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Series B Volume 3

AN AUSTRALIAN CREOLE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: A DESCRIPTION OF NGUKURR–BAMYILI DIALECTS (PART 1)

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PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION TO
SERIES B VOLUME 3

The purpose of this paper is to make available for the layman a description of the creole language spoken in the Roper River area of the Northern Territory. It is written particularly with Europeans working in the area in mind. It has not been written as a technical paper for linguists, but it is hoped that linguists will find it useful in providing information on the language.

It should be noted that this volume (Part 1) does not contain a complete description of Creole. Intonation and rhythm, word formation, adverbs, conjunctions, questions and commands, complex sentences, and discourse structure are not discussed. It is planned that these sections will be described in a second volume (Part 2) in the future. (In addition, a basic dictionary is being published separately as *Work Papers of Stl-AAB*, Series B, Volume 4.) The sections contained in Part 1 are comprehensively, but not exhaustively, covered.

At several places in this paper the reader is referred to a discussion of a particular item at another location. When the reference is stated as being 'elsewhere', it means that the item will be discussed in Part 2. If the discussion is within Part 1, the chapter or section reference is given.

Examples occur frequently throughout the chapters dealing with Creole grammar. These examples are written in the Creole practical orthography as discussed in Chapter 3. In some situations an example of an unacceptable or ungrammatical construction is given. These examples are marked by a preceding asterisk (*).

This paper is based on some 27 months of fieldwork under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics since March 1973. Of this time approximately 60% has been spent at Ngukurr, 30% at Bamyili, and the remaining 10% elsewhere.

Without the help of many people this paper would not have been possible. I would like to thank the many Creole speakers who have shared their language with me, especially those who patiently worked with me in formal situations: Barnabas Roberts, Mordecai Skewthorpe, Andrew Joshua, Isaac Joshua, Charlie Johnson, Wallace Dennis, David Jentian, and Danny Jentian. Thanks are due to the late Lothar Jagst,
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CHAPTER 5

VERBS AND THE VERB PHRASE

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Note for Chapter 5
The verbs of Creole can be divided into two major groups: main verbs and auxiliary verbs. Main verbs are sometimes referred to as predicing or lexical verbs. The majority of verbs belong to this group, which is open-ended. That is, new verbs may be generated as new experiences or needs arise. Main verbs can stand by themselves in a sentence.

Auxiliary verbs belong to a small closed group. That is, the verbs in this group can be counted and new ones are rarely added. Auxiliary verbs cannot stand by themselves but are used in a verb phrase to modify a main verb.

The following chart summarizes the division of Creole verbs discussed in following sections.

Chart 5.1. Divisions of Creole Verbs

```
main
verbs

verbs

auxiliary
verbs

Class 1 +marked +transitivity
Class 2 +marked -transitivity
Class 3 -marked +transitivity
Class 4 -marked -transitivity

Copula
process
perceptual
existential

negation --- negative
tense --- past

non-past
intention-desire
ability-permission
necessity-advisability
potential-possibility
factual

mode
aspect

limitational-intensity
habitual

voice --- passive
```
The basic verb phrase consists of a main verb modified by one or more preceding auxiliary verbs.

5.1 MAIN VERBS

It is possible to talk about Creole verbs both in terms of verb classes and in terms of marked and unmarked verbs.

5.1.1 Verb Classes

The main verbs of Creole can be divided into five classes on the basis of the way they function in a sentence and the suffixes which occur. These classes are not absolutely distinctive but represent basic divisions.

Class 1 verbs always occur with a suffix. All verbs in this class occur with the transitive suffix -im or one of its alternate forms, in which case they always function transitively. That is, they always take an object.

Olabat bin grajim yem.
'They dug yams.'

but not *Olabat bin graj yem.

Most may also occur, though not simultaneously, with the progressive aspect suffix -ing or -in, in which case they may function transitively or intransitively, depending on the context they occur in.

Olabat bin grajing yem. (transitive)
'They were digging yams.'

Olabat bin grajing. (intransitive)
'They were digging.'

Class 2 verbs may occur with the transitive suffix, in which case they always function transitively.

Stokmen bin bannim gras.
'The stockmen burnt the grass.'

They may, however, occur without the transitive suffix, in which case they usually function intransitively, though in some contextual constructions some may function transitively.

Gras bin bann.
'The grass burnt.'
Class 3 verbs never occur with the transitive suffix and they usually function intransitively, though in some contexts they may function transitively.

Mela bin dagat. (intransitive)
'We ate.'

