Mauritian Creole Revisited: Some Inferences Drawn From the Study of
a Sample of Mauritian Creole Data*

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1.   Introduction

    "Possibly all change processes partake of the characteristics of
creolization, with the *particular* historical circumstances making the
crucial, but essentially quantitative, difference." (Hoenigswald 1971:
479).   If Hoenigswald's hypothesis proves to be correct, the
implication is that the study of Creole languages has much to offer
the theorist of language change.

    Morris Goodman's comprehensive study of French Creoles was
published in 1964.   In 1981 I collected a small sample of Mauritian
Creole data in Calgary.   In the hope that the time lapse would reveal
some points of difference which could suggest appropriate questions
or even directions for research in the field of language change, I
examined the Calgary data in relation to Goodman's data and in
relation to other references to French Creoles in the literature.

    The informants were two sisters, native speakers of Mauritian
Creole, aged between thirty and forty years.   One sister left Mauritius
in 1970, and is now a resident of Calgary.   The other sister, still
resident on Mauritius, was visiting Calgary on vacation.   Two types
of data were collected, a "spontaneous" conversation, and an elicited
set of constructions based upon Goodman's data.   Both spontaneous   and
 elicited   data were utilized in the study.   In keeping with Goodman's
usage, a written form of language was used for the gloss, with phonetic
transcription being provided only where indicated by square brackets.
Not all of the data collected have been utilized: a selection of
interesting or significant linguistic items was chosen for discussion.

    The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, uninhabited until it was
settled by the French in 1715, has an interesting history of migration.
The French brought with them slaves from both West and East Africa
and Madagascar, and there were East Indian and Malay slaves also.
After the Napoleonic Wars, the island became British.   During the 19th
century, the British introduced indentured labour from the Indian sub-
continent.   When Mauritius became independent in 1968, two-thirds of
the population were Indo-Mauritians, both Hindu and Muslim; a little
over a quarter were Creoles, generally descended from white colonists
and African slaves; and the rest were mostly French and Chinese
Mauritians.   (National Geographic Magazine, October 1981:437.)

    When the island gained independence in 1968, the official
language remained English, although Creole, Hindi and French are

more widely spoken (*op. cit.*). The Calgary informant described a
social dichotomy of influence corresponding to the cultures and
languages of the two former world powers, England and France. Although
all schools are bilingual, and all children are taught in English and
French from Grade I onwards, the achievements of the children, and
their cultural orientation, differ. "Indo-Mauritians control the
government." (*ibid.*, p. 437). Hindi speaking children are surrounded
by social attitudes that are positive with respect to the English
culture. Indo-Mauritian children aspire to study at the great
universities of England, and they achieve well in English at school.
Creole children, on the other hand, carry to school social attitudes
common amongst the Creole people of dislike of the English language
and culture. The Creole children are oriented towards France, and
for this reason, and possibly other reasons such as the ease of
articulation of French compared with that of English, achieve more
highly in French than in English.

2. The Data

    (1) Gloss: a beautiful river
           Standard French (SF):   une belle rivière
           Mauritian Creole (MC):   éne belle larivière
                                         éne zolie larivière

    (2) Gloss: a very beautiful garden
           SF: un jardin superbe
           MC: éne bel bel zardin
                                       éne zardin extra

These utterances reflect the French influence on the positioning
of the adjective in Mauritian Creole. Goodman (1964:22) claims that
French usage is a safe guide with respect to this syntactical point.
The post-positioning of the uncommon and (in its original form) "long"
adjective 'extra' compared with the positioning of the more common
adjectives 'belle' and 'zolie' support his contention.

The Calgary informant made it clear that in phrases such as
these a number of variations was available to her. As an urbanized
Creole speaker, her dialect is influenced by standard French to a
degree that would not apply in isolated areas, e.g., in coastal
fishing villages. This writer proposes a modern French influence upon
the phrase 'éne zardin extra,' where the adjective 'extraordinaire'
has been shortened in a manner analogous to the shortening of
'sympathique' to 'sympa' in the phrase 'un professeur sympa.'

