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Title	On the emergence of new language varieties: The case of the Eastern Maroon Creole in French Guiana
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Publication date	2011
Publication information	Hinrichs, L. and Farquharson, J.T. (eds). Variation in the Caribbean From creole continua to individual agency
Publisher	John Benjamins Publishing
Link to online version	<a href="http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027287397-13mig">http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027287397-13mig</a>
Item record/more information	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7701">http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7701</a>
Publisher's version (DOI)	<a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/cil.37">http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/cil.37</a>

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## On the emergence of new language varieties: The case of the Eastern Maroon Creole in French Guiana

### 0. Introduction

Historical linguistic research has traditionally assumed that new dialects emerge gradually as the result of the spread of languages due to the migration of part(s) of their speakers to new locations or due to the relative isolation of part of the population in geographically relatively inaccessible locations such as mountainous areas. Social dialectological work (Labov 1963, Britain 2002) has also identified factors such as negative stereotypes, local rivalry and the absence of public transportation, as causing or enhancing dialect divergence. Finally, the bulk of sociolinguistic research has strikingly demonstrated that social factors such as class or social group membership, age, ethnicity etc. play an important role in constraining patterns of interaction and thereby contribute to the divergence of dialects/varieties.

While dialectological and traditional sociolinguistic research on dialects implicitly or explicitly maintains that linguistic differentiation comes about due to gradual language-internal processes of change, language contact is typically invoked as a prime factor in the emergence of Diaspora varieties of a language. Cases in point are Diaspora varieties of Hindi (e.g. Siegel 1988, 1990, 1997; Mesthrie 1991) and (new) varieties of English (cf. Kortman & Schneider 2004). Siegel, for instance, has identified the following kinds of processes besides independent language-internal development as having played a role in the emergence of new varieties of Hindi (e.g. Trinidad Hindi, Mauritian Hindi, Guyanese Hindi):

1. Dialect mixing: mixing of features from different regional and local varieties.
2. Formal simplicity: regularization and reduction of categories and loss of inflections.
3. Dialect levelling: loss of input dialect features due to selection of equivalent features from other varieties
4. Focussing: stabilization of a new variety based on the input varieties; sometimes much based on a majority variety

A range of other processes of contact-induced change such as borrowing, convergence, L2 acquisition and substratum influence (cf. Thomason & Kaufman 1988, Winford 2003) have been invoked as having played an important role in the creation of (new) varieties of English that arose in bilingual and multilingual contact settings (e.g. Singlish English, Irish English).

With respect to Creoles, it is widely believed that they have few internal varieties; The linguistic literature generally refers to *the* Creole and does not narrowly define the variety of Creole they are dealing with; at most we find a brief characterization of the social and regional background of the speakers from whom the data were drawn. There is relatively little research on the sociolinguistic makeup of Creoles. For some settings, e.g. Haiti (Fattier 1999), Jamaica (DeCamp ???), it has been demonstrated that there is regional variation but little is still known about how speakers conceptualise this variation and what role it plays in everyday interactions and in local identity politics. Regional differences are generally argued to be due to (partial) differences in the nature of the linguistic input (e.g. relative importance of regional European varieties, African languages, other Caribbean Creoles) at Creole formation, the past and current makeup of the population and the patterns of interaction between the different population groups (cf. Winford 1997).

In terms of social and stylistic varieties, some Creoles are described as more or less mono-stylistic (e.g. Belize). Essentially, it is argued that the Creole, which is used

in informal settings, is in contact with the official language, e.g. English, which is used in formal contexts. While it is acknowledged that there is a certain amount of interaction between the Creole and English, this 'zone' of interaction is argued to not constitute a separate variety. Other settings (e.g. Guyana) are described as consisting of two main Creole varieties, the so-called *basilect* and *mesolect*. The *basilect* is the variety that is structurally clearly distinct from the European input language and typically associated with rural populations. In contrast, the *mesolect* is associated with urban populations and is described as being linguistically intermediate between the European input language and the *basilect*. The traditional view (Bickerton 1975) maintains that *mesolects* emerged when speakers of the *basilect* gained greater access to the official language in the post-emancipation context and borrowed features they had acquired from English into the Creole. Socio-historical and historical linguistic research on Caribbean Creole communities has, however challenged this view arguing that Creole societies were never socially and linguistically homogeneous. From the beginning, different social groups of slaves spoke different varieties of Creole because of different patterns of interaction and due to different degrees of access to English, African languages and other contact varieties. According to this view, modern (mesolectal or basilectal) varieties essentially emerged due to processes of contact and linguistic focusing from these earlier varieties (Winford 1997).

Qualitative research on variation in Creole communities demonstrates that Creole speakers do not only recognize the two (Creole & official language) or three varieties (basilect, mesolect, official language) posited by quantitative sociolinguistic research. The members of Creole communities strategically and creatively draw on these varieties in order to construct individual and group social identities and social relationships. This has led to the emergence of new varieties that are associated with partially distinct social entities (e.g. social groups, settings) (Reisman 1970, LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985, Garrett 2000).

It then appears that Creoles, like other languages, have considerable internal complexity. This complexity seems to have emerged due to different kinds of processes of contact. However, to date little is known about the sociolinguistic structure of any one Creole and the social and linguistic processes that contributed to its emergence and maintenance. The aim of this paper is to investigate these issues in relation to the Eastern Maroon Creoles (EMCs) of Suriname and French Guiana. The discussion suggests that contrary to common assumptions, the speakers of these Creoles traditionally recognize a range of social and regional or ethnic varieties. In addition, new varieties and practices continue to emerge most likely spurred by the social changes that have been affecting these communities in the last 30 years.