Mela bin dagat yalum. (transitive)
'We ate water-lily seeds.'

Class 4 verbs never occur with the transitive suffix and they always function intransitively.

Biganini jilip.
'The child sleeps.'

Class 5 is a special group of verbs that functions more as linking verbs than as predating verbs. Virtually all verbs in this class also occur in one of the other classes with a different function or as an auxiliary verb. This class of verbs is discussed below in Section 5.3.

5.1.2 Marked and Unmarked Verbs

Verbs occurring with the transitive suffix -im or one of its variant forms are referred to as marked verbs. Marked verbs always function transitively.

Verbs occurring without the transitive suffix are referred to as unmarked verbs. Unmarked verbs from Class 4 verbs always function intransitively; those from the other verb classes function transitively or intransitively, depending on the context they occur in.

5.2 VERB SUFFIXES

Creole verbs may occur with a number of suffixes. Marked verbs occur with the transitive suffix. Many verbs, both marked and unmarked, may also occur with an adverbial suffix. Some types of verb aspect are also indicated by suffixes.

5.2.1 The Transitive Suffix

As noted in Section 5.1.1, the transitive suffix is affixed to many verbs to indicate that they function transitively, though it does not occur with all verbs that function transitively. In usage
it not only indicates that the verb is functioning transitively, but it can also carry the weight of the object of a transitive construction. That is, its presence allows the object to be deleted.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ai bin } & \text{ binijim } \quad \text{moni.} \\
'\text{I } & \text{ finished (i.e. used up) the money.}' \\
\text{Ai bin } & \text{ binijim.} \\
'\text{I } & \text{ finished (the money).}'
\end{align*}
\]

The basic form of the transitive suffix is the same as the third person singular personal pronoun \textit{im}, from which it is most likely derived. It has several variant forms that are phonologically conditioned.

In general usage the contrast between the non-back vowels is neutralized in the suffix; thus it may be pronounced as \textit{-im}, \textit{-em}, or \textit{-am}, as in \textit{gra'im}, \textit{gra'jem}, or \textit{gra'jam} 'dig'.

A non-front vowel in the syllable preceding the suffix tends to affect the vowel in the suffix by pulling it back also; thus the variant form \textit{-am}, as in \textit{gugum} 'cook' and \textit{bulornem} 'follow'.

In quick speech, though sometimes in slow speech as well, there is a tendency on some words to shorten the suffix by dropping the final consonant \textit{m} when it follows a non-back vowel; thus the variant form \textit{-i}, as in \textit{baidim} \textit{- baidi} 'bite' and \textit{kildim} \textit{- kili} 'hit'.

Another variant form, which is not phonologically conditioned, is \textit{-it}. This form always occurs on the verb for 'give'. It probably developed as an irregular form in order to distinguish the verb for 'give' from the verb for 'keep', both of which would have been pronounced identically otherwise:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Imin } & \text{ gibit.} \\
'\text{He } & \text{ gave it.}' \\
\text{Imin } & \text{ gibim.} \\
'\text{He } & \text{ kept it.}'
\end{align*}
\]

This 'irregular' form is now occasionally used on some other verbs alternating with the 'regular' \textit{-im} form:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Imin } & \text{ duitim.} \\
\text{Imin } & \text{ duit.} \\
'\text{He } & \text{ did it.}'
\end{align*}
\]

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5.2.2 Adverbial Suffixes

Many verbs, both marked and unmarked, occur with adverbial suffixes. These are adverb-like suffixes that indicate a sense of direction, though often of an abstract nature.

These adverbials are considered to be suffixes instead of words standing on their own because:

1. The adverbial and the verb are never separated by other words.

   Olabat bin baj-im-ap daga.

   but not: *Olabat bin baj-im daga ap.
   'They brought the food up.'

2. The continuative aspect suffix occurs after the adverbial.

   Imin go-dan-bat.

   but not *Imin go-bat-dan.
   'He was going down.'

3. When a verb is reduplicated to indicate continuative aspect, the adverbial is also reduplicated.

   Imin baj-im-ap-baj-im-ap.

   but not *Imin baj-im-baj-im-ap.
   'He was bringing it.'

4. Some verbs obligatorily take the adverbial. That is, the verb cannot occur without the adverbial.

   At bin jining-ap la im.

   but not *At bin jining la im.
   'I sneaked up on it.'

There are nine adverbial suffixes in Creole. The chart on the following page gives their basic meaning, though their specific meaning is determined by the particular verb they occur with and its context in the sentence.