    (3) Gloss: a house, a big house
           SF: une maison, une grande maison
           MC: éne lacase, éne grandcase

The use of the fairly uncommon French word 'case' (gloss 'hut, cabin') as the model for the Mauritian Creole word signalling the semantic norm is explained by Goodman (*ibid.*, p. 28) as being possibly the result of two factors. At the time that the pre-Creole and Creole languages were developing, the usual form of housing for the slaves would have been deviant from the French norm, thus requiring a marked form of the noun for 'house.' Goodman is also conscious of other European influences in the development of the Creole languages, and suggests that the Portuguese word 'casa' may also have contributed to this usage. Contrary to the use of 'maison' in the Antilles as a marked form of the noun referring to a large, elaborate dwelling, the Calgary informant reported the equivalent marked form in Mauritian Creole as 'grandcase.'

(4) Gloss: I am speaking.
     SF: Je parle
     MC: Mo pê causé

(5) Gloss: He is making fun of me.
     SF: Il se moque de moi.
     MC: Li pê moque moi.   [mwa]
                     Li pê sicane moi. [mwa]

(6) Gloss: My father
     SF: Mon père (mon = [mɔ̃])
     MC: Mo papa (mo = [mo])

These utterances were chosen to illustrate the use of personal pronouns in Creole. Although the plural personal pronouns do not vary in form according to their grammatical function, there is a certain amount of alternation among the singular personal pronouns. This is best preserved in Louisiana and Mauritius, where 'mo' occurs in pre-construction or nominative position, and in possessives if they precede the noun they modify, whilst the Louisiana [mwɛ̃] and the Mauritian [mwa] occur exclusively in post-construction. Mauritius is the only area in which the modern standard French pronunciation [mwa] is found (Goodman, 1964:34-5).

The French origin of many lexical items in this section is very clear. 'Causer' (to chat) provides the semantic base for an utterance referring to speech. From 'se moquer de' (to make fun of) and 'chicaner' (to wrangle or squabble) are derived respectively 'moque' and 'sicane'. (See (17) for explanation of the derivation of 'sicane.') The word 'papa' is used frequently in the spoken form of the French standard language.

(7) Gloss: the men and the women
     SF: les hommes et les femmes
     MC: ça [sa] zom-la ek ça fam-la

(8) Gloss: look at this bird
     SF: regarde cet oiseau [wazɔ]
     MC: guette ça zozo-la
                                   guette ça zwazo-la [zwazɔ]

(9) Gloss: rice and curry
     SF: du riz et du cari
     MC: douriz cari
                                   douriz ek cari

(7) and (8) illustrate the use of a particle which refers to a
specific and definite instance of a noun, not to the general concept
which it represents. The literature reveals a lack of agreement as
to whether the status of the particle is that of a demonstrative or
a definite article. It is suggested that it derives from a con-
vergence of the French postposed demonstrative 'là' and the Ewe
definite article 'la' which is virtually phonetically identical with
the French demonstrative, and is similarly postposed in relation to
the noun (Goodman 1964:47, 48).

The speaker's use of the variant [zwazɔ] in addition to the [zozo]
reported by Goodman (*ibid.*, p. 47) may reflect her French-influenced
idiolect. It may also reflect dialectal usage unknown to Goodman, or
a recent development.

Utterances (7) and (9) illustrate alternate ways of representing
the connection of coordinate words and phrases. 'Ek,' deriving from the
French word 'avec' (with) is used in two of the three phrases, whilst
the third 'douriz cari' juxtaposes the two nouns without employing any
connecting word. Extension of the preposition 'with' to include its
use as a connector is seen by Goodman as being a result of the influence
of West African languages on French Creoles in general. Because of its
wide geographical distribution, this usage is seen as strong evidence
in support of Goodman's positing of a close genetic connection, deriving
from a slave's jargon, of all the Creole dialects (*ibid.*, pp. 94-95).

