

NOTES ON THE LEFT PERIPHERY IN JAMAICAN CREOLE

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O. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this work is to determine some basic properties of the left periphery of the clause in Jamaican Creole (henceforth JC). More specifically, I will examine syntactic aspects of topic, focus and interrogative constructions and propose a structural map accounting for these. The investigation begins in section 1 which outlines characteristics of topicalization in this language. Section 2 highlights syntactic particularities of JC sentences involving focus, and section 3 compares these properties with those observed for interrogatives. It will be seen that the element *a* has an important role to play in both focus and interrogative constructions, and for this reason section 4 concentrates on analysing the structural and interpretative status of this element. Section 5 sketches a possible analysis for these structures. Section 6 concludes the discussion by proposing an articulation of topic, focus and interrogative constructions in JC largely along the lines of the Split-CP framework initially proposed by Rizzi (1997).

1. THE WORD ORDER OF SENTENCES INVOLVING TOPICS

1.1. Topicalization in main clauses

This section briefly sketches topicalization in JC. The sentence in (1a) exemplifies adjunct topicalization:

- (1) Tomorrah mi wi ramp wi di pickney-dem
Tomorrow 1st sg [Fut] play with the child - 3rd pl
'Tomorrow I will play with the children'

Unlike topicalization of an adjunct, topicalization of an argument in a variety of languages entails the presence of a pronominal element in the comment to refer back to it. Rizzi (1997) draws on Cinque (1990) to point out this property of topicalization in Italian:

- (2) a. Il tuo libro, **lo** ho comprato
'Your book, I bought it'
b. * Il tuo libro, ho comprato t
'Your book, I bought'

This structural property of argument topicalization attested in Italian extends to JC as illustrated by the sentence below:

- (3) a. **da bwai deh**, mi laik **im**
that boy [loc], 1st sg like him
'As for that boy, I like him'
b.??? da bwai deh, mi laik

The data in (3) further illustrates that a topicalized argument may be associated with the locative *deh*, in which case *deh* is generated to the right of the XP[+Top]. We will return to the status of *deh* in section 3.3.

The grammaticality of sentence (4) below testifies to the fact that multiple topicalization is unproblematic in JC:

- (4) Yestadei, dah bwai-deh, mi cuss im kyaan done
 Yesterday, that boy-locative, 1st sg curse 3rd sg Mod+neg finish
 ‘Yesterday, that boy, I scolded him severely’

The Split-CP proposed by Rizzi (1997) situates topics in the specifier of a recursive projection TopP, which explains the grammaticality of sentences such as that given in (4) above.

1.2. Topicalization in embedded clauses

Topicalization is not restricted to main clauses. The sentence below illustrates topicalization in an embedded clause introduced by *seh*:

- (5) Mi nuo seh [yestadei [Jan did waan dash i’ weh]]
 1st sg know seh yesterday John [past] want throw it away
 ‘I know that yesterday John wanted to throw it away’

It is tempting to analyse *seh* as an overt manifestation of Force^o in JC, as this element tends to appear in many cases where we would find complementizers introducing a finite clause in other languages. Hopper & Traugott (1993:14,15) draw on Lord’s (1976:179-82) work on West African languages to illustrate that it is not uncommon for “a locutionary verb meaning ‘say’ (...) to function as a complementizer”. Hopper & Traugott uphold that in these languages, there is a “process leading to grammaticalization of a ‘say’ verb into a complementizer”. Under this perspective the fact that topics cannot precede *seh* would follow from the Split-CP structure (Rizzi 1997) :

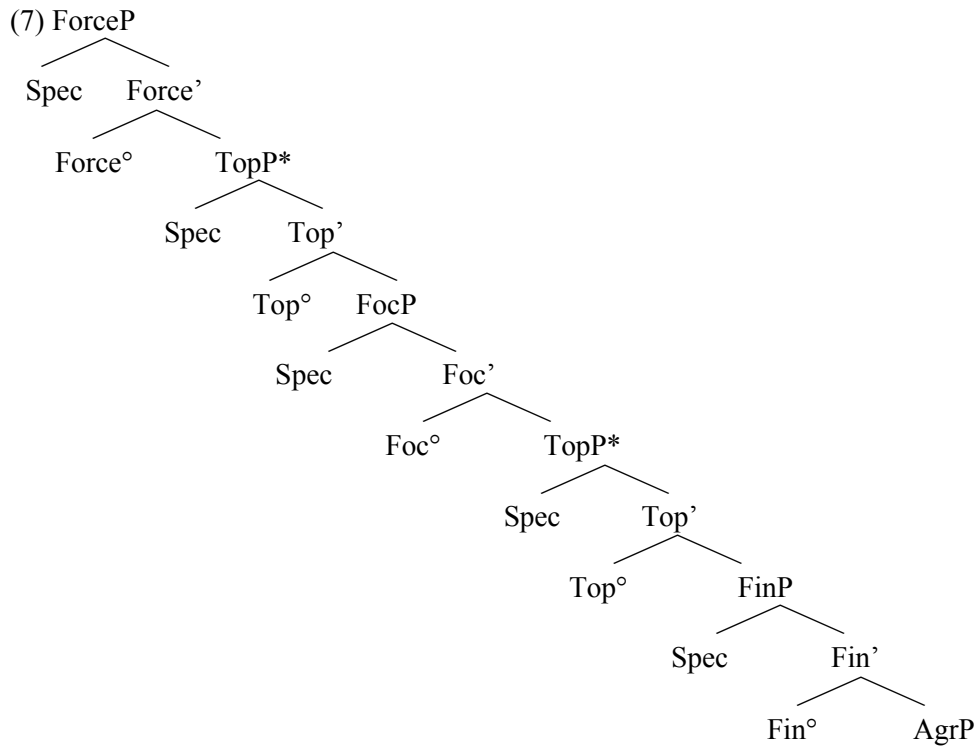
- (6) * Mi nuo [yestadei seh [Jan did waan dash i’ weh]]

I will return to a more detailed discussion of *seh* in section 4.1.

1.3. The Nature of TopP

Up to this point, we have seen that topicalization involves preposing of an XP [+Top] from the clause where it is base generated to a position situated in between what may be analysed as the morphological realization of Force^o, and [Spec,IP].¹

These structural properties of topicalization in JC follow from the articulate ‘Split CP’ structure proposed by Rizzi (1997):



We have also seen that topicalization in this language leaves a resumptive pronoun in its base position. This property does not follow from the structure in (7) alone. Indeed, something more has to be said regarding the nature of TopP. This is why Rizzi (1997:292) proposes that the projection hosting topics is non-quantificational, which is why “an empty category in object position has no legitimate status: it cannot be a variable, as there is no quantifier to bind it, nor can it fulfill the conditions of any other type of ec (PRO, pro or DP-trace)”.

This approach not only explains why topicalization in JC may bring about the filling of its base position with a resumptive pronoun, but it also makes certain predictions as to the nature of the XPs which may occupy [Spec,TopP], as well as to the effects yielded by the resulting chain. More specifically, the hypothesis that TopP is universally a non-quantificational projection implies that quantificational Operators do not have the option of sitting in the Specifier of this projection. Since XPs that occupy this position cannot be Operators [+Q], and only these Operators are sensitive to Weak Crossover (WCO), then there should be no WCO effects brought about by the chain headed by XPs in [Spec,TopP].² The examples in (8) and (9) confirm that these predictions hold in JC:

- (8) Da bwai deh i, im i mudda love im i bad
 Det boy [loc], 3rd sg mother love 3rd sg bad
 ‘As for that boy, his mother loves him a lot’

- (9) a. * Evribady i, dem i mudda laik t i
 Everybody, 3rd pl mother like
 ‘Everybody, their mother likes’
 b. * Evribady i (deh), dem i laik mi
 c. * Evribady i (deh), mi laik dem i

¹ See Hopper & Traugott (1993), and Lord (1976)

² Following Lasnik and Stowell (1991)

The sentence in (8) is perfectly legitimate: no WCO effects result from the coindexing of the resumptive pronoun *im* with the possessive contained within the subject. Topic-constructions do not involve quantificational Operators in JC, as predicted by the approach in Rizzi (1997). The situation in (9) is quite different. The ungrammaticality of (9a) suggests that the presence of a preposed Operator, here *Evribady*, unlike preposed topicalized constituents, renders the structure sensitive to WCO. Sentences (9b,c) confirm that Operators are banned from the Topic projection in JC. The framework therefore correctly accounts for the characteristics of JC topicalization observed up to present: i.e. an XP [+Top] targets a recursive left peripheral projection following ForceP and preceding IP. The fact that this projection is [-Q] accounts for the fact that Operators [+Q] cannot be topicalized, that this language exploits a mechanism whereby topicalization entails the use of a resumptive pronoun, and that this chain does not give rise to WCO effects. JC itself does not clearly illustrate that a topicalized constituent targets the Specifier of an entire XP, rather than an adjoined position, as we have not identified an element which fills Top° in this language. However, in the next section, we will consider the case of *deh*, since this locative may possibly be an optional morphological realization of the head of the Topic projection.

1.4. *Deh*

Topicalization in JC was seen (section 3.2.) to optionally involve the presence of a locative element *deh* to the right of the XP [+Top]. We return to a discussion of *deh* in this section.

In the extract given below, Christie (1997:39) touches on some structural properties of argument topicalization in JC, which in her terminology falls under ‘non-contrastive emphasis’ of a ‘thematic expression’. Notice that amongst these syntactic properties, she mentions the frequent appearance of *deh*:

“Where non-contrastive emphasis, unlike contrastive emphasis, is concerned, one important identifying feature for Jamaican is a phonological cue, that is, a pause which separates the thematic expression from the following unit(s). There are non-phonological characteristics as well. For example, word-order manipulation applies here too, but there is no specific focalizing morpheme, unlike the situation with contrastive emphasis. However an anaphoric proform or a noun, coreferential with the thematic expression, links this to the ‘remainder’ of the utterance. **The thematic expression itself often includes a deictic which further singles it out from the rest of the sentence**”.³

The question now arises as to how to analyse *deh* in these instances. As a starting point, it is important to observe that the use of *deh* in the middle field may suggest that this element serves two different functions, one being adverbial and the other verbal:

- (10) a. Di pickney-dem nuh waan go skuul
 The child-[3rd pl] [neg] want go school
 ‘The children do not want to go to school’
- b. Di pickney-dem nuh waan go **deh**
 The child- [3rd pl] [neg] want go there
 ‘The children do not want to go there’

³ Bold lettering is mine.

In (10b) *deh* is an adverb equivalent to Standard English ‘there’, and therefore its status is one of an XP. However *deh* may be used differently, as shown by the sentence below:

- (11) Di pickney-dem **deh** a skuul
 The child-[3rd pl] [copula+loc] at school
 ‘The children are at school’

- (12) wan trii de batamsaid mi hous (Bailey 1966:33)
 one tree [copula +loc] under 1st sg house
 ‘There is a tree below my house’

Bailey (1961:33) classifies this use of *deh* as the “locating verb ‘be’”. I will generally refer to *de(h)* in these instances as the locative copula *deh*, and gloss it as cop [+loc]. Notice that these two uses of *deh* may co-occur, reinforcing the idea that they are two different elements:

- (13) a. Dem deh deh
 3rd pl cop [+loc] there
 ‘They are there’

Pronounced more commonly as:

- b. Dem **di** deh

Phonetic alternation also takes place when *deh* occurs with the adverb *ya* meaning ‘here’, so that (14a) becomes (14b):

- (14) a. Dem no deh ya (Adams (1995:36))
 3rd pl [neg] cop [+loc] here
 ‘They are not here’
 b. Dem no **da** ya

Adams (1995:36) observes that this preferred alternation in pronunciation “may be relics of ancient African patterns of vowel harmony, whereby the quality of a vowel is influenced by the succeeding vowel”. Cassidy (1961:60) also points out the potential link between the JC locative copula *de/di/da* with the substrate when he notes that “there is in Twi, for example, an extremely common verb *da* meaning to *lie, be situated, live, remain, rest*, and so on. Obviously these all involve the idea of being in a place; thus *da* could easily have been converted to uses equivalent to those of English *be*.”

