The Metapragmatics of *Saying* in Sierra Leone Krio Theatre

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1. Introduction: The Krio language and theatre—a brief overview

Krio[1] is spoken natively by no more than 200,000 speakers, mostly in the Eastern area of Sierra Leone, but is used as the *lingua franca* throughout the country. Krio has bridged the linguistic gap between speakers of diverse languages in the country and is used as a viable medium of bilingual and multilingual education, in political ceremonies and speeches, but above all in the rich history of orature that includes proverbs, stories, riddles, poems, and most prominently, drama. It is unusual to find written texts in Krio these days, but Krio drama was an important literary form and the main source of Krio literature available to the general public for years. There is a great deal of poetry, but most of it is unpublished. If there were satisfactory written sources for the earlier stages of Krio, it would be easier to determine just how stable Krio has been over the last century.

In the 1960s, the work of Thomas Decker and his orthography of Krio led the way toward recognizing Krio as language in its own right. At a time when others dismissed Krio as a debased or corrupt form of English and failed to recognize its distinct identity and full potential, Thomas Decker, born on July 25th, 1916, in Calabar, Nigeria, never faltered in his conviction that it was as good a language as any other. Decker, a civil servant and journalist, asked key linguistic questions early on such as: What is Krio? Is it bad English? Is it the same as Pidgin English? Is it definable as a separate language system? Does it have any future? Should it be written? If it were to be written, how would it be spelled? An official orthography of Krio was not published until two years after Decker's death in l980 when Oxford University Press published a Krio-English dictionary.

Sierra Leone was declared independent in 1961. However, from as early as the 1930s plays were written and staged by Sierra Leoneans. Few of these early plays still exist. In the 1950s several Sierra Leone playwrights were invited to London to produce plays in English for British audiences. In 1964, when Thomas Decker translated Julius Caesar into Krio and staged the play for large audiences in Sierra Leone, many of the playwrights returned home from England and began writing plays in Krio. Not only did this pave the way for the birth of Krio in the 1970s, with numerous plays written and staged in the Krio language for the first time, but it also allowed the playwrights to deal exclusively with current social and political issues of interest to many citizens. By the 1980s, hundreds of plays in Krio were written and performed each year. It is a sad fact that few of those manuscripts are preserved today. Only six plays have been published (by two researchers at Umea University in Sweden) as the *Krio Publication Series*. The only university in the United States to house these scripts is the Pusey Library at Harvard University.

In this paper I use data from an immensely popular play performed in Sierra Leone from 1984-1985, *If You Yams White,* by Sierra Leone playwright Michael Yaarimeh Bangura, and from the few remaining earlier Krio scripts to illustrate how verbs of *saying* in a codeswitched, multilingual environment are seen as strategies on the parts of characters (and speakers) to reflexively represent themselves to audiences and to each other. At the same time, I discuss how several patterned features

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[1] Dudley K. Nylander of Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) in 2002 notes that Krio is a tone language with two tones (high tone) and (low tone). I have heard Krio described as having anywhere from two to four tones. In this paper, the tones are not represented because they did not appear in the original scripts discussed in this paper.

of *saying* may provide evidence for the development and grammaticalization of their Verbal to COMP-like role.[2]

2. Why look at scripts as linguistic data?

Staged speech represents the variety of speech that is written to be spoken and may come closest to "ordinary" spoken speech. Not only does staged speech represent the variety "written to be spoken," but modern drama is in some sense thought to be superior to a corpus based on spoken language since the latter may be less thoughtfully conceived and expressed and thus poorer in reflecting the prototypical tendencies in a language (Driven et al, 1992:6-7).

Verbs of saying generally occur much more frequently in staged speech than in naturally occurring or "ordinary" conversation because of the prevalence in scripted material of asides, soliloquies, self-confessions, and retrospective narration, which are often in the form of reported discourse.