(10) Gloss: the man's hat
     SF: le chapeau de l'homme
     MC: sapo ça zom-la

As do many other French Creole languages (Goodman, 1964:53),
Mauritian Creole omits a possessive connective. The possessive relation-
ship is expressed by juxtaposition of the possessed noun and the pos-
sessor, in that order. Although the order is different, this phenomenon
can also be seen in samples of Vernacular Black English (VBE). In VBE,
however, usage can fluctuate between use and non-use of a form of
possessive inflection. Traugott (1976:91) compares the use of 'Sharon's
dress' and 'her sister's dress.'

The demonstrative 'ça' used in this utterance, followed by the
particle 'la' postposed to the noun, is considered by Goodman to be a

more forceful demonstrative than the postposed 'la' used alone
(*ibid.*, p. 47).

(11)	Gloss:	to dine; he knows
	SF:	dîner; il connaît
	MC:	[dine]; [kɔne]

This pair of words was chosen to test the possibility that the
nasalization of [e] in word-final position following a nasal consonant
could still occur in Mauritian Creole. Urruty (1950, 1951 cited by
Goodman, 1964:68) claimed that "ça existe-quoique cette tendance ait
disparu completement avec la jeune génération." In 1981 the Calgary
informant employed no nasalization of the final [e] in these words,
thus appearing to confirm the tendency noted by Urruty in 1951.

(12) a.	Gloss:	the lady sits down.
	SF:	Madame s'assied
	MC:	Madame pé assizé [asize]

b.	Gloss:	I am sitting down at the table
	SF:	je m'assieds à table
	MC:	mo pé assize à tabe[asiz]

(13)	Gloss:	I am eating
	SF:	je mange
	MC:	mo pé manzé
		mo apé manzé

With respect to the grammatical points of (12) and (13), the
data confirm two points made by Goodman. The first is his assertion
of morphological alternation, peculiar to Mauritian Creole, in the
construction corresponding to the French 's'asseoir.' The alternation
depends upon the presence or absence of a phrase-final verb, i.e.
[asize] phrase-finally and [asiz] in non-phrase final position. The
second is the exemplification of the variations 'pre' and 'ape,' which
are available to speakers in the formation of the present progressive
tense (*ibid.*, p. 82*)*. Given that 'pé' and 'apé' variants of (13)
are considered to derive from the French word 'après' (after), these
forms illustrate the development of open French word final [è] to
close [e] in most of the Creoles (*op. cit.*, 83*)*.

(14)	Question:	Have you finished yet?
	Answer:	
	Gloss:	I haven't finished my drink.
		OR
		Not yet.
	SF:	Je n'ai pas fini ma boisson.
		OR
		Pas encore.
	MC:	a. Mo pa fin fini mo boire.
		OR
		b. Mo pencore fini mo boire.

Goodman's proposed form of the above gloss 'mo pa ti fin mo bwasõ' (*ibid.*, p. 92) was not amongst the versions offered by the Calgary informant, although she offered three variants. These sentences were chosen because they illustrate the use of the usual negative particle 'pa' (14a), and a combination of that negative particle with the word 'encore' (14b) to form an equivalent to the French 'pas encore.'

This example of language change could possibly be used to support the contention of Sankoff and Laberge (1974:76) that native speaker children, speaking with greater speed and fluency than their second-language speaking parents, make reductions in morphophonemics and primary stress. Such tendencies may contribute to language change. Although this example of a blend was not cited by Goodman, it can be compared with examples of blends formed by similar internal pressures in other creoles (Goodman, 1964:135), e.g., 'ma' (Dominica, St. Lucia) and 'ba' (Trinidad), both meaning 'I don't' and deriving clearly from combinations of the 1st person singular pronoun and the negative particle 'pa.'

