

# Relative and cleft constructions in Kréol Rényoné

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# List of abbreviations

## Gloss abbreviations

1	first person	INTERJ	interjection
2	second person	IPFV	imperfective
3	third person	M	masculine
ACC	accusative	N	neuter
ANT	anterior	NEG	negative
AUX	auxiliary	NR	nominaliser
CL	clitic	PART	partitive
COMP	complementizer	PF	pro form
COMPL	completive	PL	plural
COND	conditional	POSS	possessive
COP	copula	PREP	preposition
DEF	definite	PRF	perfect
DEM	demonstrative	PRO	pronoun
DET	determiner	PROG	progressive
EXPL	expletive	PRS	present
F	feminine	PRST	Presentational
FC	free choice	PST	past
FIN	finite	PTCP	participle
FOC	focus	Q	question particle
FR	free relative pronoun	REFL	reflexive
FUT	future	REL	relative
GEN	genitive	SBJ	subject
HL	highlighter	SBJV	subjunctive
INDF	indefinite	SG	singular
INF	infinitive	TNS	tense particle

## Other abbreviations

ADJP	Adjectival Phrase
AdvP	Adverb Phrase
AH	Accessibility Hierarchy
APICS	Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures
ARC	appositive relative clause
CLM	clause linkage marker
CP	Complementiser Phrase
CRC	cleft relative clause
CS	Constructional Schema

DP	Determiner Phrase
FRC	free relative clause
IOC	Indian Ocean Creole
KR	Kréol Rényoné
LS	logical structure
NP	Noun Phrase
PoCS	Post-Core Slot
PoDP	Post-detached Position
PP	Prepositional Phrase
PRCS	Pre-Core Slot
PRDP	Pre-detached Position
PSA	Privileged Syntactic Argument
RC	relative clause
RP	Reference Phrase
RRC	restrictive relative clause
RRG	Role and Reference Grammar
SVO	subject-verb-object order
TMA	tense/modality/aspect

# List of symbols

- \* ungrammatical form or usage
- ? dubious acceptability of form or usage
- (x) x is optional

# Abstract

This thesis provides the first in-depth study of relative and cleft constructions in Kréol Rényoné (KR), a French-lexified creole language spoken on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion. The thesis contributes new data from a corpus of oral and written materials compiled by the author, an acceptability judgement questionnaire, and interviews carried out during online and in-situ fieldwork with 40 native speakers. It offers a description of the language's headed relative clauses, free relative clauses, *sé*-clefts (comparable to *it*-clefts) and *nana*-constructions (comparable to *there*-constructions, including presentational clefts and existentials). The thesis offers a syntactic analysis of these constructions using the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) framework (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005, 2008a; Bentley et al. forthcoming and other works). It expands existing theoretical analyses of the relevant constructions in RRG, and constitutes the first analysis of KR grammar within RRG.

The thesis contributes to our understanding of KR grammar in several respects. It details the relativising strategies found in the language, uncovers patterns of relative clause marking (or lack thereof) across different types of relative clause and compares the relative clauses found in headed relatives with those found in cleft constructions. Furthermore, it advances hypotheses regarding whether the language has truly free relative clauses or, rather, light-headed ones. Finally, it begins to address the syntax of focus in KR, considering cleft constructions against other available focalising devices. Throughout the thesis, the fields of Romance linguistics and Creole Studies are drawn together: KR is situated within the broader family of Romance, and frequent comparisons are offered with French, other Romance languages, and other French-based Creoles.

The thesis draws attention to important gaps that have been neglected not only in KR, but in the broader study of creole grammars, including the structure and interpretation of free relative clauses and the syntax of focus, particularly broad focus constructions. The thesis has broader theoretical significance, though: first, it proposes a refinement of existing RRG analyses of relatives and clefts, contributing to our theoretical understanding of these constructions; second, it identifies key issues in the syntax-semantic interplay in free relatives, paving the way for further research on these structures, and third, it draws attention to the under-examined distinction between presentational clefts and existentials.

# Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.



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# Preface

The author completed a BA in French and Business Management at the University of Manchester in 2018. As part of that degree, in 2017, she completed an Erasmus semester abroad on Reunion island, studying at the University of La Réunion. During that semester, she began learning Kréol Rényoné. Upon returning, she completed an MA in Linguistics, for which she wrote a dissertation on relativising strategies in Kréol Rényoné. That dissertation lay the foreground for this thesis.

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# Part 1.

## Introduction

# 1. Introduction

Reunion Creole, known as Kréol Rényoné (KR), is a French-based Creole spoken on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, which, prior to 1848 was known as the island of Bourbon (Bollée & Maurer 2016: 458). KR is spoken as a mother tongue of the majority of the island’s population, and by a diaspora in France, together totalling approximately 800,000 speakers (Bollée 2013; Bollée & Maurer 2016). French-based Creoles can be characterised as languages that arose in French colonial territories as a result of language contact between regional, spoken varieties of French from the 16th-18th centuries and the various languages spoken by the enslaved populations in those contexts (Zribi-Hertz 2022). The French-based Creoles share the fact that the major source of their lexicon is French, but they each have an independent grammar, distinct from that of French.<sup>1</sup> The exact socio-historical conditions leading to the development of the new creole language varies between the territories, and I give details concerning the Reunionese context in chapter 2.

Within the creole literature, KR has received most attention in relation to its historical development, following the major works of Chaudenson (1974) and Carayol, Chaudenson & Barat (1984), which offered not only a linguistic description, focusing on the lexicon of KR, but also an ethnographic description of Reunion, including its people and its geography. Alongside those works, there are several broad overviews of the grammar of KR, including Papen (1978), Corne (1982), Cellier (1985a,b), Ramassamy (1985), Holm (2004), Staudacher-Valliamée (2004), Bollée (2013) and Quartier & Gauvin (2022). Concerning more focused studies on aspects of the grammar of KR, Corne (1995), Caid (2000, 2008), Chaudenson (2007), Watbled (2014, 2015, 2021a), Albers (2019, 2020, 2021), Gaze (2019) and Hummel (2019) have shed light on definiteness, number, the tense and aspect system and the preverbal marker *i* in KR, to name a few areas. However, in-depth treatment of specific grammatical phenomena in the language are still lacking in several areas, and that is what this thesis contributes, offering fresh data and analyses for a family of related construc-

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<sup>1</sup>Note that each French-based Creole has its own grammar, although there are features that some or all of them share. Some French-based Creoles are closer than others - for example, Zribi-Hertz (2022: 3), citing Chaudenson (2003), points out that the Creoles of French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and Dominica are largely inter-comprehensible, while the Creoles of Reunion and Martinique differ considerably, their distance being comparable to that between Italian and Portuguese.

tions: relatives and clefts.

KR is often set apart from other French Creoles on the basis of it being structurally closer to French (cf. chapter 2), and this sometimes causes it to be left out of comparisons between the French-based Creoles (e.g. Syea 2017). While the neighbouring French-based Creoles of Mauritius and Seychelles are mutually intelligible with one another, and often described as one language (Indian Ocean Creole (IOC)), KR is not mutually intelligible with the IOC (Baker & Corne 1986: 163). Yet, despite reportedly being structurally close to French, KR has received little attention within the Romance tradition. This reflects a more general pattern: while many authors recognise Romance-based Creoles as belonging to the wider family of Romance languages, the study of them is still not firmly integrated into the tradition of Romance linguistics. The result of this is that study of the present-day grammar of KR seems somewhat neglected in both Creole Studies and in Romance linguistics. In this thesis, I attempt to draw these two fields of enquiry together, by considering questions originating from Romance linguistics research, or more generally, typological research, with respect to KR, a creole language.

## 1.1. Aims of the thesis

The broad aims of this thesis are two-fold: to document an area of KR grammar which is poorly understood, and to contribute to our theoretical understanding of relative and cleft constructions. For the latter, I offer fresh data from a language in which relative and cleft constructions have received little to no attention in the specialist literature, and I provide an analysis of the constructions within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005, 2008a; Guerrero, Ibáñez Cerda & Belloro 2009; Kailuweit, Künkel & Staudinger 2018; Bentley et al. forthcoming, among others). Within this remit is a description and analysis of KR's headed relative clauses (chapter 5), free relative clauses (chapter 6), *sé*-clefts (chapter 8) and *nana*-constructions (chapter 9). For each of the former, I provide background to the study of the construction before presenting the KR data, which come from corpora, an acceptability judgement questionnaire, and interviews with 40 native speakers (cf. chapter 4). Following a description of each construction in KR, I present a Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) analysis of it. Where possible, I add elements of comparison concerning how RRG deals with the core issues of relative and cleft construction analysis as compared to other theoretical frameworks and concerning how KR's system of relative and cleft constructions behaves as compared with its lexifier, French, other Romance languages more broadly, and other French-based Creoles; however, the focus of the thesis is an analysis of the aforementioned constructions in KR, using the tools of RRG.

## 1.2. Theoretical context

Relative constructions have attracted considerable attention from a variety of standpoints: their syntax, semantics and typological variation. It has been claimed that all languages have restrictive relative clauses (Downing 1978, Lehmann 1986, de Vries 2002: 35), and as such, these are often included in broad descriptions of languages. In its most typical instantiation, a relative clause (RC) is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or Noun Phrase (NP) (section 5.1.1), yet we find what appear to be identical clauses in other constructions, namely presentational clefts, where they contain the main assertion of the sentence (sections 9.1 and 9.4.2). The explanation for why such RCs should have the syntax of a subordinate clause while constituting the core predication of the sentence is explained with reference to the differing semantic and discourse-pragmatic properties of the constructions, which will be explored in this thesis.

This work constitutes one of the first in-depth studies dedicated to KR relative constructions, building upon Corne (1995) and McLellan (2019), the only two previous studies dedicated to this topic. The focus of Corne (1995) was a discussion of the poorly understood optionality of the relative marker, or relativiser, *ke*, in restrictive RCs in KR. Relying upon a diachronic corpus of written materials from the 18th to the 20th century, Corne argued that *ke*, under most circumstances, is optional. This pattern of optionality, for RCs in which the missing element has subject function in particular, was described as “mysterious” by Corne given that it is not one found in any of the other French-based Creoles (optional relative marking for subject relatives, that is).<sup>2</sup> His perspective being historical, Corne (1995) sought to explain the optionality of the relative marker in relation to contact between Malagasy and colonial varieties of French: the Malagasy relative subordinator *izay* is also optional, and Malagasy was the most significant influence for KR after French (cf. section 2.1), so this is a likely explanation.

In McLellan (2019), I added to our understanding of the constraints governing the optionality of the relative marker in present-day KR via a corpus study of written materials and a grammaticality judgement questionnaire: its optionality was found to be sensitive to the syntactic function of the head noun in the RC. While zero-marking was preferred in RCs whose antecedent had subject or object function in the RC, those with oblique function favoured a relative marker. Lacking from McLellan (2019) was an understanding of the relativisation strategies found for RCs whose antecedents have other functions. The findings from McLellan (2019) provided an important starting point for this thesis, which builds directly upon that

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<sup>2</sup>It is not true that none of the other French Creoles *allow* zero-marking in subject relatives (see, for example, Alleeaib & Henri 2007). However, none of the other French Creoles seem to *prefer* zero-marking for subject relatives based on the available literature (see section 5.3.2).



work and answers the questions arising from it. Adding a significant amount of synchronic data from a wider range of sources, both written and oral, as well as native speaker judgements of the relevant constructions, I strengthen the claims made by McLellan (2019) and offer a more complete picture of the headed relative system in KR (section 5.2).

The study of free relative clauses (FRCs) has in general received less attention in the literature than headed RCs, but this constitutes a particularly big gap within the study of creole languages: FRCs are not described in the Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS) and are typically only mentioned in passing in grammars, and even studies dedicated to RCs.<sup>3</sup> The study of FRCs in KR provides an interesting example of where we can see the result of diachronic processes of language change in synchrony. Going against a cross-linguistically frequent pattern where the free relative pronouns of a given language are often identical to its interrogative pronouns (section 6.1), in KR, interrogative pronouns have low acceptability, subject to certain constraints, in FRCs (section 6.3). Instead, I have found evidence of a new free relative pronoun that derives from the combination of a demonstrative and a relative marker equivalent to *that which* (section 6.2), and this constitutes the primary strategy for forming FRCs in KR. Within the literature on FRCs, particular attention has been paid to their semantic interpretations, though much current research in this domain concerns English, leaving the availability of certain readings of English FRCs poorly understood from a cross-linguistic perspective (section 6.1.2). My investigation of the semantic interpretation of FRCs in KR seeks to highlight this, indicating that there is not a one-to-one mapping between form and function, and the complexity of variation found in KR manifests strongly in this domain.

In the second half of the thesis, I examine cleft constructions, which are bi-clausal constructions whose second clause looks like an RC and which are associated with particular focus structure articulations (section 7.2). Little to no attention has been paid to the syntax of focus in KR, but there is a body of research exploring how the rigid constraints on focus structure found in French impact on the syntax of this language, which is also strict (e.g. Lambrecht 1994; Van Valin 1999).<sup>4</sup> I examine cleft constructions of two broad types: those involving *sé* ‘be’ (chapter 8) and those involving *nana* ‘have’ (chapter 9). I situate the cleft constructions within the broader grammar of KR, allowing us to begin understanding the syntax of focus in this language (section 8.3). This will enable future comparative work between KR and its lexifier regarding the syntax of focus, which is timely given the attention

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<sup>3</sup>The APiCS is available online at <https://apics-online.info/>

<sup>4</sup>Focus is defined in section 3.5 and the relation between syntax and focus is introduced in chapter 7, which prepares for the discussion of *sé*-clefts and *nana*-constructions.

that has been paid to French clefts for decades. There is a large body of recent work investigating French clefts (Dufter 2008; Lahousse & Borremans 2014; Karssenbergh & Lahousse 2017, 2018; Verwimp & Lahousse 2017; Karssenbergh 2018 among others), and comparing the properties and frequencies of clefts in different languages, but particularly within Romance (Dufter 2009; Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012; De Cesare 2014; De Cesare & Garassino 2018 among others). Extending this comparative work to the Romance-based Creoles, an endeavor which I attempt to begin, could lead to new insights concerning the formal and functional motivations of clefts, and indeed on the history of these structures in Romance.

Cleft constructions have puzzled linguists for some decades now, because the meaning of these constructions does not appear to be a sum of the meaning of their parts. In my analyses, I differentiate between different types of cleft involving *sé* and *nana*, bringing to light their apparent similarities in form, but their different semantic and discourse-pragmatic properties. In doing so, I also make important comparisons between *nana*-clefts and other *nana*-constructions, namely, existential sentences. Existentials have received considerable attention in the theoretical literature, but a detailed understanding of the distinction between presentational clefts (one type of *nana*-construction, comparable to a *there*-cleft) and existentials remains underdeveloped. Such a comparison is therefore of great theoretical importance, and will likely require further work, particularly given that existential constructions are so well-attested cross-linguistically.

What ties the cluster of related constructions discussed in this thesis together is that they have a clause with a missing argument or adjunct, which is understood to be co-referent with an antecedent.<sup>5</sup> FRCs differ slightly in this respect: there is not a missing constituent as it is occupied by a pronoun within the RC, which itself functions as an argument or adjunct of the main clause.<sup>6</sup> The nature of the relationship between the RC and its antecedent differs between the constructions, and they exhibit different semantic and discourse-pragmatic properties. The framework used for the analyses in this thesis - RRG - is particularly apt for bringing to light such differences while also capturing their similarities, because it has separate representations for the syntactic, semantic and information structural levels of analysis, which combine in what is known as the linking algorithm (section 3.4). In addition to this linking algorithm, the framework places emphasis on the role that constructions have in a grammar: the theory proposes Constructional Schemas

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<sup>5</sup>Note that the constructions only have a missing argument/adjunct when the construction exhibits a relative complementiser or zero-marking; if the construction exhibits a relative pronoun, there is not technically a missing argument/adjunct as it is represented by the relative pronoun. In KR, relative and cleft constructions are of the former type in the majority of cases.

<sup>6</sup>I save full introductions and definitions of each relative/cleft construction to their respective chapters.

which allow us to explain construction-specific phenomena in a language's grammar. The latter are particularly crucial for the analysis of cleft constructions, which are perfect examples of where compositional rules cease to apply as they would outside the construction.

### 1.3. Organisation of thesis

This thesis is organised into four parts. Part 1 comprises the introductory chapters: in chapter 2 I introduce the KR language along with its socio-historical background; in chapter 3 I introduce RRG, the theoretical apparatus used for my analyses and in chapter 4 I discuss the data and methods used. Parts 2 and 3 contain the core chapters of the thesis on relative and cleft constructions, respectively. Part 2 begins with headed RCs in chapter 5, followed by FRCs in chapter 6. Part 3 is dedicated to cleft constructions. I begin with a chapter introducing cleft constructions, their relation to RCs, and more generally the syntax of focus, which is central to the study of clefts. That chapter (7) foregrounds chapters 8 and 9, which are respectively dedicated to the KR equivalent of *it*-clefts and *there*-constructions: *sé*-clefts and *nana*-constructions. Finally, in Part 4, I conclude the thesis, bringing together the findings from the four core chapters of the thesis and reflecting on the implications of the research, as well as its limitations.

## 2. Kréol Rényoné

Reunion has had the status of Overseas Department of France since 1946, prior to which it was a French colony. Speech on Reunion island is characterised by a high degree of variation that exists across a linguistic continuum, from varieties close to standard French at one end to basilectal varieties of KR at the other.<sup>7</sup> ‘Basilectal’ (or ‘the basilect’) is the term used to describe the variety (or varieties) furthest from the lexifier (the language from which the Creole inherits the majority of its lexicon, in this case, French). On the continuum, between standard varieties of French and basilectal varieties of KR are Reunion French (a regional variety of French) and acrolectal varieties of KR (the varieties of KR closest to the lexifier). A high degree of variation is typical of creole settings as the Creole often continues to exist alongside its lexifier, but there is a particularly high degree of variation found on Reunion island, and that variation is thought to have existed since the early stages of the formation of this Creole (i.e. since the 18th century) and persisted throughout its development (Baker & Corne 1986: 169), cf. section 2.1.

The largest reported influence on KR, after French, is Malagasy, owing to the fact that a large proportion of the enslaved population came from Madagascar. To a lesser extent, Bantu languages (Corne 1999: 73) and Tamil (Watbled 2020: 155) have also influenced the language, though it is primarily lexical influences rather than structural influences that have been reported for the latter. Acrolectal KR is typically described as the product of the restructuring of regional varieties of French, with more minor influences from the aforementioned languages (e.g. Corne 1999), while basilectal KR is thought to have restructured to a greater degree (Chaudenson 2003). The development of two distinct varieties of KR, which will be further explained in section 2.1, is a result of the history and geography of the island.