Ordinary (non-scripted) "naturally occurring" language, on the other hand, does not always occur in the "natural" context it is presumed to occur in, particularly if the ordinary language provides data from conversational interviewing between informant and ethnographer. Informants often shape what they say to their idea of what they think the ethnographer wants them to say.

In a Krio performance genre, staged speech is in general a widely disseminated form of speech that is a vital expression of the life and feelings of its speakers. In some cases, characters are made to speak in a particular medium, especially when they portray comic or foolish characters. The way these characters express certain moods is often remembered by the audience and mimicked from one season to the next. Since the general public is seldom exposed to written texts, these plays often provide an oral recognition of their language and culture.

3. Verbal to COMP: The development and grammaticalization of *se* and *say*[3]

The development of the verbal form *se* or *say* into the COMP-like role can be explained by the fact that *se* and *say* frequently occur with other verbs involved in reported speech such as *tell, show*, and the like, in which cases they have apparently become semantically redundant (lexically empty) and grammaticalized into a functional COMP-like role as a discourse connective signaling the syntactic process of embedding. A number of scholars (see particularly Mohan, 1976; Woolford, 1980; Romaine, 1988; Hutchison, 1985, 1986; Muysken, 1986; and Mühlhäusler, 1986) support this claim and argue, additionally, that this type of syntactic change, described as "lexical diffusion" (Romaine, 1988:141) or "reanalysis" (Hutchison, 1985, 1986), is characterized by a change in the choice of complement type specified in the lexical entries of individual verbs as they diffuse through the lexicon at different rates for different speakers. From the more general perspective of language contact and change, this analysis is interesting because it illustrates how a syntactic change may take place by variable and gradual diffusion in the lexicon (Romaine, 1988:141).

This appears to be what is happening in this class of *verba dicendi* in Krio, i.e., a change in the choice of a complement is diffusing though the lexicon at different rates and in different contexts. In addition, it appears that different language varieties and registers of Krio may change from one type of analysis of a construction to a different one by means of a stage in which the language varieties alternate between two analyses or constructions at the same time. Two grammars may exist at one time in a speech community and they may exist in a form of a conflation. (see Romaine, 1988 for a complete discussion). This is not surprising because in contact situations where new languages or new language varieties are continually arising, speakers (and playwrights) will naturally tend to make use of as many similarities as possible between languages and language varieties, and in Krio the lexical similarities between Krio and English are many. The transition between one grammar and the next is

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[2] The playwright, Michael Bangura, generously gave me his play, *If You Yams White*, originally written in 1984, when I was in Sierra Leone in 1990-1991. He also gave me the scripts for several other plays he has written. All of his plays are listed in the references following this paper. Bangura and I translated *If You Yams White* together in 1990, in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The line designations of the script used in this paper are from our translation.

[3] *Se* and *say* are different orthographic representations of the same verb, "to say".

marked linguistically, on the one hand, by this set of verbs which display variable category membership or sub- categorization with respect to complement type and socially, on the other hand, by the variable usage (context) of speakers. As Hutchison (1985:2) notes, "Reanalysis is inherent to all diachronic processes. Such historical change is in fact 'a smooth progression of small steps joined by the mortar of variation and ambiguity." COMPs, according to Hutchison (1985:2), "are made and not born." In Creoles as in English, the elements which became COMP-like, became COMP-like by diverse routes.

In many natural languages, the most common tendency for the development of the COMP is to draw on the closed *functional* categories of the lexicon. However, in the case of *se* and *say*, we have an exception, although a widespread exception. In this case, especially in reported speech, the functional category of [se]$_{COMP}$ is derived from the *lexical* category [se]$_V$. This exception appears to be true for several other African languages as well. For example, Hutchison (see ft. 8, 1985: 12-13) notes that in Swahili "*kwamba,*" in Setswana "*gore,*" in Shona "*kuti,*" in Bambara "*ko,*" in Kanuri "*ngin,*" and in Hausa, "*ce/cewa*" are the verbs "*to say*" which in each case have developed into the COMP-like role. In each case, the verb "*to say*" which has been selected is the simplest and most basic of the verbs of *saying* in the lexicon. In most cases, Hutchison suggests these verbs of *saying* are even "defective" in that they may not take the full range of TAM markers (Tense, Aspect, Mood) in conjunction, "[…]perhaps because they bear such an important functional load in speech and in reported speech" (1985:12).

