One of the most fascinating aspects of language, for linguist and layman alike, is the matter of origins: how did a particular language get a particular feature—phonological, syntactic, or semantic? For most languages, of course, the answers to many of these questions will remain forever hidden in millennia of unrecorded prehistory. For relatively young languages, however, such as many known today as pidgins and creoles, we are in a much better position to answer some of these questions about origins.

It is for this reason—their recent origin and in some cases their extant documentation from within a few decades of their origin—that pidgins and creoles (PC's) are especially valuable sources of data not only about language development and language contact, but also about the nature of language itself. It is not surprising, then, that a major part of creole studies is devoted to answering questions like "Where did Haitian Creole get the morpheme for sweet potato?" or "Which regional dialects of English contributed to the lexicon of the English PC's of West Africa?"

Such questions have been answered primarily about phonology and lexicon (e.g., in Voorhoeve, 1970), to some extent about syntax (e.g., in Taylor, 1960), and to a lesser extent about semantic organization (e.g., in Huttar, forthcoming). Recently, especially in connection with an increasing interest in language universals, PC syntax has been receiving more attention (e.g., in Givon, forthcoming). Sources of PC syntactic features are usually claimed to be one or more of the following four:

1. language universals,
2. PS universals (determined by the processes by which PC's arise),
3. substrata
4. dominant (e.g., European) languages.

A case in point is that of serial verb constructions in Krio, a creole spoken in Sierra Leone. Williams (1971) has pointed out some specific resemblances between Krio and the Kwa languages of West Africa with regard to these constructions. The obvious conclusion that one is tempted to draw is an answer to a question about origins, namely, Krio must have acquired this set of syntactic features from the influence of Kwa languages. Whether that is the correct evaluation of the resemblance between Krio and Kwa, however, must be determined by the answers to some other questions, such as the following:

How widespread are identical or similar constructions in other PC's?

How widespread are identical or similar constructions in other, 'ordinary,' languages?

How exactly do the Krio constructions correspond to those in a given Kwa language or group of Kwa languages?
Obviously I can't answer all these questions well in this paper. What I want to do is present some relevant data from some creoles spoken across the Atlantic from the Krio area, namely in the country of Surinam (former Dutch Guiana). I hope thereby to lay part of the groundwork for more serious consideration of the questions just raised. Data from creoles and other languages in other parts of the world will also be brought into the discussion, so that we may start to determine the origins of these syntactic patterns—African or creole or universal.

Our point of departure will be Djuka, the Surinam creole with which I am most familiar and about which the least information has been published. Where possible I have also included parallel data from Sranan and Saramaccan, the two other major creoles of Surinam.

By serial verb constructions I mean sequences of verb phrases that are immediately juxtaposed in surface structure. In particular, no subject and no conjunction or other particle intervenes.

We begin with the use of three verbs of motion postposed to another verb phrase to indicate direction. In Djuka these verbs of motion are kon (<come), go (<go), and gwe3 (<go away). In I.A. these three verbs are used as independent verbs.

I.A. Surinam creoles. Verbs of motion as independent verbs.

1. a kon He came.
   a kon He went home.
   a ko he come
   a go a osu He went home.
   a go na oso he go at house
2. a kon He went home.
   a kon  a go a wosu he go at house
   a ko he come
   a go a wosu he go at house
3. a gwe He left.
   a gwe he leave
   -----
   he leave

(In all examples with forms from the three Surinam creoles, the Djuka form appears in the top line, the corresponding Sranan form in the second line, and the Saramaccan form in the third line. The gap in I.A.3. indicates that Saramaccan uses only two verbs in this position, as opposed to the three used in Djuka and Sranan.)

In I.B. we see the same verbs of motion postposed to the intransitive verb phrase waka (<walk), 'walk, move, travel':
I.B. Surinam creoles. Verbs of motion postposed to intransitive VP.

