

# Seychelles Creole

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## 1 Introduction

Seychelles Creole (autoglossonym: *kreol seselwa*) is spoken by some 80,000 speakers in the Republic of the Seychelles, an archipelago of 110 islands spread over a region of 455km<sup>2</sup> in the Indian Ocean (East of Kenya) and by about another 80,000 diaspora speakers in Kenya, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

## 2 Socio-historical background<sup>1</sup>

Seychelles Creole	
autoglossonym	<i>kreol seselwa</i>
French	créole seychellois
number of speakers	160,000
major lexifier	French
other contributing languages	Eastern Bantu, Malagasy
location	Seychelles and diaspora communities in Kenya, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand
official languages of the Seychelles	Seychelles Creole English French

The uninhabited islands of the Seychelles were the last of the Indian Ocean islands to be settled in 1770 by the French, mainly from Mauritius (settled in 1721), but also from Reunion Island (settled in 1664). The French settlers from Mauritius brought their slaves along with them to this new subcolony, which was ruled from Mauritius. During the first two decades, the colony was faced with various difficulties, but a demographic boom began around the late 1780s, when the economy changed from the mere exploitation of the natural resources to profitable agriculture (cotton, coffee, spices) (Nwulia 1981: 27). By 1791, there were 572 inhabitants in the islands: 65 Europeans, 20 free "coloured" people, and 487 slaves (Chaudenson 1979: 225). Due to a constant demand for servile labor, the population grew constantly, and by 1810 there were 317 European settlers, 135 free "coloured" people and 3,015 slaves in the islands, as is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Population numbers for the Seychelles (1770-1817)

	Europeans	free 'coloured' people	slaves
1770: start of settlement	15	6	7
1791	65	20	487
1810: start of illegal slave trade	317	135	3,015
1817: peak of illegal slave trade	no information	no information	7,323

After the Napoleonic Wars, with the Treaty of Paris in 1814, the Seychelles and Mauritius came under the rule of Britain, whereas Reunion remained under French rule.

<sup>1</sup> If not mentioned otherwise I draw on information in Allen (2001), Bollée (1977), Chaudenson (1979), Lionnet (1972), and Nwulia (1981).

After 1807 the slave trade was illegal in all British territories, but the colonial authorities found it difficult to implement this ban in the Seychelles and Mauritius. As a consequence, an illegal slave trade started to flourish in the Indian Ocean (Allen 2001: 93, 110). It is estimated that between 1811 and 1827 about 60,000 slaves were exported from Madagascar and East Africa to Mauritius and to the Seychelles (Allen 2001: 111).

After the abolition of slavery in 1835 the British Navy captured French ships still continuing in the slave trade and set the slaves "free" in the Seychelles. This led to a considerable further influx of Bantu-speaking East Africans in the 19th century.



When the French colonists, who mainly came from Mauritius, settled the Seychelles in the 1770s, they and their slaves brought some kind of stabilized Mauritian Creole along with them. Therefore, Seychelles Creole can be characterized as an offshoot of Mauritian Creole. The two languages are nowadays mutually intelligible.

As for possible substrate languages, one has first to look at the composition of the slave population during the colonization of Mauritius: during the first decades Malagasy slaves made up

the majority except for the short period between 1735 and 1740, when most of the slaves came from Senegambia and the Slave Coast. It is only from the late 1760s onwards that more slaves were brought to Mauritius from East Africa than from Madagascar. By the time of the colonization of the Seychelles (1770), the slave trade with East Africa provided the great majority of the slaves taken to the Seychelles and the Mascarenes (i.e. Réunion and Mauritius), and this continued until the end of the century. The possible substrate languages would have been spoken from an area from Zanzibar to the South of Mozambique. It also seems that the slavers took their slaves from places quite far inside the country. Therefore some of the most probable substrate languages for Seychelles Creole are Swahili, Mwera, Makonde, Yao, and Makua.

### 3 Sociolinguistic situation

In 1976, the Seychelles, a former British colony, became independent, and since 1978 Seychelles Creole has been one of the three official languages besides English and French. Creole is the native language of about 95% of the population. In 1982 it was introduced as a language of instruction in primary schools and has been used in different formal communication contexts, e.g. television, radio, court, newspaper. But during the last 15 years, the use of written varieties of Seychelles Creole has lost a lot of its former significance to English.