Figure 2.1 shows a map of the island. The centre of the island is mountainous, with certain areas still being inaccessible other than by foot or helicopter. Different varieties of KR are traditionally associated with different geographical locations: the acrolect is thought to have developed in the central, mountainous regions and is hence sometimes referred to as *Créole des Hauts* ‘Creole of the highlands’. The

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<sup>7</sup>Regarding the notion of standard French, it should be pointed out that there is a significant difference between formal and informal French, such that Zribi-Hertz (2011, 2013) has proposed that the situation is diglossic, even in metropolitan France.

basilect, on the other hand, developed along the lower coastlines, and is referred to as *Créole des Bas* ‘Creole of the lowlands’. However, these terms are somewhat outdated because any one speaker will likely have features traditionally associated with both varieties. This change, whereby speakers no longer necessarily speak one or other variety that can be straightforwardly classified as the acrolect or the basilect, is a result of multiple factors, among them increased communication across the island, which was fairly limited prior to the 1960s (Chaudenson 1974). Furthermore, although a two-way distinction has typically been made in the literature between an acrolectal variety of KR and a basilectal variety of KR, we should not necessarily assume that there is or was only one basilectal variety and only one acrolectal variety.



Figure 2.1.: Map of Reunion Island (OpenStreetMap)

KR has been described as one of the closest French Creoles to French, so much so that some authors term it a “semi-creole”, following Holm (1989: 392). I prefer to use the term ‘Creole’ in a socio-historic sense rather than a linguistic sense. I follow, for example, Chaudenson (1995: 93) and Degraff (2005), in using the term to describe a language that has developed in the context of European colonisation, rather than to designate a typological group of languages sharing linguistic features that non-creole languages do not share. I therefore do not subscribe to Holm’s definition of KR as a semi-creole; we will see in section 2.1, where I provide precisions concerning the

history of the island, that KR clearly fits the definition of a Creole in a socio-historic sense. In section 2.2, I offer further details concerning the sociolinguistic context and in section 2.3, I offer a broad overview of the language, focusing on elements that will become relevant for our discussion of relative and cleft constructions.

## 2.1. Historical and geographical background

Between 1646 and 1665, French men began to settle on Reunion island, bringing Malagasy men and women with them (Chaudenson 1974: xi). In the early period of settlement, Indo-Portuguese women are also reported to have been brought to Reunion from southeast India to marry the French settlers (Holm 1989: 392). Towards the end of the 17th century, a system of slavery was in place on the island, with increasing numbers of enslaved people from Madagascar and Africa working on the island (Cellier 1985b: 22; Corne 1999: 68). The transportation of enslaved peoples to Reunion increased rapidly between 1715 and 1830, which marked what is known as the plantation society, during which coffee and sugar cane were the primary crops. Populations from East Africa and Madagascar, and in smaller numbers, India and West Africa, were enslaved on Reunion island during this period (Holm 1989: 393). During this phase, the proportion of non-Europeans began to outnumber the proportion of European settlers. At the same time that the enslaved population was increasing, so too was immigration from France. The white population divided into two groups, known as the *Petit Blancs* ('small whites') and the *Gros Blancs* ('fat whites'). The latter were wealthy plantation owners, while the former were a poor population who began migrating to the central mountainous region to live off hunting and fishing due to worsening living conditions (Holm 1989: 393). Slavery was officially abolished in Reunion in 1846 (Baker & Corne 1986: 164), but is likely to have continued illegally for some years. Following the abolition, in order to supply labor demands on the plantations, indentured workers were brought to Reunion from southern India (Holm 1989: 394), China (Cellier 1985b) and, to a lesser extent, Mozambique (Corne 1999: 69). Immigrants from northern India subsequently immigrated to Reunion around the beginning of the 20th century (Cellier 1985b: 37).

The acrolectal variety of KR is reported to have begun developing prior to the plantation phase, when the population was composed of French, Malagasy and Indo-Portuguese people in relatively equal numbers. Following this phase, the language is reported to have evolved in two directions: the acrolect is thought to have continued developing via the *Petit Blanc* population, who moved into the central, mountainous region, and the basilect is thought to have developed during the plantation phase, when the island had a larger enslaved population. The main actors in the devel-

opment of the acrolect were therefore French and Malagasy speakers in the early phase of settlement on the island. Basilectal KR, on the other hand, subsequently developed via the interaction between enslaved people and colonisers, and this variety (or varieties) underwent more restructuring as the proportion of speakers of French involved in its development was smaller.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2. Sociolinguistic context

### 2.2.1. Multilingualism

The two major languages spoken on Reunion island are KR and French. KR has status as official regional language alongside French, the national language. In far, far smaller numbers, there are also speakers of Malagasy, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Arabic, Comorian languages (which belong to the Bantu family) and Chinese languages (Watbled 2021d: 397-398). Note that these are minority languages spoken by recent immigrants rather than languages that have been passed down generations since the island was populated.

As noted above, speech on Reunion island is subject to a high degree of variation, owing to its history, but also to ongoing language contact with French. Today, there are virtually no monolingual speakers: it is rare to find a speaker who does not have, at a minimum, passive competence in French. The majority of the population are bilingual (KR-French, abstracting away from those who speak additional languages), but sometimes with dominance in one or other language, and many speakers' language use is context-dependent (see section 2.2.2).

### 2.2.2. Contexts of use

Reunion is traditionally described as a diglossic context, where French is used in formal settings, like in education and administration, and KR is the primary language of the home. However, today this description is a little too rigid and binary. KR is certainly not confined to the private sphere: roughly a third of my 40 participants reported that they used KR everywhere and anywhere. On the other hand, all of my participants reported that they speak KR with their family, and the majority with their friends too. Similarly, participants also frequently reported speaking French at home in addition to KR. KR is increasingly used in the media, for example, on local radio stations, TV shows, and in advertising.

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<sup>8</sup>Note that the enslaved population included Malagasy speakers too, but in the earlier phase of settlement, the Malagasies were reportedly employees rather than slaves, according to Corne (1999: 68).

Much of the sociolinguistic scholarship concerning Reunion island since the 1980s has centred around the concept of interlect, inspired by Prudent's work on Martinique (e.g. Prudent 1981). This approach focuses on the study of interactional speech produced by creolophones, examining their linguistic repertoires within a macro-system, without necessarily distinguishing between two languages with discrete systems. For work within this theoretical background, see, for example, Ledegen (2003), Lebon-Eyquem Mylène (2007), Rapanoël (2007), Souprayen-Cavery (2007) and Georger (2011).

Stories of language acquisition vary: while some begin speaking both languages from birth, many Reunionese children speak only KR before starting school, where the principal language of instruction is French. In the lifetimes of many of my participants, pupils were banned from speaking KR at school but, fortunately, this has changed for the younger generations. The primary language of instruction remains French, but KR language lessons are now offered in some schools - this usually means dedicated KR language lessons; however, a relatively recent initiative of bilingual classes at primary school is in place, whereby classes are taught in French and KR in equal measures. In those cases, KR is used as a language of instruction alongside French. This is not widespread though: in 2020, there were 35 bilingual classes across the island (Brisset, Durand & Bernabé 2020: 47).

### **2.2.3. Language attitudes**

The research reported in this thesis does not investigate language attitudes explicitly, but the fieldwork period afforded me the opportunity to learn more informally about attitudes towards the language. Like many creole languages, KR has a history of being devalued, as illustrated in the above mention of pupils being forbidden from speaking it at school in previous eras. Many advances have been made, so much so that attitudes towards KR are generally positive in today's society. My participants largely expressed positive opinions towards KR. Informal conversation and interviews revealed that certain negative attitudes do still persist though, or at least that KR and French are not yet used in equal measures in the same domains. For example, several speakers remarked that they would not (or more strongly, that one cannot) speak KR in a job interview (yet in the workplace it is common for creolophones to speak KR).

### **2.2.4. Standardisation**

KR has not been standardised to any degree. The high degree of variation in KR makes standardisation particularly difficult as it would involve questions of which features/regions to favour, and how to justify those decisions. At present, KR does



not have an official orthography, although several have been proposed: a system close to that of French, and several other systems that are more phonetic but with some differences: *Lékritir 77*, *Lékritir 83/KWZ*, *Lékritir 2001/Tangol*, and a 2020 synthesis of previously proposed systems, which I follow for the oral examples in this thesis; for written examples, I conserve the author’s original spelling.<sup>9</sup> This brief mention of the writing systems proposed does not do justice to the complexity of creating a writing system and the extensive, ongoing work being done to advance the enterprise. However, given that it is not central to the research in this thesis, I direct the interested reader to Gauvin (2004) and the website of *Lofis La Lang Kréol La Rényon*, where they can find resources on this issue.

## 2.3. Linguistic description

In this section, I give a brief overview of some core features of the grammar of KR, in order to foreground the data presented in this thesis. Like French and the other French Creoles, KR is a subject-verb-object order (SVO) language, but unlike French, pronominal objects occupy the same post-verbal position as non-pronominal ones in KR and in the other French-based Creoles (Zribi-Hertz 2022: 15).

- (1) a. *Ou la apèl amwin.*  
 2SG PRF ring 1SG  
 ‘You rang me.’ KR
- b. *Tu m’as appelé.*  
 2SG 1SG=have.3SG ring.PST.PTCP  
 ‘You rang me.’ French

Unlike French, KR allows clauses with no subject, which are possible in several contexts. Firstly, KR often exhibits no subject in impersonal constructions like that in (2), where French would employ either the dedicated pronoun *on*, or in some instances, a personal pronoun, both with non-referential, human readings (such pronouns are called R(eference)-impersonal pronouns, see Cabredo Hofherr (2015) for further detail on French).<sup>10 11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The 2020 synthesis can be found at [https://pedagogie.ac-reunion.fr/fileadmin/ANNEXES-ACADEMIQUES/03-PEDAGOGIE/01-ECOLE/langue-vivante-regionale/FL/Graphie\\_document\\_adre.pdf](https://pedagogie.ac-reunion.fr/fileadmin/ANNEXES-ACADEMIQUES/03-PEDAGOGIE/01-ECOLE/langue-vivante-regionale/FL/Graphie_document_adre.pdf).

<sup>10</sup>Note that the 1PL reading of the French pronoun *on* is treated by Cabredo Hofherr (2015: 17) as a distinct lexical item to the reading of *on* as an R-impersonal.

<sup>11</sup>In using the symbol “ $\emptyset$ ”, I do not mean to suggest that there is an underlying subject in the syntax, it is rather for exemplifying more clearly where the subject would be in language requiring one.

- (2) *Kèl zépisse Ø i mète dann kari ? Ø i mète toultan: zognion, lay,*  
 what spice Ø FIN put in curry ? Ø FIN put always onion garlic  
*thin. Souvandéfoi Ø i mète: safran, poiv krazé dann*  
 thyme often Ø FIN put turmeric pepper crushed in  
*pilon.*  
 pestle.and.mortar  
 ‘What spices does one put in a curry? One always puts: onions, garlic and  
 thyme. One sometimes puts turmeric and pepper crushed in a pestle and  
 mortar.’ (Brochure)

Albers (2019: 59) points out that subject pronouns can also be omitted when they are topical or have an easily recoverable antecedent, and this is supported by my corpus data, illustrated in (3).

- (3) *Kan zot la giny zot retrét po sat la kontinyé travayé*  
 when 3PL PRF gain POSS.3PL pension for DEM PRF continue work  
*bonpé, Ø la artourn dan zot péi (...)*  
 lots Ø PRF return to POSS.3PL country  
 ‘When they got their pension, for those who continued to work a lot, (they)  
 returned to their country (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)

Note that this is also the case with object pronouns, as illustrated in (4).

- (4) Preceding context:  
 A: So from time to time you do find your Creole pretty!  
 B: Hmm well! When they do a little piece in Creole it’s good  
  
 A: *ou la ont mé ou trouv Ø zoli*  
 2SG have shame but 2SG find Ø pretty  
 ‘You’re ashamed but you find (it) pretty.’ (Baude 2010)

In the following sections, I give further details concerning aspects of KR’s grammar: its pronominal system, determiners, tense, modality and aspect marking, the pre-verbal marker *i* and its copular system. This is not a comprehensive overview of the grammar of KR: these aspects have been selected as they are important for a general understanding of the data in the thesis and/or they will become relevant in the discussion of relative and cleft constructions.

## 2.3.1. The pronominal system

### 2.3.1.1. Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns, listed in Table 2.1, have a long form and a short form, the long form being identical to the short form, but with the addition of *a-*.

Table 2.1.: Personal pronouns in KR

	Short form	Long form
1SG	<i>mwin</i>	<i>amwin</i>
	<i>mi</i> (subject)	
2SG	<i>ou</i>	<i>aou</i>
	<i>twé</i>	<i>atwé</i>
3SG	<i>li/lu</i>	<i>ali/alu</i>
	<i>èl</i> (FEM)	<i>aèl</i> (FEM)
1PL	<i>nou</i>	<i>anou</i>
2PL	<i>zot</i>	<i>azot</i>
	<i>vou</i>	<i>avou</i>
3PL	<i>zot</i>	<i>azot</i>
	<i>banna</i>	

I will begin by explaining the alternation between long and short forms, before offering a few notes on specific forms found in Table 2.1. The short form is usually found when the pronoun functions as a subject and the long form when the pronoun functions as the object of a verb. When the pronoun is the object of a preposition, the short form is required. This distribution is illustrated by example (5).

- (5) *Tout lo bann problelm la finn ariv **anou**, aköz **zot** la*  
 all DEF PL problem PRF COMPL happen 1PL because 3PL PRF  
*anprofit su **nou** (...)*  
 profit from 1PL  
 ‘All the problems that have happened to us, because they profited from us,  
 (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

However, pronouns can (and must) occur in the long form when they are subjects if they are focal or topicalised.

- (6) a. ***Azot** dir si zot lé intéressé, (...)*  
 2PL say if 2PL COP interested  
 ‘YOU say if you are interested, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)
- b. (...) ***azot** minm y desid sat nou la bozwin (...)*  
 3PL FOC FIN decide what 1PL have need  
 ‘(...) THEY decide what we need (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)
- c. *Po Léta Rénioné sa lapa nout vizion, **anou nou***  
 for state Reunionese DEM COP-NEG POSS.1PL vision 1PL 1PL  
*kontinye sobat po lindépendans Larénion, (...)*  
 continue fight for independence La=Réunion  
 ‘For the Reunionese state, that is not our vision, WE, we continue to  
 fight for independence for La Réunion, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)

If the object pronoun follows negative marker *pa*, the short form is found.

- (7) (...) *lé inportan ke nou oubli **pa** zot*, (...)   
 COP important COMP 1PL forget NEG 3PL   
 ‘(...) it’s important that we do not forget them, (...)’   
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 12)

Watbled (2014) argues that the long and short forms are therefore not case forms, rather, it is prosodic rules that govern the distribution of the long and short forms: following the verb, two syllables are required (within the syntactic constituent that the verb governs).

The alternation *li-lu* and *ali-alu* in Table 2.1 reflects different pronunciations. The *-u* forms are more common in the south of the island and in the mountainous region. The forms *èl* and *aèl* are feminine, but not all speakers have this distinction in their grammars: for many speakers, *li/ali/lu/alu* are non-gendered. However, speakers with the *-u* pronunciation (*lu/alu*) are more likely to use the feminine pronouns *èl* and *aèl* and if they do, *lu/alu* is masculine. *Banna* is an additional 3PL pronoun, but it only has one form. *Banna* can occur as a subject (8a), an object (8b) and the object of a preposition (8c).

- (8) a. ***banna** la minm zet la klé* (...)   
 3PL PRF even throw DET key   
 ‘They have even thrown away the key (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)
- b. (...) *li la parti plinn fwa war **banna***.   
 3SG PRF leave many time see 3PL   
 ‘(...) he has been to see them many times.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)
- c. (...) *koz épi partaj ansanm **banna***.   
 speak then share with 3PL   
 ‘(...) speak and share with them.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 3)

There is an interaction between the finiteness marker *i* (cf. section 2.3.4) and some personal pronouns. When followed by *i*, the 1SG form *mwin* is obligatorily contracted to *mi*. However, some speakers, notably the younger generation, now use the form *mi* even in contexts where *i* is not required by the following verb. It has thus been overgeneralised and is becoming a new 1SG pronoun, but only in subject position. I return to this in section 2.3.4.

Finally, the form of the first-person singular pronoun often changes when followed by certain pre-verbal markers: when *mwin* is followed by the future marker *va*, they contract to *ma*, and when *mwin* is followed by *la* (in both its auxiliary (9a) and its lexical uses (9b)), it is pronounced *ma*, to the effect that the vowels are in harmony

(*ma la*).<sup>12</sup>

- (9) a. *Ma la esay mèt amwin la plas d'in fanm.*  
 1SG PRF try put 1SG DET place of=INDF woman  
 'I tried to put myself in the place of a woman.' (TV)
- b. *Ma la ryin kont lo relizion.*  
 1SG have nothing against DEF religion  
 'I have nothing against religion.' (TV)

### 2.3.1.2. Demonstrative pronouns

One of the most frequent demonstrative pronouns is *sa*, which derives from French *ça*:

- (10) a. *Mi koné pa kisa la di sa, (...)*  
 1SG-FIN know NEG who PRF say DEM  
 'I don't know who said that, (...)' (Newspaper - *Fanal* 12)
- b. *Dan lo kozé lu la fé po nout zournal (zot va trouv sa  
 in the piece 3SG PRF do for our newspaper 2PL FUT find that  
 dann paz 2-3) (...)*  
 on page 2-3  
 'In the piece he did for our newspaper (you will find that on pages 2-3)  
 (...)' (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

Unlike French *ça*, KR *sa* can have human antecedents, illustrated by the examples in (11).

- (11) a. *Sa lé bèt, sa !*  
 3 COP silly 3  
 'He's silly, that one !' (Watbled 2021b: 82)
- b. *Alor lé zanfani sava lékol. Sa i kozé vréman fransé  
 so DEF.PL child FIN go school 3 FIN speak.IPFV really French  
 sé ti garson la.*  
 DEM little children DEM  
 'So the children go to school. They really spoke French, those little boys.'  
 (Baude 2010)

As the examples in (11) illustrate, *sa* can be singular or plural. The form *sa* has also developed into a complex pronoun *sak*, with variants *sad*, *sat*, *sék* and *sét*. This pronoun occurs in both a relative clause context and a possessed/demonstrative context. Whether these forms are the same item in both contexts will be discussed in chapter 6, which is dedicated to free (and light-headed) RCs. To provide the

<sup>12</sup>Note that *ma la* may become [maa] with two successive [a]'s, which remains distinct from [ma], the contraction of *mwin va* (Jean-Philippe Watbled, p.c.).

relevant background to that question, I outline the distribution of these forms in a possessed/demonstrative context in this section. I return to the occurrence of these pronouns in the RC context in chapter 6.

