


**Creoles in contact
in French Guiana & Suriname:
implications for language documentation**

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Introduction

- ▶ Creoles often exists in contexts characterized by multilingualism
 - ▶ “members of a creole community” tend to have
 - varying degrees of exposure to the Creole
 - varying degrees of exposure to other languages,
 - different levels of competence in each language
 - different attitudes towards them
 - different language use patterns
 - different patterns of contact
 - heterogeneity represents the norm rather than the exception
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Introduction

- ▶ Viewed from this perspective, the notion of a language as a solid, self-contained and distinct system which does not interact with other such entities with which it physically coexists appears like a fiction. However, despite mounting evidence, linguistic description and documentation tends to shy away from dealing with the consequences of this evidence

Aim of this paper: to chart a new approach to documenting languages that place linguistic heterogeneity, lge variation and change and language contact at the centre rather than at the periphery.

The Guyana plateau



A multilingual and multiethnic zone

Due to arbitrary (colonial) border-drawing, slavery, indentured labour schemes and recent migration,

- ⇒ the “same” traditional groups are present in several states
- ⇒ + contact between groups

French Guiana



French official language

4 French-based Creoles
(Guyanais, Haïtien, Martiniquais,
Guadeloupéen)

5 English-based Creoles
Nengee (Ndyuka, Aluku,
Pamaka), Samaka, Sranan tongo

Amerindian languages

Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch,
Guyanese English, Hmong,
Cantonese, Javanese, Hindustani,
Arabic

Lingua franca: French, Créole
guyanais, portuguese, sranan
tongo & ndyuka

Suriname



Dutch official language

6 English-based Creoles
Sranan tongo, Ndyuka,
Pamaka, Samaka, Kwinti,
Matawai

Hindustani

Javanese

Amerindian languages

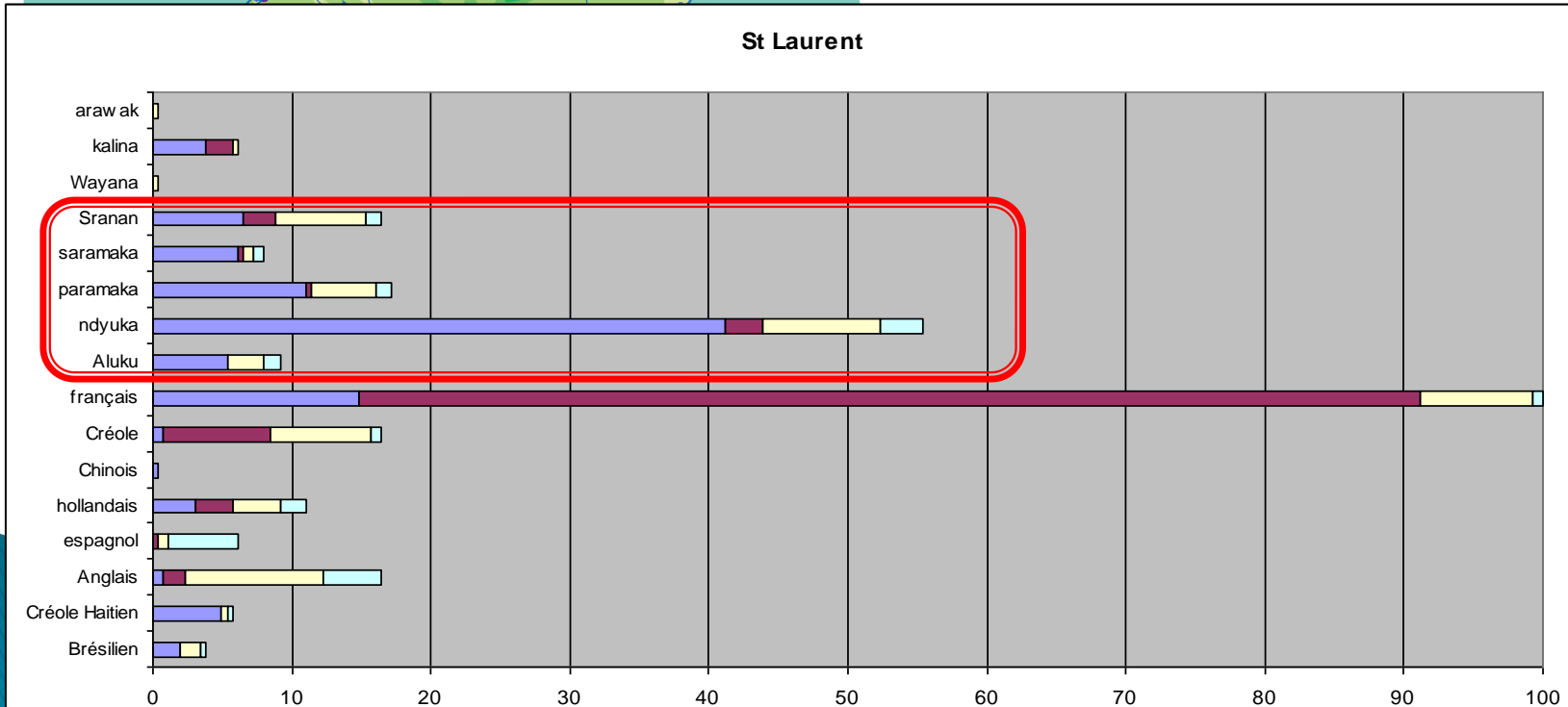
English, Brazilian Portuguese,
Guyanese English, Cantonese,
French, Spanish

