factors include previous discourse knowledge, situational knowledge, general knowledge of the world as well as the presence of linguistic indicators of definiteness such as superlative adjectives or relative clauses. The cross-linguistic research into the behavior of definite determiners, however, shows that not all markers that appear functionally parallel to English the are sensitive to all these factors. While in English, the article is “a default form that must occur in a definite noun phrase in the absence of a semantically fuller definite determiner” (Lyons 1999: 52), there are many languages in which the definite determiner can be omitted where the situational or discourse conditions for definiteness are satisfied. Given these cross-linguistic differences in distribution of definiteness-marking elements, it cannot be assumed that what resembles definiteness in certain languages is exactly the same semantic category as in other languages. Definiteness is thus only one of a number of categories which serve to guide the hearer in working out how the entities referred to fit into discourse. Other strategies that are employed to mark the status of nominal referents as given, familiar to discourse participants are specificity and topicality. As I observe in chapter 4, in some languages elements that appear to be functionally similar to English the, at a closer examination, appear to perform the function of specificity or nominal topic marking rather than definiteness marking.

Languages with dedicated nominal topic markers are found among the substrate languages of the creoles considered here. For instance, Aboh (2004b) describes the Gungbe definite determiner-like element /\ as a nominal topic marker. In his other work
(e.g., Aboh 2004a,c, 2006) he analyses it as a specific definite determiner. For the sake of convenience, I repeat Aboh’s definition of specificity, which he uses in application to definite NEs. According to Aboh (2006: 224), “[a] specific definite noun phrase is strongly D(iscourse)-linked and represents a unique referent assumed to be known to both speaker and hearer, and which the speaker intends to refer to”. Aboh’s definition of specificity of definite NEs in terms of discourse-linking differs considerably from the definition of specificity in terms of referential intent I use here (see section 4.1.8 and chapter 8). In order to avoid confusion I will use the term “nominal topic marker” in application to elements like lɔ and reserve the term “specificity” for the sense in which I define it here.

Gungbe examples illustrating the distribution of lɔ have already been provided in chapter 4. However, I will repeat them here for the sake of convenience. As the examples demonstrate, lɔ is restricted to discourse-linked NEs, thus signalling that the reference of an NE should be established through a link with a discourse antecedent (341) or with NEs that has an antecedent in the shared private speaker and hearer knowledge, based on their previous common experience (342).

Gungbe (Aboh 2004a: 76; p.c.)

(341) Kòkù mɔn tȃvù cɛ bɔ đɔ émì nà xɔ tȃvù lɔ.
    Koku see.PFV table 1SG.POSS and say.PFV 3SG FUT buy table DEF
    ‘Koku saw my table and then said he would buy the/that table.’

(342) A: Fìtɛ wɛ nùsùnù lɔ ʨè?
    Where FOC soup DEF COP
    B: Nùsùnù lɔ tɔ tȃvù jì.
    Soup DEF COP table on
    ‘Where is the soup?’
    ‘The soup is on the table.’

In other contexts where languages like English employ the definite article (cf. Hawkins 1978), Gungbe normally displays bare NEs.
Gungbe (Enoch Aboh, p.c.)

**Associative anaphora**

(343) Ùn dó tàxi tè bò chọ̀fẹ̀ kùn họn nà mì. Má
1SG make taxi stand and driver open door give 1SG 1SG
mọ̀ nù mọ̀nkọ̀ kpọ̀n.
see thing like this never
‘I stopped the taxi and the driver opened the door for me. I’ve never seen
anything like this.’

**Definiteness-inducing situational context**

(344) *Áxọ̀lù wè nò dú tèví titan.*
King FOC HAB eat yam first
‘The king (over there/in general) eats the yam first.’

**Definiteness-inducing general knowledge**

(345) Xíà *bìbélù!*
read bible
‘Read the Bible!’

**Definiteness-inducing modifiers**

(346) *Dáwè dẹ̀ à m̀n tò sòìò jì m̀lxó cè wè.*
Man REL 2SG see COP photo on brother 1SG.POSS FOC
‘The man you saw in the picture is my brother.’

A number of other Niger-Congo languages, including some of the potentially
relevant substrate languages of the creoles considered here, such as Yoruba, Fula, and
Mandinka, also use elements that resemble definite determiners to mark NEs as
discourse-linked rather than as definite.

The Yoruba postnominal determiner *nàà*, which performs a function similar to
that of *lọ̀* in Gungbe, is described by Ajiboye (2005) as a salience marker with the
semantics of ‘that very’. It not only conveys that the referent of an NE is identical to the
referent previously introduced into the discourse, but also emphasizes the identity,
conveying that it is somehow remarkable. Examples like (347) suggest the analysis of
*nàà* as a contrastive topic marker. Note that *nàà* here is used in combination with a
focus marker *ni*. Much literature on contrastive topic marking analyses contrastive topic
as focused (e.g., Krifka 2008 and other work).
Yoruba (Ajiboye 2005: 205)

(347) Tàkúté Olú mú ọ́yà.
trap Olu hold grass-cutter
Olú gbé ọ́yà lolé.
carry grass-cutter grass-cutter
Ọ́yà nàà ni wọn fí je-yán.
grass-cutter DEF FOC 3PL use eat-pounded.yam
‘Olu’s trap caught a grass-cutter. Olu carried the grass-cutter home. The very
grass-cutter served as meat with which they ate pounded yam.’

Arnott (1970: 138) describes determiners in Fula as *referentials* with the
semantics of ‘the one referred to’, ‘the one in question’. The use of determiners in Fula
is illustrated below:

Fula (Arnott 1970: 138)

(348) a. Hokk-am *deptere nden.*
book DEF
‘Give me the book we were talking about.’

b. mi-‘anndaa *baccel ngel.*
child DEF
‘I don’t know the child mentioned’

Specificity marking is also found in Mande. Unlike the markers discussed
above, the affixal marker *-o(o)* does not make a distinction between definite and
indefinite NEs. But with regard to its pragmatics, it appears to have much in common
with Yoruba *nàà* According to Rowlands (1969: 150), the effect of using *-o(o)* is to
focus the attention of the hearer upon the person or thing denoted by the noun. Used
with a noun on its first occurrence it signals “take note of a particular object to which I
am referring”. At a repetition it signals “take note that the object now referred to is the
same as referred to before”. This is illustrated in example (349) below. The first instance
of *bọọtoo* ‘bag-TOP’ introduces a new discourse topic. The use of the suffix *-o(o)*
indicates that the identity of the referent is important for the point at issue. As the reader
may remember from chapters 4 and 8, this function is associated with indefinite
determiners that are sensitive to pragmatic specificity. The use of *-o(o)* with the
subsequent mentions of the noun ‘bag’ indicates that the NE should be interpreted as co-
referential with the discourse antecedent. As example (349) illustrates, in this function

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28 As the source of this example does not provide the glosses, I only glossed the parts of the examples that are
relevant for the discussion.
-o(o) may be used in combination with a demonstrative, which is a cross-linguistically common means of discourse topic tracking (cf. Diessel 1999).

(349) ì y’aa bûla boot-oo kóno i ye boot-oo dáa siti…
     bag-TOP bag-TOP
  a be wó boot-oo le kóno Sûluu nâata a y’aa tára jée
     DEM  bag-TOP
   ‘They put him inside a bag and then tied up the mouth of the bag…
   While he was in that bag Hyena came along and found him there.’

Similarly to Yoruba saliency nàà, -o(o) may expresses the semantics of ‘that very’, ‘that particular’.

Mandinka (Rowlands 1959: 152, 153)

(350) a. í kèe
     2SG.POSS husband
   ‘your husband’

b. íla nyìng kè-o máng ké hádamaidingo ti
     husband-DET 30
   ‘This husband of yours is not a human being.’

(351) a. wò tûma b. wò tûm-oo
     DEM  time               DEM  time-DET
   ‘at that time’               ‘at that particular time’

In some literature on the distribution of creole definite determiners, it has been observed that elements that are identified as definite determiners in creoles can be omitted where the situational or discourse conditions for definiteness are satisfied, similarly to nominal topic markers in Niger-Congo languages. Aboh (2004c, 2006) argues that the distribution of definite determiners in such creoles as Haitian, Saramaccan and Sranan is constrained in the same way as the distribution of specific definite markers in their substrates. Similar claims have been put forward by Guillemin (2009) with regard to Mauritian Creole and by Lefebvre (1998) with regard to Haitian

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Creole (although Lefebvre uses the term “anaphoricity” instead of “specificity” or “topicality”).

Another way to look at the distributional properties of definite determiners in creoles is from the perspective of grammaticalization. As we observed in chapter 5, in most creoles definite determiners developed from demonstrative adjectives and other deictic markers (e.g., demonstrative reinforceers). The development of the definiteness semantics as it is described for definite articles like the is considered to represent an extension of the deictic function of demonstratives as a result of a long gradual process of grammaticalization. The distribution of definite determiners observed in creoles at the current stage of their development can be analyzed as a stage in the grammaticalization of demonstratives into general definiteness markers. This analysis is pursued by Bruyn (1995).

As already observed in chapter 4, demonstratives may be used in only a subset of cases where one finds definite articles in languages like English. According to Lyons, demonstratives can only have the strictly anaphoric use and the visible situational use, and they cannot be used as markers of associative anaphora or in situations where the referent is not visible. This is demonstrated in examples (352) and (353) below.

