WORK PAPERS OF SIL–AAB

Series B Volume 3

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

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Darwin
February 1979
SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS 1979

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PREFACE

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The publication of this volume has been partially funded by a grant from the Research Fund of the Australian Aborigines Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

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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 use-
ful 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 forma-
tion, adverbs, conjunctions, questions and commands, complex sen-
tences, 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 SIL-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 dis-
cussion of a particular item at another location. When the reference
is stated as being 'elsewhere', it means that the item will be dis-
cussed 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,
Kathy Menning, and Joyce Hudson for their editorial comments on
earlier drafts of sections of this paper, and especially to Mary
Huttar and Mike Ray for editing the full manuscript. Thanks are
also due to Julianne Slater and her typing pool for typing an
earlier draft of this paper and to Verna Campbell for typing the
final draft. I also appreciate the encouragement received from
Phil and Dorothy Meehan, Margaret Sharpe, Velma Leeding, Holt
Thompson, Warren Hastings, Neil Chadwick, David Zorc, Gail For-
butt, Debbie Maclean, George Huttar, Reg Houldsworth, and my
wife Joy.
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SIMPLE SENTENCES

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7.3 EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES
Sentences in Creole are either simple or complex. Simple sentences are those which contain only one clause, a clause being basically a subject and verb along with their related objects and complements. Complex sentences are those which contain more than one clause. For example, a simple sentence would be

\[ Ai \ bin luk \ wambala \ men. \]
'\textit{I saw a man.}'

\begin{tabular}{l}
Subject \\
Verb \\
Object \\
\end{tabular}

while a complex sentence would be

\[ Ai \ bin \ luk \ jadan \ men \ weya \ imin \ kilim \ bogiban. \]
'\textit{I saw the man who killed the echidna.'}

\begin{tabular}{l}
Subject \\
Verb \\
Object \ (Conjunction) \\
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{l}
Subject \\
Verb \\
Object \\
\end{tabular}

\textbf{main clause} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{dependent clause}

The present chapter deals only with simple sentences. Complex sentences will be dealt with elsewhere. Not only is this chapter restricted to simple sentences, but it deals only with those aspects that are central to simple sentence clauses. Elements, such as adverbs, that apply broadly to all sentences are discussed elsewhere.

The simple sentences in Creole are divided into two main categories: non-verbal and verbal. Non-verbal sentences contain no verb.

\[ Bobala \ ogaman \ wargulubala. \]
'\textit{The pitiful old woman is a widow.'}

Verbal sentences contain a verb.

\[ imin \ kilim \ rait \ la \ olabat \ ai. \]
'\textit{She hit (them) square in the eyes.'}

Sentences that make a statement as to whether or not something exists are existential sentences. In Creole these may be expressed as either verbal or non-verbal sentences and are therefore dealt with in a section on their own.

\section{Non-verbal Sentences}

The simplest sentences in Creole differ from English in that they have no verb. The English equivalents have a form of the verb 'to be' (\textit{is, am, are, was, were}) that is used to link the subject or topic with a complement or comment about it. Some English 'to be' examples are
1. I am big.
2. He is boss.
3. It is raining.
4. They are at the river.
5. They are mine.

Creole, instead of linking the topic and comment together with a verb, link them simply by means of juxtaposition. That is, the topic and comment occur side by side with nothing between. Examples 1 and 2 above in Creole would be

\[\text{Mi} \quad \text{bigbala.}\]
'I (am) big.'

and \[\text{Im} \quad \text{bos.}\]
'He (is) boss.'

The lack of a 'to be' linking verb in Creole is not a sign of a simplistic or underdeveloped language. Many of the world's languages, including Russian, lack such a linking verb.

The non-verbal sentences of Creole can be divided into five main types, for which the English examples above are selected. They are (1) descriptive, (2) equative, (3) impersonal, (4) locative, and (5) genitive. These are discussed in order below.

7.1.1 Descriptive Sentence

A descriptive sentence is a sentence in which the comment describes the topic. A minimal example would be one in which the topic is a pronoun and the comment an adjective.

\[\text{Im} \quad \text{bigbala.}\]
'He is big.'

The topic can also be a noun.

\[\text{munanga} \quad \text{bigbala.}\]
'The European is big.'

