

March 17, 2026 · CLEAR Reading Group

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Transitive alternations and syntax-phonology in French Creole

✚ (1) and (4) show that the verbal morphology of **French-Lexified Creoles (FLCs)** such as **Haitian Creole (HC)** and **Mauritian Creole (MC)**, can be sensitive to argument alternations. For example, the (-*e*-final) LONG FORM of transitive verbs, as in (1e) and (4c), is required when their internal argument surfaces as a preverbal subject (note that words enclosed inside brackets () are allowed to be phonetically unexpressed, and asterisks * () indicate the opposite).¹

(1) *Haitian Creole transitive VO and OV word orders in relative clauses*²

- a. Mwen kwè (ke) Malis t ap ✓ gad / ✓ gade yon fim sou Netflix
1.SG believe that Malis PST PROG watch a movie on Netflix
'I believe (that) Malis was watching a movie on Netflix.'
- b. Mwen kwè (ke) Malis ka ✓ gad / ✓ gade yon fim sou Netflix
1.SG believe that Malis can watch a movie on Netflix
'I believe (that) Malis can watch a movie on Netflix.'

¹My data comes from prior results in the literature or the judgments of my informants, reflecting intuitions about language that was spoken during my sessions with native speakers (*pace* Birkeland et al., 2024), and generally do not come from tasks that involve reading (cf. Sedarous and Namboodiripad, 2020).

Acceptability judgment symbols used in examples

Symbol	Meaning
(none) or ✓	Acceptable by all speakers sampled
* or ✗	Unacceptable by all speakers sampled
?	Often acceptable, but occasionally disallowed across all speakers sampled
??	Often unacceptable, but occasionally allowed across all speakers sampled
%	Acceptable only for a portion of speakers sampled, otherwise it is unacceptable
#	Pragmatically odd given the context, but otherwise a well-formed sentence

I use speaker judgments to illustrate possible contrasts in linguistic behavior, although the correctness of the broader theoretical claims I discuss herein do not depend on the validity of any specific data point from a particular language. Rather (if not for my own error or oversight), they may constitute empirical patterns that some analysis or another may predict or fail to predict; see Sprouse, Schütze, and Almeida (2013), Mahowald et al. (2016), Linzen and Oseki (2018), Goodall (2021) for further discussion about the use and reliability of acceptability judgments in linguistic research.

²In the past tense, the morpheme *ka* “can” in **HC** has an epistemic reading if it precedes tense/aspect morphemes, otherwise it is deontic; however, see 61–63 Cinque (1999) for further discussion about **HC** root modality.

- c. Ban=m yon fim (ke) Malis ka ?? gad / ✓ gade sou Netflix
give 1.SG a movie that Malis can watch on Netflix
'Give me a movie (that) Malis can watch on Netflix.'
- d. Ban=m yon fim (ke) Malis t ap % gad / ✓ gade sou Netflix
give 1.SG a movie that Malis PST PROG watch on Netflix
'Give me a movie (that) Malis was watching on Netflix.'
- e. Ban=m yon fim *(ki) ka ✗ gad / ✓ gade sou Netflix
give 1.SG a movie COMP.SUBJ can watch on Netflix
'Give me a movie that can be watched on Netflix.'
- f. Ban=m yon fim *(ki) t ap ✗ gad / ?? gade sou Netflix
give 1.SG a movie COMP.SUBJ PST PROG watch on Netflix
'Give me a movie that was being watched on Netflix.'

- ◇ I am sticking to relative clauses in (1) to control for information structure and to make use of the *ki/ke* alternation (which MC lacks as far as I know...).
- ◇ Though there are speakers that actually reject the short form in the baseline (1d), the following contrast involving complex DPs is consistent among speakers sampled:

- (2) a. Ban=m fim (ke) Malis t ap ✓ gad / ✓ gade sou Netflix la
give 1.SG movie that Malis PST PROG watch on Netflix DEF
'Give me the movie that Malis was watching on Netflix.'
- b. Ban=m fim (ke) Malis ka ✓ gad / ✓ gade sou Netflix la
give 1.SG movie that Malis can watch on Netflix DEF
'Give me the movie that Malis can watch on Netflix.'

- ◇ However, the transitive OV word order is uniformly ruled out in complex DP environments, whether with the tense/aspect words or the modal *ka*:

- (3) a. * Ban=m fim ki t ap gad / gade sou Netflix la
give 1.SG movie COMP.SUBJ PST PROG watch on Netflix DEF
(intended: 'Give me the movie that was being watched on Netflix.')
- b. * Ban=m fim ki ka gad / gade sou Netflix la
give 1.SG movie COMP.SUBJ can watch on Netflix DEF
(intended: 'Give me the movie that can be watched on Netflix.')

