22 Reflexives

Pieter Muysken and Norval Smith

22.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with a class of function words in pidgin and creole languages that can contribute both to the on-going debate on the role of universal and substratum features in creole formation, and to the debate on gradual versus abrupt creolization: the reflexives. As we will see below, reflexives tend to be innovative in creoles with respect to their lexifier languages. While content words are often reflexes of the lexemes of the colonial languages, for function words, and particularly for reflexives, there is a much more indirect correspondence.

Reflexives in creole languages raise all the issues that have been under discussion in the field in recent years. How does the lexical reconstitution of a grammatical morpheme class proceed: by taking elements from substrate languages; through the gradual transformation of superstrate patterns; through the influence of a linguistic bioprogram; or through processes of grammaticalization of content words? Reconstitution is the process through which a morpho-syntactic category lost in the process of pidginization is reintroduced into the nascent or developing creole. In addition these issues link creole studies to the mainstream of theoretical linguistics, where the distribution and properties of reflexives have been central issues for many years (Chomsky 1981; Reinhart & Reuland 1991).

Creole reflexives are formed with the analytic word formation procedures characteristic of creole lexical extension in general. Earlier accounts, typified by such survey studies as Holm (1989), were mostly focused on the forms the reflexives took and on their possible resemblance to the superstrate languages, with some reference to the substrate issue. Reflexives are often found to consist of two parts, as seen in (i):

(i)  

a. ko li (body 3SG) (Martinican)  
her/himself (cf. Fr ‘se/soi-même’)

b. en srefi (3SG self) (Sranan)  
her/himself (cf. Eng ‘himself’)

c. my yet (1SG head) (Tok Pisin)  
myself (cf. Eng ‘myself’)
The orientation of the work in this area has changed due to the publication of Carden & Stewart’s seminal article of 1988. They argue on the basis of the distribution of the reflexives in Haitian dialects, coupled with some scant diachronic data, that early Haitian had bare pronoun reflexives. This raises the issue of whether the early stages of creoles represent fully natural languages, since this may go against universal grammatical principles (as defined in Chomsky’s Binding Theory, 1981), or whether they resemble rather the pidgins from which they are derived. Corne’s work on Mauritian reflexives (1988; 1989) has introduced a new dimension into this research: different sets of verbs often select different reflexive forms. Thus there is an intimate link as well with verb semantics and the way it is reflected in the argument structure and subcategorization frame of verbs.

A dimension which needs to be explored further is to what extent principles of discourse organization influence the distribution of reflexive forms in those cases where several different forms are possible with a single verb.

22.2 Diversity among the creoles

Creole languages exhibit a fair variety of reflexive structures. This section represents a preliminary attempt to classify the forms found. Due to lack of data, we will restrict ourselves to a small number of creole languages here, so we do not wish to pretend that our conclusions are in any way definitive. In (2) we present an overview of the different types of reflexive forms encountered in the languages of the world.

(2) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>definition</strong></th>
<th><strong>example</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. 3rd person pronoun</td>
<td>Haitian <em>li</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. 1st/2nd person pronoun</td>
<td>French <em>melle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. reflexive pronoun</td>
<td>French <em>se</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. reflexive + identifier</td>
<td><em>sichzelf</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. pronoun + identifier</td>
<td><em>herself</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. possessive + identifier</td>
<td><em>myself</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. body word (body, head, skin)</td>
<td>Fon <em>wu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. pronoun + body word</td>
<td>Saram. <em>en sinkii</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. pronoun + identifier + body word</td>
<td>Saram. <em>en seei sikin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c. possessive + body word</td>
<td>Papiamento <em>su kurpa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. verb + reflexive affix</td>
<td>Quechua <em>riku-ku-n</em> [see-re-3sg]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. verb + body incorporation</td>
<td>Bini <em>egbe</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 1 the distribution of these forms over a number of creoles is presented:

Table 1. Distribution of types of reflexives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HT</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AN</th>
<th>NH</th>
<th>BE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a.</td>
<td>3pron</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b.</td>
<td>1/2pron</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>refl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a.</td>
<td>pron+idnf</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b.</td>
<td>poss+idnf</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a.</td>
<td>pron+body</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b.</td>
<td>pron+idnf+body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c.</td>
<td>poss+body</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>null</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>verb+refl af</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>verb+body inc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(HT = Haitian, MA = Mauritian, SR = Sranan, SA = Saramaccan, PA = Papiamento, AN = Fa d’Ambu, NH = Negerhollands, BE = Berbice Dutch Creole)

Most frequent are bare pronouns, pronoun + identifier combinations, and null forms. Only a few of the possibilities attested in the languages of the world are not attested in creoles.

22.3 The role of the lexifier languages

For French-lexifier creoles the colonial lexifier can only have played a limited role. The reflexives in the English-based creoles are not directly inherited from the lexifier model, either (cf. Smith 1987). Unlike the question words in the colonial lexifier languages, which tend to be uniformly mono-morphematic in structure (i.e. consist of one meaning-bearing element), as in (3), reflexive pronouns in these languages are different in their morphological structure, as in (4):

(3) who what when where etc. (English)
wie wat wanneer waar etc. (Dutch)
qui que quand ou etc. (French)
quem que quando onde etc. (Portuguese)
Reflexives

(4) myself himself herself etc.  
  me(zelf) zich(zelf) etc.  
  me se se etc.  
  me se se etc.  

(5) a. Eu me vejo no espelho.  
    ‘I see myself in the mirror.’  
  b. Maria se corta en la mano.  
    ‘Mary cuts herself in the hand.’

Ibero-Romance reflexive clitic forms are the following:

(6) me nos  
    te os etc.  
    se se

As was the case with the other clitic pronouns, reflexive clitics were lost in the process of genesis of Papiamento, perhaps in a phase when the language existed only as a rudimentary second language pidgin. The question is of course what replaced them.

Superstrate explanations are inadequate also. If superstrate influence were the proper explanation in most cases, then we would expect the following patterns in French and English-lexifier creoles:

(7)  
  French-based Pronoun Reflexive Pronoun  
  English-based Possessive + Pronoun + Identifier Identifier

Substandard English also has possessive + identifier for the 3rd person: theirselves, hiself. In fact we observe the pattern in table 2:
Table 2. Reflexives in various French and English-based Creole languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pron</th>
<th>Pron+Idnt</th>
<th>Pron+Body</th>
<th>Pron+Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English-based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ (?)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaican (?)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French-based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayenne</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Pron = pronoun; Idnt = identifier)

The most striking fact that springs to the eye here is the uniformity among the various systems. There is quite obviously no question of any major superstrate influence. The analytic constructions Pron+Idnt (him-self), and Pron+Body/Body+Pron (li-kol ko-li) are shared between English-based and French-based creoles. Pron+Head/Head+Pron (li-test tet-li) occurs only in the French-lexifier creoles.

There are two possible cases of superstrate influence to be discerned. The first concerns the use of the bare Oblique pronoun as a reflexive in Seychellois and some other French-based creoles. This differs slightly from the French facts in that the third person form is an Oblique pronoun rather than a true reflexive form as in French, but we could put this down to a regularization of the system, removing what is a minority pattern in French.

(8) ...i bey li partu
    ‘...(he) washes himself all over’ (Seychellois)

More striking is the use of the Pron+Ident pattern in certain English-based creoles. Once again we have a difference in the overall pattern, however, but this time in the majority of cases.
Table 3. Reflexives in English, Saramaccan, and Sranan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Saramaccan</th>
<th>Sranan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>myself</td>
<td>myself</td>
<td>mi-seei</td>
<td>mi-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourself</td>
<td>yourself</td>
<td>ju/i-seei</td>
<td>ju-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself</td>
<td>himself</td>
<td>en-seei</td>
<td>en-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ourselves</td>
<td>ourselves</td>
<td>wi/u-seei</td>
<td>wi-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourselves</td>
<td>yourselves</td>
<td>unu-seei</td>
<td>unu-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themselves</td>
<td>themselves</td>
<td>den-seei</td>
<td>den-srefi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact only the two patterns indicated with an ‘=’ sign are equivalent to the English pattern, and then only if we ignore the fact that plurality is marked in English reflexives. The significant differences in the pattern of Personal Pronouns are as follows:

Table 4: Contrasts between Sranan and English Reflexives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Sranan</th>
<th>*Sranan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s Pron.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>*ai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>me</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss.</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>*mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ident.</td>
<td>my-self</td>
<td>mi-srefi</td>
<td>*mai-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s Pron.</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>ju/i</td>
<td>ju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss.</td>
<td>your</td>
<td>ju/i</td>
<td>*juwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ident.</td>
<td>your-self</td>
<td>ju-srefi</td>
<td>*juwa-srefi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p Pron.</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>wi/u</td>
<td>wi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>us</td>
<td>wi/u</td>
<td>*osi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss.</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>wi/u</td>
<td>*owa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ident.</td>
<td>our-selves</td>
<td>wi-srefi</td>
<td>*owa-srefi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the Sranan reflexives were cognate with their English congeners we would have expected the non-occurring phonetic forms in the *Sranan column (cf. Smith 1987 for details of phonetic developments in the Surinam creoles). This suggests that superstrate influence in itself cannot provide an acceptable explanation of more than a small part of these phenomena, morphologically speaking.

There were, it should be mentioned, cases of 'body' reflexives in Old French (Einhorn 1974: 69), but there is no reason to assume that there is a historical link between these and the 'body' reflexives in the Caribbean creoles:

(9) por lor cors deporter
    'to amuse themselves' (Old French)
Notice finally that the forms in (10) correspond to each other, but not directly to a European model.

(10) a. su mes, e mes
   b. sie-self, am-self

(Papiamento) (Negerhollands)

22.4 Grammaticalization

One may hypothesize that ‘self’ forms started as emphatic or delimitative discourse markers and slowly developed into a grammatical formative. This trend is illustrated with an example from Quechua, where -lla-tak is used both to delimit reference and mark a pronoun as a reflexive.

(11) a. Xwan pay-ta riku-n.
    Juan he-ac see-3
    'Juan sees him/*himself.'
   b. Xwan pay-lla-ta-tak riku-n.
    Juan he-DEL-ac-EMP see-3
    'Juan sees himself/just him especially.'

(Quechua)

The evidence for grammaticalization so far is limited, however. We will consider four cases here.

22.4.1 Negerhollands

Did Negerhollands self evolve from an emphatic highlighter to a non-discourse-oriented anaphoric marker? Consider first the data in Table 5. Here two periods in the early history of Negerhollands are contrasted, 1780 and 1800 (Van der Voort & Muysken to appear).

The percentage of self forms (marked with s) increases in this period, as we would expect from the perspective of a shift from discourse marker to grammatical formative, in conformity with a gradualist hypothesis. It does so more for 1st and 2nd persons, however, where grammatical disambiguation is not needed, than for 3rd persons, where it is.
Table 5. The relation between the person of the pronoun and the presence of *self* in Negerhollands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 S</td>
<td>48 = 33%</td>
<td>19 = 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 S</td>
<td>107 = 30%</td>
<td>34 = 36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = period around and before 1780; 11 = period around and shortly after 1800. 1/2 = first/second person; 3 = third person; *self* forms are marked with *S*.

22.4.2 Papiamento

A similar question can be posed for Papiamento. Did Papiamento *kurpa* evolve from an inalienably possessed body noun to a freely occurring anaphor? The form *kurpa* is mostly used with physical action verbs, taken in the widest sense of the word:

(12) E ta kana bai bini sin duna su kurpa sosiego.
    'He walks back and forth without giving himself rest.'

(13) E ta kita nan for di su kurpa.
    'He takes them off himself/his body.'