The suffixes -ran and -wei are often -aron and -awei respectively when they follow a consonant.
Chart 5.2. Creole Adverbial Suffixes

- an  'on'
- ap  'up'
- at  'out'
- bek 'back'
- dan 'down'
- in  'in'
- op  'off'
- ran 'around'
- wei 'away'

With some verb-adverbial suffix combinations, the basic meaning of the verb may be expanded or made more specific by the suffix. In such cases the verb with the suffix and the verb without the suffix may be substituted for each other in accordance with the degree of specification desired; the adverbial suffix is, in a sense, optional.

\[
\text{Imin} \quad \text{barnim.} \\
\text{He} \quad \text{burnt it.}'
\]

\[
\text{Imin} \quad \text{barnimap.} \\
\text{He} \quad \text{burnt it up.}'
\]

With other verb-adverbial suffix combinations, the basic meaning of the verb is significantly changed or differentiated by the suffix. In such cases the verb with the suffix and the verb without the suffix may not be substituted for each other in the same context; the adverbial suffix is obligatory.

\[
\text{Imin} \quad \text{bajimap} \quad \text{modiga.} \\
\text{He} \quad \text{brought} \quad \text{a car.}'
\]

\[
\text{Imin} \quad \text{bajim} \quad \text{modiga.} \\
\text{He} \quad \text{passed} \quad \text{a car.}'
\]

With a few verb-adverbial suffix combinations, the verb never occurs without the adverbial suffix; the adverbial suffix is obligatory.
Im jidan jeya na.
but not *Im jid jeya na.
'He lives there.'
(Literally: 'He sits down there.')

5.2.3 Aspect Suffixes

Aspect basically refers to the manner in which the verb action is regarded or takes place through time. Some aspect in Creole is expressed by auxiliary verbs. Two types of aspect—continuative and progressive—are expressed by verb suffixes. Continuative aspect can also be expressed by reduplicating the verb. Closely related to continuative aspect is durative aspect. Though it is not indicated by suffixation, it is discussed here along with the continuative and progressive aspects because of affiliation with them.

1. Continuative aspect generally denotes an action as being continuous or repetitious. It can be indicated either by suffixation or by reduplication.

When indicated by suffixation, the continuative aspect suffix -bat (or in some cases -abat or -labat) occurs as the final suffix on the verb. That is, the transitive suffix, progressive aspect suffix, and adverbial suffixes occur before the continuative aspect suffix.

Olabat bin jidanbat.
Olabat bin jidonabat.
'They were sitting.'

Olabat bin leidalnabat.
Olabat bin leidonlabat.
'They were lying down.'

Olabat bin gugumbat yem.
'They were cooking yams.'

Olabat bin bajimobat.
'They were bringing it.'

Olabat bin wokinabat.
'They were walking.'

When indicated by reduplication, the whole of the verb form is reduplicated. That is, the verb with all of its suffixes is reduplicated.

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Olabat bin wokwok.  
'They were walking.'

Olabat bin godanggodan.  
'They were going down.'

Olabat bin grajimagrim yem.  
'They were digging yams.'

Olabat bin bajimabajimap.  
'They were bringing it.'

Marked verbs tend to occur more often with continuative aspect indicated by suffixation rather than by reduplication, though most may occur reduplicated.

Unmarked verbs as a whole tend to occur more often with continuative aspect indicated by reduplication rather than by suffixation, though they may occur with the suffix. There are a few unmarked verbs, however, which seldom follow this tendency.

There are a small number of unmarked verbs whose meanings are extended beyond the simple continuative aspect when they occur with the continuative aspect suffix.

Olabat bin wokwok.  
'They were walking.'

Olabat bin wokabat.  
'They were going on an outing.'

2. Durative aspect denotes an action as being of an extreme duration, whether it be of a continuous or a repetitive nature. In a sense, durative is the continuous aspect in an extreme degree. It can be indicated in one of two ways:

(1) It can be indicated by multiple reduplication of the verb. This is usually accompanied by a rise in pitch on the verb, the high pitch being sustained throughout the multiple reduplication.

Imin reinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinreinre
Olabat bin waiwaidwaidwaidwaidwaid
'They waited and waited and waited and waited (but) nothing (came).'

(2) It can also be indicated by lengthening a vowel (usually the final vowel) of the verb and simultaneously raising the pitch and sustaining the high pitch on the lengthened vowel.

Imin neeseein bini.
'It rained and rained and rained (but finally) stopped.'

Olabat bin neeseeid naijing.
'They waited and waited and waited (but) nothing (came).'