The first text published in Seychelles Creole is a collection of the Fables de La Fontaine translated into Creole by Rodolphine Young (1860-1932). Her

manuscript was edited by Bollée & Lionnet in 1983. The text may originate from the late 19th/early 20th century. In 1977, two grammars of Seychelles Creole appeared, Bollée (1977) and Corne (1977). In 1982, the first dictionary *Diksyonner kreol – franse* was published by St Jorre & Lionnet (1982) which has already seen a second edition (1999).

## 4 Phonology

Seychelles Creole has a vowel system with five oral vowels and three nasal vowels.

Table 2: **Vowels**

	front	central	back
close	i		u
mid	e, ě		o, õ
open		a, ã	

In front of *n*, *m*, *ɲ* and *ŋ*, all vowels are normally nasalized, e.g. *zanmen* [zãmẽ] 'never'. The vowels *e* and *a* are also generally nasalized after *n*, *m*, and *ɲ*, as in the second syllable of *zanmen*, or the second syllable of *annan* [ãnã] 'have'.

Seychelles Creole has 17 consonants:

Table 3: **Consonants**

		bilabial	labio-dental	dental/alveolar	post-alveolar	palatal	velar	uvular
plosive	unvoiced	p		t			k	
	voiced	b		d			g	
nasal		m		n			ŋ	
fricative	unvoiced		f	s				
	voiced		v	z				ʁ
affricate	unvoiced							
lateral approximant				l				
glide						j, ɲ		

The dental/alveolar *t* and *d* are palatalized before *i*: *disab* [dʲisab], *tinge* [tʲiŋge], 'a traditional dance'.

The phoneme *s* has an allophone [h] which appears in very limited contexts, e.g. *sa* 'this, that, the' or *son* 'his, her', but only in non-citation form and in connected speech, e.g. *dan sa later* (in this soil) 'in/on this soil' [dã ha late].

**Word stress** is always on the last syllable. Phrase and sentence stress is also in final position.

There is an official **orthography** which has been developed (based on Annegret Bollées proposals) and promoted by the *Lenstiti Kreol*, an institute which is responsible for the development and codification of the written language. The following conventions are used in the orthography: vowel nasalization is rendered by *n* following the vowel, /u/ is rendered by *ou*, /ŋ/ is written *ng*, /j/ is written *y*, and /ɲ/ is written *ny*.

## 5 Noun Phrase

Nouns are morphologically invariable, e.g. *en zonn*, *de zonn* 'a/one man, two men'; *zetwal* 'star(s)'; *latab* 'table(s)'; *disel* 'salt'. Many nouns contain an initial element that goes back to one of the French articles *le*, *la*, *les*, *du*, but these elements are inseparable and are part of the root, e.g. *zonn* 'man' (< French *les hommes*), *latab* 'table' (< French *la table*), *disel* 'salt' (< French *du sel*).

**Natural gender** can be expressed by adding *mal* 'male' and *femel* 'female' to a given noun: *en mal bourik* 'a male donkey', *en femel bourik* 'a female donkey'.

**Number marking:** Depending on the context, count nouns can refer equally to singular and plural entities, e.g. *latab* 'a table' or 'tables'. When the plural reference is important, the special plural word *bann* (< French *bande*) can be used: *bann latab* 'tables', *bann zonn* 'men, people'. In formal written Seychelles Creole, e.g. in newspaper articles, *bann* seems to have grammaticalized into a quasi-obligatory plural marker.

There is an **indefinite article** *en* preposed to the noun, e.g. *en lakaz* 'a house'. We also observe the incipient use of the demonstrative *sa* as a **definite article** (pace Bollée 2004), e.g.

(1)<sup>2</sup> *Ou pa kapab grate pwason. Ou a bezwen sal li ek son*  
2SG NEG can scratch fish 2SG FUT need salt it with POSS.3SG  
*lekay tou. E ou tir sa gro zaret milye, ou tir latet.*  
scale all and 2SG pull DEF thick bone middle 2SG pull head

'You could not scratch the fish. You had to salt them with their scales. And you pulled **the** large bone in the middle, you pulled the heads.' (Bollée & Rosalie 1994: 224)

Here, *sa* is used in an associative context, which I take as one of the crucial functions of a definite article (see also the APiCS definition of definite article): The fish are mentioned in the context, but then *sa gro zaret* 'this large bone' refers in an associative manner to the fish. Nevertheless, one should stress that nouns which would be marked by a definite article in French or English are often not marked as definite in Seychelles Creole.