But the topic need not be simply a noun. It can also be a noun phrase.

\[\text{Jadan} \quad \text{longsan} \quad \text{munanga} \quad \text{bigbala.}\]
'That tall European is big.'
Usually, however, when the topic is a noun phrase (and often when simply a noun), the noun phrase does not occur by itself but in combination with a pronoun in an appositional construction.

\[
\text{Sadem longvan munanga, im bigbala.}
\]

'That tall European, he is big.'

and also

\[
\text{Munanga, im bigbala.}
\]

'The European, he is big.'

Of course, in English, this is 'bad grammar'. But Creole is not English, and in Creole this appositional construction is 'good grammar'.

The comment can also be expanded from a simple adjective to a phrase.

\[
\text{Im brabli bigbala.}
\]

'He is very big.'

7.1.2 Equative Sentence

An equative sentence is one in which the topic and comment are equated. It could be said that the comment identifies the topic. In a real sense the equative sentence is simply a sub-category of the descriptive sentence. The distinction is not so much one of grammar (though equative comments tend to be nouns while descriptive comments adjectives) as one of meaning. All of the grammatical expansions that can occur with descriptive sentences also apply to equative sentences. A minimal form would be

\[
\text{Im bos.}
\]

'He is boss.'

An expansion of the comment to a phrase could be

\[
\text{Im brabli bigbala bos.}
\]

'He is the head boss.'

An expansion of the topic to an appositional construction could be

\[
\text{Monbala lilbala olmen, im brabli bigbala bos.}
\]

'A little old man, he is the head boss.'
7.1.3 Impersonal Sentence

In English there are a number of sentences that make use of what is usually called an empty 'it' subject. Some examples are

It is raining.
It is hot.
It is noon.

The 'it' in these sentences does not really refer to anything in particular and are thus meaningless or 'empty'. The use of 'it' is purely conventional. Such constructions are called impersonal sentences.

Creole impersonal sentences, like other non-verbal sentences, consist of a topic linked to a comment by juxtaposition. The topic is invariably the pronoun im. The comment may be a noun, adjective, or adverb as given in the following examples respectively.

Im rein. (noun)
'It is raining.'

Im hotbala. (adjective)
'It is hot.'

Im dinadain. (adverb)
'It is noon.'

In the first example the Creole non-verbal sentence has had to be translated into English as a verbal sentence. That is, where Creole used the noun retn, English had to use the verb raining.

With many constructions, the specific meaning and usage depends on the context. With the examples above in other contexts, the empty im would not be empty nor would the construction be an impersonal sentence. For example, if it is just starting to rain as someone is waking up, they might conceivably ask

Wanim jat nois?
What is that noise?

The reply could be

Im rein.
'It is rain.'

In such a context, im would refer to nois and the construction would be an equative sentence.
Similarly, a child might reach for a freshly cooked damper and be warned

\[
\text{\textit{\textit{Im hotbala.}}}
\]

'It is hot.'

in which case \textit{\textit{im}} would refer to the damper and the construction would be a descriptive sentence.

7.1.4 \textit{Locative Sentence}

A locative sentence is one in which a comment is made about the location of the topic.

\[
\text{\textit{Olabat jeya.}}
\]

'They are there.'

and \textit{\textit{Im la riba.}}

'He is at the river.'

While it is conceivable to say that the comment describes the topic as to its location, locative sentences differ from descriptive sentences in the construction of the comment. While the descriptive comment is a noun or noun phrase, the locative comment is an adverb, prepositional phrase, or a combination of the two. The topic of a locative sentence, however, has the same grammatical construction and expandability as the descriptive topic.

In its minimal form, a locative sentence has the comment as simply a locative adverb.

\[
\text{\textit{Im jeya.}}
\]

'He is \underline{there}.'

\[
\text{\textit{Im gulijap.}}
\]

'He is \underline{near}.'

and \textit{\textit{Im airrop.}}

'He is \underline{upstream}.'

The comment can also be a locative prepositional phrase.

\[
\text{\textit{Im langa riba.}}
\]

'He is \underline{at the river}.'

and \textit{\textit{Im la midul.}}

'He is \underline{in the middle}.'
A further expansion or further specification of location is possible by using a combination of adverb and prepositional phrase.

*Im gulijap la riba.*
'He is near the river.'

and *Im rait langa midul.*
'He is right in the middle.'

The combination of adverb and prepositional phrase is not restricted to only one occurrence of each. Nor is the prepositional phrase limited to a minimal form.

*Im rait la midul la dubala bigbala wadi.*
'He is right in the middle between two big stress.'

and *Im jeya lodan wansaíd la riba.*
'He is there down stream on the side of the river

*gulijap langa jat waiswan rok.*
'near that white rock.'