(352) a. He bought a car in Germany. That/the car was very expensive.
   b. He bought a car just a year ago and the/#that engine already broke down.

(353) a. Look at the/#that car across the street (Context: The car is visible to the interlocutors.)
   b. The/#that cat is around the corner. (Context: The car is not visible to the interlocutors and has not been previously introduced in into discourse.)

Another context where demonstratives may overlap with and are often even more felicitious than definite determiners, pointed out in Diessel (1999) is so-called recognitional use. Recognitional demonstratives instruct the hearer to match the referent of the NE with an object or individual present not in the ongoing discourse but in the speaker and hearer shared knowledge (see section 4.1.8.2).

Context: The speaker and the hearer(s) know the neighbor and have a share experience of having problems with him.

(354) That neighbor is so annoying!

Hawkins (1978) proposes that, as opposed to definite determiners, demonstratives are characterized by a “matching constraint”, they instruct the hearer “to match the linguistic referent with some identifiable object” (154).
While demonstratives possess a much more restricted range of distribution than definite articles in languages like English, they share many distributional properties with nominal topic markers, including tracking discourse topics (anaphoric use) and making reference to entities that represent part of the shared private speaker/hearer knowledge (recognitional use). The nominal-topic-marker-like behavior of creole determiners may therefore also be accounted for from the grammaticalization perspective.

In the subsequent sections, I will consider (i) whether definite determiners in creoles show deviations from the definiteness-based pattern of determiner use found in their superstrates and (b) whether these deviations (if present) support the claim that definite determiners in creoles function as discourse topic markers or the claim that they are not fully grammaticalized.

9.1 Deviations from the definiteness-based pattern: evidence for nominal topic marking?

Among the creoles considered here, I distinguish two groups of creoles which show deviations from the definiteness-based pattern of the definite determiner use. The first group is represented by creoles which do not have a dedicated definite determiner. The second group is represented by creoles that do have a definite determiner which is distinct from a demonstrative but use this definite determiner in a way significantly different from the way in which definite articles are used in Germanic and Romance languages.

9.1.1 Creoles without a dedicated definite determiner

The group of creoles that do not have a dedicated definite marker distinct from a demonstrative is represented by Tok Pisin, Palenquero, Santome, Cape Verdean Creole, and Diu Portuguese. In all these creoles the marking of semantically definite NEs shows significant deviations from the definiteness marking patterns observed in their superstrate languages. As demonstratives do cross-linguistically, Tok Pisin dispel and ia, Palenquero ese, Cape Verdean kel/kes, and Diu Portuguese es and ikal function to point to (and to locate) objects and individuals in the spatio-temporal context of the speech situation and as discourse-anaphoric devices. These two uses of demonstratives are illustrated below for each of the creoles. The (a) examples illustrate the situational use, and the (b) examples the discourse-anaphoric use.

Tok Pisin (Mühlhäusler et al. 2003: 92, 84, 126)

(355) a. Dispela meri i toktok, lukim em i lap.
DEM woman PM talk look 3SG PM laugh
‘This girl is talking, see how she is laughing.’
b. …*wanpela man* i go stap long longwe ples. Orait *wanpela* IND man PM go stay PREP faraway place Okay IND *meri* i go na lukim *dispela man.* Em i kambek na i woman PM go and see DEM man 3SG PM come.back and PM stap long ples bilong=en. Na *man ya* laik givim kaikai stay PREP place POSS=3SG and man DM want give food long *dispela meri.*

‘A man went to a distant place and stayed there. Then a woman went and saw that man. She came back to her village and stayed there. And this man wanted to give food to this woman.’

Palenquero (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 213, 214)

(356) a. *Suto á ten ke ba a kobá andi ese kamino pa meté ma* 1PL PST have REL go to dig LOC DEM road to put PL tubo.

‘We had to go and dig this road to put tubes.’

b. *Á sé mina limpio, pero ese agua, kuando sé pone a* it REF look clean but DEM water when REF put PREP kusiná, á sé botá *un nata.* i *ese nata* é susio. boil it REF appear IND skin and DEM skin COP dirty

‘It looks clean, but this water, when it cooks, there appears a skin, and this skin is dirty.’

Cape Verdean (Baptista 2002: 58, 2007: 68)

(357) a. *Kel omi e pretu.*

DEM man COP pretu

‘This man is black.’

b. *Panha lenha na montadu, bende… Bende kel fixinhu de lenha* take wood PREP grove sell sell DEM piece of wood

‘I would take the wood in the grove and sell it. I would sell that little piece of wood.’
Diu Portuguese (Cardoso 2009: 126)

(358) a. Aki aki, ne es igrej.
here here PREP DEM church
‘Here, here, in this church.’

b. yo larg-o karəsãw i vey dəpəy crocodile foy ali kaz d
1SG drop-PST heart and come then crocodile go there house of
irmã, foy ver pu ikəl karəsãw.
sister go see.INF DAT DEM heart
‘I dropped [my] heart and came here. Then the crocodile went to the sister’s
house, he went to check on the heart.’

With regard to marking of abstract definiteness which does not rely on the location of
the referent in the spatio-temporal context of the speech situation or anaphoric reference,
the creoles behave differently. In Palenquero, abstract definiteness is never marked by
means of ese. Semantically definite referents are realized as bare NEs when they refer to
singular entities and are often marked by means of the plural marker ma when they have
a plural interpretation (see chapter 7). Examples below illustrate the marking of singular
definites in a number of contexts distinguished by Hawkins (1978) as requiring the use
of the definite article in English.

Palenquero (1983: 211, 240, 210)

Associative anaphora

(359) Kuando í mini en Pakua, entonse kamino á taba malo.
when 1SG return in Pakua then road PST COP bad
‘When I returned to Pakua, the road was bad.’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: The speaker is talking about the problems in his community.

(360) Ta semblalo un pokito pogke tiela á-ta mu susio.
PROG collect IND little because earth COP-PROG very dirty
‘[They] are sawing little because the soil [here] is dirty.’
Definiteness-inducing modification

(361) Agua i suto sé bebé é agua i loyo, agua sucio.
   water REL 1PL REFL drink COP water PREP creek water dirty
   'The water that we drink is water from a/the creek, dirty water.'

As an alternative to zero-marking, singular definite NEs in Palenquero may be marked with the Spanish-derived definite determiners el or la.

Palenquero (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 234)

(362) Pero el año pasado á rendí un poko majaná ke pa suto asé fieta.
   but DEF year last PST unite IND little guy REL for 1PL make feast
   'But last year a few guys came together to organize a celebration.'

Another creole where abstract definite determiners generally surface unmarked is Santome. According to Tjerk Hagemeijer (p.c.), the marker se only marks definiteness together with deixis or when NEs have a familiar discourse antecedent. Alexandre and Hagemeijer (2007) define se as a demonstrative and a marker of specificity.

In Tok Pisin, the use of dispela and ia is also largely restricted to strictly anaphoric definites. Other types of definite NEs, including associative anaphora, situational definites and NEs containing definiteness-inducing modifiers are commonly not overtly marked for definiteness:

Tok Pisin (Mühlhäusler et al. 2003: 92, 120)

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: The interlocutors visited the same workshop.

(363) PDF woksap i gutpela.
   PDF workshop PM good
   'The PDF workshop is fine'

Definiteness-inducing modification

(364) kayemu bilong mama bilong mi
   uncle POSS mother POSS 1SG
   'the uncle of my mother'

Sankoff and Mazzie (1991) attest rare instances of dispela and ia as markers of associative anaphora. However, given the scarcity of such examples, it is difficult to
make any sound generalizations about the effects of abstract definiteness on NE marking in Tok Pisin.

While in Palenquero, Tok Pisin, and Santome, definiteness only appears to be marked in combination with a deictic feature, in Cape Verdean Creole *kel* and *kes* may occur with definite NEs without expressing demonstrative force or realizing anaphoric reference (see section 9.2). The use of *kel/kes* with definite NEs is, however, irregular. As observed by Baptista (2007), in Cape Verdean Creole the presence of definite determiners is generally not required to obtain the definite interpretation. Furthermore, The occurrence of *kel/kes* as a marker of definiteness represents a marked strategy: “[a]s a rule, C[ape] V[erdean] C[reole] does not mark its NPs as being definite by means of overt determiners” (Baptista 2007: 68). The examples below illustrate the distribution of bare definites in Cape Verdean Creole.

Cape Verdean Creole (2002: 88; 2007: 72, 81)

**Associative anaphora**

(365) N ta mete dentu kaza N ta fitxa *porta*, so pa-N k-odja.
1SG IPFV out inside house 1SG IPVF close door only for-1SG NEG-see
‘I go inside the house and close the door so that I don’t see anything.’

**Definiteness-inducing situational context**

(366) Ma N ta trabadja gosi ku *kanbra*.
but 1SG IPFV work now with city.hall
‘But I work now with the city hall.’

**Definiteness-inducing modification**

(367) *Omi* ki *ben* odja-*bu* e nha pai.
man REL come see-2SG COP 1SG.POSS papa
‘The man who came to see you is my father.’

The occasional use of demonstratives to mark definiteness is also found in Diu Portuguese. The use of Diu Portuguese demonstratives *es* and *ikal* with definite NEs is, however, highly irregular (Cardoso 2009).