Lingua franca: Sranan tongo &
Dutch



Western French Guiana

Schoolchildren Linguistic repertoires



What we observed socially & linguistically

- In Western French Guiana, migration, rapid urbanization and the emergence of new intra and inter-ethnic/social group interaction patterns led to
- **code-switching and code mixing** mainly between EMC and Sranan
 - **contact** with other languages, e.g. Dutch, French, Créole Guyanais, English (**code-switching, loanwords**)
 - **levelling** between EMC (case of dialect contact)
 - emergence of **reduced practices** for non native, re-used by natives 'foreigner talk'
 - extensive use of Sranan and Nengee (Ndyuka) as **lingua francas**
 - **srananization** of EMC in urban contexts

Naming issues – Takitaki

- The term *Takitaki* found in old books concerning Sranan tongo in Suriname gained currency around 2000 in French Guiana.
 - It is used to refer to the English–lexified Creoles (from Suriname).
 - BUT its actual referents vary:
 - e.g.: Maroon Creoles (Ndyuka, Saamaka)
 - e.g.: Maroon Creoles & Sranan Tongo
 - e.g.: Newly emerging lg based on above lgs
 - The term *Takitaki* is typically used by/to non–Maroons BUT also used by Maroons to cover ethno–linguistic differentiation
- > We started documenting *Takitaki*

In search of a method

- ▶ Given the fuzzy and multi-referent nature of the term *Takitaki*, mapping of its complexity involves:
 - exploration of its **ideology**
 - *analyze the views and discourse of all local social actors
 - examination of the **social context & processes**
 - *what are the social profiles of *Takitaki* speakers?
 - *they use *Takitaki* to do what, where, when and why?
 - investigation of **linguistic practices** called *Takitaki*
 - *identify their struct. & interactional nature
 - *establish differences among them & to ‘native’ practices

Categorization differentiating or homogeneizing languages & linguistic practices

I knew how to speak Nengre [Sranan Tongo] already, right. I knew *Takitaki* already, thus when the person speaks, I see what they want to say

Look, it's the same language, it's not difficult, you have to listen carefully then you'll understand directly.

