



# On the 'definite' nature of Creole plurals

A comparison of Mauritian and Haitian plurals

Viviane Deprez

ISC, Lyon, CNRS UMR & Rutgers University

# Plurality + Definiteness/Specificity

- It has often been observed that besides plurality creole plural morphemes convey an added notion of **definiteness or specificity**

(Bollée 1977, Aboh 2004, Déprez 2006, 2007, Patrick 2007, Guillemain 2009, Bobyleva, 2009, Allesaib 2013, among other)

- “The post-nominal jamaican plural *dem..* it is restricted to [+definite] NPs”. (Patrick 2007;20)

(1) \*Buk dem gud. \*Livres sont bons  
Di buk dem gud. Les livres sont bien

- This effect, common in creole languages, is, however, not unique to these languages as it has been observed elsewhere in languages as distinct as Korean, Bangla or Yoruba (cf Biswas Bangla, Yoruba (Akinlabi, pc)



## Plurality + Definiteness/Specificity

- The extent creole literature offers only sporadic data and often uses notions of definiteness/specificity that are poorly defined. The many competing formal definitions do not help clarifying the picture.
- As a result it is difficult to ascertain whether the 'added' conveyed notion is in fact 'definiteness' or 'specificity', whether it is essentially the same across the different creoles or whether there are in fact **variations from one creole to the next** and if so, of what nature.



# Goals of this presentation

- To begin answering some of these questions, we present here the results of a comparative study of the properties of the creole plurals in two distinct french based creoles, Mautian Creole and Haitian Creole
- This study aimed to be both qualitative and quantitative and for these goals used two types of data
  - Native Speakers intuitions
  - A corpus of two closely related texts, namely the translation in the two creoles of The little Prince, the most famous texts of the most famous Lyon born writer, Antoine de St Exupery
- These texts offer the advantage of allowing a fine grain comparision of the uses of these plurals in contexts that are rather close.



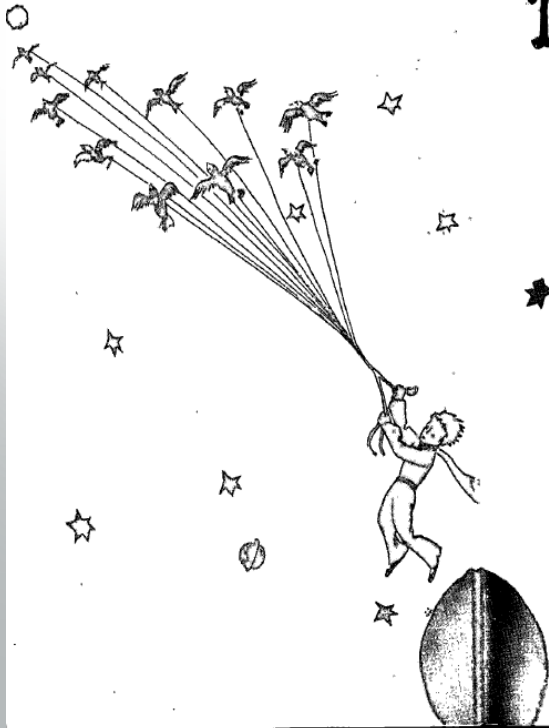
Gary Viktor

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

# Ti Prens Lan

★ Avèk ilistrasyon otè a ★

Sè Gary Viktor  
ki tradui tèks franse a an kreyòl ayisyen



polanktrad IIPRENS

<http://www.dev-virahsawmy.org/polanktrad IIPRENS.html>



## ZISTWAR TI-PRENS

Par Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



## Three main questions

- 1) What type of definiteness/specificity do these plural morphemes convey?
- 2) Are there variations across creoles, and of what nature?
- 3) How can their 'definite/specific' plural be analyzed?



## Road Map of this presentation

- Theoretical and descriptive preliminaries
- Qualitative study : the nature of the plurals
- Quantitative study : the uses of the plurals
  - Methodology
  - Results and discussion
- Analysis



Theoretical and descriptive preliminaries





## Specificity:

### Informal definition (Ionin et al.)

- If an DP is the form [D NP] is [+specific], the **speaker intends to refer** to a *unique individual* in the set denoted by the NP, and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property.

(1) Vous avez vu des voitures avec des roses dessus?  
Did you see cars with roses on them?

# Other definitions of specificity can be problematic

- **Wide scope (Fodor&Sag)**

NP has wide scope wrt a scopal operator

(2) John did **not** invite a faculty member

There is a faculty member John did not invite (but I don't know who).

- **Covert Partitive/Anchored Specificity (Enc 1991)**

An NP is specific if its referential index stands for a subset of the referential indices of NPs previously mentioned

(3) I bought four books. Three (of them) had a transparent cover.



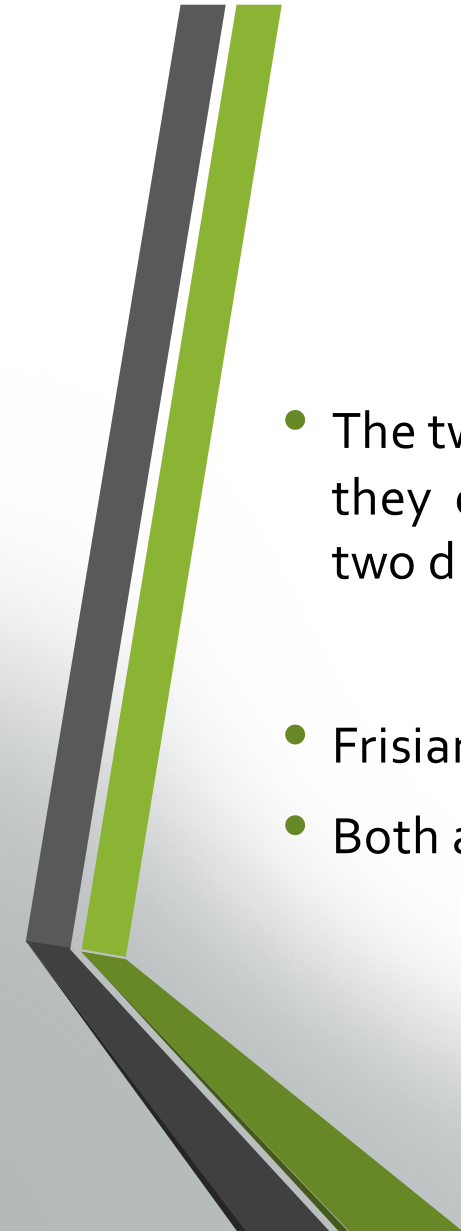
## Definitions in creole literature used notions common with definiteness (familiarity/ anaphoricity)

- By specificity, I refer to discourse anaphoric noun phrases that **link back to referents** that are **pre-established** in discourse, **known or familiar to the participants** Aboh (2004)
- A specific noun phrase indicates that it is **referentially anchored** to another discourse object (Guillemin 2011;56 (citing von Heusinger 2002) see Also Enc (1991)
- (Anaphoric + Associative definites)
- So for specificity, keep Ionin's speaker intended individual based definition best distinguishes Specificity from Definiteness

# Definiteness: Two central competing notions

- **Familiarity: (Heim 1981, Kamp 1981)**
- If a constituent of the form [Det NP] is **definite**, the **speaker** and the **hearer presuppose** the existence of unique individual in the set denoted by the NP (Heim 1991)
- Presupposed = familiar, in the common ground: discursive or situational
- **Uniqueness: (Frege (1892) (Russell (1905), Strawson (1950))**
- If a constituent of the form [Det NP] is **definite**, the **speaker** and **the hearer assert** the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.
- Unique within a situation or by the function defined by the predicate
- Pass me the hammer (Referent not presupposed, but unique and co-present)

The last one to go out will turn out the light (referent unknown but unique)



## The two approaches are complementary not competing (Schwartz 2009)

- The two notions of definiteness **Familiarity** et **Unicity** are both necessary as they cover different dimensions of definiteness that can be lexicalized by two different articles in the same language.
- Frisian, but also Picard, Bangla (Biswas 2012), Akan (Arkoh & Mathewson)
- Both articles are distinct from demonstratives

# Classification of (singular) definite uses

Himmelman (1997), Hawkins (1978) Schwartz (2009)