**9.1.2 Creoles with a dedicated definite determiner**

Next to creoles that do not have a dedicated definiteness marker, we find a number of creoles with a dedicated definiteness marker that show remarkable deviations in the marking of definite NEs from their superstrates. This group is represented by the French-
based creoles under study.

As I mention in the introduction to this chapter, several French-based creoles have been described in the literature as displaying nominal topic marking of the Gbe type. For instance, Lefebvre (1998) characterizes Haitian Creole determiner *la* as a marker of anaphoric definites. A similar characteristic of Haitian Creole *la* is given in Aboh (2006) who describes it as a marker restricted to discourse-linked NEs. The same claims have been made with regard to Mauritian Creole *la* by Guillemin (2009). As far as the work cited above is concerned, the most comprehensive description of the discourse-semantic properties of the definite determiner is presented by Guillemin (2009). Guillemin illustrates the distribution of the Mauritian Creole definite determiner *la* using Hawkins’ (1978) classification. Her examples are cited under (368)-(375) below.

Mauritian Creole (Guillemin 2009: 67-71).

Strict anaphora

(368) Fred ti pe diskit *enn liv interesan* dan so klas.
Fred PST PROG discussed IND book interesting in POSS class
Mo 'n al diskit *liv la* vek li apre.
1SG COPML go discuss book DEF with 3SG after
‘Fred was discussing an interesting book in his class. I went to discuss the book with him afterwards.’

Associative anaphora

(369) Mari ti arete pu get *enn lakaz*. *Laport* ti uver.
Mary PST stop PURP look IND house door PST open
‘Mary stopped to look at a house. The door was open.’

Visible situation use

Depending on whether there is just one or more than one bucket in the situational context and on whether the speaker wants to identify the only relevant bucket or place the bucket within the spatial range of the speech act, either (370) or (370) may be used.

(370) a. Pas mwa *seo*, do.
    pass 1SG bucket DM
    ‘Pass me the bucket, please.’

    b. Pas mwa *sa seo la*, do.
    pass 1SG DEM bucket DEF DM
    ‘Pass me this bucket, please.’
Immediate situational uses (the object is invisible)

(371) Pa al laba, monwar. **Lisyen** pu mord twa.
NEG go there chum dog FUT bite 2SG
‘Don’t go in there, chum. The dog will bite you.’

Larger situational uses, relying on specific knowledge about the referent

(372) Larenn Langleter
queen England
‘the Queen of England’

Larger situational uses, relying on general knowledge

(373) **Lalinn** turn our later.
moon revolve around earth
‘The moon revolvers around the Earth.’

Unfamiliarity uses

(374) Mo byen rapel **kumansman lager** ...
1SG well remember beginning war
‘I remember the beginning of the war very well …’

(375) Mo fam ek mwa partaz **mem sekre**
1SG wife and 1SG share same secret
‘My wife and I share the same secret.’

The distribution of *la* the way it is described by Guillemín suggests that his marker functions similarly to the nominal topic marker in Gbe languages. However, other French-based creoles considered here, show a considerable number of counterexamples to the idea that *la* replicates the distribution of the Gbe nominal topic marker. First of all, both Haitian and Lesser Antillean creoles display instances of *la* that resemble the use of definite articles in Germanic and Romance languages (see examples in section 9.2). As for the deviations from the definiteness-based pattern observed in these creoles, they do not exactly correspond to the distributional pattern of nominal topic markers. Below, I discuss contexts which favor the omission of *la* in Haitian and Lesser Antillean creoles.

Often, *la* is omitted in the presence of definiteness-inducing modifiers such as possessive pronouns and relative clauses. This is demonstrated in examples (376) and (377).
Lesser Antillean Creole (http://creoles.free.fr/Cours/lespri.htm)

(376) Rivé douvan kaz a Konpè Zanba, i vvè on ti pyé-gonbo arrive in-front house PREP friend Zanba 3SG see IND small tree-gonbo
douvan pòt-la, i kuéy on gonbo, i fé on ti dlo-gonbo in.front door-DEF 3SG cook IND gonbo 3SG make IND little water-gonbo,
é simé douvan pòt a Konpè Zanba, é i pran and put.it in.front door PREP friend Zanba and 3SG take mandoline-a-y, é i komansé joué.
mandolin-PREP-3SG and 3SG begin play

‘[He] arrived at Zamba’s house, he saw a small gonbo tree in front of the door, he
cooked a gonbo, made a little gonbo sauce, and put it in front of Zanba’s door,
and he took his mandolin and began to play.’

Haitian Creole (Hall 1953: 77-76)

(377) Pou tout ti-dézòd m-kônê fè, li bat mwê.
for all little-misdeed 1SG-know do 3SG beat 1SG

‘For all the little misdeeds I used to do, she beat me.’

A similar tendency has been observed by Baptista (2002, 2007) with regard to Cape Verdean Creole:

Cape Verdean Creole (Baptista 2007: 81)

(378) Omi ki ben odja-bu e nha pai.
man REL come see=2SG COP 1SG.POSS papa

‘The man who came to see you is my father.’

The omission of definite determiners in these contexts can be attributed to the
non-redundancy principle: when the nominal description itself already conveys the
definite reading, the use of the definite determiner is superfluous.

Zhribi-Hertz and Glaude (2007) cite examples which bring out another
important difference between Haitian Creole la and definite articles in languages like
French. Recall from section 4.1.8 that not only indefinite but also definite NEs may be
ambiguous with regard to semantic specificity. In Germanic and Romance languages,
both specific and non-specific definite NEs appear with a definite determiner. For the
sake of convenience, I repeat the relevant examples below:
English (Lyons 1999: 167)

(379) a. Joan wants to present the prize to the winner – but he doesn’t want to receive it from her.

b. Joan wants to present the prize to the winner – so she’ll have to wait around till the race finishes.

This is not the case in Haitian Creole. Zhribi-Hertz and Glaude (2007) present contrasting examples from Haitian Creole and French. These examples are cited below. They show that while in French, similarly to English, NEs marked by means of the definite article may receive a specific as well as a non-specific interpretation, in Haitian Creole NEs marked by means of *la* may only have a specific referent. The use of *la* with non-specific NEs is infelicitous.

French (Zhribi-Hertz and Glaude 2007: 276)

(380) Sonnez: *le boucher* va vous server.

ring DEF butcher will 2PL serve

‘Ring the bell: the butcher [a specific one or whichever one is in duty] will come and serve you.’

Haitian Creole (Zhribi-Hertz and Glaude 2007: 276)

(381) Sonnen: *bouche a* ap vin sè vou.

ring butcher DEF FUT come serve 2PL

‘Ring the bell: the specific butcher will come and serve you.’

*‘Ring the bell: the butcher [whichever one is in duty] will come and serve you.’

My interviews with the native speakers have demonstrated that the same holds for Mauritian Creole.

Mauritian Creole (Guillaume Fon-Sing, p.c.)

(382) a. Sonn laclos: *bouse la* pou vin servi twa.

ring bell butcher DEF FUT come serve 2SG

‘Ring the bell: the specific butcher will come and serve you.’

b. Sonn laclos: *bouse* pou vin servi twa.

ring bell butcher FUT come serve 2SG

‘Ring the bell: the butcher [whichever one is on duty] will come and serve you.’
I believe that the deviations from the definiteness-based pattern observed above represent heritage of the deictic etymon of the French creole la and can therefore be interpreted in the light of the incomplete grammaticalization account described in the introduction to this chapter.

That la in French-based creoles can express a deictic feature has been repeatedly observed in the literature (e.g., Valdman 1978:191; Neumann 1985:132; Goodman 1976: 46). In the creoles under study, we find examples where la clearly functions as a deictic marker. Consider the following two examples from Mauritian Creole:

Mauritian Creole (Guillaume Fon-Sing, p.c.)

Context: The interlocutors are sitting together at the table.

(383) a. (eski) to kav pas mwa disel?
   Q 2SG can pass 1SG salt
   ‘Could you pass me the salt?’

   b. (eski) to kav pas mwa disel la?
       Q 2SG can pass 1SG salt DEF
       ‘Could you pass me the salt?’

While a bare NE is perfectly acceptable in this context, la can be used to emphasize that the salt is located in the physical context. According to Guillaume Fon-Sing (p.c.), (383) is only possible when accompanied by a pointing gesture.

Similar examples can be found in Lesser Antillean Creole and in Haitian Creole. Zribi-Hertz and Glaude (2007) characterize Haitian Creole la as a weak deictic marker, which coexists in the creole with the strong deictic marker sa. According to Zribi-Hertz and Glaude, the difference between la and sa (which obligatory co-occurs with la), is that while the former only presupposes that the referent is located somewhere in the physical or discourse space, without necessarily expressing deixis (384), the latter may only be interpreted as a maker of deixis (384).

Haitian Creole (Zribi-Hertz and Glaude 2007: 277)

(384) a. Pòl akri lèt a.
   Paul write letter DEF
   ‘Paul wrote the/this/that letter.’

   b. Pòl akri lèt sa a.
       Paul write letter DEM DEF
       ‘Paul wrote this/that letter.’
The deictic feature in the semantics of the French creole definite determiners can account for the deviations in the use of these markers from the definiteness-based pattern of the Romance and Germanic type. In the beginning of this section we observed that demonstratives are distinguished from definite markers in terms of the so-called matching constraint, which implies that a demonstrative always instructs the hearer to match the referent of the NE with a directly identifiable entity. In Mauritian Creole, where *la* may only be used with NEs that refer to entities that are present in discourse or physical space, the matching constraint applies strictly. In Haitian Creole and Lesser Antillean creole the matching constraint appears to have weakened to the extent that the identification of the referent may need to involve inference (as for instance in cases of the associative anaphoric use). However, NEs marked with *la* still cannot have a Kind referent in these creoles.