The data for this study come from a range of sources. Part of the data come from long-term participant observation mainly in one of the three Eastern Maroon (EM) communities, semi-guided discussions with EMs and recordings of natural interactions among and with EMs. The other data come from semi-guided interviews and discussions with members of the multicultural French Guyanese society, a survey of school children in French Guiana aimed at obtaining linguistic practices, attitudes, and recordings of natural interactions in different settings such as at the marketplace, at work, within the family, among friends etc. (see (Léglise 2005; Léglise 2007).

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the current social and linguistic context in French Guiana. Section 3 discusses the traditional sociolinguistic structure of the Surinamese Creole linguistic space according the main group of native speakers, EMs. Section 4 investigates the social and linguistic changes that have been

affecting the EM linguistic space in recent years and section 5 discusses the findings and their implications.

### 1. Social and linguistic situation in French Guiana

French Guiana, located in South America, is a highly multilingual overseas department of France. Besides French, the official and ex-colonial language, about 30 languages are spoken. It is relatively difficult to obtain precise figures on the number of speakers for each language, including French, because French censuses do not record ethnic and linguistic information. However, available information suggests that about 20 of these roughly 30 languages are spoken by between 1% and 30% of the total population (Léglise, 2007). Officially and for most researchers working in the region, languages are subdivided into so-called indigenous (e.g. Amerindian languages and some Creoles such as Créole Guyanais) and immigrant languages (e.g. Haitian Creole, Hmong) but for most languages this distinction proves problematic (Léglise, 2004) because the region has been subject to several waves of migration over the last few centuries. The current situation is, however, of particular interest because the scale of migration has increased considerably over the last 30 years - the 1999 national census figures show that more than half of the population were born outside of Guyane.

The following kinds of languages are currently spoken in French Guiana: 6 Amerindian languages, 4 French-based Creoles, 5 English-based Creoles, Hmong an Asian language, and other official languages of the Caribbean and Amazonian region such as Brazilian Portuguese, Dutch, English, and Spanish. In this paper, we will focus on the Western part of French Guiana and specifically on the situation of five related English-lexified Creoles that originally emerged on the plantations of Suriname (Migge 2003).

Aluku, Ndyuka and Pamaka are associated with three independent Maroon communities of the same name. They are the first languages of the members of these communities who have either been residing in French Guiana for more than two centuries or are recent migrants from the interior of Suriname. Based on sociohistorical and comparative linguistic data, linguists argue that they are dialects of a common language called *Nenge(e)*, *Businengetongo* (Goury & Migge 2003) or *Eastern Maroon Creole* (Migge 2003). The fourth variety, Saamaka, is usually described as an English-based Creole with a significant proportion of Portuguese lexical items (Queixalós 2000). It is associated with an ethnic group by the same name. Finally, Sranan Tongo is the mother tongue of the descendants of slaves who did not flee the plantations of Suriname. It also serves as a lingua franca in multiethnic Suriname (Carlin, 2001). Most linguists in French Guiana argue that it is not spoken natively in of French Guiana and is not part of the linguistic landscape (Queixalós 2000; Goury 2002).

A sociolinguistic survey (Léglise 2004, 2005) carried out over the last seven years provided further insights into the current situation of these Creoles in French Guiana. First, it revealed that *Nenge(e)*, essentially the numerically dominant EM variety Ndyuka, is not only practiced as a native language but appears to be also learned as an L2 by school children who are not ethnically Ndyuka. The latter children employ it to interact with Ndyuka friends in the school yard (Léglise, 2004, 2005). Attitudes towards *Nenge(e)* among the whole population are quite contradictory though. It is often described negatively as being “the language of migrants” and considered to lack prestige. However, the fact that it is widely used as an L2 suggests that it is becoming a regional lingua franca especially in the town of St Laurent du Maroni and among

school children (Léglise, 2004). According to Léglise (2007), about 30% of the population speak Nenge(e) as L1 or L2.

Second, the expression *Saramaka!* functions as an insult in the school yard. It is associated with backwardness. Speakers of Saamaka tend to disguise their ethnic and linguistic background by declaring to be speakers of Nenge(e) rather than Saamaka and by employing Nenge(e) as their main means of communication, especially in inter-ethnic settings (Léglise and Puren, 2005). While the Saamaka are, according to Price (2002), numerically the largest maroon group in French Guiana, their children only make up 5% of the school population in the western part of French Guiana (Léglise, 2005). The main reason for this seems to be that most Saamaka reside in remote rural locations that are badly connected to the main urban areas where most of the schools are located. Another explanation is that, due to the recent migrations, after the civil war in Suriname, they do not constitute the largest group anymore.

Finally, despite frequent claims to the contrary, the survey found that Sranan Tongo is spoken as a mother tongue in French Guiana by both so-called indigenous and immigrant populations. It is the mother tongue and main community language of a small Amerindian group residing in St. Laurent, the Arawaks (Léglise and Puren 2005). They became speakers of Sranan Tongo due to a process of language shift that started roughly 60 years ago. Sranan Tongo is also widely used as a means of inter-ethnic communication. Its vehicularization rate (see Table 1) is not very high among school children possibly because it is only learned in adolescence or adulthood (Léglise 2004) and most children in French Guiana may not be able to distinguish between the contemporary urban maroon varieties and Sranan Tongo (Léglise and Migge 2005). In fact, a “sort of Sranan Tongo”, locally referred to as Takitaki, is widely practiced by non-maroons in the Western part of French Guiana (Léglise & Migge 2006).

