The development of the nominal domain in creole languages: A comparative-typological approach
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Chapter 10

Discussion and conclusions

This study set out to examine the properties of creole NEs with the intention to obtain findings relevant for the ongoing creole genesis debate. Before the main conclusions in this respect, I will first summarize the background of the study, review its main aims, and present a brief overview of the chapters.

In the course of the history of creole studies, quite a number of conflicting ideas concerning the birth and development of these languages have been expressed. Among the major sources of creole structure, scholars distinguished the input from the source languages (i.e. substrates and superstrates), and UG. The focus certain researchers put on one of these sources coupled with the denunciation of the others has produced the substratist, superstratist, and universalist approaches to creole genesis which, in their radicalism, deny each other completely. Next to theories highlighting the role of one of the sources of creole languages, we find research that focuses on the processes underlying the development of creoles such as L2 acquisition and grammaticalization.

Research carried out prior to this study, (Aboh 2004c, 2006; Bobyleva 2006) had already provided strong evidence that none of the factors mentioned above, taken in isolation, could account for the properties of creole NEs. This study set out to substantiate this conclusion. The main research questions of the study are revisited below:

(i) How is the structural organization and interpretation of NEs in creole languages different from/similar to the structural organization and interpretation of NEs in their superstrate and substrate languages?

(ii) How does the substrate and superstrate input affect the developing creole? Does it remain unchanged or does it undergo restructuring as a result of interaction with other contributing linguistic systems, adaptation to the new creole system, or any other factors?

(iii) Can all properties of creole NEs be accounted for in terms of substrate or superstrate influence or a combination thereof? Are innovative properties of
creole NEs, unattested in their source languages, suggestive of the role of universal principles in creole genesis?

(iv) Which factors, linguistic or non-linguistic, control the competing influences of substrate and superstrate languages and universal principles?

The current study attempted to provide answers to these questions by performing a systematic comparative analysis of NEs in fifteen creoles contrasted to their superstrate and substrate languages.

The book begins with an extensive introductory part, which sets the stage for the analysis providing the necessary background with regard to the linguistic and socio-historical factors underlying contact language formation and creolization (chapter 2), currently prominent views on the issue of creole genesis (chapter 3) and the functions, semantics and structure of NEs (chapter 4).

Chapters 5-9 deal with different aspects of creole NEs. Chapter 5 focuses on the etymology of creole nominal markers. Chapter 6 discusses the structural organization of NEs in creoles. Chapters 7-9 are concerned with the distribution of overt nominal markers as opposed to bare NEs. Chapter 7 deals with the expression of individuation and number. Chapter 8 discusses the marking of indefinite NEs. And chapter 9 deals with the marking of definite NEs.

The sections that follow list the major empirical observations concerning the form and distribution of creole NEs (section 10.1), consider what these observations can tell us about the sources of creole languages and processes involved in the development of creoles, and factors that affect the outcome of language contact (10.2). After having looked at the implications of the findings of the study for the issue of creole genesis, the focus will be on its relevance for the existing views on the structural and interpretational properties of NEs and the typology of nouns and nominal markers (section 10.3). Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed by sketching some open issues and proposing directions for further research (section 10.4).

10.1 Major empirical observations

This section, presents a list of the major empirical observations concerning creole NEs arrived at in this study. These start with a number of general observations concerning the etymology, formal properties and distribution of creole nominal markers. Subsequently, there will be a characterization of plural markers, indefinite determiners, and definite determiners according to the same parameters.
Etymology

- Creoles rarely adopt plural markers and (in)definite determiners directly from their source languages.
- The overwhelming majority of creoles develop plural markers and (in)definite determiners anew through reanalysis/grammaticalization of lexical or (more semanticized) grammatical items with a similar meaning and/or function.
- The form of these items is always derived from one of the source languages.
- With few exceptions, creole nominal markers are superstrate-derived.

Structure

- Creole nominal markers have lost the number and gender distinctions their etyma express in the source languages. Creoles disfavor agreement and double expression of the same feature.
- The ordering and the selectional properties of nominal elements are largely based on the patterns provided in the superstrate input.
- The deviations from the superstrate patterns with regard to word order and selectional properties of nominal elements result from substrate influence and language-internal developments.

Distribution

- Creole languages use bare NEs in a wider range of contexts than their superstrates. Bare NEs may have an individuated and a non-individuated, a singular and a plural, an indefinite and a definite and a non-specific and a specific interpretation.
- The distribution of overt markers in creoles is commonly affected by the following factors: (i) the non-redundancy principle, (ii) referential properties of the NE such as animacy, specificity, and definiteness, and (iii) discourse prominence of the NE.

Indefinite determiners

Etymology

- Indefinite determiners (unless directly adopted from the superstrate) always derive from the superstrate numeral ‘one’.
Structure

- Indefinite determiners occur at the left edge of the NE, paralleling the ordering properties of their superstrate etyma (the numeral ‘one’) as well as indefinite articles in Germanic and Romance languages (which also historically derive from the numeral ‘one’).

Distribution

- In many creoles, the use of indefinite markers is sensitive to specificity. The application of the specificity constraint is, however, never categorical. Its impact varies across creoles.

