

Prepositions in Krio

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Abstract

This paper is part of Peter Svenonius' Adpositions Seminar at the University of Tromsø which was taught in 2005-2006. The main focus was the distinction between locative path and locative place constructions. The aim of this paper is descriptive in nature and focuses on the complete prepositional system of Krio, an English-based Creole language spoken in Sierra Leone. The paper starts with a general introduction to prepositions in Krio. Three different categories are distinguished. This is followed by a description of each preposition individually and a discussion of intransitive prepositions and verb-particle constructions.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the prepositional system of Krio, an English-based Creole language spoken in Sierra Leone. Around 472,000 people speak the language natively (Ethnologue.com). Krio is used as a lingua franca in Sierra Leone and as a consequence over four million people are second language speakers. The language is closely related to other English-based Creoles in West-Africa, such as Cameroon Pidgin English and Ghanaian Pidgin English. Additionally, a relation with the Caribbean English Creoles has been posited. This is not only due to shared linguistic features (Alleyne 1980, Hancock 1987), but also to historical facts (Huber 1999, Smith and van de Vate 2006).

Adpositions are a controversial issue in Creole Studies. Linguists (e.g. Bickerton 1981, Mühlhäusler 1997) often assume Creole languages not to have prepositions. Instead they argue that Serial Verb Constructions are employed in functions for which Indo-European languages use a preposition. Arguing against this, Muysken (1988) claims:

“The hypothesis that serial verbs emerged because the Creole languages had no category preposition in their initial stage will have to confront at least two objections. First, all Creole languages, including those with extensive serialization, have the category preposition, [...]. These selective data show that

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even languages with extensive serialization possess a number of prepositions. Further research will reveal more prepositions, probably, since this is an under-researched area in Creole linguistics. Thus it is not the absence of the category preposition as such that gave rise to serial constructions” (Muysken 1988:296).

Recent work by Bruyn (1999; 2003a;b), Essegbey (2005) and Plag (1998) on prepositions in contemporary Sranan (an English-based Creole spoken in Suriname) has shown interesting features in the prepositional system. Additionally, the work of van den Berg (to appear) on early Sranan demonstrates that a number of these prepositions were already present in 18th century varieties of the language. These studies support Muysken’s claim. Following his proposal and the work of these above mentioned researchers, this paper aims at an analysis of Krio’s prepositional system.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is a general introduction of prepositions in Krio. Section 3 discusses the data elicitation method. In Section 4 all Krio prepositions are discussed individually. Fyle and Jones (1980) is taken as a guideline. Section 5 addresses intransitive prepositions and verb-particle constructions. Section 6 concludes this paper.

2. Prepositions in Krio: a general introduction

This section discusses the prepositional system of Krio in general. Since hardly any work has been done on this topic in Krio, I have taken the introduction of the Krio-English dictionary by Fyle and Jones (1980) (henceforth F&J) as a basis. According to them, Krio prepositions should be divided in two categories: true prepositions and prepositional locatives. They described the former as:

“These words are distinguishable by their low tone and by the fact that their sole function in the language is in construct with noun phrases as indicated above” (Fyle and Jones 1980:xxvii).

The latter are defined as

“[T]hose words which not only conform to the general pattern of locatives in Krio in that semantically they are place words and grammatically they can function on their own both as S[ubject] and C[omplement] and also as A[dverbial] [...], but in addition can construct with subordinate noun phrases in the same manner as true prepositions” (Fyle and Jones 1980:xxvii).

In this paper I follow F&J and their distinction of the two groups of prepositions. A reason for this is that as one can see in Table 1, there are differences between the two groups. Whether the differences also lead to a difference in behaviour is something which has to be analysed. The main difference between these two categories, in my opinion, is that true prepositions occur

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only as transitive and prepositional locatives as transitive and intransitive. Another difference is that most true prepositions are functional prepositions and most prepositional locatives are spatial prepositions. Before path and place prepositional constructions are addressed, I add a third category of prepositions to the two defined by F&J, namely locatives. These items are not defined as prepositions in the dictionary. F&J categorize these items as locative markers. However, my informant uses these in prepositional constructions as illustrated in (1).