The data considered in this section shows that while the distribution of the definite determiner in some creoles (e.g., Mauritian) may be interpreted in favor of substrate influence, there is also convincing evidence showing that the deviations from the definiteness-based pattern we observe in the distribution of creole definite determiners may be attributed to the presence of the deictic feature in the semantics of creole definite determiner, which is likely to represent the legacy of its superstrate etyma.

The incomplete grammaticalization account has an advantage of being universally applicable to all creoles in which the definite determiner is homophonous with and/or etymologically derived from a deictic marker. As observed in section 9.1.1, the creoles without a dedicated definite marker either (e.g., Palenquero, Tok Pisin) do not mark definiteness beyond deixis at all or only do so occasionally (e.g., Cape Verdean, Diu Portuguese). These creoles also present evidence in favour of the incomplete grammaticalization account.

### 9.2 Approximating the definiteness-based pattern

While the literature on the discourse-semantic properties of creole definite determiners primarily focuses on the use of bare NEs in contexts where Germanic and Romance languages would always require a determined NE, among the creoles under study one finds quite a few creoles in which the distribution of definite determiners approximates the definiteness-based pattern. Interestingly, this group is predominantly represented by creoles with Germanic superstrates such as Sranan, Jamaican Creole, Negerhollands, Berbice Dutch, and Afrikaans. But it also includes a couple of Spanish-based creoles: Chabacano and Papiamentu. To illustrate the distribution of definite determiners in these creoles, I adopt a simplified version of Hawkins’ (1978) classification. Examples below illustrate the following uses of definite determiners in Jamaican Creole, Sranan, Negerhollands, Berbice Dutch, Afrikaans, Chabacano, and Papiamentu: direct anaphora, associative anaphora, definiteness-inducing situational context, and definiteness-inducing modification.
Jamaican Creole (Sistren 1986: 3, 63; my data; Sistren 1986: 12)

Strict anaphora

(385) Di square have a upstairs shop and a big old parish church. Me never like di church.
THE square have IND upstairs shop a nd IND big old parish church 1SG never like DEF church
‘The square had an upstairs shop and a big old parish church. I didn’t like the church.’

Associative anaphora

(386) Me stepmadda tek khaki cloth and mek one lickle dolly gem=me.
1SG stepmother take khaki cloth and make IND little dolly give=1SG
One day, me cut off di neck.
one day 1SG cut off DEF neck
‘My stepmother took khaki cloth and made a little dolly for me. One day, I cut off [its] neck.’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: The interlocuters live in the same household.

(387) Go get di brum an go swiip uot di shaad.
go get DEF broom and go sweep out DEF shed
Go get the broom and go sweep out the shed.’

Definiteness-inducing modification

(388) In di evening me get conscious and feel di result a di beating.
In DEF evening 1SG get conscious and feel DEF result PREP DEF beating.
‘In the evening I regained my consciousness and felt the result of the beating.’
Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 62, 74, 65, 58)

**Strict anaphora**

(389) ...da j bj-a wan p'tjin kritji. Da m denk a kritji no dipi.
then 2SG PST-have IND small creek then 1SG think DEF creek NEG deep
‘Then there was a small creek. Then I thought the creek was not deep.’

**Associative anaphora**

(390) Dûs noo mj um waktu fu artji oten mi e-gwe...
thus now 1SG to wait PREP hear when 1SG IPFV-go.away
Pan, mi tjis a boskop a oso.
Pang 1SG get DET message PREP house
‘Thus now I had to wait to hear when I was going away. Pang, I got the message at home...’

**Definiteness-inducing situational context**

Context: The life story recorded in the end of the 1950s from a 40-year-old informant. A oorlog is used to refer to the World War II.

(391) Da pan a oorlog broko.
Then pang DET war break
‘Then pang the war broke out.’

**Definiteness-inducing modification**

(392) D a man dat e-kar i kon.
Then DET man COMP IPFV-call 2SG come
‘Then the man who called you came.’
Negerhollands (Van Rossem and Van der Voort 1996: 258, 260, 241, 256)

**Strict anaphora**

(393) Weni em a rak a paat, am a fid een hon. Am a se: when 3SG PST hit PREP road 3SG PST find IND dog 3SG PST say wamaa ju loo blaas soo? Dø honst see: mi meesår loo loo mata why 2SG IPVF blow so DET dog say 1SG master IPFV go kill mi. 1SG ‘When he reached the road, he found a dog. He said: Why are you panting like this. The dog said: My master will go and kill me.’

**Associative anaphora**

(394) Di difman sini a kuri staa sin hus mi sin jit. Di noli DEF thief PL PST run leave 3PL house with 3PL food DEF donkey a hoopoo di doo. PST open DEF door ‘The thieves ran away from their house and food. The donkey opened the door.’

**Definiteness-inducing situational context**

(395) Na di slaventidt.  ers di neger sender ha krii fri. PREP DEF slave.time before DEF negro PL PST get free. ‘During the times of slavery, before the Negroes got freedom.’

**Definiteness-inducing modification**

(396) Dan di kining a rup Tekoma mi Anáánsi di twee fan sinu then DEF king PST call Tekoma with Anansi DEF two of 3PL mangkandu. together ‘Then the king called Tekoma and Anansi, the two of them together.’
Berbice Dutch (Kouwenberg 1991: 352, 360, 349, 348)

**Strict anaphora**

(397) Ori ha dri, twε jerma, te en ma. Di mantoko masi nili
3SG have three two woman with one man DEF man.child must nearly
pote potε mar as eke.
old-old more than 1SG
‘She had three, two girls and a boy. The boy must be nearly as old as I am.’

**Associative anaphora**

(398) So skelpata mu-te mini ŋi jerma, mini-ta ŋi tok-apu, mini-te
so turtle go-PFV eat 3SG wife eat-PFV 3SG child-PL eat -PFV
ŋi wariri, di=skilit-apu,
3SG house DEF=skeleton-PL
‘So Tortoise went (and) swallowed his wife, swallowed his children, swallowed
his house, the skeletons, his skeletons that he has.’

**Definiteness-inducing situational context**

Context: There is just one creek in the place where the informant comes from.

(399) eke ban-te di kroke ben…
1SG born-PST DEF creek inside
‘I was born on the creek…’

**Definiteness-inducing modification**

(400) e k wa hab en, di lasti sosro…
1SG PST have one DEF last sister
‘I had one, the last sister…’
Afrikaans (my data)

Strict anaphora

(401) Maak 'n holte in die grond, voer-uit met *matige kol-e*
make IND hole in DEF ground covered with moderate coal-PL and
plaas die pot op *die col-e.*
place the pot on DEF coal-PL

‘Make a hole in the ground, fill it with middle-sized coals and place the pot on
the coals.’

Associative anaphora

(402) In die vorige ongeluk het *'n vierjarige seuntjie* ernstige
in DEF previous accident have IND four-year-old boy grave
brandwond-e opgedoen… Hy het brandwond-e aan *die arms,*
brun-PL gained 3SG have burn-PL at DEF arm-PL
*bors, nek en gesig* opgedoen.
breast, neck and face gained

‘In the last accident, a four-year-old boy badly burned himself. He’s got burns on
the arms, neck, breast, and face.’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: Instructions for an exercise in a schoolbook.

(403) Skryf kort sinn-e oor hierdie letter-s.
write short sentence-PL about this letter-PL

*Die prent* kan jou help om op woord-e te besluit.
def picture can 2SG.OBL help PURP on word-PL PURP decide

‘Write short sentences about this letters. The picture can help you to choose the
words.’

Definiteness-inducing modification

(404) Ons word belinvloed deur *die omgewing waarin ons leef.*
1PL COP influenced through DEF environment in.which 1PL live.

‘We are influenced by the environment in which we live.’
Papiamentu (Kester and Schmidt 2007: 117, 118; http://www.jukaproductions.nl/frames/storia-tr/pushi_cu_laars.htm)

Strict anaphora

(405) Mi a kumpra un bolo. E bolo a wòrdum kome den 10 minút.
1SG PST buy IND cake DEF cake PST been eaten in ten minute
‘I bought a cake. The cake was eaten in 10 minutes.’

Associative anaphora

(406) Mi a kumpra un bolo. E karma no tabata mashá.
1SG PST buy IND cake DEF frosting NEG COP good
‘I bought a cake. The frosting was not very good.’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: A fragment from the fairy-tail *Puss in Boots*, the cat instructs the field workers about what to say when the local king passes by.

(407) Scucha, e rey ta pasa djis aki.
Listen DEF king IPFV pass soon here
‘Listen, the king will soon be passing here.’

Definiteness-inducing modification

(408) Pronto el a bai busca e cosnan cu e pushi a
Quickly 3SG PST go look.for DEF thing-PL REL DEF cat DEF
pidié.
ask
‘Quickly, he went to look for the things the cat asked.’
Chabacano (McKaughan 1954: 208, 207, 210, 207)

Strict anaphora

(409) El gabilan tyene un anilyo byen bonito. Byen enkantaw el galyina kon este anilyo. Un dia ya presta le kon el anilyo para usa.