Definite determiners

Etymology

- Definite determiners (unless directly adopted from the superstrate) always develop from superstrate deictic elements, demonstratives or demonstrative reinforcers. The derivation of definite determiners from the demonstrative reinforcers is particularly common among French-based creoles.

Structure

- Definite determiners typically derive their ordering properties and selectional properties from their superstrate etyma.
- The most common deviation is the syntactically independent occurrence of post-nominal definite determiners, which derive from demonstrative reinforcers. In Germanic and Romance languages, demonstrative reinforcers are always syntactically dependent on prenominal markers of deixis.

Distribution

- The marking of definite NEs varies greatly across creoles, ranging from the marking of definiteness only in combination with deixis to nearly categorical definiteness marking. In certain contexts, the omission of definite determiners is particularly common across creoles. These are non-specific NEs, NEs with low discourse prominence, NEs containing definiteness-inducing modifiers, topical NEs and uniquely referring NEs.
Plural markers

Etymology

- The origins of plural markers are rather diverse. In addition to plural markers directly adopted from superstrate and substrate languages, creoles mark plurality by means of plural forms of superstrate demonstratives, superstrate-derived lexical items with plural/collective semantics, and superstrate- and substrate-derived 3Pl pronouns. 3Pl pronouns represent a particularly common source of plural markers, as far as Atlantic Creoles are concerned.

Structure

- The formal properties of creole plural markers typically parallel those of their superstrate and substrate etyma, when the latter are used adnominally in the source language.
- When the etyma of creole plural markers are not used adnominally, the acquisition of an adnominal function is accompanied by the development of new structural properties.

Distribution

- The use of overt plural markers in creoles is often sensitive to the presence of other indicators of plurality, as well as the referential properties of the NE (i.e. animacy, specificity, and definiteness).
- In some creoles, plural markers are also used to express the associative plural

10.2 Implications for the issue of creole genesis

A comprehensive discussion of the implications of the observations made above for the issue of creole genesis was presented in chapters 5-9. The observations listed above have important implications for the creole genesis debate. Some aspects of the etymology, structural properties and distribution of creole nominal markers have been already invoked by several scholars in the literature on creole genesis. In the chapters of the book, I interpret the findings listed above putting my own interpretation next to the views expressed by other researchers. In this section, focus is on the major theoretical implications of the findings of this study.
10.2.1 Etymology and Structure

The etymology and the structural properties of creole nominal markers bring out the role of superstrate languages in creole creation: nominal markers which develop through adaptation and reanalysis of superstrate lexical and functional items with a similar semantics and function typically preserve the structural properties of their etyma.

The advocates of the view on creole genesis as a result of gradual restructuring of the superstrate (e.g., Chaudenson 2003) interpret this in favor of the idea that superstrate languages were the languages targeted by creole creators and that the process of restructuring of the target material, which took place during unguided second language acquisition, depended solely on the variants and developmental directions available in the superstrate.

It should, however, be pointed out that superstrate-derived material was rarely transferred into creoles without undergoing change. The most common phenomenon affecting creole nominal markers is the reduction of the range of overtly realized grammatical features, specifically instantiated in the loss of number and gender agreement. With regard to this aspect of the process of creolization, I adhere to the view expressed by Aboh (2006), that purely structural features that are not interpretable at the discourse-semantics interface are the most likely ones to be eliminated in a language contact situation. Agreement features clearly belong to this type. In the literature, it has been observed that the lack of agreement is a feature creoles share with interlanguages. Based on this parallel, the loss of agreement in creoles has been analyzed by some authors as a typical outcome of imperfect L2 acquisition (see, for instance, Plag 2008b, who claims that creoles represent interlanguages of an early stage). As demonstrated in this study, in creolization the loss of agreement may affect not only superstrate-derived but also substrate-derived items. Among such examples is the Kikongo/Kimbundu-derived class prefix *ma* which lost its class specifications in Palenquero. The loss of agreement in learners’ L1 obviously cannot be accounted for in terms of imperfect L2 acquisition. It is therefore concluded in the present study that the loss of agreement in creolization primarily has to do with the fact that the expression of agreement is uninformative and does not contribute to the efficiency of communication.

Further, it should be emphasized that the superstrate input can be adopted in creoles in several different ways, whereby the function and structure of superstrate-derived items may remain largely unchanged or be modified to varying degrees. For instance, superstrate-derived nominal markers in creoles may develop through:

(i) Acquisition of superstrate grammatical markers of plurality and (in)definiteness in the function they perform in the superstrate

(ii) Reanalysis of superstrate functional and lexical items and structures, whereby they acquire a new function.
An example of (i) is the acquisition of superstrate plural morphology observed in Jamaican Creole, Tok Pisin, Afrikaans and Cape Verdean Creole. Examples of (ii) are, the development of creole indefinite and definite determiners from superstrate-derived numerals and demonstratives, the development of creole plural markers from superstrate-derived 3Pl pronouns or the development of creole deictic markers from superstrate-derived demonstrative reinforcer constructions of the type DEM-N-here/there.