(14) ??M'a sina mi kurpa ingles.
    'I taught myself English.'

Notice, however, that it cannot be used together with another inalienably possessed noun:

(15) a. M'a korta mi mes/*mi kurpa na mi man.
    'I cut myself in the hand.'

b. Mi ta dal mi mes/*mi kurpa na mi kabes.
    'I hit myself on the head.'

Here *man* 'hand' is inalienably possessed by the subject. Even though the action is quite physical, *kurpa* is impossible. We can interpret this contrast by assuming that *kurpa* itself is an inalienably possessed element, and hence blocked in (15a). When the anaphor and the antecedent are not co-arguments of the same predicate, *kurpa* cannot be used either:
(16) Mi a mira un kulebra serka di mi/*mi mes/*mi kurpa.
'I saw a snake near me (near my body (as in a dream))'

(17) Mi a mira mi mes/*mi kurpa kai.
'I saw myself fall.'
('I saw my body fall (as in a dream)')

Thus kurpa is not fully grammaticalized yet(?) as a reflexive element.

22.5 Substrate

There is also quite a variety of forms to be found in the various (potential) substrate languages (see also Carden 1993):

(18) wu 'body' (Fon/Gbe)
    egbe 'body' (Bini)
    me ho etc. 'my body' (Twi)
    ara mi etc. 'body my' (Yoruba)

If the form of the reflexives in the creole languages was purely a question of substrate or superstrate influence, we would expect clear evidence one way or the other, considering the great variety of morphological structures into account.

Let us now consider substrate influence. We will only analyse those cases where we appear to have some evidence for particular West African languages having played a major role in the formation of particular creoles. Can we observe direct substrate influence in the reflexive formation in such languages? The following languages have been argued to be substrate languages:

(19) | Creole Language       | Substrate Language | Source                |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berbice Dutch</td>
<td>E. Ijọ (Kalahta)</td>
<td>(Smith et al. 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan/Sranan</td>
<td>Gbe (Fon)</td>
<td>(Smith 1987; Bakker 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td>Gbe (Fon)</td>
<td>(Lefebvre 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annobonese</td>
<td>Bini</td>
<td>(Ferraz 1970)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let us consider these cases one by one.

(20) Pron + selfu
    bu 'body'
    (Berbice Dutch) (Kalahta)
Here there is no correspondence whatsoever.

(21)  
Pron + seei  'self'  (Saramaccan)
Pron + sinkii 'body' <skin
wu    'body'  (Fon)

(22)  
kadav + Pron  'corpse'  (Haitian)
kor + Pron    'body'
wu    'body'  (Fon)

Here there is a partial semantic correspondence between Haitian and Saramaccan on the one hand, and Fon on the other.

(23)  
ogue    'body'  (Annobonese)
egbe    'body'  (Bini)

The only case involving a complete equivalence (i.e. morphological, etymological-phonological and semantic) of these four is the last, that of Annobonese/Bini. The cases of Haitian and Saramaccan are semantically equivalent, but not equivalent either phonologically or morphologically. Overall the claim for substrate influence is not particularly strong for reflexives.

The evidence for an African basis for the body reflexives is not very strong at present, but cannot be plausibly denied. To summarize:

a. There is no Ibero-Romance reflex for Papiamento kurpa, as there is for French creole kor.

b. No body-part reflexives in Berbice Dutch.

c. Some West-African languages (e.g. Ewe) do not have body-part reflexives; this needs to be studied in much more detail.

d. The absence of grammaticalization of Papiamento kurpa (and a similar analysis could be given for Saramaccan sinkii) pleads against direct calquing, since in the West-African languages the body reflexives are often fully grammaticalized.

Note that in cases where we can identify both substrate and superstrate the N is lexically supplied in one of three ways:

(24)  
a. the superstrate form
b. the substrate form
  c. the substrate form reinterpreted or relexified in the superstrate language
In Saramaccan we have examples of options (a.) and (c.). Note that where we have the actual substrate form, as in the case of Annobonese, this is associated with the morphological pattern of the substrate language - in this case the form 'body' alone - as forecast by recent versions of the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis, incorporating the Lexical Learning Hypothesis (see chapter 11).