## Pragmatic Definiteness : Type: **Familiar /Strong definite**

- **1. Anaphoric:** previously mentioned: A man and a woman came in. **The** woman sat down.
- **2. Situational:**
  - 2a. co-presence in a shared situation: Give me **the hammer** !
  - 2b. Share community context: i. large: **The boss, The church** ii Global: **the sun**
- **2c. Recognitionnal (shared experience) :** you know, the weird guy in the subway..
- **3. Associative (Bridge)**
  - 3a: **relational:** A book ... the author
  - 3b: **unique part-whole:** A house .... The roof

## Semantic Definiteness : Type: **Uniqueness /Weak definite**

- **5. Description (superlative, ordinal number, relative clauses):** the first/ best/ only/ same drawing
- **6. Generic/Kind:** The cat is a domesticated animal



Descriptive preliminaries

## Distribution of the plural marker *bann* and *yo* in DP

	Pluriel	Possessif	Démonstratif	Défini	Numéral
C Mauricien	<b>Bann</b> Liv	Mo bann liv	Sa bann liv la	<b>Bann liv la</b>	Trwa liv Trwa *bann liv
C Haitien	Liv <b>yo</b>	Liv mwen <b>yo</b>	Liv sa <b>yo (#a)</b>	Liv (#la) <b>yo</b>	<b>Twa liv</b> <b>Twa liv yo</b>
Français	(Les/des) livres	<b>Mes</b> livres	<b>Ces</b> livres	<b>Les</b> livres	Trois livres <b>Les</b> trois livres





Properties  
of the Mauritian Plural *bann*



## Bann & Numeral: complementary distribution

(2) (*\*Bann*)*Trwa* (*\*/?bann*) *etidyan inn gagn enn pri.*

(i) \*‘Trois étudiants ont gagné un prix prix.’

(ii) ‘Trois des étudiants ont gagné un prix.’

- For many speakers, *bann* cannot co-occur with a numeral;
- For other, the co-occurrence is only apparent; there have generally a partitive meaning

# *Bann vs:* numerals: different scope

- Numerals can have ambiguous Scope

(3) *Rina p- enn manz de goyav.*

Rina not eat two guavas.

a. Rina did not eat two guavas (narrow scope of two)

b. There are two guavas Rina did not eat (wide scope of two)

- Bann cannot

Alleesaib p 101

(4) *Rina pa inn lir bann dosie.*

R. NEG PERF read BANN file

(i) %'It is not the case that Rina read (some) files.' (indefinite; narrow scope)

(ii) \*'There are files that Rina didn't read .' (indefinite; wide scope)

(iii) 'It is not the case that Rina read the files/ any of the files.' (definite; low scope)

## Bann can co-occur with the 'definite' marker *la*

- Obligatory for anaphoric NP ? Allesaib (2013)

(7) "Mo'nn al enn fet / enn sware inpe sik / inpe dan pop, yer swar. Ti ena **misie** (ek) **madam** ki ti pe danse. **Bann misie (la)** ti met kostim, **bann madam (la)** ti met rob sware. »

Je suis allée à une soirée un peu chic hier soir. Il y avait des hommes et des femmes qui dansaient. Les hommes portaient un costume et les femmes une robe de soirée.

- --> without 'la', the man and woman in the party at large are wearing a costume or a dress robe
- --> with 'la' all and only the men and woman that are dancing are wearing suits and long dresses (enforces maximality?)



But in our corpus, **bann + la** = very rare

- In ZTP, only 3/ 130 examples with *la* = défini (not sa... *la*)

(6) a. *Ou kone **bann** gran dimoun **la***

Vous saver les adultes

b. ***Bann** zetwal **la** zoli*

Les étoiles (?*la*) sont jolies

(les étoiles devant nous sont jolies)

It is not Specificity = a referent intended by the speaker only with a noteworthy property

(8) a. *Bouz enpe! **Bann envite** pe vini.*

Bouge un peu! Les invités arrivent

- The guests are known to both the speaker and hearer

b. *Mo pa kwar ki parmi **bann sef** ti ena sa dimoun la.*

Je ne pense pas que parmi **les** notables, il y avait cette personne.

- The chiefs are known to the speaker and hearer: they are part of their common: it is definiteness

## **Bann** NP cannot be partitive

(9) a. *Kan mo'nn rant dan sa pies la, ti ena boukou tipti zanfana.*

\***Bann zanfana** ti pe domi, lezot ti pe zwe.

When I entered the room there were many kids. \*The/some kids were sleeping, others were playing

b. *Kan mo'nn rant dan sa pies la, ti ena boukou tipti zanfana.*

\**Mo ti pe get **bann zanfana saz ek lezot dezorder.***

When I entered the room, there were lots of little kids. I could see  
\*the/some children who were well behaved and others undisciplined

Specific indefinites can be partitive; **bann** is definite



## **Bann** can co-occur with a universal quantifier

(10) a. *pou tou bann lerwa, lavi bien-bien senp.* ZTP:15

pour tous les/des\* rois, la vie est bien simple

b. *Tou bann poul resanble; tou bann dimoun resanble.* ZTP:30

Toutes les/\*des poules se ressemblent; tous les/\*des gens se ressemblent

- Indefinites cannot co-occur with universal Q: Bann is definite



## **Bann** can have indefinite readings

- Known (familiar) referent

(11) a. *Enn mari enfidel! **Bann zanfan** san santiman! Enn karyer san sikse!*

Un mari infidèle, des enfants sans coeur, une carrière sans succès!

- Non-specific

(12)a. *Ki vedi aprivwaze? ....Li vedi 'kree **bann lien***

Que veut dire apprivoiser? .... Ca veut dire créer des liens

b. *So abitan ti enn vie Gran Dimoun ki ti pe ekrir **bann liv enorm.***

Son habitant était un vieux monsieur qui écrivait des livres énormes

## *Bann* is felicitous in presentational constructions

(13) a. *Ena bann zanfan deor*

(Il y a un/??le problème)

Il y a PL enfants dehors

b. *De zour apre ti ena bann long reportaz dan lagazet* (Virahsawmy 2005)

Deux jours après, il y avait de longs articles dans le journal

- Is this a rigorous tests for anti-definiteness?
- c. Hier j'entend sonner. Je me précipite. Il y avait **les enfants** de ma voisine sur le pas de ma porte.  
Yesterday, I hear a ring. I run. There were the kids of my neighbour on my door step



## **Bann** expressions can be predicate nominals

(14) a. Mala ek Rima zot [**bann ners**].

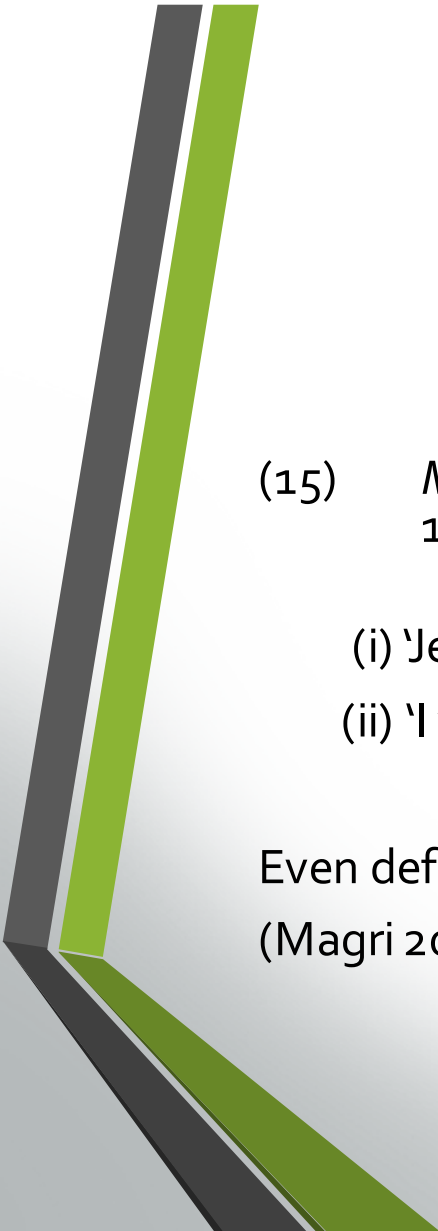
M. and R. 3PL BANN nurse

(i) 'Mala et Rina sont **des** infirmières.'

