Chapter 11

Double-Object Constructions in the Creole Languages: Development and Acquisition

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11.1 Introduction

Verbs of transfer and communication (henceforth, dative verbs) take three semantic arguments: the sender, the recipient, and the object or message transferred. This situation subjects the arguments to a round of musical chairs, as it were. The phrase marker makes two canonical, automatically licensed positions available: one for the subject and one for the direct object. The canonical thematic roles associated with these positions in this case correspond to the sender and object/message transferred. For the recipient, there are two options:

(a) It is in a syntactically unmarked position, external to the verb + object cluster, and part of a prepositional phrase (or verb phrase in a serial verb construction). This requires, however, the availability in the language of a semantically bleached element (generally indicating goal), such as to in English, and the mechanism of transmitting the recipient thematic role of the verb to another Case assigner.

(b) It is in a syntactically special position, in construction with the direct object (e.g., in a small clause), and it receives its thematic role directly. What may be special here is the possibility for an argument (the object/message) to function as a predicate, assigning the recipient role together with the verb.

Option (a) requires special lexico-semantic apparatus; option (b) special syntactic apparatus. Consider now the well-known pair:

(1) a. Jane gave the book to Mary.
    b. Jane gave Mary the book.

In many accounts of the alternation in (1) in English and other languages, two assumptions have been prevalent, implicitly or explicitly: First, the prepositional dative construction (PDC) (a) is basic and (b) is derived. Second, and in line with this, the availability of the double-object construction (DOC) to speakers of English is somehow special, requiring specific mechanisms or marked parameter settings.

The original reason that we engaged ourselves in this undertaking is that most if not all creoles have DOCs. Examples are given below. This is perhaps to be expected for creole languages for which the European lexifier has double objects, such as Dutch and English:
(2) Ham a gi di man si gout.  
3SG gA give DET man 3POS gold  
‘He gave the man his gold.’

(3) Mi soim yu banara bilong mi.  
1SG show 2SG bow PREP 1SG  
‘I show you my bow.’

They also occur, however, in creole languages whose European lexifier language has no DOC: Saramaccan and Papiamentu with a Portuguese lexical base (Saramaccan also has an English component), and Haitian Creole and Seychelles Creole with a French lexical base:

(4) Mi ke pindja i wan soni.  
1SG want tell 2SG one thing  
‘I want to tell you something (in secret).’

(5) Bo a duna mi e buki.  
2SG ASP give 1SG DET book  
‘You have given me the book.’

(6) Mo pu deman mo papa morso larzan.  
1SG MD ask 1SG father bit money  
‘I shall ask my father for a little money.’

(7) Li rakonte papa-li istwa sa-a.  
3SG tell father-3SG story this  
‘He told his father this story.’

Recall that the Romance lexifier languages do not have DOCs. All the examples in (4)–(7) show DOCs in Romance-lexifier creoles, which suggests that they are not a marked option in Universal Grammar (UG). This observation was our starting point as it raises the following explanatory issue:

(8) What explains the distribution of PDCs and DOCs in creole languages?

In order to answer this question, we must first answer some empirical questions. Surely, the first research question is:

(A) What is the distribution of the DOC in creole languages?

Three options exist in creole languages for dative verbs, illustrated in (9)–(11) for Fa d’Ambu, the Portuguese-lexifier creole of Annobon (Post, to appear):

(9) Malia da pe-d’eli tabaku.  
Maria give father-3SG tobacco  
‘Maria gives (the) tobacco to her father.’

(10) No sxa fe wan xadyi pa non-tudu.  
1PL PR make ART house for 1PL-all  
‘We are constructing a house for us all (our family).’
(11) Amu da wan kuzu da bo.  
1sg give art thing give 2sg 
'I gave you something.'

In (9) we have the DOC, in (10) the PDC, and in (11) a dative serial verb construction (SDC). The DOC occurs in almost all creole languages that we have been able to gather information on, and the PDC and the SDC are much more limited in their distribution, both across creole languages and within a particular creole, as will become clear. In fact, a common pattern in creoles is that the PDC is available for benefactives, as in (10) in Fa d’Ambu, but not for recipients.

The PDC structure in (10) depends on the availability, in English and related languages, of a semantically bleached preposition like to. Consequently, the second empirical question is:

(B) What is the distribution of the PDC among the creole languages?

We cannot dwell on the serial option, SDC, in much detail in this chapter but will treat it along with the prepositional option. In some cases, there is evidence that the serial verb ‘give’ has been reinterpreted as a preposition.

One analytical distinction that plays a role in the analysis concerns the status of the indirect object as a pronoun or a full noun phrase:

(C) Is the distinction between pronouns and full noun phrases of influence in the distribution of the DOC and the PDC?

These first three empirical questions will be addressed in section 11.2 for Romance-lexifier creoles, in section 11.3 for creoles in general, and in sections 11.4 and 11.5 for Sranan and Negerhollands. Given that the creole languages have changed since they emerged, it is crucial that we consider their history with respect to the constructions concerned:

(D) How were the DOC and the PDC distributed during the earliest stages in the development of the creole languages known to us?

This question will be addressed in sections 11.4 and 11.5 for Sranan and Negerhollands, languages for which we have ample documentation available.

Having established the basic facts, we turn to possible explanations. We consider various possibilities, including a substrate explanation (section 11.6) and a parametric explanation (section 11.7). Having established that DOCs as well as PDCs are early developments in creoles, that they are widespread, and that both a substrate analysis and some commonly proposed parametric explanations face serious problems, we will consider an explanation in terms of a theory of UG and the role of first-language acquisition in creole genesis. In order to investigate this possibility, we look at the acquisition of dative verbs in Dutch, English, and French in section 11.8. These languages provided the lexicon in a large number of the creoles we discuss.

Consequently, a further empirical research question arises:

(E) How does the acquisition of the DOC and the PDC by children proceed? Is one construction acquired earlier than the other? What are the concomitant developmental features?
In the conclusion, we find that a developmental interpretation of the theory of UG provides the best means to answer the fundamental question formulated in (8), repeated here:

(12) What explains the distribution of PDCs and DOCs in creole languages?

One note of warning before we start. The research strategy we adopt is to search with various tools at the same time and to approach our topic from various angles. At times it is not quite clear what the exact relationship between these tools is. At all times it is clear that there is a close relationship between the instruments we use and the central question of this study. We hope that the effect of our strategy will be that the essential characteristics of the PDC and the DOC will appear as a constant regardless of the instrument with which we approach them. It is in the convergence of evidence from various sources, gathered with different instruments and viewed from various perspectives, that we hope to find the seeds of truth.

11.2 Dative Objects in Romance-Lexifier Creoles

We now briefly turn to a number of Romance-lexifier creole languages, limiting ourselves to the present-day situation and to secondary sources. Recall that the Romance-lexifier creole languages are of particular importance because in these cases the superstrate does not have a DOC. Therefore, we present the evidence from these languages in detail. We have chosen not to enter into the historical sources for these languages here, because often they are lacking altogether, and where present, they have not been made available systematically.

11.2.1 Haitian and Caribbean French Creoles

In modern Haitian Creole, both classes of dative verbs typically take a double object. Consider:

(13) Kan ou jwe ak-ti-chen, la ba ou pis.
    when 2sg play with-little-dog 3sg give 2sg flea
    ‘When you play with a puppy, it gives you fleas.’
    (Hall 1953, 200)

Here we notice the use of a double-object construction with ba ‘give’. The verb ba also occurs in serial constructions:

(14) Men li, al pran-l ba mwen: lombraj.
    here 3sg go take-3sg give me shade
    ‘There it is, go get it for me: shade.’
    (Hall 1953, 201)

This riddle contains an example of serially used ba ‘give’; here it marks benefactive. Although the literal meaning of ‘giving’ is still present in (14), this is not the case in the next riddle:
(15) Gran-papa-m rete an-le, li lage you asiet ba mwen li tonbe a-te
grandfather-1SG stay in-air he drop one plate give me 3SG fall LO-earth
li pa-kase, li tonbe nan-dlo li kase: papie.
3SG NEG-break 3SG fall in-water 3SG break paper
‘My grandfather stayed in the air, he dropped a plate to me, it fell to the ground
and didn’t break, it fell into the water [and] it broke: paper.’
(Hall 1953, 202)

Here the object of ba, mwen, is in no way the beneficiary.

For Cayenne French Creole, the pattern given by Saint Jacques Fauqenoy (1972, 97) is also the DOC:

(16) Mô bay mò mamá un bó.
1SG give 1SG mother ART kiss
‘I gave my mother a kiss.’

The same holds for St. Lucia French Creole (Carrington 1984, 102):

(17) Nu te bay zot kat gud.
1PL PA give 2PL four dollar
‘We had given you four dollars.’

(18) Mwe di jo sa.
1SG say 3PL that
‘I told them so.’

For Louisiana Creole, the picture given by Neumann (1985, 255) is essentially the same, although there is the added complication of a mesolectal variety closer to French.

(19) Mo don ma momô pôje-la.
1SG give 1POS mother basket-DET
‘I give my mother the basket.’

(20) Mo va di twa ē ti kôt.
1SG fu tell 2SG ART little story
‘I am going to tell you a little story.’

However, there is sometimes variation. Thus we have (21) alongside of (22).

(21) Mo ge pu mene msje Brusar ē six-pack.
1SG gave for bring Mr. Broussard ART six-pack
‘I have to bring Mr. Broussard a six-pack.’

(22) Mo ge pu mene ē six-pack a msje Brusar).
1SG gave for bring ART six-pack to Mr. Broussard
‘I have to bring Mr. Broussard a six-pack.’

Neumann notes that the construction with a is recent and does not occur in nineteenth-century texts. Neither does it appear possible with pronouns; in the latter case, the DOC is preferred (1985, 256).
(23) Mo di li sa.
 1sg say 3sg it
'I say it to him.'

(24) ?Mo di sa a li.
 1sg say it to 3sg

11.2.2 Seychelles Creole

Bollée (1977, 62–63) and Corne (1977, 67–68) give a fairly detailed account of dative objects in Seychelles Creole. The main points of their analysis are:

• DOCs can occur with verbs of transaction and communication:

(25) Si mon vje dalon Torti pa ti donn mwa en buse manze,...
  if 1pos old buddy Turtle neg pa give 1sg art bit eat
 'If my old buddy Turtle had not given me a bit to eat,...'

(26) Rakont u madam zistwar sa zako.
  tell 2sg wife story that monkey
 'Tell your wife the story of that monkey.'

• If one of the two objects is a pronoun, and the other a full NP, the order is generally (but not always) pronoun-NP.

(27) Donn sa Mari.
  give that Mary
 'Give that to Mary.'

• If both objects are pronouns, the order is always indirect object-direct object:

(28) Mon a donn li sa.
 1sg md give 3sg that
 'I will give him that, it to him.'