- ◇ Despite the variation, HC speakers uncontroversially reject the short form wherever the long form might be allowed with a transitive OV word order (as in (1e)).

(4) *Mauritian Creole transitive VO and OV word orders with serial verbs*³

- a. Mo ti ✓ aret / ✗ arete ferm lafnèt aswar
1.SG PST stop close window night
'I stopped closing the windows at night.' [13, p. 278]
- b. Mo kone ki se Zan ki Mark inn ? fors / ✗ forse vann so lakaz
1.SG know REL SE John REL Mark PFV force sell 3.SG.POSS house
'I know that it is John that Mark forced to sell his house.' (Henri, p.c.)
- c. Li pe ✗ fors / ✓ forse vann so lakaz
3.SG PROG force sell 3.SG.POSS house
'He is being forced to sell his house.' [17]

- ◇ HC and MC differ in many respects, but seem to agree about the use of the long form with transitive OV = *an effect of word order on morphology*.
- ◇ **Relevance for linguistic theory?** Compact verbal paradigms regulated by syntactic and morphophonological factors.

🗨 It just so happens that the syntactic “facilitation” needed to support “transitive OV” word orders in the first place varies by language and by verb.⁴

(5) *Facilitation depends on the verb in Haitian Creole*

- a. Fim sa ka gade sou Netflix
movie DEM can watch on Netflix
'This movie can be watched on Netflix.'
- b. * Fim sa ka wè sou Netflix
movie DEM can see on Netflix
(intended: 'This movie can be seen on Netflix.')

(6) *gagn 'get' expands the range of passivizable verbs in Mauritian Creole* [13, pp. 223–224]

- a. Zan ti gagn morde (ar lisyen)
Zan PST get bite by dog
'Zan got bitten (by a dog).'
- b. * Zan ti morde ar lisyen
Zan PST bite by dog
(intended: 'Zan was bitten by a dog.')

- ◇ HC doesn't have a *gagn*-passive as far as I know...

³Note that there is a possible use of the long form in (4a) that marks verb focus, emphasizing the action of the predicate (Henri, forthcoming: 278, 327, 335–337).

⁴Newman (2020) discusses “facilitation” effects on A-movement and Syea (2024) discusses “transitive OV” word orders in Mauritian).

Part 1. Allomorphy and Facilitation

Q1. Do FLCs have passive constructions?

- ◇ If so, are they like the **Passive without Morphology (PwM)** constructions of languages such as Bùli [31]?

(7) *Passive sentences in Bùli* [31, p. 2]

- Lāmmú b̀̀ni
meat.DEF chop
'The meat was chopped.'
- Lāmmú tè̀ b́sáńá
meat.DEF give children
'The meat was given to children.'

- ◇ If not, why don't FLCs exploit A-movement for transitive OV word orders [34]?

Q2. How do we best characterize the morphology of verbal alternations in FLC?

- ◇ Is the allomorphy purely phonologically conditioned and derivable from one underlying representation of the verb?
- ◇ If not, what is the syntactic or morphological source of the competition between the short and long forms of the verb?

! **Plot twist!** Categories like “passives” and “middles” (or A/A-bar) do not have to dictate how people acquire and classify their lexicons (or movement operations.)

- ◇ It is more insightful to examine how general (and independent) principles of both locality-constrained syntactic derivation [e.g., 24,25] and phonologically governed morphological realization [e.g., 18,27] might interact to shape complex patterns.

Example 1: How Nothing is still Something in Haitian for Lahrouchi and Ulfsgjorninn (2024)

🗨 In HC regressive nasalization occurs optionally in almost all VN (*vowel-nasal*) sequences, but not if they correspond with VRN (*vowel-liquid-nasal*) sequences of French etymons.

Table 1: R-deletion and optional regressive nasalization [18, p. 256]

	/fam/	/farm/
Nasal harmony	[fãm]	–
R-deletion	–	[fam]
Output	[fãm]	[fam]
Gloss	'room'	'charm'

- ◇ Lahrouchi and Ulfsbjorninn (2024) argue that VR# forms have retained the underlying /r/ from French in some way, **not literally** but rather in an abstract way that interacts with phonological computation to derive this counterfeeding pattern.