We can summarize the alleged substratum cases as in Table 6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morphosyntax</th>
<th>Constituency:</th>
<th>Order:</th>
<th>Phon.Etym.:</th>
<th>Semantics:</th>
<th>(Saramaccan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mi-seei</td>
<td></td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Sup. (English)</td>
<td>Sup. (English)</td>
<td>Sup. (English)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi-sinkii</td>
<td>Morphosyntax</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Sup. (English)</td>
<td>Sup. (English)</td>
<td>Sub. (Fon)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kadav-mwe</td>
<td>Morphosyntax</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Sub. (Fon)</td>
<td>Sup. (French)</td>
<td>Sub. (Fon)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>ogue</td>
<td>Morphosyntax</td>
<td>Sub. (Bini)</td>
<td>irrel.</td>
<td>Sub. (Bini)</td>
<td>Sub. (Bini)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note that it is conceivably a frequent historical semantic process that reflexives develop from inalienable possessives through the use of words with the meanings 'head' or 'body'. This does not necessarily imply that it is the default case that reflexives should be expressed by such words. So, all in all, the explanation of the causation of creole reflexive forms is much more complex than might have been expected. Different factors require to be taken into consideration when these are being analysed.

The influence of universals in reflexives seems to be restricted to one aspect of morphosyntax. For this influence to even be present it is necessary for the substrate item not to have
been inherited. It also appears that we have to reckon with the effects of relexification. However, extrapolating once again here from the very small number of clear cases at our disposal we appear to have a situation where relexification does not involve maintaining a lexical morphosyntactic pattern. This does not augur well for much of the more grammatical interpretation of substratist claims.

We suggest, in line with the ideas of Bickerton (1981), and to a lesser extent, those of Wekker & Seuren (1986), that the unexplained morphosyntactic patterns derive from universal aspects of the internalized grammar of the early speakers of the relevant creole languages.

It might be remarked that while the analytic type of reflexive appears to be dominant in creole languages, the order of the two constituents is not invariable. However, recent versions of Bickerton's Language Bioprogram Hypothesis regard syntactic constituency as universal, but the order of constituents as language-specific. Note that the universal structure of reflexives would then be: \([\text{Pronoun}, n]\). The problem remains of how the lexical filling of the \(n\) is to be defined.

The Papiamento case suggests that there are complex semantic motivations for the choice of either the identifier or inalienable possessive reflexive. If the use of \(\text{kurpa}\) derives from some African pattern, it was not simply a case of relexifying an African form, but a complex process of reinterpretation of African pattern to fit the \([\text{Pronoun}, n]\) mould.

### 22.6 Bare pronoun forms

Is there evidence for a pidgin or early creole generalized bare pronoun reflexive (as argued Carden & Stewart 1988) or are the bare pronouns a late development under the influence of superstrate reflexive clitic systems (Corne 1988)? Again, several languages provide relevant evidence on this point.

#### 22.6.1 Papiamento

The following data show that in present-day Papiamento bare pronoun reflexives are clitics occurring with lexically specified verbs, but even then only with specific meanings:

\[(25) \quad \begin{align*}
  a. & \quad \text{Mi ta sinti mi/mi mes/*mi kurpa un tiki tristo.} \\
       & \quad \text{'I feel a bit sad.'} \\
  b. & \quad \text{Mi ta sinti *mi/mi mes/mi kurpa dor di e deklo.} \\
       & \quad \text{'I feel myself through the blanket.'}
\end{align*} \]

The two following structures correspond with the two possibilities in \((25a)\):
(a) Mi ta sinti+mi [pro(anaphoric) un tiki tristo].
(b) Mi ta sinti [mi mes un tiki tristo].

In (26a) the *mi* element is an object clitic (see chapter 17), linked to an anaphoric null pronoun in the bracketed small clause structure, and in (26b) *mi+mes* is a reflexive noun phrase.