From the findings of the sociolinguistic survey it then appears that the contemporary structure of the Creoles of Suriname in French Guiana is much more complex than described in the literature. In the next section we investigate the sociolinguistic structure of these Creoles further by exploring the (traditional) linguistic ideology of the main native speaker group, the EMs.

Table 1 illustrates the vehicularization rates for different languages spoken in the biggest town of western Guyane, St. Laurent du Maroni. For each language, the absolute vehicularization rate is calculated, following Renaud and Dieu (1979), by devising its percentage of speakers within a town or a country by its percentage of L1 speakers. The weighted vehicularization rate, following Calvet (1993), gives more precise insights. It is calculated by devising the vehicularization rate by the total amount of speakers as L1.

Table 1. Vehicularization rates (Léglise, 2004)

	Percentage of speakers (L1-L4)	Weight of the language as L1	Vehicularization absolute rate	Véhicularization weighted rate/amount of speakers)
Brazilian Portuguese	4,2%	2,5%	1,7	0,07
Haïtian Creole	5,4%	4,7%	1,1	0,06
Dutch	5,4%	2,4%	2,2	0,12
Sranan Tongo	19,6%	8,3%	2,3	0,46
Créole Guyanais	13,7%	1,8%	5,7	0,78
Kali'na	5,3%	3,6%	1,5	0,08
Ndyuka	57,1%	39,9%	1,4	0,81
Sum of varieties of nenge(e)	82,1%	56,1%	1,5	1,27

## 2. The (traditional) native view of the EM linguistic space

Eastern Maroons employ a range of language terms that refer to different locally recognized varieties. Traditionally, they differentiate between varieties that are associated with local ethnic groups (i.e. regional varieties) and those that are associated with specific settings (i.e. registers) or social groups (i.e. social varieties). Below we discuss each in turn.

### 2. 1. Ethnic or regional varieties

EMs make reference to five EM varieties, namely Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka, Kotika and Saakiiki. The first three varieties are associated with independent EM communities by the same name. The members of the Kotika and Saakiiki communities are members of the different upriver Ndyuka lineages who came to settle along the lower Maroni/Marowejne River and the Commowejne River since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in search of it often referred to as a 'better' life. Due to their geographical separation from the upriver Ndyuka and the significant size particularly of the Kotika community, they have over the years come to be recognized as quasi-independent communities and their varieties as distinct from upriver varieties. However, to date there are no studies that have systematically investigated the similarities and difference between upriver Ndyuka and Kotika varieties.

The differences between the three main EMCs (Aluku, Pamaka, Ndyuka) are largely phonological and lexical in nature (e.g. Goury & Migge 2003).<sup>1</sup> From a linguistic point of view, they are relatively minor but they function as important markers of local ethnic identities. For instance, socially very significant phonological differences between Aluku (AL) and Pamaka (P) on the one hand and Ndyuka (ND) on the other hand involve the alternation between long and short word final vowels in

<sup>1</sup>There are also intonational differences between the three varieties but they have not yet been investigated.

some lexical items (1), the alternation in vowel height of word final front vowels (2) and the absence and presence of intervocalic liquids (3).

(1) word final vowel length

PM/AL	ND	gloss
<i>wata</i>	<i>wataa</i>	‘water’
<i>nenge</i>	<i>nengee</i>	‘person/language’
<i>boso</i>	<i>bosoo</i>	‘brush’

(2) word final vowel height

PM/AL	ND	gloss
<i>meki</i>	<i>meke</i>	‘make’
<i>teki</i>	<i>teke</i>	‘take’

(3) realization of intervocalic liquids

PM/AL	ND	gloss
<i>kali</i>	<i>kai</i>	‘call’
<i>weli</i>	<i>wei</i>	‘wear’

Besides the five EM varieties, EMs recognize four further ethnic varieties, namely Saamaka, Sranan Tongo, Matawai and Kwinti. Saamaka, Matawai and Kwinti are each associated with the three maroon communities of the same name from the Western part of Suriname. Sranan Tongo is the language of the urban population, particularly those of African descent often referred to as *fotonenge* ‘the Blacks of Paramaribo (Foto)’. Although all Surinamese Creoles descend from the same plantation varieties (Migge 2003), they differ somewhat linguistically and are not fully mutually intelligible due to partially different linguistic developments. The varieties associated with Sranan Tongo have been subject to relatively strong influence from Dutch while the varieties that developed into Saamaka (SM) and Matawai in particular were in close contact with Portuguese or Portuguese contact varieties during their emergence (Arends 1999, Smith 1999). The nature of the similarities and differences between the Surinamese Creoles can be illustrated by considering the area of potential modality (Table 2).

Table 2. Future and possibility in the Creoles of Suriname (based on Migge 2006)

Forms				CATEGORY	Meanings
PM	ND	SM	SN <sup>1</sup>		
<b>LEARNED ABILITY</b>					
<i>sabi</i>	<i>sabi</i>	<i>Sá</i>	<i>sabi fu</i>		Ability or skills acquired through learning or training
<b>POTENTIAL</b>					
<i>sa</i> <i>man</i>	<i>sa</i> <i>poy</i>	<i>sa</i> <i>sa</i>	<i>man/</i> <i>kan</i>  <i>kan</i>  <i>mag</i>	Positive Negative	<b>Physical ability</b> (Deontic) Ability subject to physical or natural law. <b>deontic (root) possibility</b> Ability/possibility subject to moral or social law, involving situations under the agent's control <b>permission</b> Deontic possibility imposed by authority (social, legal, etc.).
<i>sa</i> <i>kan-</i> <i>de</i>	<i>sa</i> <i>kan-</i> <i>de</i>	<i>sa</i> <i>kande</i>	<i>kan</i> <i>kande</i> <i>(sa)</i>	Positive Negative	<b>epistemic possibility</b> Possible situations, or situations to the certainty of which the speaker is not committed.