The reanalysis of the function of superstrate-derived items can represent the result of grammaticalization and substrate influence. As argued in chapters 5, 8 and 9, the development of indefinite determiners from the numeral ‘one’ and definite determiners from deictic markers are examples of grammaticalization, which is likely to have taken place without the influence of any of the contributing languages. The reanalysis of 3Pl-pronouns as plural markers is often considered in the literature to instantiate the reanalysis of the function of superstrate-derived items based on the way in which similar items are used in the substrate. As argued in chapter 7, the idea of the substrate origins of the plural marker=3Pl pronoun feature in creoles is rather questionable. Some functional properties of creole 3Pl-derived plural markers are, however, likely to be patterned on the functional properties of their substrate counterparts. Associative plural marking is an example of such functional properties.

The reanalysis of the superstrate input may not only involve a modification of the function of the superstrate-derived lexical and functional items and structures but also affect the structural properties of the reanalyzed elements. In addition to the loss of gender and number agreement particularly common in creoles, the following types of restructuring can be distinguished:

(i) Superstrate-derived items acquire new structural properties based on the pattern of other superstrate structures.

(ii) Superstrate-derived items acquire new structural properties under influence of the substrate structural patterns.

(i) is, for instance, represented in the development of the deictic expression of the type DEF-N-DEM and of definite plural NEs of the type DEF-N-PL (where the plural marker is a free-standing determiner-like element) based on the DEM-N-here/there pattern. The DEF-N-DEM pattern is found in several creoles such as for instance, Sranan and Berbice Dutch. In the DEF-N-DEM structure, the slot originally filled by locative adverbs, is filled by a deictic element that derives from a demonstrative pronoun. In this structure, demonstrative pronouns are reanalyzed as adnominal markers of deixis. A detailed discussion of this phenomenon is provided in section 6.2.5. As for the DEF-N-PL pattern, it is, for instance, attested in Jamaican Creole and Negerhollands. In the DEF-N-PL structure, the slot of the demonstrative reinforcer is filled by an element which is derived from a 3Pl pronoun. In this structure, 3Pl pronouns are reanalyzed as adnominal markers of plurality (and definiteness).
(ii) is represented by syntactically independent postnominal elements, definite determiners and determiner-like plural markers. Such markers are found in several of the creoles under study: Tok Pisin, Haitian Creole, Mauritian Creole, Lesser Antillean Creole and Santome. Consider, for instance, Haitian Creole, where both definite determiners la (sg.) and yo (pl.) as well as demonstratives sa and sîla are postnominal. In Germanic and Romance languages, one does not find syntactically independent postnominal markers. Demonstrative reinforcers, which occur in this position, are always syntactically dependent on the presence of prenominal markers of deixis. In this respect, Germanic and Romance languages can be contrasted with the substrates of most of the creoles listed here. In many Niger-Congo languages, determiners, plural markers, and demonstratives are all postnominal.

The development of structural patterns unattested in Germanic and Romance superstrates may be interpreted as counterevidence to Chaudenson’s (2003 and other work) claim that creole languages lack positive transfer of obviously non-European features. The phenomena observed in (ii) seem to lend support to Lefebvre’s (1998) view on the process of creolization, which suggests that the structural organization of creoles is derived from the substrate. I would, however, treat these and as well as some other instances of postnominal markers (see (i)) as cases of convergence, reinforcement of the pattern present in the superstrate under the influence of a similar pattern present in the substrate (cf. Chaudenson and Mufwene 2001; Mufwene 2001; Chaudenson 2003). The structural organization of creole NPs clearly shows that creoles generally make a more extensive use of the postnominal space than their superstrates. The “activation” of this space is likely to be the result of substrate influence but the “potential” to use this space was already present in the superstrate languages.

Many structures involving postnominal elements are patterned on the superstrate demonstrative reinforcer constructions. In creoles that nowadays display syntactically independent postnominal markers, these markers derived from syntactically dependent postnominal elements at some point in creole history and/or can be shown to occupy the originally demonstrative reinforcer slot. For instance, with regard to Mauritian Creole, Guillemin (2009: 148) observes: “In early M[auritian] C[creole], the demonstratives ça…là seem to pattern exactly like in French in that the demonstrative precedes the noun, là is postnominal, and, initially là is not used independently of ça”.

The reanalysis of la as a (specific) definite/topic marker, which, according to Guillemin, took place around 1820, lead to its syntactic independence from the demonstrative sa. In other words, the reanalysis of la lead to the decomposition of the DEM-N-REINF structure. In modern Mauritian Creole, la still occurs in the sa N la construction, as use of sa requires its presence. The same holds for syntactically independent postnominal elements in other creoles (see chapter 6 for a more extensive discussion).

The role of substrate languages in creole creation can be observed not only in the reinforcement of partially converging superstrate patterns. In the creoles under study, we also find nominal markers with non-European etymology. Interestingly, these markers are subject to similar restructuring processes as superstrate-derived elements
such as loss of agreement features. Also, they do not always preserve their original function and ordering properties. Among the instances of transfer of the substrate input into creoles, we can also distinguish:

(i) Acquisition of substrate grammatical markers of plurality and (in)definiteness in the function they perform in the substrate.