While it is possible for this last example to occur, it would usually be expressed not as one unit but as several. It might be broken up as

*Im jeya lodan wansaíd la riba.*
'He is there down stream on the side of the river.

*Gulijap la jat waiswan rok.*
Near that white rock.'

or *Im gulijap la jat waiswan rok. Wansaíd jeya.*
'He is near that white rock. On the side there

*lodan langa riba.*
'down stream by the river.'

or even

*Im jeya lodan. Wansaíd la riba.*
'He is there down stream. On the side of the river.

*Gulijap la rok, jat waiswan.*
'Near that rock, the one that is white.'

In other words, Creole, like most Aboriginal languages, allows for much (but not total nor ad hoc) flexibility in word order.
7.1.5 Genitive Sentence

A genitive sentence is one in which the comment is a *bianga* prepositional phrase.

*Im bianga mi.*
'It is mine.'

The topic of a genitive sentence has the same grammatical construction and expandability as descriptive and equative topics. It can be simply a pronoun or noun or a noun phrase. Continuing with the example used above, the construction could be

*Dog bianga mi.*
'The dog is mine.'

or *Jadan bai'bulbala dog, im bianga mi.*
'That black and white spotted dog, is mine.'

The above examples have a possessive meaning. That is, the topic is possessed by the comment ('I own the dog'). The same construction in a different context would have a different meaning. Consider the following examples:

At a post office:

*Jadan leda bianga mi.*
'That letter is for me. (I am the intended recipient.)'

At a discussion on 'nationality':

*Jadan kantri bianga mi.*
'That country is mine. (I do not own it, but that is where I come from.)'

At a dispensary, by a doubtful patient:

*Dijan medisin bianga mi.*
'This medicine is for me. (It is for my benefit.)'

Upon hearing a story about one's self:

*Jadan stori bianga mi.*
'That story is about me.'

Actually, this last example, depending on what the context is, could mean
That to is about me.'
That story was told for my benefit.'
or 'I am the owner of that story.'

7.1.6 Modifications to Non-Verbal Sentences

To further complicate these 'simplest' of Creole sentences, three additional factors must be taken into consideration. These are expansion of topics and comments to include an embedded sentence, inversion of the normal order of the topic and comment, and inclusion of verbal modifiers between the topic and comment. These will be discussed in order below.

7.1.6.1 Expansion by Embedding

It has previously been discussed under the various types of sentences above, that in most cases the topics and comments can be expanded. For most sentences the topic can be expanded from a pronoun or noun to a phrase. The notable exception is the impersonal sentence where the topic is always an empty im. With descriptive and equative sentences, the comments can be expanded from an adjective or noun to a phrase. Similarly, with locative and genitive comments, the internal structure of the prepositional phrases can be expanded to include phrases.

The topics and comments that can be expanded into phrases can also be expanded by incorporating or embedding other sentences within the topic or comment. The sentence

Ai bin luk olimen.
'I saw a man.'

could be embedded in the topic of the sentence

Jadan olimen, im sikbala.
'That man is sick.'

to produce

Jadan olimen ai bin luk, im sikbala.
'That man that I saw is sick.'

When a simple sentence, however, has another sentence embedded within it, it is no longer a simple sentence but has become a complex sentence. Embedding and complex sentences are discussed in detail elsewhere.
7.1.6.2 Inversion of Order

The normal or usual word order for non-verbal sentences is the topic followed by the comment, as all previous examples have been. It is common in Creole for this order to be inverted or reversed. In most cases the comment can precede the topic.

\[
\text{Jadan monanga \quad Longwan.}
\]

'That European is tall.'

can be inverted to

\[
\text{Longwan jadan monanga.}
\]

Such inversions do not affect the meaning of the sentence, though they may shift the focus or emphasis.

Other examples would be

\[
\text{Dijan leda \quad blanga mi.}
\]

'This letter is mine.'

inverted to

\[
\text{Blanga mi dijan leda.}
\]

and

\[
\text{Dubala olgamen \quad jeya la riba.}
\]

'Two women are there at the river.'

inverted to

\[
\text{Jeya la riba dubala olgamen.}
\]

However, there are restrictions on inversions. Notable among the restrictions is the inability for an inversion to occur if the topic is simply a pronoun.

\[
\text{Im \quad bigbala.}
\]

'He is big.'

cannot be inverted to

\[
*\text{Bigbala im.}
\]

\[
\text{Im \quad blanga mi.}
\]

'It is mine.'

cannot be inverted to
"Blanga mi im.