Note: <sup>1</sup>The information on Sranan Tongo comes from Winford (2000a).

Briefly, Table 2 shows that in all the Creoles of Suriname learned ability is expressed using the verb *sa(bi)*. Differences are found with respect to the expression of other potential meanings, however. First, while the maroon Creoles have a single potential category which is expressed using the marker *sa*, the urban Creole Sranan Tongo distinguishes several different categories, namely physical ability, root and epistemic possibility, and permission using distinct elements to convey them. Second, the EMCs differentiate between positive and negative potential contexts while Saamaka does not. Third, Aluku and Pamaka use *man* to convey negative potential modality while Ndyuka uses *poy*.

Synchronic and diachronic linguistic and sociohistorical evidence suggest that the early plantation varieties were characterized by a relatively great amount of variation. With respect to the potential domain, it seems likely that at least several of the currently attested elements, e.g. *sa*, *kan*, *man*, *poy*, coexisted in earlier varieties as means for expressing the same or partially overlapping potential modality meanings. Over time, each form became associated with a different emerging social and ethnic groups. We could hypothesize that the distinction between *sa* and *kan* is related to an rural/urban or maroon/non-maroon social differentiation since the Dutch-derived item *kan* continues, even today, to be strongly associated with an urban/town orientation. The distinction between *man* and *poy* conveys a socially pertinent inter-Maroon social distinction – the smaller Maroon groups were historically much dominated by the Ndyuka and therefore still like to differentiate themselves from it.<sup>2</sup> The adoption of Dutch-derived elements such as *mag* are most likely due to the comparatively strong influence from Dutch on the varieties that developed into Sranan Tongo.

<sup>2</sup> Note also that *poy* has overtones of being ‘deep’, ‘original’ and ‘powerful’.



## 2. 2. Social varieties

Traditionally, Eastern Maroons distinguish five broad social varieties.

### (4) Social varieties

- *lesipeki taki* ‘respect speech’
- *kowounu taki* ‘ordinary speech’
  
- *basaa nenge(e)* ‘non-maroon speech’
- *keliki taki* ‘church speech’
- *fositen nenge* ‘earlier talk’
- *afiiikan tongo* ‘African (ritual) languages’, e.g. loango, papa, koomanti

Respect speech differs from ordinary speech both socially and linguistically. While ordinary speech is commonly identified with low status and every day social interaction, e.g. informal chats among women and men, parent-child talk, talk accompanying subsistence work activities, respect speech is reserved for formal settings, e.g. talk among and with elders, socio-political meetings, delicate topics. Linguistically, respect talk is characterized by a range of negative politeness strategies, e.g. a special polite vocabulary to replace potential taboo terms, special status-indicating address terms, verbal indirectness, special turn-taking rules etc. (Migge 2004). Ordinary speech is best described as conversational talk. It is characterized by positive politeness strategies including relative directness of expression, use of vulgar and taboo vocabulary and the relative absence of special turn-taking rules.

*Basaa nenge* is broadly associated with L2 varieties of the EMC. They can generally be differentiated from native talk on the basis of a range of structural differences, e.g. absence of certain functional elements, absence of allomorphs (Léglise & Migge 2006). *Keliki taki* is the language traditionally used in church books and during mass. It is a stylised, non-native variety of Sranan Tongo used by the early missionaries. *Foisten nenge* is the language used by the early slaves and runaways. Today, it is heard in spirit possession ceremonies when the spirits of the early slaves and runaways communicate with present-day Maroons. It is also a stylised variety that resembles Sranan Tongo in several respects.

## 3. The EMC migrates to the coast

Since roughly the 1950s and particularly due to the civil war in Suriname in the late 1980s, members of all maroon societies have increasingly been migrating to the regional urban centres in Suriname and particularly French Guiana. This has brought about the relative depopulation of the traditional villages and has given rise to changes in the social and linguistic practices of the maroon populations.

### 3.1. Changes in the linguistic repertoire and in-group linguistic practices

Traditionally, Maroons employed their variety of the EMC for all their communicative needs. Only a small number of men who regularly engaged with members from other communities for purposes of trade and/or who had spend some time doing cash labour on the coast acquired active competence in one of the main regional lingua franca, Sranan Tongo or Créole Guyanais. Competence in the official languages of the region, Dutch (Suriname) and French (Guyane), was even less common among the rural Maroon population since formal schooling did not become

widely available until the 1970s and was severely disrupted during the 1980s due to the civil war in Suriname.

This situation changed, however, when Maroons started migrating permanently to the coast. In both rural and urban coastal contexts they entered into more or less regular interactions with other members of the Surinamese and/or French Guianese multi-ethnic societies. For instance, they came to live in mixed neighbourhoods, entered cash labour and subsistence work networks with members from different local communities, engaged in trading with members from other local ethnic groups, and attended educational and training institutions and social venues frequented by members from all local social groups. Linguistically, this shift in interactional patterns meant that Maroons had to expand their linguistic repertoires. They had to acquire at least a passive competence in the related urban Creole and regional lingua franca Sranan Tongo or in Créole Guyanais to interact with the members of the other local populations. For those attending educational institutions and seeking work in more skilled jobs, it also became a necessity to acquire competence in either or both of the official languages (Léglise & Migge 2005).