- (1) Di tik de bifo os.
 DET tree COP before house
 ‘The tree is in front of the house’¹

Additionally, tests demonstrate their prepositional status.² The locatives appear to be similar to the prepositional locatives; items in both categories appear transitively and intransitively. The locative items will form a temporary group until it can be established if they belong to a separate group or if they should be classified as one of the other two categories of prepositions.

Table 1 lists all Krio prepositions. They are divided in the three categories just discussed.

true prepositions		prepositional locatives		locatives	
<i>fò</i>	‘or/on behalf of’	<i>ònda</i>	‘under’	<i>ínsay</i>	‘in’
<i>bày</i>	‘by’	<i>pantáp</i>	‘on/above/in addition’	<i>bièn</i>	‘behind’
<i>tò</i>	‘to/towards’	<i>ôp</i>	‘up’	<i>bífò</i>	‘before’
<i>bòt</i>	‘about’	<i>dông</i>	‘down’		
<i>lèk</i>	‘like/as’	<i>botôm</i>	‘under/at the bottom’		
<i>fròm</i>	‘from/for’	<i>klôs</i>	‘close to/near’		
<i>wit</i>	‘with’	<i>nía</i>	‘near’		
<i>pàn</i>	‘on/concerning’	<i>néba</i>	‘neighbouring/near’		
<i>nà</i>	‘in/on/at/etc’				

Table 1: Prepositions in Krio

As mentioned, the main focus of Svenonius’ seminar was the distinction between locative path and locative place prepositional constructions. In Krio these constructions have different structures. First, let us compare some examples, (2a) is a place and (2b) a path construction.

¹DET=determiner; COP=copula; PROG=progressive; SG=singular; PL=plural; COMP=complementiser; COMPL=completive marker; FUT=future; PST=past; DEM=demonstrative; NEG=negation.

²I followed Lefebvre and Brouseau (2002) and Plag (1998) in defining the status of the items in the third category.

- (2) a. Di man de nia faya.
 DET *man* COP *near* *fire*
 ‘The man is near the fire’
 b. I de waka go insay rum.
 3SG PROG *walk* *go in* *room*
 ‘S/he is walking into the room’

Example (2a) is a straightforward example of a prepositional place expression. These constructions consist of the locative copula, *de*, or a position verb, e.g. *lidon* ‘lie down’, *sidon* ‘sit down’, *tinap* ‘stand up’ and *heng* ‘hang’,³ and a prepositional phrase. The verbal item expresses that the Figure is located somewhere. The prepositional phrase is the item in the sentence which contains information on the specific location of the Figure. Other verbs are allowed in locative place expressions as well, this is illustrated in (3). However, the locative copula and position verbs are the most common verbs in locative place expressions.

Example (2b) is an example of a locative path expression. This construction contains a manner of motion verb like *waka* ‘walk’, *ron* ‘run’, etc, which is combined with a directional verb like *kam* ‘come’, *go* ‘go’ and *komot* ‘come out’. The direction verb is the item in the sentence which forces the reader to interpret the sentence as a locative path expression. Without this type of verb, the sentence will be parsed as a locative place expression (3). The final item in a directional expression is a prepositional phrase. It expresses in which direction the Figure is heading to or coming from.

- (3) I de waka insay rum.
 3SG PROG *walk in* *room*
 ‘S/he’s walking in the room’

The verbs in (2b) form a Serial Verb Construction (SVC). So, one can conclude that Krio is a serializing language. According to Essegbey (2004:483) “*It is generally known that directional-expressing verbs occur in V2 (the second verb in an SVC, MSvdV) after manner of motion verbs to express direction*”. In this respect, Krio is no different from other serializing languages. Unfortunately, locative path constructions are not as simple as this. Krio has two other possibilities to convey a directional interpretation. Compare the examples in (4), (2b) is repeated here as (4a).