Im langa riba.
'He is at the river.'
cannot be inverted to

"Langa riba im.
nor can

Im hotbala.
'Its hot.'
be inverted to

"Hotbala im.

This restriction, as exemplified in the last example, means that impersonal sentences cannot be inverted since the topic is always the pronoun im.

Inversions need not be total. Partial inversion occurs when appositional constructions are split.

Jadan olmen, im sikbala.
'That man is sick.'
can be partially inverted to

Im sikbala, jadan olmen.

and Dijan daga, im blanga melabat.
'This food is ours.'
can be partially inverted to

Im blanga melabat, dijan daga.

Partial inversions can only take place when appositional constructions occur. Single phrases cannot be partially inverted.

Jat blekwan dog blanga mi.
'That black dog is mine.'
cannot be partially inverted to

"Jat blekwan blanga mi dog.
Nor can

\textit{Jadan olmen sikbala.}

'\textit{That man is sick.}'

be partially inverted to

\textit{Jadan sikbala olmen.}

It should be pointed out, however, that the constructions

\textit{Jat blekwan blanga mi dog.}

and \textit{Jadan sikbala olmen.}

are correct and legitimate constructions in Creole. But they are not partial inversions of the above examples because their meanings are different: the first one means 'That black one belongs to my dog.' (not 'That black dog is mine.') and the second one means 'That is a sick man.' (not 'That man is sick.').

7.1.6.3 Inclusion of Verbal Modifiers

The five sentence types discussed above are classed as non-verbal sentences because none of them include a verb within their construction. All of them, however, can occur with verbal modifiers between the topic and comment. Verbal modifiers are discussed in Chapter 5, so only a few selected examples will suffice here.

\textit{Olmen \hspace{5mm} bin \hspace{5mm} sikbala.}

'\textit{The man was sick.}'

\textit{Olgamen \hspace{5mm} bin \hspace{5mm} guli\jop \hspace{5mm} presidint.}

'\textit{The woman was almost president.}'

\textit{Im \hspace{5mm} andi \hspace{5mm} hotbala.}

'\textit{It will be hot.}'

\textit{Olabat \hspace{5mm} bin \hspace{5mm} andi \hspace{5mm} lodan.}

'\textit{They should have been down stream.}'

\textit{Jadan \hspace{5mm} nomo \hspace{5mm} blanga mi.}

'\textit{That is not mine.}'

Verbal modifiers cannot occur in a totally inverted sentence, though they can occur with partial inversion.
Im bin sikhala, jadon olmen.
'That old man was sick.'

but not

*Bin sikhala, jadon olmen.

nor *Sikhala bin jadon olmen.

7.2 VERBAL SENTENCES

In addition to the non-verbal simple sentences, there are three main types of verbal simple sentences in Creole. These are sentences, as stated earlier, that contain a verb.

Some English examples selected to illustrate these three main types would be

1) We are eating.
   Subject + Verb

2) He banks the money.
   Subject + Verb + Direct Object

3) He gives us strength.
   Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

Number (1) is intransitive, (2) is transitive, and (3) is double transitive.

The subject in all of these sentences in Creole, as with most of the non-verbal sentences, may be either a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. For example, number (3) above in Creole with a pronoun as subject would be

Im gibit melabat murnda.
'He gives us strength.'

with a noun as subject it would be

God gibit melabat murnda.
'God gives us strength.'

and with a noun phrase as subject it would be

Melabat dadi la top gibit melabat murnda.
'Our Father in heaven gives us strength.'
7.2.1 Intransitive Sentence

The simplest of the verbal sentences is called an intransitive sentence. Like English, it consists simply of a subject followed by a verb.

Melabat dagat.
'We are eating.'

Biganini bago.
'The baby is vomiting.'

Blekbala jabi.
'Aborigines understand.'

7.2.2 Transitive Sentence

A sentence in which the subject does an activity to another person or object is called a transitive sentence. In a sense, the activity is transferred from the subject to the object. A transitive sentence in Creole, like English, consists of a subject followed by a verb which in turn is followed by an object.

Stakmen lukluk yarraman.
'The stockmen see the horses.'

Olgamen blandim daga.
'The woman hides the food.'

Im boksimap mani.
'He banks the money.'