The expansion of the linguistic repertoire has also led to changes in individual and community linguistic practices. On the one hand, we observe a greater incidence of borrowing. There is a noticeable increase in the use of mainly lexical items from either Sranan Tongo and/or Dutch and French to denote things that are relevant to people's life in the new urban context, e.g. terms related to administration, food, new habits, locations.

On the other hand, we find a greater use of Sranan Tongo in in-group encounters. EMs increasingly employ code-mixing and code-switching to construct newly emerging social distinctions and meanings. Elders, for instance, employ code-switching with Sranan Tongo to downplay the traditionally strongly hierarchical nature of their social relationships with each other and with younger members of the community; by code-switching they project a peer group or friendship-type relationship with their interlocutor. In example (5), for instance, *Kabiten* Anton wants to talk to one of the authors, Bettina, who was a bystander at a semi-formal meeting between the paramount chief (*Gaaman*) and two village/sublineage heads, *Kabiten* Anton and *Kabiten* Obi at the paramount chief's house - *Gaaman* and *Kabiten* Anton are in their seventies while *Kabiten* Obi is in his late fifties. To talk to her, *Kabiten* Anton has to seek permission from *Kabiten* Obi and *Gaaman*. *Kabiten* Anton switches to Sranan Tongo, or a Pamaka saliently influenced by Sranan Tongo, when addressing *Kabiten* Obi. By switching, he is invoking their personal (former work mates) rather than their positional identities (*kabiten*-hood) and emphasizing the lack of social distance between him and *Kabiten* Obi. In foregrounding his peer group or friendship-type relationship with *Kabiten* Obi, he conveys to *Kabiten* Obi that his desire to talk to Bettina is non-threatening. He is asserting that he is not trying to compete over Bettina's attention.

(5) *Pikin kuutu*

- 1 Anton: Ma, daaa, fa de e kai a flou nen?  
*But, so what's the woman's name?*
- 2 Bettina: Bettina!
- 3 Anton: Soo Betna. (.)  
*Okay, Bettina.*
- 4 (to O) So, da (.) kabiten, mi kan (ST) taki ptyin tori (ST)  
*Okay, well kabiten, can (ST) I chat a little bit (ST)*
- 5 anga a uman pikinso yere (ST)? A no (ST) wan mulikimuliki toli.  
*with the woman, right (ST)? It's nothing (ST) bothersome.*
- 6 Obi: (nods approvingly and laughs)
- 7 Obi: Iya, iya papa!  
*Yes, yes elder!*
- (adapted from Migge 2007: 65-66)

Young people generally employ code-switching to construct themselves as sophisticated and urbanized Maroons and code-mixing to assert membership in the social group of young men whose salient properties are modern urban sophistication (Migge 2007). Example (6) is an example of code-mixing. It comes from a meeting between Pamaka men in their mid 30s who head a local Maroon cultural group. They are discussing the activities of their group. Note that in this turn, the speaker is frequently alternating between Pamaka, the matrix language, and Sranan Tongo, Dutch and French forms.<sup>3</sup>

(6) *yunkuman kuutu*

- B: Ini a pisi toli san (ST) u taki fu a serjusu (ST) fu u án libisama.  
*'In this story that we are saying about being serious otherwise are are not human.'*
- A ini a pisi ape mi o taki, mi o piki oo! Te yu nanga (ST) u án man e wooko ma a  
*'I will say something about this part, I will respond. If you cannot work with us but'*  
de ini i konde oo, da i mu luku a wooko fini.  
*'it [the event] takes place in your village, then you have carefully consider the job.'*
- Efu i lobi a waka dati u án da i o gwe go namo na a wooko.  
*'If you like that kind of journey, we don't, then you'll definitely go and take up the job.'*
- Di i sabi di i no sabi, i o gwe go na a wroko omdat (ST/D) i wani teki a wooko,  
*'Even if you don't know [the job], you'll go and take up the job because you want it,'*
- a de a ini i sikin. Dati u a ini a dei di i basi no (ST) de, i mu man du wan sani, 'it is  
*your desire. That we, the day that your boss is not there, you have to do something'*
- o ehee leki fa (ST) u e taki a toli fu den skoro a yari disisi (ST). A yari san psa, (ST)  
*'Ahm, like we were talking about the schools this year. Last year,'*
- u luku a yari disisi (ST). U kisi kon fu go ini wan skoro ma omdat (ST) a pamplia fu  
*'we were contemplating this year. We were asked to go to a school but because'*
- organisasi (D) no (ST) be herken door (D) lanti  
*'the organization had not been officially recognized by the government'*
- pe den man fu education national (F) musu (ST) stort (D) a moni gi u.  
*'where the people of the [French] ministry of education have to send the money for us.'*
- Den no (ST) man sabi pe den mu stort (D) en gi i pe a sama meki

<sup>3</sup> Only one turn is provided since turns are very long in these kinds of meetings.

