How Creole morphological schemas emerged from inherited word formation paradigms.

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The talk will focus on the creation of three Guadeloupean creole affixations that emerged from the inheritance of French morphological pairs taken as a paradigm:

a) the –é suffixation which derives verbs on the bases of nouns.

(1) bwannéV ‘to move’ ← bwannN ‘movement’
    dousinéV ‘to cuddle’ ← dousinN ‘cuddle’
    migannéV ‘to mix’ ← miganN ‘purée’

b) the parasynthetic formation in dé-X-é which constructs verbs on nouns by the prefixation of dé- and simultaneous suffixation of –é.

(2) déchèpiyéV ‘to shred’ ← chépiN ‘shred’
    délyannéV ‘to disunite’ ← lyannN ‘union’
    dépyétéV ‘to remove the legs (of a crab)’ ← pyêtN ‘leg’

c) the –asyon suffixation which forms nouns on verbal bases.

(3) konpòrtasyonN ‘negative behavior’ ← konpòrtévV ‘to behave’
    pwofitasyonN ‘profit’ ← pwofitévV ‘to enjoy’
    poursuivasyonN ‘pursuit by the devil’ ← poursuivévV ‘pursue’

The three affixations under consideration follow mechanisms of reanalyses, already known from work on morphological change. These reanalyses were based on a paradigmatic approach to the morphological relations between the inherited French nouns and verbs:

1) the –é suffixation corresponds to a case of "deinflectionalization" (in the sense of Rainer 2015) of the inherited French infinitive verbal suffix that becomes a derivational suffix in creole language. This was made possible first because verbs in Creole are not inflected in infinitive forms and second because the only noun/verb
morphological paradigm massively inherited from French was that with a verb ending in –é (indeed, Guadeloupean Creole did not inherit any other noun/verb paradigm; for example, there are only a few scattered pairs with verbs ending in –i, or in –è).

(2) the parasynthetic formation in dé-X-é which is a reanalysis of a prefix and a flexional marker in a parasynthetic derivational affix: the parasynthetic dé-X-é formation is a combination of the inheritance of the French prefixation dé- and a formation of the suffix –é by “deinflexionalization”. As for the preceding schema, this reanalysis was born from the abundance, in the creole lexicon, of inherited morphological pairs with verb prefixed by dé- and suffixed by –é. French pairs that did not constitute a paradigm in Creole (such as the an-X-é parasynthetic formation: anbwasé / bwat or ankourajé / kouraj) did not give rise to a creole morphological schema.

(3) the –asyon suffixation corresponds to a case of "secretion" (Jespersen 1922, Haspelmath 1995, Rainer 2015): it phonologically reanalyses the French –ion suffix by incorporating a root element, the /as/ segment (so that French Xv-ionN derivatives become Creole Xv-asyonN derivatives). This shift in the creole suffix is linked to the fact that the majority of –yon derivatives that Creole inherited from French –ion suffixations are based on verbal endings in /as/, which belongs, in French, to the verb stem (Bonami, Boyé, Kerleroux 2009). This reanalysis appears to be exceptional in Guadeloupean creole compared to the other French inherited deverbal nominals based on stems ending in /as/: no other suffixes have incorporated this final /as/ because the frequency of the inherited paradigms was not high enough (for example, the final /as/ appears in many other French derivatives, such as nouns derived by the –eur suffix – admirateur- or the –if suffix as in admiratif).

We conclude by stating that Creole’s reanalysis of French morphological schemas is not done by inheriting morphological rules but by inheriting paradigms of word formation pairs.

References