On toys, Early Sranan and contemporary bilingual discourse in West Africa: A comparison of adjectivization strategies

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Outline

1. Adjectivization strategies: property items
2. Adjectivization strategies in the Sur. Creoles
   - Early Sranan
   - contemporary Sranan and Ndyuka
3. Methodology
4. Ewe-English/French & Akan-English adjectivization strategies
5. Conclusion
Focus on Property Concepts in English

Property concepts (Thompson 2004, 1988)
- name a property or a quality of an entity
- have two primary communicative functions:
  As predicates and as attributes in referring

Attributive use:
1a) *The white car*  
   DET ADJ N

Predicative use:
1b) *The car is white*  
   NP COP ADJ
Property concepts in Early Sranan

Attributive contexts:
(1a)  *Gimi krien klossi*  
give-1SG clean clothes  
‘Give me clean clothes.’

Predicative contexts:
(1b)  *A no krin na mi*  
3SG NEG clean LOC 1SG  
‘I don’t like it.’ (literally: ‘It is not nice to me.’)

(1c)  *Joe mo krien drie pissi fossi*  
2SG must clean three piece first  
‘First, you must clean three pieces (of land).’
Property concepts in (Early) Sranan

2 Types of predication:

(1d) (...)  
foe sie ofoe alla sanie dé boenboen  
to see if all thing COP good-REDUP 
‘(...) to see if everything is well, (....)’ 
(Weygandt 1798: 134)

(1e) alla Ningre de blakka  
all Black ASP/COP black  
alla Ningre Ø blakka  
all Black black  
‘All Blacks are black.’ (intended meaning: ‘the pot is calling the kettle black.’)  
(Schumann 1783: 18,122)
With copula in cont. Sur. Creoles

Copular constructions occur in contemporary Sranan and the other Surinamese Creoles Ndyuka and Saramaccan ...

(Huttar & Koating 1993, Huttar & Huttar 1994; Winford 1997; Migge 1999; 2003; 2006; Sebba 1986)

- When the property item derives from a small set of ‘true’ adjectives (bun ‘well’ SR, ND); bunu/bumbuu ‘good; well’, SA)
- If is an ideophone, (pii ‘quiet’, gufuu ‘very angry and quiet’ in Ndyuka and pioo ‘black’ in Saramaccan)
- To express a temporary state (not with non-stative, process-denoting verbs)
- More frequently with Dutch-derived items than with English-derived items (language origin of the form of the property item can be an indicator of nativization)
Property Concepts in contact

The early Sranan findings differ from Ndyuka etc. in that COP + Property Item has a wider distribution, that cannot be accounted for in terms of transfer from the substrate.

While the verbal use of the property item can be matched with a Gbe equivalent (Migge 2003; 2006), the use of COP + Property item in Sranan still needs to be accounted for.

“the use of the Kabiye copula we ‘be’ with Ewe adjectives appears to be the most common form of code-switched utterances among Kabiye-Ewe bilinguals” (Essisewa 2007: 36).
The similarities and differences with regard to the expression of property concepts in different types of contact situations will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the social and linguistic factors operating in language contact.
Test: Gullberg’s Toy Task (2008)

**Purpose:** Originally designed to test Papiamentu-Dutch codeswitching and to elicit complex noun phrases consisting of determiners, colour adjectives and nouns. (elicit spatial, locative expressions)

- They wanted to avoid objects and colours where the Papiamentu words were loans from Dutch (e.g., *geel-hel* ‘yellow’).
- On the other hand, we used different objects and colours without targeting specific colour terms in these languages. Some colour terms may not exist in these languages.

**Procedure:** The participants are seated at a table which has a barrier in the middle. The objects (toys) are arranged at both sides randomly distributed on it. They are assigned the role of Director and Matcher randomly. The Director is told to instruct the other participant to re-arrange his/her toys on the board such that they match at the end of the game. They are then asked to switch roles for the same task.

**Materials:** We use set of objects (toys), some of which are identical except for colour and size; and a screen or barrier blocking the view between the Director and the Matcher. 
- **18** objects were used in all.
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A piece of Toy Task Conversation

R: Dulphin yo, somy? Dulphin yo, ḍeka tail ele RED, ḍeka tai wome painti yi o. (éé)m. ekpo emi wome paint-I o, nino (shark-a ñgo)m aha

M: Menye nenema o? (ς)R. menye shark-a enye GREEN tail-a o woa?

R: ς (olc)m. Nekpo (...) ḍe, (éé)m. ewo YELLOW, very very yellow, nude ewo YELLOW, nino emi nepaint-I tapolia gbo.