*'They don't know where they should send it for you, where the person makes' a poking (D) fu Awibenkiiben mi á be abi en. Den naki ana gi en klopklop (ST/D), 'the attempt for Awibenkiiben, I did not have it. They clap for him,' a man ne en nen a e meki kaba. Dus (D) na so a dansi de, 'the guy, its he who's already done well for himself. Thus that's what the dance is like,' na so wan grupa (D) de, na so wan libi mu de. Kwolon! Mi ná e taki moo. 'such a group exists, that kind of life should be there. Finish! I am not saying anything else.'*

### 3. 2. Towards Koinization

In the coastal context where the members of the different Maroon groups are in much more regular contact with each other and with members from other local social/ethnic groups (e.g. Haitians, Amerindians, Créole Guyanais, metropolitan French) who are culturally and linguistically relatively different from them, Maroons develop a different sense of ethnic belonging. Unlike previous generations of Maroons who generally emphasized inter-Maroon differences, in the current context, especially young maroons foreground and emphasize the similarities that exist between the different maroon groups. They construct themselves as members of the social or ethnic group of 'Businenge or Maroon', a pan-maroon identity that transcends the traditional ethnic divisions.

One piece of evidence in favor of the existence or emergence of such a pan-maroon identity comes from the results of a school survey (Léglise 2004) where primary and secondary school children were asked by a metropolitan French researcher to discuss their linguistic practices. When discussing their linguistic repertoire, the children generally only referred to their native language using terms such as *Takitaki* and *Businenge Tongo* that are strongly associated with a pan-maroon identity. Language names associated with specific ethnic groups and identities (Aluku, Pamaka ...) were either only supplied on repeated questioning by the researcher or not at all (Léglise & Migge 2006).

(7) During the interview :

Res.: *Quelle langue tu parlais avant d'aller à l'école?*  
 'Which language did you speak before starting school?'

Child: *Takitaki.*

Res.: *Lequel?*  
 'Which one?'

Child: *Businenge.*

Res.: *Oui mais lequel?*  
 'Yes, but which one?'

Child: *Ben Businenge, Takitaki c'est pareil.*  
 'Well, Businenge, Takitaki, it's the same.'

Linguistically, this process of identity formation seems to be giving rise to processes that are also associated with koinization. According to Siegel (1985), koinization involves mixing of features from different related regional dialects, levelling of such features, formal reduction, and finally focussing of a new 'mixed' variety. Examples (5-6) suggest that dialect mixing involving Sranan Tongo and the Maroon varieties has become rather widespread even in in-group encounters. We also find that processes of levelling are in progress. Essentially, ethnically or rurally marked linguistic features are increasingly levelled towards more 'neutral' forms. For instance, Maroons frequently remark on the fact that the down-river Ndyuka do not

realize word final long vowels (cf. 1) in the same way as up-river Ndyuka; the vowels in down-river Ndyuka are noticeably shorter though still different from those associated with Aluku and Pamaka varieties. The realization of very long vowels has become associated with a rural and traditional Ndyuka identity. Moreover, strongly ethnically marked morphosyntactic features such as the verbal negation marker (*á* (Ndyuka), *án* (Pamaka/Aluku)) and the negative potential marker (*man* (Pamaka, Aluku), *poi* (Ndyuka)) are variably replaced with more ethnically neutral equivalents that usually come from Sranan Tongo, namely *no* and *kan*, respectively.

Levelling does not only affect ethnically marked features but also those that are closely associated with the rural context. A case in point are greeting procedures. The EMC has a number of different greeting procedures. Some require careful interplay between interlocutors, are rather formulaic and are specific to particular times of the day (8).

(8) some traditional Maroon greeting procedures

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| a. | A: <i>U weki oo, gaaman.</i>                      | ‘We have awoken, paramount chief.’   |
|    | B: <i>Iya, u weki yee/baa.</i>                    | ‘Yes, we have awoken!’   |
|    | A: <i>Eeya/Iya.</i>                               | ‘Yes’  |
| b. | A: <i>U miti oo, mma.</i>                         | ‘We meet, [female] elder.’   |
|    | B: <i>Iya, u miti (baka) yee/baa, papa.</i>       | ‘Yes, we meet (again), elder!’   |
|    | A: <i>Eeya/Iya.</i>                               | ‘Yes’  |
| c. | A: <i>Dda, a tapu u (baka) oo.</i>                | ‘[Male] elder, it [the night] has fallen (again).’ (lit. ‘it covers us again’) |
|    | B: <i>Iya, a tapu u yee.</i>                      | ‘Yes, it has fallen!’  |
|    | A: <i>Eeya/Iya.</i>                               | ‘Yes’  |
| d. | A <sub>1</sub> : <i>Mma, da u de (mooi)?</i>      | ‘Mrs. G., then, are you well?’<br>(lit. ‘then we/you (pl.) exist well’)        |
|    | B <sub>1</sub> : <i>Iya, u de (mooi) yee/baa!</i> | ‘Yes, I am well!’<br>(lit. ‘we/you (pl.) exist nicely!’)                       |
|    | U seefi de (mooi)?                                | ‘You yourself, are you well?’<br>(lit. ‘we/you (pl.) self exist nicely?’)      |
|    | A <sub>2</sub> : <i>Iya, u de (mooi) yee/baa.</i> | ‘Yes, I am well!’<br>(lit. ‘we/you (pl.) exist nicely for sure’)               |
|    | B: <i>Iya/Eeya.</i>                               | ‘yes’  |
- (from Migge 2005)

In actual practice, greetings (a-c) are generally combined with greeting (d), though each of them can also be used by itself. While these greetings are regularly used in the rural context, they convey a relatively great social distance between the interlocutors, pay each other respect and construct each other as respectable persons.

There are also two main shorter greetings that can be applied throughout the whole day.