But how do [*se*]$_V$ and [*say*]$_V$ become grammaticalized as a complementizer?

Evidence from other creolizing languages such as Tok Pisin, for example, suggest that in introducing reported speech, the grammaticalization of a V into the COMP-like role is not a unique innovation. Romaine (1988:143) provides the following example from Tok Pisin where there is now a "new" marker to introduce quoted speech:

(1)	**Em-i-tok-se: plis no go rausim mi.**[4]	
(1a)	He said: Don't chase me away.	
(1b)	Him-he-said-that: Don't chase me away.	
(1c)	Him-he-said-saying: Don't chase me away.	

Romaine translates (1) as (1a), (1b-c) are my translation, and she argues that here "se" is being used to introduce quoted speech and can be "translated as equivalent to the English complementizer "*that*" (143).

Mühlhäusler (1986:150) and Hall (1943: 85) report similar examples involving "*spik*":

(2) **Nau mi tokim masta, mi spik: O mi no laik go wantaim you**
And I spoke to the master saying, Oh I don't want to go with you.
(Mühlhäusler, 1986:150).

(3) **Em-i-tok i-spik: 'yu no ken grisim mi.**
He spoke, saying, You can't get around me by flattery.
(Hall, 1943:85).

Mühlhäusler (1986: 188-189 in Romaine 1988:144) postulates the following steps in the grammaticalization of *se*. First, *se* becomes collocationally restricted so that it is used together only with other verbs of similar semantic content, as in the following:

(1) **Em-i-tok-i se** – he said, he was saying

Next, the predicative marker **i-** preceding the second verb **se** is dropped, as in the following:

(2) **Em-i-tok se: Mi laik kam.**
He said: I want to come."

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[4] See also Mühlhäusler, Dutton and Romaine (2003), section 7-9-3, *Subject or object sentences introduced by complementisers,* pp. 23-24.

Then, sentences in which the speaker is non co-referential with the agent of the reported event neutralize the distinction between direct and indirect speech, as in the following:

>**(3)** **Em-i-tok se: papa I gat sik.**
>He said: the father is ill. He said that the father was ill.

Finally, *se* is reinterpreted as a COMP following certain verbs, rather than as an independent verb concatenation. Conventions are then introduced for the treatments of pronouns in indirect discourse, such as in the following:

>**(4)** **Em-i- tok se em i laik kam.**
>He said that he'd like to come.

In one of the earliest written records of the Krio language (a poem entitled, *Courtship* – exact date unknown), only a pronoun, in this case, *"A"* followed by "*se*" is necessary to introduce a direct quote: *A se, "a lek yu."* I say, "I like you." In later scripts as well, only a simple pronoun and the verb "to say" are necessary to introduce a direct quote, e.g. in *If You Yams White* (1984), lines 118-119 "*en I say, Shut up, I am the head of the house.*" In these cases, as in many others from scripts from the 1970s to the 1980s, it appears that directly quoted discourse need only require a simple pronoun and verb. Either this is a later development from the early collocational restrictions that Mühlhäusler postulates (1985: 188-89), or in these cases, the verb "to say" never underwent this type of collocational restriction and a predicate marker preceding the verb was never dropped. When the verb "to say" in Krio was reinterpreted (or reanalyzed) into a COMP-like role following certain verbs, conventions were then introduced for the treatment of both co-referential and non-referential pronouns in indirect discourse.

In Tok Pisin, Mühlhäusler, Dutton, and Romaine (2003) note that *se* occurs only with a small number of verbs such as "*tok*," but in other Pidgins and Creoles such as Jamaican Creole (see Hancock, 1964 and Holm, 1988) for a survey of the data)), *se* can follow many more verbs. Sierra Leone Krio is just such a case.