*Sak* and variants can occur with a possessed demonstrative function when followed by an NP (12a) or a personal pronoun (12b). It is likely that *sad* was the original form found in this possessed function, and originated from French *ça de x* ‘that of *x*’.

- (12) a. ***Sad*** *out marèn lé pa parèy.*  
 DEM POSS.2SG godmother COP NEG same  
 ‘Your godmother’s is not the same.’ (Watbled 2021b: 82)
- b. *Kévin, ou i prête amwin out lékèr? Mwin la oublige*  
 Kevin 2SG FIN lend 1SG POSS.2SG bracket 1SG PRF forget  
***sad-(a)mwin.***  
 DEM-1SG  
 ‘Kevin, lend me your bracket? I forgot mine.’  
 (Quartier & Gauvin 2022: 446)

However, in the KR literature, *sak*, *sat*, *sét* and *sék* are all listed as alternatives in this function too (cf. Armand 2014; Albers 2019: 67; Watbled 2021c: 82). Indeed, my participants accepted *sak/sat* in examples (13a) and (13b) and the *t*-form *sat* is well attested in the literature, an example of which is in (14).

- (13) a. *Pran loto-la, **sak** papa lé kasé.*  
 take car-DEM DEM dad COP broken  
 ‘Take that car, Dad’s is broken.’ (Adapted from Armand 2014: X)
- b. ***sak/sat-mwin***  
 DEM-1SG  
 ‘mine’
- (14) *Pran loto-la, **sat** papa lé kasé.*  
 take car-DEM DEM dad COP broken  
 ‘Take that car, Dad’s is broken.’ (Armand 2014: X)

*Sak* and variants also occur in a demonstrative function not expressing possession, when followed by the adverb *là*: *sak-là*, *sad-là*, *sat-là*, *sét-là*, *sék-là*.

- (15) a. *El lété san papa é son manman lavé*  
 3SG.F be.IPFV without father and POSS.3SG mother have.IPFV  
*anbandöne aèl dopi kék zané aköz **sad-là** té grokër la*  
 abandon 3SG.F since some year because DEM IPFV jealous DET  
*boté son fiy.*  
 beauty POSS.3SG daughter  
 ‘She was without a father and her mother had abandoned her some years ago because she was jealous of her daughter’s beauty.’ (Story)

- b. *bèf lombraj, sad-la!*  
 beef shade DEM  
 ‘It’s a shade ox, that one!’ (Cellier 1985b: 336)

As the above examples illustrate, *sad-là* and variants can be anaphoric, referring to a previous referent (15a), or deictic, pointing to something in the physical context (15b). In example (15a), *sad-là* actually has the interpretation of a third-person pronoun, though these pronouns are described as being translatable into French *celui-ci/là* ‘this/that one’ (Watbled 2021b: 82).<sup>13</sup>

There is another form to mark further distance from the speaker: *sak/sat/sét/sad/sék-laba* (Staudacher-Valliamée 2004: 70; Watbled 2021b: 82).

- (16) *Pran sat-là pou ou, don amoin sat-làba.*  
 take DEM for 2SG give 1SG DEM  
 ‘Take this one, give me that one.’ (Staudacher-Valliamée 2004: 70)

*Sak* and variants cannot occur alone: they must be followed by a clause, a nominal complement or *là(ba)*.

- (17) \* *Regard sak!*  
 look DEM  
 Intended: ‘Look at that!’

Instead, the demonstrative pronoun *sa* would be grammatical in example (17). In section 6.2.1, I consider how *sak* and variants have arisen in the possessed/demonstrative context described in this section at the same time as the RC context.

### 2.3.2. Determiners

For reasons of space, I do not give a complete overview of the determiner system in KR, referring the reader to Albers (2019, 2020, 2021, manuscript submitted for publication). I will summarise in brief terms certain elements that become relevant to my discussions, particularly in sections 5.2.5 and 9.2.3.2. Albers (manuscript submitted for publication) argues that KR has a three-way definiteness distinction, encoded by three different markers: *lo* N, bare NPs (which are far less constrained in KR than in French), and N-*la*. *Lo* is typically analysed as a definite determiner, while *la* is typically analysed as a demonstrative (Chaudenson 1974; Staudacher-Valliamée 2004).<sup>14</sup> Albers (2019, 2021, manuscript submitted for publication) agrees that *la*

<sup>13</sup>In the French version of this story, we find *elle* (3SG.F) ‘she’ in the place of *sad-là*.

<sup>14</sup>The determiner *lo* is usually treated as a definite article, but Albers (2020) finds that phonological factors affect the semantic features of this item: when it precedes a monosyllabic noun, its semantic features are different to when it precedes polysyllabic nouns. Albers (2020: 17) calls the *lo* that precedes monosyllabic nouns “semantically weak” and the *lo* which precedes polysyllabic nouns a determiner (which is “semantically strong”). She questions whether the semantically weak form is an affix rather than a determiner, present only for phonotactic reasons.

is a demonstrative, but argues that it encodes a specific type of definite. Albers follows Löbner’s (1985; 2011) theory of definiteness, which differentiates between semantic definites and pragmatic definites. The reference of a semantic definite is inherently non-ambiguous, whereas the referent of a pragmatic definite is identified non-ambiguously via the context. Furthermore, Löbner (2011) distinguishes between four different concept types. The four concepts types - sortal, individual, functional and relational - are distinguished based on the binary properties of uniqueness [U] and relationality [R]. Sortal nouns are neither unique nor relational (e.g. *flower*, *dog*); individual concepts are unique but not relational, for example, proper names and unique entities (e.g. *Sun*, *Moon*); functional concepts are unique and relational, taking a possessor argument (e.g. *president*, *mother*); relational nouns are not unique as there can be more than one, but are relational (e.g. *brother*). The concepts that are not inherently unique, i.e. relational and sortals, are involved in pragmatic definiteness while those that are unique are involved in semantic definiteness.<sup>15</sup>

Turning to the three-way definiteness distinction in KR, Albers (manuscript submitted for publication) argues that bare NPs encode semantic definiteness and are obligatorily used with individual concepts (18a); *N-la* encodes pragmatic definiteness with sortal concepts (e.g. deictic and anaphoric uses) (18b), and *lo* N is used for functional concepts (18c), including compositionally created functional concepts (e.g. superlatives). KR thus distinguishes not only between pragmatic and semantic definiteness, but also between individual and functional concepts (which are both involved in semantic definiteness).

- (18) a. *Gazon i yinm solèy.*  
 grass FIN like sun  
 ‘Grass likes the sun.’ (Albers manuscript submitted for publication: 5)
- b. *Ou wa son figir ladsì la, té. Figir-la i di pa*  
 2SG see POSS.3SG face on.it INTERJ INTERJ face-DET FIN say NEG  
*mwin riyin.*  
 1SG nothing  
 ‘You see his face on it. I don’t recognise the/that face.’  
 (Albers manuscript submitted for publication: 5)
- c. *Ala mon bèl marmit; soman, m’i trouv pa lo*  
 PRST POSS.1SG big pot only 1SG-FIN find NEG DET  
*kouvértir.*  
 lid  
 ‘Here is my big pot; I just don’t find the lid.’ (Albers manuscript submitted for publication: 19)

<sup>15</sup>Note that shifts can occur such that a noun can be converted to a different concept type (Albers manuscript submitted for publication: 11).



Above, I described the definite reading of bare NPs, but note that they can receive either a definite (*solèy* ‘sun’ in (18a)), generic (*gazon* ‘grass’ in (18a)), or an indefinite reading (19) (Albers 2020, manuscript submitted for publication).

- (19) *Kok i dor dan la kour.*  
 cock FIN sleep in la courtyard  
 ‘(Some) cocks sleep in the courtyard.’ (Albers 2020: 24)

Note that while some consider *la* (cf. preceding *kour* in example (19)) to be a feminine form of *lo* (e.g. Corne 1999: 70), Albers (manuscript submitted for publication: 9) does not; rather, she considers it to be a prefix that is not specified for definiteness.

### 2.3.3. Tense, modality and aspect

KR has a complex verbal system which involves both preverbal tense/modality/aspect (TMA) markers, but also verbal inflection. In this section, I will outline some features of this system, but direct the reader to Watbled (2021a) for further detail. Firstly, there is a distinction between perfect and imperfect. The former is marked in all varieties via the preverbal auxiliary *la*, exemplified in (20).

- (20) *Zot la manz in kari.*  
 3PL PRF eat INDF curry  
 ‘They ate a curry.’ Perfect

The form *la* is classified as an auxiliary (rather than a particle), because it inflects for tense.<sup>16</sup> This gives rise to other tenses being formed with inflected forms of *la* (belonging to the paradigm of the verb HAVE) such as that in (21).

- (21) *Zot lavé manz in kari.*  
 3PL have.IPFV eat INDF curry  
 ‘They had eaten a curry.’ Pluperfect

The imperfect, on the other hand, may be formed either with the preverbal marker *té* (22a), or with an inflectional suffix *-é* (22b).

- (22) a. *Zot té (i) manz in kari.*  
 3PL IPFV FIN eat INDF curry  
 ‘They were eating a curry.’ Imperfect

<sup>16</sup>This is one criterion among others that Watbled (2014, 2015) gives to distinguish between auxiliaries and particles appearing as TMA markers. He also uses the following distributional criteria: (i) Auxiliaries precede non-tensed forms of the verb, whereas particles precede tensed forms (ii) Negation and other elements can come in between auxiliaries and the verb, but not between particles and the verb. He only classifies *té* and *i* as TMA particles, all others (e.g. *la*, *va*, *sava/sa(r)*) as auxiliaries.

- b. *Zot i manzé in kari.*  
 3PL FIN eat.IPFV INDF curry  
 ‘They were eating a curry.’ Imperfect

The marker *i* is glossed as a marker of finiteness and will be discussed in section 2.3.4. The future tense can also be marked via inflection or with pre-verbal markers. There are three means for forming the future tense, two with the same meaning ((23a) and (23b)), and one with an imminent future meaning (23c).

- (23) a. *Zot va manz in kari.*  
 3PL FUT eat INDF curry  
 ‘They will eat a curry.’ Future
- b. *Zot i manzra in kari.*  
 3PL FIN eat.FUT INDF curry  
 ‘They will eat a curry.’ Future
- c. *Zot i sava/sa(r) manz in kari.*  
 3PL FIN FUT eat INDF curry  
 ‘They are going to eat a curry.’ Imminent future

Note that the marker *va* is identical to the second and third person singular forms of the French verb *aller* (*vas* and *va*, both pronounced /va/). In French, this form expresses the imminent future, while in KR, the imminent future is expressed with *sava/sa(r)* (three variants).

Many KR verbs have a long and short paradigm, and this short/long alternation is also found in some other French Creoles (see Syea 2017: 213). According to Watbled (2019), in KR, the long form corresponds to the non-tensed form and the short form corresponds to the tensed form, to which inflectional suffixes can be added. However, if a non-tensed verb (in the long form) is followed by a complement, it is truncated and appears in the short form. Consider the examples in (24).

- (24) a. *Zot va manzé.*  
 3PL FUT eat  
 ‘They will eat.’ Future
- b. *Zot va manz kabri.*  
 3PL FUT eat goat  
 ‘They will eat goat.’ Future
- c. *Zot i manzé kabri.*  
 3PL FIN eat.IPFV goat  
 ‘They were eating goat.’ Imperfect

Since (24a) is formed with an auxiliary *va*, ‘eat’ appears in the long form. However, when followed by a complement, as in (24b), the verb is shortened. The imperfect tense in (24c) is a tensed form, which is formed by the inflectional suffix *-é*. It thus

does not undergo this truncation because the long/short alternation only occurs on verbs that are not tensed, i.e. infinitives or past participles (which take the same form in KR).

KR possesses several aspectual markers. To outline a few, I offer the following examples from the SMS corpus (Cougnon 2012) used in this thesis (cf. section 4.1).

- (25) a. *OK lé bon maman **antrinn** téléphone ali.*  
 OK COP good Mum PROG telephone 3SG  
 ‘Ok it’s fine, Mum is ringing him.’ Progressive
- b. ***mapou** boir un doliprane et mi sa dodo aprè*  
 1SG-PROG drink INDF Doliprane and 1SG-FIN FUT sleep after  
 ‘I’m drinking a Doliprane and then I’m going to go to sleep’ Progressive
- c. *Coucou nous la **fine** arrivé nous lé st-denis.*  
 hey 1PL PRF COMPL arrive 1PL COP Saint-Denis  
 ‘Hey we have arrived we are in Saint-Denis’ Completive

As demonstrated by the examples above, the progressive can be marked via *antrinn* (25a) or *((l)a)pou* (25b). The latter is merged with the first person singular pronoun in (25b). The aspectual marker *fine/finn* (25c) can mark that an action is complete.

Modality is a very understudied area of KR grammar. KR has modal auxiliary verbs *pé* (26a) and *gingn/giny* (26b) which mark possibility, and *dwa/doi* (26c) which marks necessity.

- (26) a. *i fé par prélèvemen mèt mi **pe** tjr anulé*  
 FIN do by direct.debit but 1SG-FIN can still cancel  
 ‘They do it by direct debit but I can still cancel’ (SMS)
- b. *samedi ou aprè lundi ou **gane** ni koif amwa*  
 Saturday or after Monday 2SG can come do.hair 1SG  
 ‘Saturday or even Monday you can come and do my hair’ (SMS)
- c. *ma pou attendre 1 camarade chez li a bois 2 nefle mi*  
 1SG PROG wait a friend at 3SG at Bois de Nèfles 1SG-FIN  
**doi** recupere d papier  
 must collect INDF document  
 ‘I’m waiting for a friend at their house in Bois de Nèfles I have to collect some documents’ (SMS)

Note that the spelling of the original SMS is preserved; *pe* corresponds to *pé* and *gane* corresponds to *giny/gingn*.

### 2.3.4. Pre-verbal marker *i*

The pre-verbal marker *i* is a feature of the grammar of KR which will become relevant in my analysis of the relative marker *ke* (section 5.2.3.1). A marker *i* is found in many of the French Creoles, including KR, but with various functions differing between the languages (Wittmann & Fournier 1981). Several authors have proposed theories concerning the function of *i* in KR. Some have argued that *i* has a semantic function, either temporal-aspectual or modal (e.g. Chaudenson 1974; Caid 2000; Staudacher-Valliamée 2004). It cannot have a temporal-aspectual function since it occurs with verbs in several different tenses (see, for example, its occurrence in (22) which is in the imperfect and (23b) and (23c) which are in the future). See Watbled (2014, 2015) for arguments against a semantic hypothesis. For Corne (1995, 1999), Michaelis (2000), Watbled (2014, 2015) and Gaze (2019), the function of *i* is syntactic. More specifically, it marks finiteness, preceding tensed verbs; see, for example, (22a), (22b), (23b) and (23c). The marker *i* interacts with the personal pronouns when they precede this marker (i.e. in subject position) in the manner outlined in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2.: The interaction between *i* and the personal pronouns

	Pronoun	Form preceding a verb requiring <i>i</i>
<b>1SG</b>	mwin	<i>mi manz</i> ‘I eat’
<b>2SG</b>	ou	<i>ou (i) manz</i> ‘you eat’
<b>3SG</b>	li	<i>li manz</i> ‘he/she eats’
	èl	<i>èl i manz</i> ‘she eats’
<b>1PL</b>	nou	<i>nou manz</i> ‘we eat’ <i>ni manz</i>
	zot	<i>zot i manz</i> ‘you eat’
<b>2PL</b>	vou	<i>vou manz</i> ‘you eat’ <i>vi manz</i>
<b>3PL</b>	zot	<i>zot i manz</i> ‘they eat’

As detailed in Table 2.2, the first person form obligatorily interacts with *i*, resulting in the contraction *mi*. This contraction is so systematic that a new subject pronoun, *mi*, is developing in some speakers’ grammars; this will be elaborated upon below. With the pronouns that end in a consonant, *èl* and *zot*, there is no interaction. With the pronouns that end in the same vowel as the marker *i*, i.e. *li*, *i* does not appear. With pronouns that end in a different vowel, i.e. *nou* and *vou*, the contraction is optional and there is variation in this regard. Finally, *ou* and *i* (very rarely) contract to *wi* (with semi-vocalization of the /u/: [u + i] > [wi]).

The description above thus highlights that there are certain contexts where *i* is not found, or is optional, and these seem to be explained by phonological reasons. However, syntax also governs the distribution of *i*, with certain contexts not permitting the pre-verbal marker. The contexts cited in the literature are given in (27).

- (27) Precisions concerning the distribution of pre-verbal marker *i*
- a. It cannot occur before the auxiliary *la* (Chaudenson 1974; Cellier 1985a; Michaelis 2000; Watbled 2014, 2015).
  - b. It cannot occur before the *l*- forms of the verb BE, i.e. *lé* (present) or *lété* (past) (Chaudenson 1974; Cellier 1985a; Michaelis 2000; Watbled 2014, 2015), but it can occur before the *s*- forms *sra* (future) and *sré* (conditional) (Watbled 2014, 2015).
  - c. It cannot occur before future *va* but the imminent future marker *sava* does require it (Watbled 2014, 2015).
  - d. It is optional after the imperfect marker *té* (Watbled 2014, 2015).
  - e. It does not occur before non-tensed verbs (infinitives and participles) (Watbled 2014, 2015).
  - f. None of the following forms of the verb HAVE allow *i*: *na*, *la*, *lavé*, *nora*, *noré* (Corne 1995; Watbled 2014, 2015).

Where possible, these conditions were verified in the searchable component of the corpus (cf. section 4.1). The conditions were largely supported by my searches, but in what follows, I outline some new insights. A first observation regards the ban against *i* preceding *l*- forms of BE (27b). This ban appears not to be true in interrogatives. In the searchable component of the corpus, I found 18 examples with *i* preceding *lé*, and they were all in interrogatives - direct (28a) or indirect (28b).

- (28) a. ***Kosa i lé?***  
           what FIN COP?  
           ‘What is it?’ (Brochure)
- b. *zot i aprann kisa i lé Granmèrkal.*  
       3PL FIN learn who FIN COP Granmèrkal  
       ‘they learn who Granmèrkal is’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 6)

Watbled (2014) does point out that there are exceptions, where we do find *i* preceding *lé*, and gives a few interrogative examples with *ousa* similar to mine. Watbled argues that the occurrence of *i* cannot be explained by the fact that the structure is interrogative though, because we do not find *i* in interrogatives with the past tense form of *lé*, *lété*. He compares, for example, the two examples below.

- (29) a. *la ousa zot i lé?*  
 there where 2PL FIN COP  
 ‘Where are you?’  
 b. *la ousa zot lété?*  
 there where 2PL COP.IPFV  
 ‘Where were you?’