- (4) a. I de waka go insay rum.
 3SG PROG *walk go in* *room*
 ‘S/he’s walking into the room’
 b. Di kondo de ron de go pantap tik.
 DET *lizard* PROG *run* PROG *go upon* *tree*
 ‘The lizard is running to the top of the tree’

³The first two position verbs need an animate subject; the latter two can be used for both animate and inanimate subjects.

- c. I de waka fo kam botom brij.
 3SG PROG *walk* COMP *come under bridge*
 ‘S/he’s walking to get under the bridge’

Example (4b) is quite similar to (4a); both contain an SVC with a manner of motion verb and a directional verb. The difference between these two constructions is that in (4a) only V1 is modified by a progressive marker and in (4b) both verbs are. Veenstra (1996) argues for SVCs in Saámaka that if both verbs are marked for aspect, the sentence is interpreted as iterative. When only V1 is marked for aspect, the sentence receives a durative, habitual or iterative reading. This is context dependent. It would be interesting to study whether a similar distinction can be made for Krio. In (4c) the direction verb is preceded by the complementiser *fo*. This marker indicates a non-finite form of the verb. Jones (1990) describes *fo* in constructions like this one as a pre-infinitive particle. He argues against analysing *fo* in a way similar to English infinitival *to*, because *fo* also has some modal features. A sentence with *fo* “introduces a complement stating a purpose intended” and in a sentence without *fo*, the “action referred to by the main verb of the embedded clause was carried out by the subject of the matrix clause” (Jones 1990:857-858). Due to limited space I will not go into this discussion further. I refer to van de Vate (2006) for a more elaborated analysis of directional constructions in Krio.

Now I turn to the descriptive part of this paper starting with the data elicitation method.

3. Data collection

To collect the data I used the ‘Topological Relations Pictures Series’ developed by Melissa Bowerman and Eric Pederson of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen. This booklet contains 71 pictures, which represent various topological relations. In English they would be expressed by prepositions as *on*, *in*, *up*, *under*, etc. My informant was asked to describe what was shown in the pictures. The data was collected from a native speaker currently living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He was born in 1975 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Due to the war in Sierra Leone he only went to primary school. Here he learned English, which is the official language of the country, and he speaks it fluently. In 1999 he came as a refugee to the Netherlands. In the Netherlands he acquired Dutch as a third language. Although he has not been in his home country for years, he still uses Krio on a daily basis with his friends and relatives. Additionally, Krio stage plays written by native speakers and published by the University of Umeå were utilized. The stage plays made use of here are *God pas Konsibul* by Lawrence Quake-Woode and *Bad man bete pas emti os* by Esther Taylor-Pierce.

4. Description of Krio prepositions

This section gives a general description of all prepositions in Krio. Since a number of prepositions can be used either as functional or as locative prepositions each preposition is analysed individually. First, true prepositions are discussed, followed by a description of prepositional locatives and this section will finish with a sketch of the locatives.

4.1. True prepositions

The general preposition *na* is discussed first. *Na* can be interpreted as ‘in/on/at/out’ etc. In the examples provided by my informants and the stage plays *na* is generally used as a locative preposition; that is it expresses place (5a) and (5b) or path (5c). On rare occasions, *na* is interpreted as a functional preposition. The examples provided here show the many interpretations of *na*.

- (5) a. A lidom na wata.
1SG *lie-down on water*
‘I lie on the water’
- b. A de na os.
1SG COP *in house*
‘I’m in the house’
- c. I de waka fo go na rum.
3SG PROG *walk COMP go to room*
‘S/he’s walking to the room’

Na is also encountered as an identifying copula.

- (6) a. Di uman na tica.
DET *woman COP teacher*
‘The woman is a teacher’
- b. Na mi.
COP 1SG
‘It is me!’

The second preposition discussed is *fo*, one of the most difficult morphemes in Krio. The particle is complicated because it has three homonyms. *Fo* is interpreted as a modal marker expressing future or probability, as a complementiser, and as a preposition (Jones 1990). According to F&J the former two are derived from the Twi word *fa* ‘take’, the latter, and the one described here, is derived from the English preposition *for*. In its prepositional meaning *fo* can be interpreted as benefactive (7a) or purpose preposition (7b). In (7c) and (7d), *fo* conveys a non-benefactive or ‘secondary theme’ reading (Jones 1990).