1. a waka kon He walked (to point of reference).
   a waka kon
   a waka ko
   he walk come

2. a waka go a osu He walked home (away from point of reference).
   a waka go na oso
   a waka go a wosu

3. a waka gwe
   a waka gwe He walked away.

In I.C., they appear postposed to transitive verb phrases:

I. C. Surinam creoles. Verbs of motion postposed to transitive VP.

1. a tyai den fisi kon He brought the fish.
   a tyari den fisi kon
   a tya dee fisi ko
   he carry pl. fish come

2. a tyai den fisi go a osu He took the fish home.
   a tyari den fisi go na oso
   a tya dee fisi go a wosu

3. a tyai den fisi gwe He took the fish away.
   a tyari den fisi gwe

Parallel constructions occur, as already intimated, in Krio, as shown in I.D.: example 1. shows gowe postposed to an intransitive VP; 2. and 3. show kam and go, respectively, postposed to a transitive VP:

I.D. Krio. Verbs of motion postposed to intrans. (1) and trans VP (2-4).

1. i waka gowe wantem He walked away at once.
   he walk leave at once

2. i khr am kam5 He brought it.
   he carry it come

3. i khr am go He took it
   go

4. i khr am gowe He took it away.
The resemblance between the creoles of Surinam and Krio (and, for that matter, other Caribbean creoles) on this point might suggest that we are dealing here with a feature of creole languages in general. In this connection it is instructive to note data from several other languages. I.E. shows Igbo examples of parallel constructions with intransitive (1.) and transitive (2.) VP's; parallel examples from various other Kwa languages could be given as well:

I.E. Kwa (Igbo). Verbs of motion postposed to intrans. (1) and trans.(2) VP.

1. ó gbàrà ósó gàa áhyà He ran to the market.
   he ran &go market

2. ó wèrè ítè byá He brought the pot.
   took pot &come

From what we know of the history of Krio and of the Caribbean creoles, it is reasonable to assume some substratal influence here. But I.F. shows a parallel construction in Vagala, a Gur (Voltaic) language of Ghana; so rather than speaking of a Kwa substratum, we should probably be less specific in our claims and speak merely of a West African substratum:

I.F. Gur (Vagala). Verb of motion postposed to trans. VP.

1. ù kyìgò nií bà She brought water.
   she carried water came

The examples in New Guinea Pidgin (Neo-Melanesian) given in I.G. are not precisely parallel to the examples given from other languages so far, because of the particle í intervening before the verb of motion:

I.G. Neo-Melanesian. Verbs of motion with trans. VP.

1. em i kisim buk i kam long skul. He brought the book to come at school
   he take book come at school school.

2. em i kisim buk i go long skul. He took the book to school.
   go

While these data suggest that the serial verb construction now under consideration is not a PC universal, this argument may not be emphasized. For it turns on whether í is taken to be a subject marker (in which case we do not have here immediately juxtaposed VP's) or a predicate marker (in which case it could be argued that the í is part of the second VP and therefore does not intervene between the two VP's.)

At any rate, the Kwa material exemplified in I.E. demonstrated that the construction is not limited to creole languages. The data in I.H. from Chrau of Viet Nam further show that the construction is not even limited to creoles and West African languages:
I.H. Chrau. Verbs of motion postposed to trans. VP.

1. Ṉeḥ vat siraq tät  He brought the book
carry book come/arrive

2. Ṉeḥ vat siraq sīq    He took the book back.
return

3. Ṉeḥ vat siraq saq    He took the book away
go

In summary, the data presented from various creoles and other languages, along with our knowledge of the extralinguistic history of the creoles spoken on both sides of the Atlantic, suggest (1) that the hypothesis of a West African, though not necessarily Kwa, origin of these serial verb constructions in Krio and the creoles of Surinam is probably correct; but (2) the possibility of concomitant operation of language universals cannot yet be discounted.