3. Progressive aspect predominantly denotes an action continuing through some point of time indicated elsewhere in the context. It is not totally discrete from the continuative aspect; these two aspects overlap with the progressive aspect to a large degree being subsumed under the continuative aspect.

Progressive aspect occurs only with unmarked verbs; it never occurs with marked verbs. It is indicated by suffixation of -ing or -in. The long suffix -ing is generally used in slow speech, while the short suffix -in is used in quick speech.

Olabat bin gajing sentro.
'Olabat bin gajin sentro.
'They were digging sand.'

Olabat bin woking.
Olabat bin woking.
'They were walking.'

When the progressive aspect suffix co-occurs with an adverbial suffix, it occurs before the adverbial suffix. The short suffix usually occurs in this position.

Olabat bin gaminap.
'They were coming up.'

Olabat bin baijnap brambi.
'They were bringing wild horses.'

It is possible for two aspects to co-occur, though the frequency of co-occurrence is relatively low. When the continuative aspect and the progressive aspect co-occur, it is indicated in one of two ways:
(1) It can be indicated by affixing to the verb the progressive aspect suffix followed by the continuative aspect suffix.

Olabat bin wokinabat.
'They were walking.'

Olabat bin lukinabat.
'They were looking.'

Olabat bin weidingabat.
'They were waiting.'

(2) It can also be indicated by reduplicating the verb and affixing the progressive aspect suffix to the reduplicated verb.

Olabat bin wokwokin.
'They were walking.'

Olabat bin luklykin.
'They were looking.'

Olabat bin weidingweiding.
'They were waiting.'

When the progressive aspect and the durative aspect co-occur, it is indicated in one of two ways:

(1) It can be indicated by affixing the progressive aspect suffix to the verb and reduplicating the verb, usually with an accompanying high pitch.

Olabat bin wokimokimokimokin.
'They were walking and walking and walking.'

Olabat bin weidingweidingweidingweiding.
'They were waiting and waiting and waiting.'

(2) It can also be indicated by affixing the progressive aspect suffix to the verb and lengthening the vowel of the suffix, simultaneously raising the pitch on the lengthened vowel.

Olabat bin wokiiiiin.
'They were walking and walking and walking.'

Olabat bin weidingiiing.
'They were waiting and waiting and waiting.'
5.3 CLASS 5 LINKING VERBS

Linking verbs are main verbs that are used to 'link' a subject or topic with a complement or comment about the topic's state, its attributes or equivalence with something else. Linking verbs are like the other four classes of main or predicated verbs in that they may occur with preceding auxiliary verbs. Unlike other main verbs, however, the only optional suffix they occur with is the progressive aspect suffix -in or -ing, though not all of them may do so.

Creole linking verbs are divided here into four groups on the basis of their meanings.

5.3.1 Copula Verbs

Usually a topic and complement are linked by juxtaposition; that is, without a linking verb between them. Auxiliary verbs, however, may occur between the topic and comment in modification of the comment.

Olabat bigbala yem. (no auxiliary)
'They are big yams.'

Olabat bi bigbala yem. (past tense auxiliary)
'They were big yams.'

Olabat gudbala. (no auxiliary)
'They are good.'

Olabat nomo gudbala. (negation auxiliary)
'They are not good.'

When the comment is about a future state of the topic, the linking verb bi may be used. It is used only of a future state and must be preceded by a future oriented auxiliary verb. It is optional in its occurrence. Generally, it occurs less frequently than linking by juxtaposition. The form is invariant and cannot occur with the progressive aspect.

Olabat andi bi bigbala.
Olabat andi bigbala.
'They will be big.'

Olabat nomo gona bi gudbala.
Olabat nomo gona gudbala.
'They will not be good.'
5.3.2 Process Verbs

These verbs generally express the idea that the topic is becoming, changing, or turning into the complement. They may occur with the progressive aspect suffix. Process verbs include:

- go (goin)  'becoming'
- git (giding)  'becoming'
- Woda  bin  go  blad.
  'The water turned into blood.'
- Imin  giding  dakhala.
  'It was becoming dark.'

5.3.3 Perceptual Verbs

These verbs generally express the idea that the topic appears, seems, feels, or tastes like or as if it were the complement. In other words, the topic may not be what the complement says, but it is perceived by the observer as being so. Perceptual verbs may occur with the progressive aspect suffix and include:

- luk (lukin)  'look, appear'
- teis (teistin)  'taste'
- fil (filin)  'feel'
- Olabat  luk  gudbala.
  'They look/appear to be good.'
- Dislot  teistin  prabli.
  'This (food) is tasting delicious.'