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- (7) a. ... bay klos fo mi en den pikin wit sikstin lion, ...
buy clothes for 1SG and DET.PL child with sixteen leone
 ‘... buy clothes for myself and the children with 16 Leone, ...’⁴
 (Taylor-Pearce 1989:17)
- b. yu go tek in man fo witnes?
 2SG *go take 3SG.POSS man for witness*
 ‘Are you asking her husband as a witness?’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:6)
- c. A go slip fo am.
 1SG FUT *sleep for 3SG.OBJ*
 ‘I will sleep for her/him’
- d. A go it fo am.
 1SG FUT *eat for 3SG.OBJ*
 ‘I’ll eat for her/him (instead of her/him)’

The item *wit* is derived from English *with*. The interpretation of this preposition is similar to its English counterpart. In Krio too it is used to express instrumental (8a) and (8b) and comitative (8c) and (8d). Interestingly, *bay* ‘by’ is not used as an instrumental preposition. In cases where English uses *by* Krio uses *wit* (8b).

- (8) a. Wi ol bin sori fo da bobo we den bin kill wit bit.
 1PL *all PST sorry for DEM boy who 3PL PST kill with beat*
 ‘We all were sorry for that boy, whom they had killed with beatings’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:37)
- b. A travul wit aiship go na Fritong.
 1SG *travel with airplane go to Freetown*
 ‘I traveled by plane to Freetown’
- c. A go bia wit mi bad pikin.
 1SG *go be.patient with 1SG bad child*
 ‘I’ll be patient with my wicked child’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:38)
- d. Di man de waka wit dog.
 DET *man PROG walk with dog*
 ‘The man is walking with the dog’

The preposition *to* (< English *to*) heads benefactive (9a) prepositional phrases. Additionally, the item is used to indicate motion of direction towards someone (9b).

- (9) a. Di man give presen to uman.
 DET *man give present to woman*
 ‘The man gave a present to the woman’
- b. Di uman de waka de go to yu.
 DET *woman PROG walk PROG go to 2SG*
 ‘The woman is walking towards you’ (action is already happen-

⁴Leone is the currency unit in Sierra Leone.

ing at this moment)

Since both *to* and *na* express a locative path reading indicating a goal, one might expect that these prepositions are interchangeable. However, there is a difference. *Na* can, when interpreted in the meaning ‘to’, only combine with inanimates and *to* only with animates, compare (5c) and (9b) .

The preposition *bay*, derived from English ‘by’, is used as an agentive (10a) or locational preposition, where it indicates a position in space nearby the Figure (10b). In the latter case it is combined here with a position verb (*sidom*) and it expresses place, the locative copula *de* is accepted here as well.

- (10) a. Neks ia bay God pawa i go bi masta.
next year by God power 3SG FUT be master
 ‘Next year by God’s grace, he’ll have his Master’s degree’
 (Taylor-Pearce 1989:34)
- b. Di man sidom bay faya.
DET man sit by fire
 ‘The man sits by the fire’

In general, the preposition *from* (< English *from*) is used as a directional morpheme denoting source (11a). However, it can also be interpreted as non-benefactive (11b) or as a possessive marker (11c).

- (11) a. I de waka from il kam na tik.
3SG PROG walk from hill come to tree
 ‘S/he’s walking from the hill to the tree’
- b. Don i ker di siksti lion we i ayd from
and then 3SG take DET sixty leone which 3SG hide from
mi,...
 1SG
 ‘And then he took the 60 Leone which he hide from me...’
 (Taylor-Pearce 1989:17)
- c. di pen from Meri.
DET pen of Mary
 ‘the pen of Mary’

Another preposition used as possessive marker is *of*. However, according to my informant *of* is not ‘true Krio’, but more English-like. This is in agreement with F&J who state that this item only occurs in English loan phrases. (12), a saying from the Bible, is an example.

- (12) Buk se di voys of di pipul na di voys of God.
book that DET voice of DET people COP DET voice of God
 ‘The book that is the voice of the people is the voice of God’
 (Taylor-Pearce 1989:11)

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The preposition *lek* (< English *like*) is used as comparative preposition (13).