Some of the verbs taking bare pronoun reflexives are listed below; the verbs are generally inherently reflexive verbs denoting an abstract action:

(27) sinti e x 'feel x'
    haña e 'find oneself'
    gana e 'reach, find oneself'
    okupá e 'occupy oneself'
    imagina e 'imagine oneself'
    komportá e 'behave oneself'

Notice also that these verbs are often part of the more 'educated' vocabulary, almost certainly not dating from the early stages of the creole. Another factor worth taking into consideration is the fact that many of these verbs contain more than two syllables: perhaps their phonological weight favors a light reflexive object pronoun.

12.6.2 Negerhollands

A similar situation holds in 18th century Negerhollands, where the bare pronoun reflexives are all inherent reflexives. Compare *bedink* 'think, (re)consider (lit. think by oneself)', *erger* 'get annoyed at (lit: to irritate oneself)'. Some verbs taking an inherent reflexive have also been attested as zero-reflexive in Negerhollands: *bekeer* 'convert oneself', *boek* 'stoop, lean down (lit: to lean oneself down)'.

12.6.3 Sranan

The data from 18th century Sranan (Bruyn, in prep.) merit much closer investigation. On preliminary inspection, a similar picture emerges:

(28) Da zo mi za beri dem zomma di kili den srefi.
    'It is thus I will bury the people who kill themselves.' (Sranan, c. 1765)

This example indicates that reflexives based on English 'self' were present in the oldest known substantial body of textual material in Sranan. There are also bare pronoun reflexives,
but often with verbs that take an inherently reflexive direct object in the meaning intended:

(29)  
(a) Mi gi mi abra na hem.  
'I give myself (over) to him.'  
(b) Bunne jorka kibri hem.  
'The good ghost hides himself.'

However, in this context 'self' reflexives are not excluded:

(30)  
Wan libisomma membre, takki, hem kann helpi hem srefi, a kori hem srefi. (Sranan, 1783)  
'Someone who thinks he can help himself is deceiving himself.'

As for 20th century Sranan, Adamson (1993) has argued that with a certain class of verbs bare pronouns can function as reflexive objects. Thus en in (31a) can be interpreted both as a reflexive and as a referential pronoun, non-coreferential with the subject:

(31)  
(a) John, syi en/ı ini a spikri. (Sranan, 20th century)  
'John saw him/himself in the mirror.'  
(b) John, syi ensrefı/ı ini a spikri (non-emph. reading).

The reflexive ensrefı in (31b) can only be interpreted as coreferential with the subject. Adamson (1993) argues that reflexive en in (31a) is in fact an object clitic on the verb.

22.7 Overlap in use

In several creoles a number of competing forms exist, partially overlapping in use. We will illustrate this with three examples. The first concerns contemporary Papiamento (Muysken 1993). In Papiamento no less than seven different forms have replaced the Ibero-Romance clitics:

(32)  
(a) null reflexive  
(b) paña ← Port. pano, Sp. paño 'cloth'  
(c) kurpa ← Port. corpo, Sp. cuerpo 'body'  
(d) possessive + kurpa  
(e) pronoun + mes ← Port. mesmo 'self, precisely'  
(f) possessive pronoun + mes  
(g) pronoun
Examples for the principal reflexive forms are given in (33):

(33)  

a. peña               comb oneself               = (32a)  
    feita               shave (oneself)               

b. sofoká kurpa      exert oneself               = (32c)  
    (sofoká 'stifle')  

c. yuda su kurpa      help oneself                = (32d)  
    sisti su kurpa     serve/stuff oneself          

d. weta su mes        look at oneself              = (32f)  
    yuda su mes        help oneself                

e. sinti e tristo     feel sad                    = (32g)  
    haña e             find oneself 

In (33a) we find the null reflexive, in (33b) the bare body word. The latter is limited to a specific set of, often idiomatic, expressions. (33c) illustrates the possessive + body word construction, and (33d) the possessive + identifier construction. In (33e), finally, there is a bare pronoun.