In Sierra Leone Krio, when *se* is used in the COMP-like role, the following verbs occur before *se* or *say* and the utterance becomes an indirectly reported or quasi-directly reported quotative:

>**1. i memba se (say)** **(she, he, it) remembers that (he remembered saying…)**
>**2. i tink se** **(say)** **(she, he, it) thinks that (he thought saying…)**
>**3. i yerre se (say)** **(she, he, it) (knows, understands, thinks that)**
>**4. i biliv se** **(say)** **(she, he, it) believes that**
>**5. i tell se** **(say)** **(she, he, it) says that**
>**6. i show (sho) se (say)** **(she, he, it) shows that**
>**7. i no se** **(say)** **(she, he, it) knows that**

In these cases (1-7), such verb sequences may also be contextually realized in English as, e.g. (1) "He remembered saying," ("I member se") and (2) "He thought saying," ("I tink se") etc., in which cases they index a quasi-direct form of reported speech.

Mohan (1978) analyzes these sequences as *serial verb configurations* in which the second verb has become lexically empty. It then undergoes a category shift to become a non-verbal marker. This lexical emptying frees *say* (*se*) from its exclusive quotative function introducing reported speech and allows it to function more broadly with a function more nearly that of a complementizer. Further evidence for this category shift is apparent from the fact that the form *se* as a verbal does not occur with *se* as COMP, i.e.:

>*** I** *se se***,**
>*** I** *say say*

where *se* is redundant in this context because the "pure" verb *se* has incorporated the same quotative function as in reported speech. If *se* in serial verb constructions is undergoing category shift from a V to a COMP-like category, then the ungrammaticality of **I se, se* is surprising. If, however, the second

se is a COMP or COMP-like in this construction, then it should be grammatical since $se_{[COMP]}$ co-occurs with the other members of $_{se}$[V] in a semantic class. There are two possible reasons why **I se se* is ungrammatical. 1) *Se* is not really a COMP or COMP-like because it isolates [V]$_{se}$ from other members of its category; 2) *se* is redundant. Without further evidence, there is no clear way to choose one of these reasons over the other. However, I am assuming the second reason is preferable because *se* is distinct from other verbs in this class in this particular way. This suggests that the problem may be one of adjacency and redundancy of two consecutive *se*'s. When two instances of *se* are not adjacent as in sentences (1) and (2) below, *se* functions clearly in a COMP-like role:

(1)   **I *se* for tell you *se* I taya.**

He said to tell you that he's tired

(2)   **I *se* fo tell you *se* I dae kam.**

He told me to tell you that he's coming.

In examples (1) and (2), it is the sequence of (*tell…se*) as a serial verb configuration that determines the grammaticalization of the second $_{COMP}$[*se*].

It should also be noted that not all researchers agree that *verbs of saying* undergo grammaticalization form a Verbal to a COMP-like role. Kihm (1990, l994), for example, argues that in the case of Kriyol (also called *Crioulo*, which is a Portuguese-based Creole language spoke in Guinea-Bissau), "*kuma*," which Kihm notes is homophonous with the verb meaning "*to say*," is a verb in all its uses. He argues using government and binding theory that "kuma" should be analyzed as a gerund when in a COMP-like position. The structure that results for Kihm is what he terms an "instance of parataxis of serialization" or "a special case of embedding or conjunction" (1990:67). In Kihm's 1994 book on Kriyol syntax, he still believes strongly that categories such as 'complementizer-verb' are an *ad hoc* recourse to categorization. Earlier on, however, Hutchison (1985, 1986) through examples from several Creole languages argued that Creoles are in different stages in terms of establishing syntactic embedding as opposed to parataxis.[5] Unlike Hutchison, Kihm's goal is to see a syntactic explanation of the issue in this particular language, and he clearly states that he is not concerned with the larger issues of creolization (1990) or social or geographical variation, decreolization, or matters of diglossia (1994). In Kihm's own works: "I intend to take Kriyol as an ordinary linguistic object, disregarding its Creole status" (1990:54).