For me all that sounds like bad French is Creole and

everything that sounds like bad English is *Takitaki*

There are two kinds of *Takitaki*: the *Takitaki* of Amerindians and the *Takitaki* of the Blacks

We say *Takitaki* but there are differences/ there are Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka as real languages

Social profiles of some takitaki speakers

origin	Time in FG	Languages spoken	occupation	circumstances	Description of practices
Metropol. French	2 yrs	French, Spanish, English, Takitaki	Nurse (hospital)	– to patients – at the marketplace	L2 reduced variety codeswitching
Metropol. French	3 yrs	French, English, Takitaki / Nenge	Teacher	–to local friends – to parents / children	L2 variety w/ interference mixing EMC / sranan elemnts
Amerindian Arawak	always	Nengre , French	Educational assistant	At home In the village	L1 (sranan + mixing EMC)
Maroon	30 yrs	Nenge, Sranan , French, Dutch	Assistant tourist off., educational	to kids, family, friends,	L1 EMC mixing EMC–sr
Guyanese	8 yrs	Guyanese English / Creole, Businengre	Seller (Market; door-to-door)	With clients, neighbours, friends	Fluent L2 (mixing EMC–sranan)

Multilingual practices (EMC L1 speaker)

- 1 B: Da **i de anga** congé nounou?
- 2 E: Aii, mi de nanga congé nou te lek' tra mun, bigin fu tra mun. Le sept, da mi bigin baka. ‘
- 3 B: **Soutu wooko** i e du?
- 4 E: Sortu wroko mi e du? Mi e du wan sers.
- 5 B: Mh?
- 6 E: Wan sers mi e du, wan tra wroko leki soudati, fu la mairie / lameri gi la mairie / lameri. Ma mi hoop taki nanga kontrakt, den man **ná** e gi wan langa kontrakt, siksi mun, ef' i e wroko bun, den man gi i siksi mun baka, te nanga tu **yali**, a **kaba**, den man stop en.

Sranan **Ndyuka** undetermined (*EMC/sranan*)

French / créole guyanais

Dutch

Example of reduced L2 *Takitaki*

Woman 4: *mi ná taki faansi!* 'I don't speak French.'

Doctor: *a go bon?* 'Is she well? (lit. she/it went/did good)'

Woman 1: *ai mama / mama fu mi e go?* 'Yes, mother, my mother,

is she doing well?'

- ▶ Doctor: *mama ça go bon?* 'Mother is she doing ok?'
- ▶ Woman 1: *a i mi e akisi fa a mama fu mi e go!* 'It's you that I'm asking how my mother is doing!'
a e go bun? 'Is she doing well?'
- ▶ Doctor: *a e go bun?* 'Is she doing well?'
- ▶ Nurse: *non elle demande.* 'No, she's asking.'
- ▶ Doctor: *mais j'en sais rien moi si elle va bien!* 'But I don't know if she's doing well.'

L2 variety

- ▶ *Mi miti wan man na la PAF, mi akisi a man sa yu meki ala dei. Yu kon yu teki tu dri sama _ poti _ na prison _ meki dri yuru, yu tyari _ baka na Albina. En anga a man kon baka, san yu meki nownow?*

‘I met a man at La PAF, I asked the guy, what do you do all day? You come, you take three people and put them in prison, for three hours, then you bring them back to Albina. And when the man comes back, what do you do now?’

Codeswitching EMC / Sranan

- ▶ *na den dati mi sabi moo bun, den goon sani, den guluntu sani bika mi wooko pliti planga, pliti udu anga den saramaka tu, den udu nen, den sani di den e pepeka.* ‘It’s those that I know better, the agricultural things, the vegetable things because I also split planks and wood with Saamakas, the names of woods, the things that they saw with a chain saw.’
- ▶ *te i taigi en wan sani, a no man taigi en a srefi fasi da a kengi a sani drai en na nyun wortu. Da na so u taki nanga en nanga G. Da te a taki G da den tra man fi i taki yu ko tet !* ‘When you told him something, he could not say it in the same way, thus he changed it to a new word. That’s how we talked to G. Thus when he spoke, G, then the others said *ko tet*.’