**Generic nouns** are not marked, e.g. *Lion i manz gazel* [lion PM eat gazell] 'Lions eat gazelles.' (cf. the dummy predicate marker (PM) *i* § 7 Simple sentences).

There is only one **demonstrative**, *sa*, which precedes the noun, as in *sa dimyel* 'this honey'. There is no difference between adnominal and pronominal demonstratives (*sa i zoli* 'this is nice').

**Possessive constructions: Adnominal possessives** precede the noun and have the same form as the dependent subject pronouns, except for the 3SG (see Table 2 below), e.g. *mon lakaz* 'my house', *son bato* 'his boat'. The **pronominal possessives** consist of the preposition *pour* and the independent personal pronoun (see below):

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<sup>2</sup> If not mentioned otherwise, the cited examples are constructed by one of the author of this article, Marcel Rosalie, who is a native speaker of Seychelles Creole.

- (2) *Sa liv i pour mwan.*  
 this book PM for me  
 'This book is mine.'

**Possessor noun phrases** show two different constructions with no clear difference in meaning or distribution:

- (i) the order is **possessor – possessee** with the possessor indexed on the head noun via the adnominal possessive pronoun (*son lakaz*):

- (3) *sa zonm son lakaz*  
 this man his house  
 'this man's house'

- (ii) the order is **possessee – possessor** with the possessor showing no marking:

- (4) *lakaz sa zonm*  
 house this man  
 'this man's house'

A fairly rare construction within the languages of the world is the **possessor climbing construction**: *son pos palto* [3SG.POSS jacket] 'the pocket of his coat', lit. 'his pocket coat' (Corne 1977:27). The possessive determiner is not adjacent to the relevant noun, but "climbs" up to the first noun in the nominal phrase.

**Adjectives** follow the noun (*lalin kler* 'bright moon', *dilo so* 'hot water', except for a small set of high-frequency adjectives which precede the noun (cf. Bollée 1977: 42ff.): *en gran bato* 'a big boat', *en zoli garson* 'a handsome boy', *en zenn fiy* 'a young girl'. Adjectives do not agree in natural gender except for some rare cases e.g. *en zonm fou* vs. *en madanm fol* 'a crazy man' vs. 'a crazy woman'. This is also true for adjectives expressing geographical origin, e.g. *en zonm seselwa* 'a Seychelles man', *en fanm seselwaz* 'a Seychelles woman', *en lingwis nizeryen* 'a Nigerian linguist (male)', *en lingwis nizeryenn* 'a Nigerian linguist (female)'

In **comparative constructions** of equality, the standard is marked either by *ki* or by *koman*, and the adjective is marked by *osi*, which can be omitted if the standard is marked by *koman*:

- (5) a. *Mari i osi gran ki Pyer.*  
 Mari PM also tall as Pyer 'Mari is as tall as Pyer.'
- b. *Mari i (osi) gran koman Pyer.*  
 Mari PM (also) tall like Pyer 'Mari is as tall as Pyer.'

In the **comparative construction** of inequality, both adjective and standard are marked:

- (6) *Mari i pli gran ki Pyer.* 'Mari is taller than Pyer.'

The **superlative construction** is made up of the comparative of inequality plus a universal standard:

- (7) *Mari i pli gran parmi tou bann fiy.*  
 Mari PM more tall within all PLUR girl  
 'Mari is the tallest of all the girls.'

Another possibility is to use the verb *depas* 'surpass' and the parameter of comparison is expressed by an abstract noun:

- (8) *Mari i depas tou bann fiy lo grander.*  
 Mari PM surpass all PLUR girl on tallness  
 'Mari is taller than all the girls.' (lit. 'Mari surpasses all girls in tallness.')