(ii) Reanalysis of substrate functional and lexical items and structures, whereby they acquire a new function.

(i) can be exemplified by the case of the Chabacano plural marker *mango*, which is directly adopted from Tagalog and parallels its Tagalog counterpart with regard to its functional and structural properties (see section 6.2.4).

(ii) is represented in the development of the Santome plural marker *inen* and the Papiamentu plural marker *nan* from the Edo 3Pl pronoun *irú* (Maurer 2002) or from the Kimbundu 3Pl *ene* (Rougé 2004), the development of the Berbice Dutch plural marker *-apú* from the Eastern Ijo replacive pronoun *ápú* specified as 3Pl, human, and the development of the Palenquero plural marker *ma* from the Kikongo/Kimbundu class prefix *ma*. The pronominal etyma of the Papiamentu, Santome, and Berbice Dutch plural markers are not used in the source languages to mark plurality on nouns. With regard to the Eastern Ijo replacive pronoun *ápú*, I observe that it may combine with other nominals to form a compound nominal expression with [+human; +plural] reference. Nevertheless, *ápú* does not belong to the regular means of plural marking in Eastern Ijo. Kikongo and Kimbundu class prefix *ma*, which functions as the plural prefix of noun classes V, XI, XIV, XV in Kikongo (Laman 1964) and as the plural prefix of noun classes IV, V, VI, VII, VIII in Kimbundu (Chatelain 1888-89), has a function which rather closely resembles that of a plural marker. It, however, also realizes class specifications of a noun and functions in opposition to the plural prefixes of other noun classes.

In order to establish the triggers for the reanalysis of substrate-derived elements, let us consider the structural properties they have in creoles. As already observed above, the syntax of creole nominal markers that derive from elements that are not used adnominally in the source languages is typically patterned on nominal structures that exist in either the superstrate or the substrate of a creole. I also observe that when a superstrate-derived item develops a new function as a result of substrate influence, it can also acquire the structural properties of the substrate item whose function it is meant to replicate. With regard to substrate-derived nominal markers, the following cases of acquisition of novel structural properties can be identified:

(i) Substrate-derived items acquire new structural properties which replicate the structural properties of functionally similar items in the superstrate.
(ii) Substrate-derived items acquire new structural properties which replicate the structural properties of functionally similar items in other substrates.

(i) is represented by the case of Palenquero *ma*. Following Moñino (2007), I believe that the structural properties of *ma* are largely patterned on the morphosyntax of NEs in Spanish. Moñino shows that *ma* typically appears in positions where in Spanish one would expect the definite articles *los/las* or plural inflection of the indefinite article and demonstrative. Another example includes the structural properties of Santome *inen* and Papiamentu *nan*. Santome *inen* occupies the same position as the definite determiner and demonstratives in Portuguese and Papiamentu *nan* occurs in the position of demonstrative reinforcers.

(ii) is used by Maurer (2002) to account for the development of the structural properties of the plural markers in Santome and Papiamentu. According to Maurer, the reanalysis of the Edo or Kimbundu 3Pl pronoun as a plural marker observed in these creoles represents the result of influence from other Niger-Congo languages in which 3Pl-derived forms are used to mark plurality on the noun. In his study, he invokes Yoruba and Ewegbe as potential sources of the plural marker=3Pl pronoun feature in Palenquero and Santome, as well as of the structural properties of plural markers in Santome and Papiamentu. He argues that the Santome PL-N pattern is based on the PL-N pattern found in Yoruba and that the Palenquero N-PL pattern is based on the N-PL pattern found in Ewegbe. Similarly to what I argued above, I propose to view the development of the structural behavior of Santome *inen* and Papiamentu *nan* as a result of the reinforcement of converging patterns of the superstrate and substrate languages.

As a sum up, I observe that both superstrate- and substrate-derived nominal markers can be found in creoles, although the latter are rather uncommon. Superstrate- and substrate-derived nominal markers may either be transferred in the function similar to the one they perform in the source language or develop new functions as a result of the process of grammaticalization or of influence from other contact languages. When a superstrate-derived item is recruited to perform a function that is performed by a similar item in the substrate, the structural properties of the superstrate-derived marker may also be affected by the structural properties of the substrate element that served as a source of the development of its new function. The same holds for substrate-derived plural markers whose structural properties may be developed based on the structural patterns of the superstrate or other substrates. The development of new structural properties is particularly common with elements that are not used adnominally in the source languages. Creole nominal markers that develop from adnominal elements typically preserve (part of) the structural properties of their etyma.

### 10.2.2 Semantico-pragmatic properties and distribution

While the etymology and the structural properties of creole nominal markers bring out the role of the source languages in the process of creole genesis, particularly that of the
superstrate, their distribution appears to be indicative of the importance of the universal principles of reference marking and discourse organization.

What is identified as function in the previous section only roughly characterizes the semantic and pragmatic content of the nominal markers. As observed in much of the literature on creole NEs, including this study, creole nominal markers identified as (in)definite determiners and plural markers possess a rather different semantic and pragmatic content than their apparent Germanic and Romance counterparts. This becomes obvious if we consider their distribution.