It is not uncommon for a language to use the same element to fulfil more than one syntactic function: Standard English exploits a similar mechanism with *that*, one use corresponding to a left-peripheral head-position: Force^o, and two others being DP-related XPs: pronominal *that* and demonstrative *that*. The sentence below exemplifies these three instances of *that*:

- (15) That that boy should do that is a shame
 Force^o Demonstrative Pronominal

It is worth noting that the literal locative reading is lost when *deh* occurs in topic constructions: its purpose in such sentences is rather to signal that the XP it is associated with is old information. Consequently, in the example given below, *deh* does not refer to the boy’s

physical presence, but simply singles this boy out as the one which has already been introduced in the discourse:

- (16) **Da bwai-deh, im** tel tu moch lai
 That one *deh*, 3rd sg tell too much lie
 ‘As for that boy, he tells too many lies’

Bearing this observation in mind, the analysis accorded to topic *deh* must show that it is neither the locative adverb nor the locative copula. Not only is the split between the former and the latter *deh* elements interpretationally founded, but it also holds on a structural level: left-peripheral *deh* is unlikely to be an IP-internal *deh* which has undergone leftward movement since quantifiers can occur with both the locative adverb and the copula, but not with topic *deh*:

- (17) Evribady deh a skuul
 Everybody **cop[+loc]** at school
 ‘Everybody is at school’
- (18) Mi laik evribady deh
 1st sg like everybody **Adv[+loc]**
 ‘I like everybody there’
- (19) * Evribady deh, mi laik dem
 Everybody [**Top**], 1st sg like them

Therefore Top *deh* can be analysed as separate to adverbial and copula *deh*. Yet as *deh* was seen IP-internally to have both the status of an XP (adverb) and that of an X^o (copula), the use of this element in topicalized constructions leaves two structural options accessible: either *deh* [Top] is a deictic XP selected by the XP in [Spec,TopP], or it is an optional realization of Top^o.

Recall that *deh* is optional in JC topic constructions. It is worth underlining at this point that the optional nature of Top^o is cross-linguistically attested: For Gungbe, Aboh (1996:87) writes that “Top^o is optionally realized in the language as ‘ya’, a morpheme that typically occurs to the right of the topic elements”

- (20) Kofi **ya**, gan kpa me we kponon le su-i do
 Kofi Top prison in FM policeman the-PL shut-PERF-him LOC
 ‘As for Kofi, the policemen put him IN PRISON’
 (Aboh 1996:87)

Another particularity of *deh* is that it can only occur once. Under the approach whereby TopP is recursive, this is somewhat surprising. But, once again, this would not be a first for a morphological realization of Top^o: the Gungbe topic-marker *ya* is also limited to one occurrence.

The optional, non-recursive nature of *deh* therefore largely resembles Gungbe *ya*, analysed as Top^o (Aboh 1996). I will therefore propose that it is also plausible to situate JC *deh* [+Top] in Top^o. Moreover this approach has another advantage which I will turn to now.

It is important to underline that topic-associated *deh* only potentially occurs with topicalized arguments:

- (21) a. Yestadei, da bwai (-deh), im nyam aff di whole a di bammi-dem
 Yesterday, that boy ([Top]), 1st sg eat off the whole of the bammy [pl]
 ‘Yesterday, that very boy, he ate up all of the bammies’

- b. * Yestadei- **deh**, da bwai (-deh), im nyam aff di whole a di bammi-dem

Deh cannot appear with the temporal adverb *yestadei*, nor with any adverb for that matter.

Recall that a characteristic of topics is that they represent old information. At this point it is worth pointing out that the only element which necessarily encodes old information in sentence (21a) is the argument *da bwai-deh*, and not the temporal adverb *yestadei*. Indeed, it appears that only topicalized arguments have to have been previously introduced in the discourse, while preposed ‘scene-setters’ (e.g. temporal or locative specifications) may represent new information (although the latter are not contrastive like focal information). It seems then that only arguments function as ‘genuine’ topics, and this would explain why only these exhibit certain structural characteristics of topics in JC (and other languages) such as being linked to a resumptive pronoun in the comment (Sections 3.1 and 3.3). Recall that this was not found to obtain for the ‘scene-setters’. The observation that only thematic material can qualify for authentic topicalization allows us to account for the structural particularities of Topic *deh* by a single structural constraint: the topic-projection is non-recursive. If, as it has been proposed here, *deh* is the potential overt realization of Top^o, then it follows that *deh* [+Top] only occurs with arguments (the only elements which can target [SpecTopP]), and that it occurs only once. It follows that fronted scene-setters/ modifiers target a separate position, this projection is generated structurally higher than the position reserved for genuine topics.

- (21) c. ?? da bwai-deh, yestadei, im nyam aaf di whole a di bammi-dem

The structure thus far for a sentence such as (21a) is as follows:

- (22) [SceneSetterP* yestadei [Top(ic)P da-bwai [Top^o deh [IP im nyam aff di whole a di bammi-dem]]]]

It appears that the projection hosting modifiers is recursive, unlike the one hosting genuine (thematic) topicalized material.

2. THE WORD ORDER OF SENTENCES INVOLVING FOCUS

The previous section outlined characteristics of topicalization, a process involving the left periphery. Another process associated with this structural layer is that of focussing. This section outlines properties of focus in main and embedded clauses of JC.

2.1. Focussing in main clauses

JC sentences involving focalisation generally place the focussed XP at the front of the sentence. This XP is necessarily immediately preceded by an *a*-element:

- (23) a. Piita nyam di bammi
 Peter eat the bammy
 ‘Peter ate the bammy’

- b. A di bammi Piita nyam (...nutn more)
 a the bammy Mary eat (... nothing more)
 ‘What Peter ate was the bammy (... nothing else)’
- c. * Di bammi Piita nyam (...nutn more)

Multiple focussing is excluded in this language:

- (24) a. * A di bammi a di pickny [im gi
 A the bammy a the child [3sg give
- b. * A di pickny a di bammi [im gi
 A the child a the bammy [3sg give

Recall that the analysis put forth by Rizzi (1997) postulates that leftward movement of an XP [+Foc] targets a non-recursive projection in the left periphery. In this way, the framework sketched in Rizzi (1997) gives a syntactic account for the ungrammaticality of (24).

Resumptive clitics do not constitute a characteristic of sentences involving focus: Notice that the sentences below, introduced by an *a*-XP, cannot involve resumptive pronouns:

- (25) * A di bammi Piita nyam **i'** (...nutn more)
 A the bammy Mary eat it (... nothing more)

- (26) * A Jan mi laik **im**
 A John 1st sg like him
 ‘JOHN I like him’

- (27) A Jan mi laik
 A John 1st sg like
 ‘JOHN I like’

This implies that a syntactically focussed element obligatorily leaves a gap in its base position in JC. The lack of resumptive clitics in focus constructions is cross-linguistically attested:

- (28) * IL TUO LIBRO **lo** ho comprato (non il suo) (Italian)
 ‘YOUR BOOK I bought (not his)’
- (29) * JANOSSAL beszélt Mari **vele** a könyvéről (Hungarian)
 john-instr spoke Mary-nom he-instr the book-poss-delat
 ‘Mary spoke WITH JOHN about her book’
- (30) * Keke we Koku xo-e (Gungbe)
 bicycle foc koku buy 3sg
 ‘Koku bought A BICYCLE’

Recall that topics do not leave gaps in their base positions. This was analysed by Rizzi (1997) as stemming from Topic not being quantificational. Rizzi (1997:292), however, proposes that “Focus is quantificational (...) the focalized element must bind a syntactic variable (a non-pronominal empty X-max category in an A-position.” This approach therefore predicts that, unlike that observed for topicalization, focalization of quantifiers should be possible and focus movement should yield WCO effects. The examples below confirm that this is so in JC:

- (31) (A nuh jus yu im tief) A evribady im tief!
 (A [Neg] just 2nd sg 3rd sg thief) A everybody 3rd sg theif
 ‘(It’s not just you who he stole from) He stole from EVERYBODY!’
- (32) (Weh yu tink im sweet yu up fa?) A synting im waan fram yu!
 (Why 2nd sg think 3rd sg sweet 2nd sg up for?) A something 3rd sg want from you
 ‘Why do you think that he flattered you? He wanted SOMETHING from you!’
- (33) A Jiemz i im *i/k mudda love bad, (nuh, Piita)
 A James 3rd sg mother love bad, ([neg] Peter)
 ‘It’s James his mother loves a lot, (not Peter)

Focussing in JC does not entail the overt realisation of a head position to the right of the XP[+focus]. Indeed, unlike that seen for the focus marker *wè* in Gungbe (section 1.2. example 26), for instance, the syntactic distribution of the JC *a*-marker which serves to signal focus is sentence-initial:

- (34) a. A wok mi a wok
 A work 1st sg [prog] work
 ‘What I’m doing is working’
 b. * Wok a mi a wok

Furthermore, fronting of a focussed constituent in JC does not trigger/allow subject-auxiliary inversion, unlike the subject-verb[+fin] phenomena observed in Hungarian (see section 1.2. example 34):

- (35) a. A di rockstone [im **wuda** fling ef mi neva stap im
 A the rock-stone 3rd sg [modal] throw if 1st sg never stop 3rd sg
 ‘He would’ve thrown *the rock* if I hadn’t stopped him’
 b. * A di rockstone **wuda** [im fling ef mi neva stap im

2.2. Focussing in embedded clauses

We already noted in section 3.2 that finite embedded clauses in JC may be introduced by *se(h)*. Some examples drawn from (Bailey 1966) are given below:

- (36) Mi en nuo **se** im wudn kom (Bailey 1966:37)
 1sg [past] know **se** 3rd sg [+Mod+neg] come
 ‘I knew that she wouldn’t come’
- (37) Mi hier **se** fait brok out op a shap (Bailey 1966:37)
 1sg hear **se** fight broke out up at shop
 ‘I hear that there is a fight up at the shop’
- (38) Mi sari **se** unu neba kom (Bailey 1966:44)
 1sg sorry **se** you [pl] never come
 ‘I am sorry that you (pl.) did not come’

As pointed out in section 3.2. corresponding uses of a clause-introducing say-verb has been analysed as an instance of grammaticalization of this verb into a C° (see Hopper and Traugott (1993) and Lord (1993)). Notice now that leftward movement of an XP [+Foc] is not restricted to main clauses and, as can be seen by (39b), when preposing of a focalised XP occurs it follows *se(h)*. As seen for main clauses, the focussed constituent is immediately preceded by the element *a* :

- (39) a. Mi tink **seh** [Piita nyam di bammi]
 1sg think *seh* Peter eat the bammy
 ‘I think that Peter ate the bammy’
 b. Mi tink **seh a di bammi** [Piita nyam]
 1sg think *seh a* the bammy Peter eat
 ‘I think that what Peter ate was the bammy’

In fact, the focussed XP cannot prepose higher than *se(h)*:

- (40) * Mi tink **a di bammi seh** Piita nyam

If *se(h)* is analysed as a complementizer in $Force^\circ$, then this constraint would be a consequence of the structure in (8). We come back to *seh* in section 6.1.

2.3. The nature of [Spec,FocP] in JC

It was pointed out in section 3.3 that FocP is [+Q]. This section examines other properties which the Focus projection in JC evinces. Focus preposing in JC can involve a variety of categories, as the data in (41) through (43) confirm:

- (41) A **di bammi** mi love -> DP
 A the bammy 1sg love
 ‘What I love is the bammy’
 (42) A **tayad** mi did tayad mek mi gwaan so -> A°
 A tired 1sg [past] tired make me go+on so
 ‘It is because I was TIRED that I behaved that way’
 (43) A **wok** mi a wok -> V°
 A work 1sg [prog] work
 ‘What I’m doing is working’

Notice that in cases of what appears to be X° movement (42-43), the X° reduplicates, while in cases of XP movement (41), reduplication of the XP is banned:

- (44) * A **di bammi** mi love **di bammi** ->DP
 A the bammy 1sg love
 ‘What I love is the bammy’

Standard English also marks a clear distinction between focussing of XPs and focussing of X° s: whereas the former appear freely in cleft-constructions, the latter do not:

- (45) It’s John who is here (not Mary)

- (46) a. * It's run that I did (not walk)
 b. What I did is run (not walk) / I RAN

- (47) a. * It is tired that I was
 b. I was TIRED

In some instances, the verb seems to be able to undergo syntactic focussing in English:

- (48) He said he would work, and worki he did ti

However on closer examination, we see that in Standard English what undergo focussing is the entire VP, not just the V°:

- (49) He announced that he would sing the song, and
 a. [sing the song]i [he did ti]
 b. * [sing]i [he did ti the song]

Compare the contrast in grammaticality of the sentences (49a/b) above, with JC (50a/b) below:

- (50) Yu nuh tink seh im tief, bot ...
 2nd sg [neg] think seh 3rd sg steal, but...
 'You don't think that he steals, but...'
 a. A **tief** im tief di mango-dem !
 A steal 3rd sg steal the mango-pl
 steal the mangoes he did!'
 b.??? A **tief di mango-dem** im (did) (tief) (di mango-dem) !
 A steal the mango-pl 3rd sg (past) (steal) (the mango-pl)

The data above implies that the focussed verb in JC cannot occur with its object. Therefore it appears that JC allows for X° focussing, and that the distinction made between (what looks like) X° focussing and XP focussing in JC is that the former, unlike the latter, have to reduplicate in the base position. It would appear that reduplication is the only process which can license X°-movement in these instances. The different syntactic effects of X°/XP focussing in JC may be the effect of the Empty Category Principle (ECP). Indeed the ECP would be violated in (42) and (43) (repeated here as (51) and (52) with traces) since X°-movement here would leave a trace which could not be identified as it would be neither theta-governed not antecedent-governed:

- (51) * A **tayadi** mi did ti mek mi gwaan so
 A tired 1sg [past] tired make me go+on so
 'It is because I was TIRED that I behaved that way'

- (52) * A **woki** mi a ti
 A work 1sg [prog] work
 'What I'm doing is working'

In both cases there is an intervening X° position which renders visible the fact that X°-focussing in this language does not undergo cyclic-movement. In this way ECP or more

This intuition is empirically confirmed: Notice that, once syntactically focussed, verbs (and adjectives) take on various properties which are identifiably nominal. For instance, while in this fronted position:

(i) Verbs can appear with a determiner

- (58) A **di ron** [shi ron mek shi fiil so taiad] (Christie 1997)
 A the run 1st sg run make 1st sg feel so tired
 ‘It’s the running she did that makes her feel so tired’

Notice that this observation extends to adjectival focussing:

- (59) A di tayad mi tayad mek mi fiil so
 A the tired 1st sg tired make 1st sg feel so
 ‘It’s because I’m tired that I feel this way’

(ii) Verbs can be modified by adjectives:

- (60) A nuh **adinary** wok im a wok
 A [neg] ordinary work 1st sg [prog] work
 ‘It’s not an ordinary amount/type of work that he’s doing’

So can focalized adjectives:

- (61) A nuh adinary tayad mi tayad
 A [neg] ordinary tired 3rd sg tired
 ‘It’s not an ordinary kind of fatigue that I’m experiencing’

(iii) Verbs can no longer be modified by TMA markers:

- (62) * A did wok im (did) wok ...
 A [+past] work 1st sg ([+past]) work

Similarly, although unfocussed adjectives may be modified by TMA markers, this is no longer possible with focussed adjectives:

- (63) * A did tayad im (did) tayad...
 A [+past] tired 3rd sg ([+past]) tired

(iv) Verbs do not readily appear with their complements:

- (64) ?? A nyam di bammi im nyam di bammi
 A eat the bammy 3rd sg eat the bammy

(v) Another reason to believe that this position is exclusively nominal is suggested by the fact that elements which are fundamentally [+V], such as functional verbs like modals, cannot be syntactically focussed:^{6,7}

⁶ If adverbs are classified as [+V], this might explain why they also resist syntactic focussing :

* A really im really sik

- (65) * A kyan im kyan dw i'
A can 1st sg can do it

(vi) Finally, PPs do not easily undergo focussing :

- (66) ?? A **fi di pickney** mi bring di ackee -> ??PP
A for the child 1sg bring the ackee
'It is for THE CHILDREN I brought the ackee'
- (67) A **di pickney** mi bring di ackee fa ->DP with P-stranding
A the child 1sg bring the ackee for
'It is THE CHILDREN whom I brought the ackee for'.

However note that certain PPs are unproblematic in focus constructions:

- (68) A opa stedyam dem en kip it (Christie 1997)
A up+at stadium 3rd pl [+past] keep it
'It's up at the Stadium they kept it'

It is as though PPs which can occupy subject position can undergo focussing, while others cannot:

- (69) Opa stedyam a wan gud place fi hide
Up+at stadium [equative] article good place to hide
'Up at the stadium is a good place to hide'
- (70) * Fi di pickney a wan good idea
For the child [equative] article good idea

Notice that these are PPs which can be pronominalized:

- (71) [Opa stedyam]i? [Deh-so/Dat]i a wan gud place fi hide
Up+at stadium? There/That [equative] one good place to hide
'Up at the stadium? There/That is a good place to hide'

A really 3rd sg really sick

⁷ There are occurrences of *mosa* in this position, but in these instances, *mosa* has the status of an epistemic adverb modifying a nominal, not as a modal marker: This might not be evident when it occurs with the bare verb, as in:

A *mosa ron im ron*
A epistemic run 3rd sg run

'He **probably RAN**'; (see also examples from texts).

But the situation is clearer once it is seen that *mosa* can be used with more obviously nominal XPs :

A *mosa di ackee im tief*
A epistemic the ackee 3rd sg steal

'What was stolen by him is **probably the ackee**'.

Notice that other modals cannot be used in this way, i.e. as modifiers of nominals :

*A kyan di ackee im (kyan) tief
A can the ackee 3rd sg (can) steal.

Mosa (like other adverbs and modals) cannot be focussed on its own :

*A *mosa im mosa tief*
A epistemic 3rd sg epistemic steal

- (72) [Fi di pickney]i? *[Dem/Dat]i ...
For the child? *3rd pl/ That...

Indeed while the PP *opa stedyam* can be referred to by means of a pronoun (71), this is impossible for a PP such as *fi di pickney* (72). A pronoun alone cannot refer to the latter PP.

Therefore, it is as if only PPs which appear to have the status of a nominal constituent, have the option of moving to [Spec,FocP], reinforcing the notion that this position is reserved for XPs of a nominal nature.

If focussed verbs are not really focussed V^os, but rather nominalized constituents, then we are faced with a new problem: why is reduplication of the verb (and adjective) necessary since the ECP is not violated as originally hypothesized? A possible solution to this dilemma lies in the observation that the focalized verb (or adjective), precisely because it is a nominalized projection, cannot itself enter into a predicative relationship with the other elements of the sentence so that a verb (or adjective) must be present elsewhere in the structure.

3. JC WH-QUESTIONS

The process of focalization resembles that of interrogation to a large extent in this language: For instance, we have seen that constructions involving focalization place the XP[+foc] at the front of the sentence, that this XP leaves a gap in the sentence (recall the absence of resumptive pronouns), and that this fronted XP is preceded (not followed) by an *a*-element. Notice now that these observations also hold for wh-constructions:

- (73) A wa im a nyam?
A what him [prog] eat
'What is he eating?'
- (74) A-huu put i de? (Bailey (1966))
A who put it there
'Who put it there?'
- (75) A-we unu pudong uno kluoz? (Bailey (1966))
A where 2nd pl put-down 2nd pl clothes
'Where have you (pl) put your clothes?'
- (76) a. A wa yaa say?
A what 3rd sg say
'What are you saying?'
- b. * Wa a yaa say?

It must be noted, however, that whereas this *a*-element obligatorily precedes focalized-XPs, it is optional in the case of wh-XPs:

- (77) Wa im en tell uno say? (Adams (1995))
What him [+past] tell you[plur] say
'What did he tell you all?'

- (78) Wa yu niem (Bailey (1966))
 What you name
 ‘What’s your name’

Veenstra and den Besten (1995:310) touch upon the recent tendency to omit *a* in interrogatives when they comment that “in Jamaican Creole(.) the highlighter *a* is optionally used with WH-words, but due to decreolization it is disappearing”.

Therefore *a* behaves differently with focus and interrogative constructions in that it remains obligatory with the former although it has become optional with the latter. One may attempt to account for this in terms of a decreolization process, as postulated by Veenstra and den Besten (1995:310), but the question remains: why should *a* be affected in this selective manner? One possible explanation lies in the analysis of *a* as a marker encoding a [+Foc] feature. It then suffices to observe that wh-words are inherently focussed. Their wh-morphology reflects this [+Foc] feature which has to be checked in [Spec,FocP], except in specific contexts such as echo-questions. XPs which may be focussed do not morphologically reflect a [+Foc] feature, and unless they are pronounced with considerable stress they cannot be interpreted as focussed. As is the case for wh-words in-situ, focus in-situ is reserved for instances of echo-focussing:

- (79) - Piita tel Jan
 Peter tell John
 ‘Peter told John’
 - Im tel JAN!?
 3rd sg tell John
 ‘He told JOHN!?’

If the XP in-situ *JAN* above did not bear focal stress, it could not be interpreted as an XP in focus. Movement to a position of syntactic focus where this XP can be preceded by *a* allows the XP to be interpreted as focussed without needing to be pronounced emphatically. Roberts (1980) notices that the possibility for a sentence with syntactic focus to be pronounced with a flat interpretation, but his interpretation of this fact is not entirely clear: He writes “(...) there is no difference in intonation between

- (80) A tuu baskl wuda beta
 A two bicycle [modal] better
 and

- (81) tuu baskl wuda beta
 two bicycle [modal] better

to suggest that there is a structural difference between the two.” It may be, however, that the most plausible way of accounting for an absence of intonational difference between sentences where there is an interpretational difference is precisely in terms of a structural difference. The structural difference would simply be less visible in a sentence such as (80) above because JC is an SVO language, and in this sentence what is in focus is the subject. When an object is in focus (82b), movement is more obvious:

- (82) a. Jan buy **tuu baskl**
 John buy two bicycle
 ‘John bought two bicycles’

- b. A **tuu baiskl** [Jan buy
A two bicycle John buy
'What John bought is two bicycles']
- c. * Jan buy **a tuu baiskl**

Here the variation in word order reveals that movement has taken place in the focus-construction.

The structural parallelisms existing between Wh and Foc sentences in JC suggest that the type of movement involved in the latter is the same as that involved in the former. A further indication that the movement which takes place in 'A [+Foc] [IP ...]' sequences is Wh-movement stems from the observation that in instances of wh-movement, there is a change in prepositional form depending on if the preposition is followed by an overt object or a wh-trace, as can be seen by the contrast *fi/fa* in (83b):

- (83) a. Im bring ackee **fi** di pickney-dem⁸
3rd sg bring ackee for the child-pl
'S/he brought the ackee for the children'
- b. A huu im bring dat ***fi/ fa?**
A who 3rd sg bring that for
'Who did s/he bring that for?'

Notice now that this change in preposition is evident also in cases of focus constructions :

- (84) A dem im bring dat ***fi/fa**
A 3rd pl 3rd sg bring that for
'THEY are who s/he brought that for'

Da Cruz (1997:36) observes a similar phenomenon at work in Fongbè regarding the distribution of the prepositions *ná* vs *nú*:

- (85) a. Kòkú sà motò ó **nú** Asíbá
sell car DET P
'Koku sold the car to/for Asiba'
- b. * Kòkú sà motò ó **ná** Asíbá
sell car DET P
- (86) a. Me (wè) Kòkú sà motò ó **ná** eci
Who FOC sell car DET P
'To/for whom did Koku sell the car?'
- b. * Mei (wè) Kòkú sà motò ó **nú** eci
Who FOC sell car DET P
- (87) a. Asíbái (wè) K`kú sà motò ó **ná** eci
FOC sell car DET P
'It's to/for Asiba that Koku sold the car'

⁸ Notice that here the order appears to be S – V – DO – IO. This reversal of the order of objects in the case of 'fi' objects may be due to the fact that ambiguity may result if the normal order is used : in JC, possession may also be expressed via a 'fi' phrase or a bare NP : i.e. (*fi*) *di pickney-dem* can also mean 'the children's', so that *yu bring (fi) di pickney dem ackee ?* would be interpreted as : 'Did you bring the children's ackee ?'

- b. * Asíbái (wè) Kòkú sà motò ó **nú** eci
FOC sell car DET P

In order to account for the distributional constraints highlighted above, Da Cruz (1997:36) argues “that the contexts in which Benefactive *ná* appears involve *wh*-movement of an NP.” Similarly, I propose that JC *fa* licenses a Wh-trace, while *fi* does not. The latter instead must select an overt lexical object. *Fa* appears to be the agreeing form of *fi*. Agreement would be triggered by transit of *wh* from the PP specifier. This is reminiscent of the *que/qui* alternation found in French (Pesetsky 1982).

If when *a* appears with an object there are various reasons to assume *wh*-movement, then by analogy when this element appears with a subject, movement has also taken place.