Turning now to a serial verb construction more specifically associated with languages of West Africa, and in much of the literature with Kwa languages in particular, let us examine the use of 'give' as a preposition-like introducer of dative and/or benefactive noun phrases. In II.A. we have first the verb 'give' as an independent verb (1.), then as an introducer of a dative (indirect object) (2), then as an introducer of a benefactive (3.), in Djuka, Sranan, and Saramaccan:

II.A. Surinam creoles. 'give' as independent verb (1), introducing dative and benefactive (2-4).

1. a gi mi den fisi He gave me the fish.
a gi mi den fisi a da mi dee fisi
he give me pl. fish

2. a tyai den fisi kon gi mi He brought me (dative)
a tyari den fisi kon gi mi the fish.
a tyar dee fisi ko da mi carry come give me

3. a go a foto gi mi He went to town for me (benefactive).
a go na foto gi mi a go a foto da mi
he go at town give me

Note that the same construction is used for both dative and benefactive. Examples II.A.2. and 3. were chosen to represent fairly unambiguous uses of this construction for dative and benefactive, respectively. In II.A. 4., however, the same construction can be taken either way:

4. a kisi den fisi gi mi He caught the fish for me/
   a kisi den fisi gi mi He caught me the fish (i.e.,
   a kisi dee fisi da mi caught and gave them to me).
catch
In the Kwa language Yatye the same ambiguity exists as in the creoles of Surinam, as shown in II.B.:10
II.B. Kwa (Yatye). 'give' introducing dative/benefactive.
   1. 'mì ìyàwà ìnyahwë íbì akà 'awò I brought you a book./
      I took book came for you I brought a book on (give?) your behalf.

In Yoruba, also a Kwa language, on the other hand the corresponding construction with 'give' serves only for the dative (II.C.1.), while a contrasting construction expresses the benefactive (II.C.2.):

II.C. Kwa (Yoruba). 'give' introducing dative (1), contrasting construction for benefactive (2).
   1. mo mù 'ìwè wá fún è I brought you a book.
       I took book came gave you
   2. mo bà àbúrò mì I brought a book on
       I on-behalf-of younger-brother my behalf of my younger brother.
       mù 'ìwè wá
took book come (sic)

It is instructive to note at this point that Krio resembles Yoruba in using contrasting constructions for dative and benefactive, unlike the ambiguous expression of these two deep structure notions in the surface of Yatye and the Surinam creoles. The Krio forms are given in II.D.:

II.D. Krio. 'give' as independent verb (1), and introducing dative (2), contrasting construction for benefactive (3).
   1. a gi am di kër I gave him the money.
       I give him the money
   2. i kër dis kër go gi am He took this money to him.
       he carry this go give him
   3. i go tòr fò ram He went to town for him.
       go town for him

The force of these data is that, at least in the modern forms, even such similar languages as Krio and the Surinam creoles differ in the use of serial verb constructions, suggesting a different origin within West Africa for the Krio constructions and for the Surinam constructions. I do not have the data available to determine whether an earlier stage of Krio used the serial construction with 'give' for benefactive as well as for dative. We should remember, however, that Krio has been exposed to post-creolization influences from English in a way that the Surinam creoles have not. But if Krio turns out never to have used this construction to express benefactive, then this use of the construction would probably be neither a language universal nor a PC
universal. That it is not found, even in the dative use, in all PC's is demonstrated by the Neo-Melanesian data in II.E.:

II.E. Neo-Melanesian. 'give' as independent verb (1); dative and benefactive constructions without 'give' (2-4).

1. em i givim ol dispela pis long mi He gave me the fish. he give pl. this fish at me

2. em i hukim ol dispela pis na givim (long) mi He caught the catch pl. and give (at) me fish and gave them to me.

3. em i kisim ol dispela pis i kam long mi He brought the pl. come fish to me.

4. em i go long taun na baim rais bilong mi He went to town go town and buy rice of me and bought rice for me.

From II.F. we see that Chrau uses a similar construction (i.e., verb serialization with 'give'), but not a precisely parallel one:

II.F. Chrau. 'give' introducing dative (1) and dative/benefactive (2).