Indeed, I do not find any examples with *i lété* in the corpus. To explain this distribution, Watbled (2014) turns to prosody, pointing out that *i* appears with *lé* for prosodic reasons, when it does not govern a syntactic phrase following it. *Lété* does not require *i* in the same context because it is already disyllabic. Of the 18 examples with *i* preceding *lé*, 7 do end with *lé* and are hence compatible with the argument that *i* is needed for prosodic reasons. However, in the remaining examples, there are 9 cases where there is a following constituent that is governed by *lé*:<sup>17</sup>

- (30) a. *Kisa i lé le personaj prinsipal ?*  
 who FIN COP the character main  
 ‘Who is the main character?’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 1)  
 b. (...) *zot i aprann kisa i lé Granmèrkal.*  
 3PL FIN learn who FIN COP Granmèrkal  
 ‘(...) they learn who *Granmèrkal* is.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 6)

One argument could be that the following constituent is dislocated in examples like those in (30) and that *lé* therefore does not govern it, though there is not necessarily reason to suggest that this is the case. We could argue that it is a combination of syntactic and prosodic reasons that mean that the rules governing the presence of *i* before *lé* differ between present and past tense interrogatives.

Moving onwards, the second point related to the distribution of *i* concerns the form *mi*, which is widely acknowledged as the contraction of *mwin* (1SG) and *i*. However, if we are to assume that the form *mi* is indeed still a contraction, then we encounter many examples which violate the principles listed in (27) of when *i* cannot occur: with the auxiliary *la*, with *l-* forms of the verb BE, with forms of the verb HAVE and with the future marker *va*. To illustrate, I found 21 examples of *mi la*, 71 examples of *mi lé*, 23 examples of *mi na* and 35 examples of *mi va*.

- (31) a. *mi la gagne in totochement la pluie*  
 1SG PRF gain INDF beating DET rain  
 ‘I got a beating from the rain.’ (SMS)  
 b. *mi lé là pou défan nout tradision*  
 1SG COP there to defend POSS.1PL tradition  
 ‘I am here to defend our tradition.’ (Comedy sketch)

<sup>17</sup>In the remaining 2 examples, the element following *lé* is not governed by it, e.g. adverbial *là* follows *lé*.

- c. *ou vien ce soir ou pa mi na 1 chose importante a di*  
 2SG come this evening or NEG 1SG have INDF thing important to say  
*aou*  
 2SG  
 ‘are you coming this evening or not, I have something important to tell  
 you’ (SMS)
- d. *mi va èm ali toujours*  
 1SG FUT love 3SG always  
 ‘I will always love him/her.’ (SMS)

This change has been pointed out in the literature (e.g. Watbled 2015: 4; Albers 2019: 66), usually with examples of *mi lé*. I have shown here that this form occurs across contexts in which *i* is otherwise not permitted, so it is clear that the change in progress is advancing and it should be reinforced that *mi* is an increasingly prevalent subject pronoun form. My interviews with native speakers revealed that the use of *mi* is governed by age: younger speakers use it, and older speakers reject it. This change, whereby *i* is occurring in contexts in which it is thought not to be permitted, is only occurring when the subject is the first person pronoun. This pattern indicates that *mi* is developing into a new subject pronoun rather than that the distribution of *i* is changing.

### 2.3.5. Copulas

In this section, I give an overview of the copulas found in KR, which become relevant to *sé*-clefts in chapter 8. The primary copula given in general descriptions of KR is *lé*, but I argue that there is an additional copula, *sé*, not always recognised by authors in broad overviews of the language. In addition to those two copulas are the forms *la* and *sa*, which some have argued to be pronunciation variants of *lé* and *sé* respectively. In this section, I first outline my classification of different types of copular construction, then I discuss the distribution of the different copulas in copular constructions in KR. In section 8.2.1, I add further to our understanding of the distribution of copulas in KR, arguing that *sé* is the primary copula found in cleft constructions.

Copular constructions can be distinguished as predicative, identifying or specifying (dating back to Higgins 1979). Definitions of these three types, from Bentley (2017), are given in Table 2.3. Identifying and specifying copular constructions are sometimes subsumed under one group as ‘equative’ copular constructions, since both establish a relation of identity, if in slightly different ways.<sup>18</sup> For the purposes of my

<sup>18</sup>However, see, for example, Declerck (1988), Bentley (2017) and den Dikken & O’Neill (2017) for discussion of the different discourse and syntactic properties of identifying and specifying copular constructions, leading some authors to separate them.

discussion of the distribution of copulas in KR, I will subsume identifying and specifying copular constructions as equative copular constructions, because KR seems to treat specifying and identifying copular constructions together, and separately from predicative ones, *lé* being preferred in the latter and *sé* in the former.

Table 2.3.: Types of copular construction

<b>Predicative</b>	Assign a property, location or possessor to an individual or entity. e.g. <i>Katie is a good teacher.</i>
<b>Specifying</b>	A value (the post-copular NP) is specified for a variable (the pre-copular NP). e.g. <i>The problem is the weather.</i>
<b>Identifying</b>	A relation of identity is expressed between two referential NPs. e.g. <i>That man is my sister's boss</i>

I follow authors such as Declerck (1988), Lambrecht (2001) and Pavey (2004) in describing narrow focus cleft constructions, illustrated in (32), as a type of specifying construction because they specify a value for a variable. Note, however, that they do not exactly establish a relation of identity between a pre-copular NP and a post-copular NP as stated in Table 2.3.

(32) It was a book that I got. (Declerck 1988: 6)

In what follows, I offer some insights into the distribution of *lé* and *sé* in copular constructions, based on a small corpus study of *sé* and *lé* in the searchable component of the corpus (cf. section 4.1). A random sample of 100 tokens of each of *sé* and *lé* was analysed. The results are reported in the following sections. In addition to those two copulas, I briefly mention two other elements that may be analysed as copulas - *sa* and *la* - and I note the possibility of omitting the copula in section 2.3.5.4. Due to time constraints, only *sé* and *lé* were subject to a corpus study.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.3.5.1. *lé*

The copula *lé* is the copula usually recognised in general descriptions of KR. *Lé* is the primary copula found in predicative copular constructions. Of the 100-token sample of *lé* from the corpus, 60 examples were relevant i.e. they were instances of

<sup>19</sup>A corpus study of *sa* and *la* as copulas would be hampered by a lot of “noise” since both of these forms have other, much more frequent functions in the language.



*lé* in a copular construction.<sup>20</sup> All 60 occurrences of *lé* were in predicative copular constructions, illustrated in (33).

- (33) a. *Le grin sek lé importan pou nout manjé.*  
 DEF grain dried COP important for POSS.1PL food  
 ‘Pulses are important for our food.’ (Brochure)
- b. (...) *nou lé dan in péi kolonial*, (...) *1PL COP in INDF country colonial*  
 ‘(...), we are in a colonial country, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)

In predicative copular constructions with *lé*, a grammatical subject is not required: of those 60 copular constructions, 21 were impersonal, an example of which is in (34).

- (34) (...) *lé difsil minn lo konba isi Larénion* (...) *COP difficult lead DEF fight here La.Réunion*  
 ‘(...) it is difficult to lead the fight here in La Réunion (...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 24)

Given that the same form *lé* is found in examples with and without a subject (cf. (33) and (34)), I do not consider this form to contain a clitic subject pronoun in synchrony, although it has likely derived from French *il est*, the 3SG pronoun followed by the 3SG form of BE. The majority of those 21 impersonal examples are examples where other languages such as French and English would require an expletive subject (e.g. *it* in (34)). However, in one case, the understood subject would be an anaphoric pronoun referring back to an easily recoverable referent in the preceding discourse.

- (35) (...) *ou i koupe an ti morso, ou i fé roussir alu dan luil, kan*  
 2SG FIN cut in little piece 2SG FIN do brown 3SG in oil when  
*lé bien roz* (...) *COP well brown*  
 ‘(...) you cut (it) into little pieces, you brown it in oil, when (it) is nice and brown, (...)’ (Brochure)

According to Quartier & Gauvin (2022: 554), *lé* is not traditionally employed with nominal predicates. Instead of *lé*, either *sé*, *sa* (cf. section 2.3.5.5) or a zero copula (cf. section 2.3.5.4) is usually employed with nominal constituents. My corpus study indicates that NPs are possible in post-copular position with *lé*, occurring in 9 of the 60 (15%) relevant examples, two of which are in (36). Nevertheless, it is clear that nominal constituents are less common with *lé* than other constituent types such as adjectival predicates.

<sup>20</sup>The remaining tokens were not relevant as they were not instances of *lé* as a copula. They were, for example, *lé* as an auxiliary or an article.

- (36) a. *Mé sa lé in nafèr pa touzour fasil, (...)*  
 but DEM COP INDF thing NEG always easy  
 ‘But that is something that’s not always easy, (...)’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 3)
- b. *El lé koméla formatris (...)*  
 3SG.F COP now teacher  
 ‘She is now a teacher (...)’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 3)

The results of this corpus study indicate clearly that *lé* is found in predicative copular constructions. While it may simply be that predicative copular constructions are more common than equative ones in the corpus, which could explain this distribution, a comparison with the types of copular construction in which *sé* is found, in the next section, does suggest that the two copulas have different distributions.

### 2.3.5.2. *sé*

Unlike *lé*, not all authors recognise *sé* as a copula in KR. However, I argue that *sé* is a copula and present evidence of it occurring in the corpus in copular constructions. Of the 100-token sample of *sé*, 37 tokens were not relevant as they were not instances of *sé* in a copular construction.<sup>21</sup> This left 63 relevant tokens of *sé*, of which 42 were equative copular constructions, illustrated in (37).

- (37) a. *Moun-là sé Kozima.*  
 person-DEM COP Kozima  
 ‘That person is Kozima.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 6)
- b. *Le kréol sé nout lang kozé.*  
 DEF creole COP POSS.1PL language spoken  
 ‘Creole is our spoken language.’ (TV)

There were 17 narrow focus clefts, illustrated in example (38), which I have included in this group, given that I consider them to be a type of specifying construction (see above).

- (38) (...) *sé komsa lo pép i desid par li minm.*  
 COP like.that DEF people FIN decide by 3SG self  
 ‘(...), it is like that that the population decides for itself.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)

Finally, *sé* was found in 18 predicative copular constructions in the corpus study, two of which are in (39).

<sup>21</sup>In these disregarded examples, *sé* was, for example, a demonstrative determiner *sé* ‘these’ (which is acrolectal), the verb *sé* ‘try’, or the sentence was French (but written phonetically).

- (39) a. (...) *nou sé in pep.*  
 1PL COP INDF people  
 ‘(...) we are a people.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)
- b. *Oubli pa zéléksion kolonial sé in maskarad po mét lespwar dann*  
 forget NEG election colonial COP a masquerade to put hope in  
*kér (...) heart*  
 ‘Don’t forget that colonial elections are a masquerade to put hope in the heart (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

Copular constructions with *sé* also occur without a subject - this is the case for all of the cleft constructions, like that in example (38), but also other types of copular construction with *sé*:

- (40) a. *Dan la vi, i serv pa rien alé tro vite. Sé in ti*  
 in DET life FIN serve NEG nothing go too quick COP INDF little  
*mesaj pou bann zinpasian.*  
 message for PL impatient  
 ‘In life, there is no point going too fast. (It) is a little message for impatient people.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)
- b. (...) *zot i krwa sé in bon lidé (...)*  
 3PL FIN believe COP a good idea  
 ‘(...) they believe (it) is a good idea (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

Similarly as for *lé*, I do not consider the form *sé* to contain a clitic subject pronoun in synchrony, though it has developed from French *c’est*, which is composed of a clitic subject *ce* and the third person singular form of the copula. As illustrated in this section (see (37a), (37b), (39a) and (39b)), the same form *sé* occurs in sentences that have a subject. Another reason for not assuming that *sé* has an incorporated subject is that KR does not require sentences to have a subject, as outlined at the start of section 2.3, whereas French does.

The evidence from the corpus study indicates that *sé* is found more often in equative copular constructions than *lé* is. *Sé* can nevertheless still occur in predicative copular constructions. The types of post-copular phrase found in this small corpus study with *sé* were usually NPs (e.g. (39a)): 16/18 (89%) predicative copular constructions with *sé* have an NP as the post-copular phrase. This finding is consistent with Albers’ (2019: 57) claim that *sé* is found primarily with nominal predicates. However, *sé* was found twice with a subordinate clause in post-copular position, illustrated by the examples in (41). In both (41a) and (41b), *sé* occurs in a complex construction (*if/when...it is*).

- (41) a. *Zordi si zot i viz amwin, sé aköz moin lé dovan é moin*  
 today if 2PL FIN see 1SG COP because 1SG COP before and 1SG  
*la pa per kozé (...)*  
 have NEG fear speak  
 ‘Today if you see me, it is because I am at the front and I am not scared  
 to speak (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)
- b. *Anou kan nou di parnouminm ponouminm, sé po met*  
 1SG.FOC when 1SG say by=ourselves for.ourselves COP PREP put  
*dobout in vré prozé rénioné kontkolonial, (...)*  
 stand INDF real project reunionese counter-colonial  
 ‘Us, when we say “by ourselves for ourselves”, it is to get a real Reunionese  
 counter-colonial project up and running (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

Finally, further evidence concerning the distribution of *sé* and *lé* comes from interviews. Acceptability judgements indicated that *sé* is the preferred copula in equative copular constructions: in example (42), 6/6 (100%) speakers accepted *sé* while only 2/6 (33%) accepted *lé*.<sup>22</sup>

- (42) *Mwin ?lé/sé Alina.*  
 1SG COP Alina  
 ‘I am Alina.’

As for the acceptability of *sé* in predicative copular constructions, judgements revealed that *sé* is ungrammatical in (43a), where the post-copular constituent is a locative, and in (43b), where it is an adjective; *lé* is required in such contexts.

- (43) a. *Mwin lé/\*sé marsé sodron.*  
 1SG COP market Chaudron  
 ‘I am at Chaudron market.’
- b. *Mwin lé/\*sé kontan.*  
 1SG COP happy  
 ‘I am happy.’

In section 8.2.1, I show that *sé* is the primary copula found in narrow focus cleft constructions, which is in line with the findings in this section that *sé* is the preferred copula in equative constructions, given that narrow focus clefts are considered to be a type of specifying construction.

### 2.3.5.3. *la*

The form *la* is sometimes described as a pronunciation variant of the copula *lé* (e.g. Albers 2019: 57). It occurs particularly often when followed by negation (*pa*)

<sup>22</sup>There were two contexts given for example (42): one was that the speaker was presenting himself to a teacher in a classroom, and the other was that the speaker was correcting the teacher, who had referred to someone else as Alina. In both of these contexts, *sé* was preferred over *lé*.

(Quartier & Gauvin 2022: 303). This is illustrated nicely by example (44).

- (44) *Port mask le bon ou lapa bon?*  
 wear mask COP good or COP-NEG good  
 ‘Wearing a mask is good or is not good?’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)

It should be pointed out that the form *la* is also part of the verbal paradigm of the verb HAVE: it is a present-tense form, illustrated in example (45).

- (45) *La-dan la poin déssèr, la poin le pistache, (...)*  
 inside have NEG dessert have NEG DEF pistachio  
 ‘Inside there is no dessert, there are no pistachios, (...)’ (Brochure)

The lexical use of *la* in (45) is also separate to the use of *la* as an auxiliary (cf. example (20)).

#### 2.3.5.4. zero copula

The presence of a copula in KR is one of the features cited as distinguishing KR from other French Creoles, which are often said to not require a copula (e.g. Corne 1999: 70). However, such statements are inaccurate. Syea (2017: 343-351) describes the distribution of the copula in the French Creoles (though he does not include KR) and highlights that there are contexts in which a copula is required in the other French Creoles; these contexts vary between the different Creoles (see also Henri & Abeillé 2007 for Mauritian). Furthermore, Albers (2019), Watbled (2021b) and Quartier & Gauvin (2022: 307) point out that a zero copula is in fact permitted in KR. Evidence from my corpus supports their comments - some examples are in (46).

- (46) a. *Aou mèm rasist.*  
 2SG FOC racist  
 ‘You are the racist.’ (SMS)
- b. (...) *si ou in zèn tit fonm zangajé (...)*  
 if 2SG INDF young little woman engaged  
 ‘(...) if you are a young female indentured worker (...)’ (Baude 2010)
- c. *Si zitwar lé mantèr, pa nou lotèr.*  
 if story COP liar NEG 1PL responsible  
 ‘If the story is a lie, it is not our fault.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 1)

Albers (2019) observes that in her corpus, the copula appears to be optional with nominal predicates, but obligatory with adverbial and most adjectival predicates. This observation is supported by Watbled (2021b: 183), who argues that a zero copula is permitted only with NPs in the post-copular position, and not with Adjectival

Phrases (ADJPs) or locative expressions. Finally, Watbled (2021b) notes that it is never obligatory to have a zero copula.

In the past tense, the copular forms *lété* and *sété* can reduce to *té*, which is identical to the imperfective marker (cf. section 2.3.3).

- (47) *Nous té maléré, mé nou té heureux ansanm.*  
 1PL IPFV/be.PST poor but 1PL IPFV/be.PST happy together  
 ‘We were poor, but we were happy together.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 10)

As indicated with the glosses, there are two ways of analysing such examples: *té* may be analysed as the TMA marker of imperfectivity, in which case structures like that in example (47) have a zero copula, or *té* could be analysed as a (reduced) past tense form of ‘be’, in which case structures like that in (47) do have a copula. If the former is adopted, then the same restrictions do not apply as for the present tense distribution of the zero copula: a zero copula in the past can occur with post-copular constituent types other than nominals, as evident from (47).

#### 2.3.5.5. *sa*

The form *sa* is sometimes described as a copula (Quartier & Gauvin 2022: 553), or as a pronunciation variant of *sé*. However, Albers (2019) and Watbled (2021b) analyse copular constructions with *sa* as instances of a zero copula, where *sa* is a pronominal subject (a demonstrative).

- (48) a. *Sa in sèlfi, non?*  
 DEM INDF selfie no  
 ‘That is a selfie, no?’ (Albers 2019: 58)  
 b. *Sa Fifine lo mètrès lékol.*  
 DEM Fifine DEF teacher school  
 ‘That is Fifine the school teacher.’ (Watbled 2021b: 183)

*Sa* occurs in my corpus in this function too, and is often accompanied by a second *sa* following the post-copular NP.

- (49) a. *Sa anou sa!*  
 DEM 1SG DEM  
 ‘That is us/ours!’ (SMS)  
 b. *sa pa zistoir mantèr sa mesië!*  
 DEM NEG story lying DEM Sir  
 ‘That’s not a lie sir!’ (Blog)

I agree with Albers (2019) and Watbled (2021b) that in such examples, *sa* can be analysed as a demonstrative, and the structure has no copula.