(ii) 'Mala et Rina sont les infirmières.' (ok with context)

b. Non, personn dan not group inn fime. Nou pa bann droger.

Non, personne dans notre group ne fume. On n'est pas des drogués



# Definite/indefinite readings Maximal/non-maximal

(15) *Mo pou kontan si **bann etidyan pass legzame***  
1SG IRR happy if BANN student pass the exam

(i) 'Je serais content si les étudiants réussissent l'examen.'

(ii) 'I will be happy if des étudiants réussissent l'examen.'

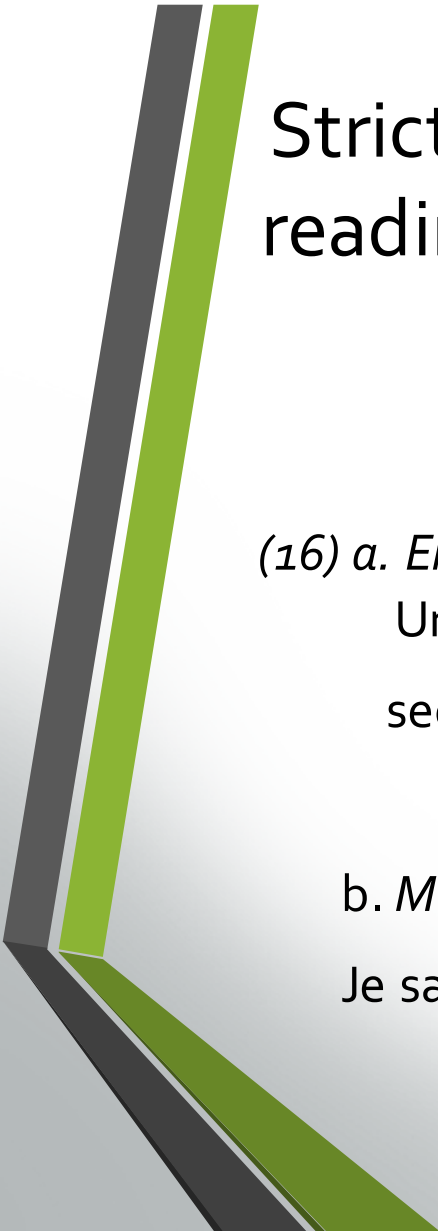
Even definite expressions admit indefinite readings in Downward entailing contexts

(Magri 2014)



## Assymmetric Distribution ?

- Guillemin (2009) notes that in her textual data *bann*-noun phrases are definite in subject position: “*Bann*+NP in subject position is always definite” (Guillemin 2009: 195).
- ‘This descriptive generalization is not phrased as a syntactic constraint; for my part, I claim that it is a syntactic constraint in MC that indefinite *bann* NPs are barred from the subject position’. P 99 Allesaib



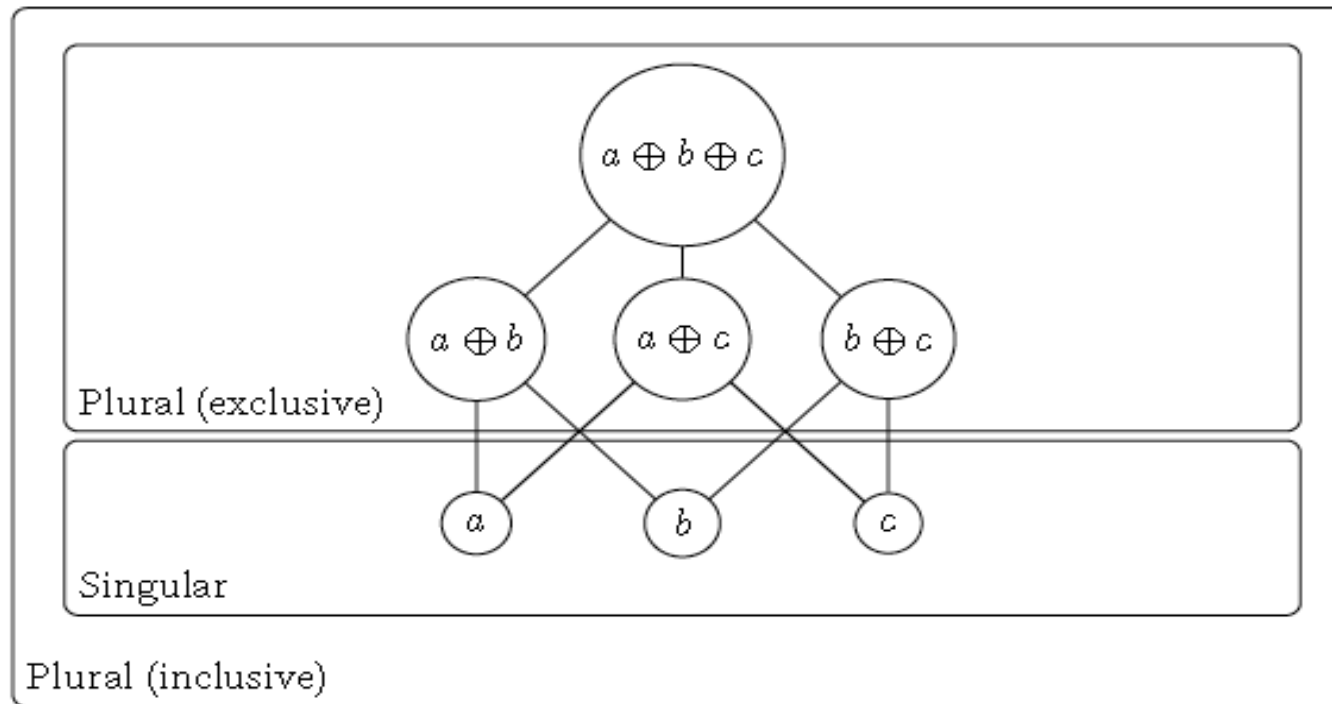
Strict Distribution? Not entirely. Potential indefinite readings in sujet positions (rare) and some definite readings in object positions

(16) a. *Enn mari enfidel! **Bann zanfan** san santiman! Enn karyer san sikse!*  
Un mari infidèle, des enfants sans coeur, une carrière sans succès  
see also (15) above

b. *Mo ti kone, li pou pass zizmen avan li ekout bann fe*  
Je savais, il se fait son avis avant d'avoir écouté les faits

# Inclusive Plurals (one or more) vs. Exclusive Plural (necessarily more than one)

Figure 2.1: Different views on the plural.



## **Bann** plural= exclusive

(17) a. *To enna zanfan ? wi, mo enna enn*

Vous avez des enfants ? Oui, j'en ai un (un ou plusieurs)

b. *To enna **bann zenfan?** **Mo enna nek enn***

Vous avez des enfants ? Je n'en n'ai qu'un

c. *si zot ena (bann) zanfan, lev zot lame*

si vous avez des enfants, lever votre main

Ok to raise your hand if you have more than one child, not if you have only one

Yet both collective and distributive readings are ok





## *Bann* Associative plural?

(18)a. Bann Anil/Bann Moka pe vinn promne

(Anil = a person, Moka = a place)

Anil et son gang / les Mokaeins


b. Group/\*Bann Moka la inn vini

Le groupe de Moka / les Mokains arrivent / ok La bande de Moka arrive



# Summary : Mauritian Creole Plural

- Bann in complementary distribution with numerals
- Not in complementary distribution with *la*, although co-occurrence rare
- Can behave like a definite (in subject position)
  - no covert partitivité
  - Compatible with universal quantifiers
  - No wide scope over negation
- Can have indefinite readings (in object positions)
  - Is ok in presentational constructions
  - Ok as predicate nominal
- Exclusive plural
- Associative plural



# Properties of the Haitian Plural *yo*

## The plural maker *yo* is definite

- *yo* = In complementary distribution with **the definite marker *la*** in some dialects (Sud and Port au Prince)

(19) a. *Liv la* le livre                      c. \**liv la yo*  
b. *Liv yo* les livres

Co-occurrence with *la* is possible but never obligatory in other dialects (Nord) (Glaude 2013, Govain 2017)

c. *Liv la yo* Les livres là  
d. Kote timoun nan yo? Ou sont les enfants?

This suggests *yo* is a plural associated with definiteness and not a definite plural determiner as some have suggested.