‘The hawk had a beautiful ring. The hen was very enchanted with this ring. One day he borrowed the ring to use.’

Associative anaphora

(410) Kwando ta bolbe ya si Juan ya pasa le na un rio. Byen bonito gayót el agwa…

‘When John was returning, he passed by a river. The water was flowing so beautifully…’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

Context: The speaker is in the river; the hearer is standing on the bank.

(411) Si kyere bos kohi kon-migo toma bos todo=el agwa d=el rio.

‘If you want to catch me, drink all the water in the river.’

Definiteness-inducing modification

(412) Un dia el nana di Juan ya manda kon-ele kompra sal na tyangge.

‘One day the mother of Juan sent him to buy salt at the market.’

In a number of Romance creoles discussed in sections 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 as examples of creoles in which definite determiners show deviations from the definiteness-based pattern, definite determiners are, in fact, able to cover the same range of uses as definite determiners in the creoles cited above. These creoles are Haitian
Creole (413)-(416), Lesser Antillean Creole (417)-(420) and Cape Verdean Creole (421)-(424). The difference between these creoles and Sranan, Jamaican Creole, Berbice Dutch, Negerhollands, Afrikaans, Papiamentu, and Chabacano is in the regularity of overt marking of definite NEs.

Haitian Creole (Hall 1953: 138, 164, 94; Zribi-Hertz and Glaude 2007: 281)

Direct anaphora

(413) Vwala you mama ki té-gê you bel piit fi…
Voila IND mother REL PST-have IND beautiful little girl
tout moun ki té-vini mâdé pou ti-fi-a li pa-té-vlé,
all man REL PST-come ask for little-girl-DEF 3SG NEG-PST-want
‘There was a mother who had a beautiful daughter…everybody who came
to ask for the girl, she didn’t want.’

Associative anaphora

(414) Kòmè tòtu bare, l-ap-chaché mét kò li â-ba féy,
sister tortoise catch 3SG-PROG-search put body 3SG LOC-under leaf
mê tôtô Já fini pa-wè li. A-lè-ki-lè bagay-la
but uncle John COMPL NEG-see 3SG LOC-time-REL-time thing-DEF
gatè.
spoil
‘Sister Tortoise was caught, she tried to hide under the leaves, but Uncle John
finally saw her. Then the situation was spoiled.’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

(415) Chémiz sou-ou-a pa-sâblé chémiz ou…
shirt on-2SG-DEF NEG-seem shirt 2SG
‘The shirt on you does not look like your shirt…’

Definiteness-inducing modification

(416) Mori Pòl achte a.
codfish Paul buy DEF
‘The codfish which Paul bought.’
Lesser Antillean Creole (http://creoles.free.fr/Cours/lespri.htm)

Direct anaphora

(417) Aaa Konpè Lapin di: “Aaan Zanba, ki malè! Koman sa té rivé ou, non!!” Alòr, Zanba di: “Ebin, monchè, sé arivé: an té kontan 2SG DM so Zanba say well my.dear it happen 1SG PST enjoy muzik-a, dan-la kase; manfou a sa!” Alòr, Konpè music-DEF tooth-DEF break 1SG.not.care PREP DEM so brother Lapin di: “Mé ka ou ké fè épi dan-la?” rabbit say but what 3SG FUT do subsequently tooth-la ‘Aaa, said Rabbit, Aaa Zanba, how unfortunate! How did that happen to you!!!’ Then Zanba said: “Well, my dear, that’s how it happened: I wan enjoying the music, my tooth broke, I don’t care about that!” Then Rabbit said: “But what are you going to do with that tooth?’

Associative anaphora

(418) Lapin ramasé on koko; i pran-y, i koupé tèt-la, é rabbit pick.up IND coconut 3SG take-3SG 3SG cut head-DEF and i pati. 3SG leave ‘Rabbit picked up a coconut; he took it, he cut off the head, and he went away…’

Definiteness-inducing situational context

(419) I tonbé douvan on on pyé-koko: on pyé-koko èspanyol, 3SG fall in.front.of IND big tree-coconut IND tree-coconut Spanish e ki té plin makak. I di “Gay sé makak-la: oui, zò lèd! and REL PST full monkey 3SG say look PL monkey-DEF yes, 3PL ugly Ka zòt ka santi!” how 3PL how stink ‘He fell in front of a big coco-tree, a Spanish coco-tree, that was full of monkeys. And he said: “Look at these monkeys! Yes, they are ugly…! How they stink!”

Definiteness-inducing modification

(420) toulezòt frè-la ki té la all.the.other brother-DEF REL COP there ‘all the other brothers that were there’

Strict anaphora

(421) Panha lenha na montadu, bende...Bende *kel fixinhu de lenha*. 
I would take the wood in the grove and sell it. I would sell that little piece of wood.

Associative anaphora

(422) Mo la e sima Merka, *kes arvi*. si txuba sta ku bentu, 
I tell you, over there it is just like in America, the trees, if the rain comes with strong winds, if the trees collapse and they fall on you, there you stay.

Definiteness-inducing situational context

(423) Na munda *kel azagua* mi so. 
I weed during the rainy season on my own.

Definiteness-inducing modification

(424) *Kel omi ki’ N odja na merkadu* era bu pai. 
The man that I saw at the market was your father.

Regardless of the fact that definite determiners in some creoles are used with much less regularity than their Germanic and Romance counterparts and do not fully replicate the discourse-semantic and grammatical properties of Germanic and Romance definite articles the development of the definiteness-based behavior of definite determiners in creoles deserves attention. As I already point out above, most accounts of the distribution of definite determiners in creoles focus on the deviations from the definiteness-based pattern and neglect the definite-article-like-behavior. Section 9.4.1 will be dedicated to this issue.
9.3 Contexts that favor determinerless NEs

While the creoles considered here show variability with regard to the distribution of definite determiners, ranging from nearly categorical definiteness marking to the lack of marking of definiteness beyond deixis, there is one property common to most creoles studied here. This property is the possibility of omitting definite determiners with semantically definite NEs under certain conditions. Some of these conditions has been already discussed in section 9.1.2 based on the data from the French-based creoles. Here I will discuss a number of other contexts in which bare definites are common in the creoles under study.

9.3.1 NEs with unique referents

The uniqueness of the referent in question represents a prominent condition favorable for the omission of definite determiners in creoles. In order for the definite determiner to be omitted, the uniqueness feature needs to be firmly established in the common discourse. The uniqueness may be either absolute or bound to a particular context. Examples of absolutely unique NEs are words denoting entities like ‘sun’ or ‘moon’. Consider some examples:

Berbice Dutch (Kouwenberg 2007: 447)

(425) *Sono* das mja lombo fi εκε.
sun HAB make bed for 1SG
‘The sun makes (it) hard for me [to work in the field]’

Cape Verdean Creole (Baptista 2007: 74)

(426) *Sol* ta ben mas txeu, ta da kumida mas txeu.
Sun IPFV come more a.lot IPVF give food more a.lot
‘The sun comes out more, there is more food.’

Good examples of NEs that have a unique referent within a given situational context are NEs that refer to features of local geography and are well-established in the community usage. For instance, in Jamaican Creole, *yaad* ‘yard’ also has the meaning of ‘home’, and it is often used to refer to Jamaica. In this case, it occurs without the definite determiner:
Jamaican Creole (my data)

(427) Noweh noh betta dan *yaad*.
Nowhere NEG better than yard
‘No place is better than Jamaica.’

A similar example can be found in Sranan, where *foto* ‘town’ is always used to refer to Paramaribo.

Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 3)

(428) Da m k a *foto*.
then 1SG come PREP town
‘Then I came to town.’

Kouwenberg (2007) cites similar examples from Berbice Dutch, where *birbiši* ‘river’ is used to refer to the Berbice River, *krēkte* to the Wiruni Creek, and *stati* ‘town’ to New Amsterdam.

Berbice Dutch (Kouwenberg 2007: 48)

(429) *ekē* wa stup-a so, *krēkte* ben, ofru Hilda-apu.
1SG PST live-IPFV so creek inside over Hilda-PL
‘I was living over there, in the Wiruni Creek, across from Hilda and her family.’

Another group of NEs of this type are titles and names of professions that within the context of a particular community or institution refer uniquely to a particular individual.

Jamaican Creole (Sistren 1986: 14)

(430) Den dem laugh after me when *teacher* a beat me.
Then 3PL laugh after me when teacher IPFV beat me
‘Then they laughed after me when the teacher was beating me.’

Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 71)

(431) …i n e-wroko, Richard?
2SG NEG IPFV-work Richard
We, nee, m tek ontslag a *bas*.
well no 1SG take dismissal PREP boss
‘You are not working, Richard?’
‘Well, no, I took a dismissal from the boss.’
Cape Verdean Creole (Baptista 2007: 75)

(432) \text{N} \text{ben} \text{ta} \text{ntende} \text{kuse} \text{ki} \text{xefri} \text{ta} \text{kanbersa}-\text{m}
1SG PST IPFV understand thing REL chief IPFV talk-1SG

‘Little by little, I got to understand what the chief is talking to me about.’

9.3.2 Discourse topics

Another type of definite NEs that in some creoles tend to receive zero-marking are discourse topics. The referents of topical NEs are firmly established in discourse, which makes their identity obvious to discourse participants. This tendency is illustrated below in an example from Sranan.