(8) *Phonology-to-phonetics mapping* [18, p. 279]

V may be interpreted as \tilde{V} when the phonological description contains VN.

(9) *Condition on optional regressive assimilation and associated structures* [18, p. 279]

a. VN

C	V	C	V
f	a	m	i

Phonological sequence: V N V

Interpreted: [fami] or [fāmi] ‘family’

b. VRN

C	V	C	V	C	V
f	ε			m	e

Phonological sequence: V C^{EMPTY} V^{EMPTY} N

Interpreted: [fεme] / *[fēme] ‘to close’


c. VLN

C	V	C	V	C	V
p	a	l		m	i ...

Phonological sequence: V C^{FILLED} V^{EMPTY} N

Interpreted: [palmis] / *[pālmis] ‘palm’

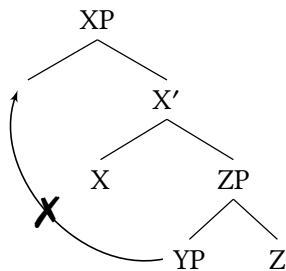
- ◇ Phonology regulates when and where you’re allowed to have empty CVs. This is a very powerful system that can also do a lot of (“phonologically conditioned”) allomorphy for us on the PF side!

 Some CV Phonology literature: Charette [2], Newell [22], and Scheer [26].

Example 2: Middles and Facilitation Effects in Newman (2020)

Deal's Generalized Spec-to-Spec Antilocality Movement of a phrase out from a specifier position of XP must cross a maximal projection other than XP (i.e., spec-to-spec movement cannot be "too short").

(10) *Illicit "too-short" Spec-to-Spec movement*



☞ Antilocality has mainly been discussed in the domain of \bar{A} -movement, where “a single adjunct or moved phrase is enough to obviate the special behavior of subject extraction” [8, p. 26], however, Newman (2020) argues that similar sensitivity to intervening adverbial structure is observed in A-movement, especially in **middle constructions**.⁵

✚ Unlike middles, unaccusatives and passives are not rendered ungrammatical without the presence of, say, adverbs.

(11) *Obligatory adjuncts in English middles*

- a. Bureaucrats bribe *(easily).
- b. This book reads *(quickly).
- c. Beautiful landscapes photograph *(well).

☞ According to Newman, adverb “facilitation” in middles parallels *that*-trace effects: in both cases, the movement step would otherwise be too local, and the presence of an intervening adverbial projection renders the derivation licit.

⁵An earlier argument that antilocality constrains A-movement comes from Deal (2019). She argues that in Nez Perce applicative unaccusatives, the theme argument raises over the applicative argument to receive ergative case. Crucially, the applicative argument is trapped in SpecAppP, since movement from SpecAppP to SpecvP would be too short. The theme therefore must move across the applicative projection, consistent with Erlewine's Spec-to-Spec antilocality [4,7].

- ◇ Looking at object A-movement across construction types, she finds that certain derivations require an additional optional projection, a **facilitator**, to avoid too-local movement, and that such **facilitation effects** arise in some A-movement environments but not others due to structural differences.

Newman's Generalized Antilocality Moving constituent α must *cross* a constituent distinct from the closest X^0 that **c-commands** it.

- ◇ Movement from a position α to a position β *crosses* a constituent γ iff γ asymmetrically **c-commands** α but not β .

(12) *by-phrase in middles vs. passives*

- * The ocean photographs well by an amateur.
- The ocean was photographed well by an amateur.

- ◇ Intuitively, middle clauses are still transitive and imply an agent of the verb, but unlike passives, middles cannot host a *by-phrase*

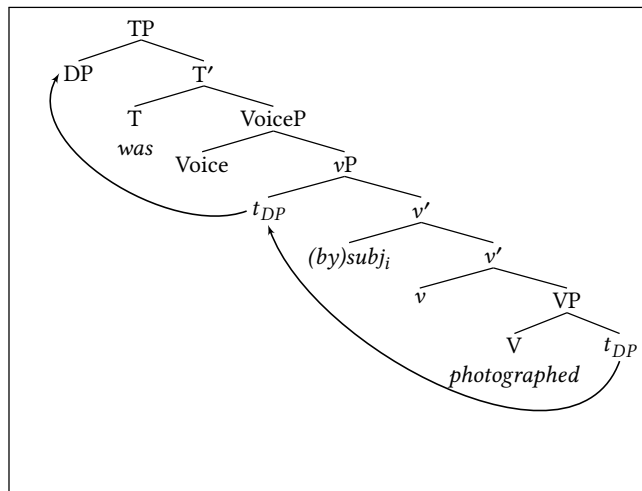


Figure 1: A derivation for passives using a VoiceP system. No facilitation is needed because both movement steps are anti-local [23, p. 7].