There are two sets of personal **pronouns**, dependent and independent personal pronouns. In Table 4, I have added the adnominal possessives, because they differ only slightly from the two other patterns:

Table 4: **Pronouns**

	dependent subject pronoun	independent/ object pronoun	adnominal possessive
1SG	<i>mon</i>	<i>mwan</i>	<i>mon</i>
2SG	<i>ou</i>	<i>ou</i>	<i>ou</i>
3SG	<i>i</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>son</i>
1PL	<i>nou</i>	<i>nou</i>	<i>nou</i>
2PL	<i>zot</i>	<i>zot</i>	<i>zot</i>
3PL	<i>zot</i>	<i>zot</i>	<i>zot</i>

The **dependent pronouns** occur only in subject position whereas **independent pronouns** cover both subject and object position. The dependent and independent pronouns only differ in the 1SG and 3SG: *mon* vs. *mwan*, and *i* vs. *li*. There is no gender distinction in 3sg, *i* refers equally to male and female referents. There is person syncretism in the 2PL and 3PL (*zot*). As can be further seen from Table 2, adnominal possessive pronouns are homophonous with the subject pronouns, except for 3SG *son* (vs. *i*) 'his/her'.

- (9) *Mwa zanmen mon 'n reste dan zil plis ki en mwa.*  
 1SG.INDEP never 1SG PRF stay in island more than one month  
 'I have never stayed on one island more than a month.' (Michaelis 1994: 201)

**Pronoun conjunction:** Seychelles Creole has a special **conjoining construction** (i.e. 'and' construction) when one of the conjuncts is a **personal pronoun** (especially a personal pronoun of the first person):

- (10) *Nou de Mari nou ti al dan lakour*  
 1PL two Marie 1 PL PST go in house  
 'Marie and me went home.'

In such constructions, the second occurrence of the pronoun (here: *nou*) is obligatory.

## 6 Verb Phrase

Seychelles Creole has eight verbal markers relating to tense, aspect and mood: *ti* (past marker), *in/'n* (perfect marker), *pe* (progressive marker), *a* and *pu* (future markers), *fek* (immediate past marker), *nek* (continuative marker, 'keep doing'), plus the zero marker. In Table 3, the different markers are displayed in relation to different aktionsart meanings of the verb. We need to distinguish between dynamic verbs (e.g. *manze* 'eat', *vini* 'come', *bate* 'strike', stative verbs (e.g. *krwar* 'believe', *reste* 'stay, live', *konnen* 'know'), and adjectival verbs (e.g. *malad* '(be) ill', *mir* '(be) ripe', *fatige* '(be) tired', *rouz* '(be) red'). In combination with the perfect marker *in/'n*, dynamic verbs refer to a past event with current relevance for the speech moment, e.g. *zot in manze* 'they have eaten'. Some stative verbs receive a change of state interpretation when combined with *in*: *mon konnen* 'I know' vs. *mon 'n konnen* 'I have come to know' (cf. French *j'ai su*). Adjectival verbs with *in* also refer to a change of state resulting from a past event: *Son figir in rouz* 'His face has become red.' Table 5 summarizes the use of the verbal particles with different aktionsart verbs, their respective tense, aspect and mood functions, and the French etymon of the Seychelles Creole particle.

Table 5: Tense-Aspect-Mood markers in Seychelles Creole

	Aktionsart	tense/aspect	French etymon
zero	all (i.e. dynamic, stative, adjectival)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple present</li> <li>• future</li> <li>• habitual present</li> <li>• generic present</li> <li>in narrative contexts:</li> <li>• perfective past</li> </ul>	
<i>pe</i>	dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progressive present</li> <li>• future</li> </ul>	<i>être après de/à</i>
	adjectival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ongoing change of state ('become')</li> </ul>	
<i>ti</i>	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple past</li> </ul>	<i>était, étais</i>
<i>in/'n</i>	dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perfect with current relevance</li> </ul>	<i>finir de faire</i>
	stative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completed change of state with current relevance</li> </ul>	
<i>fek</i>	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• immediate past</li> </ul>	<i>(ne) faire que</i>
<i>a</i>	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• future</li> </ul>	<i>(v)a faire</i>
<i>pou</i>	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• future</li> </ul>	<i>être pour faire</i>

Table 6: **Some combinations of TAM particles**

	<b>Aktionsart</b>	<b>tense/aspect</b>	<b>modality</b>
<i>ti'n</i>	all	• past-before-past	
<i>ti pe</i>	dynamic	• progressive past	
	adjectival	• past ongoing change of state ('was becoming')	
<i>a'n</i>	dynamic, adjectival	• perfect future with current relevance	
		• future resultative with current relevance	
<i>ti a</i>	all		counterfactual
<i>ti a'n</i>	all		counterfactual (past with current relevance)
<i>ti pou</i>	all	• future in the past	

Zero-marked verbs refer to the present, regardless of their aktionsart. Narrative contexts constitute an exception: After the stage of the narrative has been set in the past, dynamic verbs, stative verbs, and adjectives are zero-marked and receive a past interpretation.

