The syntax of African American English borrowings in the Louisiana Creole Tense-Mood-Aspect system

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1 Introduction

This paper documents two ongoing processes of contact-induced change in Louisiana Creole (LC), a critically endangered French-lexifier Creole language spoken mostly in Louisiana, USA. Many—but not all—speakers of LC are also regularly users of local varieties of African American English (AAE). Contact between these two varieties has resulted in the ongoing incorporation of at least two new morphemes into the LC Tense-Mood-Aspect (TMA) system. The first is a borrowing of AAE stressed *BIN*, which marks the remote past with a range of aspectual meanings. Some speakers additionally have borrowed the English adverb *still*, which is grammaticalizing as a marker of continuative aspect.

The borrowing of TMA morphemes is rare in crosslinguistic perspective (Matras 2007) and has not been thoroughly analyzed in LC. Discussion of contact-induced change in Creole languages has typically been confined to examination of interactions with the lexifier, the language which contributes the majority of a Creole's vocabulary. Far fewer studies have presented detailed accounts of how Creoles behave when in contact with other languages, meaning that this particular contact context remains undertheorized (Aceto 1999; Snow 2000; Siegel 2010).

This paper aims to contribute to the documentation of the first instances of contact-induced change in LC motivated by contact with AAE and, in so doing, to the theory of how Creole languages behave when in contact with languages other than their lexifiers. Section 2 presents the necessary background for the study, reviewing the linguistic ecology of LC in Louisiana in historical-sociolinguistic perspective, with a special emphasis on contact with AAE. Section 3 reviews the data used in the study. The analysis itself proceeds in two parts in Section 4, examining how AAE stressed *BIN* and the adverb *still* are incorporated into LC. These changes are discussed in broader perspective in Section 5, with special emphasis on how degrees of structural similarity modulate language contact. Concluding remarks are presented in Section 6.

2 Louisiana Creole and African American English in Louisiana

Today, LC is spoken by a dwindling number of elderly people—probably around 6,000—who are all bilingual in English and have varying levels of competence in local varieties of Louisiana Regional French (Neumann 1985; Valdman 1997; Valdman et al. 1998; Klingler 2003; Klinger & Neumann-Holzschuh 2013). The speech community today is mostly concentrated in rural South Louisiana, although smaller diaspora communities exist especially in East Texas (see Wendte 2020). These rural communities remained insulated from the gradual Americanization of Louisiana which followed the sale of the territory to the United States in 1803, although local bourgeois classes adopted English relatively early (Fortier 1891: 77; Morgan 1970). All this changed, however, in the first half of the 20th century, when even the most isolated communities underwent a shift to English precipitated by changes in statewide

educational and language policy (Dajko 2012; Landry 2016; Dubois, Leumas & Richardson 2018).

The Americanization of Louisiana brought with it not only the dominance of English but also the imposition of a Black/White racial binary as part of the antebellum regime of 'Jim Crow' racial segregation. This bifurcated rural Creole communities, where the construction of race and ethnicity had previously been negotiated as an interaction between tripartite legal status (*blancs, noirs, gens de couleur libres* – White, Black, Free People of Color) and a number of phenotypical descriptors (Domínguez 1986; Kein 2000; Landry 2016; Barthé 2021). Race and ethnicity therefore constitute key social constructs for understanding language variation in Louisiana in general, and in LC in particular (Neumann 1983; Dajko 2012; Klingler 2019; Wendte 2020). Previous quantitative studies (Mayeux 2017; Mayeux 2019; Klingler 2019) have shown that variation and change in LC pattern according to the Anglo-American Black/White racial binary due to differing degrees of contact with French on either side of the Jim Crow divide (see Mayeux 2024).

Race and ethnicity have also shaped the nature of contact with English. It is important to understand that LC exists in contact with local varieties of English which themselves display contact features from LC and Louisiana Regional French. This process of levelling was first noted in publications based on field data collected from older speakers in the 1950s (Morgan 1959; Morgan 1970). Studies on English in rural Louisiana identify two distinct varieties based on race (for recent work on urban Louisiana, on the English of New Orleans, see Dajko & Carmichael 2023). Cajun English is the name given to a variety of English spoken by White, Cajun-identified Louisianians from historically French- and LC-speaking communities (Carmichael 2019). Cajun English has been the subject of a number of sociolinguistic studies, many of which comment on the presence of phonological and morphosyntactic features originating in LC and Louisiana Regional French (Dubois & Horvath 1998; Dubois & Horvath 1999; Dubois & Horvath 2001; Dubois & Horvath 2003a; Dubois 2002; Carmichael 2013; Carmichael 2018). Another variety, which has received less attention, has been termed Creole African American Vernacular English by Dubois & Horvarth (2003b). This variety also exhibits various features of contact with LC and Louisiana Regional French which distinguish it as a sub-variety of AAE (Dubois & Horvath 2003b; see also Oetting & Garrity 2006). AAE, and its local incarnations, has had an important presence in Louisiana since at least the early-to-mid-19th century. Picone (2003) provides the most detailed historical-sociolinguistic overview, demonstrating that the arrival of enslaved and formerly enslaved anglophones in the plantation societies of Louisiana exerted considerable pressure from below in encouraging shift to English. This also resulted in the introduction of contact features into local AAE, for example pronominal tagging (e.g. *I got no chance, me.*; Picone 2003: 421).