## The *yo* marker is also a 3rd Pers Pronoun

- *yo* = 3P pronoun or possessive = definite

As a possessive pronoun, it can also co-occur with *la* (Glaude 2013; 232)

(20) *M pran liv yo a.*

1SG prendre livre PL DF

'J'ai pris le livre qui est a eux (livre déjà mentionnés).'

# Tests of definiteness (Dayal 2012)

- **No implicit partitivity**

(22) a. *Lè mwen antre nan lakas, mwen we twa timoun.*

*De timoun \*yo tap diskite. Trwaziem timoun nan pa kontan.*

En entrant dans la maison j'ai vu trois enfants

(\* Les) deux enfants se disputaient. Le troisième n'était pas content.

- **No intermediate scope reading**

b. *Chak elev li chak liv sou de sijè yo*

Chaque élève a lu chaque livre sur (les) deux sujets

# Pour chaque élève, il y a deux sujets (différents pour chacun) sur lesquels il a lu tous les livres

Ok **Les** deux sujets sur lesquels chaque élève a lu chaque livre

**Yo is clearly definite, not a specific indefinite**



## Compatible with universal quantifiers and numerals

(23) a. yo te oblige genyen sou **tout sis kontinan yo**, HTPL:52  
on etait obligee d'avoir sur tous les six continents....

b. **Tout poul yo** sanble. **Tout moun yo** sanble. HTPL: 62

Toutes les poules se ressemblent. Tout les gens se ressemblent



**Yo** is infelicitous in presentational constructions

(21) a. *Gen twa liv sou tab la*  
Give 3 book on table the  
There are 3 books on the table

b. \**Gen twa liv yo sou tab la*  
There are the three books on the table





## Yet indefinite readings are not impossible?

(24) Gen milyon lane mouton yo ap manje **flè yo** kanmèm.

Il y a des millions d'années que les moutons mangent des fleurs quand même.

b. Mwen montre **granmoun yo** bèl desen sa a .

Je montrais mon dessin à des adultes



yo under negation; existential reading but like  
definites (Magri 2014)

(25) Ou pa fèt pou janm koute flè yo.

On ne devrait jamais écouter les fleurs

= one should never listen to any flower

Not: one should never listen to all flowers (but only to some)



Can be predicate nominals but still definite

- (26) a. Twa moun sa yo se manm eli yo (komite sa a)  
Ces trois personnes sont les membres élus (de ce comité)



## Allows a uniqueness reading?

- Ca c'est pas juste une des raisons pour laquelle j'ai quite mon travail, c'est la vrai raison. (baed on an example bt Abbotto)
- Sa se pa selman youn nan rezon ki fe m kite travay mwen, se li ki rezon an menm.
- Sa a pas un rezon ki kite travay sa a, c'est rezon un."
- Sa se pa selman youn nan rezon mwen kite travay mwen, se sel rezon an.(me)



**yo** = Exclusive Plural (= more than one)

(27) a. *Ou gen timoun (#yo)?*

(\**Wi, Mwen gen youn*

Est-ce que tu as les enfants?

\* *Oui, j'en ai un*



## **Yo** associative plural

(28) Kote Jakibo yo ? Où ø Jakibo PL ? Govain(2017)

Où sont les Jakibo

'Où sont Jakibo et les siens ?'

# Interim summary

## Bann

- \*with numerals
- Ok with *la*, although co-occurrence rare
- Behaves like a definite (subject )
  - no partitivity
  - Compatible with universal quantifiers
  - No wide scope over negation
- Can have indefinite readings (in object positions)
  - Ok in presentational constructions
  - Ok as predicate nominal
- Exclusive plural
- Associative plural

## yo

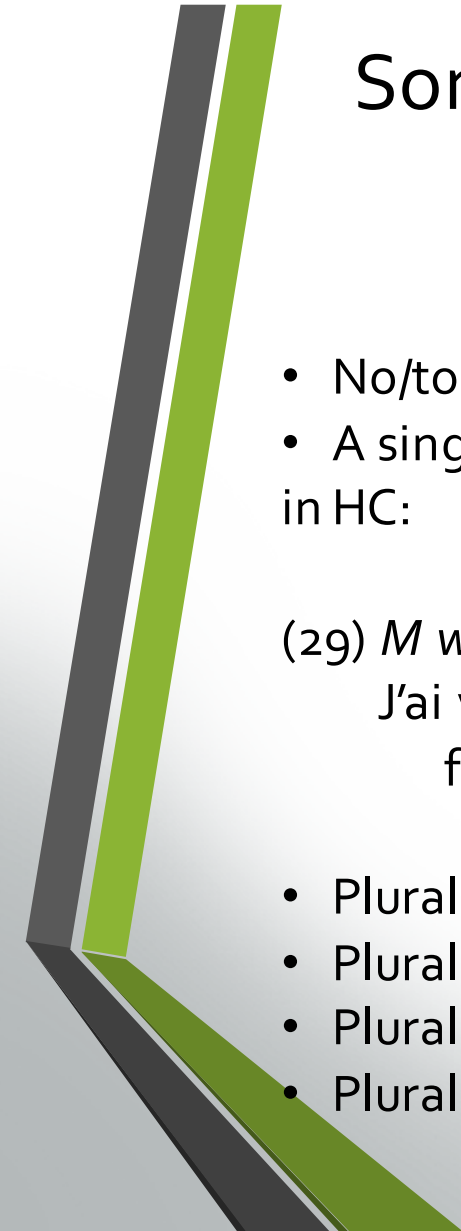
- Ok with numerals
- \* with *la* in some dialects
- Behaves like a definite
  - No partitivity
  - No intermediate scope
  - Compatible with universal Quantifiers
  - Infelicitous in presentational constructions
  - No wide scope over negation
- May have indefinite readings (generic?)
- Exclusive plural
- Associative plural



# Uses of the Creole Plurals Quantitative Study

Methodology





## Some modifications to the classic Himmelmann inspired classification of definite uses

- No/too few recognitional plural definites in our corpus
- A single example of associative definite plural (counted as anaphoric) in HC:

(29) *M wè yon bèl kay ak brik wouj avèk bèl flè jeranyòm **nan fenèt yo***

J'ai vu une belle maison avec des briques rouges et des fleurs de géranium aux fenêtres

- Plurals can co-occur with demonstratives
- Plurals can co-occur with possessives
- Plurals can co-occur with universal quantifiers
- Plurals expressions can be modified by a relative

CODED TYPES DE PLURIEL DEFINITE	EXAMPLES:
<b>Anaphoric : previously mentioned (=page)</b>	J'ai vu des roses et des blés....Les roses...
<b>Situational: referent in shared situation, or shared community</b>	Regarde les roses (dans ce vase) Ex ; les notables d'un village
<b>Generic : the kind or all its possible instantiations</b>	Les adultes sont bizarres
<b>Demonstrative: pointed/designated referent</b>	Ces roses n'ont pas d'épines
<b>Possessive: referent in relation with another</b>	Tes roses (a toi)
<b>'tout bann' : quantified referent</b>	Toutes les roses ont sont dans un vase
<b>Relative: Referent modified by a relative</b>	Les fleurs qui sont dans ce champ...
<b>Grammatical: Superlative, numeral/ only....</b>	Le premier/meilleur/seul/plus riche client
<b>Other</b>	



# Methodology

- Gathered all the examples containing ***bann*** and ***yon***
- Coded the uses

(For haïtian, élimination of cases of pronouns 3P (194))

- 3 codeurs
- Verificatition with natives speakers for cases of disagreement

## The corpus: basic numbers

Language	# of words	# plurals	pourcentage
C Mauricien	13.238	130	2.47%
C Haitien	16,119	221	1.37%
Français	15,103	261 + 139 +11 =411 (les+des+aux)	2,72 %

\* 194 yo = pronoms not in analysis

## Anaphoric: previously mentioned referent

(30)a.MC: *Ti-Prens trov en zarden roz: - Bonzour . **Bann roz** ti reponn: - Bonzour.*

b.HC: *Se te yon jaden tou bèl ak **woz**. — Bonjour, **woz yo** di.*

Le petit Prince vit un jardin de roses. Bonjour, les roses dirent.