10.2.2.1 Universal principles of reference marking and discourse organization

The distributional properties of creole plural markers and determiners show considerable variation among creoles. Here, I will focus on the tendencies and constraints that are particularly common. As observed in section 10.1, these are: the non-redundancy principle, the referential properties of the NE (animacy, definiteness, and specificity) and the discourse prominence of the NE.

The non-redundancy principle is responsible for:

- the loss of agreement
- the fact that creoles have not developed agreement over time
- the fact that creoles disfavor repeated expression of the same feature

The latter feature is particularly well illustrated in the distribution of creole plural markers. Plural markers in creoles commonly tend to, or even must, be omitted in the following contexts:

- in the presence of plural numerals and quantifiers;
- in the presence of other markers of plurality (in creoles such as Jamaican and Cape Verdean that have several morphological markers of plurality);
- with NEs that are commonly or in a given context likely to refer to pairs or to plural entities.

Certain instances of definite determiner omission in creoles can also be attributed to the non-redundancy principle. The omission of definite determiners in creoles is typical in the following contexts:

- in the presence of definiteness-inducing modifiers such as relative clauses;
- with NEs that refer to unique entities;
- with NEs that refer to firmly established discourse topics.

These examples suggest that the omission of plural markers and definite determiners in creoles may or have to take place whenever discourse context, situational
context or general knowledge suggest that an NE should be interpreted as [+plural] or [+definite, +specific].

Another factor that often controls the distribution of nominal markers in creoles is the referential properties of NEs, which I describe with the notions of animacy, definiteness, and specificity. The role of animacy is illustrated in the following observation:

- Animacy, particularly humanness, plays an important role in the distribution of plural markers in a number of the creoles under study.

The significance of definiteness and specificity in the distribution of creole nominal markers is illustrated in the following observations:

- In many creoles, the use of overt plural markers is restricted to definite NEs. In those creoles where the definiteness constraint does not apply categorically, plural marking usually occurs with all definite and some indefinite NEs. As far as marking of indefinite NEs is concerned, specificity appears to be an important factor that determines whether or not an overt plural marker will be used.
- In most of the creoles under study, the use of indefinite determiners is constrained in terms of specificity. Although contrary to what has been claimed in some literature (e.g., Bickerton 1981) here it was observed that the specificity constraint does not apply categorically, the role of specificity in the distribution of creole indefinite determiners is evident.
- Specificity also plays a role in the distribution of definite determiners. In some of the creoles under study, non-specific definite NEs receive zero marking.

In chapter 4, I distinguish the notions of semantic specificity (defined as the assertion of existence of a particular individual that satisfies the nominal description) and pragmatic specificity (defined as speaker referential intent). The notion of speaker referential intent is the one that appears to be important for the distribution of creole nominal markers. This notion is tightly related to the notion of discourse prominence. In the present study, the following observations are pointed out, with regard to the role of discourse prominence:

- Indefinite determiners that are sensitive to pragmatic specificity typically introduce new discourse topics, that is, NEs that are going to play an important role in the subsequent discourse.
- Old discourse topics also receive a special treatment: while they are always interpreted as [+specific; +definite], such NEs favor the omission of overt definiteness marking. The same holds for uniquely referring NEs, whose
reference might not be prominent in the ongoing discourse but is firmly established in the community use.

- Low discourse prominence is a condition that favors both indefinite and definite determiner omission. In creoles, determiners are far more easily omitted with complements of (locative) prepositions, which typically possess a lower discourse prominence than subjects and objects.

The non-redundancy principle, animacy, definiteness, specificity, and discourse prominence have been repeatedly demonstrated to play an important role in the use of nominal markers not only in creoles, but also in other languages of the world. These factors constrain the variation in the distribution of nominal markers and control the spread in the distribution of nominal markers in the course of the process of grammaticalization (cf. Greenberg 1978; Comrie 1989; Corbett 2000; Givón 1981, 1984; Rijkhoff 2002). This latter observation is interesting in the light of the fact that the majority of nominal markers in creoles have been developed through reanalysis/grammaticalization of superstrate- and substrate-derived lexical or (more semanticized) grammatical items. The sensitivity of these markers to the factors of semantic and pragmatic nature may be interpreted as evidence for their incomplete grammaticalization.

It should, however, be pointed out that not only the distribution of newly created nominal markers, but also the distribution of nominal markers that are directly adopted from the source languages is constrained by factors listed above. For instance, in all the creoles under study that use superstrate-derived inflectional plural markers, these markers are sensitive to animacy. This phenomenon has a logical explanation. According to Comrie (1989), animacy effects on plural marking are cross-linguistically common. Typological studies of plural marking demonstrate that overt plural markers commonly favor animate nouns over inanimate ones. This is attributed to the fact that individuation and number are considered more relevant when the referent is human or animate than with inanimate referents, which may be conceived of as undifferentiated mass.

Summing up, the distribution of creole nominal markers shows sensitivity to the universal principles of reference marking in discourse organization.