Notice that *a* is not only found in root interrogatives, but may also precede a preposed *wh*-constituent in embedded clauses, as seen to obtain for focus constructions (recall section 2)

- (88) Wi neva ya **a wa** im en a say (Adams (1995))
2pl never hear a what he [+past] [prog] say
‘We never heard what he was saying’
- (89) Mi no bizniz **a huu** tel yu (Bailey (1966))
Me [neg] buisness a who tell you
‘I don’t care who told you’

On the basis of these observations, JC, unlike Standard English, does not differ in the satisfaction of the AFFECT-Criterion in main and embedded contexts : *a* precedes *wh*-elements in both contexts. Inversion does not take place in either:

- (90) a. (A) why [im **did** gwaan so]?
A why 1st sg [past] go+on so
‘Why did he behave like that?’
b. * (A) why **did** [im gwaan so]?
- (91) Wi neva ya a wa [im en a say] (Adams 1995:45)
1st pl never hear a what 1st sg [past] [prog] say
‘We never heard what he was saying’
- (92) * Wi neva ya a wa **en** im a say

Parallel to that observed for focussing (see example 24)), multiple leftward movement of *wh*-constituents is banned in JC in both main and embedded sentences:

- (93) a. * (Mieri aks) a **wa** a **wen** yu tel im?
(Mary ask) a what a when you tel 3rd sg
b. * (Mieri aks) a **wen** a **wa** yu tel im?
(Mary ask) a when a what you tell

The similarities between interrogative and focus constructions in JC can be captured by attributing a similar syntactic analysis to the two. This implies that the sequence ‘*a* XP [+wh]’ and the sequence ‘*a* XP [+foc]’ must be subject to similar constraints and plausibly target the same position. Such an account would predict that the fronting of a focussed constituent is in

complementary distribution with fronting of a wh-constituent. This prediction is confirmed by the data in (114d,e):

- (94) a. Im bring di bammi dis maanin
3sg bring the bammy this morning
'He brought the bammy this morning'
- b. A **wen** [im bring di bammy
A when 3sg bring the bammy
'When did he bring the bammy?'
- c. A **di bammi** [im bring dis maanin
A the bammy 3sg bring this morning
'What he brought this morning is the bammy'
- d. * A **wen a di bammi** [im bring
A when a the bammy 3sg bring
- e. * A **di bammi a wen** [im bring
A the bammy a when 3sg bring

The ungrammaticality of (93d,e) seems due to a constraint which is purely syntactic since there is no interpretational ban on a construction containing both a focussed and a questioned constituent. In fact JC allows the questioning of one XP and focussing of another as long as the XP [+Foc] (95a), and not the XP [+Wh] (95b), remains in-situ and is pronounced with considerable stress:

- (95) a. A **wen** im bring **DI BAMMI**?
b. * A di bammi im bring wen/WEN?

This suggests that both an XP [+Foc] and an XP [+Wh], when preposed, undergo movement to the same position, namely [Spec,FocP], and an XP [+Wh] has priority over an XP [+Foc] in this position. Once again, FocP is a non-recursive projection according to Rizzi (1997), which explains the fact that it is impossible to simultaneously prepose an XP [+Foc] as well as an XP [+Wh].

While considering focussed XPs in section 4.3., [Spec,FocP] was seen to host constituents of a nominal nature. If Wh XPs also target this position, we can account for the fact that these XPs (e.g. Who, What, When, Where) appear nominal – notice that questioning a verb gives rise to a nominalization of the latter:

- (96) **What** did you do?

Therefore this work analyses *A XP[+Wh] IP* sequences in JC as constructions involving wh-movement of an XP to [Spec,FocP], a position hosting nominalized elements.

The fact that Wh-movement (i) involves movement of Operators binding variables and (ii) yields WCO effects is coherent with this approach to *A XP[+Wh] IP* sequences:

- (97) a. (A) Huu Jiemz tief di mango fram?
(A) Who James theif the mango from
For which X, X is human, is it the case that James stole the mango from X
- b. (A) Huui im*i/k muddah laik?
(A) Who 3rd sg mother like

Finally, it is worth noting that *seh* is “obligatorily deleted if the contained sentence is introduced by an interrogative word” (Bailey 1966:112). *Seh* appears to endow ForceP with a [+declarative] feature, so that an XP [+interrogative] becomes impossible in the structure due to feature incompatibility. Recall that this was not the case with an XP [+focus] (see example 39b)). It remains to be seen whether *seh* endows the CP layer with [+declarative] through occupying Force° or through selection from a higher position. I deal with this issue in the next section.

4. IDENTIFYING FORCE° AND FIN° IN JC

In this section I discuss material from JC which appears to be located in the extremities of the complementizer layer, namely ForceP and FinP. In section 4.1. I concentrate on ForceP. & 4.1.1. presents two different analyses for the element *se(h)* in an attempt to identify Force°. Section 4.1.2. points out the importance of [Spec,ForceP] as illustrated by JC yes-no questions. In section 4.2., I turn to FinP.

4.1 Force°

4.1.1. *seh*

Examples (36)-(38) repeated here as (98)-(90) for convenience, illustrated that the word *se(h)*, when used in certain contexts, seems to take on the role of a complementizer:

- (98) Mi en nuo **se** im wudn kom (Bailey 1966:37)
 1sg [past] know **se** 3rd sg [+Mod] [+neg] come
 ‘I knew that she wouldn’t come’
- (99) Mi hier **se** fait brok out op a shap (Bailey 1966:37)
 1sg hear **se** fight break out up at shop
 ‘I hear that there is a fight up at the shop’
- (100) Mi sari **se** unu neba kom (Bailey 1966:44)
 1sg sorry **se** you [pl] never come
 ‘I am sorry that you (pl.) did not come’

This use of *seh*, contrary to lexical *seh*, only selects sentential complements:

- (101) Mieri **nuo seh** [IP di bwai neva tief di mango-dem
 Mary know *seh* [the boy never thief the mango-pl
 ‘Mary knows that the boy never stole the mangoes’
- (102) * Mi **nuo seh** [NP dat] aredi
 1st sg know *seh* that already
- (103) Mi nuo [NP dat] aredi
 1st sg know that already
 ‘I know that already’

- (104) Mi seh [NP dat] aredi
 1st sg *seh* that already
 ‘I said that already’”

By situating *se(h)* in Force^o, it followed from the structure in Rizzi (1997) that in embedded contexts, both syntactically focussed and topicalized elements have to follow *se(h)*:

- (105) a. Mi tink **seh** a di bammi [Piita nyam
 1sg think *seh* a the bammy Peter eat
 ‘I think that what Peter ate was the bammy’
- b. * Mi tink a di bammi **seh** Piita nyam
- (106) Mi nuo **seh** [yestadei [Jan did waan dash i’ weh
 1st sg know *seh* yesterday John [past] want throw it away
 ‘I know that yesterday John wanted to throw it away’
- (107) * Mi nuo [yestadei **seh** [Jan did waan dash i’ weh

In section 3 it was observed that this approach to JC *se(h)* would not be a novelty: “Hopper & Traugott (1993:14,15) draw on Lord’s (1976:179-82) work on West African languages to illustrate that it is not uncommon for “a locutionary verb meaning ‘say’ (...) to function as a complementizer (...)”. Hopper & Traugott uphold that in these languages, there is a “process leading to grammaticalization of a ‘say’ verb into a complementizer”.” Lord (1976:151,160) specifies that the ‘say’ complementizer in question is equivalent to the English complementizer ‘that’. According to the structure in (8), then, it would be accurate to analyse JC *seh* as a manifestation of Force^o.

On closer examination, however, it is not entirely obvious that the most appropriate analysis of this use of *seh*, and possibly of other ‘say’ equivalents, is one where the latter is situated in Force^o. In fact there are some properties of *seh* which suggest that this element is not located in Force^o. Crucially, the IP-complement which follows *seh* in JC can (be nominalized and) undergo wh-movement, leaving *seh* behind :

- (108) Paul swear **seh** Mieri nuh laik mi
 Paul swear **seh** Mary [neg] like 1st sg
 ‘Paul swears that Mary doesn’t like me’
- (109) (A) Wa im swear **seh**?
 (A)What 3rd sg swear **seh**
 ‘What does he swear?’
- (110) Wa im tel yuu **se**?⁹ (Roberts1980:27)
 What 3rd sg tell you **se**
 ‘What did he tell you’

Notice that this cannot be a case of incorporation of the complementizer to the verb as a DP may intervene between the matrix verb and *se(h)*, as attested by example (110). Moreover if *se(h)* were a complementizer, sentences (109) and (110) should be ruled out by the ‘that-t’ constraint, or more generally ECP: a complementizer should block the ability for the trace left

⁹ Bold letters are mine.

behind by Wh-movement to be properly governed. The grammaticality of (109,110) above confirms that *seh* cannot be a *that*-complementizer equivalent.

A sentence such as (112) below involving focalization of an embedded subject further upholds this reasoning:

(111) Mi tel yu seh Jan tief di mango-dem
 1st sg tell 2nd sg *seh* John steal the mango-pl
 ‘I tell you that John stole the mangoes’

(112) A Jani mi tel yu seh ti tief di mango-dem
 A John 1st sg tell 2nd sg *seh* trace steal the mango-pl
 ‘I told you that JOHN stole the mangoes’
 Literally: ‘It’s JOHN that I told you that stole the mangoes’

Once again, if *seh* were a complementizer in Force^o, it would be surprising that sentence (112) does not bring on a ‘that-trace’ effect, i.e. that this sentence does not violate the ECP.

A Serial Verb Construction (SVC) analysis would seem more promising in accounting for these complex sentences involving *seh*. Serial Verb Constructions involve a series of verbs which together describe one event and share logical arguments. The verbal sequence is uninterrupted by conjunctions or prepositions. Such constructions are commonly found in West African languages as well as in basilectal varieties of Creole.¹⁰

Under such an approach, the lexical quality of *se(h)* would allow for proper government of the Wh-trace, and the particularities observed for the *se(h)* constructions considered would still be potentially accounted for: Verb complexes containing *seh* subcategorize for a CP-complement, and endow this complement with a [+declarative] feature. This selectional property explains why DPs may not follow a *seh* SVC, as well as why *seh* SVCs do not allow wh-XPs to occur in the ForceP they select. Recall that *seh* is “obligatorily deleted if the contained sentence is introduced by an interrogative word” (Section 5 drawn from Bailey 1966:112). However there is no ban on the selected CP itself being the object of interrogation. Situating *seh* within a complex verbal unit would predict that *seh* is left behind when its CP complement undergoes wh-movement.

An SVC approach also accounts for the contrast below:

(113) a. Im seh im dash i’ weh
 3rd sg say 3rd sg throw i’ away
 ‘He said that he threw it away’
 b. * Im seh seh im dash i’ weh

Indeed, if there were two separate elements *seh*, one the lexical verb, the other a functional complementizer, then it would be difficult to explain why the sentence in (113b) is ruled out. Recall that there is no such ban on the double occurrence of *deh* copula with *deh* adverbial:

(114) Im **deh deh** / Im **di deh**

Notice that the complementizer *that* in Standard English can co-occur with determiner *that*:

(115) **That that** boy threw everything away is truly a shame

¹⁰ See appendix for an explanation of the terms acrolect(al), mesolect(al), and basilect(al).

The fact that the JC say-verb used to introduce a clausal complement cannot occur with the lexical verb ‘say’ is a ban which extends to certain West African languages where this phenomenon is attested. Traugott & Hopper (1993:15) based on data taken from Lord (1976) consider the case of Ewe when they write that : “if the matrix verb is the general verb *bé* ‘say’, no further complementizer is needed:

- (116) Me-bé me-wo-e.
 I-say I-do-it
 ‘I said, “I did it.”/I said that I did it.’

However, if some verb of saying other than *bé* is the matrix verb, *bé* must be used as a complementizer:

- (117) Me-gblo bé me-wo-e.
 I say say I-do-it
 ‘I said that I did it.’

(where *gblo* is a different verb meaning ‘to say’).”

Notice that in terms of this complementizer approach, there is no obvious way to account for the above phenomenon. On the other hand, if complex sentences involving *seh* are in fact SVCs, then *seh* always retains its status as a lexical verb and the ungrammaticality of (133b) above follows: It would be repetitive for a lexical verb to reselect itself, and therefore understandable that such a redundancy is preferably avoided by the system. If the ‘say’ clause-linker verbs examined above retain their status as lexical verbs (even if situated inside a complex verbal unit), it becomes understandable why they may not be selected by the matrix verb when the latter is also ‘say’.

It is nonetheless true, as Lord (1993:186) points out, that *seh* does not retain the full meaning of the verb ‘say’ when it combines with another verb to introduce a clause. For instance, the sentence below does not mean that the speaker, nor anyone else, has actually ‘said’ that the child threw something away.

- (118) Mi nuo seh di pickney dash i’ weh
 1st sg know *seh* the child throw it away
 ‘I know that the child threw it away’

However I continue to uphold that this alternation in interpretation of *se(h)* does not necessarily imply that *se(h)* has been transformed into a complementizer: the alteration of the original meanings of lexical verbs is a basic property of SVCs. The latter are widely recognized as constructions which syntactically involve various lexical verbs, although semantically these verbs only express a single happening. As Da Cruz (1997:31) puts it: “Serial verb constructions are (...) a combination of two or more verbs within a phrase, whose interpretation implies a single event as opposed to a sequence of two or more events”. Therefore *se(h)* may in fact preserve its status as a lexical verb, while somewhat shifting in meaning, precisely because it is in an SVC.