(13) *Facilitation in middles vs. passives*

- The ocean photographs *(well).
- The ocean was photographed (well).

☞ Newman argues that s-middles (Figure 2) lack the projections that license movement in passives, namely VoiceP and an external argument. As a result, movement would be too local unless an additional projection is introduced. Adverbial phrases, negation, or similar structure therefore function as facilitators.

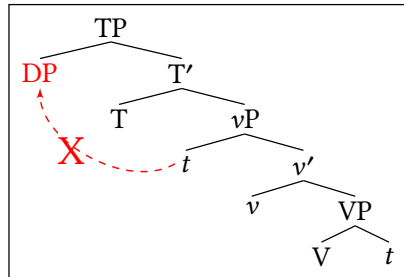


Figure 2: Too-local A-movement step in middles [23, p. 11]

☞ Verbs differ in their facilitation requirements. Some allow either a high or low facilitator, others permit only low facilitators, and a third class requires both a high and a low facilitator simultaneously. This suggests both between-language and within-language variation in the structural configuration associated with verbs and their internal arguments.

(14) *Variation in facilitation requirements* [23, p. 14]

a. **Either high or low facilitator works**

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| i. | The bread cuts easily/quickly/like molasses. | ✓ Low adverb |
| ii. | The bread should/might/will cut. | ✓ Modal |
| iii. | The bread didn't cut. | ✓ Negation |
| iv. | Speaker A: I told you it would be hard to cut bread with a fork.
Speaker B: But the bread <i>did</i> cut! | ✓ Verum focus |

b. **Only low facilitator works**

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------|
| i. | The book reads easily/quickly/like a play. | ✓ Low adverb |
| ii. | * The book should/might/will read. | *Modal |
| iii. | * The book doesn't read. | *Negation |
| iv. | Speaker A: I told you, books are for using as pillows, not reading!
Speaker B: * But the book <i>did</i> read! | *Verum focus |

c. **Both high and low facilitator required**

- | | |
|------|--|
| i. | * Those diamonds steal easily. |
| ii. | * Those diamonds don't steal. |
| iii. | ? Those diamonds don't steal easily. |
| iv. | * Roger Federer defeats easily. |
| v. | * Roger Federer doesn't defeat. |
| vi. | ? Roger Federer doesn't defeat easily. |

- ◇ Both the **either**-type (14a) and **low**-type (14b) classes are well populated in English. The rarer **both**-type (14c) class patterns with structures that do not further embed objects, requiring simultaneous low and high facilitation [23, p. 14].

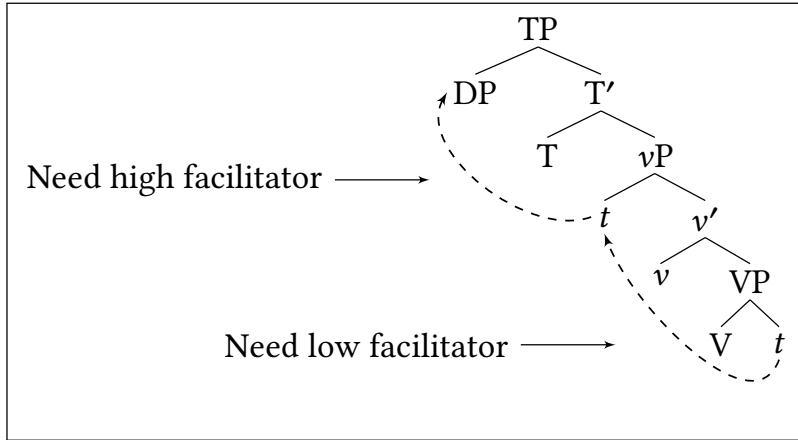


Figure 3: Newman’s proposal: in *syntactic middles* (“s-middles”), movement requires additional projections (“facilitators”) to avoid antilocality.

Part 2. How (not) to syntax-phonology?

🗨️ Again, the verbs of **FLCs** may alternate between a **Short Form (SF)** and **Long Form (LF)**.

(15) *Verb apocope in FLC*

- Mo fin ✓ mâze / ✗ mâz
1.SG finish eat
‘I have eaten.’
- Mo fin ✗ mâze / ✓ mâz diri la
1.SG finish eat rice DEF
‘I have eaten the rice.’