10.2.2.2 Substrate influence?

In addition to the fact that they show sensitivity to the universal principles of reference marking and discourse organization (which present evidence in favour of the role of language universals in creole development), creole nominal markers possess distributional properties suggestive of substrate and superstrate influence. Substrate influence has been invoked in the literature to account for the specificity-based behaviour of creole indefinite determiners and for the restriction of definite determiners to discourse-linked NEs (Lefebvre 1998, Aboh 2004c, 2006). As far as indefinite
determiners are concerned, it was observed that the distributional properties of overt indefinite determiners in the creoles under study can in many cases indeed be captured in terms of specificity. However, I question the claim that the restriction of creole indefinite determiners to specificity represents a result of substrate influence. Below, I recapitulate my major counterarguments to this idea:

- Specificity represents a universally prominent constraint on the distribution of indefinite determiners and it has been described for many unrelated languages of the world such as Hebrew, Chinese, Turkish, Russian, and Samoan, to give just a few examples.
- According to Givón (1981, 1984), all indefinite determiners that derive from the numeral ‘one’ have gone through a stage in which they were only used to mark specific definite NEs.
- The research into L1 and L2 acquisition of determiner systems in languages like English shows that both children and adults whose L1 does not have determiners make a common mistake of using the English determiners to mark specificity instead of definiteness (Ionin et al. 2004, 2008; Schaeffer and Mathewson 2005).

With regard to the distribution of definite determiners, it was observed that hardly any of them is restricted in its distribution to the marking of discourse-linked NEs. The deviations from the Germanic/Romance definiteness pattern observed in the behaviour of creole definite determiners can be more straightforwardly shown to represent the heritage of their deictic etyma or to instantiate sensitivity to the universal principles of discourse organization. At the same time, it was observed 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. The converging properties of nominal topic markers and Germanic and Romance demonstratives might have been the reason why demonstratives (and other deictic markers) and not definite articles with their vague semantics were selected to perform the function of NE markers in creoles.

10.2.2.3 Grammaticalization or superstrate influence?

While the majority of the existing claims with regard to the distribution of determiners in creoles focus on the deviations from the Germanic/Romance definiteness-based pattern, in the present study it was observed that in quite a number of creoles indefinite and definite determiners show instances of definiteness-based behavior.

While specificity plays a role in the distribution of indefinite determiners in many of the creoles under study, in none of the creoles does the distribution of the
indefinite determiner fully conform to the specificity-based pattern. The frequency of the indefinite determiner use with non-specific NEs differs across creoles. While in some creoles, the specificity value of an NE nearly always determines whether or not an overt indefinite marker should be used or not, in other creoles, indefinite determiners are less sensitive to the specificity-based constraint and tend to behave like general markers of indefiniteness. The same holds for definite determiners, which in some creoles approximate the Germanic/Romance definiteness-based pattern.

In chapters 8 and 9, I consider grammaticalization and superstrate influence as possible sources of the definiteness-based behaviour of creole determiners. The grammaticalization perspective appears attractive in view of the fact that creole determiners developed anew through reanalysis of demonstratives and numerals. The diachronic analysis of creole determiners does not, however, unanimously support the idea that creole determiners are undergoing a unidirectional development in the direction of grammaticalized definiteness markers. More extensive diachronic research is required to substantiate the claims concerning the role of grammaticalization in the development of the definiteness-based behaviour of creole determiners. In the present study, I focus on the role of superstrate influence as a factor affecting the distributional properties of creole determiners and argue that the prolonged and extensive contact with the superstrate can promote or enhance the development of the definiteness-based determiner use in a creole (see also section 10.2.3).

Summing up, the distributional properties of creole nominal markers are affected by the semantics of their etyma, universal principles of discourse organization and reference marking, grammaticalization, and the influence of languages with which they stayed in contact.

10.2.3 External factors affecting the outcome of creolization

While creole NEs show similarity with regard to such features as lack of agreement, we also observe considerable diversity with regard to structural organization of creole NEs, as well as the distribution of creole nominal markers and bare NEs. In section 10.2, there is a discussion about linguistic factors of universal and individual nature that may affect the development of creoles. In the present section, I emphasize the role of contextual factors such as the characteristics of the contact situation which gave rise to creoles.

In the chapters of the book, it is repeatedly observed that the creoles under study vary with regard to the amount of superstrate-derived features they display and that the amount of superstrate-derived features in a creole typically positively correlates with the amount of contact between the non-European population of the colony and the speakers of the superstrate. This statement is illustrated in the following observations:

- Direct adoption of superstrate-derived nominal markers (i.e. plural inflection and (in)definite determiners) is observed in several of the creoles under study.
These are Tok Pisin, Jamaican Creole, Afrikaans, Chabacano, and Cape Verdean Creole. In most cases, one observes clustering of superstrate-derived features in one creole. For instance, Jamaican Creole, Afrikaans, and Chabacano all exhibit superstrate-derived plural inflectional morphology as well as indefinite and definite determiners that derive from indefinite and definite articles of their superstrates. This is not accidental. These creoles are known to have emerged and developed in an extensive contact with their superstrates.