M: éé, ke yellow, bowl-a woame eve le afiya. Suetō kple gātō

R: ko gātō with yellow, eya enye DEEP YELLOW paa. Deep yellow

M: bowl-a woame eve-a same colour

R: ooho, menye the same colour-o. tonye le fi lé le ELE WHITISH COLOR me-nye WHITE-o (cream)m. ehς

M: bowl woame eve-a. Tatá nye cream

R: ehς, ya ḍeka tse nye yellow. Very yellow
Predicative use of Property Concepts in EWE

Example: predication of notion of being SMALL

2a) E-le sue-de NP COP ADJ
   3SG-COP small-ADVERBIALISER
   ‘He/she /it is small.’

2b) E- nye ame sue (me) NP COP NP
   3SG-COP person small person
   ‘He/she is a small person.’

2c) E-sue NP V
   3SG-small
   ‘He/she is small’
Example: predication of notion of being **WHITE**

3a)  Ava- a le yi-e/-de NP le ADJ 
Cloth-DEF COP white-ADVSER 
‘The cloth is white.’

3b)  E- nye ava yi NP nye NP 
3SG-COP cloth white 
‘It is a white cloth.’

3c)  Ava- a fu NP V 
cloth-DEF white 
‘The cloth has become white / the cloth has whitened.’
Predicative use of Property items in Ewe-Eng CS

R: Dulphin yo, somy? Dulphin yo, ḍeka tail ele RED, ḍeka tai wome painti yi o. (éé)m. ekpo emi wome paint-I o, nino (shark-a ṣọgo)m aha

M: Menye nenema o? (ς)R. menye shark-a enye GREEN tail-a o woa?

R: ς (olc)m. Nekpo (...) ḍe, (éé)M. ewo YELLOW, very very yellow, nude ewo YELLOW, nino emi nepaint-I tapolia gbo.

M: éé, ke yellow, bowl-a woame eve le afiya. Suetọ kple gatório

R: ko gatório with yellow, eya enye DEEP YELLOW paa. Deep yellow

M: bowl-a woame eve-a same colour

R: oohoo, menye the same colour-o. tonye le fi lé le ELE WHITISH COLOR me-nye WHITE-o (cream)m. ehς

M: bowl woame eve-a. Tatá nye cream

R: ehς, ya ḍeka tse nye yellow. Very yellow
Attributive use of Property Concepts in EWE

1a) Ẹnu ɣi a
     car white  DEF
     ‘The white car.’

1b) Ẹnu ɣi-tɔ a
     car white-one  DEF
     N, ADJ-one  DET
Attributive use of Property Concepts in multilingual data

16 combinations/patterns attested in Ewe-English/French & Akan-English

4 subtypes
1.1. **Afr Noun + Eur Adj**

1a. Eyi ne kpọe ṣọ eya enye *atadi YELLOW* 
   ‘The one which follows this COP pepper yellow.
   ‘The one which follows this one is the yellow pepper.’

1b. éhan-vi *JAUNE* kpọtsia kpọtsia kpọtsia bé alignement ḍʒi 
   ‘(it is) in line with the very last little yellow pig.’

1c. nea *BLACK* wo ṣo no 
   ‘The black thing (that is) there.’
1.2 Afr Noun + Eur Adj Afr Modifier

2a. atadi YELLOW-a, e-trɔ asike kɔ ɖo curtains-a. Ewe-Eng
pepper yellow DEF it-turn tail take reach curtains-DEF
‘The yellow pepper, it has turned its tail towards the curtains.’

2b. o la kpɔ afɔkpa JAUNE-a Ewe- Fre
2SG FUT see slipper yellow-DEF
‘You will see the yellow slipper.’

2c. tapoli GREEN no ene blue chelsea no. Akan - Eng
grinder green DEF and blue chelsea DEF
‘The green grinder and the blue chelsea.’
3a. Ok, etɔlia yi nye *atadi YELLOW to*. Ewe-Eng
Ok third-one which COP pepper yellow one
‘Ok, the third one which is the pepper that is yellow.’

3b. fifi *asiké ROUGE to-a,* ... Ewe-Fre
now tail red one-DEF
‘Now, the tail that is red ... ‘

3c. .... Akan-Eng
1.4 Noun Afr Adj ONE

Ewe - Eng
4a. Ke eyi ne ga-kplɔ-e eya enye akpa. Akpa GREEN ONE
then the one which REP-follow-it this COP fish fish green one
‘Then the one which follows this one is fish, the green fish.’

Ewe - Fre
4b. Ok, éhu ORANGE-ONE ...
ok car orange-one
‘Ok, the red car ...’