## 2.4. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce the KR language and context: its history, sociolinguistic context, and some features of its grammar that will become relevant to the core chapters of this thesis on relative and cleft constructions. We have seen in this brief introduction that the language shares similarities with French and with other Romance languages, as well as with other French-based Creoles. Where possible throughout this thesis, I will further exemplify the similarities and differences between KR and related languages, situating the language as a Romance-based Creole. In the next chapter, I introduce the theoretical framework used for my analyses.

### 3. Theoretical apparatus: Role and Reference Grammar

Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) is an approach to grammar developed in Foley & Van Valin (1984), Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), Van Valin (2005, 2008a), Guerrero, Ibáñez Cerda & Bello (2009), Kailuweit, Künkel & Staudinger (2018), Bentley et al. (forthcoming) among others. RRG takes a functional approach to the analysis of language, in that it seeks explanation in the interplay of syntax with semantics and discourse structure. Each of these components of the grammar has its own representation in the RRG model of grammar, and they are each given equal weight. The theory is formal in the sense that it proposes a set of formal tools for analysing language. However, RRG rejects the assumption, made in other formal approaches to syntax, that there is an underlying structure of language, which may differ from its surface structure. Thus, there is only one syntactic representation in RRG. This means that where other frameworks rely on underlying syntactic structures to explain facts about language and draw generalisations across languages and across constructions, RRG does not. Instead, RRG seeks explanation via a complex, bi-directional linking algorithm between the syntactic and semantic representations, and this linking algorithm can be affected by the information structural properties of the sentence.

One of the central theoretical commitments of the RRG framework is to capture, on the one hand, universal aspects of language, and on the other hand, to document linguistic diversity and offer tools to analyse any language in its own terms. As such, there is a clear demarcation between what is proposed to be universal to language and what is language-specific. The framework attributes an important role to constructions when explaining the grammar of a language. Constructional Schemas (CSs) are proposed, which essentially summarise the syntactic, semantic, morphological and pragmatic features particular to a construction in a particular language. The purpose of a CS is to specify the features that are specific to the construction rather than being general linking rules or general principles of the language, which can be assumed to apply unless otherwise specified. CSs hence capture cross-linguistic features of a given construction, as well as language-specific features of it.



In the following two sections, I offer further detail concerning the syntactic and semantic representations respectively. In section 3.3, I explain the RRG approach to grammatical relations, and in section 3.4, the linking algorithm. I conclude the chapter by explaining the role of information structure in section 3.5. The intention is not to be comprehensive in this chapter, but to introduce the basic concepts that will be necessary to understand the RRG analyses presented in the chapters of Parts 2 and 3. I will introduce further details of the framework as they become relevant in those chapters.

## 3.1. Syntactic representation

RRG distinguishes between relational and non-relational aspects of the structure of clauses. The former concerns the relation between the predicate and its arguments while the latter concerns the hierarchical organisation of sentences, clauses and phrases. The RRG approach to the relational aspects of clause structure is dealt with in section 3.3; this section is dedicated to the non-relational aspects of clause structure. In RRG, only one syntactic representation is proposed, which represents the structure of a given sentence as it is found. The framework rules out underlying representations: syntactic movements and derivations are not possible in this framework, nor are phonologically null elements.

### 3.1.1. The layered structure of the clause

The syntactic structure is represented in terms of a layered clause structure which contains the following universal aspects, detailed in Table 3.1 (from Van Valin 2005: 5).

Table 3.1.: Components of the layered clause in RRG

Semantic element(s)	Syntactic unit
Predicate	Nucleus
Argument in semantic representation of predicate	Core argument
Non-arguments	Periphery
Predicate + arguments	Core
Predicate + arguments + non-arguments	Clause ( = core + periphery)

As indicated in Table 3.1, the syntactic units of the layered clause structure are semantically motivated in terms of the distinction between predication and reference. In addition to these universal components, there are language-specific components of the clause which are not universal and are defined by their position in the clause, unlike the universal syntactic units in Table 3.1, which can occur in any order in a

given language. Non-universal aspects of the clause are often pragmatically motivated (Diedrichsen 2008). The non-universal units are the Pre-Core Slot (PRCS), the Post-Core Slot (PoCS), the Pre-detached Position (PRDP) and the Post-detached Position (PODP). The PRCS and PoCS units are inside the clause but outside the core. The PRCS often hosts fronted, focal elements and *wh*-words in languages like English in which they do not occur *in-situ* but rather, at the beginning of the clause. The PRDP and PODP, on the other hand, are outside the clause but in the sentence. These units host, for example, dislocated elements in languages like English. The constituent projection, containing the universal aspects of the clause in Table 3.1 as well as the non-universal aspects of the clause, is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

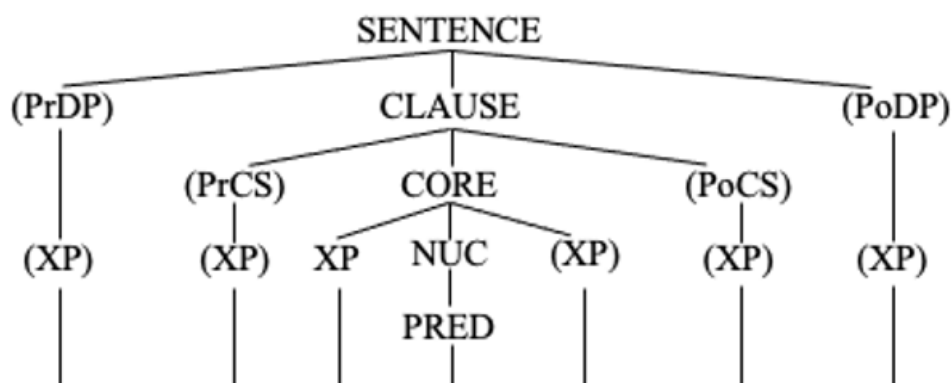


Figure 3.1.: Constituent projection of the layered structure of the clause

Every language has a syntactic inventory, composed of all of its possible syntactic templates, i.e. all of the syntactic structures found in that language. This inventory reflects the word-order preferences of the given language, and also its non-universal positions such as a PRCS or PRDP. The syntactic inventory is necessary as RRG does not assume that all languages have the same inventory of syntactic positions, and the framework does not rely on movement, so different syntactic templates are needed for different constructions. It is assumed that the syntactic templates are stored in a dedicated inventory. For KR, there is reason to posit a PRCS since, like in English, *wh*-words can be found at the front of the KR clause regardless of their syntactic relation to the predicate. KR also has a PRDP and PODP, which host left and right-dislocated elements respectively. The syntactic representation of example (50), a simple sentence in KR, including some of its non-universal positions, is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

- (50) *Élodie, ousa ou la parti yèr?*  
 Élodie, where 2SG PRF leave yesterday  
 'Élodie, where did you go yesterday?'

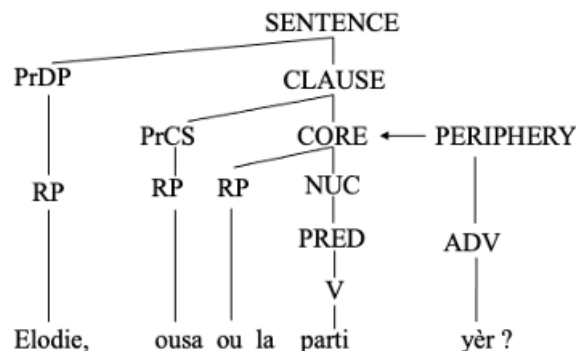


Figure 3.2.: Constituent projection of a simple sentence in KR

An important point to note is that phrases are not necessarily endocentric in RRG. Although the most common category for a predicate is a verb, any category can serve as a predicate in the nucleus, and it need not be a head. For example, in the copular sentence “*Katie is a good teacher*” (cf. Table 2.3), the predicate is a nominal phrase. Therefore, RRG does not postulate a VP. Note also that the periphery in Figure 3.2 modifies the core, but peripheries can modify any layer of the clause.

### 3.1.2. Operators

Similarly to other syntactic frameworks, RRG distinguishes between lexical categories and functional categories, the latter being called operators in RRG. Operators have a separate projection in the syntactic representation, and they modify different layers of the clause. The perfect marker *la* in Figure 3.2 is not attached to anything in the constituent projection because it is neither predicating nor a referential unit so, rather, is part of the operator projection. Table 3.2 (from Van Valin 2005: 9) details the operators modifying each layer of the clause, and the syntactic representation of example (50), including the operator projection, is illustrated in Figure 3.3.

Table 3.2.: Operators in the layered structure of the clause

---

**Nuclear operators:**

Aspect

Negation

Directionals (only those modifying orientation of action or event without reference to participants)

**Core operators:**

Directionals (only those expressing the orientation or motion of one participant with reference to another participant or the speaker)

Event quantification

Modality (root modals e.g. ability, permission, obligation)

Internal (narrow scope) negation

**Clausal operators:**

Status (epistemic modals, external negation)

Tense

Evidentials

Illocutionary force

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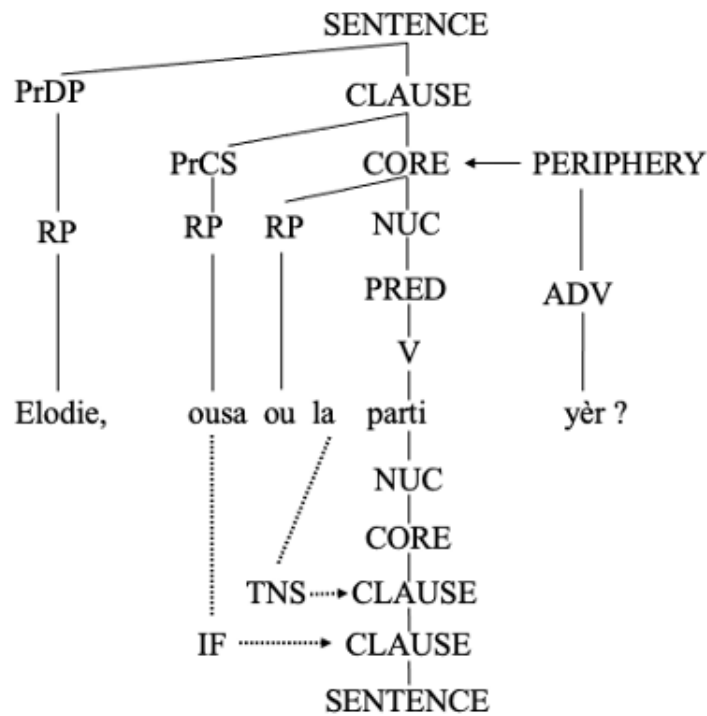


Figure 3.3.: Simple sentence in KR with operator projection

In the analyses presented in this thesis, I only include the operator projection when it is relevant. In the next section, I discuss the structure of Reference Phrases, which is parallel to that of the clause.

### 3.1.3. Reference phrases and their clause-like structure

Unlike many syntactic frameworks, RRG does not assume a universal set of lexical categories, nor that a syntactic category is a projection of its head. It is argued that only nouns and verbs are universal, yet even for these, it is hard to find universal distinguishing criteria (Van Valin 2008b: 165). Instead, RRG focuses on the fundamental distinction in language between predicating and referring. As noted in section 3.1.1, there are no restrictions on the lexical category of the predicate. A similar approach is taken for argument expressions. These are termed Reference Phrases (RPs) in RRG. Like the clause, they have a layered structure, with a nucleus that can be of any category, though it is often a noun. There are some exceptions, namely pronouns and Proper nouns, which do not usually have a layered structure.<sup>23</sup> RPs are referring expressions which serve as an argument of a verb or ad-position. These are typically described as NPs or Determiner Phrases (DPs) in other frameworks. Van Valin (2008b: 170) acknowledges that not all argument expressions are referential; for example, the dummy pronoun *it* in sentences such as *It is raining* is not referential. He proposes that RPs therefore be considered “*potentially* referential expressions”, whose default referential interpretation can be blocked in instances like the aforementioned. It is constructional factors that determine whether the RP be interpreted as referential or non-referential.

Having a layered structure parallel to the clause, RPs also have operators, which modify different layers of the RP. RP operators are detailed in Table 3.3 (Van Valin (2005: 28)).

Table 3.3.: Operators of the RP

<b>Nuclear<sub>RP</sub> operators:</b>
Nominal aspect (count-mass distinction, classifiers in classifier languages)
<b>Core<sub>RP</sub> operators:</b>
Number
Quantification (quantifiers)
Negation
<b>RP operators:</b>
Definiteness
Deixis

In the next section, I discuss the structure of prepositional phrases.

<sup>23</sup>Though there are exceptions to this, which in fact adds to the argument for the phrasal category RP.

### 3.1.4. Prepositional phrases

There are two types of preposition: predicative and non-predicative. Predicative prepositions, like *in* in (51a), licence the argument they mark, while non-predicative prepositions, like *to* in (51b), do not: it is the predicate that licenses them.

- (51) a. Robin read [in the library].  
b. Kim gave the book [to Sandy.]  
(Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 52)

The difference between predicative and non-predicative prepositions is important: predicative prepositions have a logical structure of their own, taking a semantic argument. They have a layered structure, with the core containing the nucleus (which contains the predicate: the preposition) and the core argument. However, non-predicative prepositions do not have a logical structure of their own, and do not have a layered structure (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 52-53). This difference in syntactic structure is illustrated in Figure 3.4, from Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 53).

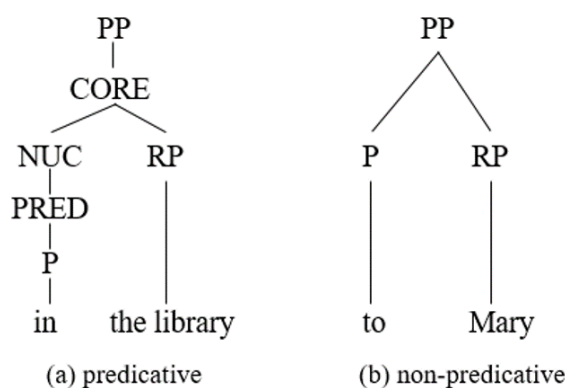


Figure 3.4.: Predicative and non-predicative PP structure

In the next section, I discuss combining in complex sentences.

### 3.1.5. Nexus and juncture

In complex sentences, syntactic units are combined. This combination, known as a juncture in RRG, can occur at different levels of the layered structure of the clause: nuclear, core and clause. The relation between the two units is described as a nexus relation. There are two traditionally recognised nexus relations: co-ordination and subordination, the former involving two independent units and the latter involving dependent units. Similarly to other syntactic frameworks, RRG divides subordination into two types: daughter subordination (52a) and peripheral

subordination (52b). In the former, the embedded clause is an argument, and in the latter, it is an adjunct.

- (52) a. John decided yesterday [that he will go to the party].  
 (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 467)
- b. John saw Max [after he went to the party].  
 (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 466)

RRG posits a third category of nexus relation in addition to the two generally recognised relations of coordination and subordination: cosubordination. Cosubordination is somewhere between co-ordination and subordination in that one unit depends on another for operators, but it is not embedded. An example of clausal cosubordination is below.

- (53) Harry ran down the hall laughing loudly.  
 (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 455)

In example (53), the two clausal units are cosubordinated because the second depends on the first for tense (and therefore depends on it for operators) and they also share one argument. However, the dependent clause bears no sign of embedding (subordination) and is neither an argument nor an adjunct modifier of the first clause.

Table 3.4 summarises the difference between the three types of nexus relation.

Table 3.4.: Nexus types in RRG

Co-ordination	Cosubordination	Subordination
- embedded	- embedded	+ embedded
- dependent	+ dependent	+ dependent

These nexus types can occur at each level of juncture (nuclear, core, clausal), which gives a possibility of nine different nexus-juncture types, though a language does not necessarily have all nine. In addition to those nine, sentential subordination and co-ordination are possible, though sentential co-subordination is not because there are no sentence-level operators (Van Valin 2005: 192).

## 3.2. Semantic representation

The meaning of the clause is built from the semantic representation of the predicate, which is constructed in terms of a decompositional system. The lexical decomposition of the predicate relies on Vendler's (1967) *Aktionsart* classification of verbs as

states, activities, achievements and accomplishments. In addition to these four basic classes, there are semelfactives (Smith 1997) and active accomplishments. This categorisation of predicates is based on the features  $[\pm \text{ static}]$ ,  $[\pm \text{ dynamic}]$ ,  $[\pm \text{ telic}]$  and  $[\pm \text{ punctual}]$ .<sup>24</sup> The representation of the lexical decomposition of a predicate is termed its logical structure (LS), which contains the predicate and its arguments. An example of the LS of a simple English sentence (54a) containing a state predicate is given in (54b).<sup>25</sup>

- (54) a. Dana saw the picture.  
       b. **see'** (Dana, picture)  
           (Van Valin 2005: 46)

Following the retrieval of the LS is the assignment of what are known as semantic macroroles in RRG. RRG posits two generalized semantic macroroles: actor and undergoer. The prototypical actor is an agent, but this generalized macrorole subsumes other thematic roles such as experiencer and instrument. The prototypical undergoer is patient, but again, this macrorole subsumes other thematic roles such as theme and recipient (see Van Valin 2005: 60-67 for the macrorole selection principles). The position that an argument takes in the LS of a predicate determines its semantic interpretation: in the LS of a transitive verb like that in (54a), the default is that the leftmost argument is the actor and the rightmost the undergoer. Actor and undergoer are assigned to arguments based on the positions that the arguments take in the LS. However, note that a verb need not take both macroroles and could take neither (cf. Van Valin 2005: 64).<sup>26</sup>

### 3.3. Grammatical relations

Unlike certain aspects of non-relational clause structure, the relational aspects are not assumed to be universal. The traditional notions of subject, object and so on are not constructs of the RRG framework, because grammatical relations are construction-specific. Instead of the traditional notions of grammatical relations, RRG posits only one Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA), which is construction-specific and is defined as “a restricted neutralization of semantic roles and pragmatic functions for syntactic purposes” (Van Valin 2015: 724). An example of this from English is that the verb agrees with A and S (and derived S in the passive), regardless of whether S is an actor or an undergoer.<sup>27</sup> While this is evidence that English does

<sup>24</sup>See Van Valin (2005: 32-42) for the tests that can be applied to check the classification of a given verb.

<sup>25</sup>For a detailed explanation on the logical structure of predicates, see Van Valin (2005: 31-50).

<sup>26</sup>An example of a verb with no macroroles is *snow*.

<sup>27</sup>S and A are semantico-syntactic argument roles proposed by Comrie (1978) and Dixon (1994). The A argument is the most agent-like argument in a transitive clause. This contrasts with O



have grammatical relations, the reason for not positing this in the theory is that they are not universal (see Van Valin 2005: 90-93).

There are two types of PSA: controllers and pivots. Controllers can, for example, trigger verb agreement, antecede a reflexive or control the interpretation of a missing argument in a linked core (Van Valin 2005: 95). Pivots, on the other hand, are usually the argument in the missing core. The two are exemplified in the examples below.