- In some creoles, the distribution of definite and indefinite determiners resembles the Germanic/Romance definiteness-based pattern more than in the others. In these creoles, we find considerably less bare NEs. Based on the comparative analysis of Jamaican Creole and Sranan (section 9.4.2, see also Bobyleva 2011), I claim that differences in the distribution of definite determiners and bare NEs between these two creoles can be related to the different length and intensity of contact with English. A comparison of the distribution of overtly marked and bare definites in Cape Verdean and Santome (Lucchesi 1993) also supports the idea that the length and amount of contact with the superstrate has effects on the development of definiteness marking in creoles.

10.2.4 Creole genesis: summary

The findings of this study suggest that morphophonological and structural properties of creole nominal markers were largely shaped on the basis of the input from superstrate and substrate languages filtered out in accordance with a number of universal and context-specific criteria (e.g., the semantic interpretability of a feature, (partial) convergence between the source languages, the amount and intensity of contact between a creole and its source languages). I therefore believe that the development of the formal properties of creole NEs can be best accommodated and interpreted within the feature pool approach to creole genesis advocated by Mufwene (2000 and other work) and Aboh (2006 and other work). At the same time, I tend to agree with Chaudenson’s point that “in creole languages there are almost no positive transfers of obviously non-European linguistic features” (Chaudenson 2001: 148). Setting the cases of transfer of substrate morphemes aside, the influence of substrate languages on the structure of creole NEs appears to be largely restricted to the reinforcement and (sometimes) modification of the patterns available in the superstrate input.

As far as the discourse-semantic properties of the creole nominal markers are concerned, I argue that much of what we observe in creoles results from the application of the universal principles of reference marking and discourse formation and the universal tendencies of grammaticalization. While this by no means sets creole languages apart as a new typological class, as claimed by Bickerton (1981), McWhorter
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(2001) or Bakker et al. 2011, it does show that creoles are more than mixed descendants of their source languages.

10.3 Contribution to the research on nouns and NEs.

By looking at the structure and distribution of creole NEs, the present study contributes to a number of topics within the research on NEs.

10.3.1 Creole data in the light of the DP-hypothesis

In the Introduction to the book I already pointed out that creole data provides a potential challenge to the currently prominent DP-hypothesis (e.g., Abney 1987; Szabolcsi 1987; Longobardi 1994; Chierchia 1998). Assuming that D is a syntactic primitive that assigns reference (i.e. singularizes and individuates the nominal description) and converts nominal predicates into arguments, the wide usage of bare NEs observed in creoles appears problematic. What parameter, if any, allows these languages to use bare nouns in argument positions? Should we, following Longobardi (1994), assume that the DP structure is universal and that creoles are subject to a parameter that allows non-overt D’s so that both determined and bare nouns always project a full DP? Or should we rather adopt the weaker hypothesis that creole languages allow for bare NP structures (Chierchia 1998)?

The existing literature that touches upon the issue of the creole nominal structure presents us with several distinct views. While some researchers (e.g., Stewart 2007) claim that bare NEs with zero determiners in Jamaican Creole are semantically and syntactically equivalent to determined NEs, Bruyn’s (1995, 2007), analysis implies that bare NEs in Sranan possess an impoverished nominal structure.

It is generally assumed that a null element can be postulated if it alternates with an overt morpheme (or morphemes) and if it always expresses a distinct semantic value. Many of the creole languages considered here appear to violate these conditions by using determiners variably and allowing for determined and bare NEs in similar semantico-pragmatic conditions. On the other hand, the variation in the use of determiners is not free. In contrast to determiners and number markers in Germanic and Romance languages, which are only sensitive to definiteness and/or number, creole determiners and number markers are sensitive to a number of interrelated semantic, pragmatic and syntactic factors. In the present study, such factors as the referential properties and discourse prominence of NEs and the non-redundancy principle were shown to constrain the distribution of determined and bare NEs in creoles. This suggests that creole determiners are not optional but have a richer semantic and pragmatic content than their Germanic and Romance counterparts.

What complicates the picture is that the factors listed in the previous paragraph apply variably and do not operate in exactly the same way in all creoles. While some
creoles make an extensive use of overt determiners and plural markers, allowing for bare NEs in a restricted range of contexts, in other creoles overt marking of referentiality and individuation is rather scarce. The variability of determiner use observed within and across creoles makes the creole data problematic for both Longobardi’s and Chierchia’s claims.

According to Longobardi, NEs always project a full DP regardless of whether they occur with an overt determiner or not. If a determinerless NE occurs in an argument position, N is assumed to have raised to the D position (overtly or covertly) or the NE is assumed to comprise a null D + N. The first scenario is applicable to proper names and generics, the second – to determinerless common nouns. In chapter 9, I also used the raising analysis in application to topical NEs to demonstrate that these are different with regard to their underlying structure from non-specific NEs. This analysis undermines Bruyn’s claims with regard to the zero determiner in Sranan, which, according to Bruyn, may occur with non-specific and topical NEs and is therefore ambiguous with regard to specificity. Under the raising analysis, topical NEs do not have a determiner at all. While Longobardi’s analysis helps to distinguish between these two types of definite determiner omission, it cannot accommodate the wide distribution of bare NEs we observe in creoles. Longobardi maintains that determinerless common nouns may only occur in lexically governed positions. Typically, a null D is lexically governed by V. While this observation is true for Romance languages, analyzed by Longobardi, it is violated by many of the creoles studied here.