Akan - Eng
Possible, but no data (yet)
2.1 Eur Noun + Eur Adj

Ewe-Eng
2a. enelia eya enye car, **CAR YELLOW** (not an EL island)
    fourth one it COP car car yellow
    ‘The fourth one, it is car, yellow car.’

Ewe-Fre
2b. fifia **BALLON JAUNE** va. (or French/EL island)
    now ballon yellow come
    ‘Now the yellow ballon follows.’

Akan – Eng
2c. ... **CHELSEA YELLOW AND BLUE** (not an EL island)
2.2 Eur Noun + Eur Adj Afr Modifier

Ewe-Eng
2a. e-do **JACKET RED ade**
    3SG-wear jacket red INDEF
    ‘He/she wears a red jacket.’

Ewe-Fre
2b. **PION ORANGE dé, ota énu-vi dé dzj léké**
    pion orange INDEF 3PL-draw something-small INDEF top like this
    ‘An orange pion, they have drawn something small on it like this.’

Akan-Eng
2c. afei fa **PEPPER GREEN paa no so so**
    now take pepper green very DEF put top
    ‘Now place the deep green pepper on it.’
2.3 Eur Noun, Eur Adj – ONE (Afr Modifier)

Ewe-Eng
2a. Nakɔ eeh, shark-a, big one, sorry, FISH BIG ONE
SUBJ-take EXCL shark-DEF big one sorry fish big one
‘Take, eeh, the shark, the big one, sorry, the big fish.’

fifia FISHi-a, GREEN TAIL-a
now fish-DEF green tail-DEF
‘Now, the fish, the one with the green tail.’

Ewe-Fre
2b. Not attested, not expected

Akan-Eng
2c. fa so so, afei PEPPER RED ONE no
take put top now pepper red one DEF
‘Take and put it on top of the red pepper.’
3.1 \text{Eur Adj + Eur Noun}

Ewe-Eng
3a. \textbf{RED CAR, no, ORANGE CAR} meda ge ṣe dolphin.
    red car no orange car 1SG-put INGR at dolphin
    ‘Red car, no orange car, place it at the dolphin.’

Ewe-Fre
3b. Not attested, not possible

Akan-Eng
3c. \textbf{RED CAR, me mewɔ \textit{YELLOW CAR} oo!}
    red car 1SG 1SG-have yellow car EMPH
    ‘Red car, me, I have a yellow car!’
3.2 Eur Adj + Eur Noun Afr Modifier

**Ewe-Eng**
3a. Kpli bɔl-a, **YELLOW bɔl-a, YELLOW-BLACK bɔl-a.**
and ball-DEF yellow ball-DEF yellow black ball-DEF
‘And ball, the yellow ball, the yellow-black ball.’

**Ewe-Fre**
3b. Not attested, not possible

**Akan-Eng**
3c. na afei wo de **GREEN FISH no**
and now 2SG take green fish DEF
‘And now you take the green fish ...’
4.1  Other: $\text{Eur Adj + Afr Noun}$

**Ewe-Engl**
4a. Possible, but not in data

**Ewe-Fre**
4b. Not attested, not possible for colour items (but it can for other Property Concepts)

**Akan-Eng**
4c. **YELLOW** nam
   yellow fish
4.2. Other: Use of ‘COLOUR’

**Ewe-English:**

5. Afɔkpa, **COLOUR** blɔ to
   slipper colour  blue one
   ‘The blue slipper.’

6a. Nuɖugba, **CREAM COLOUR**, eyi  nye ṃeka le  eme
   plate  cream colour  this.one COP one COP inside
   ‘The cream coloured plate, this one which is the one inside.’

6b. ehɛ. Eʋu, **ORANGE COLOUR**
   EXCL car orange colour
   ‘Ehe. The orange car.’
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- NA order is more often found in Ewe French than in Ewe English.
- If the noun is of English or French origin, Ewe-English CS and Ewe-French CS differ significantly in the preferred order: NA in Ewe-French.
- Ewe-French and Ewe-English further differ significantly with regard to the following:

  • If the noun is of European origin, it precedes the color term in Ewe-French, while it can occur both before and after the color term in Ewe-English CS.

  • If the adjective is of European origin, it will most likely appear after the noun in Ewe-French codeswitching; Ewe and French have the same structure.
Concluding remarks

1. Dual origin of Early Sranan property items:
   - Complement of COP: match with multilingual data
   - Property item is verb: match with Kwa
   - Prop N: Eng/Du model

2. Variation in verbal but not in the nominal domain in the case of Sranan, but different in CS in Ghana/Togo, where it is also found in the nominal domain

3. CS adjectivization strategies differ across languages: ONE islands are found in Ghana but not in Togo

Akpe!