- (55) Chris<sub>i</sub> wants [—<sub>i</sub> to drink a beer].  
CONTROLLER PIVOT
- (56) Chris<sub>i</sub> slapped Pat<sub>j</sub> and then —<sub>i/\*j</sub> ran away.  
CONTROLLER PIVOT  
(Van Valin 2005: 95)

There is a default selection principle for the PSA, given in (57), which means that in syntactically accusative languages, the default PSA is the highest-ranking argument in the semantic representation (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 175).

- (57) PSA-selection hierarchy (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 282)  
arg. of DO > 1st arg. of **do'** > 1st arg. of **pred'** (x, y) >  
2nd arg. of **pred'** (x, y) > arg. of **pred'** (x)

There can be a marked PSA selection in certain constructions, though, such as the passive. This would be stored in the CSs for the construction. Further work is needed to determine whether KR is a language which consistently selects the highest argument in the semantic representation as the PSA, or if it has certain constructions, like the passive, which have a marked PSA. In my KR corpus, I have found evidence of a *be*-passive, which is found across Romance (Cabredo Hofherr 2017).

- (58) (...) (*li la été rééli lo 11 novanm 2018*).  
3SG PRF be.PST.PTCP re-elected DEF 11 November 2018  
‘(...) (he was reelected on the 11th November 2018).’  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

The majority of *be*-passives in my corpus do not have an agent-like argument or actor expressed, though there are two exceptions. In those examples, cf. (59), the actor is expressed with the preposition *par*, derived from French *par*, which is found in the French *be*-passive (Cabredo Hofherr 2017: 235).

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(or P), the more patient-like argument. In an intransitive clause, the single argument is termed the S argument.

- (59) (...) *kan zot lavé été invité par in Komité Espésial*  
 when 3PL have.IPFV be.PST.PTCP invite by INDF committee special  
*dann péi Tanzani (...)*  
 in country Tanzania  
 ‘(...) when they had been invited by a Special Committee in Tanzania (...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

Caid (2008), who investigates whether KR has a passive, argues that it does not really, but that one does find occasional French calques. A thorough investigation is beyond the scope of this thesis, given that it is not central to my topic. Given that the issue of the PSA in KR requires further work, but is not central to the subject of this thesis, I will continue to use the term ‘subject’, and in doing so, I refer to the S/A arguments (see footnote 27).

There is no notion of direct or indirect object in RRG, but a distinction is made between direct core arguments and oblique core arguments. The term ‘oblique’ is used with different meanings in the literature, but in RRG, it means a constituent marked by an adposition or oblique case (Van Valin 2005: 57). In RRG, oblique constituents can appear either in the core or the periphery depending on whether they are an argument or an adjunct of the verb. For the purposes of my discussion of relative clauses though, it seems desirable to group prepositional constituents together, as they might behave differently with respect to relative markers. For this reason, in the descriptive parts of this thesis, I will keep oblique core arguments together with other obliques and will use the term oblique in its broadest sense to include nominal and prepositional adjuncts of the verb, but also arguments of the verb that are marked with a preposition.

### 3.4. Linking

As already noted, RRG does not allow empty underlying positions or syntactic movement operations, which other frameworks rely on for explaining phenomena in language. Instead, it is the linking algorithm that RRG relies on for such explanation. It is a bi-directional linking algorithm that links the syntactic and semantic representations, seeking to capture the comprehension and production processes of communication. This linking is governed by the Completeness Constraint (Van Valin 2005: 130):

#### **Completeness Constraint**

All of the arguments explicitly specified in the semantic representation of a sentence must be realized syntactically in the sentence, and all of the referring expressions in the syntactic representation of a sentence must

be linked to an argument position in a logical structure in the semantic representation of the sentence.

Below, I give versions of the steps of the linking algorithm in each direction. Specific features of the linking will be discussed in further detail when they become relevant in the later analyses. On the production side of communication, the semantic representation determines the syntactic template selected from the speaker's syntactic inventory, so the relevant algorithm is the semantics to syntax one.

(60) **Semantics-to-syntax linking algorithm** (Van Valin 2005: 225-226)

1. Construct the semantic representation of the sentence, based on the logical structure of the predicator.
2. Determine the actor and undergoer assignments, following the actor-undergoer hierarchy.
3. Determine the morphosyntactic coding of the arguments (select PSA based on the PSA selection hierarchy and principles; assign arguments case markers and/or adpositions)
4. Select the syntactic template(s) for the sentence, based on the following principles (from Van Valin (2005: 130):
  - a) The number of syntactic slots for arguments and argument-adjuncts within the core is equal to the number of distinct specified argument positions in the semantic representation of the core.
  - b) Language-specific qualifications of the principle in (a):
    - i. All cores in the language have a minimum syntactic valence of 1.
    - ii. Argument-modulation voice constructions reduce the number of core slots by 1.
    - iii. The occurrence of a syntactic argument in the pre/postcore slot reduces the number of core slots by 1 (this may override (i)).
5. Assign arguments to positions in the syntactic representation of the sentence.
  - a) Assign the [-WH] argument(s) to the appropriate positions in the clause.
  - b) If there is a [+WH] argument of a logical structure,
    - i. assign it to the normal position of a non-WH-argument with the same function, or
    - ii. assign it to the precore or postcore slot, or
    - iii. assign it to a position within the potential focus domain of the clause (default = the unmarked focus position).

- c) A non-WH argument may be assigned to the precore or postcore slot, subject to focus structure restrictions (optional).
- d) Assign the [-WH] argument(s) of logical structure(s) other than that of the predicator in the nucleus to
  - i. a periphery (default), or
  - ii. the precore or postcore slot, or
  - iii. the pre- or post-detached position

On the comprehension side, the direction of the mapping is reversed; a speaker parses the input that they hear and identifies its syntactic representation, which is then mapped onto the semantic representation for interpretation. A version of the syntax-to-semantic linking algorithm is given in example (61), modified (reduced) for our purposes.

(61) **Syntax-to-semantics linking algorithm** (Van Valin 2005: 226-228)

1. Determine the macrorole(s) and other core argument(s) in the clause.
  - a) If the verb is intransitive, then assign the privileged syntactic argument either macrorole or direct core argument status, depending upon the language (language-specific)
  - b) If the verb is transitive and the language lacks voice oppositions, determine the macroroles from case marking and/or word order(language-specific)
  - c) If the language has a voice opposition, determine the voice of a transitive verb (language-specific)
  - d) If the language is head-marking and there are independent NPs in the clause, associate each NP with a bound argument marker (language-specific).
2. Retrieve from the lexicon the logical structure of the predicate in the nucleus of the clause and with respect to it determine the actor and undergoer assignments
3. Link the arguments determined in step 1 with the arguments determined in step 2 until all core arguments are linked.
4. If there is a predicative adpositional adjunct, then retrieve its logical structure from the lexicon, insert the logical structure of the core as the second argument in the logical structure and the object of the adposition as the first argument.
5. If there is an element in the pre- or postcore slot (language-specific),
  - a) Assign it the remaining unlinked argument position in the semantic representation of the sentence.
  - b) And if there are no unlinked argument positions in the sentence,

then treat the WH-word like a predicative preposition and follow the procedure in step 4, linking the WH-word to the first argument position in the logical structure.

Whether we rely on the mapping from semantics to syntax (60) or the mapping from syntax to semantics (61) depends on whether we are seeking explanation regarding language comprehension or production. The linking algorithm becomes clearer with reference to specific examples, which I leave to my analyses of relative and cleft constructions in chapters 5, 6, 8 and 9.

### 3.5. Information structure

RRG is a parallel architecture theory which places equal weight on syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In the previous section, we saw that there is an algorithm that links the syntactic representation to the semantic representation and vice versa. In addition to these two representations, RRG also has an information structure representation, which plays a role in the linking.

Information structure in RRG follows the theory developed by Lambrecht (1994) and subsequent works. The notion of focus and how it interacts with syntax will be treated in detail in chapter 7; this section will therefore be restricted to a brief definition of focus and an outline of the focus projection in RRG.

**PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITION** The set of propositions lexicogrammatically evoked in a sentence which the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered. (Lambrecht 1994: 52)

**PRAGMATIC ASSERTION** The proposition expressed by a sentence which the hearer is expected to know or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered. (Lambrecht 1994: 52)

**FOCUS** The semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition. (Lambrecht 1994: 213)

The RRG focus structure projection details the information units (IU), the potential focus domain and the actual focus domain. The information units are formed by, for example, the predicate, arguments, and the peripheral PPs, and the smallest information unit is argued to be the minimal phrasal category in syntax (Lambrecht 1994, cited by Van Valin 2005: 78). The potential focus domain is where the focus is permitted to be in the clause of a given language (which is language-specific)

whereas the actual focus domain is where the focus of a given sentence lies. The focus structure projection for an English sentence is represented in Figure 3.5, from Van Valin (2005: 77).

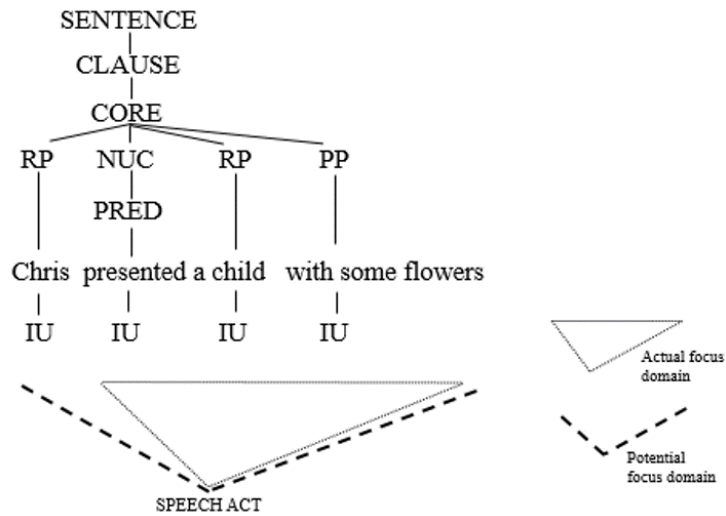


Figure 3.5.: Focus structure projection for predicate focus in English

In English, the potential focus domain is the whole clause, but this is language-specific. Other languages, such as French and Italian, for example, do not allow focus on the whole of the clause (Van Valin 2014: 10).

This concludes my introduction to the theoretical framework to be used in this thesis. Further details will be explained as they become relevant in the analyses of headed relatives (section 5.4), free relatives (section 6.5), *sé*-clefts (section 8.4) and *nana*-constructions (section 9.4).

## 4. Data and methodological considerations

The data for this thesis come from several strands of work: a corpus of materials gathered online, supplemented with existing corpora; an acceptability judgement questionnaire, and 45 interviews conducted with 40 native speakers of KR between June 2021 and April 2022. The first 11 interviews took place online via Zoom due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, and the remaining 34 interviews took place during a fieldwork trip to Reunion from January-April 2022. In the following sections, I give further details concerning the corpus, the questionnaire and the interviews.

### 4.1. Corpus

#### 4.1.1. Materials

The corpus created and used in this thesis builds directly upon that which I created for McLellan (2019), which was composed uniquely of written materials: a play script, a series of blog posts, an educational brochure, two fictional stories and two editions of a digital magazine. For the written component of the corpus used in this thesis, I added more editions of the magazine, 19 editions of a newspaper called *Fanal*, published online by a political organisation (*Lorganizacion popiler pou libèr nou t pèi*), and an SMS corpus by Cougnon (2012). The SMS corpus was composed of 12,000 SMS sent by KR speakers on Reunion island in 2008.<sup>28</sup> I also added an oral component to the corpus, composed of the following materials: one episode of a TV show, one radio recording, two comedy sketches and two short documentary-style clips. I transcribed these materials using the linguistic annotator software ELAN.<sup>29</sup> I supplemented this oral corpus with the Reunionese section of the *Corpus de la Parole* (Baude 2010), a collection of audio recordings of conversations and semi-structured interviews from the 1970s. Full bibliographical details of the corpus are contained in Appendix A.

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<sup>28</sup>The project webpage is available at <http://www.lareunion4science.org/>.

<sup>29</sup>See <https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan>.

### 4.1.2. Analysis

The materials in the corpus were largely analysed manually. What I mean by this is that I read or listened through the materials and all examples of the relevant constructions were lifted into a spreadsheet to store and analyse. There are several reasons for doing the corpus study manually rather than using a search function: firstly, the investigation was exploratory, in the sense that only a limited amount was known about the constructions of investigation, so it was necessary to explore the data to find out how they were constructed before searching for specific items. Secondly, for some constructions, such as headed RCs, performing a search was impossible because a very common strategy for forming an RC in KR is without a relative marker, hence there is no way of searching for it. Thirdly, there were technical reasons for doing a manual analysis: the Baude (2010) corpus, for example, could not be downloaded in a format permitting me to store all of the materials in one place for analysis. It was necessary to rely on this secondary oral corpus because the transcription of oral materials is a very time-consuming process and it would not have been feasible within the time limits to transcribe new oral data myself amounting to the size of the Baude (2010) corpus.

A drawback of the manual analysis is that as the research progressed, I noticed new things, so the list of features to look out for was continually evolving. This sometimes meant revisiting the texts in light of new discoveries, but inevitably missing some things. Had I not analysed the corpus manually, things would also have been missed though. One way of combating this was to subsequently create a searchable component of the corpus (discussed below), enabling me to verify things. An advantage of the manual analysis on this language, of which I am not a native speaker, is that it gave me a rounded picture of the language and trained my competency in it, which was essential preparation for the fieldwork and for the project in general.

The SMS corpus (Cougnon 2012) was not analysed manually, but rather using a search function for specific items (such as a copula, for identifying cleft constructions). This corpus was hence not used for the analysis of RCs, because there was not a specific item that could be used to search for them, given that they are not usually marked with a relative marker. The reason for not analysing this component of the corpus manually for RCs is that it was very large and I decided that manually analysing it would not be a worthwhile endeavour as text speech is probably less likely to contain a large number of RCs: text speech is characterised by brevity and simple language, and RCs are a complex construction.

When relevant examples were placed into the Excel file, they were coded for certain features, some of which depended on the construction, and others were coded for all examples. Features coded included, for example, the construction type (e.g.



free relative, headed relative etc.), the presence or absence of a relative marker and which relative marker, if found. In addition to linguistic features, metalinguistic data about the source was included for every example (e.g. source number, genre etc.).

Following the manual analysis, parts of the corpus were uploaded into Sketch Engine, forming a searchable component of the corpus.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of this was to be able to have as much of the corpus as possible in one place to verify things during the analysis and explore other facts about the language that were related to the constructions of interest. The searchable component of the corpus included the *FANAL* newspapers, the *Kriké* magazines, the short stories, the educational brochure, and transcripts of the comedy sketches, the documentary clips and the TV show. The Baude (2010) corpus could not be imported, and there were some issues with the formatting of the SMS corpus when imported, meaning searches performed may not have returned all relevant results. Due to the fact that not all of the materials could be imported into this corpus, a full word count of the corpus is not feasible. The searchable component totals 628, 975 words, but this figure is inflated: the SMS corpus contained the “raw” texts and “transcribed” text (which was done by the corpus compilers), and the corpus included some elements of text written in French, which was not included (cf. section 4.1.3 for how I distinguished between the two languages).<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the documents imported into Sketch Engine that had been transcribed in ELAN also contained some of my coding notes, which inflates the corpus size too. In the next section, I discuss the methodological issue of distinguishing between KR and French.

### 4.1.3. Distinguishing between Kréol Rényoné and French

As described in chapter 2, speech on Reunion island is characterised by a high degree of variation across a continuum ranging from basilectal KR to varieties close to standard French. The original research contribution of this thesis is limited to the study of KR, and not French (or the regional variety, Reunion French). In order to do so, somewhere along the continuum, a distinction has to be made between what is classified as KR and what is classified as French. This is not straightforward, particularly given that most KR speakers have a multilingual repertoire that they draw upon in their interactions. In this section, I outline the strategy adopted for classifying a given example as KR or French.

An important factor to consider during this process was the role of orthography.

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<sup>30</sup><https://www.sketchengine.eu/>

<sup>31</sup>The transcription process was to standardise the spelling across the corpus. For example, forms such as “ct” were normalised to *sété* (past-tense copula). I cite the raw text when giving SMS examples.

There is no standard KR orthography and it is important that the choice of orthography does not dictate which language the data is viewed as belonging to. There were examples like (62) from Baude (2010) that, with different orthographies could belong to either KR or to French.

- (62) a. *kan sé mwin k'i koup*  
           when COP 1SG REL-FIN cut KR
- b. *quand c'est moi qui coupe*  
       when it-be.3SG 1SG REL cut  
       ‘when it’s me who cuts’ French

The solution that I adopted was to develop a coding system to apply to all examples of relevant constructions that were extracted from the corpus. Examples were coded as KR, French or floating between the two. The term “floating” is borrowed from Ledegen (2012), who discusses the difficulty of distinguishing between KR and French during the transcription process, illustrating the existence of “floating predicates”, which could belong to either language.<sup>32</sup> Examples such as that in (62), which could plausibly be utterances belonging to either French or KR, were coded as floating. Such examples were included in my study, but French examples were excluded. The surrounding context was also taken into account: if an example that one could classify as floating was contained within a section entirely in French, then this was coded as French, because there is no reason to suggest that a speaker would be code-switching in such an instance, if the difference between the French and KR for that part of the utterance is indistinguishable.

In (63), I detail the criteria used to distinguish between the two languages. Some criteria refer to features discussed in section 2.3 and others with reference to the literature.

(63) **Criteria for distinguishing between KR and French**

1. Lexical items
  - a) Lexical items belonging to KR but not French are used to distinguish the two e.g. *kas larmwar* ‘to be dressed up to the nines’ is KR.
  - b) Words which have a different meaning or use in KR to French are also used e.g. *bonbon* means ‘sweet’ in French but ‘cake’ in KR (Ledegen 2012)

2. Personal pronouns

See section 2.3.1.1. There are certain pronouns that cannot be used to

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<sup>32</sup>Ledegen makes specific reference to examples where the sound [i] could be analysed as the KR marker of finiteness *i* or the French third person singular pronoun *il*, which can both be realised phonetically as [i].

distinguish the two languages as they are phonetically identical in the two languages: *nou* (1PL) and *èl* (3SG.F).