[Mauritian Creole, 29]

- Le klos ape ✓ sone / ✗ son aster
DEF bell PROG ring now
‘The bell is ringing now.’
- Yer le klos ✓ sone / ✗ son a witer
yesterday DEF bell ring at eight-hour
‘Yesterday, the bell rang at eight.’
- Zordi le klos ✗ sone / ✓ son a onzer
today DEF bell ring at eleven-hour
‘Today the bell rings at eleven.’

[Louisianese, 15]

- ◇ The crosslinguistic facts are complex and the SF/LF alternation plays out differently across FLCs.⁶

🗨 Verbs in HC may also surface as SF or LF (e.g. *gad* vs. *gade* ‘look’), though the alternation is much less productive in this language compared to a language like MC (Henri, forthcoming, counts 12 out of 2657 verb forms in Valdman et al. 2007’s dictionary compared to her sample of 1494 out of 2139 verbs; most LF are *-e* final).

(17) *The SF/LF alternation in Haitian Creole*

- Malis te ✓ *gad* / ✓ *gade* fim
Malis PST watch film
‘Malis watched movies.’
- Fim *(ki) ka ✗ *gad* / ✓ *gade* sou Netflix
film that can watch on Netflix
‘Movies that can be watched on Netflix.’

- ◇ Recall that passive constructions seem to be generally disallowed in HC, however, the presence of the modal *ka* in (17b) can improve the acceptability of transitive OV word orders.

🗨 The restriction on LF/SF alternation is sensitive to the type of material immediately following the verb: for example, some adverbs are compatible with both forms, while others exclude SF.

- ◇ Temporal and aspectual adverbs like *yè* ‘yesterday’ and *deja* ‘already’ can easily follow both LF and SF.
- ◇ Degree adverbs like *anpil* ‘a lot’ are degraded after SF.

(18) *Adverb type affects LF/SF*

- Se fim sa Saika t ap ✓ *gade* / ✓ *gad* yè
it.is movie DEM Saika PST PROG watch yesterday
‘It’s this movie, Saika was watching yesterday.’
- Se fim sa Saika t ap ✓ *gade* / ✓ *gad* deja
it.is movie DEM Saika PST PROG watch already
‘It’s this movie, Saika watched already.’
- Se fim sa Saika t ap ✓ *gade* / ?? *gad* anpil
it.is movie DEM Saika PST PROG watch a.lot
‘It’s this movie, Saika watched a lot.’

⁶ For example, in Louisianese (16) the alternation inflects for tense and aspect: SF is used for present habitual and imperatives, LF is used for past tense and progressive. In other words, the presence of TAM markers invariably attract LF, distinguishing finite and non-finite clauses.

🗨️ Clausal complements show a parallel sensitivity, and the availability of **SF** depends on the type of embedded clause.

- ◇ Embedded interrogatives pattern with DP objects in allowing both forms. *pou* “for” infinitives and *se*-cleft “it is” complements require **LF**.

(19) *Clause type affects LF/SF*

- a. Èske li ✓ konnen / ✓ konn kijan pou (li) pati
 Q 3.SG know how for 3.SG leave
 ‘Does he/she know how to leave?’
- b. Èske li ✓ konnen / ✗ konn pou *(li) pati
 Q 3.SG know for 3.SG leave
 ‘Does he/she know to leave?’
- c. Èske li ✓ konnen / ✗ konn se Malis ki te pati
 Q 3.SG know it.is Malis COMP.SUBJ PST leave
 ‘Does he/she know that it was Malis who left?’

🔗 Similarly to what has been shown for **MC** [14,29,32,33], the surface the distribution of **SF** suggests a phonological dependency: it is acceptable when followed by overt material but degraded domain-finally. However, in **HC** only **LF** is possible with pronominal objects.

(20) *SF rules out pronouns in HC*

- Saika ap ✓ gade / ✗ gad li
 Saika PROG watch 3.SG
 ‘Saika is watching it.’

- ◇ In contrast, **MC** strong object pronouns follow the **SF** form and **LF** is excluded.

(21) *Short form required pronouns in MC*

- a. Mo’nn ✓ trouv / ✗ trouve twa
 1.SG.PRF see 2.SG
 ‘I have seen you.’
- b. Mo’nn ✓ trouv / ✗ trouve li
 1.SG.PRF see 3.SG
 ‘I have seen him/her.’