Sranan (De Drie 1985: 40, from Bruyn 2007: 368-369)

(433) \ldots \text{a} \text{pernasi} \text{pe} \text{Opoko gebore, pe} \text{Atyopi gebore, a}
DEF plantation where Opoko born where Atyopi born DEF
gransmasra \text{dati} \text{ben} \text{de} \text{wan} \text{wreedaardige} \text{gransmasra}. […]
plantation.owner DEM PST COP IND evil plantation.owner
Ma \text{a} \text{pernasi} \text{dati} \text{tussyuru} \text{roysi} \text{e} \text{broko}. […]
but DEF plantation DEM always sluice IPFV break
\text{Pernasi} \text{feti} \text{fu} \text{sungu} \text{bika} \text{sroysi} \text{boro}…
plantation fight for sink because sluice have.holes

‘But now, the plantation where Opoko was born, where Atyopi was born, that plantation owner was a cruel plantation owner. […] But that plantation, [its] sluice(s) was/were always breaking down. […] The plantation was about to flood because the sluice(s) was/were cracked.’

In the first sentence \text{pernasi}, which is specified as the one where Opoke and Atyopi, two of the speaker’s children, were born, is marked by means of the definite determiner \text{a}. Then the plantation is referred to again and this time \text{pernasi} is introduced by the demonstrative \text{a….dati}, which establishes its status as a current discourse topic. On subsequent mentions, the plantation is referred to by means of a bare NE. In her analysis of this example, Bruyn (2007: 368) observes: “[T]he topicality of this plantations as well as the identity are established firmly enough to make the use of a definite article superfluous”.

A similar pattern of determiner use with topical NEs has been described for several other creoles. For instance, with regard to Santome, Alexandre and Hagemeijer (2007) observe that after the introduction of a new Topic into discourse, on its second occurrence it is often anchored by means of \text{se}. With the subsequent occurrences of the topical NE, \text{se} is usually dropped. This is illustrated in example (434) below:
Santome (Alexandre and Hagemeijer 2007: 55-56)

(434) Avia ŭa sungê ku mina sun. Sun se sa ve ketekete.

was IND man with child man man DEF COP old IDEOPH

Mina se sa ai, sun ka sam=ɛ

Child DEF COP here man IPFV call=3SG

‘Once upon a time there was a man (formal) with his child. The man was very old.
This child here, the man calls him.’

Sometimes, the overt anchoring of a new discourse topic may be skipped. In this case, a bare noun occurs on the second mention of the referent. This pattern illustrated in example (435) is, however, less common.

Santome (Alexandre and Hagemeijer 2007: 55)

(435) N té ŭa mosu ku ŭa mina mwala. Mina sa ni kwarenta

1SG have IND boy and IND child woman child COP in forty tal. Mosu sa ni kwenta.

something boy COP in in fifty

‘I have a boy and a girl. The girl is in her forties. The boy is fifty.’

A similar tendency has been observed for Lesser Antillean Creole (Gadelii 2007), Haitian Ceole (Joseph 1988; Aboh and Degraff 2010), Cape Verdean Creole (Baptista 2000), Berbice Dutch (Kouwenberg 2007), and several other creoles studied here.

9.3.3 Complements of prepositions

Another context which favors definite determiner omission is defined syntactically as NEs inside (primarily locative) PPs. In many creoles, definite determiners are more easily omitted with NEs that are complements of locative prepositions than with NEs in argument positions. The same tendency has been observed in chapter 8, with regard to indefinite determiners. Definite determiner omission in this this context is illustrated below in examples from Sranan, Negerhollands, Haitian, and Papiamentu.
Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 60)

(436) …dan w e-kon lat a skoro […]
then 1PL IPFV-come late PREP school
Da masra ‘Van der Geld’ ben-tnap a mofo doro.
then mister Van der Geld PST-stand PREP mouth door
‘Then we came late to school […] Then mister Van der Geld stood in the door opening.’

Negerhollands (Van Rosse and Van der Voort 1996: 255)

(437) …alma di suku sinu wa sinu gooi a ton fo ma rhum
all DEF sugar PL REL 3PL throw PREP barrel to make rum
fo di foléégen week.
for DEF next week
‘…all the sugar [canes] that they threw in the barrel to make rum for the next week.’

Haitian Creole (Hall 1953: 77)

(438) Li mété-m kouché a-pa nâ-salô.
3SG put-1SG sleep apart PREP-living.room
‘she put me to sleep apart in the living room.’

Papiamentu (Kester and Schmidt 2007: 122)

(439) Mi no a mira un mancha riba suela.
1SG NEG PST see IND spot on floor
‘I didn’t see a particular spot on the floor.’ / ‘I did not see any spots on the floor.’

In Chabacano, the omission of definite (and indefinite) determiners with complements of prepositions has a nearly categorical status.

Chabacano (McKaughan 1954: 207)

(440) Ya pone ele el sal na rio […] ya diriti ya el sal
PST put 3SG DEF salt PREP river PST dissolve now DEF salt
na agwa.
PREP water
‘He put the salt in the river. The salt had now dissolved in the water.’
9.3.4 Zero determiner or no determiner: a syntactic analysis

While in chapter 9.4 I will argue that the pragmatic triggers for the omission of overt definiteness marking in the cases considered above are similar, these NEs are clearly not all the same with regard to their specificity value. While topical and uniquely referring NEs are always semantically and pragmatically specific, complements of prepositions are generally distinguished by lower discourse prominence than NEs in subject and object positions. I therefore believe that they can be considered pragmatically non-specific. This seems to suggest that the omission of definite determiners is not sensitive to specificity and that the zero determiner is not specified for specificity. This is the conclusion made by Bruyn (1995, 2007) based on Sranan data. On the basis of examples like (433), Bruyn argues that zero determiners in Sranan are not restricted to non-specific NEs, but are open to both non-specific as well as specific definite interpretation. Consequently, she concludes that zero determiners in Sranan do not “express a distinctive value and should be regarded as merely nothing” (Bruyn 1995: 81). In what follows, I will argue that pragmatically non-specific definite NEs and uniquely referring and topical NEs are fundamentally different with regard to their underlying structure.

I believe that pragmatically non-specific definite NEs realize their [-specific] feature value through a zero determiner in the underlying structure. This is exemplified in (441) below, which represents the structure of the Papiamentu NE riba suela ‘on the floor’ from example (439):

(441) PP
    Spec       P'
    P           TopP
        riba
    Spec       Top'
        Top       DP
    [spec] Spec
        D           NP
    suela

Such NEs demonstrate that overt definite determiners are sensitive to pragmatic specificity. As for uniquely referring and topical determinerless NEs, they neither support nor violate the specificity- and definiteness-based principles of determiner use,
as in contrast to non-specific bare NEs they do not have a zero determiner in the underlying structure. In their referential properties, uniquely referring and discourse prominent topical NEs are akin to proper names. I therefore assume that, similarly to proper names (cf. Longobardi 1994), they have no determiner at all and receive a specific definite interpretation by virtue of raising to Spec-TopP. This is exemplified in (442), which represents the structure of the NE *yaad* from example (427).

\[
(442) \quad \text{TopP} \quad \text{Spec} \quad \text{Top}' \quad \text{Top} \quad \text{DP} \quad \text{Spec} \quad \text{D'} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{yaad}
\]

Regardless of the differences in the structural representation, the possibility of zero-marking of both pragmatically non-specific and uniquely referring and topical NEs distinguishes the creoles under study from their superstrates. The observed differences in the distribution of creole definite determiners and their apparent Germanic/Romance counterparts suggest that despite the similarities observed in section 9.2, definite markers in creoles have a different discourse-semantic content and grammatical status than definite articles in Germanic and Romance languages. In the next section, I will elaborate on this idea.

### 9.4 Discussion

In this section, I shall interpret the observations made above in the light of the creole genesis debate and discuss the applicability of the accounts of the distribution of definite determiners in creoles mentioned in the introduction to this chapter to the data considered here. As the reader may recall from the introduction, the existing approaches to the distribution of definite determiners in creoles focus on the deviations from the Germanic/Romance definiteness-based pattern of determiner use and propose to account for them in terms of substrate influence or in terms of incomplete grammaticalization. In this chapter, it was demonstrated that the creoles under study do not behave uniformly with regard to the marking of definite NEs. While some creoles under study show
significant deviations from the Germanic and Romance definiteness-based pattern in allowing for bare definites in a wide range of contexts or even not marking definiteness beyond deixis at all, one also finds creoles in which the distribution of definite determiners closely resembles the distribution of their superstate counterparts. On the other hand, despite the considerable variation in the use of definite determiners, many creoles are similar with respect to the contexts which favor bare definites. This complex picture suggests that multiple factors should have affected the distribution of determiners in the creoles. Below, I will attempt to identify these factors. Section 9.4.1 is dedicated to the analysis of the factors underlying the occurrence of bare definites; section 9.4.2 deals with the factors underlying the distribution of overt definite markers in creoles and focuses on the development of the definiteness-based pattern.

9.4.1 Deviations from the definiteness-based pattern: unfinished grammaticalization or substrate influence

In this section, we will focus on creoles that show considerable deviations from the definiteness-based pattern of determiner use the way it is described in Hawkins (1978).

The behaviour of definiteness markers in such creoles has been described in the literature from the perspective of unfinished grammaticalization and from the perspective of substrate influence.