It has been underlined that *seh*-stranding is a characteristic of constructions involving Wh/Foc-movement of the projection following *seh*. It is worth adding that not only is *seh* stranded in embedded question formation, but ‘*seh* + XP’ sequences resist movement operations such as focalization and topicalization. This trait would be unexpected if the XP along with *se(h)* formed a CP, hence a constituent (which is an argument):

- (119) Mi nuo seh Jan tief di mango-dem
 1st sg know *seh* John theif the mango-pl
 ‘I know that John stole the mangoes’
- (120) * A [seh Jan tief di mango-dem]i mi nuo ti
 A [*seh* John theif the mango-pl 1st sg know
 [*seh*+XP does not undergo focalization]
- (121) * [seh Jan tief di mango]i, mi nuo [dat/i’] i
seh John theif the mango, 1st sg know that/i’
 [*seh*+XP does not undergo topicalization]

These facts follow from an SVC approach: if *se(h)* is in a complex verbal unit which in turn selects a CP, then *se(h)* and the CP do not form a constituent and therefore cannot undergo movement (nor pronominalization in contexts of topicalization).

The fact that *se(h)* cannot take TMA markers does not necessarily indicate that *se(h)* is a complementizer either, since once again this may stem from *se(h)*’s being in an SVC: notice that the verbs in SVCs in JC share one set of inflectional markers:

- (122) Im run gaan lef ar (Adams 1995:35)
 3rd sg run gone leave/left 3rd sg
 ‘He has run away and left her’
- (123) Im a go run (*a go) gaan (*a go) lef ar
 3rd sg [+prog] [+prosp] run ([+prog] [+prosp]) gone ([+prog] [+prosp]) leave/left 3rd sg
 ‘He’s going to run away and leave her’
- (124) Im did run (*did) gaan (*did) lef ar
 3rd sg [+past] run [+past] gone [+past] leave/left 3rd sg
 ‘He had run away and left her’

This is a widespread (if not universal) characteristic of SVCs. As Baker (1989:513) observes, SVCs share various structural elements: not only is there “Usually (...) only one tense/aspect specification for the whole chain of verbs; (but) the verbs also have a single structural subject and share logical arguments”.

Under the ‘say’-complementizer approach put forth in Lord (1993), and upheld by Hopper and Trogott (1993) it is proposed that a ‘say’-verb goes through stages of grammaticalization before becoming a complementizer: initially it “is used to reinforce a variety of verbs of saying”, and then it is more generally “used as a complementizer after a whole range of matrix verbs (...) The verbs included are verbs of speaking, cognition, and perception. Since these are verbs which in most languages can have objects that are propositions (i.e. clauses) there is an obvious syntactic and semantic relation between them and ‘say’”.

According to this reasoning, basilectal JC clause-introducing *se(h)* should be a fully-fledged complementizer as it is used with a wide range of verb types: Bailey (1966:112) observes that, in basilectal JC, “If the predicator in the containing sentence is a Vps (or Psychic state transitive) (...) a Vap (or Verb of appearance) (...) then the contained sentence is linked to it by *se* (...)” Recall, however, that basilectal varieties of JC allow wh-movement of the complement selected by *seh*, as illustrated below:

- (125) Mieri tink seh Piita nyam di bammi
Mary think *seh* Peter eat the bammy
'Mary thinks that Peter ate the bammy'
- (126) (A) Wa Mieri tink **seh**?
A what Mary think *seh*
'What does Mary think'
- (127) Mi nuo seh dat sweet yu
1st sg know *seh* that sweet you
'I know that that amuses you'
- (128) (A) Wa yu nuo **seh**?
A what 2nd sg know *seh*
'What do you know'

Therefore I continue to uphold that in JC *se(h)* is a lexical verb in an SVC. It begins entering into SVCs with verbs of saying in mesolectal varieties, and then does so in a more general manner in basilectal ones, e.g. with verbs of psychic state or appearance. Note that this is nothing exceptional, as basilectal varieties generally admit more SVCs than mesolectal ones. Indeed, this might be due to the fact that basilectal Creoles evince more substratum influence.¹¹

It is interesting to note here that there is a general tendency for speakers of mesolectal JC to be influenced by the grammar of Standard English. As a result, in subordinate clause contexts, mesolectal speakers try to overtly fill Force^o. Under an SVC analysis of *seh*, it becomes clear why, in these instances, one can observe the co-occurrence of the Standard 'that' equivalent *dat* and *seh*: indeed if *seh* is not in Force^o, then nothing prevents *dat* from occupying this position. Consider the following data drawn from Bennett (1979:1):

- (129) me hear Puss muma dah tell him **seh dat** anytime¹² him meet up Rat again
1st sg hear Cat mother [prog] tell 3rd sg *seh* that anytime 3rd sg meet up Rat again
'(...) I hear Cat's mother telling him that anytime he meets up with Rat again'

Roberts (1980) observes that this phenomenon, related to 'social variation' found in 'middle levels', and notes that at least in these mesolectal varieties, *se(h)* cannot be a that-equivalent:

'Although *se* may be regarded as equivalent to S(tandard) E(nglish) *that*, in cases where **social variation** (change in form to suit formality or informality of context) is involved, the two forms are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as is seen in the sentence:

Big Boi fada tel im se dat im waan somting
'Big Boy's father told him that he wanted something'

¹¹ Substratum influence referring here to the influence from West African languages. These languages often make use of SVCs.

¹² Another indication that this sentence is from mesolectal JC is the use of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) such as *anytime*: indeed speakers of basilectal JC tend to avoid NPIs, so that in an instance such as this, *wentaim* would be preferred.

The problem arising from the co-occurrence of *se* and *dat* is that one cannot regard the two forms as merely social variants or that if they are indeed social variants in polar lects, in the **middle levels** the one or the other form changes in meaning or status¹³.

Indeed I agree that *se(h)* and *dat* are not ‘social variants’ in the middle lects, and furthermore propose that they are not equivalents in the polar lects either. According to this reasoning, the only difference between the mesolect and the basilect is that speakers of the former (being by definition more influenced by the acrolect than the latter) prefer overtly filling Force^o. For this reason, speakers of the acrolectal varieties use a complementizer equivalent directly borrowed from the acrolectal ‘that’ : *dat*. This analysis explains the contrasts below:

- (130) a. A wa Mieri tell yu seh?
 A what Mary tell yu *seh*
 ‘What did Mary tell you’
 b. * A wa Mieri tell yu seh dat?
 A what Mary tell you *seh* that
- (131) a. A huu yu tink seh tief di mango-dem
 A who 2nd sg think *seh* steal the mango-pl
 ‘Who do you think stole the mangoes?’
 b. * A huu yu tink seh dat teif di mango-dem?

The data above testifies to the fact that ‘that-trace’ effects are absent with *seh* and brought about by *dat*.

4.1.2. Additional evidence for ForceP

In the CP-analysis put forth in Rizzi (1997), the ForceP projection encodes the illocutionary force of a given sentence, e.g. interrogative or declarative. So that in (132), the presence of *if* in Force^o determines the interrogative nature of the embedded clause, while in (133) the use of *that* endows the embedded clause with a declarative value.

- (132) I wonder if John stole the mangoes
 (133) I think that John stole the mangoes

In root interrogatives, however, while the illocutionary force is encoded in ForceP, no overt material occupies this projection. Indeed in these instances, the overt Wh XP or Wh Operator targets the Focus projection. Since the difference in word order between root declaratives and root interrogatives in Standard English itself signals whether a given sequence is the former or the latter, the necessity for a ForceP is not immediately obvious. However in JC, the importance of the separation of tasks between ForceP and FocusP is clear even in instances of root clauses – indeed the word order in declaratives involving focus and yes-no questions in this language may indeed be identical, although the illocutionary force is different.

- (134) Did John steal the mangoes? Standard English
 (135) JOHN stole the mangoes (not Peter)

¹³ Bold letters are mine.

- (136) Yestadei, a Jan tief di mango-dem? Jamaican Creole
 Yesterday, *a* John steal the mango-[pl]
 ‘Yesterday, did John steal the mangoes?’
- (137) Yestadei, a Jan tief di mango-dem (nuh Piita)
 Yesterday, *a* John steal the mango-[pl] (neg Peter)
 ‘Yesterday, JOHN stole the mangoes (not Peter)’

The examples above illustrate that Force^o is void of overt material – notice that a topic can be the initial element in both instances. In JC, therefore, the overt material occupying FocP is the same in both (136) and (137), yet the interpretations yielded by the two constructions differ, one being an interrogative, and the other being a declarative. The separate role played by covert material in ForceP in specifying whether the sequence is interrogative or declarative becomes more evident in a language such as JC, where overt material may be identical in contexts of +/- declarative force.

4.2. Fin^o

Parallel to that observed for Force^o, it appears that morphologically filling Fin^o is not the preferred option in basilectal JC. On the other hand, a corresponding morphological realization of Fin^o is identifiable in mesolectal JC:

- (138) I wuda nais fi Jan fi go (Bailey 1966:124)
 It [modal] nice Fin^o John to go
 ‘It would be nice for John to go’

Cassidy (1961:59) writes that “in Standard sentences beginning with the expletives *it* or *there*, the Jamaican folk speaker omits the expletive”. The use of an expletive in the above sentence therefore testifies to the fact that this sentence is not of the basilectal variety of JC. In fact JC speakers transform such sentences to avoid expletives, as we will see in section 8.5. The sentence above is drawn from Bailey (1996:124), yet Bailey (1971:344) herself notices that constructions involving expletives, such as “the existential phrase (...) do() not occur in JC”, where ‘JC’ refers to the basilect, or “that form of language used in Jamaica which is syntactically, phonologically, and lexically farthest removed from the Jamaican standard” (Bailey 1971:342). It is safe to conclude, nonetheless, that mesolectal varieties of JC make use of the complementizer *fi*.

In those varieties of Creole where *fi* is used, the latter is used in a similar fashion to the English complementizer ‘for’, so one is tempted to situate this element in Fin^o:

- (139) **Fi** Jan fi gwaan so, dat nuh right at all¹⁴
 FIN^o John to go+on so, that not right at all
 ‘**For** John to behave that way, that is not right at all’

It is difficult to situate *fi* in Fin^o on the basis of its interaction with focus constituents since *fi* can not be preceded by an XP [+Foc] coming from within its clause (140), nor can it be followed by a focalized XP (141):

¹⁴ Notice the NPI here, once again revealing the mesolectal tone of the sentence.

- (140) * A so fi Jan fi gwaan ...
 [+Foc] so FIN° John to go+on ...
 ‘It’s THAT WAY for John to behave...’
- (141) * Fi a so Jan fi gwaan ...

On the other hand *fi* may be preceded by a topic, in which case the latter precedes the former, an order which would follow from *fi* being inserted in Fin°:

- (142) Yestadei, fi Jan fi gwaan so, dat nuh right at all
 Yesterday, FIN° John to go+on so, that not right at all
 ‘Yesterday, for John to behave that way, that is not right at all’
- (143) * Fi yestadei Jan fi gwaan so, dat nuh right at all
fi yesterday John to go+on so, that not right at all

5. The relative orders of topic, focus and wh-constituents in JC

While syntactically focussed constituents may follow topicalized constituents, the reverse order is unacceptable:

- (144)a. Da bwai-deh, a di mango [im tief]
 That boy [loc], a the mango 3rd sg steal (thief)
- b. * A di mango da bwai-deh [im tief]

This observation holds for the ordering between an XP[+Wh] and an XP [+Top]:

- (145) a. Da bwai-deh, a wa [im tief]?
 That boy [loc] a what [3rd sg steal]
 ‘As for that boy, what did he steal?’
- b. * A wa, da bwai-deh, [im tief]?
 a what, that boy [loc] [3rd sg steal]

The relative order ‘topic > focus’ seen to hold in root clauses extends to embedded clauses:

- (146) Mi tink seh da bwai-deh, a tief [im tief di mango]
 1st sg think that that boy [loc] a steal(thief) 3rd sg steal the mango
 ‘I think that that boy STOLE the mango’
- (147) * Mi tink seh a tief da bwai-deh, [im tief di mango]
 1st sg think that a steal(thief) that boy [loc] 3rd sg steal the mango

The varieties of JC considered here therefore give direct evidence for the structure ForceP>ModP>Topic P>FocusP>(FinP)>IP. This organization of the left-peripheral projections is compatible with that proposed by Rizzi (1997). On the other hand, JC does not give direct evidence for the lower topic projection proposed by the analysis in (8) (see 144b,

145b & 147) nor does this language exploit a recursive TopP (see section 3.4) but rather seems to distinguish between a projection hosting topicalized arguments, and another recursive projection reserved for preposed modifiers.

At this point many questions still remain: What is the status of left-peripheral *a*? And where does one situate this marker in the structure? In the next section we will explore possible analyses of focus/interrogative *a*.

6. THE STATUS OF *A*

The element *a* serves many functions in the grammar of JC. Adams (1990:39) provides a “cumbersome sentence contain(ing) the five different words *a*” in this language. The sentence referred to is given below:¹⁵

- (148) **A** Joe **a** di one who **a** ‘tan up **a** gate wid **a** daag?
Foc J. Equative-Copula the one who [**+prog**] stand up **Preposition** gate with **Article** dog
 ‘Is Joe the one who is standing up at the gate with the dog?’

