

## Definiteness and specificity in the Martinican Creole DP

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Ihsane and Puskás (2001) propose that D be split into two distinct heads (Top<sup>0</sup> and Def<sup>0</sup>) to account for the distinction between definiteness and specificity. Definiteness, which they describe as “select[ing] one object in the class of possible objects,” is associated with the lower DefP projection. The higher TopP projection encodes specificity, defined as the “relation to pre-established elements in the discourse.”

In this paper, I propose that evidence for this structure can be adduced from Martinican Creole (MC) relative clauses (RC) which surface as NP DET RC (DET) strings. As illustrated by the contrast in (1), specific readings are licensed by the presence of the optional clause-final determiner. I take this to mean that the immediately postnominal determiner marks definiteness, while its clause-final counterpart encodes specificity.

- (1) a. Man ké ba 'y bagay la i mandé  
1SG IRR give 3SG thing DET 3SG ask  
'I will give her the thing (whatever it is) she asks for.'
- b. Man ké ba 'y bagay la i mandé a  
1SG IRR give 3SG thing DET 3sg ask DET  
'I will give her the thing (whatever it is) she asks for.'  
'I will give her the (aforementioned) thing she asked for'

This data is consistent with a Raising Analysis of RCs (Kayne 1994; de Vries 2002). The head noun in (1b) is raised from inside the relative clauses to Spec,CP. It is then moved to Spec,DefP. Finally, the whole DP is moved to Spec,TopP. The last two steps in this derivation, represented in (2), are in line with Déprez's (2007) observation that MC has a predilection for snowball movement in the nominal domain.

- (2) a. [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> bagay<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>C'</sub> ∅ [<sub>IP</sub> i mandé t<sub>i</sub>]]]  
b. [<sub>DefP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> bagay<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>Def'</sub> la [<sub>CP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> ∅ [<sub>IP</sub> i mandé t<sub>i</sub>]]]]]  
c. [<sub>SpecifP</sub> [<sub>DefP</sub> bagay la i mandé ] [<sub>Specif'</sub> a t<sub>DefP</sub>]]

Building upon Aboh's (2004) proposal that nominal topicalization licenses clausal topicalization, I postulate that relativized DPs bearing a [topic] feature can move covertly and optionally to a left peripheral position. The ambiguity of (1b) would then follow from the assumption that the temporal interpretation of RCs depends on their position at LF (Stowell 2007).

Unexpectedly, specific definite simplex DPs surface as NP DET strings (*bagay la* 'the aforementioned thing'). This has led previous studies to claim that they contain a single D head encoding specificity (Déprez 2007; Gadelii 2007; Zribi-Hertz & Jean-Louis 2014). Contra these authors, I posit the underlying presence of both Def<sup>0</sup> and Top<sup>0</sup>. I attribute the fact that a single determiner is pronounced to a haplology, as independently observed elsewhere (e.g. possessive constructions).

This paper thus shows that empirical support for the Split-DP Hypothesis is found in MC. In addition, the facts presented above suggest that the DP layer may be just as articulated in simplex DPs as it is in relativized DPs.

## References

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