- *c.MC.Explorater la bizen donn **prev**..... Kan explorater la ti finn fini donn **bann prev** ;*
- L'explorateur doit donner des preuves... Quand l'explorateur a fini de donner les preuves

# Situational

(31) a. MC: *Ar enn ti mouvman so lame, lerwa ti fer konpran ki li lerwa tou: so planet, lezot planet, **bann zetwal**.*

Avec un petit mouvement de sa main le roi fit comprendre qu'il était roi de tout: sa planète, les autres planètes, les étoiles.

a'. HC: Wa a fe yon jes pou li montre planet li an, lot planet ki tebyen lwen yo avek **zetwal yo**.

b. MC: labrim ti leve e **bann zetwal** ti pe koumans alime dan lesiel

HC: Nuit lan tonbe. **Zetwal yo** komanse klere

## Generic

- (32) a. MC: *Dan liv la ti dir ki **bann boa** zot aval zot manze antie, san kraze, san mase;*  
a'. HC: *Yo te di nan liv sa a, **bowa yo** vale bèt yo vle manje a antye san kite yon mòso, san menm yo pa moule*

Dans le livre, il était dit que les boas avalent leur nourriture en entier, sans croquer, sans macher

- b. MC: ***Bann fler** zot feb; 10*

Les fleurs sont faibles

- b' HC: ***Flè yo** fèb anpil.;27*

## Specified by a Relative

(33)a. MC: *bann planet ki ti ena nom;*

les planètes qui ont un nom

b. MC: *Bann ti zafer ki briye.*

les petites choses qui brillent

d.HC: *Menm flè ki gen pikan yo?*

Même les fleurs qui ont des pikans

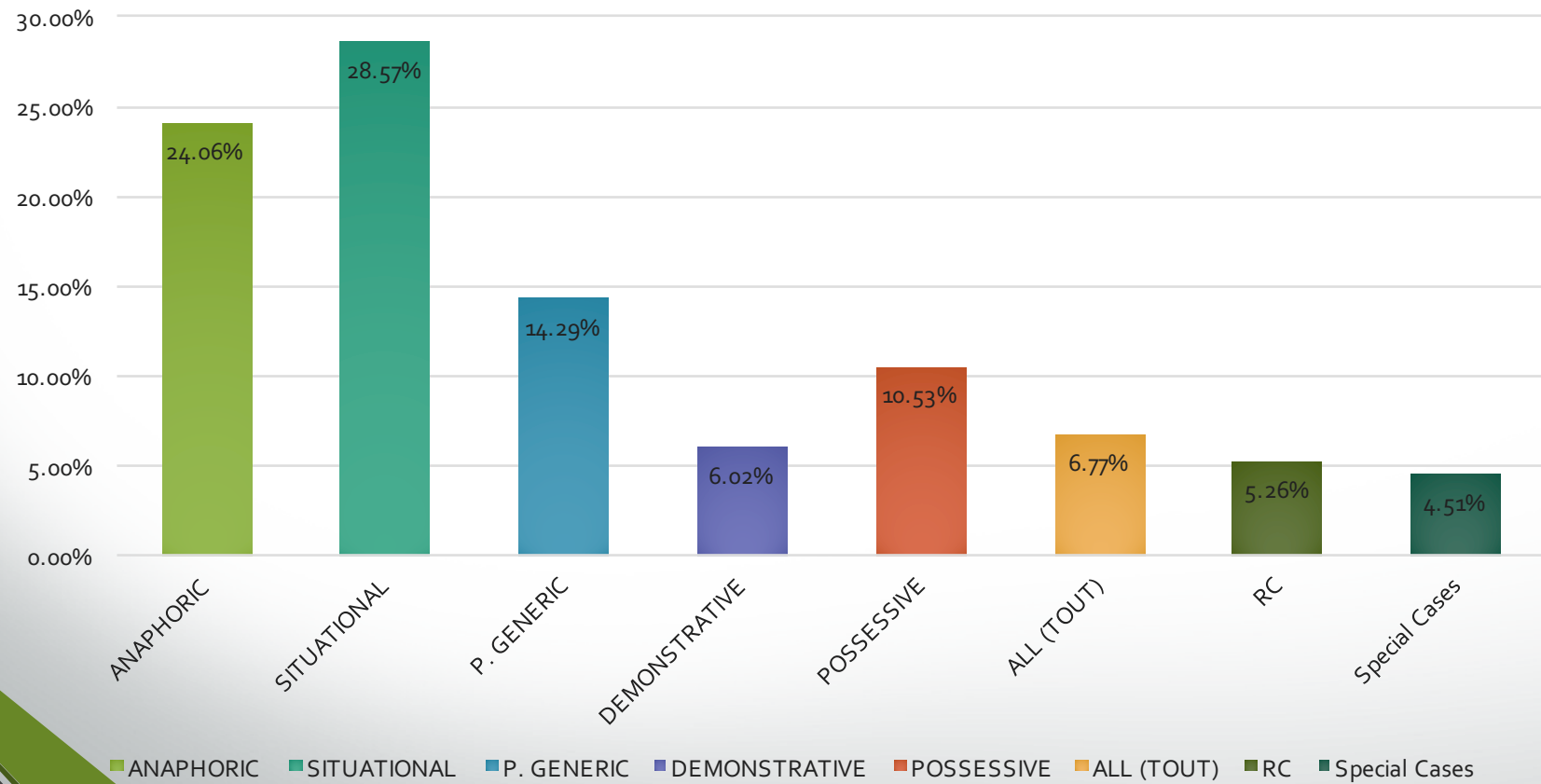
c.HC: *zot planet ki tebyen lwen yo*

les autres planetes qui étaient bien loin



# Results: Types of plural uses: Mauritian

## Créole mauricien





## Results: Plural uses in Mauritian Creole

- A large number of **anaphoric (24,6)%** and **situationnel uses (28,5%)**, i.e. **Total Familiar (=53%)**
- A non négligeable number of **generic uses (14%)**
- Un nombre non-négligeable de possessive (10%)
- Few relative specified cases (5,2%)
- Relatively few demonstratives (6,7%)
- No semantic definites (numéral, comparatif, le même, le seul)