Creoles also pose problems for Chierchia’s account of the cross-linguistic variation in the use of bare NEs. If we consider Chierchia’s classification of languages in accordance with the Nominal Mapping Parameter, creoles may be grouped together with Slavic and Germanic languages. Such languages do have morphemes, which overtly realize D but allow for bare NEs in certain contexts. Under Chierchia’s analysis, such languages are considered to have both argumental and predicative nouns. The use of determined and bare NEs in such languages is not free but constrained in terms of the Blocking Principle. This principle stipulates that a zero morpheme for a given feature value is blocked whenever the language possesses an overt morpheme which expresses the same feature value. This generalization is problematic for creoles, where elements identified as definite determiners may be omitted in a number of contexts as well as for creoles in which definite referents are normally denoted by means of bare NEs and the use of overt definite markers is only occasional. This problem disappears if we assume that creole nominal markers, which clearly possess a richer semantic and pragmatic content than their apparent Germanic/Romance counterparts, are, in fact, not fully grammaticalized D heads but can be rather regarded as weak deictic markers which are also employed to express the notion of definiteness. This is what I proposed in chapter 9.

If this is the case, creoles should rather be grouped together with languages like Chinese, in which, nouns always denote Kinds and determinerless NEs (structurally represented as bare NPs) freely occur in argument position. This again poses a problem
for Chierchia’s typology. According to Chierchia, languages with argumental NEs are distinguished by having a classifier system and no plural morphology. Most creoles have neither of the two.

This brief discussion shows that creole data clearly poses challenges for the currently prominent views on the structure and interpretation of NEs developed after the introduction of the DP hypothesis.

### 10.3.2 Creole data and Rijkhoff’s lexico-semantic noun types

The creole data is equally challenging for Rijkhoff’s classification of lexico-semantic noun types. According to Rijkhoff, nouns that are used in languages of the world to refer to spatially discrete entities can be grouped into four lexico-semantic classes based on their inherent specification for the features of individuation and number. These are: singular object nouns, set nouns, sort nouns, and general nouns. Rijkhoff’s classification is based on the analysis of the morphosyntactic behavior of NEs in a sample of typologically different languages.

In chapter 7, I argue that creoles with variable inflectional plural marking pose problems for Rijkhoff’s classification. Based on the distributional and interpretational properties of bare NEs, they fall into the class of set noun languages. The use of inflectional plural marking of the Germanic/Romance type is, however, a property of singular object noun languages, which, according to Rijkhoff’s analysis, should not be compatible with set nouns.

If we want to maintain Rijkhoff’s idea that the differences in the morphosyntactic behavior of NEs are indicative of different lexico-semantic properties of the nouns that head them, then we will be forced to conclude that nouns in creoles with variable plural marking of the Germanic/Romance type have two lexical entries: one with the semantics of a set noun and another with the semantics of a singular object noun. One is activated when a noun occurs in its bare form and the other when it combines with the plural marker -s. Such a rule would obviously go against the principle of economy, which has been repeatedly shown to play an important role in the organization of the language system.

Based on the evidence considered here, I propose that while Rijkhoff’s classification is useful as a typology of the licensing properties of NEs, the idea that the cross-linguistic differences in the morphosyntactic behavior of NEs are indicative of different lexico-semantic properties of the nouns that head them should be reconsidered. With regard to the lexico-semantic properties of nouns, I adhere to Borer’s (2005) universalist view.
10.4 Directions for further research

The scope of the study did not allow me the researcher to treat all the issues raised in the book equally well. Some of the issues touched upon here deserve attention and should therefore be further investigated.

As repeatedly pointed out in the book, the analysis of the development of creole NEs suffers from the scarcity of diachronic data. Diachronic research into the development of creole NEs would considerably substantiate the discussion if the possible sources of the structural and discourse-semantic properties of creole nominal markers.

While the present study digs into the issue of substrate influence more than some of its predecessors, it certainly leaves space for further research. It is sometimes pointed out in the literature that the research of substrate influence is inhibited by the scarcity of information about the behavior of determiners and plural markers in the substrates. However, the body of research in this area has significantly grown in the past couple of years.

A considerable part of the present study was dedicated to the discussion of the categories of definiteness and specificity and their role in the distribution of creole nominal markers. As far as this research topic is concerned, the analysis of creole data could certainly profit from a broader, interdisciplinary perspective. In the chapters devoted to the distributional properties of creole NEs, I claim that creole nominal markers display sensitivity to the universal principles of reference marking and discourse organizations and attempt to draw comparisons between the phenomena observed in creoles and the phenomena observed in other world languages, as well as in cases of L1 and L2 acquisition. A systematic comparison of findings obtained in creole studies, linguistic typology, and studies of L1 and L2 acquisition could significantly substantiate the claims with regard to the nature and semantico-pragmatic content of the categories we identify as definiteness and specificity and allow us to address the issue of their origins in the human language.

These are, in my belief, the major issues that need to be researched in order to complete the picture that has been drawn in the present study. I hope that this book will give the reader more new ideas and inspire further research into the structure and interpretation of NEs in creoles and in other languages of the world.