Most verbs that are used in transitive sentences in Creole occur with the suffix -im as in the last two examples above with blandim and boksimap. Verbs that occur with this -im suffix are called marked verbs; those without are unmarked verbs as in the first example above with lukluk. While some unmarked verbs may occur in transitive sentences, marked verbs only occur in transitive sentences; they never occur in intransitive sentences. For more detail, see the sections on marked and unmarked verbs and transitive suffix in Chapter 5.

Unlike English, Creole has the ability to delete the object from most transitive sentences. This is normally restricted, however, to sentences that have marked verbs and is possible because the -im suffix, in essence, carries the 'weight' of the object much like a pronoun. The specification of the object would be understood from the context in which the sentence was used.
Im barnimap modiga.
'He is wrecking the car.'

In context, could simply be

Im barnimap.
'He is wrecking (the car).'

The object in transitive sentences is referred to as a direct object. Like the subject, a direct object may be a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. For example, with the object as a noun

Imin blandim daga.
'She hid the food.'

as a pronoun

Imin blandim im.
'She hid it.'

and as a noun phrase

Imin blandim melabat monanga daga.
'She hid our whiteman's food.'

7.2.2.1 Reflexive and Reciprocal Sentences

There are two special cases of transitive sentence in which the direct objects are specific pronouns. The first is a reflexive sentence in which the direct object is the reflexive pronoun mijelb. The subject acts upon itself; the activity is reflected back upon the subject.

Yangboi barnim mijelb.
'The young boy is burning himself.

Jineik bin baidim mijelb.
'The snake bit itself.'

Olabat kitim mijelb.
'They are hitting themselves.'

The second case is a reciprocal sentence in which the direct object is the reciprocal pronoun gija. In this case the subjects act upon each other in a reciprocating manner. Note that the subject is plural, involving more than one entity.
Dubala kilim gija.
'They hit each other.'

Yunanga en biekala luklu Luk gija.
'The Europeans and Aborigines see each other.'

7.2.3 Double Transitive Sentence

Related to the transitive sentence is a type of sentence that occurs with not only a direct object but a second object as well. This type of sentence is referred to as a double transitive sentence since the activity of the subject in some way affects two objects.

Im. gubit melabat munda.
'He gives us strength.'

Im dalim mi laya.
'He is telling me a lie.'

Unlike with transitive and intransitive sentences, relatively few verbs can occur in double transitive sentences. Virtually all verbs which do occur in double transitive sentences can also occur as the verb of a transitive sentence as well. Four of the most common double transitive verbs are discussed below.

7.2.3.1 Gubit Sentences

The basic form of the double transitive sentence is

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

as exemplified by the sentence

Im gubit melabat munda.
'He gives us strength.'

The second or indirect object, like the subject and direct object, can be a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. Unique to the double transitive sentence, the indirect object can also be a prepositional phrase. This is usually a la prepositional phrase as in

Im gubit la melabat munda.
'He gives to us strength.'
When the indirect object is simply a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase, it always precedes the direct object. When it is a prepositional phrase, however, it may follow the direct object. The above example could be expressed as

\[
\text{Im gubit murnda la melabat.} \\
\text{He gives strength to us.}
\]

but not as

\[
\text{Im gubit murnda melabat.}
\]

Similar to transitive sentences, the direct or indirect object or both can be deleted in a given context. Thus the following constructions are possible.

\[
\text{Im gubit melabat.} \\
\text{He gives us (strength).}
\]

\[
\text{Im gubit la melabat.} \\
\text{He gives to us (strength).}
\]

\[
\text{Im gubit murnda.} \\
\text{He gives strength (to us).}
\]

or simply

\[
\text{Im gubit.} \\
\text{He gives (us strength).}
\]

Just as the meaning of such reduced forms depends on their context, so also does the type of sentence it represents.

\[
\text{Im gubit daga.}
\]

in one context could be a reduced double transitive sentence meaning

\[
\text{He is giving food (to us).}
\]

but in another context it could be a transitive sentence meaning

\[
\text{He distributes (is a distributor of) food.}
\]

7.2.3.2 Dalim Sentences

Very similar to the constructions using *gubit 'give'* are those using *dalim 'tell'. All the forms discussed above can occur with *dalim*. 
Im dalim mi laya.
'He is telling me a lie.'

could also be expressed as

Im dalim la mi laya.
Im dalim laya la mi.

but not

'Im dalim laya mi.'

Likewise, reduced forms could be used.

Im dalim mi.
Im dalim ia mi.
Im dalim laya.
Im dalim.

As with the gibit examples, depending on the context,

Im dalim laya.

could either be a double transitive sentence with the indirect object deleted meaning

'He is telling (me) a lie.'

or it could be a transitive sentence meaning

'He tells lies.'