• If both objects are lexical NPs, the order is free (although there may be a tendency towards indirect object-direct object). In addition to (25), (29) is possible.

(29) Mon pu donn sa rob Mari-Frans.
 1sg md give that dress Marie-France
 'I will give that dress to Marie-France.'

• With verbs of communication, but not of transaction, there is the possibility of a construction with (av)ek (< Fr. avec ‘with’):

(30) Frer Zako i deman avek pti Torti:
  brother Jacquot 3sg ask prep little Turtle
 'Brother Jacquot asks little Turtle:'

It is not possible at present, in the absence of more detailed work, to offer a theoretical account of the patterns of Seychelles Creole. One possibility is that there is a zero-preposition marking datives, so that the cases of direct object-indirect object
order are really PDCs. Another possibility is that there is a rightward scrambling rule operating rather freely.

Bickerton (1989) provides some cases of SDCs in Seychelles Creole. These are somewhat marginal, Bickerton claims (1989, 161), and the examples given are benefactives:

\[(31)\] Zot amene vin zet isi donn bann blan isi.
\[3\text{pl} \text{bring} \text{come} \text{put here} \text{give} \text{DET. PL white here} \]
‘They brought [the slaves] here for the whites here.’

\[(32)\] I fer son dite i donn li.
\[3\text{sg} \text{make} 3\text{pos} \text{tea} 3\text{sg} \text{give} 3\text{sg} \]
‘She made his tea for him.’

11.2.3 Papiamentu and Palenquero

In Papiamentu, the only possibilities are DOCs:

\[(33)\] a. Maria a duna Wanchu un buki. (fieldwork data, Muysken)
   Mary \(\text{pa} \text{give} \) John \ ART book
   ‘Mary gave John a book.’

b. Maria a dunami un buki.
   Mary \(\text{pa} \text{give-1SG ART book} \)
   ‘Mary gave me a book.’

c. Maria a dunami e.
   Mary \(\text{pa} \text{give-1SG 3SG} \)
   ‘Mary gave me it.’

d. Maria a duna mi ruman e.
   Mary \(\text{pa} \text{give 1SG brother 3SG} \)
   ‘Mary gave my brother it.’

Notice that this even holds for cases such as (33d), where the indirect object (IO) is an NP and the direct object (DO) a pronoun.

In Palenquero, a Spanish-lexicon creole from Colombia not related to Papiamentu, we also have DOCs (de Friedemann and Patiño Roselli 1983):

\[(34)\] Lole, nu nda Purita ndulo nu. (p. 97)
   Lole \ NEG give Purita hard \ NEG
   ‘Lole, don’t hit Purita hard.’

   ‘Lole, no le des duro a Purita.’ \ (Spanish translation)

\[(35)\] Pepe á ta mandá suto un ma kata. (p. 120)
   Pepe \ PR ASP send \ 1PL ART PL letter
   ‘Pepe is sending us some letters.’

   ‘Pepe está mandandonos unas cartas.’ \ (Spanish translation)

We also have DOCs with verbs like rroba ‘steal’:

\[(36)\] Konejo taba rrroba-ndo ele ma yuka ele. (p. 120)
   rabbit \ PA steal-ing \ 3SG PL manioc 3SG
   ‘The rabbit was stealing his maniocs from him.’
11.2.4 Guinea-Bissau Kriyol

Kihm (1994, 54–56) describes the DOC in Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (involving a variety of thematic roles) in some detail and expresses his puzzlement over its origin, particularly because the construction is present only in some of the potentially relevant substrate languages.

(37) Mininu manda si mame un karta.
    boy send 3POS mother ART letter
    ‘The boy sent his mother a letter.’

The order is fixed. When the direct object is a pronoun, the ‘detached’ form of the pronoun must be used:

(38) Kila ningin ka pudi tuji n el.
    that nobody ASP can forbid 1SG 3SG
    ‘Nobody can forbid me that.’

There are some marginal cases in which the basically locative preposition na can be used to indicate the role of recipient, but this is not a general pattern (Kihm 1994, 70):

(39) E nterga n na pulisya.
    3PL turn.over 1SG LO police
    ‘They turned me over to the police.’

11.2.5 Principe and Fa d’Ambu

In the Portuguese-lexifier creole of Principe (Günther 1973, 87), there is an alternation between a DOC and an SDC. In the SDC, a dative and a benefactive reading is possible:

(40) Pwé sa dá minu dyó.
    father ASP give child money
    ‘The father gives the child money.’

(41) Pwé sa dá dyó da minu sé.
    father ASP give money give child 3POS
    ‘The father gives money to/for his child.’

Günther (1973, 87) notes, however, that with a verb such as futa ‘steal’ the DOC marks the source, whereas the SDC marks the beneficiary:

(42) N ka futá dyó da mwí mé.
    1SG PRF steal money give 1POS mother
    ‘I stole money for my mother.’

(43) n ka futá mwí mé dyó.
    1SG PRF steal 1POS mother money
    ‘I stole money from my mother.’

The parallel data for Fa d’Ambu were already given in examples (9)–(11) in section 11.1.
11.2.6 Indo-Portuguese
The only Romance exception to this general pattern that we are aware of (and indeed the only exception among the creoles in general) are the Portuguese creoles of Malaysia and Indonesia—a set of varieties for which the data are not very extensive. Thus we have PDCs with *por* ‘for’ and *ku* ‘with’:

(44) Kompra sigero por yo. (Tugu; Wallace 1977)
    buy cigarette for 1sg
    ‘Buy me some cigarettes.’

(45) Iste figura yo bende ku ele.
    this picture 1sg sell with 3sg
    ‘This picture I sold to him.’

(46) Kantu kere da akel ondra kum yo. (Malayo-Portuguese; Schuchardt 1890)
    if want give the honor with 1sg
    ‘if you want to give the honor to me.’

(47) Yo da ku eli. (Malacca; Hancock 1975, 211–236)
    1sg give with 3sg
    ‘I give him.’

In Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole, we find extensive convergence with Batticaloa Tamil; this makes it hard to interpret the findings for this variety (Smith 1979), in which *-pa* appears as a dative Case marker:

(48) a. E:w eli -pa dine:ru ja:-da:. (Batticaloa Portuguese)
    1sg 3sg -DAT money PA-give
    ‘I gave money to him.’

b. Nam avan -ukku calli-ya kútu-(tt-an. (Batticaloa Tamil)
    1sg 3sg -DAT money-AC give-PA-CNC
    ‘I gave money to him.’

In earlier forms of this creole, however, *per* is used prepositionally, as in Dalgado’s (1900) presentation of a literary Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole text from 1852, cited in Holm (1989):

(49) Pai da per mi o quinhão de os fazendos que per mi te compete. E
    father give for 1sg the part of the farm that for 1sg PR belong and
    elle ja reparti per ellotros sua fazendo.
    3sg PA divide for 3pl 3pos farm
    ‘Father gives me the part of the farms that to me belongs. And he had divided
    his farm between them.’

Notice, however, that the position of the *per* PP is between the verb and the direct object. It also turns out that *per* is used with animate direct objects as well. It is a regional feature of many languages of the southern Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka that the dative object is marked in the same way as the animate direct object, and it could be that this feature has spread to the creoles of the region.
A similar account is not directly available for Malayo-Portuguese, however. It is not clear why this variety is exceptional with respect to the other creoles.

11.2.7 Summary
Although there are some remaining issues for analysis, it is clear that in the Romance-lexifier creoles the DOC constitutes the basic, and in some cases, the only available option. This is the case in a wide variety of creoles, many of them not related. The main exception is Malayo-Portuguese.

11.3 The Expression of Dative Objects in Some Creoles: An Overview

Even though much work remains to be done, we can summarize the distribution of datives in the creole languages with some confidence, as shown in table 11.1.

A few non-Romance cases need further discussion: Tok Pisin and Afrikaans. In Tok Pisin there appears to be much variation. Mühlhäusler (1985, 363) gives (50) for mainland Tok Pisin and (51) for Tok Pisin of the islands.

Table 11.1
The distribution of DOCs, PDCs, and SDCs in selected creole languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>DOC</th>
<th>PDC</th>
<th>SDC</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaican Creole</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tok Pisin</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negerhollands</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(-)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berbice Dutch</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haitian Creole</td>
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<td>Guyanais</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana Creole</td>
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<td>(+)</td>
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<td>Seychelles Creole</td>
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<td>Papiamentu</td>
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<td>Palenquero</td>
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<td>Guinea-Bissau Kriyol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fa d’Ambu</td>
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<td>Principense</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malayo-Portuguese</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka Portuguese</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(50) a. Givim buk long mi.
   give book to me
   'Give me the book.'
   b. Soim buk long mi.
   show book to me
   'Show me the book.'

(51) a. Givim mi long buk.
   give me lo book
   'Give me the book.'
   b. Soim mi long buk.
   show me lo book
   'Show me the book.'

Notice that the preposition long in Tok Pisin has a wide variety of uses. The core prepositional system of Tok Pisin has bilong linking nouns to other nouns and long linking nouns to verbs. Dutton (1973, 29) has the following example, in addition to PDC cases:

(52) Ol i givim mipela tu siling na mipela givim ol tu siling pepa
    3PL give 1PL two shilling and 1PL give 3PL two shilling packet
    rais yet.
    rice
    'They give us two shillings and we give them a packet of rice worth two
    shillings.'

In Afrikaans, the situation is complicated by the fact that in DOCs the indirect object is marked with the Case marker vir, which can also be a preposition 'for' but is similar to the Spanish Case marker/preposition a. In Spanish, a occurs both with animate specific direct objects and with indirect objects. The Afrikaans indirect object can precede the direct object, however, unlike Spanish. In this sense, Afrikaans is like some varieties of eighteenth-century Negerhollands and Sranan, which also allow the indirect object to be preceded by the preposition na even in constructions with the sequence indirect object-direct object. See sections 11.4 and 11.5 for details.

Our conclusion from this survey of a number of creole languages is that:

(A) the DOC construction is almost universally present
(B) the PDC is present only in a number of languages; the alternative analytic form, SDC, occurs only occasionally, and particularly in languages with strong West African substrate influence.

As noted in the introduction, we will now turn to explanations for the distribution of the constructions under study after answering research question (D), repeated here for convenience:

(D) How were the DOC and the PDC distributed during the earliest stages in the development of the creole languages known to us?
Section 11.4 presents detailed and diachronic evidence about datives in Sranan, and section 11.5 presents the evidence from Negerhollands.

11.4 Sranan

Sranan is one of the creoles for which abundant early material is available, enabling us to answer research question (D).

11.4.1 Modern Language

In Sranan there are presently DOCs, PDCs, and SDCs involving the serial verb/preposition gi. The basic word order is S V IO DO, as in (53).

(53) I e skrifi i sisa wan brifi.
   2SG PR write 2SG sister ART letter
   ‘You are writing your sister a letter.’