Contact with local varieties of English has exerted extensive influence on LC. Best documented are the widespread processes of lexical borrowing and code-switching. The impact on the grammar of LC, however, has so far been subject only to preliminary investigation. Instead, much of the focus has been on the results of contact with French. This follows from an emphasis in Creole Studies on decreolization, the process of contact between a Creole and its

lexifier which may result in the former becoming more similar to the latter (DeCamp 1971; Whinnom 1971; Bickerton 1980; Holm 2000). Decreolization has been roundly critiqued (see the comprehensive critical review in Siegel 2010). For our purposes, an important shortcoming of decreolization is that it excludes contexts where Creoles are in contact with languages other than their lexifiers (Aceto 1999), as is the case in Louisiana. It is perhaps for this reason that this kind of contact remains under-researched (Snow 2000; Bartens 2002).

3 Data

Data are taken from a diachronic corpus of Louisiana Creole (Mayeux 2019), which combines historical language documentation with fieldwork recordings from 2017. Although the whole corpus was examined for the variables discussed here, no occurrences in historical texts were found. The variables were only attested in recordings made in 2017, which comprise sociolinguistic interviews from 27 speakers in St Martin and St James Parishes, Louisiana. Samples averaging 30 minutes were transcribed and analyzed for each of the speakers represented. Occurrences of the variables in this study—*bɪn* (Section 4.1) and *stɪl* (Section 4.2)—were coded. LC examples are transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet; English insertions are transcribed orthographically. Examples are followed by 2017*XX*, where XX is a two-letter code identifying the speaker. Syntax trees were generated using RSyntaxTree (Hasebe 2023).

4 Analysis

Like both other French-lexifier Creoles (see Syea 2017) and AAE (see Green 2002), LC encodes TMA through a series of pre-verbal function words usually referred to as particles or markers (Neumann 1985; Klingler 2003; Klinger & Neumann-Holzschuh 2013). This paper builds on the analysis in Rottet (1992), who finds that TMA and the Negator *p(a)* follow strict ordering before the verb, *viz.* (1). Rottet (1992: 275) analyzes each marker as the spell-out of a functional head, deriving the Tense Phrase (TP) structure in (2).

(1) TENSE > MOOD > NEGATION > ASPECT > VERB

(2) $[_{TP}\ [_{MoodP}\ [_{NegP}\ [_{AspP}\ [_{VP}\ ]]]]]$ (Rottet 1992: 275)

Following Henri (2016; see also Henri & Klingler 2014), this paper adopts a preliminary analysis of the negator *p(a)* as a clitic. The analysis also incorporates Rottet's suggestion that LC aspectual heads can be "stacked" (1992: 275n12), i.e. that more than one AspP may appear in a given TP. This notion is compatible with the hierarchy of clausal functional projections in Cinque (1999). Elements of this cartographic approach are drawn upon here to extend Rottet's account of the LC inflectional domain.

The present study treats two new borrowings into this system, which both have their origins in AAE: *bɪn* (< stressed *BIN*; Section 4.1) and *stɪl* (< *still*; Section 4.2). The sociolinguistic and linguistic factors involved in this contact-induced change are discussed in Section 5.

4.1. Remote past *bɪn*

The presence of the form [bɪn] in LC is attested in Neumann (1985: 211) and Klingler (2003: 262–263). Both grammars of LC classify *bɪn* as a borrowing of English perfective *been*

(Neumann 1985: 211; Klingler 2003: 262–263). Rottet (1992: 270–272) follows these descriptions. In this section, *bɪn* is shown to originate from the phonologically identical AAE stressed *BIN* which in fact can be straightforwardly incorporated into the phrase structure proposed by Rottet (1992). AAE *BIN* is a "camouflaged" (Spears 1982) AAE feature, i.e. one which is phonologically similar to, but syntactically and semantically distinct from, a feature in other varieties of English. This may explain why LC *bɪn* has been mistaken as a borrowing of perfective *been*.

