

*Se/sa-ki* as head of relativised determiner phrases in Mauritian  
Muhsina Alleesaib  
Université de Paris-8, UMR SFL/ ED CLI  
[muhsinaa@hotmail.com](mailto:muhsinaa@hotmail.com)

This paper focuses on the morphosyntax of *se-ki* and *sa-ki* which occur in relativised determiner phrases (RDP) in Mauritian Creole : it is proposed that they should be analysed as newly formed words. Following Kayne (1994), I will assume that relativisation involves movement of a nominal (the pivot) from the embedded clause into the Specifier of the Complementizer Phrase.

RDP's may contain a pivot that is either a lexical item (1a) or a functional item *se/sa-ki* (1b) which is composed of *se/sa* and *ki*. *Se* and *sa* seem to vary freely. The complementizer *ki* occurs to the right of the pivot and does not vary according to the case of the extracted element. It is a subordinator that introduces object clauses and relative clauses ; it can also be an interrogative pronoun meaning 'what' or enter into the composition of various question words (*kifer* 'why', *kisennla* 'who'). As for *se*, it is analysed as a presentational noun by Henri and Abeillé (2007) since it appears in identificational constructions of the type X *se* Y. It also occurs in mesolectal varieties of Mauritian Creole to introduce clefted or pseudo-clefted elements (2). *Sa* is either a demonstrative pronoun or a demonstrative determiner depending on the syntactic context.

The analysis proposed here has *se* and *sa* occupy the same position as the lexical pivot, that is Spec,CP, given the fact that they share the same distribution in subject and object relativisation. The extraction of a Prepositional Phrase, however, obligatorily involves the use of a resumptive pronoun if the pivot is non-lexical (3) whereas resumption is optional in lexically-headed relatives. Also, *ki* is claimed to be the head of CP instead of occupying Spec,CP : it may not be treated as a (relative) pronoun given that it does not undergo Case alternations.

From a theoretical point of view, the description of *se/sa-ki* relatives illustrates the nominal properties of functionally-headed RDP's : in Mauritian Creole, they may combine with the quantity/plurality morpheme *bann* and with the postnominal determiner *la* (1,3). This parallelism fits easily into Kayne's framework where relatives are treated as complex DPs.

On a comparative note, it should be emphasised that the lexifier of Mauritian Creole, French, has two types of functionally-headed RDP's : a paradigm with *celui* and one with *ce* (4). *Celui* as a pivot is marked for gender and number, whereas *ce* isn't. *Ce* RDP's, moreover, are restricted to inanimate referents. Interestingly, these distinctions have not survived in Mauritian Creole, providing another example of the loss of inflectional morphology in creole formation. Furthermore, *se/sa* cannot be separated from *ki* whereas adverbs may intervene between *celui* or *ce* and the complementizer. Presumably, *se-ki* and *sa-ki* have combined into a single word in the grammar, thereby forming a new pronoun. This new pronoun is of a category that can be found in other languages (cf. English *whatever/ whoever* and maybe *quiconque* in certain varieties of French) and is therefore not an exceptional feature of Mauritian Creole.

### Examples :

- (1)a. Ramas papye ki inn tonbe la.  
pick.up paper COMP PERF fall DET  
'Pick up the paper(s) that is/are on the floor.'
- b. Ramas se-ki inn tonbe la.  
pick.up SE-KI PERF fall DET  
'Pick up what is on the floor.'
- (2) Se-ki<sub>1</sub> mo kwar, [se ki<sub>2</sub> Rani pa ule fer sintaks.]  
SE-KI 1SG think SE KI R. NEG want do syntax  
'What I think is that Rani does not want to do syntax.'
- (3)a. \*Pret mwa [ek se- ki to pe telefone \_\_\_ \_\_\_z la].  
lend 1SG with SE KI 2SG PROG call DET
- b. \*Pret mwa [se- ek ki to pe telefone \_\_\_ \_\_\_z la].  
lend 1SG SE with KI 2SG PROG call DET
- c. Pret mwa [portab<sub>z</sub> ki to pe telefonn ek sa<sub>z</sub> la].  
lend 1SG cellphone KI 2SG PROG call with DEM DET  
Lit. 'Lend me the cellphone that you are calling with that.'
- d. Pret mwa [se<sub>z</sub> ki to pe telefonn ek sa<sub>z</sub> la].  
lend 1SG SE KI 2SG PROG call with DEM DET  
Lit. 'Lend me the one that you are calling with that.'
- (4)a. **Celui** que Corinne a peint est moche. 'The one (MSing) that Corinne painted is ugly.'  
b. **Celle** que Corinne a peinte est moche. 'The ones (FSing) that Corinne painted is ugly.'  
c. **Ceux** que Corinne a peints sont moches. 'The ones (MPI)that Corinne painted is ugly.'  
d. **Celles** que Corinne a peintes sont moches. 'The one (FPI) that Corinne painted is ugly.'  
e. **Ce** que Corinne peint est moche. 'What Corinne paints is ugly.'

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