3. Tense and aspect systems
  - a) KR can mark tense and aspect with preverbal (TMA) markers (cf. section 2.3.3), which French does not.
  - b) KR can also mark tense and aspect via inflection. However, there is no person or number agreement in the inflection system, like there is in French. Therefore, invariant tense forms are used to distinguish KR from French e.g. *nou travay* (KR) vs. *nous travaillons* (French) ‘we work’.
  - c) Forms of the verbs HAVE (*la, na, nana, lavé, nave, nora, lora*) and BE (*sé, lé, sété, lété, sra*) in KR are different to those verbal paradigms in French.
4. KR plural marker *bann*
5. Determiners
  - a) Most varieties of KR do not have a gender distinction in the article system like French does. If a French feminine noun is not marked as such in KR, this can be used to distinguish the two – e.g. KR *mon famiy* rather than *ma famille* ‘my family’.
  - b) Bare NPs: KR permits bare NPs far more freely than in French (cf. section 2.3.2) See Albers (2020).
6. Agglutination
 

Nouns in which the French article has become part of the noun in KR and is no longer an article e.g. *le landroi* ‘the place’ (vs. French *l’endroit*).
7. Absence of *que*

Corne (1995) notes that the “general subordinator” *ke* is optional in KR. However, Ledegen (2012) also notes that *que* is sometimes omitted in Reunion French. She does not specify exactly which different types of *que* are omitted (i.e. the *que* found in French complement clauses or RCs) but gives an example of the complementiser *que* being omitted: *j’ai l’impression ça va casser* ‘I get the feeling (that) that is going to break.’

The last diagnostic in (63) is particularly important from a methodological standpoint as the presence or absence of *ke* in relative constructions is one of the features investigated in this thesis. Its presence was not used as a diagnostic for classifying an utterance as French or KR. Its absence was used in a limited regard: it is not standard French and thus inhibited a sentence from being coded as such. In Appendix B, I exemplify how the features were used to distinguish between KR and

French.

The corpus study gave me a good idea of how the four constructions dealt with in this thesis are formed in KR. However, corpus data alone would not have been sufficient for a full understanding of the data. The absence of something in the corpus data does not signify that it does not exist in the language, so it was imperative to investigate further with native speakers. In the following two sections, I explain that component of the research, which comprised a questionnaire and interviews.

## 4.2. Questionnaire

### 4.2.1. Aims

The questionnaire had two central aims: to act as a pilot study for the investigation of headed and free RCs, and to recruit participants for subsequent interviews. The latter aim was by no means secondary: it was a very important goal as I would not have been able to investigate everything in one questionnaire. It was necessary to establish contact with speakers willing to participate in a more in-depth enquiry, one in which I could ask more detailed questions concerning, for example, subtle differences of meaning between two sentences, which is difficult to obtain via a written questionnaire.

### 4.2.2. Design, distribution and analysis

The questionnaire was created and distributed online via the survey platform Qualtrics.<sup>33</sup> It began by explaining what participation in the study would entail and obtaining participant consent.<sup>34</sup> The linguistic component of the questionnaire consisted of 25 acceptability judgement questions. For each question, respondents were given a context (in KR). They then had to judge between two and four possible responses in KR. Participants were asked to judge sentences as one of three options: (i) “It’s good, I would say something like this”; (ii) “I would not say this, but other KR speakers would.”; (iii) “It’s not good, no one in Reunion would say this.”. I translated option (i) to a participant strongly accepting the sentence, (ii) to weakly accepting it, and (iii) to rejecting it. This scale of judgements allowed me to differentiate between what was totally unacceptable in the language and what was subject to variation. It was important that a sentence was not rejected simply because it was not part of the idiolect of a given participant. Alongside each question, there was

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<sup>33</sup>Qualtrics is the University of Manchester’s approved and recommended survey tool, available at [www.qualtrics.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.qualtrics.manchester.ac.uk).

<sup>34</sup>This included detailed information about how participants’ data would be handled and was in conformity with UoM’s Ethics regulations.

a space for participants to leave comments. All questions and additional comment boxes were optional, except from the question obtaining consent to participate. This meant that a participant did not have to complete all parts of the questionnaire. For this reason, when I report figures concerning the judgements, the total number of participants will always be included as it varies between sentences.

The linguistic component of the questionnaire investigated issues relevant to headed and free RCs (chapters 5 and 6 respectively). The aim was to keep the questions fairly simple but begin to investigate some of the fundamental questions concerning headed and free RCs - ones which will be explained in the chapters dedicated to those constructions. I included 10 filler questions interspersed between 15 questions on headed and free RCs. The aim of the filler questions was two-fold: to distract the participant from the focus of my investigation, and to verify the general standards of judgement. By this, I mean how strongly or weakly participants were judging a given sentence on the whole. In order to do this, the filler questions concerned linguistic features that I predicted would return fairly clear-cut judgements, based on what I already knew about KR and what was reported in the literature. The fillers included, for example, the position of object pronouns and the order of TMA markers. I take this opportunity to point out that responses to the fillers indicated that even with examples that were predicted to be clear-cut, there was at least some level of variation in the responses. For example, concerning the ordering of TMA markers, it is expected that *la* would precede *fine* as it does in example (64a), rather than the reverse, found in example (64b).

- (64) a. *zot la fine prann kontak èk lo mèt.*  
           3PL PRF COMPL take contact with DEF mayor  
       b. *zot fine la prann kontak èk lo mèt.*  
           3PL COMPL PRF take contact with DEF mayor  
           ‘they have got in touch with the mayor’

100% participants accepted example (64a), confirming what was expected. However, 8 participants (20%) also accepted example (64b); 4 accepted it weakly but 4 strongly. Checks revealed that it was not the case that those speakers simply did not reject any sentences: they did. This margin of variability in the judgements should thus be borne in mind when interpreting the results reported from this questionnaire in chapters 5 and 6.

The questionnaire also gathered demographic information: age, gender, hometown (or where they had spent most of their life) and the highest level of education that they had obtained. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to leave their email address if they consented to being contacted for an interview.

Participants were asked to focus on the sentence as if it was oral and not to concentrate on the writing system used, since orthography is not the focus of the

thesis. I considered having the contexts and sentences recorded so that it was oral rather than written, but disregarded this because clicking between several recordings would not be user-friendly. Making the questionnaire user-friendly was important so that participants would reach the end of the questionnaire and have the opportunity to leave their email address for an interview.

The questionnaire was distributed online via my personal network of KR speakers and other contacts living on the island. To reach a wider audience, I also distributed the questionnaire link via a dedicated Facebook page for the project and I posted the questionnaire link on an international community webpage *Réunionnais du monde* ‘Reunionese people of the world’.<sup>35</sup> Finally, I contacted *Lofis la lang kréol la rényon* ‘Office for the Reunion Creole language’ who kindly publicised my questionnaire via their channels. The questionnaire received 54 responses, though 12 of these were incomplete. Responses were analysed using the built-in Data & Analysis package within Qualtrics. When reporting the results, I distinguish between “strong accept” and “weak accept” (as defined above).

### 4.2.3. Participants

There were 54 participants of the questionnaire, though not all completed the questionnaire and not all left their demographic information. Those participants that did came from all over the island: Saint-Denis, La Montagne, La Possession, Le Port, Saint-Paul, La Saline, Saint-Louis, Saint-Pierre, Le Tampon, Saint-Joseph, Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Suzanne and Sainte-Marie (see Figure 2.1 for a map of the island). Participants were aged between 20 and 70+ and there was a roughly even split between men and women. Their ages are detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.: Questionnaire participant ages

Age	Number
20-29	7
30-39	11
40-49	9
50-59	5
60-69	5
70+	2

The questionnaire provided an important starting point for the interviews, particularly given that it successfully served as a recruitment tool for interviews.

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<sup>35</sup><https://www.reunionnaisdumonde.com/>

### 4.3. Interviews

Interviews with native speakers were conducted in two phases. They began online via Zoom, due to Covid-19 restrictions delaying an in-person fieldwork trip. This phase, spanning from April to November 2022, consisted of 11 interviews with 9 participants, all of whom had left their contact details at the end of the questionnaire described in the previous section. The second stage of interviews were conducted in-situ on Reunion island. During this phase, I conducted 33 interviews with 31 participants. Across the two phases, this amounted to 44 interviews with 40 participants. Interviews included elicitation, acceptability judgements and translations. Each of these will be discussed in turn in section 4.3.2, following details about the participants in section 4.3.1.

There was insufficient time to cover material related to all four core chapters (5, 6, 8, 9) in one interview, which meant that material was spread out between participants, and six participants were interviewed more than once, covering different material in each session. Concerning the spread of content between interviews, 23 interviews covered headed RCs, 40 covered FRCs and 14 covered clefts. The reason for this imbalance was that FRCs produced more variable results and further research questions emerged throughout the process. On the other hand, the results for headed RCs were fairly consistent.

For the in-person phase of interviews, I recruited a native speaker assistant from the University of La Réunion. Her role was, during interviews, to read out the contexts in KR followed by the KR sentences to be judged by the participant in the case of acceptability judgement tasks, and to ask questions in KR during the elicitation tasks. She attended the majority of in-person interviews, though not all for practical reasons. The rationale for having a native speaker assistant was to increase the naturalness of the sentences presented to participants, as my non-native accent may otherwise interfere with participant judgements. I did not have a native speaker assistant with me during the Zoom interviews but mitigated this issue by asking participants for their judgements of sentences pre-recorded by a native speaker. Note that for practical reasons, not every single sentence judged in interviews was recorded by this native speaker, because I asked follow-up questions with subtle changes to the sentences depending on the participant's response, but I could not predict an exhaustive list of every variation on a sentence that might come up during the interview.

#### 4.3.1. Participants

Interview participants were recruited initially via email: I obtained contact details for 25 native speakers via the questionnaire (cf. section 4.2). During the in-situ

fieldwork trip, further recruitment was done through contacts that I established there, and relied particularly upon contacts made via the University of La Réunion.

Interview participants also came from all over the island: Saint-Denis, La Montagne, Saint-Paul, Bois de Nèfles, Saint-Louis, Entre-Deux, Le Tampon, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Joseph, Saint-Philippe, Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Suzanne and Sainte-Marie (see Figure 2.1 for a map of the island). The age distribution of the participants is given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.: Interview participant ages

Age	Number
18-24	16
25-29	5
30-39	4
40-49	4
50-59	6
60-69	3
70+	2

The reason for the strong coverage of the 18-24 year group is because, as mentioned above, one channel of recruitment was via the University of La Réunion. Although there was good coverage of participants from around the island, unfortunately I was unable to interview speakers from the central mountainous region of the island: Mafate, Cilaos and Salazie (cf. Figure 2.1). This is true also of the questionnaire participants. The results reported in this thesis should therefore be considered to be reflective of the varieties spoken in the coastal lowlands of the island. Finally, as for the gender balance, there were 15 female participants and 25 male participants. Given that this thesis does not present a sociolinguistic study, this imbalance should not be an issue.

### 4.3.2. Interview tasks

There were three tasks included in interviews: elicitation tasks, acceptability judgments and translations.

#### 4.3.2.1. Elicitation tasks

An elicitation task was used to elicit headed RCs and narrow focus cleft constructions, both intended to be starting points for subsequent acceptability judgements.



**4.3.2.1.1. Relative clause elicitation task** The elicitation task for headed RCs was taken from Pavesi (1986: 256-259). During this task, the participant was presented with images which each included eight numbered characters. On the basis of the image, the native speaker assistant (or I) asked them the question “Who is number X?” in KR. The desired outcome was that they would respond with a sentence containing an RC describing the character with the corresponding number. The eight characters in any given image were differentiated on the basis of what they were doing in the image and also their physical characteristics, their gender and apparent age bracket (e.g. child, adult, elderly adult). The response should therefore have included a restrictive RC, narrowing down the reference of its antecedent. There was a different image to elicit an RC for each syntactic function: subject, object, oblique, genitive and object of comparison. See Appendix C for the images used.

This task is not perfect and did not always elicit an RC. This was particularly the case for the object of comparison example: no participant produced an RC in their response. One reason that a participant might not produce an RC in response to the task (for relatives with any syntactic role, not just object of comparison relatives), pointed out to me by a participant, is that it would be more natural in KR to receive a name as a response to a “who is... ?” question. However, formulating the question in another way, for example, asking “What does the image X represent?” did not elicit a structure which selected the appropriate character amongst the group of characters in the image. Instead, it provided responses which described the image relevant to the character, without an RC, because the focus was moved away from a description of the character and towards the event that was taking place in the image. I thus decided to stick with the “Who is number X?” question, given that this question did successfully elicit RCs with some participants. The task was successful to some extent, and provided a starting point for obtaining subsequent acceptability judgements of constructed sentences with RCs. The task thus fed into the acceptability judgement task (section 4.3.2.2).

**4.3.2.1.2. Cleft construction elicitation task** I designed an elicitation task for the narrow focus cleft constructions myself. I introduced participants to three locations and three characters to be used in the task. The locations were well-known beaches on the island, and were hence familiar to participants. During the task, I gave participants information on a slideshow, using the characters and locations. I then gave participants a statement in KR (pre-recorded by a native speaker in online interviews or read by my native speaker assistant in in-person interviews). If the statement did not correspond to what the images on the slideshow showed, participants were instructed to respond by correcting the statement. For example, one slide displayed an arrow from each character to a different location, indicat-

ing who was going to which beach. The accompanying statement was an incorrect statement about where one of the characters was going. This was designed to elicit a cleft construction, translating roughly to, for example, “No, it’s Eloise who’s going to the Ermitage beach.” A list of images and questions asked in the task is given in Appendix D. This task also fed directly into acceptability judgements.

#### 4.3.2.2. Acceptability judgements

Acceptability judgements were obtained by presenting the participant with a sentence in KR and asking them whether it is a natural, well-formed sentence in KR. Acceptability judgements constituted the largest component of the interviews and many of these questions were interweaved into the elicitation tasks described above. This task offered the opportunity for me to verify whether a given construction was acceptable or not, and was particularly important for verifying the existence of structures that did not occur in the corpus. As with the questionnaire (section 4.2), care was taken to distinguish between what a participant judged unfavourably because they would not say it themselves, or because they would not hear any KR speaker say it. When I report the number of speakers who accepted a given sentence in the interviews, I include those that would not say it themselves but confirmed that others would.

Another central purpose of the interviews was to ascertain subtle meaning differences between variants of a sentence, and a secondary aim was to learn about sociolinguistic attitudes towards certain linguistic features. For example, if a speaker reported that they would not say a given sentence themselves, a follow-up question would be whether there is a particular group of people on Reunion island that would say such a sentence (e.g. an age group). I take caution with responses to this type of question, as sometimes respondents seemed unsure but keen to respond, and the responses were fairly varied, not often enabling me to attribute a given feature to a given sociolinguistic group. One of the aims of this thesis is to describe relative and cleft constructions in KR and relevant to that is, of course, variation. However, the complexity of variation discovered during the fieldwork made it quickly apparent that attributing sociolinguistic factors to the occurrence of a particular linguistic structure was beyond the scope of the thesis and would require a far larger-scale study involving more participants. Therefore, I do include sociolinguistic comments in my discussion of the data, but with caution that the numbers are low.

I had a list of sentences to obtain judgements for, but throughout the data collection period, minor modifications were made to the test sentences in response to participant comments. This meant that participants did not always judge the exact same set of sentences. An example of the type of difference is whether the present progressive was marked explicitly (65a) or not (65b) in an RC.

- (65) a. *Lo boug lo syin lapou mord la pèr.*  
 DEF man DEF dog PROG bite have fear  
 ‘The man that the dog is biting is scared.’
- b. *Lo boug lo syin i mord la pèr.*  
 DEF man DEF dog FIN bite have fear  
 ‘The man that the dog is biting is scared.’

In KR, the present tense can receive a progressive reading, as in French, but there are progressive markers to mark it explicitly - for example, *lapou* (65a). If it became apparent with a given participant that they preferred explicit marking, for example, I would continue the subsequent sentences in the interview with explicit progressive marking so that the participant’s concentration was on the subject of my investigation (e.g. the presence of a relative marker, a resumptive pronoun etc.). This slight variation in the sentences offered means that although there were 40 participants, for each exact sentence, there were far fewer than 40 that judged it.<sup>36</sup>

There are some drawbacks to acceptability judgements as a data collection method. Firstly, working with 40 different speakers, I had the advantage of gathering a large number of judgements and being able to cover material related to all four core chapters of the thesis. However, this meant divergent judgements, which were on occasion hard to provide explanation for (see, in particular, section 6.3). Furthermore, not all participants were equally consistent in their responses. There were some speakers who were naturally more accepting and others who more consistently rejected sentences. On the whole, speakers often acknowledged the high degree of variation on the island, so were sometimes hesitant to rule a given structure out on that basis. Nevertheless, there were speakers who insisted that a given sentence did not exist, in an instance where a different native speaker had actually produced the sentence in question. This highlights that although speakers are aware that a high degree of variation exists in the language, they are not always acutely aware of the manifestations of that variation.

Finally, there is a well-recognised flaw with acceptability judgements in that speakers’ reported use of language often differs from their actual usage. In other words, speakers will frequently reject a given feature or report that they do not use it, without realising or acknowledging that it is indeed a feature of their speech. This can be affected by sociolinguistic associations with the given feature. Despite this drawback, acceptability judgements are still an essential component of research on an under-resourced language, for which there is a more limited amount and type of naturally occurring data to analyse.

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<sup>36</sup>There were also fewer than 40 for each sentence because there was insufficient time to cover all material with each participant.

#### 4.3.2.3. Translations

A small component of some interviews was a translation task (which went in both directions, KR-French and French-KR). Translations were useful in the following instances: to get a better insight into the meaning of a KR sentence, to highlight the differences between the two languages and to find out what possible translational equivalents exist in KR of structures that had not occurred in the corpus and for which I had little evidence to construct an example from. The benefit of the translation task was that it exemplified the variation that exists for certain structures (see section 6.4), and it enabled the speaker to produce a more natural response than judging a sentence constructed by me. On the other hand, there are methodological weaknesses of translations: notably, participants may be influenced by the source language and also that translations are not necessarily direct because a direct translation does not always exist. Taken in combination with the other methods discussed in this chapter, translations were a useful supplementary data collection method. In the next section, I discuss the processing and analysis of my interview data.

#### 4.3.3. Processing and analysis

Interview recordings were imported into ELAN (see footnote 29). They were segmented and part-transcribed. The transcription process in ELAN has two stages: first, the file must be segmented and then it can be transcribed. The segmentation process splits the recording into smaller time-aligned segments, into which the transcription for that segment can then be entered. The Zoom interviews were transcribed in full, but the in-person interviews were not. The reason for this is that I exceeded the target number of interviews to complete during the in-situ fieldwork, and it was not time-efficient to transcribe every interview in full. At a minimum, I segmented the file for each interview and during the segmentation process, I inputted the participant's comments and judgements into an Excel spreadsheet containing all sentences that had been judged during interviews. I recorded all translations in a separate spreadsheet, and participant responses to elicitation tasks in another.

Some interviews were transcribed in full. The decision to transcribe in full or only segment and record judgements/comments from an interview was dependent on the level of detail of the participant's responses. Some participants offered their judgements and gave very few explanatory comments. In those cases, it was not worthwhile transcribing the interview in full and was more efficient to simply record their judgements and comments in the spreadsheet. However, there were other interviews where the participant provided detailed explanation that would be useful in the later analysis; those interviews were prioritised to transcribe in full so that I

could revisit the transcripts. This concludes Part 1 of the thesis.