The difference between the use of *ti* (past marker) and *in* (perfect marker with current relevance) can be seen in the following minimal pair:

- (11) a. *Mon ti perd mon lakle.*  
 1SG PST loose POSS key  
 'I lost my keys'. (It could be that I have found them again.)
- b. *Mon'n perd mon lakle.*  
 1SG=PRF loose POSS key  
 'I have lost my keys'. (And I haven't found them yet.)

The **verbal negation particle** *pa* precedes all verbal markers, but follows the personal pronoun or noun in subject position:

- (12) a. *Ou ti al bazar.*  
 2SG PST go market  
 'You went to the market.'
- b. *Ou pa ti al bazar.*  
 2SG NEG PST go market  
 'You did not go to the market.'

**Indefinite pronouns** cooccur with the negation particle:

- (13) a. *Personn pa ti vini*  
 nobody NEG PST come  
 'Nobody came.'
- b. *Mon pa ti vwar personn/naryen.*  
 1SG NEG PST see nobody/nothing  
 'I did not see anybody/anything'.

Table 7 summarizes the different construction types and verbs which render the four different types of **modality**. The verbs *kapab* 'can' (< French *capable*) and *bezwen* 'need' (< French *besoin*) can express all four modalities, whereas *dwatet* 'must' (< French *doit être*) can only have an epistemic function.

Table 7: **Modality** (cf. Kriegel et al. 2003)

Different kinds of modality	construction	examples English translation
Participant internal modality (possibility/necessity)	<i>kapab; bezwen; fodre + sentence</i>	<i>Koze i pa ti kapab.</i> speak 3SG NEG PST can 'He could not speak.'
Participant external modality: deontic (permission / obligation)	<i>kapab; bezwen</i>	<i>Ou bezwen al lopital.</i> 2SG need go hospital. 'You have to go to hospital.'
Participant external modality: root possibility	<i>kapab; bezwen</i>	<i>Dimoun pa kapab ariv ditou.</i> people NEG can arrive at all 'The people cannot land at all. (because of external obstacles)'
epistemic (uncertainty /probability)	<i>kapab; bezwen; dwatet</i>	(i) <i>Pyer i kapab arive.</i> Peter PM can arrive Peter may arrive.  (ii) <i>Mon bezwen in perd li laba.</i> 1SG need PRF lose it there I must have lost it there.  (iii) <i>I dwatet sorti Ladig.</i> 3SG must come.from La Digue. He must come from La Digue.

In epistemic uses of *bezwen* a possible verbal particle (*pe, in*) is postposed to the modal *bezwen*, whereas in non-epistemic readings the verbal particle is preposed to the modal *bezwen* (cf. Kriegel et al 2003: 185):

#### Epistemic reading

(14) *Mon pa trouw mon lakle. Mon bezwen in perd li laba.*  
1SG NEG find 1SG.POSS key 1SG must PRF lose 3SG there  
'I don't find my key. I must have lost it there.'

(15) *Mon pa 'nn trouw li dan travay ozordi. I bezwen pe al Porglo.*  
1SG NEG PRF find 3SG in work today 3SG must PROG go Porglo  
'I don't see him/her at work today. He/she must be going to Porglo.'

#### Non-epistemic reading

(16) *Zot in bezwen anmen li.*  
3PL PRF must take 3SG  
'They had to take him along.'

**Copula:** Seychelles Creole generally uses no *copula*. Predicative adjectives, predicative noun phrases and predicative locative phrases are directly combined with a tense-aspect-mood particle, without a copula.

(17) *ou papa ti reziser*  
 2SG.POSS father PST estate.manager  
 'Your father was a manager of an estate.' (Bollée & Rosalie 1994)

(18) *Pyer i kot Marcel.*  
 Pyer PM at Marcel  
 'Pyer is at Marcel's house'.