(15) Gloss: music; to brutalize; punishment
                                        some rice
        SF: la musique abrutir; la punition
                                          du riz
        MC: lamisque; abriti; pinition;
                                          douriz

(16) Gloss: a pleasant atmosphere; nice music;
                                        Good morning! Good afternoon!
        SF: une ambiance agréable; de la belle
                                        musique; bonjour! [3]
        MC: zolie lagamme; zolie lamisque;
                                        bonzour! [z]

(17) Gloss: dog; to squabble or wrangle
        SF: le chien chicaner [ʃ]
        MC: lisien; sicane [s]

These three groups of words and phrases were chosen to illustrate the occurrence of regular sound shifts in the development of the Mauritian Creole language from lexical forms based upon standard French models. (15) represents unrounding of the high front vowel [ü] to the front close [i], and also gives an example of a backing to ⌊u⌋, i.e., 'douriz.' These are regular changes in the Creole languages (Goodman, *ibid.*, p. 96). (16) and (17) represent a change in consonants from the shibilants [ʃ] and [ʒ] to the sibilants [s] and [z]. (17) represents also a slight semantic shift to include 'mocking' or 'teasing.'

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(18)  Gloss:                    lots of Mauritians
      SF:                       beaucoup de Mauriciens
      MC:                       Mauricien full
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(18) illustrates the use of English-derived words in the Mauritian Creole, a process which could be expected given that the island was British from the time of the Napoleonic Wars until its independence in 1968 and that the official language is still English. The informant cited some other English lexical forms used in the Creole, e.g., 'parcel' replacing 'colis,' 'blouse' replacing 'chemisier.' Goodman's data do   not include any examples of English-derived lexical forms. It is possible that such usage is a recent development. Also, the informant stressed the fact that such words are not numerous.

Goodman observes (*ibid.*, p. 17) that "[Creole] remains fairly strong, but is being more and more influenced by standard French in areas under French control, and to a lesser extent in Haiti and Mauritius.' Given that the Creole of Jamaica has come under great pressure from the standard form of English because of the position of the standard as the official language; and given the influence of Dutch, the official language, upon the English-based pidgins of Surinam (Todd 1974:62), it would be very interesting to use the case of Mauritian Creole to test the hypothesis that competing European influences have prevented pressure from either English or French from becoming overwhelming.

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(19)  Gloss:                    2nd person sing. pronoun   'you'
                                 "       "    plural    "    'you'
      SF:                        "       "    sing.     "    'tu'    [tü]
                                 "       "    plural    "    'vous'
                                Pronoun of respect 'vous' [vu]
      MC:                        2nd person sing. pronoun 'to'   [to];
                                 "       "    plural    "     'ou'   [u]
                                Pronoun of respect 'ou' [u]
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Mauritian Creole, like French, distinguishes between the second person singular and second person plural pronouns, and makes use of the plural or courtesy pronoun of address directed towards an individual in particular situations. This usage confirms the fact that the language has developed away from the "monostratic" code which Samarin (1971:122) claims renders pidgin languages socio-linguistically abnormal.

A study of contemporary usage of T and V in Mauritian Creole and in Mauritian Standard French would be interesting not only for purposes of comparison between the Creole and Standard languages: a comparison with usage in Metropolitan France and in French Canada should yield insights into the nature of language change and the nature of the linguistic and socio-political relationship. The Calgary informant estimates that such a study would reveal a much more conservative usage in both Mauritian Creole and Mauritian Standard, than are her French-speaking Calgary peers.

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(20)  a.  Gloss:              I laughed a lot.
          SF:                 J'ai beaucoup ri.
          MC:                 Mo rié, rié, rié.

      b.  Gloss:              I keep on beating him.
          SF:                 Je continue à le battre.
          MC:                 Mo batté batté.
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The utterances of (20), like utterance (2) (éne bel bel zardin)
illustrate the use of reduplication in Mauritian Creole. Whereas (2)
showed its usage as an intensified form of the adjective, (20) shows
that the verb form can be used in two ways. In (20a) it is once again
used as an intensifier. In (20b), however, it is used to signal
direction. This usage appears to conform with that of many other
Creole languages in that it is an example of the iterative aspect, one
of the three tense/aspect categories described by Bickerton (1979:4).
Traugott (1976:75) describes as "intensified duration" a neo-
Melanesian example "stap stap stap stap" of this iterative use of
reduplication. Note the use of the present tense in (20a) in MC,
signifying intensity.