- |        |  |                             |
|--------|--|-----------------------------|
| (9) a. | A: (Sa Moiboto), <i>fa i tan?</i>        | ‘Mrs Moiboto, how are you?’ |
|        | B: <i>Saaflio/saafsaafi/Mi de.</i>       | ‘Well/I am well.’           |
| b.     | A: (Baa Aseengi), <i>fa a e go?</i>      | ‘How is it going?’          |
|        | B: <i>Mi de/a e go/saafsaafi/saaflio</i> | ‘I am well/as usual/well.’  |

These greetings, particularly (9b), is associated with the urban context and Sranan Tongo. These greetings convey social closeness and relative social equality between

the interlocutors, essentially a friendship-type relationship. In the rural context, these greetings are only employed among young people who are all part of the lowest social category and tend to maintain relaxed kinds of relationships. In the urban setting, however, EMs of all generations/social groups increasingly mainly use the greetings in (9) for regular everyday interactions. The longer greetings are increasingly being reserved for special occasions associated with situations that require heightened attention to negative face such as demands for help, complaints, formal events, strongly hierarchical relationships, e.g. with in-laws (Migge 2005)

Finally, we also observe the emergence of new, mixed varieties. In recent years, in both French Guiana and Suriname new radio programmes are emerging due to grass-roots efforts that are broadcasted in local languages and are targeting specific local ethnic population groups. A case in point is the radio programme *loweman paansu*. It is broadcasted in and around St. Laurent du Maroni (French Guiana) for two hours in the late afternoons Mondays to Fridays. It is produced on a voluntary basis by young urbanized Maroon men with a Ndyuka ethnic background. The programme primarily targets the extensive (Eastern) Maroon population of the area but members of other ethnic groups, e.g. Amerindians, that are familiar with the Surinamese Creoles also listen to it. It covers a range of topics that are of interest to all sections of the EM population such as presentation and discussion of local popular music, discussions of health issues, political matters, local news, birthdays, obituaries etc. Especially news programmes and discussions of local sociopolitical issues are carried out in the EM respect variety (Migge 2004). However, there are a couple of salient differences between the traditional respect variety and the one used on the air. First, the radio variety does not employ discontinuous speech and does not have a dialogic nature (i.e. it does not involve a ritual responder). Second, speakers make greater use of rurally-marked forms rather than the special respect vocabulary and figures of speech to encode negative politeness. Third, there is a greater use of foreign lexical items in the radio variety than in the traditional variety. In the latter, use of anything other than the local EM variety is considered problematic in that it is easily interpreted as a lack of alignment with the local community (Migge 2005).

### 3. 3. Vehicularization

Especially since the civil war in Suriname in the late 1980s, maroons in general and EMs in particular have emerged as one of the largest 'ethnic groups' in western French Guiana. Members of other local ethnic groups, including metropolitan French, have either felt obliged to or have desired to learn the EMC to integrate in some areas, such as the west of French Guiana, where EMs are numerically very dominant (Léglise 2004, Thurmes to appear). To a small extent, these L2 practices are also used for communication between non-Maroons, e.g. members of different Amerindian communities, Hmong and Amerindians etc.

Non-native or L2 practices are quite diverse ranging from relatively reduced learner varieties to near-native like practices (Léglise and Migge 2006). Generally, L2 varieties would differ in two main respects from the EM practices: First, they show varying degrees of structural reduction and/or variation that is mostly not found in native practices. For example, relatively acoustically imperceptible functional elements whose functions can also be inferred from the context are either completely or variably absent (e.g. the imperfective marker *e* and the future marker *o* in (10)), or are replaced by elements from another language (e.g. the conditional element *efu* which is replaced by French *si* in (10)). Inherently variable forms tend to be regularized to a perceptually salient form. For instance, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular

pronoun in the EMC is realized either as *i*, *y* or *yu* depending on the phonological environment, it is generally realized as *yu* in L2 varieties (Léglise and Migge 2006).

- (10) a. *Si*  $\emptyset$  *no*  $\emptyset$  *teki dresi, yu*  $\emptyset$  *dede mama.* (L2)  
 efu i ná e teki/diingi den deesi, i o dede mama. (EM)  
 if you NEG IMP take/drink DET tablets you FUT die female elder  
 ‘Grandma, if you don’t take your medicine, you may die’

Second, L2 speakers tend to mostly select Sranan Tongo lexical items rather than EM ones in those cases in which the two differ despite the fact that most L2 speakers would mainly interact with Maroons. The relative preponderance of Sranan Tongo-derived lexical items is most likely due to the fact that EMs tend to shift to Sranan Tongo in all kinds of public out-group contexts. Moreover, Sranan Tongo figures prominently in urbanized speech by young (male) maroons (see above).

Socially, the most immediate effect of its increasing acquisition and use by non-maroons is the maintenance of the language. From the point of view of the native speakers, its acquisition by non-natives contributes to the social valorization of the language as a valuable means of communication. This, in turn, contributes to its maintenance within the native speaker community/s.

Linguistically, depending on the overall frequency and importance of exchanges with non-native speakers, its use as an L2 variety may further reinforce patterns of variation and change that are already in progress in native practices. For instance, the increased use of lexical elements from Sranan Tongo and simple as opposed to complex prepositional phrases in interactions as a way of accommodation to non-Maroons may lead to a further establishment of their use in intra-Maroon practices.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. The role of social and linguistic processes in lg. diversification

The developments discussed suggest that linguistic diversification in the case of the EM linguistic space is due to both processes of social and linguistic convergence and divergence. Convergence involves processes that lead to the reduction or elimination of social and linguistic differences while divergence refers to processes that bring about the creation of social and linguistic differences or contribute to their emphasis. Social processes such as

- a) urbanization (i.e. displacement and reorientation in a new environment),
- b) new identity formation (i.e. pan-maroon identity),
- c) emergence of new interactional patterns (i.e. increased out-group interaction with L2 speakers and native speakers of related varieties)

lead to convergence. Socially, they bring about new contexts of interaction, practices and inter-group relationships that transcend or cross-cut traditional ethnic boundaries. Linguistically, they give rise to contact and mixing between existing varieties, and to the levelling of differences between them and, eventually possibly, to the emergence of a new ‘compromise’ variety such as a koine that would be added to people’s existing repertoire.