The dummy predicate marker *i* cannot be considered as a copula because it also occurs in clearly verbal contexts, e.g. *Lydia i vini*. 'Lydia comes' (see the next subsection).

However, when the predicative phrase is fronted (as in questions and focus constructions), the copula *ete* is used, e.g. *Kote ou ete?* 'Where are you?'

## 7 Simple sentences

The **word order** at clause level is Subject – Verb – Object. The verb has a so-called long form and a short form: *sant* vs. *sant-e* 'sing', *vin* vs. *vin-i* 'come'. The short form is used when the verb is directly followed by a verbal argument, either a direct object (*mon donn li en mang* 'I give him/her a mango'; long form *donn-en*) or a local adverbial (*mon retourn lakaz* 'I come home'; long form *retourn-en*). When a verbal argument is present but does not follow the verb (because it is fronted), the verb is in the long form, as in (19).

(19) *Sa mang ki mon ti donner.*  
 this mango REL 1SG PST give  
 'It is the mango which I gave (him).'

With **ditransitive verbs**, Seychelles Creole displays a double-object construction (with no prepositional coding of either object), contrasting with the indirect object construction in French (*donner qc à qn*):

(20) *Lea ti donn Gabriel en mang.*  
 Lea PST give Gabriel a mango  
 'Lea gave Gabriel a mango.' (French: *Lea a donné une mangue à Gabriel.*)

**Experiencer verbs** often show a transitive pattern (contrasting with the indirect French pattern): *mon per li* 'I am afraid of him/her' (cf. French *j'ai peur de lui*), *mon kontan li* 'I love him' (cf. French *je suis content(e) de lui/d'elle*), *mon bezwen li* 'I need her/him' (cf. French *j'ai besoin de lui*).

In Seychelles Creole there is a **dummy predicate marker** *i* in the 3SG and 3PL which occupies the position directly to the left of the finite predicate when no other tense-aspect-mood or negation marker is present.

(21) a. *Pyer i manz mang.* 'Peter eats a mango/mangoes.'  
 b. *Pyer pa manz mang.* 'Peter doesn't eat a mango/mangoes.'  
 c. *Pyer ti manz mang.* 'Peter ate a mango/mangoes.'  
 d. *Pyer pe manz mang.* 'Peter is eating a mango/mangoes.'

**Passive:** Seychelles Creole has several construction types which cover the functional domain of a processual passive. In spoken discourse, the most widespread construction type is subject suppression, as in (22). Here, the subject position remains empty, and the object/patient remains *in situ*. There is a non-specific human agent reference which could be translated as 'They sell houses', 'Houses are sold'.

- (22) Subject suppression:  
*Ti vann lakaz.*  
 PST sell house  
 'They sold houses.' OR 'Houses were sold.'

In another construction type (cf. 21), the patient is promoted to subject position and the verb occurs in the long form:

- (23) Patient in subject position:  
*lasyet i lave*  
 dishes PM wash  
 'The dishes are washed/cleaned.'

In more formal discourse, there is a special passive construction with the auxiliary *ganny* ('get', < French *gagner*) followed by the long form of the main verb.

- (24) *Ganny* passive:  
*Bidze 2005 ti ganny approve menm zour.*  
 budget 2005 PST PASS.AUX approve same day  
 'The budget for 2005 was approved the same day.'

**Reflexive voice** can be expressed by different constructions:

- (i) no marking for body care and grooming verbs: *i lave* 'he/she washes';
- (ii) ordinary object pronoun: *i get li dan laglas* 'he looks at himself in the mirror';
- (iii) use of *lekor* (< French *le corps* 'the body'): *i deteste son lekor* 'he hates himself';
- (iv) use of the intensifier *limenm* (< French *lui-même* 'him-self'): *i vwar limenm dan laglas* 'he sees himself in the mirror'.

There is a special **reciprocal voice** coded with *kanmarad* ('friend', < French *camarade*):

- (25) *Nou pa zwenn kanmarad.*  
 1PL NEG meet each.other  
 'We don't meet each other.'

**Causative voice** is coded by the verb *fer* 'make':

- (26) *Winslow ti fer zanfán manze.*  
 Winslow PST make child eat  
 'Winslow made the children eat.'