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(21)  Gloss:                  Did the French dance the folkdance
                              called the "séga?"
      SF in France:           Les Français, ont-ils dansé la
                              danse folklorique "la séga?"
      Mauritian Standard      Les Français, ont-ils dansé
      French:                 "la séga?"
      MC:                     Français danse séga?
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The MC utterance illustrates the signalling of interrogation
solely by the use of intonation, a distinguishing feature of Creole.
It is never signalled by reversal of subject and verb (Goodman 1964:102).

The "séga" is a Creole cultural item, a folkdance. Use of this
term exemplifies lexical items derived from the non-European heritage
of the Creole people, for which there would have been no standard French
lexical form. Mauritian Standard French has in turn borrowed the term
and incorporated it into its lexicon. This particular term has not
been incorporated into standard Metropolitan French as has, for example,
the Australian indigenous people's word 'boomerang' into English, as
it is preceded by the explanatory words, 'la danse folklorique.'

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(22)  a.  Gloss:          (i)   I'll come with you to the
                                doctor's tomorrow.
                          (ii)  Don't worry, I'll come with
                                you to the doctor's tomorrow.
          MC:             (i)   Mo pu alle cote doctéure demais.
                          (ii)  Mo ava vine ek ou coute
                                doctéure demais.
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b. After being told that his mother is sick:

        Gloss: (i)   He will come.
                             (ii) He'll try to come.

        MC: (i)   Li pu vine. (Some time in the
                                   future, either near or distant.)
                             (ii) Li va vine. (He'll try—it's his
                                   duty to come—but it's not so sure.)

Richardson (1963, cited by Goodman, *op. cit.*, 86) describes usage with respect to the future tense thus: "There are two future tenses— the near and the distant (indefinite future). The first is indicated by [pu] (pour) and the second by [va] [a] [a va] (from the verb 'aller')." An element of uncertainty in the semantic field rather than indefiniteness subsumed under the heading "distant," is the distinguishing characteristic of the [va, ava] constructions used by the Calgary informant. The near/distant characterization of the construction as an example of tense with aspect, the "irrealis" described by Bickerton (1979:4). [pu] appears to be used as a factual expression, independent of the distance involved in the futurity which the speaker wishes to express.

3.   Comparison of the Calgary Data with the Indian Ocean data Used by
     Goodman

3.1 Similarities

Section 2 (above) clearly reveals that the Calgary data confirm many of Goodman's findings and descriptions of usage in Mauritian Creole.

Phonology

(a) There was a regular unrounding of [ü], usually to [i] (on one occasion to [ɪ] in 'pinition'); but occasionally, especially if followed by an [r], it is backed to [u], e.g., 'douriz' [duri].

(b) There was a regular sound shift of [ʃ] and [ʒ] to [s] and [z] respectively, where the shibilants merged with the blade sibilants.

(c) There was backing of [œ] to [o]. Goodman (*ibid.*, p. 76) offered the example of 'voleur' developing to [volor], whilst the informant offered 'pleurer' developed to [plore].

Syntax

Many examples of confirmatory data were found in this area. Some of these were: the positioning of the adjective, the lack of inversion in the interrogative, and the use of the present progressive tense signalled by the preposed particle 'pé.'

Lexical Forms

The elicited section of the data was designed so that a direct comparison with Goodman's data could be made. Lexical items were usually found to be identical, and the bulk of the lexicon appeared to be etymologically connected with French words, e.g., 'douriz ek cari,' 'mo papa,' etc.

Morphology

There was much support for Goodman's data in this area also. One example would be the loss of the overt inflectional system of French as regards number in demonstrative adjectives, e.g.,'ça fam-la.'