First analyzed as a remote past marker (REMP) by Labov (1972) and Rickford (1975), AAE stressed *BIN* indicates that "the time period referred to is longer than normal for an activity, or [...] that a state has indeed held for a long [period] of time" (Green 2002: 54). Incidentally, this resembles the description for LC *bɪn* in Klingler (2003: 263) as encoding "an action or state that began before, and continued up to, a subsequent point in time, which may be the moment of utterance or a point prior to it." The usage of *bɪn* is distributed categorically across speakers in the corpus and in other available data (in Neumann 1985; Klingler 2003), attested only amongst Black speakers who are proficient in AAE.

BIN is normally transcribed in all capitals, a convention which denotes that it typically bears prosodic stress unlike its perfective counterpart *been* (Green 2002: 54). When it is used, *bɪn* bears prosodic stress as in (3) (⟨ˈ ˈ⟩ indicates prosodic stress). No counterexample was otherwise heard during fieldwork.

(3) ⟨Vitamin C⟩ ˈˈ*bɪn* *Ø* *la!*
Vitamin-C REMP COP there
'Vitamin C has been around for a long time (and still is)!'
(2017EJ)

Unlike perfective *been*, AAE *BIN* has varied aspectual readings. Green (1998a; see also 2002: 55–59) finds it can encode stative aspect (STAT) as in (4a), habitual aspect (HAB) as in (5a) and completive aspect (CMPL) as in (6a). All three are attested for contemporary LC *bɪn* as in (4b) – (6b).

(4) Stative

a. *He BIN running.*
'He's been running for a long time and still is.'
(Green 1998:117)

b. *li* *bɪn* *muri* *ɛ̃?*
3S REMP.STAT dead eh
'He has been dead for a long time (and still is), eh?'
(2017EO)

(5) Habitual

a. *Bruce BIN running.*
'Bruce started running some time ago and he still runs from time to time.'
(Green 2002: 57)

b. *mo* *bɪn* *ole* ⟨retire⟩
1S REMP.HAB want retire

‘I’ve been wanting to retire for a long time (and still want to).’
(2017ML)

(6) Completive

a. *Bruce BIN ate those potato chips.*
‘Bruce ate those potato chips a long time ago (and is no longer doing so).’
(Green 1998:130)

b. *n* *t* *ape* *kite,* *nu* *bɪn* *ape* ⟨pack up⟩ *no* *zafɛ*
1PL ANT PROG leave 1PL REMP.CMPL PROG pack up 1PL.POSS thing
‘We were leaving, we had been packing up our things for a long time (and no longer were).’
(2017BM)

Further similarities are found in the domain of negation. As in AAE (Green 1995), *bɪn* cannot take sentence-level negation as shown in (7a). AAE negative auxiliaries *ain’t* or *haven’t* can be used in metalinguistic negation and ellipsis contexts (e.g. *He ain’t BIN running; he only just started*, see Green et al. 2022: 964). This may be possible in LC as in (7b), though no examples of this kind of metalinguistic negation are attested in the corpus. Where the negator *p(a)* is placed after *bɪn* in (7c), another constructed example, the result is a change of scope.

(7)

a. **li* *pa=* *bɪn* *muri*
3S NEG REMP.STAT die
intended: ‘He has not been dead for a long time.’

b. *li* *pa=* *bɪn* *muri;* *li* *ʒɪʃ* *sɔr* *muri*
3S NEG REMP.STAT die 3S just AUX die.
‘He hasn’t been dead for a long time; he only just died.’
cf. AAE ‘He ain’t *BIN* dead; he only just died.’ (after Green et al. 2022: 964)

c. *li* *bɪn* *pa=* *muri*
3S REMP.STAT NEG die
‘He has been not-dead for a long time (i.e. he has been alive for a long time and still is).’

Finally, English perfective *been* is not rendered in LC using *bɪn*. Example (8a) contains an extended code-switch into English where the perfective *been* is used (‘we’ve been there’). This is rendered in LC with a plain verb *kuri* ‘go’. With *bɪn*, the sentence would produce a different interpretation, denoting the remote past with stative aspect rather than a perfective aspect (i.e. ‘we’ve been there and still are there’). A similar case can be found in Neumann (1985), reproduced in (8b). The example shows an insertion of *been* in a calque on the English *have been to V* construction associated with motion events (see Gesuato 2012).