- ◇ But we also know that **HC** exhibits domain-final restrictions elsewhere in its grammar.

(22) *Copulas and the empty predicate restriction in HC* [cf. 5,6]

- a. Saika se yon doktè
Saika SE a doctor
'Saika is a doctor.'
- b. Se (yon) doktè Saika *(ye)
SE a doctor Saika YE
'Saika is a doctor.'
- c. * Saika ye yon doktè
Saika YE a doctor
(intended: 'Saika is a doctor.')

(23) *Predicate fronting and doubling in HC* [cf. 9,12]

- a. (Se) **kontan** ✗ ki / ✓ ke / ✓ Ø Bouki *(**kontan**)
SE happy COMP Bouki happy
'It is that Bouki is HAPPY (not sad).'
- b. (Se) **kouri** ✗ ki / ✓ ke / ✓ Ø Bouki *(**kouri**)
SE run COMP Bouki run
'It is that Bouki RUNS (not walks).'

✚ Certain coordination environments obviate the **LF/SF** alternation, while others do not: in *ni...ni* 'neither...nor' constructions, the **SF** form is degraded but not fully excluded as it is with the conjunction *epi* 'and', even though the first conjunct lacks an overt object.

(24) *Coordination affects LF/SF*

- a. Malis pa ✓ gade / ✗ gad (futbòl) epi li pa jwe futbòl
Malis NEG watch and 3.SG NEG play football
'Malis does not watch and he does not play football.'
- b. Malis ni ✓ gade / ? gad (futbòl) ni jwe futbòl
Malis neither watch nor play football
'Malis neither watches nor plays football.'

(25) *Zulu: Prosodic boundary in first conjunct → Conjoint required* [11, p. 140]

- ngi-buk-e:la (ibho:la) futhi (ngi-phinde) ngi-dlal-e ibho:la
1.SG-watch-APPL AUG.5soccer and (1.SG-again) 1.SG-play-CJ AUG.5soccer
'I watch and I (also) play soccer.'

Given that the phonological form (i.e., overtness) of the postverbal complement seems to play a key role in determining the surface form of the verb (i.e., how it is spelled out at PF), Syea (2013) proposes for MC that PF rules must be sensitive to both the categorial status and the phonetic form of the postverbal constituent.

(26) Syea's PF Rule [33, p. 187]

Spell verbs out in their short form, if they are in a local head-spec configuration with an overt constituent, otherwise spell them out in their long form.

◇ So this rule tells us that at PF, we can check for whether or not a head is close enough to an OVERT specifier that it dominates. Let's consider some of his derivations...

(27) Li nn ✓ gard / ✗ garde liv la dan so sak
 3.SG ASP keep book DET in 3.SG.POSS bag
 'He keeps the book in his bag.'

[Mauritian Creole; 33, p. 188]

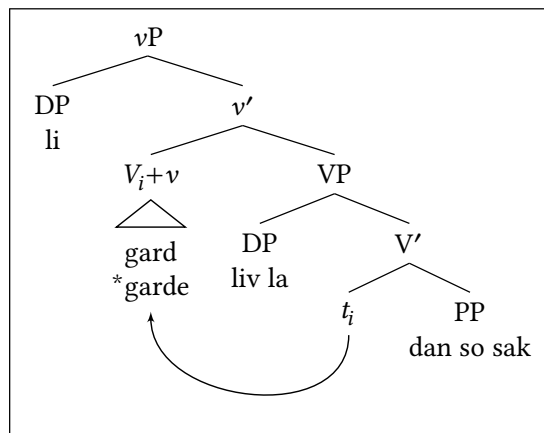


Figure 4: Partial representation of (27) [33, p. 188].

(28) Li ✓ galup / ✗ galupe lor simen avan midi
 3.SG run on street before noon
 'He runs on the street before noon.'

[Mauritian Creole; 33, p. 187]

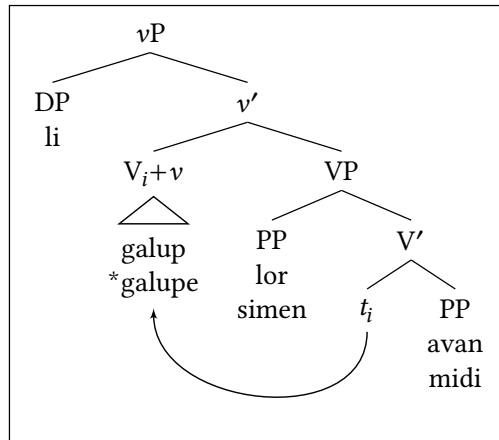


Figure 5: Partial representation of (28) [33, p. 187].