But in disregarding the Creole status of this linguistic "object," Kihm disregards not only its history, but also the larger question of **the relation of the means of speech to social needs**. Grammatical categories of *saying* reflect salient indices of social and cultural representation because such categories index *acts of saying something* within a chosen system of beliefs. In a purely grammatical paradigm, it is not possible to analyze the many and varied ways that *se* and *say* function. In strictly syntactic models of grammar that take "*se*" as an ordinary linguistic object, the main locus for understanding its use are propositional (i.e. within the constraints of truth-conditional logic). However, the (meta)pragmatic, (con)textual and (inter)personal resources a language has for creating **cohesive discourse** are also of primary importance. The interpersonal or "expressive" components of language concern the resources a language has for expressing personal attitudes to what is being talked about, to the text itself, and to the actors (and audience) in the speech event or performance.[6]

In example (1) from the play *If You Yams White*, where *say* is used as part of a serial verb configuration, it is clear that *say* falls into the fourth category of Bickerton's 1981 "orthodox" COMP

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[5]Syntactic embedding versus "the parataxis of serialization" refers to the practice of "normal" embedding processes where clauses are embedded under clauses versus the practice of placing related clauses, etc. in a series with the use of discourse connectives (e.g. "I came, I saw, I conquered."). While this distinction raises interesting questions for generative linguists, it is beyond the scope of the present analysis.

[6] I find it interesting that in the last chapter of Kihm's 1994 book, *Kriyol Syntax,* "Beyond the Sentence: a few considerations on Kriyol texts," Kihm discusses the use of "literary" texts such as comic books, calling such data a […] hopefully a representative sample of the language (1994:263-268).

role. For example, Bickerton (1981: 106-109) has suggested the following criteria for assigning COMP status: 1) a COMP is deletable; 2) COMPs can be generated in subject position; 3) a COMP S structure can be moved to subject position; and 4) COMPs normally precede the sentences they introduce.

In *If You Yam White*, when Maria says to her mother, Mrs. Hillman (lines 217-220):

(1) Maria:	(217)	**You know say ar dae mime en dance.**	
		You know that I mime and dance.	
	(218)	**And you know say some new nomba**	
		And you know that some new numbers	
	(219)	**dem don comot, en the latest dance**	
		have come out, and the latest dances	
	(220)	**wae dem call electronics**.	
		we call them electronics.	

it may be easy to recognize the grammaticalized COMP-like function of *say* in this serial verb configuration. However, what is interesting is the (con)textual function of *say* in this particular speech. In this case, "*You know say*," functions emphatically to sketch character and mood and although the grammatical form appears to index indirectly quoted discourse, its metapragmatic function is as a quote with in a quote, i.e., as a way for the character of Maria to quote herself for emphasis.

In the following examples (2 and 3), as in many similar examples, if one follows the orthodox criteria for assigning COMP status, the following instances of *say* are not COMP candidates because Bickerton's 2nd and 3rd criteria are not applicable. *Se* in these instances can never meet Bickerton's criteria, and in all these instances *se* is, in fact, COMP-like. What is salient, however, in these examples, is not whether *se* is COMP-like, but, rather, the cohesive function of "*tell am say*" and "*tell you* say" in holding together highly embedded discourse. (2) is part of a speech from the Krio play, *Queen Esther* (1979, originally pg. 6) between the 1st Chamberlain and the 2nd Chamberlain regarding the absence of the Queen (who did not show up at her own coronation).

(2) 1st Chamberlain:
- (a) **Wen we tell am say you sen for can call am,**
- (a) When we told her that you sent us to come and call her (call for her…fetch her),
- (b) **en tell am all way tin you say make you sen for call am**
- (b) and told her everything you said to make you call for her (and explained to her the reason why you wanted to see her)
- (c) **ee say make can tell you say een nor day cam**.
- (c) she told us to tell you that she was not coming.