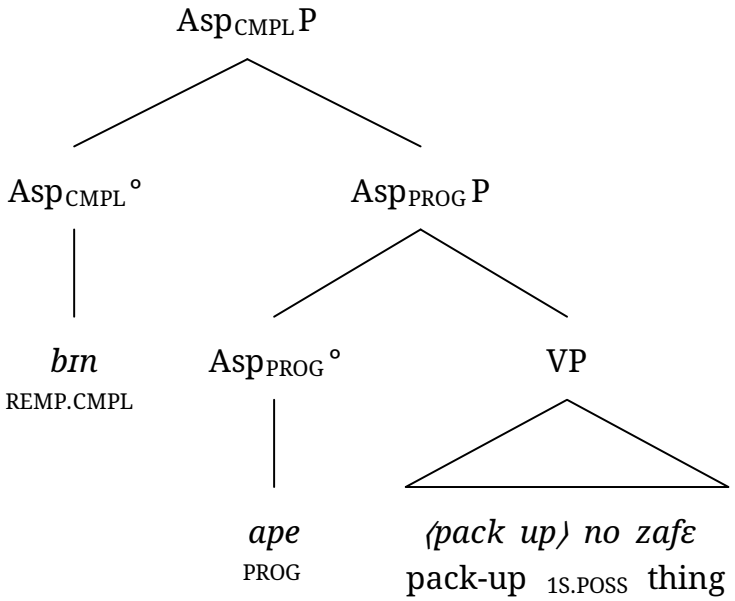
(8)

a. *paske* ⟨we've been there⟩ [.] *no* *kuri* *la*
because we've been there 1PL go there
'Because we've been there. We've been there (and no longer are).'
(2017LD)

b. *Mo* *te* *pa=* ⟨been⟩ *wa* *twa* *lɔ̃tɔ̃* *e* *tɔ̃t?*
1S PST NEG been see 2S long.time eh aunt
'I have not been to see you in a long time, eh Auntie?'
(Neumann 1985: 211n1)

Given its syntactic and semantic properties, I posit that remote past *bɪn* can be incorporated into Rottet's (1992) phrase structure as a functional head which lexicalizes stative, habitual or completive aspects as in (4) – (6). This is the same position it occupies in AAE (Green 1998b). This $Asp_{STAT/HAB/CMPL}$ is higher than the progressive Asp_{PROG} since *bɪn* must precede the progressive marker where the two co-occur, as in (6b) (though see Footnote 4 for discussion of another potential solution for future investigation). This structure is schematized in (9).

(9)



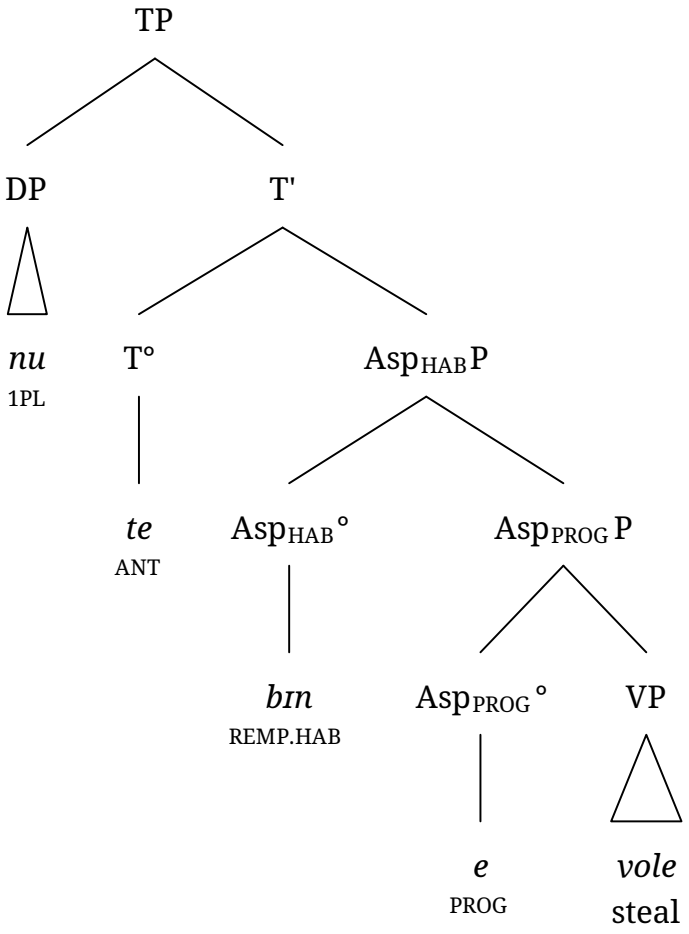
This analysis allows for tense markers to appear under T. This structure is not found in my data from St Martin or St James Parishes. In the LC of Pointe Coupee Parish, however, two examples where anterior *te* precedes *bɪn* are recorded by Klingler (2003: 263). This possible regional variation, which should be subject to further investigation, may result from differing sociolinguistic dynamics in that region. By way of summary, I present one of these examples from Klingler (2003: 263) in (10a) and (10b) which shows a more fully elaborated structure.