The point of departure of the unfinished grammaticalization approach is that definite determiners in many creoles develop from deictic markers. The deviations from the definiteness-based pattern observed in the behavior of creole definite determiners are attributed to the incomplete bleaching of the deictic semantics they have inherited from their etyma.

The unfinished grammaticalization approach is supported by the evidence from creoles that do not have a dedicated definite marker different from the demonstrative, which in some of these creoles may be employed to perform a definite-determiner-like function. As observed in section 9.1.1, such creoles either do not mark definiteness beyond deixis at all (e.g., Palenquero or Tok Pisin) or do so irregularly (e.g., Cape Verdean Creole or Diu Portuguese).

In some of the creoles that do have a dedicated definite marker distinct from a demonstrative this marker shows evidence of the incomplete bleaching of the deictic feature. A good example is French Creole la, which goes back to the French postnominal demonstrative reinforcer la. In section 9.1.2, I demonstrate that this marker can be used to express (weak) deixis and argue (together with Zribi-Hertz and Glaude 2007) that some of the the constraints in the distribution of this marker (such as the restriction to specific definite NEs) can be attributed to the fact that it is not a true definite determiner but a weak deictic marker which can perform a definite determiner-like function. Also, the sensitivity of la such to pragmatic principles as the principle of non-redundancy supports the idea of its incomplete grammaticalization.
The substrate-oriented research offers a different perspective on the distributional properties of creole definite determiners. As observed in the introduction to this chapter, substrate languages of some of the creoles under study display a different strategy of reference marking, which relies on the status of the referent in discourse rather than on the definiteness feature. While Germanic and Romance languages, all definite NEs indiscriminately, languages like Gungbe and Yoruba only mark those definite NEs that refer to a previously introduced discourse antecedent. Therefore, they have been characterized in the literature as nominal topic markers (e.g., Aboh 2004b).

The idea of substrate influence has been invoked in the literature to account for the anaphoric/topic marking function of the creole definite determiners (cf. Lefebvre 1998; Aboh 2004c, 2006; Guillemin 2009). In this chapter, I observe that in no creole under study is the use of elements identified as definite determiners restricted to the marking of topical NEs. I do not, however, take this to imply that substrate influence did not play any role at all in the establishment of creole definite determiners. In what follows, I will argue that despite the fact that creoles do not fully replicate the distribution of nominal topic markers in Niger-Congo languages, certain aspects of the behavior of Niger-Congo nominal topic markers might have affected the development of the discourse-semantic properties of definite determiners in creoles.

Let us first of all have a closer look at the discourse-semantic properties of nominal topic markers in Niger-Congo languages. In the introduction to this chapter, following Aboh (2004a,b, 2010), I characterize them as dedicated markers of discourse-linked NE. However, this characteristic does not fully describe their distribution. First of all, nominal topical markers are not used categorically. With regard to the use of l$ç@ in Gungbe, Aboh observes that it tends to be omitted with established discourse topics. As we observed in section 9.3.2, the same tendency is observed with regard to definite determiners in creoles. Importantly, this tendency is also cross-linguistically characteristic of anaphoric demonstratives. As far as demonstratives are concerned, their omission with established discourse topics is attributed to the fact that demonstratives are attention focusing devices (cf. Diessel 1999). The same seems to be true for nominal topic markers of the Gungbe type. Below I will discuss examples that illustrate the emphatic, attention focusing function of nominal topic markers.

Enoch Aboh (p.c.) observes that l$ in Gungbe may be used not only with discourse-linked but also with situational definites when certain pragmatic conditions are satisfied. Consider, for instance, examples (443). Both are possible in the same context: the interlocutors are sitting together at the table. In a neutral situation, the use of l$ is disfavored. The use of the determiner puts emphasis on the referent of the NE, thus conveying an emotional attitude of the speaker. The use of l$ after xvelâk$ is, for instance, plausible when the speaker has been trying to reach the salt for quite some time and nobody would bother to pass it to him.
In certain contexts, when the referent itself or its behavior is remarkable, the emphatic *lọ* is obligatory. This is demonstrated in example (444) below.

Recall that we also observed the expression of emphasis on the referent in question (or its certain qualities) with the nominal topic markers in Yoruba (347) and Mandinka (350)-(351). This suggests the emphatic feature maybe characteristic of elements that perform the function of nominal topic markers and that their functioning is not restricted to the marking of discourse topics. Further investigation is required to shed more light on this issue.

The data considered here shows that Niger-Congo nominal topic markers show properties which in Germanic and Romance languages are associated with demonstratives and that these properties are not restricted to the tracking of discourse topics. Similarly to demonstratives, nominal topic markers may function as attention focusing devices and convey speaker’s emotional attitude.

I thus believe that in addition to the fact that demonstratives are semantically and phonologically more salient than definite articles, the converging semantic and pragmatic properties of nominal topic markers and Germanic and Romance demonstratives might have been the reason why demonstratives, and not definite determiners (whose distribution does not always rely), were selected to perform the function of NE markers in creoles. The distributional properties of these newly developed markers might have been further affected by the properties of the contributing
languages as well as the universal processes such as grammaticalization. These further developments will be the focus of the next section.

9.4.2 The development of the definiteness-based pattern: grammaticalization or superstrate influence

In section 9.4.1, I attempted to account for the deviations from the definiteness-based pattern in the behaviour of creole definite determiners. This section focuses on the development of the definite-article-like behavior of definite determiners observed in a number of the creole under study.

While the idea of unfinished grammaticalization of creole definite markers can be supported by the fact that they display incomplete bleaching of the deictic feature, the idea of grammaticalization as a trigger for the development of definiteness marking in creoles remains speculative if it is not supported with diachronic evidence.

Diachronic research into the distribution of definite determiners in creoles presents us with different results. While Bruyn’s (1995, 2007) research on Sranan shows an increase in the use overt definiteness marking overtime, these findings are not replicated in other diachronic research into creole NEs. According to Guillemin’s (2009) diachronic analysis of the distributional behavior of \textit{la} in Mauritian Creole, this marker, which initially only functioned as a demonstrative reinforcer, was reanalyzed as a syntactically independent nominal topic marker. While the data presented here demonstrates that the use of \textit{la} is not restricted to this function, it is nevertheless clear that \textit{la} is constrained in its distribution more that the definite determiners in Sranan. Sankoff and Mazzi (1981), who investigated the changes in the distribution of \textit{dispela} and \textit{ia} between 1920 and 1970, found no signs of development towards the definiteness-based pattern. Although Tok Pisin is a relatively young creole, which only emerged in the second half of the 19th century and is therefore considerably younger than the majority of the creoles considered here, Sankoff and Mazzi’s results question the fact that that the grammaticalization of definiteness will never take place in Tok Pisin. After all, plenty of much older languages of the world have not grammaticalized definiteness marking.

Given this, it is important to understand why some creoles develop in the direction of definiteness marking and others don’t. I believe that one of the possible answers to this question can be found if we also consider the factor of superstrate influence.

Among the creoles where the distribution of definite determiners closely resembles the Germanic/Romance definiteness-based pattern we find a number of creoles that have developed in a very close contact with their superstrate languages. These are, for instance, Jamaican Creole, Afrikaans and Chabacano. Note also that two of these creoles – Jamaican and Chabacano – differ from the majority of the creoles considered here in that they have adopted the definite determiners of their superstrate languages (see chapter 5).
The correlation between the regularity with which the definite determiner is used in a creole and the high intensity/long duration of the contact between this creole and its superstrate which we seem to find in these creoles can, however, only be proven to exist if we can demonstrate that the lack of intense and prolonged contact between a creole and its superstrate produces significantly different results. In Bobyleva (2011a), I compare the use of definite determiners in Jamaican Creole and Sranan.

Both creoles developed in the latter part of the 17th century in the plantation colonies of the British as a result of contact between the British settlers and the West African (Kwa (Gbe), Benue-Congo, and Bantu) slaves. Despite their common socio-historical and linguistic sources, Jamaican Creole and Sranan have a quite different linguistic history, the main difference being the amount of contact with their main lexifier, English. As already observed in section, 8.4, Jamaican Creole developed in a continuous contact with English, which has always remained the official language of the colony. Combined with the pressure from English as a language of prestige and socio-economic growth, the contact between English and Jamaican Creole gave rise to a situation where very few (if any) Jamaicans use the "deep" creole, referred to as basilect. The majority of Jamaicans, especially in the urban areas, speak a variety (or varieties) in between the basilect and English, so-called mesolect, creating a creole-to-English speech continuum.

The linguistic situation of Surinam is very different. The direct influence from the varieties of English spoken by the English only lasted thirty years. Surinam started out as an English colony in 1651 but in 1667 it was taken over by the Dutch. By 1680 almost all English slave-owners had left the colony with their slaves. The slave population of Surinam, however, continued speaking an English-based creole, and the Dutch influence hardly penetrated beyond the level of lexicon.

The different amount of contact with the lexifier has had a significant impact on the linguistic properties of the creole languages that developed in Jamaica and Surinam. Jamaican Creole, in particular its most widely spoken mesolect variety, shows much more affinity with English than Sranan. In what follows, I will demonstrate that this also holds for the distribution of the definite determiner.