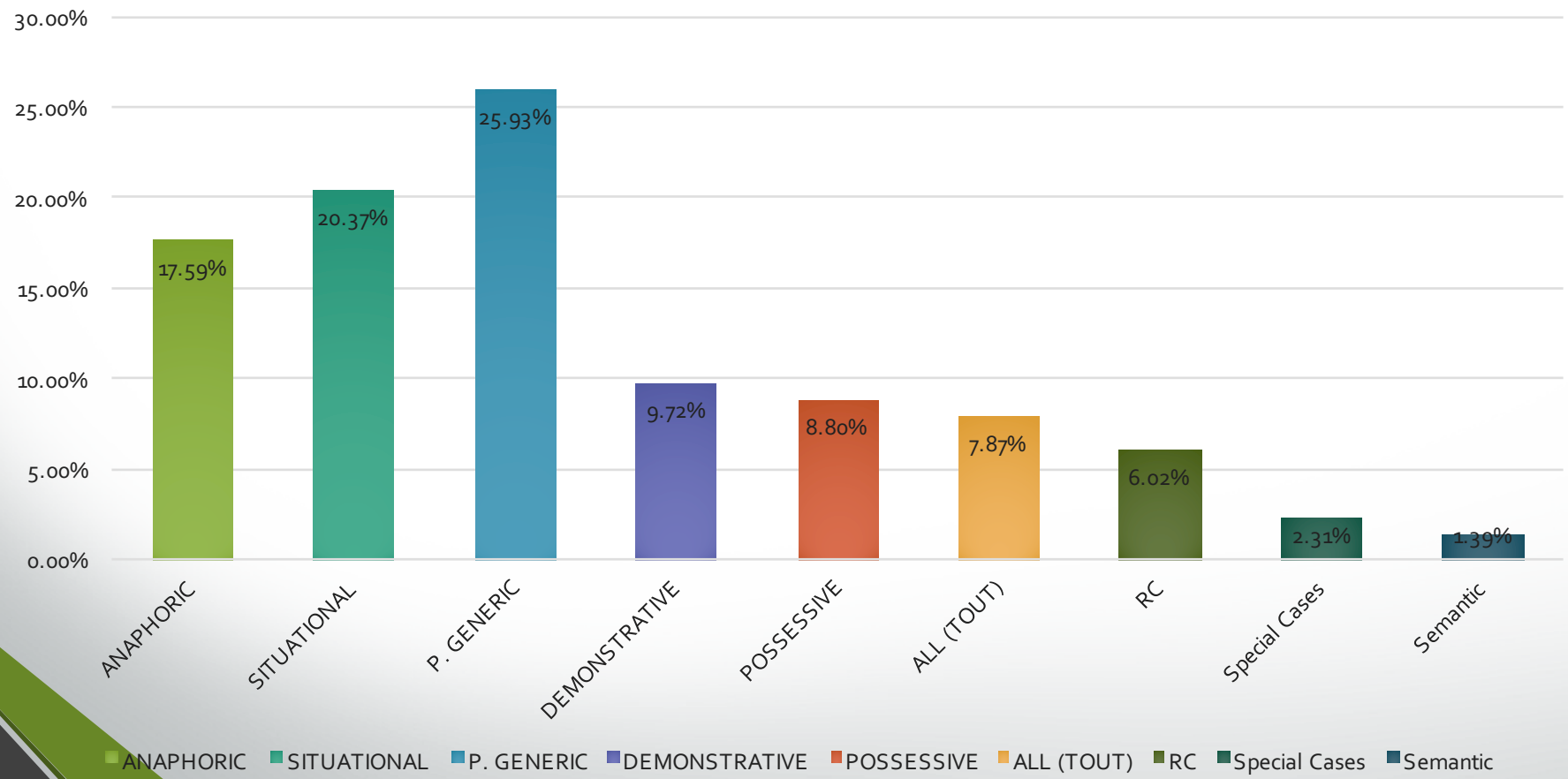


## Results: Plural uses in Mauritian Creole

- The Mauritian plural resembles in its important anaphoric and situational a **familiar or strong definite** (Schwarz 2009), which mirror the value of its singular definite *la* (Deprez 2007, 2014, 2016, Guillemin 2009) (80,18% *la*).
- However, it departs from it by its generic uses that are not found with the singular definite and by a stronger use with relative clauses essentially absent from ZTP in the singular, though this could be accidental.

# Results: Plurals uses in Haitian Creole

## Haitian Creole



## Results: Plural uses in Haitian Creole

- Proportionally fewer **anaphoric** (17%/vs 24% MC) and **situational** uses (20,3%,/vs 28,5%) although these remain important Total Familiar (= 38% vs 53% MC)
- Rather more **generic uses** (25,9% vs 14,3%)
- Somewhat more **de démonstratives** (9,7% vs 6,2%)
- Comparable possessive and **relative clause** (8,8% vs 10,5% ) et (7,8% vs 6,7%)
- Some semantic **definites** (superlative)

(34) CH: *Ti bagay tankou lò yo ki konn fè parese yo fè **pi bèl rèv yo**.* (superlatif)

CH: *Y ap kouri dèyè **premye vwayajè yo** ?* (numeral ordinal)



## Results: Plural uses in Haïtian Creole

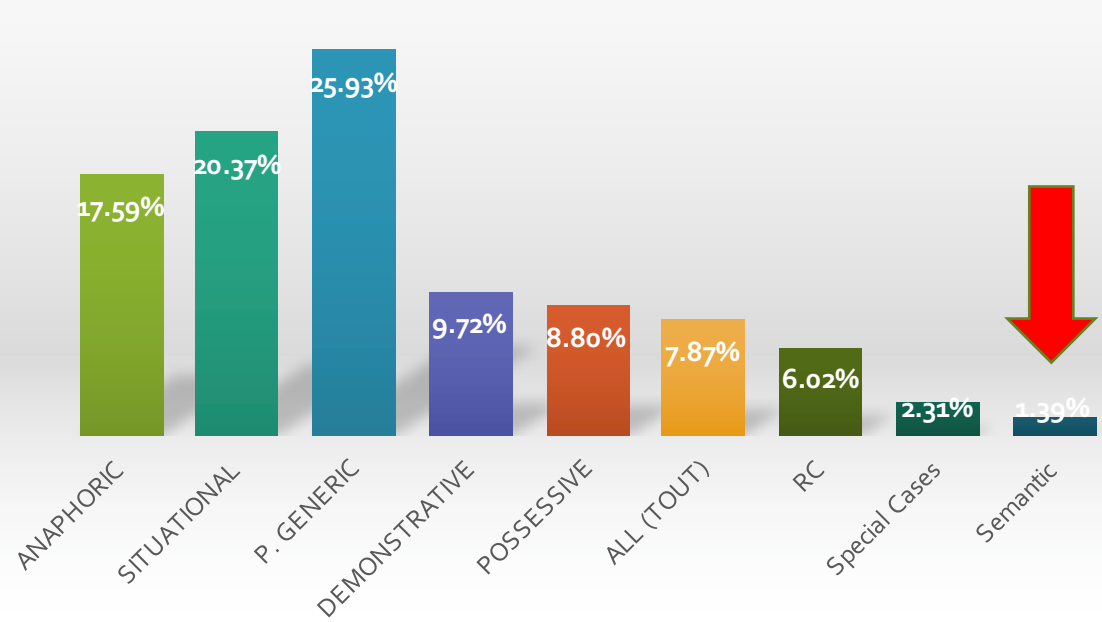
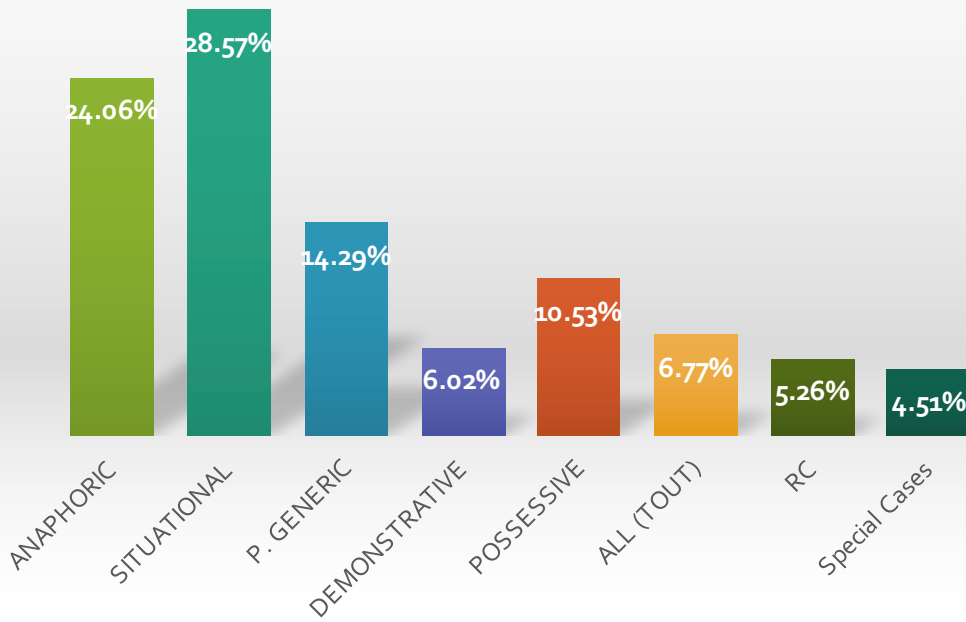
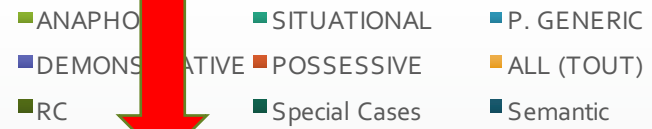
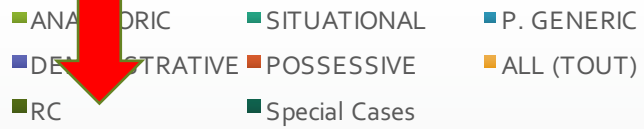
- The Haitian plural appears to move somewhat away from a familiar definite towards a weak **based on uniqueness** that comes from the description type: some semantic uses, more generic uses.
- This also mirrors its definite singular uses that are not fully aligned with familiar definiteness but represent an increase in the use of 'functional' definite as opposed to 'sortal' ones (Déprez 2016)
- But the correspondence with a weak definite is far from complete, which may call for a finer grained cross-linguistic differentiation such as (Wespel 2008)