(10)

a. *nu* *te* *bɪn* *e* *vole*
1PL ANT REMP.HAB PROG steal

'We had been stealing (peaches) for a long time.'
(Klingler 2003: 263)[1]

b.



4.2. Continuative *stɪl*

In another incipient process, an English-origin temporal adverb may be undergoing grammaticalization as preverbal marker for the continuative aspect (CONT). The adverb [stɪ(l)] 'still' (< En. *still*) is recorded as an alternative to the adverb *tuʒu* 'always; still' (Neumann 1985: 27; Klingler 2003: 343). Today, speakers who also know AAE have replaced *tuʒu* with *stɪl* for the sense 'still' as in (12). For the sense 'always', *tuʒu* is used as in (13). I submit that this change has occurred due to reanalysis of this adverb as an aspect marker on the basis of structural similarities between pre-verbal TMA elements in both AAE and LC.

(12)	*no*	*stɪl*	*mãʒ*	*pul*
	1PL	CONT	eat	chicken

[1] The progressive marker *ape* may take the form *e* in Pointe Coupee (see Klingler 2003: 255). I slightly amend the translation from Klingler (2003: 263) to make clear the aspectual reading.

‘We still eat chicken.’
(2017BB)

(13) *to kɔ̃nɛ̃ to tuʒu bɛzɛ̃n kɛkʃɔʒ*
2s know 2s always need something
‘You know, you always need something.’
(2017BB)

Since adverbs can encode aspectual information and may act as the specifiers of functional heads (see Cinque 1999: 95), they represent good candidates for grammaticalization as aspect markers. In languages where adverbials share a similar distribution to TMA markers—as is the case in both LC and AAE—their reanalysis and grammaticalization is robustly attested (Marchese 1986; Bybee et al. 1994: 240; Abunya and Amfo 2013). In such cases, another sign of the grammaticalization of adverbs as TMA markers is phonological reduction (cf. Bybee et al. 1994), e.g. Nyabo *kéɛ̄té* ‘today’ > *kèɛ̄* PRS (Marchese 1986: 258); Kaakyi *ɔ̀ké* ‘tomorrow’ > *kè* FUT (Abunya and Amfo 2013). LC continuative *stɪl* also occurs in a phonologically reduced form [stɪ~sti], even where followed by a vowel as in (14).

(14) *me le piti astær je sti ole!*
but PL child now 3PL CONT want
‘But the children nowadays, they keep wanting [things].’
(2017MY)

The first stage in this process was the substitution of the borrowed adverb *stɪl* for *tuʒu* in cases where the latter adverb had a continuative reading (‘still’). Here, *stɪl* took on the special distribution of *tuʒu* which belongs to a closed class of adverbials which can appear preceding the verb (Neumann 1985: 296) as in (15). Other adverbials, e.g. manner adverbs such as *dusmã* ‘slowly’, cannot as is shown in (16a) – (16b).

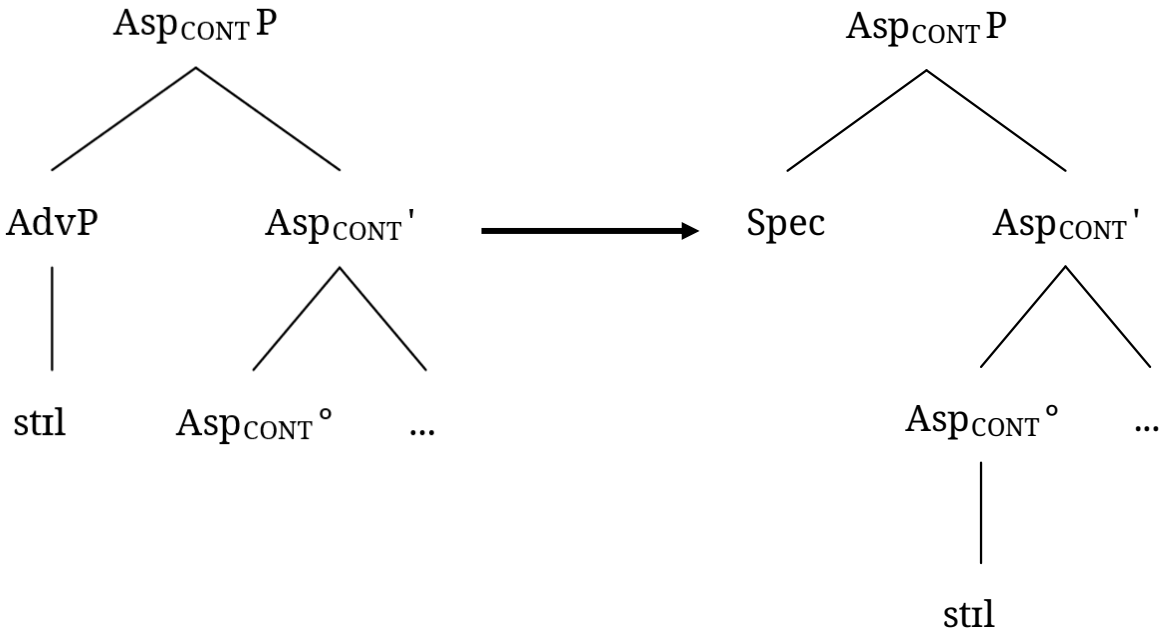
(15) *no tuʒu mãʒ pul*
1PL still eat chicken
‘We still eat chicken.’
(cf. 12)