- (13) a. Di pikin de waka lek dog.
 DET *child* PROG *walk like dog*
 ‘The child is walking like a dog’
 b. Di pikin du lek kaw.
 DET *child do like cow*
 ‘The child acts like a cow’

The item *bot* (< English *about*) indicates approximation; generally it is followed by an expression of time or quantity (14a) and (14b). It can also mean ‘concerning’, or ‘with regard to’ as in (14c) and (14d).

- (14) a. A go de in bot twenti minits.
 1SG *go there in about twenty minutes*
 ‘I went there in about twenty minutes’
 b. Di pikin dem na bot ten.
 DET *child 3PL COP about ten*
 ‘The children numbered about ten’ (Fyle and Jones 1980:49)
 c. Wetin dis buk de bot?
what DEM book COP about
 ‘What is this book about?’
 d. Oltem yu de tok bad bot mi.
all-time 2SG PROG talk bad about 1SG
 ‘All the time you are talking bad about me’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:14)

The final true preposition discussed here is *pan* (< English *upon*). According to F&J, this item can be interpreted as ‘on, about, concerning’. Thus, the reading is contextually dependent. In (15) *pan* is analysed as a locative place preposition, where it is interpreted as a position above and in contact with the Ground.

- (15) a. I de waka pan rod.
 3SG PROG *walk on street*
 ‘S/he’s walking on the street’
 b. I rob di meresin pan im and.
 3SG *rob DET medicine on 3SG.POSS hand*
 ‘S/he stole the medicine in his/her hand’

When *pan* should be read as ‘about, concerning’ the use of this item is similar to that of the preposition *bot* (16).

- (16) Sisi Josifin insec kam mit wi pan di plaba.
sister J herself come meet 1PL about DET discussion
 ‘Sister Josephine herself came and talked with us about the discussion’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:25)

Pan also occurs as adverb stressing that the action is taking place right now (17). In this function the item always precedes the main verb.

- (17) Di motoka de pan kam.
 DET car PROG *right now come*
 ‘The car is coming right now’

4.2. Prepositional locatives

Now we turn to a description of the prepositional locatives. First, *nia* (< English *near*), *neba* (< English *neighbour*) and *klos* (< English *close*) are discussed. All indicate a motion or position of the Figure close to the Ground. They can all be used as locative markers to express both place (18a) and path (18b). Often the items are interchangeable, without a difference in interpretation. However, *klos* specifies that the object is very close by, as opposed to *neba* which can be used when the object is further away⁵ as well as when it is very close by. Another difference is that use of *neba* is not allowed in (18a) and similar expressions. Apparently this item cannot combine with natural elements.

- (18) a. Di man sidom nia faya.
 DET *man sit near fire*
 ‘The man sits near the fire’
 b. A de waka go nia bich.
 1SG PROG *walk go near beach*
 ‘I’m walking and going towards the beach’
 c. Holland de klos Belgium.
The.Netherlands COP close Belgium
 ‘The Netherlands is next to Belgium’
 d. Di wol kop de ple neba mi kontri.
 DET *world cup PROG play neighbouring 1SG.POSS country*
 ‘The world cup is being played in a neighbouring country’

Next the prepositions *op* and *pantap* are analysed. The source of the former is English *up*; the latter is a combination of English *upon* and *top*. Since the interpretations of these items are closely connected, they are discussed together. Both should be read as implying that the Figure is located above the Ground: contact between Figure and Ground is not required, but also not excluded. They indicate a locative place interpretation. Combined with a directional verb they can also modify a locative path reading. A difference between these items is that in the meaning of above, *op* indicates that the Figure is right above the Ground (19a), while the interpretation of *pantap* is not so strict (19b).

⁵One should take in mind the inherent meaning of *neba* which implies that the Figure cannot be too far away from the Ground.