In this section I will review these *a*-elements in an effort to determine the precise nature of the *a* associated with focus and wh-constructions.

6.1. Progressive *a*

Consider the following sentence illustrating the use of the progressive particle *a* :

- (149) Im **a** nyam di bammi
 S/he [+progressive] eat the bammy
 ‘S/he is eating the bammy’

It is obvious that the *a* observed in focalization and interrogation is not the progressive particle. Indeed in many instances of focalization and interrogation, the verb is not interpreted in the progressive. In (149), the middle-field *a*-marker is present and a progressive reading results, however (150) below illustrates verb-focalization, and notice that a progressive reading is not yielded through the use of this sentence-initial particle *a* :

- (150) A waak mi waak mek mi kom so liet (Bailey 1966: 34)
 A walk 1st sg walk make 1st sg come so late
 ‘It’s because I walked that I have come so late’
 ‘*It’s because I’m walking that I’m coming so late’

Similarly, (151) is an example of an interrogative which lacks a progressive reading:

- (151) A-wen Boti lef ya? (Bailey (1966:89))
 A-when Bertie leave here
 ‘When did Bertie leave here?’
 ‘* When is Bertie leaving here?’

Therefore sentence-initial-*a* observed in focus and interrogative contexts is not an instance of (inversion of) the progressive particle.

¹⁵ Gloss and bold letters are mine.

6.2. Prepositional *a*

Cassidy (1961:423 fnt 14) underlines that in JC “There is also a preposition *a*, formed from *at* but meaning *to*: Go *a* Kingston; and another, formed from and meaning *of*: One *a* dem wrong.” Despite the homophony which exists between focus/interrogative-*a* and prepositional-*a*, I will not propose an analysis of this element as a preposition. Once again, this choice follows from the observation that the *a*-element in *wh* and focus constructions does not yield a prepositional reading.

6.3. Determiner *a*

In certain languages which allow structural verb-focussing, the verb has visibly been nominalised. The example from Yoruba below illustrates this: the focussed verb *ra* meaning ‘buy’ has undergone reduplication:

- (152) [Rìrà]i ni Ajé ra ti ìwé (Manfredi 1993)
 Nom-buy Comp Ajé buy paper
 ‘It is buying the Aje (is doing, did) to (a book/book)’
 [i.e. he didn’t steal it/them]

Manfredi (1993) proposes that verbal focalization in a language such as Yoruba involves focalization of a nominal VP. It has also been seen in section 4.3 that elements in [Spec,FocP] in JC evince nominal properties. From this perspective, the status of *a* as some form of nominalizer in JC is worth looking into. It is particularly interesting since *a* is occasionally used with nominal constituents as a determiner. Indeed Adams (1995:15) observes that “the word *a* may serve as the indefinite article, as in standard English”, however she underlines that “the word *one* is frequently used in its stead. This may have resulted from the need to distinguish the indefinite article from the preposition *a* and the verb *a*”. The following examples illustrate the use of the indefinite articles *a* and *one/wan* in JC:

- (153) Kieti sidung unda **wan** trii (Bailey 1966:40)
 “Katie sat down under a tree”
- (154) Mi a gaa **one** film (Adams 1995:15)
 “ I am going to a movie”
- (155) im a rait **wan** leta (Bailey 1966:35)
 “He is writing a letter”
- (156) Gi mi **a** cutlass (Adams 1995:15)
 “Give me a machete”
- (157) Mi a go beg im **a** lif (Bailey 1966:38)
 “I am going to ask him for a lift”

Examples (153) and (154) illustrate that *one/wan* may be used in contexts where the preceding phoneme is /a/, and (155) shows that *one/wan* may also be used where the preceding phoneme is other than /a/. Sentences (156) and (157) confirm that the indefinite article can be realised as *a* in JC, like its standard English counterpart. Notice that the phoneme preceding the indefinite article differs from *a* in these contexts. It seems that whenever the phoneme /a/

precedes the DP which is to yield an indefinite reading, *wan* is the preferred article, possibly because otherwise, a definite reading may be conveyed as in the example below:

- (158) a. Mi a ron go **a** shap (Bailey 1966:41)
 “A am running (and going) **to the** shop”

Here *a* is understood as a preposition, and the DP is taken as not bearing an overt article, which leads in this case to an interpretation where the shop in question is a specific one. This possibility is erased when *one/wan* is inserted:

- b. Mi go a **wan** shap an mi buck-up fi di bwai muddah
 1st sg go to Det shop and 1st sg bump-into Prep Det boy mother
 ‘I went to **a** shop and I bumped into the boy’s mother’

In *wh* and focus constructions, therefore, it is not surprising that in ‘*a* + indefinite DP’ sequences, the indefinite article spells out as *one/wan*:

- (159) A **one** duppy? (Adams 1995:15)
 A article ghost
 ‘Is it a ghost?’

Here we have co-occurrence of the Foc/Wh *a* and the indefinite article *one*. Notice also that *a* Foc/Wh is not mutually exclusive with a definite article either:

- (160) A di bammi Piita nyam (...nutn more)
a the bammy Mary eat (... nothing more)
 ‘What Peter ate was the bammy (... nothing else)’

On the basis of these observations it is improbable that *a* [+foc/wh] is the indefinite article serving as a nominalizer in foc/wh constructions. One could argue that *a* is rather an instance of grammaticalization of what was originally an article into a nominalizing marker. However, under this perspective, *a* should not be necessary with DPs as the latter are inherently nominal. As shown in a sentence such as (158), this is not the case. Therefore an analysis of *a* [+foc/+wh] as a nominalizer is not easily tenable. Moreover, the observations in the following section uphold a different approach.

6.4. Equative *a*

6.4.1. Focus/Interrogative *a* as equative *a*

Considering *a* in its emphatic use, C.F. Cassidy (1961: 59) writes that: ‘It seems to be clearly verbal, not prepositional, and to be either a phonetic reduction of *is* or, far more likely, an African loan-word. I take it to represent Twi *à* (or some related form), an emphatic particle which, following a noun or adjective, means *it is, they are*. In Jamaica the word order has been reversed: *a* comes before the noun or adjective, following the English pattern; yet it has exactly the force of *it is* or *there are*, or the English expletive and verb.’ Cassidy (1961:56) also notes the presence of this *a*-element in interrogatives: ‘It should be noted (...) that Twi and other Niger-Congo languages have an interrogative particle *à*, which probably survives to some extent in Jamaica in such questions as ‘*A* who sen yu?’ It is impossible, of course, to

show that this is not the verb *a* meaning *is*, since the two are identical in form and fit such a context equally well.'

Christie, (1997: 38) also touches upon the possible connection between interrogative and emphatic *a* with the copula when she notes that "There are grounds for seeing a historical relationship between the focalizer *a* and the copula *a*, but exploration of this link is considered to fall outside the scope of this paper'. One clear link between the two can be found in the realization of the focus marker in mesolectal varieties of JC. Indeed these varieties replace basilectal *a* with the particle *iz/is* when focussing/questioning, although the rest of the structure evinces similar properties to those observed for basilectal focus and interrogative structures. Consider the examples below, all taken from Lowe (1999):

- (161) **Is mad** yu **mad** (...) ?
Is mad you mad
'Are you mad?'
- (162) **Is whe** im gone eeh, Sah?
Is where 1st sg gone eh, Sir
'Where is he gone, eh, Sir?'
- (163) **Is wha** mek wid dis ole bus, eeh Sah?
Is what make with this old bus, eh Sir
'What is going on with this old bus, eh, Sir?'
- (164) But **is why** Me ave fe put up wid all dem crosses, Lahd?
But is why 1st sg have to put up with all 3rd pl crosses, Lord
'But why do I have to put up with all those crosses, Lord?'
- (165) **Is dat** dem do all de while yu know... take de fare from de likkle one dem (...)
Is that 3rd pl do all the while you know ... take the fare from the little one 3rd pl
'THAT is what they always do, you know... take the fare from the little ones (...).'

Markers resembling copulas seem to be commonly used for marking focus in African and Creole languages: The examples below show that when these markers signal focussing, they can appear either just after the focussed element, or sentence-initially in which case they precede the element in focus:

- (166) [Pí-pa] **ni** nwô pa á (Yoruba Seuren 1993 taken from Boretzky
kill **is** they kill him 1983:225)
'They *killed* him'
- (167) **Na** [swari] mi bribi a fisi swari aka (Sranan - Boretzky 1983:221)
Is swallow I believe the fish swallow hook
'I believe the fish *swallowed* the hook'

I will argue that it is possible to show that when *a* surfaces in the pre-IP domain (i.e. in interrogatives and focus constructions), it is not identical to equative-*a* which surfaces inside of the IP, despite the close resemblance that exists between the two in both basilectal and mesolectal varieties of JC and other languages. In fact, various differences between left-

peripheral and middle-field *a/is/iz* markers uphold that they are distinct both syntactically and interpretationally in JC. The fact that both markers are homophonous would not stem from their being the same element, but could rather be due to focal/interrogative *a* being an instance of grammaticalization of the equative copula *a*. Copulas, being elements which are primarily functional elements, i.e. largely void of semantic content, seem to be particularly good candidates for cases of grammaticalization such as this: recall that the locative copula *deh* may also be used for left-peripheral purposes in JC, namely for serving the purpose of signaling topicalization (Section 3.4.)

6.5. Why focus/interrogative *a* cannot be analysed as equative *a*

Notice that if we were to analyse sentence-initial *a* as the equative copula, then sentences containing this element would have to be null-subject sentences, with a non-overt pro expletive in [Spec,IP] for the satisfaction of the EPP. For example, a sentence such as (168a) would have to be assigned a structure along the lines of (168b):

- (168) a. A di moni Piita tief
 b. [[pro expletive] [equative copula *a*] [DP *di moni* [CP[IP *Piita tief*]]]]

It is important to underline here that the grammar of JC does not generally license null-subjects, be it thematic or expletive *pro*. Compare the Spanish sentence in (169) with the one in JC (190). The contrast is clear : whereas in Spanish a thematic null-subject is legitimate, in JC it is not :

- (169) Ø como de todo
 pro 1st sg eat of all
 ‘I eat everything’
- (170) * Ø nyam evryting
 pro 1st sg eat everything
 ‘I eat everything’

Regarding non-thematic subjects, i.e. expletives, it would appear that even overt ones are often avoided in JC. Notice that in contexts where expletives are used in Standard English, Creole usually makes use of another strategy : For example, compare the ‘weather-sentences’ in (191a & 192a) taken from Standard English with those in (191b,c & 192b,c) drawn from JC:

- (171) Standard English a. It is raining
- JC b. Rain a fall
 Rain [+prog] fall
 c. ? It (a) rain
- (172) Standard English a. It is breezy
- JC b. Breeze a blow
 Breeze [+prog] blow
 c. ? It (a) breezy

A statement such as *a rain* is in fact interpreted as a question (173a), as a correction, or as an answer to a question (173b), i.e. it is reserved for contexts of new information:

- (173) a. *A rain?* : Is that rain?
 b. *A rain.* : Either it has previously been implied that a certain noise is other than rain, or someone has necessarily previously asked what a certain noise is.

In various instances where an expletive is typically chosen by the lexifier, an alternative construction which avoids this dummy element is made use of in the Creole: for example in the initial sentence of narration, Standard English has the usual existential construction:

- (174) Once upon a time **there** was...

Whereas speakers of the acrolect variety retain this, those of the basilect resist it: Bailey (1971: 343,346) has two Jamaicans tell the same tale, one does so in an acrolectal variety and the other in a basilectal one: the following extracts confirm that where the former retains the expletive construction used in standard English, the latter avoids it:

- (175) a. Acrolect: Wans opan a taim **die** woz a jengklman huu had wan uondli daata.
 Once upon a time there was a gentleman who had one only daughter
 ‘Once upon a time, there was a gentleman who had an only daughter’
 b. Basilect: Wantaim, wan man en ha wan gyal-pickni nomo.
 One time one man [+past] have one girl child nomore
 Literally: ‘Once, a man had an only daughter’
 ‘Once upon a time, there was a gentleman who had an only daughter’

Another instance of this contrast is given below (also from Bailey (1971: 343, 346)):

- (176) a. Acrolect: Bot luo, aafta shi gat mari, insted it woz a man, **it** woz a bul-kou.
 But lo, after she got marry, instead it was a man, it was a bull-cow
 ‘But lo, after she got married, instead of its being a man, it was a bull’
 b. Basilect: Bot luo, afta im marid, steda man, a bulkou im marid
 But lo, after 3rd sg married, instead+of man, *a* bull-cow 3rd sg married
 Literally: ‘But lo, after she married, instead of a man, a BULL she married’
 ‘But lo, after she got married, instead of its being a man, it was a bull’

Bailey comments that the narrator of the acrolect variety “uses Jamaican Creole phonology throughout (...) But were it not for the fact that our technique requires it, there would be no necessity to gloss the story, for the lexicon and the syntax are obviously English and not creole.” She also observes that the speaker of the acrolect allows existential phrases which she assures “do() not occur in JC”. Her point is validated by the fact that the narration in the basilect is apparently exempt of expletives.