- ◇ There are some cool implications here! Syea assumes V-to-*v* head movement for MC (which has also been independently demonstrated for HC [6]), but even more interesting is his proposal that the **complement/adjunct distinction be derived from whether a constituent is merged to the left or right of the verb (respectively)**.⁷

(29) Li nn ✗al / ✓ale san dir nu
 3.SG ASP go without tell 1.PL
 ‘He went without telling us.’

[Mauritian Creole; 33, p. 189]

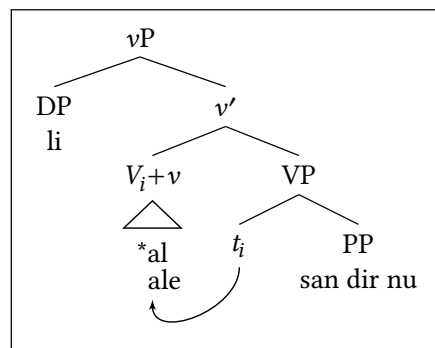


Figure 6: Partial representation of (29). [33, p. 189]

- ◇ He also argues that **wh-movement blocks the short form**, just in case that some kind of linear adjacency requirement between the verb and a lexical complement is not fulfilled [33, pp. 186–187].

(30) Ki to ti ?gard / ✓garde ki lor latab
 what 2.SG PST keep what on table
 ‘What did you put on the table?’

[Mauritian Creole; 33, p. 186]

⁷Adjuncts have been claimed to affect movement possibilities, though they are usually represented as specifiers.

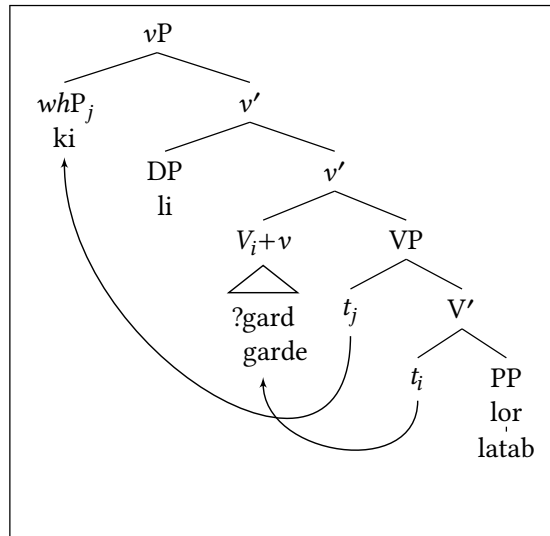


Figure 7: Partial representation of (30) [33, p. 188].

◇ Syea also illustrates how vP complements can pattern with the short form.

- (31) Nu ✓ pans / ✗ panse al lamer dimans
 1.PL think go seaside Sunday

‘We are thinking of going to the seaside on Sunday.’

[Mauritian Creole; 33, p. 189]

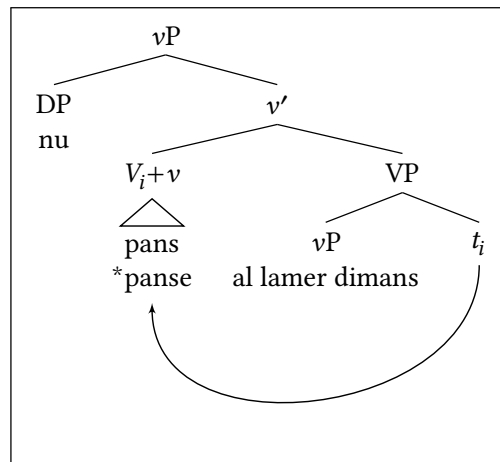


Figure 8: Partial representation of (31) [33, p. 189].

- ◇ So vP (unlike CPs) are merged to the left of the verb [33, p. 190]. Though this might run into trouble with some of the MC data we saw earlier.