The dative object of the verb may follow the DO if it is introduced by the general preposition na ‘to’:

(54) I e skrifi wan brifi na i sisa.
   2SG PR write ART letter LO 2SG sister
   ‘You are writing a letter to your sister.’

Voorhoeve (1962, 22) writes that verbs that may take the DOC include gi ‘give’ and frei ‘tell’:

(55) M e gi hen wan sani.
   1SG PR give 3SG ART thing
   ‘I give him a thing.’

(56) Mi gi a san disi wan nen.
   1SG give DET thing this ART name
   ‘I gave this thing a name.’

Later he introduces the verb taigi, derived from taki ‘talk’ and the incorporated preposition gi (1962, 40).

(57) I go taig a man dati?
   2SG go tell DET man that
   ‘You went to tell the man that?’

The element gi ‘give’ is analyzed by Voorhoeve (1962, 44) as an “auxiliary which follows the verb” and glossed as ‘for’ or ‘for the sake of’.

(58) A ma e-pai dj i.
   the man ASP-pay for 2SG  (dj < gi)
   ‘The man pays for you.’

There may be cases of the SDC in some varieties of Sranan, but Voorhoeve claims gi is a preposition for speakers from higher social grades. What is not quite clear is the actual distribution of the DOC, the PDC, and the SDC in modern Sranan usage.
Sebba (1987, 50) analyzes *gi* as follows:

As V2 it may be followed by exactly one NP, and this will be interpreted as “dative” or “benefactive” object, depending on the semantics of V1. In this use, the usual English translation is “to” or “for”.

### 11.4.2 Eighteenth-Century Sranan

For the earlier stages of Sranan, we investigated Van Dyk (c1765; abbreviated as VD) and Schumann (1781; SCH). The former is a kind of language guide and contains phrases, various dialogues, and a playlet that gives an impression of the daily life at a plantation in Suriname. The other source is a translation from German into Sranan of a compilation of the four Gospel books of the New Testament by the Moravian brother C. L. Schumann.

In both of these texts, the DOC occurs with some frequency. It alternates with constructions with *gi*, which we refer to as an SDC even if it is not certain whether *gi* is a verb, ‘give’, or a preposition, ‘to’. The other option is a PDC. The dative preposition is in most cases *na*, which has a wide range of meanings similar to what we shall see for Negerhollands (see section 11.5 below); occasionally *fo* ‘for’ is used. The verb *sori* ‘show’ is found with the three constructions:

(59) a. DOC; IO-DO:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kaba dem sori hem wan Schelling} \\
\text{and 3pl show 3sg one shilling}
\end{align*}
\]

‘and they showed him one shilling’

b. SDC; DO + dative *gi*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bikasi meti nanga brudu no ben sori datti gi ju.} \\
\text{becasue meat with blood not pa show that to 2sg}
\end{align*}
\]

‘because not flesh and blood showed that to you’

c. PDC; DO + dative *na*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{va a sori hem lobbi na dem tatta va wi} \\
\text{for 3sg.nom show 3sg love to det.pl father of 1pl}
\end{align*}
\]

‘that he showed his love to our fathers’

The verbs that take DOCS all involve transfer or communication. The distribution of DOCs versus what can be regarded as potential double-object cases—namely, sentences containing an overt DO as well as a PDC or SDC—is given in table 11.2 for some verbs that occur frequently with two arguments. The percentages in the column “2 arguments” reflect the proportion of double-argument structures over the total amount of occurrences of the verbal item; the percentages of DOCs and of DO + PDC/SDC (order irrelevant) reflect the numbers of DOCs and of DO + PDC/SDCs over the subtotal of sentences with two arguments in the sense at issue. The last column contains the serial or prepositional dative marker occurring with a certain verb, irrespective of the presence of a DO. For each verb, the total figures are followed by those for the two sources separately.

The verb *gi* ‘give’ is responsible for the larger part of the total number of DOCs. This is to a certain extent in line with what Givón (1984) found for English printed
Table 11.2
The distribution of DOCs versus PDCs and SDCs in Van Dyk c1765 (VD) and Schumann 1781 (SCH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 args</th>
<th>DOC</th>
<th>DirObj + PDC/SDC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gi 'give'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorti 'show'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haksi 'ask'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>takki 'say/talk/tell'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

narrative—namely, that ‘give’ and ‘tell’ account for the majority of double-object cases. However, whereas of these two verbs it is ‘tell’ that has the higher frequency in the English text, in the early Sranan sources it is ‘give’ that turns out to be the core case. In Schumann’s text, *takki* ‘say, tell, talk’ even takes double objects only when the DO is a greeting or a word expressing gratitude: *dem takki hem odi* [they say him hello] ‘they said hello to him’ or *a takki hem grangangi* [he tell him many-thanks] ‘he thanked him’. Apart from the four cases of this type, which may be regarded as idiomatic, there are no double objects with *takki* in Schumann, whereas there is a substantial amount of two-argument sentences realized with PDC or SDC (108). One may want to relate the marginality of DOCs in this case to the fact that the English source, *talk*, is not ditransitive. It is surprising, however, in view of the fact that ‘tell’ is one of the verbs one would expect to take double objects if a language has this option at all. Moreover, Van Dyk uses *takki* with double objects.

The other verbs in table 11.2 are derived from English ditransitive verbs. The same goes, for example, for *pai* ‘pay’ or *haksi* ‘ask’. However, DOCs occur as well with verbs whose source form does not take a double object in English. Besides *takki*, this is for example the case with *pikki* ‘answer’, derived from *speak*. That *pikki* is used with DOCs can be regarded as an extension of the core case *gi* ‘give’, comparable to overgeneralization in first-language acquisition.

Especially in Van Dyk, there are some cases of incidental ditransitive usage of certain verbs:

(60) Mi za kotte joe wan pisi?
    1sg shall cut 2sg art piece
    ‘Shall I cut you a piece?’
Table 11.3
The frequency of double objects with IO-pronoun–DO-NP/wh with gi ‘give’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DOCs</th>
<th>IO-pronoun–DO-NP/wh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gi in Van Dyk</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gi in Schumann</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, Van Dyk has a higher proportion of double objects than Schumann, not only with regard to the incidental cases but also with gi and with takki, which, as mentioned above, is only marginally used with a DOC by Schumann. It is conceivable that this is related to a difference in style or register between the two texts. The language manual by Van Dyk appears to be more informal and closer to spoken language than Schumann’s Gospel translation, as argued by Bruyn (1995). Tentatively assuming that the DOC, with less explicit morphosyntactic marking, is more likely to occur in informal language varieties, we can partly account for the difference between Van Dyk and Schumann.

In both sources, DOCs often have a pronoun as IO and a full NP as DO. The examples given so far are of this type. Of the 35 double objects occurring with ‘pay’, ‘show’, ‘teach’, ‘ask’, and ‘promise’, 28 have an IO-pronoun followed by a DO-NP. In 7 cases the IO is a pronoun, and the DO a relative, a question word, or a fronted NP as nuffe bunne worko in (61).

(61) Nuffe bunne worko mi ben sori une vo mi tatta. (SCH 147)
    many good work 1SG PA show 2PL for 1SG father
    ‘Many good works I’ve showed you on behalf of my father.’

All of these 35 cases, which can be subsumed under V IO-pronoun DO-NP/wh, have a pronoun immediately following the verb, and one could think of a syntactic account based on the idea that the DOC is only possible with clitic-like pronouns. With gi and takki, the IO can be a full NP, however:

(62) Dem musse gi da pikin jamjam. (SCH 84)
    3PL must give DET child food
    ‘They have to give the child food.’

(63) Takki mastra lange missi alle da ogeri dissi da mastra ben doe (VD 84)
    tell master with miss all DET harm that DET master PA do
    na pranasi.
    at plantation
    ‘Tell the owner and the mistress all the harmful things the manager has done
    at the plantation.’

Table 11.3 shows that whereas with gi ‘give’ the pattern IO-pronoun DO-NP/wh is not the only possibility, it certainly is the most frequent one.
The predominance of the pattern IO-pronoun DO-NP/wh can be considered as an effect of discourse-pragmatic factors, along the lines of Givón (1984). Givón argues that the high frequency of pronouns and names as IOs is related to the fact that, crosslinguistically, the semantic dative/benefactive Case is higher in topicality than accusative. Thus, the dative object is likely to occupy the first object position and will more often be realized as a pronoun, pronouns being more topical than NPs. Conversely, the theme object tends to appear in the second object position as an NP. This is indeed what we find with ‘give’ in eighteenth-century Sranan, as well as with the verbs ‘pay’, ‘show’, ‘teach’, ‘ask’, and ‘promise’ that occur with double objects, the pattern of which is always IO-pronoun DO-NP/wh in the sources we investigated. It is conceivable that gi ‘give’, a typical ditransitive verb, constituted the core case of the DOC, which was then extended to other verbs, perhaps with an intermediate stage in which only pronouns can appear as IOs. The distribution of DOCs versus PDC/SDCs appears to be in line with a gradual development: gi takes a double object in a significant majority of the two-argument cases, whereas the overall distribution is more or less even. The fact that, for example, sori ‘show’ is ditransitive in only 41% of the cases—none of which involves a full NP as IO—would then reflect the fact that this verb is not yet fully grammaticized as a ditransitive verb. If such a development would have taken place, the syntactic properties of the individual lexifier items are irrelevant, except maybe for gi ‘give’. Another possibility is that the lower number of DOCs and the absence of full NPs as IOs with verbs such as sori ‘show’ is due to the limited data. The patterns found in the sources may be influenced by the lower frequency of verbs other than gi, in combination with a general preference for pronominal IOs for pragmatic reasons.

On the basis of the data in Van Dyk and Schumann, it cannot be argued that the DOC arose because of a basic functional need: with all verbs there are alternative means to express two arguments; namely, with a PDC or a SDC. The pragmatic tendency that the constituent with the higher topicality tends to precede the other one is not only relevant for the distribution of pronouns and NPs within the DOC but also for the use of a DOC versus the alternative constructions. Tables 11.4 and 11.5 provide overviews of the distribution of pronouns, proper names, and NPs over DOCs and PDCs with gi, the most frequent two-argument verb. Cases involving question words, relativizers, or fronted constituents are excluded from the figures.
If *gi* ‘give’ is the main verb, the SDC does not occur at all. As noted before, with *gi* the expression of two arguments is by means of a DOC in most cases (left-hand column). The nine instances of pronoun-na NP in Schumann versus the never occurring IO-NP–DO-pronoun is completely in line with the topicality hierarchy. The PDC alternative (right-hand column) is preferred by Schumann if two NPs are involved as well. Note that in quite a few cases (seven) the DO comes after the PP. Although this may sometimes be explained by rightward shift of a heavy DO (e.g., if it contains a relative clause), there are also a couple of cases like the following, where the DO *wan pisi stoon* is not complex:\(^5\)

(64) bikasi husomma va une sa gi na hem pikin wan pisi stoon (SCH 67)

because what-person of 2pl shall give to 3sg child art piece stone

‘because which of you would give to his child a lump of stone’

With the PP preceding the DO, the preposition is in a sense redundant: were *na* left out, we would have a DOC with two NPs. The order PP-DO may be used for stylistic reasons. For example, the sentence in (64) involves a rhetorical question, as does (65a), one of the cases where a DO-NP is followed by a PP containing a pronoun.