5.3.4 Existential Verbs

These verbs express the idea that the topic is, that is exists. They do not occur with the progressive aspect suffix but do obligatorily occur with an adverbial suffix. Existential verbs include:

- jidan  'to be' (literally 'sit down')
  Used of animate beings and objects perceived as
  'being' in some sense in a 'sitting' position.
jandap  'to be' (literally 'stand up')
Used of objects perceived as 'being' characteristi-
cally in a vertical position.

leidan  'to be' (literally 'lay down')
Occasionally used of objects on the ground instead
of jidan.

Sambala  pipul  jidan  jeya.
'Some people are there.'

Blandibala  wadi  jandap  jeya.
'Plenty of trees are there.'

Waya  (A roll of) wire leidan jeya.
'in there.'

5.4 AUXILIARY VERBS

Creole auxiliary verbs are divided into five categories: nega-
tion, tense, mode, aspect, and voice. These are summarized in Chart
5.3. on the following page.

Auxiliary verbs generally modify the meaning of the main verb of
a verb phrase. They differ from main verbs in not being able to stand
alone, except in topic-comment constructions which have no linking
verbs. In such cases auxiliary verbs stand without a main verb,
modifying the comment or complement instead.

Olabat  bin  grajimbat  yem.  (predicating verb)
'They were digging yams.'

Olabat  nomo  go  dakhala.  (linking verb)
'They do not become dark.

Olabat  anati  gudbala.  (no main verb)
'They will be good.'

5.4.1 Negation

Negation is expressed by nomo, no, nat, and neba.

Nomo and its short form no express a simple negative. The short
form is used less frequently than nomo. The negative auxiliary may
be used with most other auxiliary verbs. It usually occurs in the
first position of the verb phrase.
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</tbody>
</table>
Olubat  nomo  gaman.
Olubat  no  gaman
'They  are  not  coming.'

Olubat  nomo  bin  andi  gaman.
'They  did  not  want  to  come.'

Nat  is  sometimes  used  to  express  an  emphatic  negative.  Its  co-
ocurrence  with  other  auxiliaries  is  more  restricted  than  is  nomo.
It  occurs  relatively  infrequently.

Olubat  nat  gaman.
'They  are  not  coming.'

Olubat  nat  bin  andi  gaman.
'They  did  not  want  to  come.'

Neba  is  also  sometimes  used  to  express  an  emphatic  negative,
though  its  primary  usage  is  an  expression  of  negative  habitual.  (See
Section  5.4.4.3  for  discussion  of  this  usage.)  Like  nat,  its  co-
ocurrence  with  other  auxiliaries  is  more  restricted  than  is  nomo.
It  too  occurs  relatively  infrequently.

Olubat  neba  gaman.
'They  are  not  coming.'

Olubat  neba  bin  gaman.
'They  did  not  come.'

5.4.2  Tense

In  general,  tense  expresses  the  relationship  of  the  main  verb  to
time.  It  indicates  the  'location'  in  time  of  an  event  or  state  rela-
tive  to  the  time  the  statement  about  the  event  or  state  was  made.
There  are  two  tenses  in  Creole:  past  and  non-past.

Past  tense  is  indicated  by  the  auxiliary  bin,  which  usually  pre-
ces  all  other  auxiliaries  except  the  negative.  When  used  with  the
third  person  singular  personal  pronoun  im,  bin  usually  occurs  in  the
contracted  form  imin.

Imin  gaman.
'He  came.'

Olubat  gaman.
'They  come/are  coming.'
Olabat bin gaman.
'They came/were coming.'

Im nomo bin andi gaman.
'He did not want to come.'

Non-past tense is indicated by the absence of a tense auxiliary. A main verb occurring without a tense auxiliary can refer to a present or future event or state. This does not mean, however, that a more specific expression of the principal verb’s relationship to time cannot be made. Further specification is made, not by means of tense auxiliaries, but by time adverbs outside the verb phrase but still within the context, and auxiliaries that contain a time oriented component in their meaning. The latter are discussed in following sections.

Olabat gaman.
'They come/are coming/will come.'

Olabat gaman mailawik. (adverb)
'They will come the week they don’t get paid.'

Olabat gona gaman. (auxiliary)
'They will come.'

Olabat labda gaman ailibala. (auxiliary and adverb)
'They must come early.'