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- (19) a. Di cloud de op os.
 DET *cloud* COP *up house*
 ‘The cloud is right above the house’
 b. Di cloud de pantap os.
 DET *cloud* COP *upon house*
 ‘The cloud is above the house’

Another difference is displayed in (20), in which both examples express a locative place. However, *pantap* indicates the Figure to be on the top. While *op* is less precise, it can be interpreted as the Figure being halfway towards the top or on the top of the Ground.

- (20) a. Di vilej de op il.
 DET *village* COP *up hill*
 ‘The village is up the hill’
 b. Di vilej de pantap il.
 DET *village* COP *upon hill*
 ‘The village is on top of the hill’

Note that *op* can also indicate motion or direction from a lower point towards a higher point (21a). In this example use of *pantap* would be ungrammatical. In (21b) *pantap* is used in a locative path construction.

- (21) a. Di titi don go op staiz.
 DET *girl* COMPL *go up stairs*
 ‘The girl went up the stairs/upstairs’⁶
 b. Di kondo de ron go pantap tik.
 DET *lizard* PROG *run go upon tree*
 ‘The lizard is running towards the top of the tree’

Now we turn to another combination of linked prepositions, *onda* (< English *under*) and *botom* (< English *bottom*). According to my informant a difference between these two items is that *onda* is found in the acrolectal variety of Krio. Both items convey the position of the Figure to be beneath that of the Ground and are used as locatives to express place (22) or path (23).

- (22) a. Di il de onda cloud.
 DET *hill* COP *under cloud*
 ‘The hill is under the cloud’
 b. Di pen bin de botom tabul.
 DET *pen* PST COP *under table*
 ‘The pen was under the table’

⁶In the literature on Krio *don* is analysed as a completive perfective aspect. The use of this item by my informant suggests that *don* may be changing from an aspect marker towards a past tense marker. However, more research needs to be done.

- (23) a. Di pen fodom onda tabul.
 DET *pen fall under table*
 ‘The pen fell under the table’
 b. I de waka kam botom brij.
 3SG PROG *walk come under bridge*
 ‘S/he’s walking towards down under the bridge’

Additionally, they express a position beneath the surface of the Ground (24a) or locate the Figure in the lower side of a domain (24b). Note that *onda* can be used in these examples as well.

- (24) a. Di fis de botom wata.
 DET *fish COP under water*
 ‘The fish is under the water’
 b. Di vilej de botom il.
 DET *village COP under hill*
 ‘The village lies at the foot of the hill’

Furthermore, *onda* is used to express more abstract situations like (25a). It can also refer to weather conditions, or introducing elements as the sun, moon, stars, etc (25b). In both sentences the use of *botom* is excluded.

- (25) a. Di pikin de onda mi kia.
 DET *child COP under 1SG.POSS care*
 ‘The child is under my care’
 b. Wi begin fo waka onda fayn weda.
 1PL *begin COMP walk under nice weather*
 ‘We began to walk under a clear sky’

Dong (< English *down*) indicates a locative place expression (26a). It can also be used for locative path phrases (26b) and (26c). Example (26b) should be analysed as a verb-particle construction, these will be discussed in Section 5.

- (26) a. Di os de dong riva.
 DET *house COP down river*
 ‘The house is down river’
 b. Meri bring dong di bed.
M bring down DET *bed*
 ‘Mary brought the bed down’
 c. Di rol kam dong di ruf de go na gron.
 DET *ball come down* DET *roof* PROG *go to ground*
 ‘The ball rolled down the roof and landed on the ground’ (Lit:
 ‘The ball came down the roof and was going to the ground’)

4.3. Locatives

The three locative markers that occur as a preposition are *insay* (< English *inside*), *bifo* (< English *before*), and *bien* (< English *behind*). First, *insay* indicates that the Figure is contained. *Insay* is used as locative place (27a) and path (27b) preposition.

- (27) a. Di arow de insay apul.
 DET *arrow* COP *in* *apple*
 ‘The arrow is in the apple’
 b. I don waka go insay rum.
 3SG COMPL *walk* *go* *in* *room*
 ‘S/he walked into the room’ (the action is finished)

Bifo is a locative place marker indicating a position of the Figure ‘in front of’ the Ground (28a). It is further used as temporal marker, where it expresses the precedence relations between two events (28b) or a condition (28c).