(32) *Mauritian Creole transitive VO and OV word orders with serial verbs.*

- Mo ti ✓ aret / ✗ arete ferm lafnat aswar
1.SG PST stop close window night
'I stopped closing the windows at night.' [13, p. 278]
- Mo kone ki se Zan ki Mark inn ? fors / ✗ forse vann so lakaz
1.SG know REL SE John REL Mark PFV force sell 3.SG.POSS house
'I know that it is John that Mark forced to sell his house.' (Henri, p.c.)
- Li pe ✗ fors / ✓ forse vann so lakaz
3.SG PROG force sell 3.SG.POSS house
'He is being forced to sell his house.' [17]

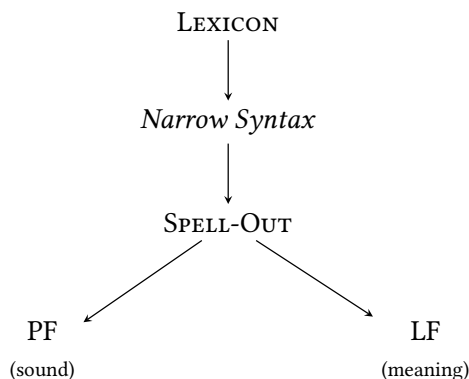
- ◇ There's still some work left to illustrate why vPs count as adjuncts with the transitive OV word order!

Null vs. Silence

☞ Whether or not a constituent is merged in the syntax has nothing to do with whether or not it is realized in phonology (e.g., pronounced or signed) **unless we are explicit about the connection!** (Or, at least I need to be explicit about this because I confuse easily...)

- ◇ **Syntactically Null** (\emptyset_S) = **may or may not** be represented in the narrow syntax (**depends on your specific theory**), but never PF-legible (by definition)
- ◇ **Phonologically Silent** (\emptyset_P) = **must** be represented in the narrow syntax (**assumes Y-model**), is PF-legible but lacks overt phonetic realization (by definition)
- ◇ **Phonologically Overt** (\emptyset_O) = **must** be represented in the narrow syntax (**assumes Y-model**), is PF-legible and has a phonetic realization (by definition)

(33) *The Y-Model of Grammar*



(34) *Syeda's PF Rule again* [33, p. 187]

Spell verbs out in their short form, if they are in a local head-spec configuration with an OVERT constituent, otherwise spell them out in their long form.

🗨 In Asante Twi (Niger-Congo), the morpheme $y\epsilon$ obligatorily surfaces as a default verbal exponent under V-to-T movement.

(35) *V-to-T in Asante Twi*

- a. Kofí sa-a *($y\epsilon$)
Kofi dance-PST $y\epsilon$
'Kofi danced.'
- b. Dua nó shii *($y\epsilon$)
tree DEF burn-PST $y\epsilon$
'The tree burned.'

- ◇ For Kandybowicz (2015), $y\epsilon$ is inserted for the head of AspP to avoid a PF violation, namely an OT-style constraint against vacuous Spell-Out domains, assuming the Chomsky-style derivation-by-phase framework.

(36) *Overt aspectual heads obviate $y\epsilon$ requirement*

- a. Kofi ré-sa (* $y\epsilon$)
Kofi PROG-dance $y\epsilon$
'Kofi is dancing.'
- b. Kofi á-sa (* $y\epsilon$)
Kofi PFV-dance $y\epsilon$
'Kofi danced.'

🗨 According to McFadden and Sundaresan (2018), the EPP requirement should not make direct reference to SpecTP given the Y-Model: "We need a way then to define the relevant position targeted by the EPP in terms that should make sense at PF, *and ideally there should also be a phonological or prosodic reason for why this position in particular should have to be filled by something overt.*"

- ◇ **Intonational Phrase Edge Generalization (IPEG):** The edge of an Intonational Phrase (IntP) cannot be empty, where the notion of edge includes both the specifier and the head of the relevant syntactic constituent. [21, p. 10]
- ◇ **Overt Subject Requirement (OSR):** Constraints against empty subject positions (e.g. the EPP, the *that*-trace effect, and the ban on *for-pro-to*) arise when SpecTP, as the left edge of the CP spell-out domain, coincides with the left edge of an Intonational Phrase. In this configuration, the subject position must be overt to satisfy the IPEG. [21, p. 11]

(37) *CP and IntP edge alignment* [21, p. 14]

a. $[_{TP} (^{IntP} \text{PRO To}_T [_{vP} \text{eat the samosas }])]]$ would be a mistake.

b. * $[_{CP} (^{IntP} C [_{TP} \text{PRO To}_T [_{vP} \text{eat the samosas }]])]]$ would be a mistake.

- ◇ (37a) satisfies OSR because $C = \emptyset_S$ and *to* is overt, realizing the highest head. Therefore, the left edge of the spell-out domain is phonologically filled even though SpecTP is silent. (37b) is ungrammatical because the left edge consisting of C and its specifier are all silent, violating OSR.

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