Two kinds of levelling processes seem to take place.

- a) In interactions between speakers of different native varieties (Aluku, Ndyuka...), speakers tend to level marked differences between their varieties (e.g. relative shortening of long vowels in Ndyuka, adoption of Sranan Tongo forms to replace

<sup>4</sup> Complex prepositional phrases: *na* NP locational N (*na a tafa tapu* ‘on the table’); simple prepositional phrases: P NP (*tapu a tafa; na tapu a tafa*)

ethnically-marked morphosyntactic differences) towards a common ethnically 'neutral' norm.

- b) With respect to interactions between native and non-native speakers, L2 learners only acquire the most widely/frequently available practices while native speakers tend to select only those practices that they deem to be widely/easily understood (e.g. the use of Sranan Tongo vocabulary items).

In French Guiana (and Suriname), these processes operating in native-native encounters and in native-non-native encounters happen to be linked through local language ideologies to similar kinds of linguistic practices. For EMs, relative social neutrality in interethnic encounters and simplicity or accommodation in interactions are encoded by drawing on Sranan Tongo-associated practices. This then suggests that these different social and linguistic processes lead to similar linguistic outcomes: They reinforce the use of Sranan Tongo practices.

In contrast, the assertion of various individual (e.g. respectable), traditional (e.g. Aluku, Pamaka...), new group identities (e.g. sophisticated urban EM), gives rise to patterns of social and linguistic divergence, differentiation and fragmentation. Essentially, in accordance with their goals, speakers draw in selective ways on the locally available linguistic and social resources, including ethnically neutral forms, to construct unique individual and group identities. Linguistically, this leads to a kind of reorganization and linguistic instability that over time develops into stable variation, code-switching, and gives rise to the emergence of new styles.

### 5. Conclusion & Implication

The discussion in this paper suggests the following things about the development of the Surinamese Creole linguistic space. First, on the microlinguistic level we showed that speakers creatively and strategically draw on different varieties and emblematic markers in accordance with a range of social factors such as the communicative situation, the interlocutors, their self-positioning, their goals etc. All of these constitute good examples of individual agency. While these are the activities of individuals, they may lead to the expansion or diversification of the community's linguistic repertoire through social & linguistic focusing (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985). Cases in point are the emergence of new styles that we discussed. The individuals' mixing of native EM linguistic practices with external ones (e.g. from Sranan Tongo) has led to the emergence of the EM style *wakaman taki* and the blending of two different native styles (*wakaman taki* + *lesipeki taki*) is leading to the formation a new formal style (radio talk). These new styles are added to the existing styles and classic language varieties/styles (cf. the social and ethnic varieties discussed in section 2). This suggests that the EM linguistic repertoires are open ended and non static – new styles or varieties are continuously added to existing ones.

Second, Creoles, like other languages, involve different types of variation. Taking a *dia-* model of variation (Coseri 1956; Oesterreicher 1988; Gadet 2003), our case shows diatopic (geographic) and dialectal variation, and diachronic and diaphasic (stylistic and register) variation. As for diastratic variation (due to social factors and social stratifications), our case shows the same results as for diaphasic variation. We assume that this is due to the social structure of the EM societies: their social structure is less organized in social groups (lower middle class etc.) in which a variety could be isolated than depends on social events (such as *kuutu*) and ways of addressing the elderly etc.



Third, on a macrolinguistic level, we observed linguistic variation and change and the emergence of new varieties: L2 varieties and new dialect varieties through what could be a process of koineization.

The findings from our investigation challenge two of the main tenets of the Creole continuum theory. First, the assumption that changes in the linguistic repertoire of a Creole community and in the Creole's structure are largely due to contact with an external variety or erstwhile lexifier, e.g. English. Our case shows that changes may also occur due to contact between different varieties of the same language induced by a range of social forces and by contact with a related language, Sranan Tongo. The influence of the official languages of the region (French, Dutch) is relatively minor despite their overall symbolic and economic importance.

Second, the assumption that linguistic change is unidirectional. Our study showed that different social forces give rise to two kinds of (contradictory) linguistic developments. On the one hand, we found a reduction in diversity (e.g. through levelling and the reduction of the differences between ethnic varieties in favour of an emergent pan-maroon variety) and on the other hand we observed an increase in diversity (e.g. with the emergence of new EM styles, new non-EM styles and new linguistic structures).

Moreover, the present case seems to be an instance of a mix of two classic cases of dialect contact: It involves contact involving L1 and L2 speakers on one hand and contact among L1 speakers of different dialects on the other (Kerswill & Williams 2000).

The investigation of the Surinamese Creole linguistic space makes it quite clear that current models of the Creole continuum are not applicable in situations where "the" Creole is no more in contact with its erstwhile lexifier. Would some sort of a continuum of practices or a continuum of varieties be a more relevant model? Or would maybe a complex (or a galaxy) of practices and varieties, organized by social forces and always in action, be a more suitable model to represent the dynamics of variation?

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