- (28) a. Di tik de bifo os.
 DET *tree* COP *before* *house*
 ‘The tree is in front of the house’
 b. ..., na de i drawn wan wik bifo di mared.
 COP *be-at* 3SG *drown* *one* *week* *before* DET *marriage*
 ‘..., it is he, who drowned one week before the wedding’
 (Taylor-Pearce 1989:21)
 c. Bifo yu luk televishon, yu get fo du yu omwok.
Before 2SG *look* *television* 2SG *get* COMP *do* 2SG *homework*
 ‘Before you can watch TV, you have to finish your homework’

Bien is used as a locative marker with a place interpretation, it conveys a position of the Figure ‘beyond or at the back’ of the Ground in literal (29a) and figurative (29b) sense. It can also express a temporal relation (29c).

- (29) a. Di os de bien tik.
 DET *house* COP *behind* *tree*
 ‘The house is behind the tree’
 b. A de bien pas mi work.
 1SG COP *behind* 1SG.POSS *work*
 ‘I’m behind with my work’
 c. Yu no de si, o yu no no wetin de bien yu?
 2SG NEG PROG *see* *oh* 2SG NEG *know* *what* COP *behind* 2SG
 ‘You’re not looking; oh don’t you know what is behind you?’
 (Quake-Woode 1988:9)

4.4. Conclusion

Section 4 discussed and described three categories of prepositions, i.e. true prepositions, prepositional locatives and locatives. F&J were followed in the division of these three categories. The main difference between true prepositions and the latter two categories is that prepositions belonging to the former category are mainly functional prepositions and they can only occur as transitives. Prepositions in both the prepositional locative and the locative category are spatial prepositions and they can occur as transitives and intransitives. It still has to be established whether locatives belong to a separate category or whether they are similar to prepositional locatives. An answer might be found in the next section in which Verb-Particle Constructions and intransitive prepositions are discussed.

5. Intransitive prepositions and Verb-Particle Constructions

The focus of this section is intransitive prepositions and Verb-Particle Constructions. Intransitive prepositions are defined as items ‘*without an object or other complement*’ (van Riemsdijk 1978:51). Verb-Particle Constructions (VprtCs) are described as constructions in which the verb and particle function on their own, but are also closely connected and function as one unit (Ramchand and Svenonius 2002). Emonds (1972) argues for one class which contains both the intransitive prepositions and the particles in a VprtC. He demonstrates that these items have similar characteristics and that they show similar behaviour. Emonds’ classification of intransitive prepositions and post-verbal particles will be followed in this paper.

In Krio there is no phonological difference between the transitive occurrence of a preposition and the intransitive occurrence of the same prepositions. As a result, it is difficult to figure out whether the transitive and intransitive prepositions have a different underlying structure. Van Riemsdijk claims: ‘*That intransitive prepositions have to exist follows from the principle that categories on the main projection line are obligatory and all other positions (complements and specifiers) optional*’ (van Riemsdijk 1978:51). Therefore, I assume the underlying structure of the transitive and intransitive prepositions to be similar.

Before I continue, I want to point out that due to the rare occurrence of intransitive prepositions and VprtCs the claims made in this section need further research with a larger group of informants.

5.1. True prepositions

First, true prepositions are touched upon briefly. According to F&J’s classification true prepositions can only occur as transitive. My informant agrees that items in this category cannot appear without a complement following them (30).

- (30) *A bay presen fo.
 1SG *buy present for*

5.2. Prepositional locatives and locatives

Since prepositional locatives and locatives show similar characteristics, which, in addition, distinguish them from true prepositions, the two categories are discussed together in this section.