In (3) below, from *If You Yams White* (81-87) *say* functions pragmatically to stylistically mark the discourse as part of a prayer ceremony and again, what is salient here is not whether *say* appears in a COMP-like role (even though it may), but the overall (con)textual cohesion of the discourse:

(3) Willis:	(81)	**Papa God we tell you tenkie**
		Papa God we thank you (We thank God)
	(82)	**for getha we ya dis afternoon**
		for gathering this afternoon
	(83)	**en pray say you go keep we man**
		and we pray *that (saying)* you keep our men
	(84)	**off from kem jerry curls and**
		off from those sexy teenagers and
	(85)	**discorama sucking blood dem,**
		blood sucking disco girls
	(86)	**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
	(87)	**Amen (all).**

In the following examples from *If You Yams White*, (lines 03-04 and lines 39-43), Mrs. Hillman, described in the opening scene as a wealthy and snobby Krio woman, uses *Ar say* for emphasis in dialogue with her husband, Mr. Hillman. In these cases the homonymic shape of *say* in English and *say* in Krio allows lexical space for theatrical representations of parody. *Saying* in English may be used as a multi-varietal pun on *saying* in Krio and vice versa. When Mrs. Hillman uses the form "*ar say*" below, she is using the Krio *Ar say* as a pun on the British, "I say" as in "*I say, Lord Herringbone, isn't that poopoo on your shoe?*"

(1)   **Mrs. Hillman:**
              (Slapping his hand)
(03)   **Nar watin dis!**
            Now what is this! (Listen!)
(04)   **Ar say mista do ya ar dae?**
            I say, Mr. (Hillman) what do you take me for (who do you think I am?)

(2)   **Mrs. Hillman**
 (39)   **Ar say Issac**
                I say Issac
 (40)   **You nor dae try**
                Why don't you try
 (41)   **Vacate dis parlour?**
                Vacating this parlour?
 (42)   **Look wae you dae**
                Look you are
 (43)   **Pit pit possin ba!**
                spitting all over me!

4. Codeswitching and Creolization in a Krio Performance Genre

To further complicate matters (as if this situation were not complicated enough), the lexemes *se* and *say* in Krio frequently occur in a codeswitched environment where attention is further drawn to how competing language varieties act and are acted upon in the same sociolinguistic niche. And although it has not received much theoretical or methodological attention in the literature on Pidgins and Creoles, codeswitching may have contributed to both pidginization and creolization processes so that an overlap or conflation of shape in the codeswitched environment of creolized forms may account for the simultaneous presence of both Krio and English in the same niche.

This similarity can most easily be seen in the opening speech from *If You Yams White*. In Mrs. Hillman's opening lines to her husband, the shy and retiring Mr. Hillman, Mrs. Hillman discusses a dinner party she is preparing for her guests. In lines 05-14, Mrs. Hillman warns her husband:

(1)   **Mrs. Hillman:**
 (05)   **Take me mami back you,**
                 in the name of my mother,
 (06)   **try dae disappear from dis parlour**
              try disappearing from this parlour
 (07)   **I am having some very important**
 (08)   **guests to lunch.**
 (09)   **Mrs. Funna, Bank Governor im wef.**
 (10)   **Mrs. Kersophpeh Wilhelm, Mrs.**
 (11)   **Willis Johnson-cole, Chief Justice**
 (12)   **Im wef, Haja Cassandra Kamara,**
 (13)   **Aunty Morshor en Mrs. Irene Marke.**

    (14)   **So do ya try dae fen you abode**
            So try fending for yourself in another house (So go out
            somewhere else).