However it is worth pointing out that there are a few limited instances where JC may fill [Spec,IP] with both a null and overt expletive, such as in the sentences given below:

(177) a. (I) komiin like seh di pickney a go run weh
 Expletive seem like *seh* the child [prog] [prosp] run away
 "It seems like the child is going to run away"

(178) a. (i) look like im nuh like yu
 look like 3rd sg [neg] like 2nd sg
 "It looks like s/he does not like you"

It is crucial to note that while a null expletive can be inserted in certain constructions, it's occurrence is strictly a root phenomenon. In other words, null expletives are completely banned from the the specifier position of an embedded clause :

(177) b. im tell me seh *(i) komiin laik di pickney a go run weh
 3rd sg tell 1st sg she (expl) komiin like the child [prog] [prosp] run away
 "S/he told me that it looked like the child is going to run away"

(178) b. im tell me seh *(i') look like im nuh like yu
 3rd tell me *seh* (expl) look like 3rd sg [neg] like 2nd sg
 "S/he told me that it looks like s/he does not like you"

If focus/wh constructions in JC were to involve Pro Expl + *a* [equative], we could not account for the fact *a* [+Foc/Wh] is found in embedded clauses (179), where null expletives are banned (177b & 178b) :

(179) Mi tink seh a di mango Jan tiif
 1st sg think seh a [Det] mango John steal
 "I think that what John stole was the MANGOES"

This reasoning implies that the instances of emphatic *a/is/iz* examined are unlikely to involve 'pro[+expletive] + copula + XP' structures. Moreover, other instances of sentence-initial *a/is/iz* offer further evidence for a left peripheral analysis:

Firstly, it is worth underlining that *a* [+foc] is invariable. That is, it cannot be modified for TMA.

(180) a. A di moni im tief
 A the money Peter steal (thief)
 'Peter stole THE MONEY'
 b. * **Did** a moni im tief

Notice that middle-field equatives can be modified for past tense: consider examples (198,199) where the equative appears without the past tense marker *did*, with examples (200,201) where *did* precedes *a*:

(181) Di puss **a** fi Mieri, an di daag **a** fi Piita
 The cat [equative] for Mary, and the dog [equative] for Peter
 'The cat is for Mary, and the dog is for Peter'

(182) Mi mudda **a** di bess out a all a uno
 Poss mother [equative] the best out of all of you-pl
 'My mother is the best out of all of you'

- (183) Piita neva shuda tek di puss weh! Di puss **did a** fi Mieri!
 Peter never [modal] take the cat away! The cat [past] [equative] for Mary!
 ‘Peter never should’ve taken the cat away! The cat was for Mary!’
- (184) Mi mudda **did a** di bess out a all a uno
 Possessor mother [past] [equative] the best out of all of you-pl
 ‘My mother was the best out of all of you’

Now compare sentences (185,186) with their ungrammatical counterparts in (187,188), the only difference between the former and the latter being the insertion of the past tense marker *did* in front of sentence-initial *a* in the latter:

- (185) **A** di daag mi bring fi Piita.
 A the dog 1st sg bring for Peter
 ‘THE DOG I brought for Peter’
- (186) **A** mi mudda shuda win di competishan
 A possessor mother [modal] win the competition
 ‘MY MOTHER should’ve won the competition’
- (187) * **Did a** di daag mi bring fi Piita
- (188) * **Did a** mi mudda shuda win di competishan

The same pattern observed here can be seen to hold for interrogatives:

- (189) a. **A** who tief di mango-dem?
 A who steal(thief) the mango [+pl]
 ‘Who stole the mangoes?’
 b. (***Did**) **a** who (did) tief di mango-dem?

Secondly, if these structures were ‘pro-expletive [equative copular] XP CP’, one would expect a complementizer such as Standard English *that* to occasionally surface in mesolectal varieties between the main clause yielding the new information, and the embedded one bearing old information. It is worth pointing out that a complementizer is not used to articulate the new and old information in *a/is/iz – XP* constructions. Indeed, an overt C° seems to be obligatorily absent in cases of focalisation in JC, even in mesolectal varieties which otherwise make use of the complementizer *dat*: Roberts (1980: 34) writes that “When a is replaced by iz in the children’s speech, the topicalizer grows closer to the verbal structure of SE (...)”¹⁶ However, it never becomes identical with the SE structure, that is, there is no appearance of that or an equivalent.

- (190) **Iz** dat taim mii baan
Iz that time 1st sg born
 ‘it is that time that I was born’

¹⁶ This is an unfortunate term here. Recall the discussion in section 4 where I point out that *A XP ...* constructions have a clear syntactic particularity of focus i.e. a resumptive clitic is obligatorily absent.

- (191) *iz shii di tel mi dat not tuu long ago*
iz 3rd sg [past] tell 1st sg that [neg] too long ago
 ‘it is she that told me that not too long ago’
- (192) *nuo, iz not tuelv skuul let uova*
 [neg] *iz* [neg] twelve school let over
 ‘no, it is not at twelve that school finishes’
- (193) *ov kuors iz mii rait dis*
 of course *iz* 1st sg write this
 ‘of course it is me that wrote this’

(...) As such it has features of an “introducer” and features of a verb”.

Once again, this reinforces the idea that *a/is/iz* focal constructions are not clefts: notice that cleft constructions in English and French typically involve a complementizer:

- (194) **It’s** their attitude **that** I don’t like
- (195) **C’est** l’hiver **que** je ne supporte pas
 ‘It’s winter that I can’t stand’

Under this perspective, if the JC focal constructions under examination here were cleft constructions, it would be difficult to explain why complementizers such as mesolectal *dat* don’t readily follow the XP which is focalized. If, however, the XP [+foc] were situated in a focus projection located in the left-periphery, this property would follow: the complementizers used in clefts, namely Standard English *that*, French *que* and by analogy JC (mesolectal) *dat* are located in the Force Projection, i.e. higher in the structure than FocusP. Under this perspective, only movement of XP[+foc] to [Spec,ForceP] could derive the surface order. Since this movement is unmotivated, we have a purely syntactic account for the ban on the sequence ‘* XP [+focus] < C° [+force]’.

Also, in cases of the focussing of a predicate, the latter is reduplicated in its base position, suggesting that the CP-layer is exploited:

- (196) *A tief yu tief di mango-dem!*
 A thief you thief the mango-3rd plur
 ‘You STOLE the mangoes!’

Furthermore, as already pointed out in section 5, interrogatives optionally involve *a/is/iz*:

- (197) *A wa im tek ?*
 A what 3rd sg take
 ‘What did s/he take?’

With this in mind, compare (198) with sentences (196) and (197) above:

- (198) *A di mango Piita tief*
 A the mango Peter thief
 ‘Peter stole THE MANGO’

Notice that, first of all, it would be uneconomical to elaborate a different syntactic apparatus for sentence (196) and sentence (198), the only difference between the two being the nature of the element which bears focus : In sentence (196) what is focalized is a purely nominal constituent [*di mango*], and in (198) it is a nominalized verbal constituent [*tief*]. Secondly, it is a well attested fact that movement in interrogatives and focus constructions involve similar syntactic patterns and constraints, implying that the wh-question in (197) should receive a syntactic analysis reflecting an underlying structural commonality with (196) and (198). Consider, for example, the data from Hungarian in (198) and Gungbe, in (199):

- (198) a. Melyik filmet látta János tegnap este? (Puskás 1997)
 Which film saw John yesterday evening
 ‘Which film did John see last night’
 b. AMARCORDOT látta János tegnap este
 Amarcord saw John yesterday evening
 ‘It was Amarcord that John saw last night’
- (199) a. Sénáí *(wè) ti xía wémà ló (Aboh 1998)
 Sena wè read-PERF book the
 ‘SENA read the book’
 b. ménúí *(wè) ti xia wémà ló (Aboh 1998)
 Who wè 3pl read-Perf book the
 ‘Who read the book?’

Both interrogative and focus structures trigger subject- verb[+fin] inversion in Hungarian (198a,b). In terms of the AFFECT criterion (Haegeman 1995), then, both focus and interrogative Operators must be in a Spec- X° agreement with a head bearing the feature [+foc/wh], and vice-versa, with the relevant head being the finite verb in Hungarian. The Gungbe focus and interrogative constructions in (199) show that the Spec- X° relation must be established between the Operator [+foc,+wh] and the X° wè, also [+foc,+wh].

Just as attested for Hungarian and Gungbe, there exist various similarities between focus and wh-constructions in JC. The approach sketched above for Hungarian and Gungbe wh/foc-sentences has the advantage of capturing these similarities. In light of these facts, it would be desirable to extend this approach to the corresponding structures in JC. Indeed the explanatory adequacy of an analysis which may generalize across foc/wh data would be lost if one were to postulate a null expletive analysis for (196,198) and a wh-movement one for (197).

Finally, there is some further empirical evidence that differentiates Jamaican *a/is/iz XP* [*IP* constructions from clefts. There are some restrictions on the occurrence of certain constituents in clefting which do not apply to structural focus constructions. Notice, for example, how adverbs resist clefting, while they occur freely in focus constructions:

(200) ??? It's loudly that he spoke

- (201) KESERVESEN sírt Emöke (Puskás 2000)
 bitterly cry-PAST-3SG Emöke
 'Emöke cried BITTERLY'

Notice now that Jamaican Creole allows a *Adverb* [*IP* constructions:

(202) a loud loud im play im radio¹⁷
a loud loud 3rd sg play 3rd sg radio
 'S/he plays his radio LOUDLY'

(203) a faas faas im lik i' aaf
A fast fast 3rd sg lick it off
 'S/he gobbled it up MOST QUICKLY'

It is interesting to note that Jamaicans prefer to reduplicate the adverb in these contexts, as reduplication has been analysed as a means of nominalizing constituents in various African languages. The example below from Yorùba illustrates verb nominalization/focalization.:

(204) [Ri-rà]i ni [Ajé ra ti iwé] (Manfredi 1993)
 Nom-buy Comp buy paper
 'It is a buying that Aje [is doing, did] to [a book/books]'
 (i.e. he didn't steal it them)

We are still faced with the fact that *a/is/iz* in Focus/Wh constructions is homophonous with the equative copula found in the corresponding variety of Creole. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, one possible account for this homophony is to analyse *a* as an instance of grammaticalization of the copula, the result is then logically a phonetically similar yet syntactically and interpretationally different element.

Finally, the idea that the marker *a* [+wh/+foc] derives from the copula is reinforced by the fact that copula-like elements are cross-linguistically used as sentence-initial markers signalling focus or interrogative force. The data in (205) and (206) below illustrate the use of copula-like *na* in Krio and *ni* in Yoruba interrogatives and focus constructions:

(205) a. **na** snek kil am (Byrne, Caskey, Winford 1993)
 Cop snake kill him
 'THE SNAKE killed him'

b. **Na** undat bin kam (Veenstra and den Besten 1995)
 FOC who PAST come
 'Who came'

(206) a. Iwé **ni** Kúnlé rà (Oládiípò Ajíbóyè 199 ? – see Niger-
 Book Foc K. buy Congo Syntax & Semantics 9)
 It's a book that Kúnlé bought'

b. Kí **ni** Kúnlé rà ?
 What Foc K. buy
 'What did Kúnlé buy ?'

Although it seems safe to hypothesize that focus/interrogative *a* derives from the copular, exactly *why* these constructions should single out this element as the most adequate marker deserves further research which is beyond the scope of the present paper

¹⁷ Note that unlike the Standard English copula, JC *a* cannot occur in the middle field with adjectival predicates such as *loud* in a sentence such as : *dis music (*a) loud* : 'This music is loud'.

6.6. A structural analysis of Foc/Wh *a* in JC

We have seen that JC makes use of a copula-like marker in its focus/wh constructions. In basilectal varieties, this element is realized as *a* and in mesolectal varieties, it is realized as *is/iz*. In the previous section it was therefore argued that focus/interrogative *a/is/iz* are markers encoding a [+Foc/Wh] in the left-periphery of the clause. It was also seen that cross-linguistic investigation reveals both orders Cop XP and XP Cop. Since both orders are attested in these constructions, it is appealing to account for the surface variation in terms of movement. This section discusses this analysis.