5.2.1. Verb-Particle Constructions

In this section, I continue with VprtCs and intransitive occurrence of prepositions. First, some examples of VprtCs in Krio:

- (31) I trow op bol.
 3SG *throw up ball*
 ‘S/he threw up the ball’
- (32) Yu go ron go, yu lef yu lod bien.
 2SG FUT *run go* 2SG *leave* 2SG *load behind*
 ‘You’ll run and go, you leave your load behind’ (Taylor-Pearce 1989:14)

An interesting observation is that a V-DP-Prt order for example (31), which contains a prepositional locative, would be ungrammatical. In addition, it is obligatory for a complement to follow the particle in this example. The V-DP-Prt ordering is accepted for example (32), which contains a locative. My informant also accepts a V-Prt-DP order for this example. Thus, it appears to be possible for locatives to occur in a DP-Prt order and in a Prt-DP order. However, for prepositional locatives the data shown here suggests that a DP-Prt order is not allowed. Both in example (31) and (26b), containing the prepositional locative *dong*, a DP-Prt order is not allowed. Example (26b) is repeated here as (33).

- (33) Meri bring dong di bed.
M bring down DET *bed*
 ‘Mary brought the bed down’

Unfortunately, there is not enough data to make claims regarding the difference between prepositional locatives and locatives. Only these few examples could be found. However, I do think that to investigate whether there is a difference between prepositional locatives and locatives with respect to VprtCs would be worth the while. Special attention should be paid to whether the distinction observed here holds for similar constructions and which conclusion can be drawn from them.

5.2.2. Intransitive prepositions

Let us turn to constructions which contain an intransitive preposition. First, some examples. In these examples, as would be expected for intransitive prepositions, the complement is optional.

- (34) Di bobo sidom nia (di man).
 DET *boy sit-down near* DET *man*
 ‘The boy sits nearby (the man)’
- (35) I de waka go dong (di strit).
 3SG PROG *walk go down* DET *street*
 ‘S/he is walking down (the street)’
- (36) Ol di fayv pikin den kam insay.
 All DET *five child* 3PL *come in*
 ‘All the five children came in’ (Quake-Woode 1988:10)

Examples (34) and (35) each include a prepositional locative, and (36) a locative. There is no difference in behaviour for prepositional locatives and locatives as far as I could find with respect to the intransitive use of these prepositions.

I have been unable to find intransitive use of the prepositional locatives *onda*, *botom*, *op* and *pantap*. This is in conflict with the information given by F&J. They argue that all prepositional locatives appear both as transitive and intransitive. Since only one informant was used, it is important to test the judgments of other native speakers with respect to intransitive occurrence of these four items.

All three locatives can appear as intransitive. This is shown in example (36), (37) and (38). Note that the last example has a temporal interpretation.

- (37) a. Una big pipul, oltem una tok, pas una pul lili
 2PL *big people all time* 2PL *talk except* 2PL *remove little*
 yan bien.
word behind
 ‘You big people, all the time you talk, except you remove little words to the back’ (Quake-Woode 1988:6)
- b. Di man de bien (di os).
 DET *man COP behind* (DET *house*)
 ‘The man is behind (the house)’
- (38) wi os bifo.
 1PL *house before*
 ‘our house before (i.e. the house we had before this one)’

Another feature worth mentioning in Krio is shown in example (39) and (40).

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- (39) Fo uda yu de bay di presen fo?
for who 2SG PROG *buy* DET *presen* *for*
'For whom are you buying a present?'
- (40) Wit wetin yu de go na os wit?
with what 2SG PROG *go to house* *with*
'With what are you going home?'

In these examples the preposition appears both in the first and final position of the surface order. It is unusual for a preposition to leave an explicit trace when pied-piped. Questions worth answering here relate to the status of these items (are they 'real' prepositions or should they be labelled differently) and how would a formal analysis treat this phenomenon. I leave this for further research.

6. Conclusion

This paper focusses on Krio's prepositional system in a descriptive manner. Fyle & Jones divide the prepositions in two categories; true prepositions and prepositional locatives. I added a third category; namely locatives. The main difference between the former category and the latter two categories, is that true prepositions only occur as transitives and the other two appear as transitive and intransitive. Additionally, true prepositions can be classified as functional prepositions and prepositions in the other two categories as spatial. Whether there should be a distinction between prepositional locatives and locatives is left for further research. I suggest focussing on whether the distinction between these two categories found here for post-verbal particles holds for a larger data set.

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