(65) a. Hufa a no sa gi klossi na une? (SCH 172)

how 3sg neg shall give cloth to 2pl

‘Why wouldn’t he give clothes to you?’

b. A haksi reekening na dem. (SCH 240)

3sg.nom ask account to 3pl

‘He asked an account of them.’/‘He asked them for an account.’

Apart from such exceptions, the general distribution of pronouns, names, and full NPs with the main verb *gi* is in line with the idea that pronouns, being more topical, precede names or NPs, and that names precede NPs. Thus, the distribution of two-argument sentences over double objects on the one hand and DO + PP on the other can, to a large extent, be accounted for by assuming that the topicality of the
participants determines their linear ordering, which in turn triggers the syntactic configuration.

With other verbs, *gi* is sometimes used to mark the dative (see also table 11.2). Although *gi* in this function is of course related to the main verb *gi* 'give', it is not clear whether it should be analyzed as the second verb in a serial construction or as a preposition (see Voorhoeve 1962 and Sebba 1987 on *gi* in modern Sranan). Its meaning is not always directly related to 'give' in the sense that transfer is not necessarily involved.

With the verbs that occur sometimes with *na* and sometimes with *gi*, the two seem to be interchangeable in most cases. Examples (59b,c), repeated here, may serve to illustrate this.

(59) b. bikasi meti nanga brudu no ben sori datti gi ju
   because meat with blood not PA show that to 2SG
   'because not flesh and blood showed that to you'
   c. va a sori hem lobbi na dem tatta va wi
   that 3SG.NOM show 3SG love to DET.PL father of 1PL
   'that he showed his love to our fathers'

Similarly, with for example *takki* 'say, tell, talk', both *na* and *gi* can be translated as 'to'. One notable semantic difference between *na* and *gi* is that *na* can occur with a recipient but not a beneficiary. The latter is expressed by *fo/vo/va* 'of, for', or, more frequently, by *gi*:

(66) Dem haksi wan hosso gi hem.
   3PL ask ART house for 3SG
   'They asked a house for him.'

Apart from this, *gi* and *na* fulfill the same function as a dative marker.

We already mentioned that a DO may come after a PP with *na* (see (64)). The same order is possible with *gi* as well:

(67) Kaba a takki gi dem da tori krinkrin.
    and 3SG.NOM tell to 3PL DET story clear-clear
    'And he told them the story very clear.'

Cases like (67) do not provide support for a serial analysis because *gi dem* intervenes between the verb *takki* and the DO *da tori*. For the same reason, they do not corroborate the idea that *gi* came to be used as a serial verb in order to license a second argument. The assumption that dative *gi* appeared to fill a gap in the morphosyntactic system is problematic anyway, because the prepositions *na* 'to' and *fo* (vo/va) 'for' are available as well. A tentative account for the similarity of *gi* and *na* as recipient markers may be provided by assuming substrate influence from Ewe, a language spoken by many slaves arriving in Suriname in the period 1651–1725 (Smith 1987; Arends 1995). In Ewe *nâ* means 'give' as a main verb, but it is also used to mark dative constituents (Westermann 1907, 51–52). The overlapping functions of Sranan *gi* and *na* may be interpreted as the result of a kind of convergence of the Sranan preposition *na* with the Ewe form *nâ* as a dative marker and with the usage of
Sranan gi in a way similar to the usage of Ewe na on the basis of the shared meaning ‘give’. What is relevant here, however, is not so much the sources for the functions of gi and na but rather the availability of gi, na, and fo ‘for’ as dative markers. Their presence implies that the existence of DOCs in Sranan cannot be explained by assuming that these are necessary for the syntactic expression of two arguments. The verb gi, derived from English give, as well as the prepositions na and fo must have been present in Sranan since the earliest stages (see, for example, Hancock 1987) and were thus available to mark dative objects.

In the case of Sranan, the lexifier language as well as some of the potential substrate languages (see section 11.6 below) have DOCs, making it difficult to assess the respective contributions of universal strategies, substrate languages, and lexifier language to the existence of DOCs in this particular case.

From the Sranan data we can conclude that gi is the core case of the DOC in eighteenth-century Sranan, that the construction is not restricted to verbs derived from English ditransitives, and that it can appear even if there are other means to express two arguments. The typical pattern is that the indirect object is a pronoun, but when we take all dative verbs together, this is not categorical: there are occasional NP indirect objects.

11.5 Negerhollands

A second language for which we have a rich, as yet not fully explored, set of eighteenth-century data available is the Dutch-lexifier creole Negerhollands, which is now extinct.

11.5.1 Modern Language

In the twentieth-century Negerhollands texts collected by De Josselin de Jong, we find the DOC with the verbs say and give almost invariably with both pronouns and lexical NPs. In (68) we have pronouns with give and in (69) full NPs.

(68) a. Gi am een fraai skiring. (De Josselin de Jong 1926)
   give 3SG ART good thrashing
   ‘Give him a good thrashing.’

   b. Ham a gi mi twee fan di tou bene mi rigi.
      3SG PA give 1SG two of DET rope beneath 1SG back
      ‘He gave me two of the ropes under my back.’

(69) a. fo gi shi kabai water
    for give 3POS horse water
    ‘to give his horse water’

    b. Gi de jung een machete.
       give DET boy one machete
       ‘Give the boy a machete.’

    c. Am a gi Bru Rabbit jet.
       3SG PA give brother rabbit food
       ‘He gave Brother Rabbit food.’
The same holds for the verb *say*:

(70) a. see am
    say 3SG
    ‘say to him’
    b. Am a see di ande sendr ...
    3SG PA say DET other PL
    ‘He said to the others ...’

We found one exception so far:

(71) Am a see na mi ...
    3SG PA say LO 1SG
    ‘He said to me ...’

Bare indirect objects even occur with verbs like *draa* ‘carry’:

(72) An draa sendr een present fo 3SG det
    and carry 3PL ART present for DET king
    ‘And carry them a present for the king.’

Here the expression *fo di kining* refers to the beneficiary of the overall action rather than to the indirect object.

This picture of twentieth-century Negerhollands is confirmed in the variety presented in the report from around 1900 of A. Magens (cited in Schuchardt 1914 and not to be confused with his famous ancestor J. M. Magens, the author of the first grammar of a creole language, from 1770).

(73) a. skriffju
    write 2SG
    ‘write to you’
    b. fragg am
    ask 3SG
    ‘ask her’
    c. Am see mi.
    3SG told 1SG
    ‘She told me.’
    d. Mi sa gi ju een frei ferstann fan di tael.
    1SG FU give 2SG ART good understand of DET language
    ‘I will give you a good understanding of the language.’

Only one PDC is mentioned:

(74) Mi hoop gaw mi sa krii een for stier na ju.
    1SG hope soon 1SG FU get one for send LO 2SG
    ‘I hope soon I will get one to send to you.’

### 11.5.2 Dutch Syntax

Before entering into an analysis of the development of Negerhollands double objects, it may be relevant to briefly bring to mind several aspects of Dutch syntax that may
play a role. First, Dutch has the DOC (as well as the PDC), as in (75). Second, recall that Dutch has verb-final subordinate clauses, as in (75a), and the finite verb in second position in main clauses, as in (75b).

(75) a. ... omdat Marie Jan een boek gaf.
    because Marie Jan a book gave
    '... because Marie gave Jan a book.'

b. Marie gaf Jan een boek.
    Marie gave Jan a book
    'Marie gave Jan a book.'

For DOCs this implies that at least in one type of clause (and in what has been assumed by many to be the underlying order) the direct object is closest to the verb. This was the basis for the original assumption by, for example, Koster (1978) that the object and verb formed a unit that then together assigned a Case (and perhaps a thematic role, although this was not part of the theory at the time) to the indirect object. Please note that Negerhollands does not have a root/embedded clause asymmetry, unlike Dutch. All clauses in the creole are strictly SVO.

Another construction that may be relevant here involves particle + verb combinations. In subordinate clauses, they are together in final position, as in (76a), but in main clauses, the particle occurs after the object, as in (76b). There is no distinction here between pronouns and NP, as in English. Hence there is no basis for an analysis holding that pronominal objects would cliticize onto the verb.

(76) a. ... omdat Marie Jan uit scheldt
    ... because Marie Jan out scolds
    'because Marie scolds Jan'

b. Marie scheldt Jan uit
    Marie scolds Jan out
    'Marie scolds Jan.'

The construction is of relevance because the position of the particle might reveal something about underlying order and clitic status of objects in Negerhollands. However, there is no evidence for SOV orders in any but the earliest and most “Dutchified” Negerhollands texts.

11.5.3 Eighteenth-Century Negerhollands

Negerhollands emerged around 1700 and was spoken as a community language until around 1900. There are many written sources, which include:

(77) a. Moravian (Herrnhut), e.g., Böhner 1730–1840

b. Danish Lutheran, e.g., J. M. Magens 1760–1830

c. Lay writings, e.g., Pontoppidan, A. Magens 1900

d. De Josselin de Jong dictations 1920

e. Recent recordings (Sprauve, Sabino) 1970–1987

For the eighteenth century, we will rely mostly on the Moravian sources. They have a number of liturgical features but may well reflect a more popular variant than the
oft-cited Danish Lutheran texts. In early Negerhollands, we have variation between three construction types:

(78) a. verb IO DO
    b. verb DO na + IO
    c. verb na + IO DO

As stated above, in twentieth-century Negerhollands we find mostly the pattern in (78a), as illustrated in (68) and (69), and sometimes the pattern in (78b). The pattern in (78c) is absent.

In the earlier documents, we find a much more varied picture, but before going into these, a few preliminary remarks. First, the preposition *na* has a wide range of meanings, as shown in (79). Examples are from the Danish sources cited in Hesseling 1905, including the Magens grammar from 1770 and parts of the Danish New Testament (DNT).