3.2 Differences

Phonology

(a) The Calgary informant intermittently employed [ʋ], possibly with allophonic status. The [ʋ] is not included in Goodman's (*ibid.*, p. 99) description of the [r] in Creole languages. This usage may reflect development in the language, or solely the diglossic situation of the speaker and its effect upon her pronunciation. A study of the use of [ʋ] in Mauritian Creole could provide an interesting comparison with its status in other parts of the French-speaking world, e.g., in Quebec.

(b) Goodman makes use of a proper noun 'Licien' [lisiɛ̃], following Baissac (1880, cited by Goodman *op. cit.*, 28). When the Calgary informant pronounced the name as [lüsiɛ̃], and on another occasion as [lʸisiɛ̃], some interesting dynamics of language accommodation were revealed. Following the regular unrounding of [u] to [i], and of [ʃ] to [s] in MC, two formerly distinct French words, 'le chien' meaning 'dog' and 'Lucien,' a person's name, are pronounced in the same manner as [lisiɛ̃]. In order to maintain the distinction, the speaker changes the form of the word denoting the person. The Calgary informant claimed that this change should be [li] -- [lʸi], although she used [lü] also. The data of Baissac's data (1880) suggests the possibility of development; but it is also possible that the researcher, being unaware of the special circumstances of this exception, over-generalized the [ü] de-rounding rule.

Morphology and Syntax

(a) Baudot (1923, cited by Goodman *op. cit.*, 47) claims that the demonstrative 'la' of 'guette zozo la' and similar constructions, may be accompanied by a more forceful demonstrative 'ça,' but need not be so accompanied. The Calgary informant insisted upon the use of 'ça' in any such environment, e.g., 'guette ça zozo la.'

(b)   Baissac (1880) and Baudot (1923) (both cited by Goodman *op. cit.*, 94) suggest 'av' and 'ek' as possible alternations for the connecting word glossing as 'with, and.' (As noted in Section 2 (9), these forms are etymologically related to the French word 'avec.') The informant claimed that she had never heard 'av' being used in this manner, as a connecting word: the only connecting word she employed in her data was 'ek.' The dates of Baissac's and Baudot's data indicate subsequent development of the language, with 'av' being lost, at least in the informant's dialect. Citation by Goodman of outdated, even of obsolete forms, could be justified given that his main thesis was the close genetic connection of the Creole languages. Nevertheless, these data should not mislead the reader with respect to current usage; nor should it be used to conceal facts (if any) of synchronic variation among the Creole languages.

The informant offered another means of expressing connected nouns in MC, i.e., the use of two co-ordinate nouns juxtaposed without any connecting word, e.g., 'douriz kari.' Goodman makes no mention of this usage. One would hypothesize, however, that it would not be a new development. It would be interesting if this form could be traced back to the pre-Creole stage of the language. Recent studies of young readers reveal the importance and significance for them of content words (e.g., 'birthday'). This contrasts with the lack of interest held for them by function words (Y. Goodman 1981). Child first language acquirers (Keller-Cohen 1978, McNamara 1972, cited by Huggins 1977:43) and adult second language learners (Cooper, Ashtain, Tucker and Waterbury, 1979) use context as a cue to language rather than language as a cue to context. The signalling of the possessive in MC solely by use of juxtaposition (Section 2 (10)) is another example of regard for "content" rather than "function" words.

(c)   In Section 2 (23), which deals with the forms 'pu' and 'va, ava' used for the future tense, the two sets of data have been interpreted in a subtly different manner. It would be interesting to see a comprehensive analysis of the MC tense system guided by Bickerton's (1979:4) divisions of tense-aspects in the Creole languages.

Lexical Forms

Goodman's use (*op. cit. passim*) of French-derived lexical forms should not mislead the reader as to the use in MC of lexical forms derived from other contact languages, and from the languages of the people who were originally the learners of the "model language" (Southworth 1971:260). Thus, the informant made spontaneous use of words 'séga' and 'full' in the non-elicited section of the data. It is claimed that lexical forms deriving from languages other than French should be included in any overall analysis of the language, not that they are in any respect as important or as numerous as the French-derived lexicon.