The causee (*zanfán*) is placed between the causative verb and the main verb (here: *manze*).

## 8 Interrogative and focus constructions

In **content questions**, the interrogative phrase is normally fronted:

(27) *Lekel (ki) ou ti vwar?*  
who 2SG PST see  
'Whom did you see?'

(28) *Kan ou pou vini?*  
when 2SG FUT come  
'When will you come?'

However, some interrogative phrases can stay in situ, e.g. *lekel* 'which one / who', *avek kwa* 'with what'.

(29) *Ou ti vwar lekel?*  
2SG PST see who  
'Whom did you see?'

(30) *I fer avek kwa?*  
3SG make with what  
'With what does one make it / is it made?'

**Polar questions** are normally marked just by a rise in the intonation, but can be introduced by the question particle *eski* in more French-like varieties of Seychelles Creole.

In **focus constructions**, the focussed element is moved to the left and followed by the complementizer *ki*:

## 9 Complex sentences

Coordinating conjunctions are very rare in spontaneous spoken discourse. The most widespread construction type is juxtaposition of sentences. We also find a special kind of the juxtaposition technique which I call **integrative intonation**:

(31) *ou grat li ou tir li tou ou zet li ater*  
2SG rub 3SG 2SG pull 3SG all 2SG through 3SG on.the.ground  
'You scratch them, you pull all of them, you throw them on the ground.'  
(Bollée & Rosalie 1994: 112)

In example (31), all three sentences are uttered under a single intonation contour. These integrative intonation constructions always show identical subjects, identical TAM-marking (here: zero-marked), and identical polarity marking.

The **sentential coordination conjunctions** are *e* 'and' (mostly in written language, contrasting with *ek* for nominal conjunction), *be* 'but', *me* 'but', *oubyen* 'or'.

With verbs of speaking and knowing, **object clauses** show zero-marking or marking by the complementizer *pou dir* (< French *pour dire*). Directional complement clauses are marked by *pour* or zero (*demann* 'to ask', *ule* 'to want').

**Adverbial clauses** are introduced by the subordinators *avan* 'before', *akoz* 'because', *kan* 'when', *si* 'if', *pangar* 'lest', and others.

There is a special concessive construction which involves the preposition *dan* 'in' and a kind of nominalized verb phrase:

- (32) *Dan tou son fatigue, i ti bezwen ed pov balen.*  
 in all his tired, 3SG PST need help poor whale  
 'Even though he was tired, he had to help poor Whale.' (Corne 1977:148)

**Relative clauses** follow the head noun. There are different construction types relating to the different syntactic-semantic roles of the head noun in the relative clause as shown in Table 6:

Table 8: **Relative constructions**

Relativized element/ construction type	no marking + gap	pronoun/relative particle + gap	relative particle + resumptive pronoun
subject		<i>ki</i>	
object	zero + gap	<i>ki</i>	<i>ki</i> plus resumptive
instrument	pied-piping (cf. 7) <i>ek ki</i>	<i>ki</i> + gap + adposition stranding ( <i>avek</i> )	

In example (33), the relativized element has the syntactic function of an object and is marked by *ki*. At the same time this object is taken up by the resumptive pronoun *sa*.

- (33) *Sa gro delwil nwanr ki korvet i servi sa.*  
 DEM big oil black RELparticle corvette PM serve RES  
 'This heavy black oil which the corvette uses.'

Example (34) shows an instance of pied-piping, i.e. the instrumental preposition is fronted together with the pronoun *ki*:

- (34) *Sa i kouto ek ki Za ti koup pwason.*  
 this PM knife with RELparticle Jacques PST cut fish  
 'This is the knife with which Jacques cut the fish.'

In example (35), we see a relative particle with a gap and adposition stranding:

- (35) *sa sizo ki i ti koup papye avek*  
 DEM scissor RELparticle 3SG PST cut paper with  
 'the scissors that he cut the paper with'

## 10 Lexicon

Over 98% of the Seychelles Creole vocabulary can be traced back to dialectal, non-standard French varieties of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Out of a word list of 1400 meanings in the "Loanword Typology Project" (directed by Martin Haspelmath & Uri Tadmor), some 35 words are of Bantu origin, e.g. *toto* 'child' < Swahili *mtoto*; *kasoukou* 'parrot' < Swahili *kasuku*. Some 25 words are borrowed/retained from Malagasy, e.g. *kelkel* 'armpit' < Malagasy *hélika*; *kalou* 'pestle' < Malagasy *akalo*; *kanbar* 'yam' < Malagasy *kambara*. Only very few words

can be traced back to West African languages. There are about 80 loanwords from English, e.g. *ays* 'ice'; *mice*<sup>3</sup> 'mouse, rat'; *sik* 'sick' (cf. Michaelis 2009).