(79) *The meanings of na*

a. Em a see na mi.
   3SG PA SAY LO 1SG
   ‘(S)he said to me.’

b. Em no ben na hoes.
   3SG NEG BE LO house
   ‘(S)he is not at home.’

c. No stoot na die glas.
   NEG hit LO DET glass
   ‘Don’t hit the glass.’

d. Na een hoor nabinne en na die ander ut.
   LO ART ear inside and LO DET other out
   ‘In one ear, out the other ear.’

e. na kreol taal
   in creole language
   ‘in the creole language’

f. na vut / mee vut
   on foot with foot
   ‘by foot’

g. Ju Meester le loop na Plantaj.
   2SG master PR walk LO plantation
   ‘Your master walks to the plantation.’

h. Sender sa kom jeet Vrukost na mie.
   3PL FU come eat breakfast LO 1SG
   ‘They’ll come and eat breakfast at my place.’

i. Mie ookal sal due so na ju.
   1SG also FU do so LO 2SG
   ‘I will do the same to you.’

j. as volk ka quae na ju
   when people PRF angry LO 2SG
   ‘when people have gotten angry with you’
Double-Object Constructions in the Creole Languages

k. Jellie allemaal sal erger jender na mie.
   2PL all FU irritate 2PL LO 1SG
   ‘You all will get irritated at me.’

l. Want hem ka due een goed Werk na mie.
   for 3SG PRF do ART good work LO 1SG
   ‘For he did a good deed for me.’

They included location, direction, source, affecting something, and even beneficiary. In contrast, the preposition voor ‘for’ has a more limited use and may be acrolectal, except in its complementizer use, where it is often spelled for (see (80d,e)). Page numbers refer to Hesseling.

(80) The use of voor

a. as die no ha wees voor ons Vrient
   when DET NEG PA BE for 1PL friend
   ‘if he has not been a friend for us’

b. van die soort ju kan maek altit voor mie
   of DET kind 2SG can make always for 1SG
   ‘of that kind you can always make for me’

c. Een Engel van die Heer ha verskien voor hem nabinne (DNT, Matt. 1:20)
   ART angel of DET lord PA appear for 3SG inside een Droom.
   ART dream
   ‘An Angel of the Lord appeared for him in a dream.’

d. Seg mie Neegerin for maek die Vrukost klaer. (Magens 146)
   say 1SG negress for make DET breakfast ready
   ‘Tell my Negress to prepare breakfast.’

e. Waer ju wil dat ons sal maek klaer voor ju for (DNT, Matt. 26:17)
   where 2SG want that 1PL FU make ready for 2SG for jeet die Paeslam?
   eat DET Easter.lamb
   ‘Where do you want us to prepare the Easter lamb for you?’

Notice the different spellings of the preposition in (80e): one is the benefactive preposition, voor, and one the complementizer, for.

Verbs that in Dutch require a preposition may also be used transitively:

(81) a. Mi le wag sender. (Magens 157)
   1SG PR wait 3PL
   ‘I await them.’ (cf. Dutch wachten op)

b. Hem le vrie ju negje. (Magens 167)
   3SG PR fancy 2SG niece
   ‘He has an eye on your niece.’ (cf. Dutch vrijen met)

With respect to the use of particles, the picture is quite complex. First of all, particles may occur separate from the verb, as in (82), or next to it, as in (83).
(82) a. Da mi sa *due mi Parik en Deegen an.*
   ‘I will put my wig and sword on.’

b. Ons ka kom for *bid hem an.*
   ‘We have come to adore him.’

c. *Neem die Tafelgut wej.*
   ‘Take the table settings away.’

(83) a. Loop dan *due an ju klaer.*
   ‘Go and put your clothes on.’

b. *en ha bid an die Kind*  
   ‘and adored the child’

c. *Sellie ha loop yt na die Oliefberg.*
   ‘They walked away from the Olive hill.’

So far, no cases of V + particle + pronoun have been encountered.

Taking usage of prepositions and particles in earlier Negerhollands into account, let us now look at the expressions of dative objects. In the dialogues collected by J. M. Magens (1770), we find consistent [gie ‘give’ IO-pronoun DO-NP], and with *seg* ‘say’ optional, *na*. Compare (84) and (85).

(84) Mi sa *seg na die Meesterknegt for lastaen maek Jeet klaer.*
   ‘I will tell the head servant to have your food prepared.’

(85) *Seg mi Neegerin for maek die Vrukost klaer.*
   ‘Tell my Negress to get breakfast ready.’

In the Danish New Testament (1770), there is only one case of *seg* without *na*:

(86) dat ju seg ons, als ju bin Christus
   ‘that you tell us if you are Christ’

The verb *giev* (give) can occur both with and without *na*:

(87) En die Verraeder ha ka *giev na sender een Teeken.*
   ‘And the traitor gave them a sign.’

(88) *Sellie sal gieve hem dertig Silverlingen.*
   ‘They will give him thirty silver pieces.’
Double-Object Constructions in the Creole Languages

Table 11.6
The use of Negerhollands gie 'give' in the Moravian sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>321A</th>
<th>3240P</th>
<th>3231</th>
<th>3232A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V NP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V na NP</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V NP na NP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V pron</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V pron NP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V na pron NP</td>
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<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>other 10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.7
The use of Negerhollands see 'say' in the Moravian sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>321A</th>
<th>3240P</th>
<th>3231</th>
<th>3232A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V na pron</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V tot pron</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V pron</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V na NP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V na pron NP</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V tot NP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, DOCs sometimes occur with verbs such as stier 'send'.

(89) Hem stier mie meer als twaelf Legionen Englen. (DNT, Matt. 26:53)

3SG send 1SG more than twelve legion-PL angel-PL

'He sends me more than twelve legions of angels.'

Consider now the findings for a limited set of Moravian sources in tables 11.6, for gie 'give' and 11.7, for see 'say'. The first two columns, for manuscripts 321A and 3240P, reflect a slightly earlier source (around 1770) and the last two columns, 3231 and 3232A, sources from around 1790.

The verb gie or giev 'give' can occur with the PDC with either pronouns or NP indirect objects. The DOC is limited in this material to pronominal datives. We sometimes find that the indirect object, even in pre-object position, is marked with na. Of course, the question can be raised whether we are not dealing with somewhat unusual PDCs in this case. An argument to treat them as DOCs could be constructed similar to the one given for Afrikaans in section 11.3, where we proposed that the preposition could be no more than a dative Case marker. Bare indirect-object
pronouns (i.e., where the direct object is lacking) are quite rare. There are no cases of bare direct-object pronouns or NPs in this context.

With the verb *see* ‘say’, we have a number of bare indirect-object pronouns, particularly in the earlier period. Later, *na* almost becomes obligatory. Something similar to the DOC is limited here to a few cases of pronouns in the later period, and these are always preceded by *na*. We assume that the use of the preposition *tot* ‘to, till’ in the earlier texts is a liturgical feature.

To summarize, whereas in later Negerhollands the DOC appears to be the general pattern both with pronoun and with NP indirect objects, in the (admittedly rather limited set of) earlier texts surveyed here, it is restricted to pronouns. Now we can turn to explanations. In section 11.6, we consider the possibility of explaining the widespread distribution of the DOC through substrate influence. In section 11.7, we look at relations with specific parameter settings.

**11.6 Possible Substrate Language Influence**

Koopman (1986, 235) suggests that double objects in Haitian are a product of substrate influence from West African languages through second-language acquisition. The evidence in Koopman 1986 at this point is rather brief: DOCs “occur both in Haitian and W. African languages” (p. 235), “with the sole exception—of Mande languages” (p. 255). A similar claim is made for Haitian Creole in work by Lefebvre (e.g., 1993) and associates.

At first sight, Koopman’s strong claim makes a substrate explanation for the occurrence of DOCs quite plausible. It is not possible at this point to seriously survey all relevant substrate languages. However, when we consider Twi, Ewe, and Kikongo, languages that are generally accepted to have had a major role in the genesis of Caribbean creoles and that had speakers present in large numbers in the relevant periods of the slave imports, the following picture emerges. Twi has DOCs at least with pronouns:

(90) méká kyéré nô sêc vôwô há
     I will tell him that you are here

(91) Wômââ mi sikâ nô nnéra
     They gave me the money yesterday.

Very frequent are also SDCs:

(92) Fa enô mà mâ mé.
    take it      give me
    ‘Give it to me.’

However, Redden et al.’s introduction does not give examples with NP dative objects.

In Ewe there are also DOCs, but according to Westermann (1907) and Bole-Richard (1983), these can only have the order DO-IO, not IO-DO:
Double-Object Constructions in the Creole Languages

(93) Efia ati adela.
he.show tree hunter
‘He showed the hunter a tree.’

(94) Ena ga lam.
he.give money me
‘He gave me money.’

(95) Nã élà dêvi-ó-cá.
give meat child-PL-also
‘Give the children also meat.’

As in Twi, SDCs are often preferred:

(96) Egblo nya na ame.
he.say word give people
‘He said the word to the people.’

(97) Mi lâ-trô vá sô xómá-yã ná mú.
you.PL FU-return come take book-this give me
‘You will come back and take me this book.’

In Kikongo, DOCs appear to be the only possibility:

(98) Gana mwa:na mamba.
give child water
‘Give the child water.’

(99) Gana Nkuká mwana.
give Nkuka child
‘Give Nkuka the child.’

These data tend to support Koopman’s general claim that substrate languages have played a role in the genesis of the DOCs in the Caribbean creoles.

In more general terms, however, a substrate theory faces the problem, mentioned by Kihm (1994) for Guinea-Bissau Kriyol, that not all relevant substrate languages have DOCs. It is quite likely that this circumstance would arise given the nearly universal presence of DOCs as the basic construction in the creoles from every lexical group and from every area of the globe. Generally, West African substrate phenomena have a much more specific and limited distribution, excluding the Indian Ocean creoles, for instance. A case in point would be the distribution of the SDC among the creole languages; it is widespread but by no means universal. This makes us cautious about a substrate explanation as the major general factor in the emergence of DOCs in the creoles.

11.7 Accounting for Double-Object Constructions and Parametric Variation

The possibility of having DOCs has been linked to various specific parameter settings.
On some formal syntactic accounts, a relationship is assumed to hold between the possibility of double objects and of P-stranding. Both English and Dutch have P-stranding as well as DOCs. According to Larson (1988), for example, both are possible by virtue of the fact that P assigns objective Case (as opposed to oblique/dative). In later varieties of Sranan and Negerhollands, P-stranding is possible, as are DOCs. However, this is a fairly recent development in Sranan, whereas double objects occur in the earliest sources. To the extent that P-stranding does not occur in varieties in which double objects are possible, it seems unlikely that both constructions depend on the fact that the class of Ps in general assigns objective Case in a certain language. Indeed, the large majority of creole languages do not allow P-stranding. The Romance-lexifier creoles share this feature with their lexifiers, which are non-stranding as well.

A different parametric proposal involves Case assignment in the NP. We might assume that languages allowing possessor nouns in NPs without a preposition also allow DOCs. It turns out, however, that the structure of the NP differs rather dramatically among the creole languages surveyed: bare prenominal and postnominal possessor nouns occur, and so do prepositional pre- and postnominal possessors. It is unlikely that there is any correlation between any of these patterns and the stable DOC pattern. This makes a link in parameter settings unlikely for the two parameters considered so far. Although a more successful parametric proposal is a possibility, we are somewhat skeptical until a more successful candidate has appeared.