Fuzzy borders accross languages – « floating segments »

*I ne e ferstan san mi e du nou. Mi kan rei tu trip,
i ferstan tok, mi kan lei tu trip / mi e lei den man
fu mi*

*I ne e ferstan san mi e du nou. Mi kan rei tu trip
I ne e ferstan san mi e du nou. Mi kan rei tu trip,*

*I ferstan tok mi kan lei tu trip / mi e lei den man fu mi
i ferstan tok, mi kan lei tu trip / mi e lei den man fu mi*

Data, point of views and activities that are related but do not overlap

A bunch of practices

- ▶ Approximation
- ▶ Convergence
- ▶ Identity issues
- ▶ Performance (doing)

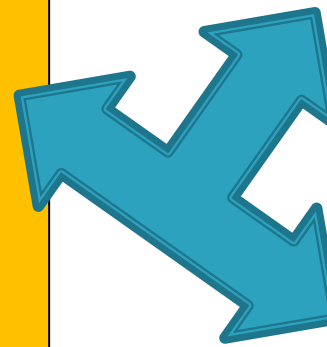
multilingual & heterogeneous

Speakers discourse

Naming issues always situated
categorization & ideology
Homogenizing or differentiating

Takitaki

(a useful fuzziness)



Linguists point of view

Naming issues

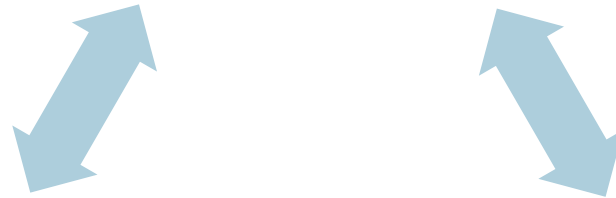
Categorization

Ideology

Homogeneity **Lg names**

Ideology as a sorting device

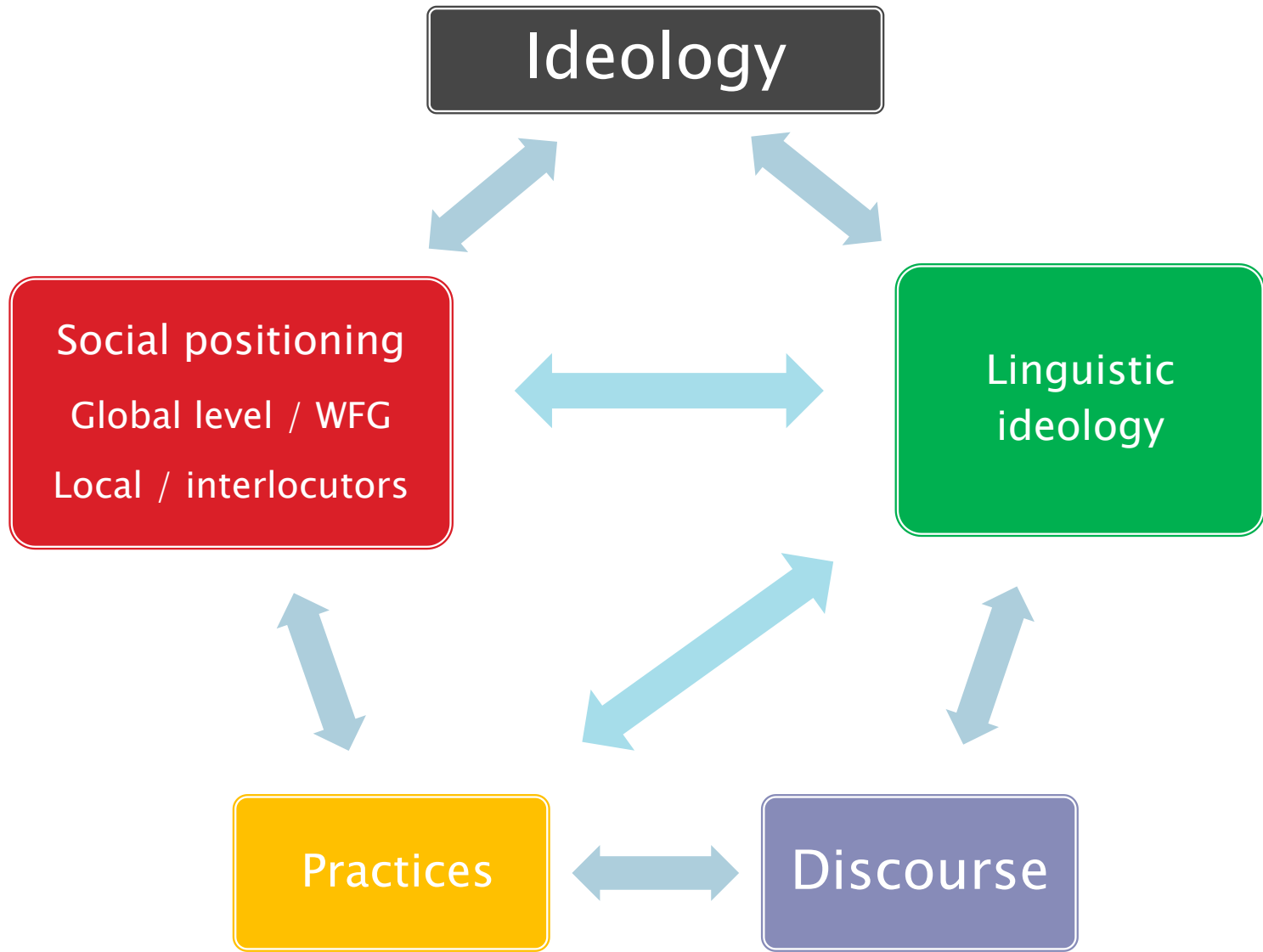
Ideology

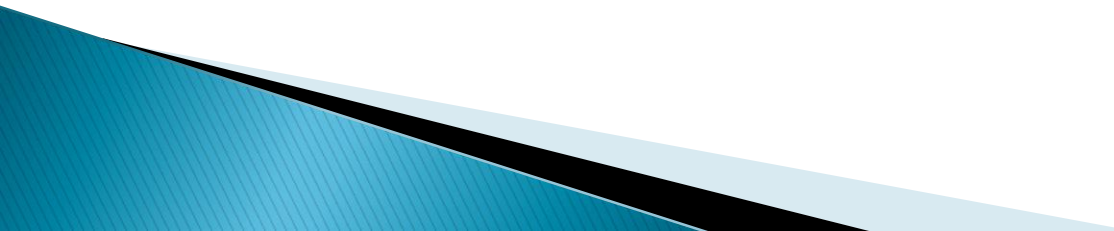


Social & linguistic
practices



Discourse
– to researchers
– spontaneous speech



- ▶ Instead of looking at one phenomenon, we tried to capture the complexity
 - using different frameworks
 - through different approaches
 - looking at different phenomena
 - using different types of data
- 

Types of data and approaches

Type of data	Issues phenomena	Method / approach	Framework
Spontaneous speech	Structural variation	Variation and change	Sociolinguistics & Descriptive ling.
Bilingual speech	Code-switching and mixing	Quali/quantitative approaches to synchronic language contact	Contact & corpus linguistics
Interactions	Social meaning (Identity and performance)	Qualitative approach to interaction	Anthropological linguistics
Discourse	Ideology Naming issues	Qualitative approach to discourse	Discourse Analysis
Declaration of practices	Sociolinguistic context	Quantitative approach to questionnaires & interviews	Sociology of language & Sociolinguistics

=> use of different approaches to document a synchronic process of language contact

