

A three-way DP-split in Martinique Creole

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Since Abney (1987) introduced the « DP » assumption into syntactic theory, a number of works have argued that noun phrases headed by a definite determiner may trigger two types of « definite » readings : strong (1a) and weak (1b,c), responding differently to various tests (e.g. the « Sloppy identity » test):

- (1) a. *John went to **the old bank**.*
 b. *In order to deposit a check, one goes to **the bank**.*

Several analyses have been proposed to account for the semantic contrast between strong and weak definites as illustrated in (1) (Beyssade & Pires de Oliveira, eds., 2013, a.o.). Nevertheless, most linguists researching DP structure, in particular Longobardi (e.g. 2008), assume only one D head, with the exception of Ihsane & Puskás (2001) who argue — in line with Rizzi's (1997) « CP-split »— that definite determiners may actually occupy two different functional heads in the left periphery of the Noun Phrase: Top° (Topic), or Def° (Definite), respectively triggering the strong (viz. specific) and weak (viz. nonspecific) readings of, e.g., *Mary took **the train**.*

Térosier (2022) borrows this DP-split idea to analyze the structure of noun phrases in Martinique Creole (MQ), a language which freely allows bare arguments (2a,b) and has an uninflected, enclitic, allomorphic « definite determiner » (2c,d) glossed here as LA (its basic spell-out). The plural marker (*sé*) precedes the noun and must be licensed by the LA determiner (2d):

(2) a. <i>Kay (wouj) chè</i> house red expensive '(Red) houses are expensive.'	c. <i>Noa achte kay (wouj)-la.</i> Noa buy house red -LA 'Noa bought the (red) house.'
b. <i>Noa achte kay (wouj).</i> Noa buy house red 'Noa bought red houses.'	d. <i>Noa achte sé kay (wouj)-la.</i> Noa buy PL house red -LA 'Noa bought the (red) houses.'

Among the evidence supporting the split-DP analysis is the syntax of relativized definite noun phrases, which, in MQ, may overtly involve two layers of DP structure, as in (3):

- (3) a. *Gwo éfò-a Noa fè pou réyisi lègzamen-an enprésionnen mwen.*
 big effort-LA Noa make to pass exam-LA impress 1sg
 'The big effort Noa made to pass the exam impressed me.'
 b. *Noa fè gwo éfò(*-a).*
 'Noa made big efforts (*the big effort).'

Assuming (with Déprez 2007 and Zribi-Hertz & Glaude 2007) a raising analysis for the phrase-final LA determiner in MQ, and (with Kayne 1994) a raising analysis for relativized DPs— supported by the ungrammaticality of LA in (3b), Térosier argues that the two LA determiners in (3a) have different syntactic functions and must respectively occupy the Definite and Topic heads distinguished by Ihsane and Puskás (2001). This claim, however, leaves unaccounted for the class of definite DPs illustrated in (4), analyzed by Zribi-Hertz & Jean-Louis (2014) as *Names*:

- (4) a. *I di **lavérité**, tout **lavérité**, yenki **lavérité**.*

- 3sg tell the.truth all the.truth only the.truth
 '(S)he told the Truth, the whole Truth, nothing but the Truth.'
- b. **Lasisil** sé an bèl péyi. c. **Eva** sé an bèl fanm.
 Sicily sé a beautiful country. Eva sé a beautiful woman.
 'Sicily is a beautiful country.' 'Eva is a beautiful woman.'

We assume (as Zribi-Hertz & Jean-Louis 2014), that although they do not contain the phrase-final LA determiner, the boldfaced nominals in (4) are « definite DPs » as are definite proper names, hence must contain a projection headed by a « definite » feature. We argue that this head is distinct from both the Def and Top heads told apart by Térosier, as shown by the fact that the three of them may combine, as in (5), where *Lasisil* (contrasting with *Sisil*, <-definite>) is a definite name combined, under relativization, with two further layers of D:

- (5) a. — *Lasisil* sé an bèl péyi. b. — Pa **Lasisil-la** man vizité-a !
 la-sicily sé a beautiful country NEG la-sicily-LA 1sg visit-LA
 'Sicily is a beautiful country.' 'Not that Sicily I visited!'
 (= (3b))

We argue that each level of « definiteness » marking in (5b) makes its own semantic contribution to referent identification, respectively (from bottom up): denomination (naming), delimitation (D-C shell), and anchoring (topicality). We should further devote some thought to the nature and structure of the linguistic change that led to this complex grammar of definiteness in MQ.

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