11.8 Double-Object Constructions in Language Acquisition

11.8.1 Introduction

In the preceding sections, we have concluded that creole languages in general have DOCs, and the evidence presented so far leads to the conclusion that these were already possible in the early stages of the creole. One explanation for the fact that DOCs are widespread in creole languages, and for their early appearance in the genesis of creole languages, is that DOCs are in some sense a direct manifestation of unmarked values of UG.

In this section, we evaluate this claim by looking at some evidence on the acquisition of DOCs and PDCs in the lexifier languages of the creoles for which we have presented historical data: English and Dutch. We will look at some fairly simple criteria for unmarked status in acquisition: early appearance and (overgeneral) productivity. Section 11.8.2 summarizes the findings in the literature on the acquisition of English, and section 11.8.3 presents our analysis of the Dutch CHILDES corpora.

As mentioned in section 11.2, Romance-based creoles, like Haitian Creole, provide a crucial case. Haitian Creole, for example, has DOCs, whereas its lexifier language, French, does not (Kayne 1984, Koopman 1986). Logically then, the availability of double objects in Haitian Creole is an important reason to assume that processes involved in creole genesis, whatever their nature, are responsible for the emergence of double objects in creoles. Koopman (1986) suggests that double objects in Haitian Creole are a product of substrate influence. The problems associated with this anal-
ysis have been set forth in section 11.6. Below, we defend the view that first-language acquisition processes are responsible for the fact that the Haitian Creole grammar allows DOCs.

If processes of first-language acquisition are responsible for the appearance of DOCs in Haitian Creole, a natural prediction would be that we would find double-object constructions in French child language. Section 11.8.4 considers some evidence about French children and dative constructions. In section 11.8.5, we consider how a theory that attributes the DOC in creoles to the role of language acquisition in creole genesis would deal with the grammar of Haitian Creole, its lexifier French, and the acquisition of modern French.

11.8.2 Double Objects in the Acquisition of English

In the field of language acquisition, the DOC has received a lot of attention. Baker’s famous (1979) paper illustrated the logical problem of language acquisition with a consideration of the limited productivity of some argument-structure alternations in English, including the dative alternation, as illustrated in (100) and (101).

(100) a. John gave a book to the library.
   b. John gave the library a book.

(101) a. John donated a book to the library.
   b. *John donated the library a book.

Ever since, children’s overgeneralizations of the DOC have been put forth as (counter)examples for claims regarding the role or nature of UG in language development (e.g., Bowerman 1987). The discussion about the logical problem of language acquisition, and the fact that children manage to retreat from overgeneralized verb argument-structure alternations more or less culminated in Pinker’s (1989) theory of how argument structures are represented and acquired by children. Pinker’s theory deals with the acquisition of a number of argument-structure alternations in English, including the dative alternation.

We will not pay much attention to studies and explanations of overgeneralization problems with DOCs here. Instead, we shall focus on the question of whether evidence from language acquisition throws light on the case with which DOCs enter a new language, as in the creoles discussed above.

In this respect, there is a persistent misconception about the acquisition of DOCs and PDCs. As Snyder and Stromswold (1997, 285) state:

It is widely believed that children acquire prepositional datives before they acquire double object dative.

Such a misconception may have survived because grammatical theories treat the DOC as a marked, derived phenomenon. This assumption intuitively leads to the expectation that DOCs are acquired later than PDCs.

Pinker (1984) already pointed out that the DOC is not acquired later than the PDC. Rather, the two seemed to be acquired more or less simultaneously, when measured in terms of children’s first spontaneous productions of dative verbs. In
Pinker's (1989) theory of argument-structure alternations and their acquisition, the DOC is not derived from an underlying PDC, nor vice versa. Neither is predicted to appear later in linguistic development than the other.

Early studies (in the 1970s and early 1980s) of children's dative constructions showed that children had more difficulty imitating and comprehending DOCs than PDCs. As Pinker (1984) and Gropen et al. (1989) note, however, this is not surprising because in these experiments the children were typically confronted with DOCs that contained two full NPs. These forms are often harder to process than their prepositional equivalents, even for adults. Compare (102) and (103).

(102) The teacher showed the girl the boy.

(103) The teacher showed the boy to the girl.

White (1987) succeeded in making children between 3 and 5 years old imitate and act out PDCs and DOCs. Gropen et al. (1989) discuss some particular limitations in White's design. One very general problem with comprehension and act-out studies is that people's capacity to comprehend or imitate sentences does not necessarily correlate with their judgment on whether these sentences are grammatically correct. Gropen et al. (1989) analyzed the CHILDES corpora of spontaneous speech of five English-speaking children and concluded that neither the DOC nor the PDC appears systematically before the other.

Snyder and Stromswold (1997) criticize Gropen et al.'s analysis of the data on three grounds. First, Gropen et al. did not limit their category of for-datives and to-datives to the real dative uses of these prepositions. Secondly, the ages given for two of the children were incorrect for a number of crucial files. Third, their study lacked the statistical power to determine whether the ordering effects they found were statistically significant. (See Snyder and Stromswold 1997.) Snyder and Stromswold go on to analyze the spontaneous speech data recorded in the CHILDES database of 12 native monolingual English-speaking children. They analyze a total of 195,000 lines of child speech, counting the first clear example of a construction as the moment of acquisition. With respect to double objects, their findings can be summarized as follows: the acquisition of double-object datives and to-datives were significantly correlated in the sense that, in all but one child, double-object datives were acquired before to-datives, and no child exhibited the reverse developmental order. This finding could not be explained by the frequency with which either the children or the parents used these constructions.

Snyder and Stromswold then put forth a theory of parametric learning, which explains the attested developmental order. In this theory, the acquisition of dative verbs involves two binary valued parameters, which they call property A and property B. Property A involves the possibility of some kind of "complex predication." A language may only have dative verbs if it allows secondary predication—that is, if it has the correct setting for parametric property A.

Property B is the availability of a mechanism Snyder and Stromswold call "mediated theta-selection." Prepositional dative constructions involve mediated
theta-selection because the thematic role for the indirect object is assigned by the verb *via* the dative preposition.

Within this parametric model, a DOC requires the correct setting for parameter A, whereas the PDC requires the correct setting for parameters A and B. It is to be expected, then, that PDCs will not appear in linguistic development before DOCs, though they may appear simultaneously.

As further evidence for their analysis, Snyder and Stromswold (1997) show that other constructions involving complex predication appear around the same time as DOCs and that other constructions involving mediated theta-selection appear around the same time as PDCs. They take this as evidence that properties A and B are not defined over lexical items but over languages.

Attractive though their developmental logic is, it must be pointed out that it forces us to reanalyze a language like French, which has been regarded as a language with a PDC (requiring properties A and B) and without a DOC (requiring property A only). Within Snyder and Stromswold’s theory, such a language cannot exist.

Yet, they present an empirically well-founded and internally consistent picture of dative acquisition in English, in which children produce their first DOCs before or simultaneously with PDCs. In our terms, DOCs do not appear to be more marked, in the sense that they require more “learning” than PDCs.

### 11.8.3 Dutch

In this section, we present our analysis of dative verbs in the spontaneous speech of four children acquiring Dutch, the lexifier language of Negerhollands.

#### 11.8.3.1 Data

We searched the corpora of spontaneous speech of four Dutch children from the CHILDES database (MacWhinney and Snow 1990; Wijnen 1989). Names, age ranges, and number of files per corpus are given in table 11.8.

The same list of verbs that we compiled for the study of the creoles was used to search DOCs in the child data. The CLAN-program COMBO searched all the files in the database for any child utterance containing a form of one of these verbs. These files were then analyzed by hand to select all DOCs. Additionally, COMBO searched all files for child uses of the preposition *aan* ‘to’. Both the searches by verb and the searches for the preposition *aan* were checked by hand to find PDCs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Utrecht</td>
<td>2;3.22–2;11.22</td>
<td>77 files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hein</td>
<td>Utrecht</td>
<td>2;4.11–3;1.24</td>
<td>77 files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niek</td>
<td>Wijnen</td>
<td>2;7–3;10.17</td>
<td>46 files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>v. Kampen</td>
<td>1;09.18–2;02.18</td>
<td>12 files</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11.9

The first appearances of DOCs and PDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>First DOC Verb</th>
<th>First PDC Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>2;05.27 'give'</td>
<td>2;07.28 'give'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hein</td>
<td>2;06.14 'give'</td>
<td>2;06.23? 'ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niek</td>
<td>3;04.18 'give'</td>
<td>3;06.21 'ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.8.3.2 First Appearance For all children, we determined when they first used a DOC and when they first used a PDC. We adopted the same criteria for first use as Snyder and Stromswold (1997) did for the English children. Table 11.9 presents the results and indicates which verb was the first verb used in the construction. The first examples of each are given in (104).

(104) a. Pepijn stukje geven

Pepijn piece give

b. plantjes water geven

plants water give

c. mij antwoord geven!

me answer give

d. vragen ze aan de hond mogen we op jouw rug rijden?

'They ask the dog: may we ride on your back?'

e. moet je niet (aan) sinaasappel aan Roef geven

You shouldn't give an orange to Roef.'

f. ik ga (enn aan Harry) een aan Harry vragen

'I will ask Harry for one.'

Laura does not produce any DOCs or PDCs. She is disregarded in the rest of the analysis.

It should be noted that DOCs are extremely rare in this corpus. All in all, we found 13 examples of a DOC: 6 for Thomas, 5 for Niek, and 2 for Hein. We found 12 PDCs: 2 for Hein, 1 for Thomas, and 9 for Niek.

Clearly then, we have looked at the very phase of the first emergence of DOCs in Dutch. It would be nice to see how acquisition proceeds, but as yet there are no data available. All children produce their first double objects about six months before the end of the data collection though, so the scarcity of double-object data is not only due to lack of data in general but also to the fact that these constructions apparently emerge very slowly.

The first conclusion from these data is that, in child Dutch, DOCs appear before PDCs, just like in English, at least when measured in terms of first occurrence in spontaneous speech.
Second, there is some similarity in the choice of verbs that appear as first verbs in dative constructions. Four out of six reported “first uses” in table 11.9 involve ‘give’, and the other two involve ‘ask’. For the English children, 9 out of 24 “first uses” reported involve the verb ‘give’, 5 involve the almost synonymous ‘get’, 6 involve the verb ‘read’, 3 involve ‘show’, and 1 involves ‘send’ (Snyder and Stromswold 1997).

Third, especially Niek uses PDCs with un-adult-like prepositions such as van ‘of’ and met ‘with’. A broader comparison between children is necessary to determine whether this is an idiosyncrasy of Niek or whether other children also use a wrong dative preposition for a while. The finding suggests at least that in order to find the first prepositional dative, one should not only do an automatic search for aan ‘to’.