(16) a. *no pal dusmã*
1PL speak slowly
‘We speak slowly.’

b. **no dusmã pal*
1PL slowly speak
Intended: ‘We speak slowly.’

The second stage in the process concerns how the borrowed adverb *stɪl* was grammaticalized. I propose that *stɪl* goes from being the AdvP specifier of Asp_{CONT} to being the head as in (17). This change proceeds by spec-to-head reanalysis in accordance with the Head Preference Principle, which holds that speakers will prefer to see a given word as head rather than a phrase (van Gelderen 2004).

(17)

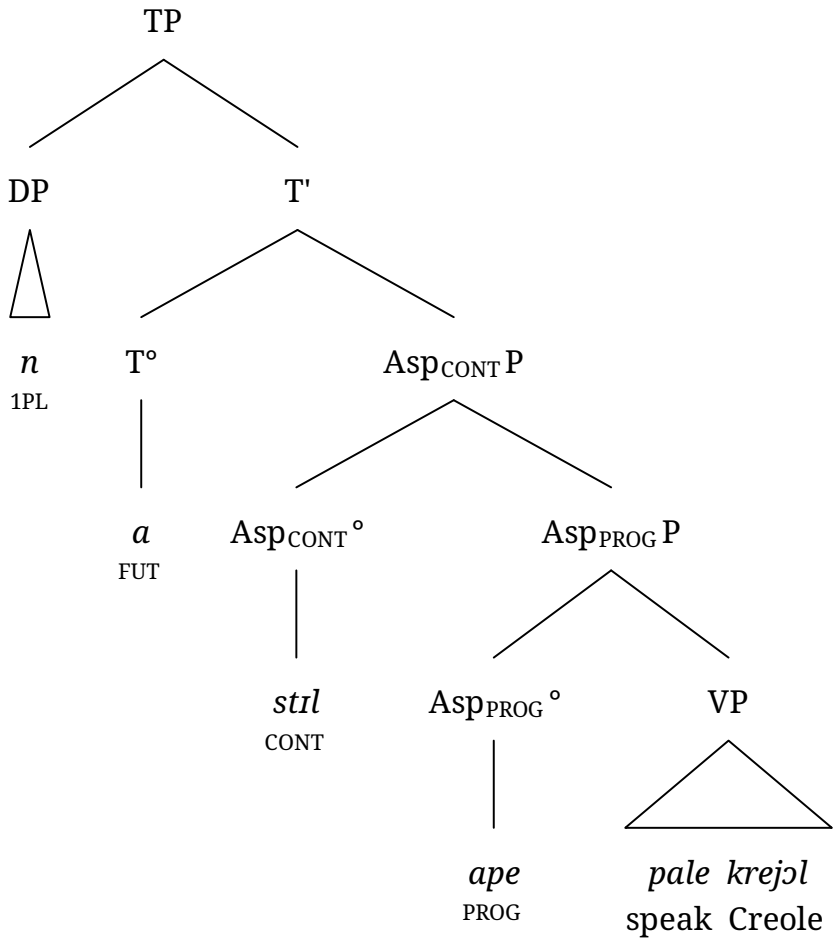


Within this analysis, *stɪl* conforms to the principles of ordering outlined in Rottet (1992) and must appear following Tense elements such as *te* in (18) or the future *a* in (19). Example (19) also shows that, as for *bɪn*, more than one aspect marker may co-occur though with ordering constraints. In (19), *stɪl* precedes *ape* (PROG) and may not follow it. The architecture of examples such as (19) can be schematized as in (20) according to Rottet's analysis.