In both creoles, the definite determiners commonly tend to follow the definiteness-based patterns. One does, however, find several differences between them, which seem to be significant for the superstratist argument. For instance, while di in Jamaican Creole systematically occurs with so-called unfamiliar definites (cf. Hawkins 1978), that is NEs modified by an ordinal numeral, an adjective in the superlative form or the adjectives same, only, last, or next, definite determiners in Sranan appear to behave less systematically when modifiers of the aforementioned types are involved. Also, the omission of the definite determiner with unique NEs is less regular in Jamaican than in Sranan (see example (445), where the nouns sun and sky that denote unique entities are overtly marked), and the omission of the definite determiner with Topic NEs has not been attested in the Jamaican Creole data I have consulted.
Jamaican Creole (Thelwell 1980: 66)

(445) Me know dat when the sun bright and the breeze cool an’ the
1SG know COMP when DEF sun bright and DEF breeze cool and DEF
mountain dem purple an’ the sky blue…
mountain PL purple and DEF sky blue…
‘I know that when the sun is bright and the breeze is cool and the mountains are purple and the sky is blue…’

Further, in contrast to Sranan, in Jamaican Creole one may find semantically vacuous instances of the definite determiner which parallel the distribution of the in English. As demonstrated in (446) and (447), generic NEs in both creoles commonly occur without a determiner.

Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 62)

(446) Soso Tamkaman mag sjwen dape.
only Tamka.man may swim there
‘Only Tamka men may swim there.’

Jamaican Creole (Sistren 1986: 45)

(447) Member seh man a green lizard.
remember COMP man COP green lizard
‘Remember that men are green lizards.

However, in Jamaican Creole, in contrast to Sranan NEs that are marked as definite may also receive a generic interpretation:

Jamaican Creole (Stewart 2007: 397)

(448) Di manguss chrikifai.
DEF mongoose cunning
a. ‘The mongoose (over there) is cunning.’
b. ‘The mongoose (in general) is cunning.’

The same holds for so-called weak definites (cf. Poesio 1994; Carlson & Sussman 2004). While in Sranan these are always marked by means of bare NEs (449), in Jamaican creole both bare NEs (450) and NEs marked with di (451) are possible:
Sranan (Voorhoeve 1962: 59)

(449) Taka, u bê-luku san a strati.
Say 1PL PST-PROG-look thing PREP street
‘Say, we were looking at things in the street.’

Jamaican Creole (Sistren 1986: 62, 75)

(450) She use her to carry di excess load pon her head
She use 3SG.F.OBL to carry DEF excess load on 3SG.F.OBL head
when she going to market.
when 3SG.F.NOM go-PROG to market
‘She used her to carry the excess load on her head when she was going to the market.’

(451) Mr Iris have to be on the road by six thirty…
Mr Iris have to be on DEF road by six thirty
‘Mr Iris had to be on the road by six thirty…’

The differences between Jamaican Creole and Sranan discussed above show that the former has more affinity with English with regard to the definite determiner use than the latter. The semantically vacuous instances of the definite determiner observed in Jamaican Creole are important as they show that it not only employs the same semantic principle of definite determiner use as English but also shows parallels to English in some distributional properties of the definite determiner, which do not straightforwardly follow from this semantic principle. Thus, the expectation based on the differences in the linguistic history of the two creoles is borne out by the data.

A comparison of the distribution of overtly marked and bare definites in Cape Verdean and Santome (Lucchesi 1993) also supports the idea that superstrate influence might have played an important role in the development of definiteness marking in creoles. According to Lucchesi, the overt marking of definite NEs is more common in Cape Verdean than it is in Santome. This correlates with the fact that Cape Verdean developed in a closer contact with Portuguese than Santome (cf. Baptista 2002).

9.4.3 Interpreting the special cases of bare definites

In section 9.3, we observed that despite the variation in the distribution of overt definite determiners, creoles share the property of allowing bare definite NEs in a number of specific contexts. These contexts are NEs with unique referents, topical NEs, and complements of (locative) prepositions.

Uniquely referring NEs very often receive zero-marking not only in creoles but also in other languages of the world. Proper names, which can be considered the
prototype of uniquely referring NEs, are bare in most world languages. As I state in section 9.3, I believe that uniquely referring NEs whose unique status is firmly established in the community usage are perceived as proper names and interpreted in the same fashion. The reference of proper names and uniquely-referring NEs is always unambiguous, which renders the use of the definite determiner superfluous. I therefore believe that the omission of definite determiners with unique NEs is governed by the non-redundancy principle.

The same principle can be made responsible for the omission of definite determiners with topical NEs. Definite determiners in creoles are used to anchor newly introduced discourse participants but tend to be omitted with established discourse topics. As already pointed out in section 9.4.1, this behavior of creole definite determiners parallels the behavior of anaphoric demonstratives. As observed in Diessel (1999) and work cited there, the anaphoric use of demonstratives is particularly common with the second mention of a newly introduced referent, when the topical status of this referent is being established. Once a new discourse participant has been established as a discourse topic, it is usually tracked by third person pronouns, NEs marked by means of definite determiners (if the latter are available), or bare NEs. This restriction in the use of demonstratives is related to the fact that demonstratives are attention-focusing devices. When the attention of the hearer is already focused on a referent, the use of a demonstrative becomes redundant and less marked strategies of referent tracking are preferred. The same tendency is observed with nominal topic markers. The general strategy can be thus described as follows: use more informative and salient markers to establish the discourse topic and less informative/salient ones to track the established discourse topic. Such a strategy is clearly based on the non-redundancy principle.

The non-redundancy principle is also likely to be responsible for the omission of definite determiners with NEs containing definiteness-inducing modifiers, discussed here in section 9.1.2 on the basis of the data from several Romance creoles.

In the case of topical and uniquely referring NEs, the redundancy of overt definiteness marking appears to be caused by the discourse prominence of their referents. When as a result of its recurrent mention, the specific referent of an NE has been activated and firmly established in the current discourse or within the community use, overt definiteness marking becomes unnecessary in order to establish the identity of the referent. With NEs containing definiteness-inducing modifiers are concerned, the redundancy of the definite determiner is caused by the presence of other (lexical) indicators of definiteness inside the NE. (Recall from chapter 7 that the same principle has been invoked to account for the omission of plural marking with NEs that contain other indicators of plurality such as plural numerals and quantifiers.)

As for the omission of definite determiners with complements of locative prepositions, I believe it can be accounted for in terms of pragmatic non-specificity. In section 9.1, I observe that definite determiners in (at least) some creoles are not used with semantically non-specific NEs. While definite complements of locative prepositions may be semantically specific when they denote specific referents that are
assumed to exist, they may be pragmatically non-specific in that their identity is not important for the point at issue. NEs inside locative PPs often have less discourse prominence than subjects and objects.

Summing up, the non-redundacy principle appears to be crucial for the omission of definite determiners with topical, uniquely referring as well as pragmatically non-specific NEs. As observed by Kouwenberg (2007), the reasons behind the omission of determiners with uniquely referring and topical NEs and pragmatically non-specific definites may be similar. She points out that in both cases the identity of the referent is not at issue, either because it is considered unimportant or because it is self-evident.

The sensitivity of creole definite determiners to such discourse-pragmatic principles as non-redundancy, which allows for their omission with semantically definite NEs, presents evidence for the incomplete grammaticalization of these markers.

The ability to use a zero definite determiner with pragmatically non-specific definite NEs (cf. section 9.3.4 for the structural analysis) observed in creoles is particularly informative in this respect as it clearly demonstrates that the syntactic status of creole definite determiners is different from the syntactic status of definite articles in Germanic and Romance languages. In addition to expressing the semantics of definiteness, definite articles in Germanic and Romance languages perform the syntactic function of turning a nominal predicate into a referring expression and assigning it the status of an argument. According to Abney (1987), this justifies the analysis of definite articles as heads of the functional projection DP. In creoles, not only determined but also determinerless NEs can be used referentially and receive a definite interpretation. This suggests that even in creoles like Jamaican and Chabacano, which closely resemble the definiteness-based pattern and allow for bare definite NEs only occasionally, definite determiners are not (yet) fully grammaticalized DP heads.

Uniquely referring and topical NEs are treated in a special way in many world languages and receive zero-marking even in languages with fully grammaticalized definiteness marking. Zero-marking of some uniquely referring NEs is, for instance, observed in Germanic and Romance languages. Consider, for instance English God, Dutch God ‘God’, French Dieu ‘God’, Spanish Dios ‘God’, and Portuguese Deus ‘God’. This suggests that zero-marking of uniquely referring NEs is not always indicative of the unfinished grammaticalization of the definite determiner. On the other hand, even among languages with grammaticalized definite articles, in some languages this process of grammaticalization appears to have gone further than in others. For instance, in Portuguese proper names of persons can be used with a definite article, such as, for instance, o Roberto (lit.) ‘the Roberto’ or a Ana (lit.) ‘the Ana’. In Greek, the use of the definite article with proper names is obligatory.

On the whole, one can observe that while some languages disallow or disfavor zero marking of proper names, uniquely referring NEs, and topical NEs, other languages allow or even require the presence of a definite determiner in these contexts. The spread of definite articles to contexts where its presence is superfluous may be indicative of the
fact that the definite article is being reinterpreted as a desemanticized noun marker (cf. Greenberg 1978). The fact that all creole languages strongly disfavour definite determiners in such contexts again supports the idea that they are markers with a heavy semantic content and that they instantiate earlier stages of grammaticalization than definite articles in their superstrate languages.