11.8.3.3 Concluding Dutch and English With respect to research question (E), as formulated in section 11.1, we may conclude that the Dutch findings, although limited in number, confirm the general picture that arises from the English literature—namely, that there is no stage at which children acquiring a language with a DOC possess the PDC but no DOC, but there is a stage at which both are absent. Most first uses of dative constructions, be they DOCs or PDCs, involve a verb meaning roughly ‘give’.

11.8.4 French
We assume so far that DOCs have arisen in Romance-based creoles as a result of the role of first-language acquisition in the formation of these creoles. In section 11.8.1, we argued that a natural prediction for such a theory is that DOCs can be attested in native children’s French. In this section, we take a first look at the French data to evaluate this prediction.

We have looked at the spontaneous speech of Philippe, available through CHILDES and collected by Léveillé (Suppes, Smith, and Léveillé 1973). The corpus consisted of 35 files, collected in the period between the ages of 2;01.19 and 3;03.12. Because both English and Dutch children’s early datives appear to involve the verb ‘give’ so often, we looked at Philippe’s use of donner ‘give’, expecting that, if DOCs appear in his grammar, they would certainly appear with donner. The appendix lists the complete set of Philippe’s utterances involving donner and an indirect object.

Philippe’s first uses of donner, in the imperative, appear to be fixed formulae: donnemoi X. The first productive use of donner appears at age 2;06.27. Almost one month (two recording sessions) later, at age 2;07.18, the first PDC appears.

All indirect objects in Philippe’s utterances with donner are realized as clitics on the verb or as objects of the preposition à.

There were no utterances in which Philippe used a full NP in indirect-object position. Full NPs do appear inside the PP in prepositional dative constructions. In other words, the pattern found in Haitian Creole and other Romance-based creoles is not found in Philippe’s French.

Assuming that these findings form a representative sample of French children’s early linguistic development, we might conclude that the existence of double objects in Haitian Creole and other Romance-based creoles cannot be attributed to processes
of first-language acquisition. We would have to conclude that the presence of DOCs in Haitian Creole is due to other factors involved in creole formation—for example, substrate influence as proposed by Koopman (1986)—or general processes involved in second-language acquisition.

However, in section 11.9, we argue that this conclusion is not warranted.

11.9 Implications and Conclusions

So, what have we found and what is our answer to the original question of this paper we formulated in (8), repeated here?

(105) What explains the distribution of PDCs and DOCs in creole languages?

Our empirical conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- The DOC construction is almost universally present in creole languages.
- The PDC is present in a subset of the creole languages in which the DOC occurs. The alternative analytic form, SDC, occurs only occasionally and particularly in languages with strong West African substrate influence. SDCs and PDCs are almost in complementary distribution (Sranan is the exception, but see the discussion of the relation between *na* and *gi* in section 11.4).
- In the modern varieties, the difference in distribution of NPs and pronouns as indirect objects in DOCs is at most statistical. The earlier stages for Sranan could be interpreted the same way, but an interpretation in which some verbs only allowed pronoun indirect objects originally cannot be excluded. In early Negerhollands, NP indirect objects were not found so far.
- The early sources for Sranan and Negerhollands show both DOCs and PDCs.
- There is no stage at which children acquiring a language with a DOC possess the PDC but no DOC, although there is a stage at which both are absent. Most first uses of dative constructions, be they DOCs or PDCs, involve a verb meaning roughly 'give'.

Sections 11.6 and 11.7 concluded that some current proposals in terms of substrate influence or parametric properties fail. The distributional evidence summarized above suggests a universalist explanation. We have suggested that there might be such an explanation in terms of a theory of UG that contains some notion of markedness. In this section, we argue that the evidence reviewed in the sections on the first-language acquisition of dative constructions has supported such an approach, if we take a developmental perspective. In section 11.9.1, we present an explanation for the distribution of DOCs, and in section 11.9.2, we present an explanation for the distribution of PDCs.

11.9.1 DOCs: Reinterpretation of Object Clitics

How could a theory of markedness explain the fact that DOCs appear to be a creole universal? The assumption would be that UG provides the DOC as the unmarked realization of dative verbs. What would it mean to say that something is an
unmarked option in UG? One possible interpretation of the notion "unmarked" is that children choose that unmarked value of the relevant parameter, regardless of the input they receive. Such an interpretation of default values and unmarked settings has been proposed in the acquisition literature—for example, for the universal presence of null subjects in early speech (Hyams 1986). If this were so in the case of DOCs, the explanation for the presence of DOCs in creoles would be simple: the generation of children that formed creole languages assumed the default value of the relevant parameter, and the degenerate input they received never made them retreat from this option.

However, if children use DOCs regardless of the input they receive, the prediction is that French children also use DOCs, even if only for a little while. Our findings, however, suggest that this is not the case: Philippe, who doesn’t receive DOCs in the input, doesn’t produce them. This suggests that DOCs are not formed unless they are present in the input. On the other hand, the findings reported for English and Dutch suggest that DOCs are not more “marked” for children than PDCs. So, we appear to be faced with a paradox. The ease of acquisition of DOCs in Dutch and English, as well as their widespread distribution in creole languages suggest that UG provides children with DOCs as an unmarked value. However, when comparing the syntax of Haitian Creole with child French, we don’t find the predicted ungrammatical DOCs in child French.

We can imagine two possible ways out of this paradox; the first trivial, the second more substantial. The trivial way out is that we simply haven’t looked hard enough for DOCs in child French. We have looked at Philippe only, and we have only looked at his use of the verb donner ‘give’. It may be that a more thorough investigation of child French reveals that DOCs are overgeneralized by French children. In that case, a theory of UG containing some markedness hierarchy, together with the assumption that children select the unmarked option regardless of the input they receive, could explain both the acquisition data and the creole syntax. In that case, we could take the distribution of DOCs in creoles as an empirical argument in favor of a theory that relates the formation of creole syntax to first-language acquisition.

The second way out of the paradox requires a slight modification of the relation of the theory of language acquisition to the theory of UG. We have taken the markedness theory of development to predict that it takes no positive evidence to instantiate an unmarked value. A markedness theory of UG, however, leaves various options open for a concomitant development theory. So far, we have taken “unmarked” to be an absolute term, meaning that for a child to select the unmarked option he or she “needs no positive evidence.” Alternatively, unmarked might be a relative term, meaning that for a child to select an unmarked option, he or she “needs some positive evidence, though less than for the marked option.” Markedness hierarchies related to different parameters might even vary with respect to whether they are formulated in absolute or relative terms. In the following discussion, we assume that, for DOCs, markedness values are of the relative type. Secondly, needless to say, linguistic theory assumes “instantaneous acquisition.” Studies of language acquisition reveal time and again that the time course of linguistic development is a factor to be reckoned with:
certain parameters seem to be set before others systematically, and all kinds of developmental preconditions may hold before the correct setting of a parameter can be established.9

We will now show how we might explain the presence of DOCs in Haitian Creole as well as their absence in child French when we take the time course of acquisition into consideration and assume that markedness in the case of DOCs is a relative term. What we basically want to suggest then is that DOCs were part of the input to Haitian children, even though they were not part of the grammar of the French speakers that provided this input. In other words, the first generation of Haitian Creole speakers misanalyzed certain strings as DOCs, though they were not really DOCs in the French input. The French input that was misanalyzed is found in positive imperatives of the type in (106).

   give me some bread
   ‘Give me bread.’

The reason that the first generation speakers of Haitian Creole misanalyzed these utterances lies in the fact that pronominal clitics could not enter the creole system. Input that contained pronominal clitics was therefore necessarily discarded or reanalyzed—in other words, misanalyzed.

Loss of pronominal clitics has long been known to be a widespread phenomenon in the genesis of creole languages (at least since Schuchardt). In particular, phonologically weak clitics are lost in creolization, whereas strong clitics are reanalyzed as pronouns. Kouwenberg (1993) presents a case where object clitics have been reanalyzed as pronouns.

Let us assume that object clitics were not retained during the formation of Haitian Creole for independent reasons. Children confronted with input such as (106) could either disregard it or assign a non-adult-like structure in which the pronominal clitic moi filled an NP position. We suggest that this is how DOCs entered Haitian syntax. Our findings from the survey of DOCs in creoles, in particular the findings from Palenquero, provide further evidence that such a process took place in creolization.

A number of questions arise with respect to this explanation. As DeGraff (personal communication) pointed out, the first question that arises is why only those object clitics were reinterpreted and not others. Only in positive imperatives do the indirect-object pronominal clitics follow the verb in the order V IO DO.10 Why would this particular structure lead to the generation of a nonadult structure? In every other sentence type, French object clitics precede the verb, and this order is not at all attested in Haitian Creole.

We believe that functional, structural, and phonological factors have collaborated to produce this particular result. Functionally, it might well be that, in the context in which the creole was formed, positive imperatives were a substantial part of the input. Both syntactically and phonologically, the pronominal clitics that appear as indirect objects in positive imperatives are the heavy, emphatic variants of the pro-
nouns: lui, moi, and so on. These forms can also appear independently in French, as in (107), as opposed to the pronominal clitics that appear preverbally, as in (108).

(107) Moi, je vais dormir.
me I go to-sleep
‘Me, I go to sleep.’

(108) Jean m’a donné un livre.
John me-has given a book
‘John has given me a book.’

It was noted above that the strong pronouns are exactly the forms that survived creolization. Structurally, it should be noted that the positive imperative resembles SVO word order (with full NP objects) much more than the clitic construction, in which the object(s) precede the finite verb.

There may even be more sophisticated structural reasons for the proposed misanalysis of positive imperatives. Although we do not want to elaborate here on all the issues it raises, we present this speculative suggestion: it has been argued that Haitian Creole lacks the possibility of verb movement (DeGraff and Dejean 1994; DeGraff 1997). The postverbal clitics in French positive imperatives have been argued to result from movement of the finite verb into a higher functional projection. If early Haitian Creole didn’t have verb movement, it may be that Haitian Creole speakers had no other option but to analyze the positive imperatives in the way they did. These functional, phonological, and structural factors together form a probable explanation of the emergence of DOCs in Haitian Creole.

Secondly, we have to show now that this theory can also account for the absence of DOCs in child French. This is where the time course of acquisition becomes important. If French children do analyze pronominal clitics correctly at the age when they produce their first dative verbs—in particular, if they do not confuse them with nonclitic pronominals—the French children are not predicted to make the same misanalysis. The available evidence on the acquisition of clitics in French shows that this is indeed the case.

Clark (1985) points out that French children acquire both the form and the position of pronominal clitics surprisingly early (around age 2;0) and without errors. Hamann, Rizzi, and Frauenfelder (1994) present a case study of a boy (2;0–2;9) acquiring French as his first language. Their analysis of his spontaneous speech leads them to the following conclusion

We thus have rather robust evidence that, from the earliest syntactically relevant production, the child masters the lexical distinction between clitic and non-clitic forms, as well as the major syntactic consequences of this distinction. (Hamann, Rizzi, and Frauenfelder 1994, 96)

The “earliest syntactically relevant productions” occur in the earliest files studied (age 2;0).