5.4.3 Mode

In general, mode expresses, not statements of fact, but events or states that exist only as conceptions of the mind. When used with the non-past tense, mode expresses events or states that may or may not eventuate in the future. When used with the past tense, it expresses the fact that the conception took place, but generally makes no statement on whether or not the events or states so conceived eventuated.

Olabat andi gaman.
'They want to come.'

Olabat bin andi gaman.
'They wanted to come.'

Olabat labda gaman.
'They must/should come.'
Olabat *bin labda* gaman.
'They should have come.'

Olabat *mat* gaman.
'They may come.'

Mode auxiliaries are divided into four classes: intention-desire, ability-permission, necessity-advocacy, and potential-possibility. They always occur preceding the main verb and usually, though not always, follow the negative and tense auxiliaries.

1. **Intention or desire** is expressed by *andi* (or one of its variant forms), *gona*, and *gada*.

*Andi* and *gona* are positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. They are future oriented but may be used with the past tense auxiliary. *Andi* has three variant forms generally conditioned by rate of speech: *wandi*, *wani*, and *witi*.

Olabat *andi* gaman.
Olabat *wandi* gaman.
Olabat *gona* gaman.
'They will/want to/intend to/plan to come.'

Olabat *nomo gona* gaman.
'They are not/do not intend to come.'

Olabat *bin andi* gaman.
'They were going to/wanted to come.'

*Gada* is positive and future oriented. It can be negated by the negative auxiliary, but it cannot be used with the past tense auxiliary. Its usage also includes an expression of a mild degree of necessity.

Olabat *gada* gaman.
'They want to/intend to come.'

Olabat *nomo gada* gaman.
'They do not intend to come.'

2. **Ability or permission** is expressed by *gin* and *gaw*.

*Gin* is positive and non-past oriented. It cannot be negated nor can it be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat *gin* gaman.
'They can/may/are able to come.'
Olabat ginn go dakhala.
'They can turn dark.'

Gan expresses inability or denial of permission. It is negative but can be used with the negative auxiliary for added emphasis. It is primarily non-past oriented, but unlike its positive counterpart ginn, it can be used with the past tense auxiliary to express past inability. Gan is also sometimes used to express habitual aspect.

Olabat gan
'They cannot/may not/are not able to come.'

Olabat nomo gan gaman.
'They cannot come.'

Olabat bin gan gaman.
'They could not come.'

3. Necessity or advisability in varying degrees is expressed by gada, labda, mas, ada, judbi, and juda.

Gada expresses a mild degree of necessity. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is future oriented and cannot be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat gada gaman.
'They should/ought to come.'

Olabat nomo gada gaman.
'They do not need to come.'

Labda and mas express a strong degree of necessity or obligation. Though both are positive and future oriented, labda can be negated by the negative auxiliary and can also be used with the past tense auxiliary, while mas can be neither. Mas occurs less frequently than does labda.

Olabat Labda gaman.
Olabat mas gaman.
'They must/have to come.'

Olabat nomo Labda gaman.
'They do not have to come.'

Olabat bin Labda gaman.
'They had to come.'

Ada, judbi, and juda express a mild degree of necessity or advisability. All are positive but can be negated by the negative
auxiliary. *Ada* is future oriented but can be used with the past tense auxiliary; *judbi* is future oriented and cannot be used with the past tense auxiliary; *juda* is past oriented and usually, though not always, occurs with the past tense auxiliary following. *Judbi* is also used to express likelihood. All three occur relatively infrequently.

Olabat *ada* ganam.
'They *should/ought to* come.'

Olabat *nomo bin ada* ganam.
'They *should not have* come.'

Olabat *judbi* ganam.
'They *should/ought to* come.'

Olabat *nomo judbi* ganam.
'They *should not* come.'

Olabat *juda bin* ganam.
Olabat *juda* ganam.
'They *should/ought to have* come.'

Olabat *nomo juda bin* ganam.
'They *should not have* come.'

4. Potential or possibility, in a broad sense, is expressed by *mat*, *judbi*, *gul-jap*, *nili*, and *trai*.

*Mat* expresses simple potential or possibility. It is positive and future oriented and cannot be negated nor used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat *mat* ganam.
'They *may* come.'

Olabat *mat* go *dakhala*.
'They *may* turn dark.'

*Judbi* expresses a strong sense of likelihood. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is present oriented and cannot be used with the past tense auxiliary. It is used relatively infrequently.

Olabat *judbi* ganam.
'They *should be/are probably* coming/on the way.'