(18) *li* *te* *stɪl* *dã* *lɛkɔl*
3S ANT still in school
'She was still in school.'
(2017MM)

(19) *n* *a* *stɪl* *ape* *pale* *krejɔl*
1S FUT CONT PROG speak Creole
'We will still be speaking Creole.'
(2017GB)

(20)



Finally, as for *bɪn*, the presence of multiple aspectual heads can also allow for contrastive negative scope (via different merging positions of Neg as per Cinque 1999: 140 – 141). In (21a) the Negator *p(a)* intervenes between *stɪl* (CONT) and *ape* (PROG). Sentences such as (21b) are also judged as acceptable, albeit with a different reading. Sentences such as (21c) may represent the adverbial adjunction of *stɪl* to the TP (Rottet 1992: 285–286), possibly for focus purposes.

(21) a. *li* *te* *stɪl* *p=* *ape* *pale* *frãse*
3S PST CONT NEG PROG speak French
'She still was not speaking French.'
= 'It remained the case that she was not speaking French.'
(2017GB)

b. *li* *te* *pa=* *stɪl* *ape* *pale* *frãse*
3S PST NEG CONT PROG speak French
for 'She was not still speaking French.'
= 'It did not remain the case that she was speaking French.'

c. ?*li* *stɪl* *te* *p=* *ape* *pale* *frãse*
3S CONT PST NEG PROG speak French
intended: ‘Still, she was not speaking French.’

It is my hypothesis that this reanalysis of *stɪl* has been facilitated in particular by contact with AAE, explaining why nearly all speakers who employ this feature are proficient in that variety. This is because AAE, like LC, features a distributionally similar set of pre-verbal aspectual heads. LC-AAE bilinguals are primed to interpret the aspectual semantics on adverbials preceding the verb; since *stɪl* shares both the distribution and semantics of a TMA marker, it is vulnerable to grammaticalize as part of this system by means of spec-to-head reanalysis in accordance with the Head Preference Principle (van Gelderen 2004).

5 Discussion

To understand the changes-in-progress examined in this study, we must draw on a framework of contact-induced change which acknowledges the interplay between sociolinguistic context and linguistic change, including language-internal mechanisms of reanalysis (Weinreich 1953; Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Farrar & Jones 2002; Chamoreau & Léglise 2012).

The results of the analysis can be understood from a historical-sociolinguistic point of view as the result of differing levels of contact with different superstrates on either side of the Jim Crow divide in the areas where I have conducted fieldwork. In communities which were racialized as Black, LC took on an important role as a marker of ethnolinguistic identity (Maguire 1987). In White communities, though, LC speakers in St Martin Parish were under pressure to dissociate themselves from Blackness and therefore to accommodate to Louisiana Regional French (Tentchoff 1977; Neumann 1983; see Mayeux 2024). Therefore, although both Black and White communities were in intensive contact with English, it is in Black communities that LC was maintained for longest in St Martin Parish. One result of this maintenance is the increased presence of local English features—and, in particular, local AAE features—in the speech of Black speakers of this variety of LC.[2]

The linguistic consequences of these sociolinguistic dynamics are evidenced in the borrowing of *bɪn* and *stɪl* and their incorporation into LC as aspect markers. This represents a case of the borrowing of morphosyntactic matter, resulting from the prolonged intensive contact described above. However, the borrowing of TMA morphemes is rare even in situations of intensive contact (Matras 2007: 44). I suggest that the borrowing of *bɪn* and *stɪl* has been facilitated not only by the intensive contact between LC and AAE, but by structural congruity between these two systems. Alongside the intensity of contact, structural and lexical congruity have long been known to modulate borrowing (Weinreich 1953; Thomason & Kaufman 1988). For instance, Jones (2015) compares contact between Mainland Norman and French, two very similar varieties, to that between Insular Norman and English, which are more distantly related.

[2] As a reviewer points out, a different account holds in Pointe Coupee Parish where, as early as the 1990s, LC was the only French-related variety in widespread use. Further, in Pointe Coupee it is amongst White speakers that LC has been best maintained (Klingler 1998: 206; Klingler 2003: 110–111; see also Klingler 2019). This may result in different patterns of variation, perhaps even explaining the co-occurrence of anterior marker *te* and *bɪn* (in Klingler 2003: 265), a pattern not found in my data (see Section 4.1).

She finds the close relationship between Mainland Norman and French facilitates the transfer of grammatical material. The result is that changes in Mainland Norman driven by contact with French are more fully "worked through" than those in Insular Norman driven by contact with English (Jones 2015: 142).