A second finding in Hamann, Rizzi, and Frauenfelder 1994 is that subject clitics appear earlier and are more productively used than object clitics. In the entire age range, 278 subject clitics appear, compared to 34 object clitics. Object clitics do not
appear productively before age 2;6. They appear in the correct (preverbal) position. This suggests that object clitics, more than subject clitics, are “hard to learn,” even for native French children. This finding independently supports the idea that French object clitics were unlikely to survive creole formation.11

Other corroborating evidence is reported by Haverkort and Weissenborn (1991) and Haverkort (1993), who discuss errors of clitic placement in French children’s positive imperatives. Initially (around age 2;0), French children overgeneralize the normal clitic-verb order.12 In a second stage (more or less 2;7–2;9), they use preverbal and postverbal clitics in positive imperatives without any systematicity. Moreover, interestingly the children overgeneralize the unstressed form of the pronominal clitic in positive imperatives at this stage. The overgeneralization of the typical clitic pattern constitutes evidence that, when French children begin to acquire dative verbs (around 2;6), they have a productive rule of clitic placement that differentiates clitics from pronominals. In the third stage (from 2;10), they have the adult grammar of positive imperatives.

A third and final question that arises was pointed out to us by DeGraff (personal communication): How universalist is this explanation? Does our account shift the burden of DOC’s genesis to the superstrate? To a small extent it does, we believe. Our French findings seem to indicate that a child will not form DOCs if they are not present in the input. On the other hand, DOCs do not seem to be particularly “hard to get” by UG. So, both the fact that UG provides “easy access” to DOC configurations, as well as the fact that something that could easily be mistaken for a DOC was part of the input to Haitian Creole, account for the presence of DOCs in Haitian Creole and other creoles.

It should be noted, however, that whether DOCs are part of creole grammars because of superstrate influence or the structure of UG is ultimately an empirical question. This question can be formulated sharply within the theory we have proposed. The two empirical issues that need to be addressed are whether any creole language we have overlooked does not have DOCs and what the properties of its lexifier language are, and whether a closer look at child French reveals systematic use of overgeneral DOCs by children who do distinguish clitics from full NPs.

11.9.2 PDCs: Absence of a Generalized Locative Preposition
What is striking, if we look at the distribution of DOCs in the creoles, is not only that they occur in Romance-lexifier creoles but that they often have no alternative, as in Haitian Creole and Papiamentu. Why are PDCs excluded in many Romance-lexifier creoles, whereas they are an option in Negerhollands, Sranan, and Tok Pisin? (We assume that the explanation for Afrikaans and Malayo-Portuguese will need to be more complex.) The answer we propose is rather trivial: the Romance-lexifier creoles lack a generalized locative preposition with optionally a directional interpretation, similar to Negerhollands and Sranan na and Tok Pisin long. Reflexes of Romance a were invariably lost (though perhaps preserved in null form in Seychelles Creole). In Haitian Creole, there are many specific locative prepositions, and in Papiamentu as well. The latter creole has na, but only with nondirectional meaning.
Support for this lexicalist interpretation comes from Bailey’s (1966) observation that Jamaican basilect only has the DOC, whereas mesoelectal and acrolectal speakers have recourse to the preposition tu and hence to PDCs. Indirect evidence for this line of reasoning also comes from the distribution of the SDC among the Caribbean creoles. All creole languages in the Caribbean have some serial constructions; whatever “parameter setting” characterizes serializing languages is shared by them. Papiamentu, Jamaican, and Negerhollands, however, do not have SDCs, although they have other serial constructions. One could simply argue that the verb ‘give’ in these languages does not have the features (perhaps of thematic-role transmission) that allow it to function in a serial construction.

The lexicalist option could be criticized as exceedingly trivial because it does not explain why creoles lacking the PDC have not simply developed a preposition, through bleaching and grammaticization, with properties similar to those of English to. A critic could add, “just like Negerhollands and Sranan did.” However, there is no stage known in the development of Sranan and Negerhollands where na was absent (with the appropriate features). Neither does Sranan na have any plausible lexical source in English that it could have developed from. It is most probably a Portuguese pidgin (<Port. em a ‘in the [fem.]’) or African inheritance (see section 11.4). Negerhollands na could be derived from Dutch naar ‘towards’, but its overall distribution does not make this likely as a general explanation, and there is no alternation in the early documents of naar and na.

The main point, however, that emerges from our survey of both the creole and the acquisition data is that speakers of natural languages in any stage of development can do perfectly well without the PDC, if there happens not to be an appropriate preposition available in their system.

11.9.3 Final Remarks
Although our discussion has left many questions unanswered, we hope to have shown that the status of PDCs and DOCs in UG needs to be reconsidered. More generally, we hope our contribution shows that combining results from acquisition and creole studies (including the early stages of creoles) can further our insights into the nature of human language.

Appendix
Philippe’s use of donner ‘give’ clitic indirect object

donne-moi la voiture (2;01.19)
give-me the car

donne-moi la voiture (2;01.19)
give-me the car

donne-moi une cigarette (2;02.10)
give-me a cigarette

donne-moi une cigarette (2;02.10)
give-me a cigarette

donne-moi (2;06.13)
give-me

donne-moi le sucre
give-me the sugar
tu m'as donné un grand bout
you have given me a big punch
donne-moi
give-it-me
c'est papa me l'a donné les sous
it was Daddy who gave me the money
c'est Ginette qui te l'a donné?
was it Ginette who gave-it-you?
Ginette m'a donné deux gâteaux
Ginette has given-me two cakes
Ginette m'a donné deux gâteaux
Ginette has given-me two cakes
donne-moi deux sucres Madeleine
give-me two sugars Madeleine
je vais lui donner une fessée à Michel
I will give-him a spanking to Michel
je vais te donner une trempé
I will give-you a spanking
maman je veux te donner une cigarette
Mommy, I want to give-you a cigarette
je te le donne pour que tu enlèves
I give-it-you for you to take away
je vais chercher le camion que Minou elle m'a donné
I will look-for the truck that Minou has given-me
regarde le camion que Minou elle m'a donné
look at the truck that Minou has given-me
le camion bétonneuse que Minou elle m'a donné
the truck for concrete that Minou has given-me
c'est qui qui me donne cette voiture-là?
it-is who who gives-me that car?
on m'a donné une petite piqûre
they have given me a little sting
ben, la maîtresse elle m'en donne des bonbons
well, the teacher she gives-me sweets of-it
quand, quand on chante elle m'en donne des bonbons
when, when we sing she gives-me sweets of-it
tu me donnes un peu d'eau
you give-me a little water
tu me donnes de l'eau de cette bouteille-là
you give-me water from that bottle
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je vais lui donner le biberon
I will give him the bottle

faut dire à Ginette qu’elle me donne un suppositoire
gotta say to Ginette that she gives-me a suppository

bois, bois, je te donne à boire
drink, drink, I give-you to drink

je vais t’en donner d’autres
I will give-you some others of-it

tu pourrais me donner un stylo
you could give-me a fountainpen

c’est mémère qui me l’a donné
it-is memere who has given-me it

Prepositional dative

je le donne au monsieur
I give-it to the man

et je vais le donner à les poules
and I will give-it to the chickens

moi je vais donner trois petits cadeaux à Myriam
me, I will give three small presents to Myriam

je vais en donner une à maman
I will give one-of-them to Mommy

elle prendait toutes les sous pour donner les sous aux chats
she took all the money to give the money to the cats

elle prendait toutes les sous du monsieur pour donner les sous aux chats
she took all the money from the man to give the money to the cats

je vais en donner un à papa
I will give one-of-them to daddy

le monsieur qui les achète, qui leur donne aux enfants
the man who buys them, who to-them gives to the children

elle donne des glaces aux gens qui en veulent des glaces
she gives icecreams to the people who want of-the icecreams

il donne des cravates aux gens, aux monsieurs
he gives ties to the people, to the men

Notes

1. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses of the examples: ART = article; ASP = aspect marker; BE = copula; DET = determiner; FU = future tense; LO = general locative preposition; MD = mood marker; NEG = negation marker; NOM = nominative form; PA = past tense marker; PL = plural; POS = possessive pronoun; PR = progressive aspect; PREP = (general) preposition; PRF = perfective aspect marker; 3SG, etc. = third/etc. person singular pronoun; 3PL, etc. = third/etc. person plural pronoun.

2. Here as well as in similar cases, we ignore the possible but unlikely interpretation ‘And they showed his only shilling,’ with only a DO, and the pronoun hem expressing the possessor.

3. Sentences with sentential arguments, such as ‘He told me (that) he would come’ are not included.
4. Michel DeGraff has pointed out to us that there is a possibility in English as well to optionally add a beneficiary argument in cases like ‘Will you please clean me these shirts?’ The translation in English of (61) is perfectly grammatical.

5. However, as Michel DeGraff pointed out to us, it may be that wan pisi stoon is used with some kind of (sarcastic) emphasis and might thus appear in this special focus position to achieve this effect. Similarly, na une in (65a) receives focus.

6. The Moravian missionaries directed their efforts primarily at the slaves. The Danish Lutheran missionaries were also occupied with the townspeople because the Lutheran Church was the official church of the Danish government. De Josselin de Jong recorded the last descendants of the slaves who still spoke Negerhollands more or less fluently.

7. The children they studied are: Adam (Brown), Allison (Bloom), April (Higginson), Eve (Brown), Mark (MacWhinney and Snow), Naomi (Sachs), Nathan (MacWhinney and Snow), Nina (Suppes), Peter (Bloom), Ross (MacWhinney and Snow), Sarah (Brown), and Shem (Clark).

8. Snyder and Stromswold (1997) define this as follows: “In order for an utterance to count as the first use of a construction, the utterance had to be a novel utterance (i.e., not an unanalysed routine or imitated utterance) and the utterance had to be spoken clearly (i.e. not mumbled, stuttered, etc.).”

9. To mention but a few approaches to developmental issues, see Borer and Wexler 1987 for a maturational theory, Clahsen 1992 and Manzini and Wexler 1987 for lexical learning, Roep and Weissenborn 1990 for ordered parameters, and Gibson and Wexler 1994 and Fodor 1995 for discussion of triggering in real time. See also Verrips and Wijnen 1995 for a collection of other approaches to the “developmental problem.”

10. In fact, it is only in positive imperatives where the direct object is a full NP that this order obtains. When the DO is also cliticized, the positive imperative word order is V DO IO, as in donne-le moi ‘give-it me’.

11. Evidence that children acquire object clitics after subject clitics is growing (Friedemann 1992 for French; Haegeman, 1995 for Dutch).

12. Clark (1985) also notes some errors of clitic placement in negative imperatives.

References


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