

## Nominal Architecture in Jamaican Creole

Stephanie Durrleman, University of Geneva, e-mail: stephanie.durrleman@lettres.unige.ch

This study explores the extended projection of nouns in Jamaican Creole (JC) and aims to uncover the inventory of structural positions related to this domain. The data presented illustrates that the DP in JC is highly articulate, involving various projections that host nominal functional material. Along the lines of Cinque (1994) and Scott (2002), among others, a fine-grained syntactic map is developed and seen to account for various distributional and interpretational aspects of nominal morphology in JC. The investigation (i) testifies to the presence of an elaborate hierarchy of functional projections in the DP, (ii) offers new evidence in favour of the enriched structural architecture upheld by the cartographic approach, and (iii) confirms that Creole is no ‘simpler’ in this respect than any other natural language.

I further observe that the presence of morphological material in the higher sections of the JC nominal architecture has an impact on the interpretation of tense and aspect when the latter are morphologically null. More specifically, in the absence of TMA marking, the temporal and aspectual interpretations of non-stative verbs vary depending on properties of the internal argument:

- (1a) Jan nyam **(big) bredfruit**  
John eat (big) breadfruit  
‘John **eats** (big) breadfruits’
- (b) Jan nyam **di / dis / som/ chrii bredfruit**  
John eat the/this/some/three breadfruit  
‘John **has eaten/ ate** the/this/some/three breadfruit(s) (up)’

I argue that these default telicity effects are encoded by delimiting an eventive VP with a ‘quantized’ direct object, as opposed to a non-quantized one. This ‘quantized’ trait stems from the morphological realization of projections higher than attributive AdjPs in the nominal domain. Such a DP has the effect of measuring out the event evoked by the verb (Tenny 1987) and, I argue, qualifies the eventive VP for movement to [SpecCompletive, AspP]. This movement becomes visible in instances where the completive marker is actually pronounced in a clause-final position:

- (2) Im nyam di bami don  
S/he eat the bammy [Completive]  
‘She finished eating it (up)’

I propose that the option for Completive<sup>o</sup> to be left morphologically null in JC becomes available because of this VP-movement to the Specifier of CompletiveP, in the spirit of Dimitrova-Vulchanova & Giusti (1998) who state that “A Functional Projection must be visible at all levels of representation: by (a) making the Spec visible and/or (b) making the head visible”. As a result of this reasoning, we arrive at a new account for temporal/aspectual interpretations of Creole ‘bare sentences’, where a default past, completive reading results for certain VPs in the absence of TMA marking. This analysis therefore suggests that even Creole ‘bare sentences’, i.e. those sentences lacking inflectional markers in the middle-field, are arguably structurally more complex than they seem at first sight.