1. neph vät ca ściq an ānh iun He brought me a fish. he carry fish return give me to-have

2. neph vät an ca ānh iun He carried a fish for me./ he carry give fish me to-have He brought me a fish.

Finally, with reference to the West African data, it should again be pointed out that Gur languages such as Vagala also have verb serialization with 'give' parallel to the Kwa usage, although I do not have enough data to determine whether it is used for the dative. Two examples of its use for benefactive are given in II.G:

II.G. Gur (Vagala). 'give' introducing benefactive.

1. ù wa sa' ìgyò te ù bowl He danced the igyo- he came danced igyo-dance give his village dance for his village.

2. ù é ù tê ní He did it for me. he did it gave me

From these data it seems likely that serial verb constructions involving 'give' in a particular modern creole must be traced to a specific source in West Africa, different major substratal languages giving different results in the respective creoles. The difference between Krio on the one hand and the Surinam creoles on the other make the hypothesis that language universals are responsible for the presence of these con-
structions in Atlantic creoles unlikely, although such factors may have had some reinforcing effect upon their development in these languages.

The third sort of serial verb construction we will consider is that involving 'take' to introduce an instrument, as in the Yoruba data in III.A.1. (which could, again, be matched with parallel data from, e.g., Igbo, Yatyë, and Ewe):

III.A. Kwa (Yoruba). 'take' introducing instrument (1) and manner (2).

1. ò fì ṣbè ge èrè He cut the meat with a knife.
   he take knife cut meat

The same construction is also used to express manner in Yoruba, as in III.A2.:

2. ò fì èsò ge èrè He cut the meat with care.
   care

III.B.1. shows the same construction used for instrument in the Gur language Vagala:

III.B. Gur (Vagala). 'take' introducing instrument.

1. Ṱ kpá kiyèè mòng ów1 He cut the meat with a knife.
   he took knife cut meat

For the instrumental usage, Krio uses the same construction, given in III.C.1., although another construction, considered Anglicized Krio, given in III.C.2., is also used:

III.C. Krio. Instrument expressed with 'take' (1) and without (2).

1. i tek nèf ćcò di bif He cut the meat with a knife.
   he take knife cut the meat

2. i ćcò di bif wit nèf with

Krio does not use verb serialization with 'take' for manner, however.

In the creoles of Surinam, such a serialized construction is rare even for instrument. In Djuka, for example, the parallel construction given in III.D.1. is possible, but very infrequent. A Djuka speaker is more likely to use either the simple clause construction given in III.D.2., or two overtly conjoined clauses as in III.D.3. I believe the same can be said of Sranan and Saramaccan, although I do not have enough experience with those languages to support this hunch.
III.D. Djuka. Instrument expressed with 'take' (1) and without (2-3).

1. a teke nefi koti a meti
   he take knife cut the meat

2. a koti a meti anga nefi
   with knife

3. a teke nefi, ne a koti a meti
   take then he

As in Krio, this construction is not used at all for manner.

The resemblance between the usual Djuka construction in III.D.2. and English is evident. Does this mean that this particular construction was borrowed into Djuka from English? Not necessarily; for Kwa languages also have a parallel construction using 'with' for expressing instrument. We again limit our data to a Yoruba example, given in III.E.:10

III.E. Kwa (Yoruba). Instrument expressed without 'take'.

1. ó ge' ŋà kpèlu' bë He cut the meat with a knife.
   he cut meat with knife

Further, it should be remembered that many languages, including the Surinam creoles, English, and Kwa languages, but not Krio, use the same prepositional construction for instrumental, manner, and comitative, as in III.F., G., H., and I.:

III.F. English. Instrument, manner and comitative with 'with'.

1. He cut the meat WITH a knife.
2. He cut the meat WITH pleasure.
3. He cut the meat WITH Kofi.

III.G. Surinam creoles. Instrument, manner and comitative with 'with'.