# Mauricien

# Haitien

Mauritian Creole

Haitian Creole





## To sum up

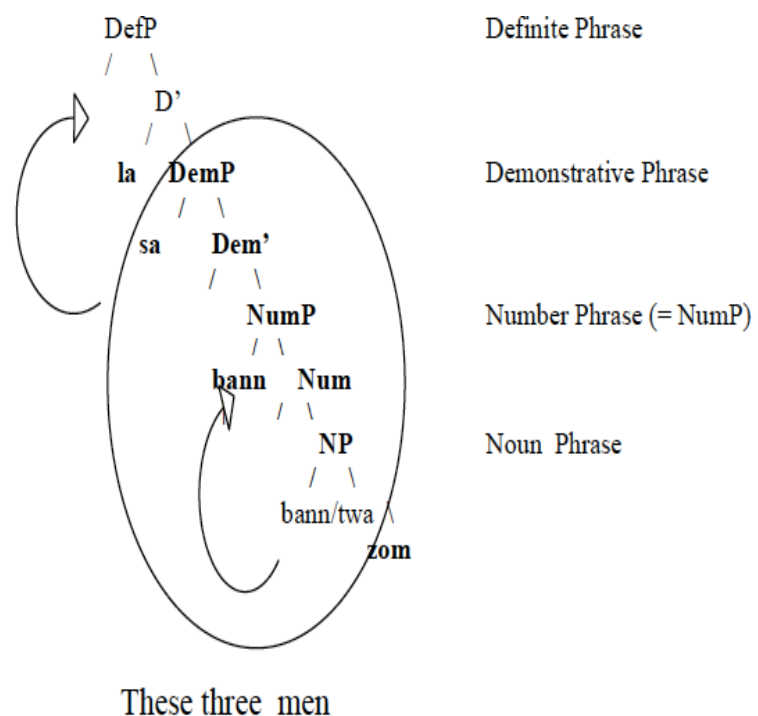
- The plural uses seem to be in close correspondence with what has been observed with singular definites in each of these creoles
- Strong familiar definiteness for Mauritian créole mauricien
- Definiteness is closer to weak definiteness, but not entirely. In fact a more fine grained classification seems to be required for the singular as well as the plural definiteness (Wespel 2008)
- However, the use of plurals for the generic, found in both creoles but more frequently in Haitian creole distinguishes plural uses from singular definites.



# Mauritian Creole

*[sa bann zom] la* (these men)

- Possible analysis:
- Bann is merged in the specifier of NumP (in complementary distribution with numerals)
- The NumP Projection Moves to the Spec DP headed by a null counterpart of the singular definite *la*.
- Movement is optional, allowing for indefinite readings, perhaps structurally conditioned in subject position
- Recalling the bann on null D in Italian (Chierchia 2008)

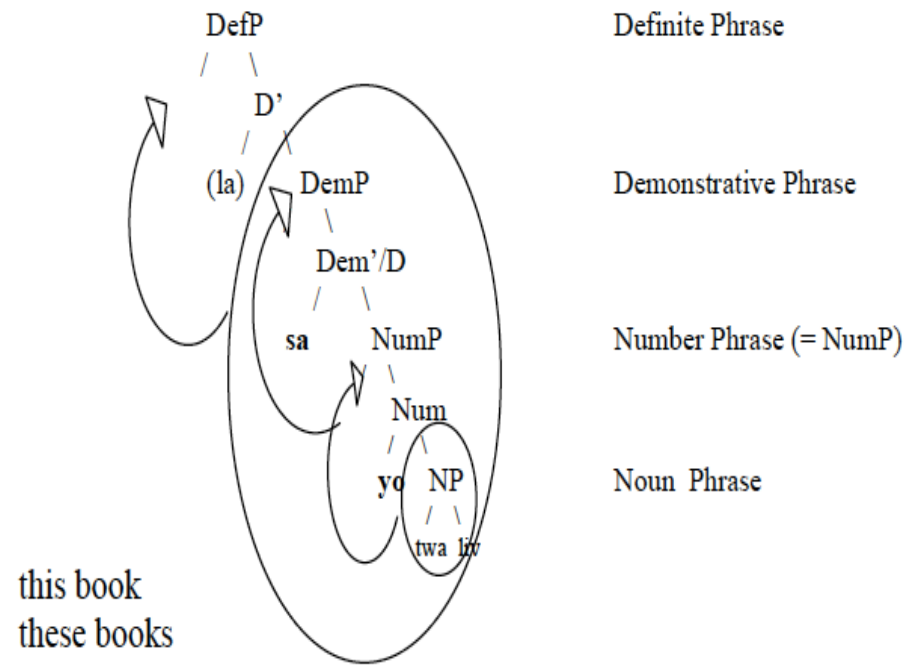


# Haitian Creole

*[[de liv]sa t yo* ☉ (*these two books*)

- Yo is merged in the head of NumP
- NP move to Spec NumP (NP final yo)
- NumP moves to Spec DemP (NP sa yo)
- DemP move to Spec DefP : la fuses with yo
- Guyanese C: NP ye la → NP ya

Alternative for the liv la yo dialect: Spec to Spec



[<sub>DefP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> liv] **la** [<sub>NumP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> yo] **yo** [<sub>NP</sub> twa liv]]]

## What this analysis can capture

- The mirror effect between plural definiteness and singular definiteness in each creole : the head of D is a silent *la* that has the same interpretation
- → definiteness is compositionally derived through movement
- Equivalent to the creoles where the Def Det is obligatory with plural

Martinique , Guadeloupean, Guyanese, Jamaican creole

(35) Se liv la                    \*se liv  
The books

# Striking similarity to definiteness in Bangla (Biswas 2012)

**Table 2:** Base and alternative orders and their interpretations

	<b>Num-cla NP</b>	<b>NP-cla</b>	<b>NP Num-cla</b>
<b>Familiar to speaker</b>	yes/no	yes	yes
<b>Familiar to hearer</b>	no	yes	yes
<b>Interpretations:</b>	Indefinite (± specific)	Definite (+Specific)	Definite (+Specific)

In Bangla, Familiar definiteness is derived by NP displacement over (Num)+Classifier to Spec D = Def

Indefinites are unmoved. The same can be assumed for indefinite readings in MC if the movement To Spec Def or the projection of Def is optional.



# Merci de votre attention

Un grand merci à mes informateurs

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Jude Lafleur, Franz Fontin, Herby Glaude, Robert  
Arisma, Renault Govain (créole Haitien)**

**Fabiola Henri, Shrita Hassamal, Guillaume Von Singh,  
Daniel George Véronique (créole Maurilien)**

Et aux étudiants dont l'aide dans les travaux de  
classification a été déterminante

**Krysta Duquette & Mason Mc Kenzie**

# Interprétation du pluriel défini

## Maximalité- non-maximalité

- Il a été observé que l'interprétation d'un pluriel défini varie:
- Il peut avoir une **interprétation maximale** qui implique que **tous les individus membres de la pluralité** participent à la vérification des conditions de vérité.

Ex : Les garçons sont sortis

Vrai seulement si tous les garçons sont dehors

- Une **interprétation non-maximale** qui n'a pas cette implication

Ex: Les journalistes ont pose des questions.