Recall that other languages, like JC, make use of a sentence-initial copula-like element in foc/wh constructions : Examples (223) from Krio are repeated here for convenience:

- (207) a. **na** snek kil am (Byrne, Caskey, Winford 1993)
 Cop snake kill him
 ‘THE SNAKE killed him’
 b. **Na** undat bin kam (Veenstra and den Besten (1995) : Krio)
 FOC who PAST come
 ‘Who came’

In brief, the attested structure in these languages and in JC is as follows:

- (208) Cop > XP [+Foc/+Wh] > [IP

It was also seen that languages which employ a copula-like marker in Foc/Wh constructions may show the reverse ordering :

- (209) a. Iwé **ni** Kúnlé rà (Oládiipò Ajíbóyè 199 ? – see Niger-
 Book Foc K. buy Congo Syntax & Semantics 9)
 It’s a book that Kúnlé bought’
 b. Kí **ni** Kúnlé rà ?
 What Foc K. buy
 ‘What did Kúnlé buy ?’

In this way, JC and Krio and Yoruba are very similar, and differ apparently only in surface word-order:

- (210) a. Yoruba : [Foc/Wh XP] > Cop > [IP
 b. JC, Krio: Cop > [Foc/Wh XP] > [IP

The surface ordering in Foc/Wh constructions in a language such as Yoruba resembles that attested in Gungbe and Hungarian:

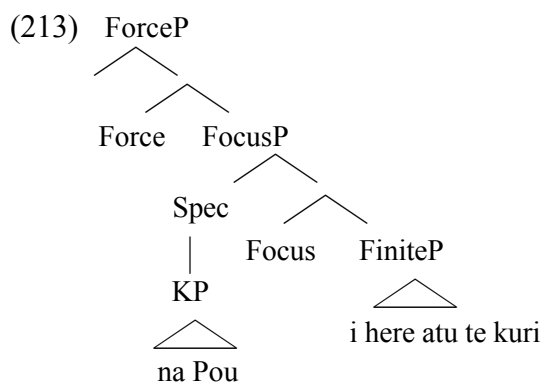
- (211) a. Yoruba : [Foc/Wh XP] > Cop > [IP
 b. Gungbe, Hungarian: [Foc/Wh XP] > wè, V [+Fin] > [IP

The main variation between Yoruba, on the one hand, and Gungbe and Hungarian on the other seems to reside in the fact that the former prefer a copula-like element, while the latter make use of other kinds of heads to encode [+Foc/+Wh]. In order to capture this cross-

linguistic parallelism, it is preferable to situate all these Foc/Wh heads in the same position. More specifically, it is theoretically appealing to insert the Yoruba copula-like X° in the same position as the Gungbe and Hungarian heads, namely in Foc° .

If the copula associated with Foc/Wh constructions in Yoruba is located under Foc° , then the JC Foc/Wh marker should also sit in Foc° at some stage in the derivation. Analyses for the order $\text{Foc} > \text{XP}[+\text{Foc/Wh}]$ do not always favour such an approach. For instance, Pierce (1999:12,13) proposes that Maori, which also evinces Focus marker $>$ Focus XP ordering, makes use of a device whereby the particle in question “is the complex head of a K(ase)P constituent which is attracted to the $[\text{Spec},\text{FocusP}]$ position to check the features on the Focus° head”. Under her approach, the sentence in (230) is assigned the structure in (231)

- (212) Na Pou i here atu te kuri
 Na Pou T/A tie away the dog
 ‘It was Pou who tied up the dog’



In light of the reasoning adopted in this paper, an approach whereby JC *a*, like *na* above, is situated under $[\text{SpecFocP}]$ is unappealing. Indeed such an approach could not capture the structural and interpretative similarities encoded by Foc/Wh heads cross-linguistically. On the other hand, an approach whereby all the Foc/Wh heads sit in Foc° at some point is therefore preferable as it strikes a parallelism between *a* in JC, *na* in Krio, *ni* in Yoruba, *wè* in Gungbe, and the inverted finite verb in Hungarian.

Nevertheless, even if JC *a* sits in Foc° at some stage in the derivation, it cannot remain there. In order to account for the surface-order variations *a* must move to another head-position. The question which remains is: where does *a* move to?

One possible solution would be to say that *a* moves up to Force° where it encodes the illocutionary force $[\text{+interrogative}/\text{+focus}]$. Recall that Force° in basilectal Creole leaves Force° empty under the hypothesis that *se(h)* is in an SVC construction, and is not a complementizer in Force° . Granted this hypothesis, the data below is unproblematic:

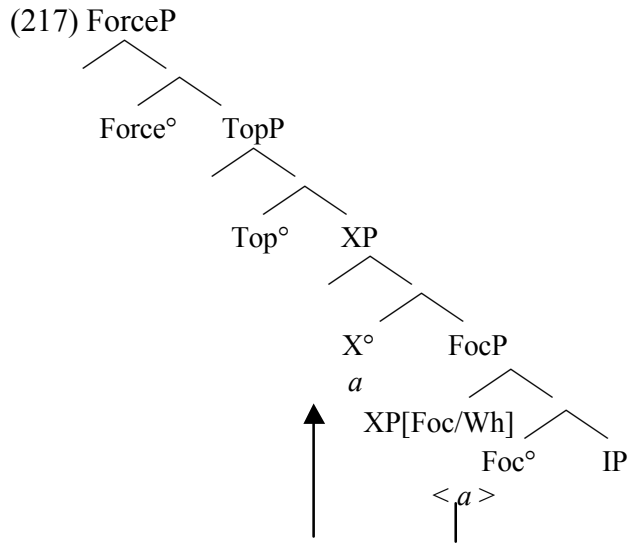
- (214) Ruoz-dem tel im se a Klaris mash di pat (Bailey 1966: 111)
 Rose-[pl] tell 3rd sg say Foc Klaris mash the pot
 ‘Rose and the others told her that it was Claris (who) broke the pot’

However the acceptability of basilectal (215) and mesolectal (216) illustrates that *a* cannot be located in Force° :

- (215) If a tief im tief di mango, im shuda jus say so
 Force° a thief 3rd sg thief the mango, 3rd sg [modal]just say so
 ‘If what he did was steal the mango, he should just say so’

- (216) Dem tell mi seh dat (di likkle pickney deh) a tief im tief di mango
 3rd pl tell 1st sg say Force° (the little child [loc]) a thief 3rd sg thief the mango
 ‘They told me that (the little child) what he did was steal the mango’

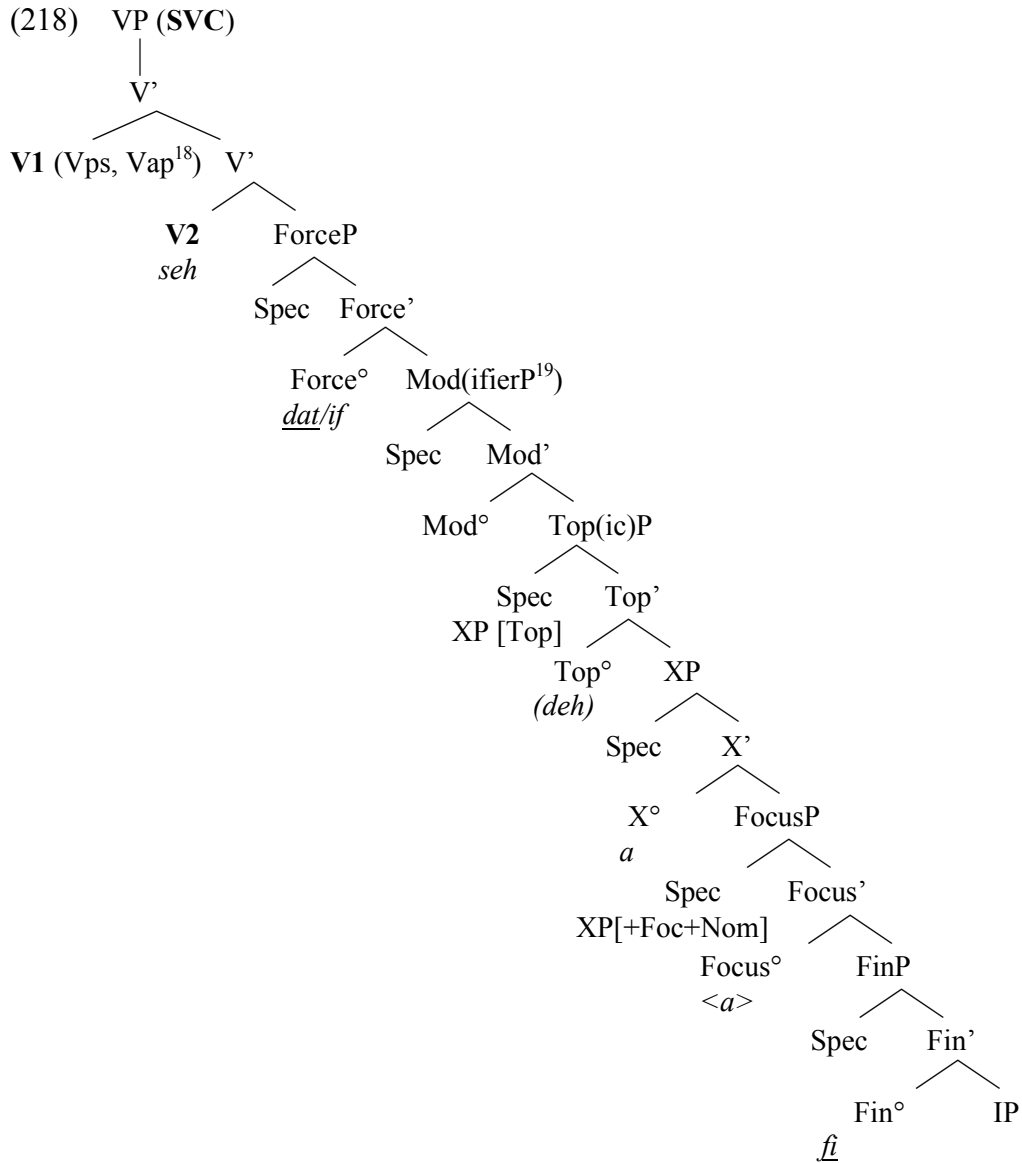
The data above provides an empirical argument for not locating *a* in Force°, and the cross-linguistic evidence examined in this work provides theoretical reasons for *a* being a head which must transit Foc° at some point in the derivation. In light of this reasoning, therefore, the remaining option is that which follows:



Of course questions still remain. For instance, why must *a* move to this X°? Presumably it must establish a c-commanding government relation with the XP in [Spec,FocP]. But exactly why this is so is not yet clear. Also, the precise nature of the projection whose head position hosts *a* remains to be determined.

7. CONCLUSION

This work has concentrated on exploring the syntax of constructions involving topicalization, focalization, and interrogation in varieties of JC oscillating between the basilect and the mesolect. On the basis of the discussion, the following analysis is proposed, with elements which are specifically mesolectal underlined:



The Creole data here examined therefore testifies to the universal quality of the analysis of the articulate left-periphery put forth in Rizzi (1997): JC upholds the ordering of the various projections, as well as it explicitly illustrates the need for the separation of roles played by ForceP and FocusP in the formation of interrogatives. Moreover, the data from JC considered here suggests that the nature of [Spec,FocP] seems to be characterized by nominal traits. Finally, this work points to the need for further developing the structure postulated in order to (i) capture the differences between topicalized arguments versus topicalized scene-setting modifiers, and (ii) account for cross-linguistic variation between the ordering of syntactically focussed constituents and their related focus-heads.

Appendix :The Creole Continuum

Often in Creole societies a number of linguistic varieties tend to exist, yielding a situation which can be described as a linguistic continuum, commonly referred to as a Creole

¹⁸ Following Bailey 1966 : 112, I use the abbreviation Vps for ‘psychic state transitive verb’, and Vap for ‘Verb of appearance’.

¹⁹ Recall the discussion about scene-setters versus genuine topics in section 3.4.

continuum. The coexisting speech-forms of such Creole societies oscillate between two extremes. One of these extremes is the acrolect, which enjoys social prestige. One could classify this variety as the local Standard, as it is that variety which shows the most superstrate influence, i.e. in Jamaica, that means influence from Standard English, the lexifier language. At the other extreme is the basilect or 'deep Creole'. The latter variety lacks prestige, and manifests most substratum influence. In the case of Jamaican Creole, substratum influence refers to influence from West African languages, the native tongues of the slaves. Situated in between the two poles of the continuum are numerous varieties known as mesolectal, which share features with both the basilect and the acrolect in several combinations. Speakers of opposite extremes (without access to the mesolect) may be mutually unintelligible – however this is very rare as most people can adjust their variety upward or downward on the continuum. In this work I concentrate primarily on a variety of the Creole found closer to the basilectal extreme as it is the speech-form most removed from Standard English, and therefore contains most syntactic novelties. In some instances, however, it becomes insightful to take a more mesolectal variety into consideration.

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