## 11 Glossed text

This text from Bollée & Rosalie (1994: 112) is a transcript of a spontaneous conversation between a young interviewer (Marcel Rosalie = R) and an inhabitant of Silhouette (small island North-West of the main island Mahé), René Jupiter (69 years old) = J; date of recording: 6 May 1981.

Situational context: J reports on the traditional way to prepare and to use lime. A dot refers to a pause longer than 0.5 sec.

J.: *Si ler ou pe vir . vir ou laso,*  
if when 2SG PROG turn turn POSS lime

*ou trou koray i ankor . parey, i nwanr.*  
2SG see coral 3SG still same 3SG black

*Be i pa . i pankor kwi. Fodre ou koray i blan*  
but 3SG NEG 3SG not.yet cook it.is.necessary POSS coral 3SG white

*Ler ou vin vir li la tou sa bann k' anler*  
when 2SG come turn 3SG PART all DEM PLUR REL up

*ki nwanr ki' n ganny lafimen ki pa' n brile la,*  
REL black RELPRF get smoke RELNEG PRF burn PART

*ou tir li sa. Ou grat li byen.*  
2SG pull 3SG DEM 2SG rub 3SG good

*Ou annan en rato, ou grat li ou tir li tou .*  
2SG have a rake 2SG rub 3SG 2SG pull 3SG all

*ou zet li ater, ou zet li ater,*  
2SG throw 3SG on.the.ground 2SG throw 3SG on.the.ground

*toultour ler ou' n zet li ater prezan ou*  
always when 2SG PRF throw 3SG on.the.ground then 2SG

*anmas li ou met li en kote laba. Pour ou travay*  
gather 3SG 2SG put 3SGa PART there for 2SG work

*sa ki' n blan la, la prezan ou k'mans*  
DEM REL PRF white PART PART now 2SG start

<sup>3</sup> Here, the English spelling has been preserved.

*travay sa ki' n blan la ou aroz li,*  
work DEM REL PRF white PART 2SG water 3SG

*ziska ler i fini, ou anvoy li laba.*  
till when 3SG finish 2SG put 3SG there

R.: *Be ou dir mwan ler ou vin vir li la,*  
but 2SG say 1SG when 2SG come turn 3SG PART

*ler ou fini vire, ou realim dife ankor lo li?*  
when 2SG finish turn 2SG light fire again on 3SG

J.: *Non non! Ou' n fini vire ou' n touf li.*  
no no 2SG PRF finish turn 2SG PRF cover 3SG

R.: *Touf li anba fey?*  
cover 3SG under leaf

J.: *Anba fey ver, si ou mete i sek i so li,*  
under leaf green if 2SG put 3SG dry 3SG hot 3SG

*ou pou alim dife i pou bril sa sa fey la.*  
2SG FUT light fire 3SG FUT burn DEM DEM leaf PART

*Be ler ou met sa ki ver, sa ki ver la i transpire.*  
but when 2SG put DEM REL green DEM REL green PART 3SG transpire

J: If you are turning ... turning your lime, and if you see the coral is still ... the same, when it's black, then it's not ... yet cooked. Your coral must be white. When you turn it, all those that are on top, which are black, which have gotten smoked, which have not burnt, you pull them. You rub them well. You have a rake, you rub them, you pull them all. You throw them on the ground, you throw them on the ground. When you've thrown them on the ground, then you gather them, you put them there. In order to process those which are white, now you start working on those which are white, you water them, till you are finished, you put them there.

R: But tell me when you have turned them, when you have finished turning them, you light the fire again on them?

J: No, no, you finished turning, you covered it.

R: Cover them with leaves?

J: With green leaves, if you put dry leaves, they (the corals) are hot, you will light a fire, it will burn these leaves. But when you put those which are green, those which are green transpire.

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