Vrai même si certains journalistes n'ont pas pose de questions

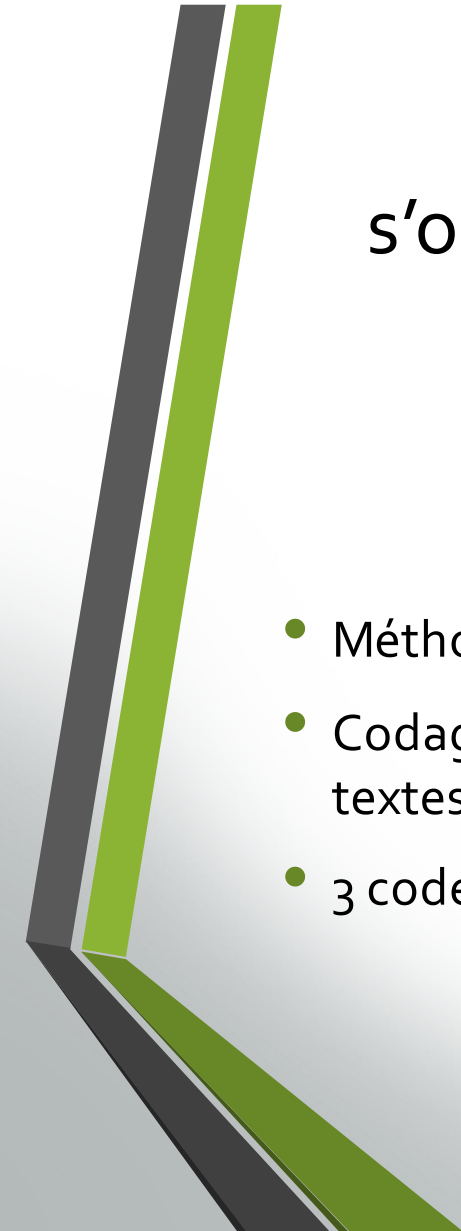
J'ai laissé les fenêtres ouvertes

Vrai même si seulement quelques fenêtres sont ouvertes

## Ces variations d'interprétation ont inspiré deux analyses sémantiques concurrentes des définis pluriels

- Pour certains, le sens de base d'un pluriel est un opérateur de maximalité IOTA, qui cible l'individu maximal de la semi-lattice du pluriel i.e tous ses membres
- Et les interprétations **non-maximales** sont dues à un affaiblissement pragmatique
- $\forall \rightarrow \exists$
- Pour d'autres, le sens de base d'un pluriel est plus faible et celui d'un quantificateur existentiel qui cible seulement quelques/ la plupart des membres de l'ensemble
- Les interprétations maximales sont dues à un renforcement pragmatique.

$\exists \rightarrow \forall$



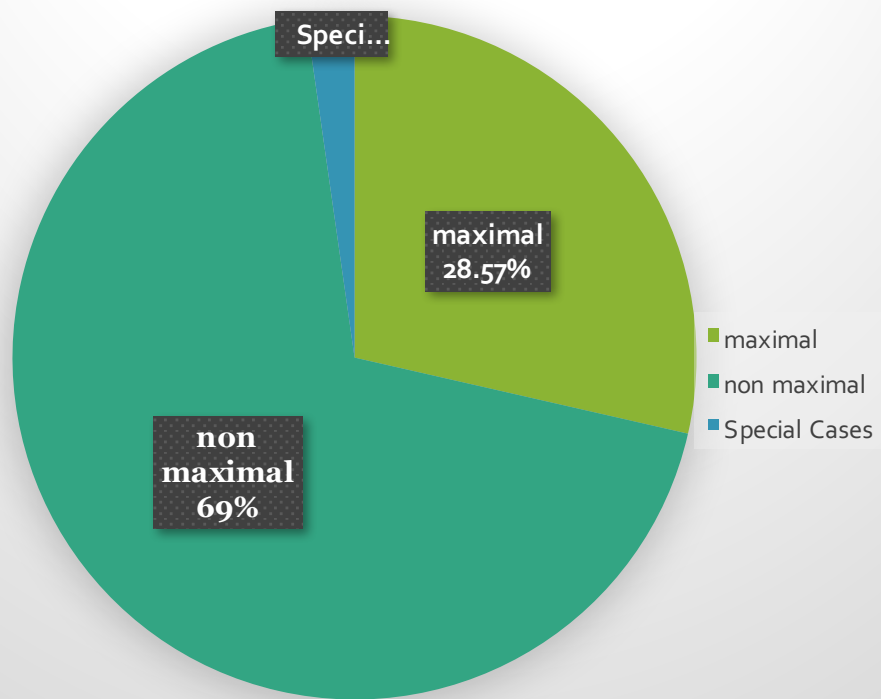
Question: ces variations d'interprétation s'observent-elles aussi pour les pluriels créoles? et de la même façon pour les deux?

- Méthodologie:
- Codage maximal/ non maximal pour chacun des pluriels dans chacun des textes.
- 3 codeurs, discussions des désaccords et résolutions.

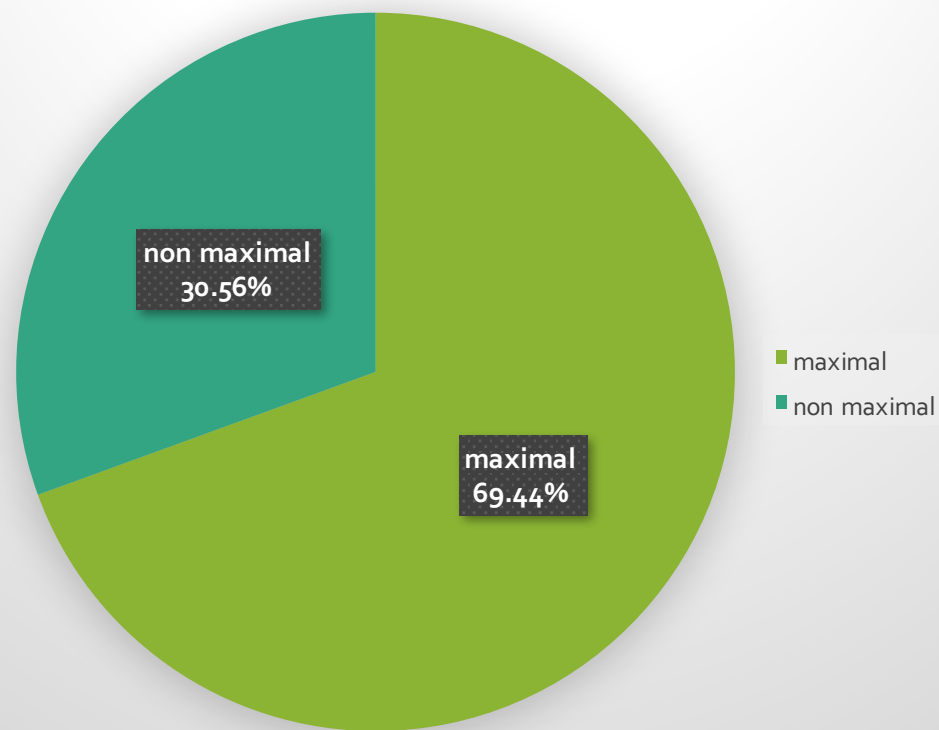


# Interprétation Maximale en Créole Mauricien et Haïtien

## Mauritian Creole



## Haitian Creole



# Résultats

- L'interprétation non-maximale est dominante pour le pluriel Mauricien **bann**
- C'est l'inverse pour le pluriel haïtien **yo**, ou c'est l'interprétation maximale qui domine
- Ces résultats suggèrent que les deux analyses sémantiques concurrentes des pluriels définis seraient pourraient être complémentaires, et qu'il pourrait de surcroît y avoir une corrélation entre interprétation et type de défini

• Bann :  $\exists \rightarrow \forall$       **interprétation existentielle**      **défini familier**

• Yo :  $\forall \rightarrow \exists$       **interprétation maximale**      **défini unique**

# Conclusions

- Notre méthode qui est loin d'être parfaite: reste artisanale. Devrait être testée sur plus de textes avec un encodage réalisé par des locuteurs natifs entraînés et aveugles l'un à l'autre. Mais elle a dégagé des points intéressants:
- 1) Il semble bien y avoir une correspondance entre les usages des définis singuliers (*la*) et ceux des morphèmes pluriels dans les deux créoles
- La définitude de ***bann*** comme celle de *la* en créole Mauricien: défini familial
- La définitude de ***yo*** comme celle de *la* en créole Haïtien tend plus vers l'unicité
- Les deux approches du pluriel ne sont peut-être pas autant concurrentielles que complémentaires.
- De même qu'il a été utile de distinguer deux types de définis singuliers
- De même il semble utile de distinguer deux types de définis pluriels avec des sémantiques différentes.
- Il pourrait y avoir une corrélation entre défini faible ou familial et le taux d'interprétation non-maximale et défini plus fort et le taux d'interprétation maximale.



## Réponses à nos questions de recherche

- Quel type de défini s'agit-il ? et y a-t-il des variations ?
- Type 'Familier' et oui les variations sont subtiles en relation apparente avec les variations observées pour les définis singuliers
- Quelle approche sémantique pour les pluriels de ces deux créoles ?
- Les deux approches concurrentielles paraissent en fait plutôt complémentaires et pourraient se recouper avec la distinction entre type de défini.