4. A Comparison of the Data with Some Descriptions of Mauritian
    Creole to be Found in the Literature

Research is needed into the question of mutual comprehension/-
comprehensibility among speakers of different languages or dialects.
Whinnom (1971:106) suggests that mispronunciation of words by the
learners undergoing a process of pidginization might render the
target language unintelligible to the native speaker. On the other
hand, Goodenough (1981:22, 23) dismisses the problems caused by
barriers of the phonological system and some of the morphological
barriers, opting for the overriding importance of the semantic
system and the use of distinct lexical forms as the chief potential
barriers to communication. The question of prosody "is scarcely
touched upon in the literature, and a comparative treatment is
therefore virtually impossible." (Goodman *ibid.*, p. 100)

Given the lack of consensus upon the factors which govern mutual
intelligibility, and the lack of research upon prosody, some
descriptions in the literature of the language situation among the
French Creoles appear to be superficial and over-simplified. Valdman
(1970:7) claims for the other French Creoles mutual intelligibility
with Haitian Creole, and (*op. cit.*, 6) that French and Creole are not
mutually intelligible. Whinnom (1971:103) describes it as having
"a very low level of intelligibility." DeCamp (1971:27) sums up:
"The French Creoles of the Caribbean and of the Indian Ocean are
all mutually intelligible. Within a community the French Creole is
also quite uniform and contrasts sharply with standard French. In
fact, a speaker's shift from the Creole to the mutually unintel-
ligible standard French is much like a shift to a totally foreign
language."

Against the assertions of mutual unintelligibility of standard
French and Creole must be set the use of these data by two non-native
French-speaking listeners who agreed that there was at least some
degree of intelligibility, which should be heightened in the event
of the listeners being native speakers. In the neglected area of
study of the general articulatory base of the language, there occurred
in the MC the French "tendency towards a front articulation"
(Malmberg 1963:71), and a tendency towards tense vowels in stressed
syllables. Sound changes were regular and could be deduced from
exposure to the data.

It is possible that the informants' idiolects (e.g., the
occasional use of [ʁ]) have been affected by their control of standard
French. Such a situation would lead to a questioning of the claim that
the French Creoles are quite uniform and "have long co-existed with
standard French or standard English...with surprisingly little inter-
lingual influence." (DeCamp 1971:17) DeCamp cites Goodman's work in
support of this statement, yet this writer can find in it no evidence
which could be thus construed. Goodman, cited elsewhere in this
paper, acknowledges the increasing influence of standard French. The

Calgary informant disallowed the possibility that she would use a pure form of Creole, and also remarked upon the influence of French upon her Mauritian-domiciled sister's contemporaneous use of the language, an influence which she felt had been heightened in comparison to her own usage.

With respect to the claims by Valdman and Decamp that the French Creoles are mutually intelligible, this writer suggests some degree of qualification also. Goodman (*ibid.*, p. 16, supported by private communication with Richardson cited *ibid.*, p. 16) is careful to point out the interesting dissimilarities between the Réunionais Creole and the Mauritian Creole, differences that are possibly quite surprising considering that the latter island was colonized from the former. The Calgary informant described occasions of reunion with friends from Haiti and Réunion when, to facilitate communication, it was found easier to converse in standard French than in the Creole. This evidence, as with the other rebuttals of Valdman, Whinnom and DeCamp offered above, is meant not to destroy the tenor of their statements, but to lead to a more complex and modified view which this writer believes would be a more realistic assessment of the situation. The rate of change in recent years may have been an important factor in rendering the language situation more complex in 1981 than in the 1960's.