Of course, these forms are not all usable interchangeably. In table 7 a rough outline of their distribution is given, along the dimensions [±physical action] ((non-)phys.) and [inherent (inher.) versus transitive (trans.)]. Inherent reflexives are those where the action of the verb is typically directed at the agent itself (shave), while transitive reflexives are those where it is directed to another being or object (kiss).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 7. The rough distribution of Papiamento reflexives</th>
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<td>phys.inher.</td>
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<td>phys.trans.</td>
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<td>non-phys.inher.</td>
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<td>non-phys.trans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>non-phys.trans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Papiamento, *mes can be used as an identifier, in addition to being a reflexive, but kurpa cannot:

(34)  

a. Mi mes ta hunga.  
    'I myself am playing.'  

b. *mi kurpa ta hunga
Reflexives

The main factor in the choice between *mes* and *kurpa* as reflexives seems to be whether the verb expresses a physical action or not. With some verbs both forms are possible, although one may be preferred (as with *bo mes* in (7)):

(35) El a hoga su mes/su kurpa na lama.
    ‘He has drowned himself in the sea.’

(36) Bo a yuda bo mes/bo kurpa.
    ‘You have helped yourself.’

In other constructions, only *mes* is possible. These are principally cases where the ‘self’ is purely mental or figurative:

(37) M’a ekiboka mi mes/*mi kurpa.
    ‘I made a mistake.’

(38) El a hasi su mes/*su kurpa sokete.
    ‘He made himself out to be stupid.’

(39) El a lolea/hode su mes/*su kurpa.
    ‘He made an asshole of himself.’

In cases such as (11), which is purely corporeal, *kurpa* but not *mes* is possible:

(40) El a dal su kurpa/*su mes na un palo.
    ‘He walked into a pole.’
    (lit. ‘he walked himself into a pole’)

We will discuss the use of bare pronoun forms below.

The distribution in Papiamento is not dissimilar to that in Mauritian, as described by Corne (1988; 1989). The following four categories and distributions are distinguished by Corne:

(41) null inherent reflexives

pronoun inherent reflexives / transitive verbs / preferred with datives

pro + *mem* transitive verbs; preferred with prepositional phrases

pro + *lekor* physical action verbs
Mauritian *lekor* has a distribution very much like Papiamento *kurpa*. We will see below that the same holds for bare pronoun and null forms.

A partially different picture is suggested by 18th century Negerhollands (Muysken and van der Voort 1991), which lack body part reflexives altogether. Some examples are given in (13) of different forms occurring in different contexts:

\[(42)\] a. *wies ju selv na die Priester* (Mat 8, 4)  
'**show 2SG self to the priest’**

b. *ha openbaar sie selv* (Mat 2, 19)  
'**tNS reveal refl self’**

c. *Partie van die Skriftgeleerden ha seg bie sender selv*  
part of the Pharisees *past say with 3PL self* (Mat 9, 3)

d. *en Jesus ha ruep sie twaelf Disciplen na sie* (Mat 10, 1)  
and Jesus **call his twelve disciples to refl**

e. *maer die Volk ha verwonder sender* (Mat 8, 27)  
but the people **marvel [themselves]**

In Table 8 it is made clear that there are considerable differences amongst the different contexts where the *selv* forms occur most frequently.

<table>
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<th>Table 8. Distribution of <em>selv</em> over different contexts in Negerhollands (van der Voort &amp; Muysken to appear)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
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<tr>
<td>pronoun + <em>selv</em></td>
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Forms with *selv* are very common in direct object position and particularly in adverbial phrases, but much less so elsewhere.

### 22.8 Conclusion

The above survey of creole reflexive systems has of necessity been incomplete. It has yielded some preliminary answers, but it has led to further questions as well. Before we can state a more definite set of conclusions, more representative data from a wider variety of creoles are needed, embedded in an explicit diachronic perspective.
Further readings