LC and AAE share similar syntactic structures in their inflectional domains, with both marking aspect on functional heads. The borrowings *bɪn* and *stɪl* share near-identical distributions in both LC and AAE. Compare the LC sentences in (22a) and (22a) with their AAE renderings in (23b) and (23b). [3]

(22) *bɪn*

a. *li* *bɪn* *muri!*
3S REMP.STAT dead
(2017EO)

b. *He* *BIN* *dead!*
3S REMP.STAT dead
'He's been dead for a long time!'

(23) *stɪl*

a. *li* *stɪl* *Ø* *ɛ̃* *hɔg.*
3S CONT COP INDEF hog
(2017EO)

b. *He* *still* *Ø* *a* *hog.*
3S CONT COP INDEF hog
'He still is a hog (promiscuous male).'

In the case of *bɪn*, this represents a more straightforward case of the borrowing of structurally congruent material. The case of *stɪl* involves multiple stages, beginning with the borrowing of the adverb *still* (which has no special distribution in AAE). Once borrowed into LC, *stɪl* was subsequently grammaticalized via reanalysis from adverb specifier to head of $Asp_{CONT}P$ in accordance with the Head Preference Principle (van Gelderen 2004; see Section 4.2). In both cases, LC-AAE bilinguals employ similar structures across both linguistic systems which facilitates transfer of material and its grammaticalization.

Finally, I propose a revision to the hierarchy in (1) – (2) (see Section 4) proposed by Rottet (1992; cited in Cinque 1999: 164). The present analysis takes up Rottet's suggestion that aspectual heads may be "stacked" (1992: 275n12), a notion compatible with the approach in Cinque (1999). The first task is to account for the ordering of aspect markers. It has been shown that *bɪn* and *stɪl* must both precede, not follow, the progressive *ape*. Since no co-occurrences of

[3] Thanks to Cliford St. Laurent for contributing the local AAE renderings.

bɪn and *stɪl* are attested, their relative ordering constraints are unclear. I provisionally place them within a single point on the hierarchy, pending further research.[4] Cinque (1999: 140–141) proposes that negation may merge in various positions depending on language- and context-specific considerations. In LC, Henri's (2016) analysis of *p(a)* as a clitic allows its insertion in various positions to obtain different scopal readings, e.g. (21) in Section 4.2. Nevertheless, it must occur below Mood (Rottet 1992). These observations are summarized in (24).

(24) TENSE > MOOD > (NEGATION) > ASPECT$_{\{STAT, HAB, CMPL, CONT\}}$ > (NEGATION) > ASPECT$_{PROG}$ > VERB

6 Conclusion

This study has documented two novel aspect markers, *bɪn* and *stɪl*, which have emerged in LC due to that language's intensive contact with AAE. This relatively rare case of morphosyntactic borrowing has been facilitated in linguistic terms by the syntactic congruity between LC and AAE, both of which employ pre-verbal aspect markers subject to similar ordering constraints. Now that these novel aspect markers have been documented, future research should seek to uncover the finer details of the LC inflectional domain, notably negation, and situate these findings in crosslinguistic perspective. Future work should also seek to investigate variation in different varieties of LC, notably that of Pointe Coupee Parish, as well as the extent to which AAE contact features are found in Louisiana Regional French.

The borrowing of *bɪn* and *stɪl* constitutes a case of contact-induced change which involves the reanalysis and grammaticalization of borrowed material, emphasizing the need to consider multiple causation in language contact (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Mougeon & Beniak 1991; Farrar & Jones 2002). The results of this study confirm a need for further examination of contact between Creoles and languages other than their lexifiers (Aceto 1999; Snow 2000) which may present valuable data for the comparative study of language contact. Creoles and their lexifiers hold a particular sociohistorical relationship and, by definition, share most of their lexical material. On the other hand, Creoles and non-lexifier languages share much less lexical material diverge structurally. The comparison of Creole/lexifier and Creole/non-lexifier contact may thus yield important insights into the borrowability of material as a function of linguistic similarity however defined (see also Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Mayeux 2019; Yakpo 2021).

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[4] This could be tested in future fieldwork using elicitation and grammaticality judgements, if possible. The advanced age and frailty of many speakers as well as other factors present challenges to this method (see Mayeux 2019: 95 – 98). One promising point of further investigation is to test the hypothesis that *bɪn* can move to T. This allows for, but does not require, the presence of the anterior tense marker *te* as in (9) and seems appropriate given that *bɪn* also encodes remote past. Movement to T also addresses a remaining puzzle, namely the position of CMPL relative to PROG, since in Cinque (1999) the ordering is PROG > CMPL > V (see also Rizzi & Cinque 2016: 150). Further testing that hypothesis should reference the discussion of verb movement in Rottet (1992).

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