Mrs. Hillman codeswitches regularly from Krio to English, often conflating the two. Likewise, Mr. Hillman, in his response to his wife (28-37) also codeswitches:

    (3)   **Mr. Hillman:**
      (28)   **But wan day den nor**
             But not one day
      (29)   **tote me kam nar ose.**
             was I carried to the house.
      (30)   **You see darling, as I was saying**
             When you invite such personalities
      (31)   **Nar you ose, ehm, by the way,**
      (32)   **these personalities are the**
      (33)   **"crème de la crème," and I am**
      (34)   **master of this house,**
      (35)   **you nor get for subject me**
             you begin to subject me
      (36)   **to any kanaba blaetant shame and humilia…**
             to various kinds of shame and humiliation…

5. Substratum or Superstratum influences?

Tied to this situation of codeswitching is the overall problem of assigning a source to *se* or *say* as a discourse connective. In other words, does its function reflect substratum or superstratum influences? There is, for example, great disagreement as to whether *say* functions as an independent innovation or whether it is a borrowing from the substrate. Is it possible that the Verb *say* is derived from English and the COMP-like *say* from other African languages? Or, as Romaine (1988:151) asks: "Are we dealing with a case where substratum semantics is being mapped onto a lexical item which has its origin in the superstrate?"

These are by no means easy questions to answer. As we have seen, both Mühlhäusler (1986) and Mohan (1978) believe that the use of *say* in its COMP-like function represents an independent innovation. In earlier research such as that conducted by Hancock (1964:27) and Cassidy and Le Page (1967:396), these scholars believe that the form *say* is a borrowing from the substrate and thus the coincidence between the *say* in Creoles and the *say* in English is accidental. Hutchison (1986:3-4) suggests that in many cases a given COMP-candidate may be from the same category in both the superstrate and Creole languages. He writes: "In any event, it is apparent that if they are originally from the superstrate, they have come into the Creole unaccompanied by the syntactic processes in the context of the Creole."

Before presenting my own view, it should be noted that certain scholars, most notably those of the Bickerton bioprogram hypothesis persuasion (l981, 1984), or the "Neogramarians" as they are also called, ascribe in differing degrees to a universalist theory that for the most part rejects substratum influences.[7] Other scholars, such as Sarah Thomason (l997), maintain that "mixed" languages: pidgins, creoles, and bilingual mixtures, do not belong to any language family. Thus, she believes, questions of derivation are not particularly salient in these cases.

My own view regarding substratum or superstratum influences is the following: *say* or *se* is sometimes English and sometimes Krio in the codeswitched environment in which it naturally occurs. While this at first may appear as an easy way out, I suggest this for several reasons. First, *say* is a highly contextualized form and the same shape may function differently according to context. In other words, *say* functions cross-contextually and is a variable form in different contexts as it diffuses

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[7] For a full discussion of these views see "Atlantic Meets Pacific: A Global View of Pidginization and Creolization" *(Selected Papers from the Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics)* edited by Francis Byrne and John Holm, 1993.

through the lexicon at different rates and in different ways (not a pretty picture for most generative linguists).   Verbs of *saying* are a "squishy" kind of verb, which displays multiple category subcategorization with respect to complement type (see Romaine, 1988: 141). Also, the homonymic shape of *say* in English and *say* in Krio opens lexical space for representations of parody and other forms of humor which are often used as a form of social control. Considering Sierra Leone's particular cultural and linguistic history, *saying* in Krio may be intertextualized as a multi-varietal pun – on *saying* in English, and vice versa.

6. Conclusion

In this short paper, I have tried to reveal several patterned features of *saying* not only for their syntactic effect, but also as choices of styles or codes, which are seen as strategies on the part of characters (and speakers) to reflexively represent attitudes, impressions, and moods that emerge in negotiations between audience/author and actor as well as between participants in everyday social interactions. While not ignoring, for example, the linguistic compatibility of the *say* lexeme in both its Verbal and COMP-like categories, this paper has applied a theory of metasemiosis to the relationship between systematic linguistic regularity and sociocultural praxis in a reflexive manner using a corpus of Krio theatre scripts.

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