Olabat *nomo judbi* ganam.
'They *probably are not* coming/on the way.'
Guli jap and nili are generally past oriented and express a sense of potential or possibility that did not eventuate but came very close to doing so. Though generally past oriented, they sometimes occur in constructions with a future orientation. Both are positive but may be negated by the negative auxiliary.

Olabat bin 

Guli jap 

gaman.

Olabat bin 

nili 

gaman.

'They almost/just about came.'

Olabat 

nomo bin 

Guli jap 

gaman.

'They did not almost come.'

Olabat 

nili 

gaman.

'They are almost/nearly coming.'

Trai expresses attempt or endeavor. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and may be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat 

trai 

gaman.

'They are trying/attempting to come.'

Olabat bin 

trai 

gaman.

'They tried/attempted to come.'

Olabat 

nomo bin 

trai 

gaman.

'They did not try to come.'

5.4.4 Aspect

In general, aspect, like tense, expresses the relationship of the main verb to time. It differs from tense, however, in that it indicates the manner in which an event or state takes place in relationship to time, rather than its 'location' in time.

Olabat 

gaman. (non-past tense)

'They come.'

Olabat 

oldei 

gaman. (aspect)

'They always/continually come.'

Olabat bin 

gaman. (past tense)

'They came.'

Olabat 

yueda 

gaman. (aspect)

'They used to/always come.'

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Olubat stil gaman. (aspect)
'They still come.'

Though aspect auxiliaries generally modify the main verb, some aspect auxiliaries may also modify other components of the verb phrases. They usually occur immediately preceding the component they modify.

Olubat oldei gaman.
'They always come.'

Olubat oldei go dakhala.
'They always turn dark.'

Olubat oldei andi gaman.
'They always want to come.'

Olubat oldei gan gaman.
'They always cannot come.'

Olubat oldei nimo gaman.
'They always never come.'

Aspect auxiliaries are divided into three classes: factual, limitation-intensity, and habitual.

1. **Factual** is used as a cover term for aspect auxiliaries that express inception, continuation, and cessation: stat, go, kip, stil, and stop.

Stat expresses inception. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olubat stat gaman.
'They start/begin to come.'

Olubat nimo bin stat gaman.
'They did not start to come.'

Go expresses a sense of action through time from its inception. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary. This usage of go is not to be confused with its usage as a main verb.

Olubat go jilip.
'They go to sleep.'
"Olabat nomo bin go jilip.
'They did not go to sleep.'

*kip* expresses continuation. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

"Olabat kip gaman.
'They keep/continue to come.'

"Olabat nomo bin kip gaman.
'They did not continue to come.'

*stil* expresses continuation, though with a sense of persistence. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

"Olabat stil gaman.
'They still/continue to come.'

"Olabat nomo bin stil gaman.
'They did not continue to come.'

*stap* expresses cessation. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

"Olabat stap gaman.
'They stop/cease to come.'

"Olabat nomo bin stap gaman.
'They did not cease to come.'

2. Limitation or intensity is expressed by *onli, fiv, lilbit, and rill.*

*onli* expresses limitation in the sense of 'solely'. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

"Olabat onli gaman.
'They only/simply come.'

"Olabat nomo bin onli gaman.
'They did not only come.'

*fiv* expresses limitation in the same sense as *onli* but also expresses a diminished or low degree of intensity. It is positive
but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat bin jie gaman.
'They just/only came.'

Olabat nomo bin jis gaman.
'They did not just/only come.'

Lilbit expresses a diminished or low degree of intensity. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat nomo lilbit gaman.
'They came wholeheartedly/in droves.'

Olabat lilbit go dakhala.
'They turn slightly dark.'

Olabat bin nomo lilbit go dakhala.
'They turned very dark.'

Rili expresses a high degree of intensity or quality. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary.

Olabat rili gaman.
'They really/very much so come.'

Olabat rili go dakhala.
'They turn very dark.'

Olabat nomo bin rili gaman.
'Very few came.'

3. Habitual is expressed by oldei, olweis, yusda, neba, and gan.

Oldei and olweis are positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. They are neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary. Oldei is used more frequently than olweis.

Olabat oldei gaman.
Olabat olweis gaman.
'They always/habitually come.'

Olabat nomo bin oldei gaman.
Olabat nomo bin olweis gaman.
'They did not always come.'
Yueda is past oriented. It generally occurs without the past tense auxiliary but may occur with it. Its meaning is equivalent to bin oldet, which is used more frequently than yueda. Yueda is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary.

Olabat yueda gaman.
Olabat bin yueda gaman.
Olabat yueda bin gaman.
'They used to/always came.'