5.   Conclusion

Goodman's suggestion (*ibid.*, p. 135) that creolized languages have undergone a historical development not very different "except in intensity" from those undergone by a large proportion of the languages of the world is echoed by Moag (1979:62) with his claim that they are subject to the same laws and processes as all languages in social context. The Quebec dialect of French shows a regular sound shift [ã] to [ã] in words such as 'enfant,' which parallels the sound shifts of the Mauritian Creole. Lexical borrowing, e.g., 'parcel' from English, can be paralleled by the use of the term 'Faculté des Arts' instead of 'des Lettres,' a similar example of lexical borrowing from English, in Québecois French. Semantic shift, e.g., the shift in MC of the semantics of the French verb 'parler' to the less common French verb 'causer' is a very common process in the world's history of contact between languages (Campbell 1979).

Sankoff, in a number of studies (Sankoff and Laberge 1974:76; Sankoff 1979:36), has shown that neo-Melanesian as it develops to the status of a Creole is responding to internal pressures. Thus, native speaker children make reductions (see Section 2 (14)) as they speak with greater fluency and speed than their parents. The blending of 'pas encore' to 'pencore' in MC could exemplify a similar process. The introduction of 'ia'-bracketed relatives in neo-Melanesian was also derived from existing constructions. It has been the case that

writers on historical problems of Creole generally have not been aware
of the "possibility of spontaneous evolution within these dialects,
but, instead, naively attempt to attribute every Creole feature of
uncertain origin to some prior source." (Goodman *op. cit.*, 120)   It
is proposed here that such an attitude would be a logical result of
a failure to appreciate that many aspects of Creole languages,
particularly the processes of change, can be paralleled in languages
which are not usually thought of as 'Creoles,' e.g., in English.

Greenberg (1963) in his work on synchronic regularities that
amount almost to universals, proposes that semantically unmarked
categories (nominative) will be morphologically unmarked, and semantically
marked categories morphologically marked. There is an interesting
similarity here between the MC and the Australian dialect of English
with respect to the word 'house.' The MC word 'case,' taking on the
semantics of the normal 'house' has marked a big house as 'grandcase.'
The Australian dialect, using the word 'house' as the term for the
normal house, a one-storeyed dwelling as opposed to the normal English
two-storeyed dwelling, marks the latter as a 'two-storeyed house.' The
English, on the other hand, marks the one-storeyed dwelling by
designating it a 'bungalow.' In both the dialect and the Creole,
differences from the mother tongue or model language can develop
rapidly in the semantic field, especially where geographical and social
factors differ from those obtained in the countries of the European
"model language" speakers.

Problems of intelligibility between the standard and the Creole
may have been heightened by the general lack of written forms of the
Creole languages. Sound shifts and the development of distinctive
accents in geographically isolated areas can cause problems of intel-
ligibility to speakers of different dialects of the same language.
The advantage of standard conventional orthography for English lies in
its facilitation of world-wide communication amongst English speakers
whose spoken dialects display a wide range of variation.

If the theorist of language change is unwilling to agree with
Hoenigswald (1971:479) that "all change processes partake of
characteristics of creolization," he may yet agree that, as demonstrated
in this paper, many aspects of Creole languages are similar to those
of other languages with respect to characteristics of change. The
Creole languages therefore provide a rewarding field of study with
implications for the change processes of other languages. In Papua,
New Guinea, the emergence of neo-Melanesian (Tok Pisin) as the
official language, and its current use as a written language should,
in increasing the range of functions to which it is applied, have
an effect upon the language output (Samarin 1971:127). In the study
of the Creole languages, this writer suggests the use of a balanced
linguistic/socio-linguistic approach. The rationalist stance of
Bickerton (1979:1-22) is modified by Washabaugh (1979:125-139) in
his description of Providence Island Creole. The latter appears to
be governed by the ideals of Weinreich, Labov and Herzog with respect to

his explanations as to why "changes in a structural feature take place in a particular language at a given time, but not in other languages with the same feature, or in the same language at other times." (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968:102) Washabaugh uses both history and geography to explain the unique circumstances of Providence Island, and to propose connections between its social situation and development in its Creole language.

Applied to Mauritian Creole, such an approach should be fruitful. Product of a fast language contact situation and an ongoing one, and unofficial language in a newly politically independent country, Mauritian Creole merits analysis.

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