Unlike with gibit, the direct object with dalim need not be restricted to simply a noun, pronoun, or basic noun phrase. It can be a complete sentence in direct or indirect quote form.

Im dalim mi, "Go weidabat bla mi jeya".
'He tells me, "Go wait for me there."'

Im dalim mi, go weidabat bla im jeya.

or Im dalim mi, bla go weidabat bla im jeya.
'He tells me to go wait for him there.'

Such constructions, however, because they involve two sentences or clauses in one, are no longer simple sentences but rather complex sentences.
7.2.3.3 *Meigim* Sentences

The verb *meigim* 'make' is usually used in simple transitive construction.

_Olgamen meigim damba._
'The woman is making a damper.'

*Meigim* can also be used in a type of double transitive construction.

_Olgamen meigim olmen damba._
'The woman is making the old man a damper.'

As with other double transitive sentences, the indirect object can be expressed as a prepositional phrase. In this case it is with a *bla* phrase.

_Olgamen meigim bla olmen damba._
'The woman is making for the old man a damper.'

or

_Olgamen meigim damba bla olmen._
'The woman is making a damper for the old man.'

but not

*_Olgamen meigim damba olmen._*

Compare, however, the following

_Im meigim mi nogud._
'He makes me feel bad.'

_Im meigim mi ofsaída._
'He is making me (his) assistant.'

The form of these examples is

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Object Complement

It should be noted that the object complement, unlike the direct and indirect objects, normally cannot be deleted. For example, it is possible to delete the direct object and have

_Im meigim nogud._
'He makes (me) feel bad.'
but it is not possible to delete the object complement and have

"Im meqgim mi.
'He makes me (feel bad).'

7.2.3.4 Budum Sentences

The verb *budum* 'put' is used in double transitive sentences having the basic form

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Object Place

as in

Im *budum* at la bekbon.
'He puts (his) eyes on (his) back.

(i.e. He is turning away.)'

The object place is always a locative construction, being either an adverb, prepositional phrase, or a combination of both. Locative constructions are discussed in detail elsewhere.

Unlike other double transitive sentences, the word order of those involving an object place are fixed. The object place always follows the direct object.

Im *budum* mi la pitja.
'He is putting me in the picture.

(i.e. He is paying my way into the movie.)'

but not

"Im budum la pitja mi.

As with other double transitive sentences, either or both of the objects can be deleted in a given context.

Im *budum* mi la pitja.
'He is paying my way into the movie.'

could be reduced to

Im *budum* la pitja.
'He is paying (my way) into the movie.'
Im *budum mi.*
'He is paying my way (into the movie).'

or simply

Im *budum.*
'He is paying (my way into the movie).'

7.3 EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES

Sentences that are used to make a statement as to whether or not something exists are referred to as existential sentences. The basic form of existential sentences in English is

'there' + a form of the verb 'to be' + a noun expression

as in

There are swarms of mosquitoes at Roper.

There are several ways of making an existential statement in Creole. The simplest is by use of a non-verbal construction. The English example above would be

*Tumaj miskida la Ropa.*
'Swarms of mosquitoes are at Roper.'

A stronger, more emphatic construction would be

*Ropa onli fo miskida.*
'Roper is only for mosquitoes.'

This construction, however, is used relatively rarely.

The same existential statement could, however, also be expressed by using a verbal construction. This could be a transitive sentence using one of the verbs for 'have', either *abum* or *gadim*, as in

*Ropa abum tumaj miskida.*
or
*Ropa gadim tumaj miskida.*
'Roper has swarms of mosquitoes.'

The same idea could also be expressed by an intransitive sentence using the verb *jidan* 'exist, dwell, to be'.

*Tumaj miskida jidan la Ropa.*
'Swarms of mosquitoes exist at Roper.'
The verb *jandap* is also used in intransitive existential constructions. It is, however, restricted to stating the existence of entities that in some sense have a vertical nature, such as trees.

*Tumaj* meinggo *tri* *jandap* jeya.
'Many mango trees exist there.

(i.e. There are many mango trees there.)'

Another way of expressing existential in Creole is by the use of a *deibin* construction. This is similar to the English 'there + to be' construction. It consists of a contraction of the third person plural pronoun *dei* and the past tense marker *bin* followed by a noun expression. It is restricted to an expression of the past existence of an entity.

*Deibin* tumaj meinggo tri jeya.
'There were many mango trees there.'
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