Olabat no mo yueda gaman.
'They did not used to come.'

Noba expresses a sense of negative habitual. It occurs relatively infrequently and co-occurs with few other auxiliaries. It is neutral oriented. When used with and preceding the past tense auxiliary, it expresses primarily a sense of emphatic negative rather than negative habitual. When used with the non-past tense auxiliary, it sometimes expresses a sense of 'seldom' and is basically equivalent to no mo oldet. It is used with gan to express an habitual inability. It cannot co-occur with the negative auxiliary.

Olabat ne ba gaman.
'They never/seldom come.'

Olabat bin ne ba gaman.
'They used to never/seldom come.'

Olabat no ba gan gaman.
'They never/seldom are able to come.'

Gan, in addition to its use to express inability or denial of permission, is sometimes used to express a behaviour pattern in which the subject has the ability to act but habitually does not. It is negative but can be used with the negative auxiliary for added emphasis. It is neutral oriented and does not occur with the past tense auxiliary.

Beibi gan kraitkrai.
Beibi no mo gan kraitkrai.
'The baby never/seldom cries.'

5.4.5 Voice

In general, voice expresses the relationship of the subject to the main verb in terms of the 'direction' of the action expressed by the verb. In the active voice the action comes from the subject as
the actor, while in the passive voice the action passes to the sub-
ject as the entity acted upon.

Though Creole makes relatively little use of the passive voice, it is expressed in three ways: by the passive auxiliary *git*, by unmarked verbs that are inherently passive in meaning, and by circum-
locution.

1. The passive auxiliary *git* expresses a 'true' passive voice. It is used with relatively few predicating verbs though it is very common with those few. It is positive but can be negated by the negative auxiliary. It is neutral oriented and can be used with the past tense auxiliary. Though it only occurs with predicating verbs, it can co-occur with most auxiliary verbs. This usage of *git* is not to be confused with its usage as a linking verb.

   Olabat *bin* git *shat*.  
   'They *were/get* shot.'

   Olabat *andi* git *kil*.  
   'They *will be/get* killed.'

   Olabat *nome anidi* git *kil*.  
   'They *do not want to be* killed.'

2. Passive is also expressed by some unmarked intransitive verbs that are inherently passive in meaning. With such verbs, the active voice is usually expressed by the marked transitive form of the verbs.

   Imin *obin*.  (passive)  
   'It was opened.'

   Sambodi *bin* obinim *im*.  (active)  
   'Somebody *opened* it.'

   Olabat *binij*.  (passive)  
   'They are *finished*.'

   Imin *binijim* olabat.  (active)  
   'He *finished* them.'

3. Passive, in a sense, is also expressed by circumlocution. The third person plural personal pronoun *olabat* is used as a 'dummy' subject in an active voice construction.

   Olabat *koli* nyen.  
   'It *is called* water-lily seed.  
   (Literally: *They call it* water-lily seed.)'
5.5 CONCORD

Concord basically refers to a relationship between two grammatical elements such that if one has a particular feature then the other in some sense has to have that feature also. For example, in English the most important concord is that of number between a subject and verb. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular; if the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

The boy runs.
The boys run.

but not

*The boy run.
*The boys runs.

Creole does not have concord that parallels that of English. Concord, however, is not totally absent from Creole, though it carries a low functional load.

There is a degree of concord in Creole that exists between the verb and the object. This operation has not been studied in detail, so only a general reference is made to it here.

When the object is of a plural nature and the action of the verb relates to individuals within the mass, the verb occurs with the continuative or repetitive aspect.

\[ \text{Imin gijimbat guaberi.} \]

'He picked/was picking (individual) gooseberries.'

but not \*Imin gijim guaberi.

When, however, the verb relates to the whole of the object as opposed to individuals within the mass, the verb occurs without the continuative aspect.

\[ \text{Imin gijim guaberi.} \]

'He picked (a batch of) gooseberries.'

The converse situation, likewise, holds true. When the object is of a singular nature, the action of the verb relating to it is expressed without the continuative aspect.
*Imin kilim* wolabi.
'He killed a wallaby.'

but not *Imin kilimbat wolabi.*

It should be pointed out, however, that

*Imin kilimbat* wolabi.

is an acceptable construction when the situation it refers to is one in which

'He killed many wallabies.'

'He hit and hit and hit the wallaby.'

or 'Time and again he killed a wallaby.'
NOTE FOR CHAPTER 5

The curved line in these examples indicates the rise and fall of the pitch.