1. a koti a meti ANGA nefi He cut the meat with a
   a koti a meti NANGA nefi knife.
   a koti di gbamba KU faka

2. a koti a meti ANGA piisii He cut the meat with
   a koti a meti NANGA prisiri pleasure.
   a koti di gbamba KU piizii

3. a koti a meti ANGA kofi He cut the meat with Kofi.
   a koti a meti NANGA kofi
   a koti di gbamba KU kofi

III.H. Kwa (Yoruba). Instrument, manner, and comitative with 'with'.

1. ó ge' ŋà KPÈLU' bë He cut the meat with a knife.
2. ó gé ṣrâ KPLÚ ẹs) He cut the meat with care.
3. ó gé ṣrâ KPLÚ ǎkî He cut the meat with Akin.

III.I. Krio. Instrument and manner with 'with', contrasting construction for comitative.

1. i ṣ̀l̀ di bif WIT nîf He cut the meat with a knife.
2. i ṣ̀l̀ di bif WIT gladi He cut the meat with pleasure.
but 3. ì en kofì ț̀l̀ di bif He cut the meat with Kofi.
    he and Kofi

(Let us note in passing, without citing examples, that Neo-Melanesian does not use the 'take' construction for expressing instrument; and that it uses the general preposition long to introduce an instrument, but a different preposition, wantain, to introduce comitative. On the other hand, Vietnamese does express instrument with a serial verb construction, e.g. 'He use knife cut meat' for 'He cut meat with a knife', but does not express manner in this way.)

The lack of specific resemblances among the Surinam creoles, Kwa (and Gur?) languages, and Krio should introduce caution in assuming that the resemblances that are present among these languages can all be explained in terms of a Kwa or even general West African substratum. On the other hand, the lack of such surface structures in Neo-Melanesian must warn us against assuming too easily an origin in language universals, or even PC universals, for these construction. Yet the presence of parallel constructions in languages of other parts of the world (exemplified in this paper by data from Viet Nam) does mean that we do not know enough yet to reject the role of language universals in favor of the exclusive operation of specific West African substrata.

When we have studied enough syntactic constructions from enough languages (both PC and ordinary), we will probably find that even for one creole language, different constructions are due to different influences: sometimes the dominant language, sometimes the substratal languages, sometimes (perhaps) the nature of the process by which PC's arise, sometimes the nature of communication itself as reflected in language universals—and perhaps most often a combination of some or all of these factors.
FOOTNOTES

*A slightly different version of this paper was given at the SECOL XI meeting in Tampa, Florida, on May 4, 1974.

1 Bendix (1970) discusses resemblances between Papiamentu and Ijo. Krio is compared with Kwa languages in more detail in Givon (forthcoming).

2 Further information on Djuka is given in Huttar (1972) and Huttar and Huttar (1972)

3 All Djuka data are from my own field work, in consultation with James Park. The Sranan data are also from my own field work, though I have benefited from discussion with Hein Eersel. The Saramaccan data are from Naomi Glock and Catherine Rountree (see especially Glock (1972)).

4 All Krio data are from Ian Hancock (personal communication)

5 In the variant; i bri am kam, the notion of direction-toward is expressed by the main verb briŋ as well as by the postposed kam.

6 The Igbo data are from Hyman (1971). The ampersand in the glosses indicates that "The second verb occurs in what is typically referred to as the 'consecutive' construction, one form of sentential conjunction" (op. cit., p. 30), not a conjunctive formative separate from the verb.

7 All Vagala data are from Pike (1970).

8 All Neo-Melanesian data are from Ellis Deibler and Allan and Phyllis Healey (personal communication).

9 All Chrau data are from David and Dorothy Thomas (personal communication).

10 The Yatyf example is from Stahlke (1970).

REFERENCES


Huttar, George L. Forthcoming. Sources of Creole Semantic Structures.


Pike, Kenneth L. 1970. Tagmemic and Matrix Linguistics Applied to Selected African Languages (Norman: Summer Institute of Linguistics of the University of Oklahoma).