## Part 2.

### Relative clauses

## 5. Headed relative clauses

### 5.1. Introduction

This first core chapter on KR relative constructions is dedicated to headed relative clauses - restrictive and appositive. The former is the relative clause (RC) construction that has received the most attention in the typological and theoretical literature, and which is often thought of as the most typical RC, to which other relative-like clauses are related. I begin this chapter by introducing these constructions: I give a more formal definition in section 5.1.1; in section 5.1.2 I discuss different types of relative marker and in section 5.1.3, I discuss relativising strategies. The aim of these sections is to introduce debates relevant to RCs in Romance and in creole languages, laying the ground for the subsequent presentation of KR's RCs; the aim is not to provide a comprehensive overview of RCs cross-linguistically. Section 5.2 describes the different types of RC found in KR, focusing on the distribution of relativising strategies in the language. In section 5.3, I situate KR's relative system in a broader perspective, comparing it on the one hand with the relative system of French and, more broadly, Romance, and on the other hand, with the relative systems of the other French-based Creoles. In section 5.4, I turn to the syntactic structure of headed RCs, offering an RRG analysis of restrictive and appositive RCs in KR. In section 5.5, I summarise the chapter.

#### 5.1.1. Definitions

Considerable attention has been paid to RCs, meaning there is a wealth of data on these structures from a wide range of languages, which exhibit a great deal of variation. Owing to the typological diversity in the syntax of these constructions, a cross-linguistically applicable syntactic definition of relative constructions is challenging (Downing 1978: 378), yet entirely semantic definitions are imprecise (de Vries 2002: 14). I will thus begin with a broad semantic definition before offering a syntactic definition, which does not promise to be universal but pertains to the type found in KR: externally headed, post-nominal relatives. These terms will become clear in due course.

In semantic terms, there are two types of headed RC typically distinguished in

the literature: restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and appositive relative clauses (ARCs). RRCs, illustrated by (66a), are clauses that narrow down the reference of their antecedent, adding information that helps to identify them, whereas ARCs, illustrated by (66b), contribute additional information about their antecedent, but the referent of their antecedent is established independently of, rather than by, the RC (Comrie 1981: 139).

- (66) a. The woman [who is wearing red] is a teacher.  
 b. The woman, [who is wearing red], is a teacher.

In syntactic terms, headed relatives are clauses that modify a (usually nominal) element in a sentence - *woman* in the examples in (66). That element is known as the ‘antecedent’ or ‘head’ of the relative. Some authors use the term ‘non-restrictive’ interchangeably with ‘appositive’, but as argued by Cabredo Hofherr (2014), this use of terminology is problematic because it assumes that there is a binary distinction, when in fact, several authors have pointed out that this is not the case: Carlson (1977) and Grosu & Landman (1998) have argued for a third category of relative known as ‘amount’ or ‘third-type’ relatives; Cinque (2008) argues that ARCs come in two syntactic types (integrated and non-integrated); and Cabredo Hofherr (2014) argues that we should distinguish at least two different types of RRC. Cabredo Hofherr (2014) points out that some authors assume in their definitions of RRCs that they are contrastive. In other words, the RRC assumes that there exist entities that fit the description of the head noun but not the restriction given in the RC. This is illustrated in example (67): the RRC implies that there were linguists at the party that were not drunk.

- (67) The linguists that were drunk spoiled the party. The sober linguists were blameless. (Cabredo Hofherr 2014: 182)

However, as Cabredo Hofherr (2014) shows, there are RCs that are still restrictive in the sense that they serve to identify the referent of the head noun, but which do not explicitly contrast that referent with other entities:

- (68) Anna bought the house that Ina had inherited. (Cabredo Hofherr 2014: 182)

I will follow Cabredo Hofherr (2014) in adopting a positive definition of ARCs as ones for which the referent of the antecedent is established independently of the RC. I will subsume both types of RC in (67) and (68) under the term ‘restrictive relative clause’ and do not assume contrastiveness to be an essential feature of RRCs. In sum, the difference between RRCs and ARCs for me is that the referent of the head noun is identified independently of the RC for ARCs, whereas for RRCs, the RC is required for the identification of the head noun’s referent. I will return to the



differences between the two in section 5.2.1.2, where I identify ARCs in KR and in section 5.4.2, where I offer an RRG analysis of ARCs.

The position of the RC with respect to its antecedent is one syntactic dimension by which RCs differ: they can be externally-headed or internally-headed. The head of an externally headed RC is outside of the RC, as in the English examples in (66), whereas internally-headed relatives contain the head within the RC. This type is illustrated by the Bambara example (69), where the head is indicated in boldface.

- (69) [*n ye        **tye** mìn ye*], ò    be    finì        fère.  
 I    COMPL man REL saw DEM IPFV cloth:DEF sell  
 ‘The man I saw, (he) sells the cloth.’Bambara  
 (Bird 1968: 43, cited in Lehmann 1986: 2)

Externally-headed RCs are further divided into post-nominal RCs, which follow their antecedent (illustrated above in (66), (67) and (68)), and pre-nominal RCs, which precede their antecedent, illustrated below in (70).

- (70) [*Orhan-in    gör-düğ-ü*]        adam cık-tı.  
 Orhan-GEN see-NR-POSS.3 man    leave-PST  
 ‘The man Orhan saw left.’Turkish  
 (Andrews 1975: 152, cited by Lehmann 1986: 3)

In KR, headed relatives are externally-headed and post-nominal; as such, the remainder of my discussion relates to this type. One of the features of RCs that has attracted linguists to their study is that the head of the RC is interpreted as having a function in both the matrix clause and in the RC, while only occurring in one of those clauses. In externally-headed RCs the head appears in the matrix clause, so a question arising from this type of RC is how a listener interprets the function of the head in the RC. In some cases, a representative of the head, which is co-referent with it, occurs in the RC. However, languages vary regarding the relativising strategies that they employ.<sup>37</sup> Relativising strategies differ in the extent to which the function of the head in the RC is made explicit and how this is done, if at all. The relative marker - the element found at the beginning of the RC - can indicate the function of the head in the RC, but not all types of relative marker do this. There are also alternative means besides relative markers to indicate the function of the head in the relative and it may instead not be indicated at all. In the next section, I discuss the classification of relative markers.

### 5.1.2. Types of relative marker

I use the cover term ‘relative marker’ to refer to the element that introduces an RC. I will distinguish between three types of relative marker (or lack thereof): zero-

<sup>37</sup>By ‘relativising strategy’, I mean a syntactic means of forming an RC.

marking, relative complementisers and relative pronouns. Examples (71a), (71b) and (71c) respectively illustrate these three possibilities.<sup>38</sup>

- (71) a. The lady [ $\emptyset$  I met yesterday] just rang me.  
 b. The lady [**that** I met yesterday] just rang me.  
 c. The lady [**who(m)** I met yesterday] just rang me.

Languages differ with respect to how freely they allow zero-marking and within a language, its acceptability can be subject to syntactic, stylistic or sociolinguistic constraints. Such factors will be discussed in section 5.2.2 on zero-marking in KR.

Relative pronouns and relative complementisers are often distinguished (at least in the Romance literature) by the following criteria: complementisers are invariant and do not inflect for case, number or gender, nor do they carry animacy features, unlike pronouns; complementisers also introduce complement clauses; complementisers cannot be preceded by a preposition whereas pronouns can (Stark 2016; Poletto & Sanfelici 2018: 265). Example (72a) exhibits a relative complementiser and example (72b) a relative pronoun.

- (72) a. *Le livre que je t'en ai parlé.*  
 DEF book REL 1SG 2SG=thereof have.1SG talk.PST.PTCP  
 'The book that I spoke to you about.' Colloquial French  
 (Stark 2016: 1030)  
 b. *Une chose à laquelle je pense souvent.*  
 INDF thing to which.F.SG 1SG think.1SG often  
 'Something about which I often think.' Standard French  
 (Blanche-Benveniste 1990: 317, translation my own)

There have been debates in the literature over whether a binary distinction between relative complementisers and relative pronouns is justified. The key criteria normally used to distinguish between the two do not always hold up: there are relative markers that have the relative pronoun property of being able to combine with a preposition yet do not inflect for case, and, equally, there are elements that do exhibit some sort of agreement with a head noun, yet do not combine with a preposition (Poletto & Sanfelici 2018). For instance, in Portuguese, the invariant relative marker *que* can be preceded by a preposition:

- (73) *para o outro dia em que se matavam*  
 for the other day in REL REFL.3 killed.3PL  
 'for the other day in which they killed themselves.' Portuguese  
 (Poletto & Sanfelici 2017: 811)

<sup>38</sup>In using the symbol  $\emptyset$ , or the term 'zero-marking', I do not assume that there is an empty position in the syntactic structure (see section 5.4.1.1); I use both simply to indicate that there is no relative marker.

However, for KR, I will maintain the binary distinction between relative complementisers and relative pronouns because its relative markers can be classified unproblematically using the criteria stated above.

### 5.1.3. Relativising strategies

On the basis of a large cross-linguistic study of RCs, Keenan & Comrie (1977) introduced the well-known Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) in (74), which ranks the functions that the antecedent may have in the RC by accessibility.

(74) **Accessibility Hierarchy**

Subject > Direct Object > Indirect Object > Oblique<sup>39</sup> > Genitive > Object of comparison

Regarding what is meant by ‘accessibility’, Keenan & Comrie (1977) argue that certain syntactic functions are easier to relativise on: the AH implies that if a language can relativise on a given position of the hierarchy, that language will also be able to relativise on all positions to the left. Another implication of the AH is that within a language that can relativise on several positions on the hierarchy, RCs of those positions higher up the hierarchy will be more frequently found. Keenan & Comrie (1977: 67) also give a number of constraints regarding relativising strategies:

(75) **Relativising strategy universals**

1. A language must be able to relativise subjects.
2. Any RC-forming strategy must apply to a continuous segment of the AH.
3. Strategies that apply at one point of the AH may in principle cease to apply at any lower point.

Keenan & Comrie (1977: 66) point out that not all languages necessarily distinguish all of the syntactic functions in (74), or there may be further distinctions needed, so the AH should be adapted to the language in question. Certain authors have proposed modifications to the AH, for instance, Poletto & Sanfelici (2017: 812) argued that for Romance, modifications are needed to capture patterns regarding which type of relative marker is found based on whether the relativised head is nominal or prepositional. However, the general principles of the AH and the accompanying universals do remain largely accepted, and subsequent work has supported the AH from a psychological perspective, finding that RCs increase in syntactic complexity as you progress down the AH and are harder to process (see, for example, Hawkins 2004 and references therein).

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<sup>39</sup>By oblique, they mean a prepositional argument of a main verb.

As implied by the universals in (75), any one language can in principle have more than one relativising strategy. Relativising strategies vary between being maximally explicit regarding how they indicate the function of the head in the RC to not at all explicit, not indicating it. The latter possibility is called a ‘gap strategy’, examples of which are in (71a) and (71b), repeated below.

- (76) a. The lady [ $\emptyset$  I met yesterday] just rang me.  
 b. The lady [**that** I met yesterday] just rang me.

As demonstrated by the examples in (76), the presence or absence of a relative marker does not necessarily correspond to an explicit strategy and a gap strategy respectively: both marked and unmarked RCs can exhibit a gap strategy. In (76b), *that* is a relative complementiser: it does not exhibit case marking to indicate the syntactic function of the head noun in the RC. Example (76a) has no relative marker and no alternative means for indicating the function of the antecedent in the RC and hence also constitutes a gap strategy. It should be pointed out here that a zero-marked RC may not necessarily always correspond to a gap strategy as it could have an alternative means for indicating the function of the antecedent in the RC, such as a resumptive pronoun (discussed below, cf. example (79)).

Example (71c), repeated as (77), on the other hand, does indicate the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC via the relative pronoun, because *whom* exhibits accusative case marking.

- (77) The lady [**whom** I met yesterday] just rang me.

However, it must be noted that the presence of a relative pronoun does not necessarily mean that the function of the relativised element in the RC is made maximally explicit. Taking (66a) as an example, repeated below in (78), English *who* is usually considered a relative pronoun because it carries the animacy features of its antecedent as it is only found with human antecedents.

- (78) The woman [**who** is wearing red] is a teacher.

The pronoun *who* is found in subject relatives, but it is also found in object relatives in most varieties of English (*whom* is gradually being replaced by *who*, at least in spoken varieties (Radford 2019: 32 among others)), so we cannot say that it is maximally explicit regarding the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC. This exemplifies issues with the criteria used to distinguish between relative pronouns and complementisers: the pronoun *who* carries animacy features but is not case marked in many varieties. Some languages do not have case either, so the case marking criterion is certainly not cross-linguistically applicable.

Another strategy for indicating the function of the antecedent in the RC is via a resumptive pronoun. This is not standard in English, though it is found to be fairly common in spontaneous English speech (cf. Radford 2019: 54-131) and is standard in other languages (Comrie 1981). In such cases, a pronoun which is co-referential with the head noun occurs in the RC in the position that the head would occupy if it were in the clause. A resumptive pronoun is distinct from what I have called a relative marker because it is not by necessity clause-initial.<sup>40</sup> Resumptive pronouns can co-occur with a relative complementiser (79a), a relative pronoun (79b) or zero-marking (79c), but it is less common for them to co-occur with a relative pronoun (Poletto & Sanfelici 2017: 826).<sup>41</sup>

- (79) a. This is something [**that** I'm sure players would support **it**]  
(Listener, BBC Radio 5; Radford 2019: 75)
- b. We need players [**who** we can count on **them** in a crisis]  
(Glenn Hoddle, ITV; Radford 2019: 75)
- c. Then they went and signed Greg Halford, who's another player [**ø** **he's** had premiership experience]  
(Steve Claridge, BBC Radio 5; Radford 2019: 71)

There is a tendency for the occurrence of resumptive pronouns to correlate with the grammatical function of the relativised head, those positions further down the AH being more likely to have resumptive pronouns because more explicit strategies are preferred the further down the hierarchy you go (Nikolaeva 2006: 505). Table 5.1 offers a summary of the different strategies discussed in this section, with a reference to an illustrative example.

Table 5.1.: Relativising strategies

Example	Relative marker	Indication of syntactic function
(66a)	Relative pronoun	None (gap strategy)
(71b)	Relative complementizer	None (gap strategy)
(71a)	Zero	None (gap strategy)
(77), (79b)	Relative pronoun	Relative or resumptive pronoun
(79a)	Relative complementizer	Resumptive pronoun
(79c)	Zero	Resumptive pronoun

<sup>40</sup>Though it could occur at the front of the clause, for example, if it resumes the function of subject in an SVO language. A relative pronoun may not be clause-initial if it is the complement of a preposition, but the Prepositional Phrase (PP) containing it will be clause-initial.

<sup>41</sup>Some authors have actually argued that relative pronouns are incompatible with resumptive pronouns (e.g. Downing 1978; de Vries 2002: 165). Example (79b) offers a counter-example to that and Poletto & Sanfelici (2017: 826) offer counterexamples from Romance.

Against this backdrop, I discuss the RCs of KR.

## 5.2. Relative clauses in Kréol Rényoné

As noted in section 1.2, only two previous studies on KR have been dedicated to RCs: Corne (1995) and McLellan (2019). The former offered a historical investigation of zero-marking in RRCs, finding that zero-marking is possible in virtually all contexts and has been available since the 17th century.<sup>42</sup> Corne (1995) highlighted that the optionality of the relative marker in subject RCs distinguishes this language from other French Creoles, and he explained this feature with reference to Malagasy influence, since this language also permits zero-marked subject RCs and was the second largest influence (after French) in the formation of KR (section 2.1). McLellan (2019) added to our understanding of relative marking in KR, finding that the presence of a relative marker is sensitive to the function of the antecedent in the RC, being favoured in subject and object RCs but not oblique ones. Some evidence of a relative pronoun strategy for obliques was found, but given the small amount of data found for those structures, further investigation was needed. This chapter fills that gap, building directly upon McLellan (2019) with fresh data. Interviews with native speakers have allowed the uncertainty about relativisation strategies further down the AH to be clarified. This chapter supports the finding from McLellan (2019) that relative marking is sensitive to the function of the antecedent in the relative. The additional findings of this chapter are that KR permits relativisation on all positions of the AH, a relative pronoun strategy is widely accepted but only in oblique RCs and the distribution of resumptive pronouns is also sensitive to the function of the antecedent, being at least disfavoured (if not unacceptable) in subject, object and oblique RCs, favoured in genitive RCs and obligatory in object of comparison RCs.

In the remainder of this section, I first distinguish between RRCs and ARCs in KR in section 5.2.1. Following a discussion of the patterns of zero-marking in section 5.2.2, I discuss the status of the relative marker *ke* in section 5.2.3, providing new evidence that it is invariant and arguing that it is a relative complementiser. I discuss the distribution of relative pronouns in KR in section 5.2.4, arguing that they are a favoured strategy in oblique RCs. I conclude this section with a note on RC-final *la*, a feature of RCs found in many of the other French-based Creoles.

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<sup>42</sup>The only context that forbids zero-marking, according to Corne (1995), is when the antecedent is the pronoun *sa*. See example (89) and my surrounding discussion.

## 5.2.1. Types of relative clause

### 5.2.1.1. Restrictive relatives

RRCs were the most common type of RC found in my corpus: I found 404 examples, compared with 35 ARCs. RRCs in KR are often zero-marked (80a), but they can occur with a complementiser *ke* (80b) or, in oblique relatives only, with a relative pronoun (80c).

- (80) a. (...) *mi rogard bann marmay [i oz pa tro kozé, (...)]*  
1SG-FIN watch PL children FIN dare NEG too.much speak  
'(...) I watch the children who aren't really daring to speak (...)'  
(Documentary)
- b. *Minm bann liséin i révey ek lo slogan [ke nou la*  
even PL school.children FIN wake with DEF slogan REL 1PL PRF  
*lansé] "Lev la tet, lev dobout".*  
launch lift DET head lift stood.up  
'Even school children are being awakened with the slogan that we launched:  
"look up, stand up"'  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 24)
- c. (...) *ladministrasyon [kont ki nou batay]*  
administration against REL 1PL fight  
'(...) the administration against whom we are fighting (...)'  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)

The distribution of these relativising strategies will be the topic of sections 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

### 5.2.1.2. Appositive relatives

As noted in section 5.1.1, a semantic distinction is typically made between RRCs and ARCs: the former restrict the reference of their antecedent, whereas the reference of an ARC is established independently of the RC. RRCs are described as being integrated into the NP, while ARCs are typically described as independent (though see Cinque 2008 for a different view) and this is reflected in their syntax, which is treated in section 5.4. There are a number of other syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences, some of which are language-specific and others universal. In fact, not all languages have ARCs (Downing 1978: 380) and those that do may not always exhibit morphosyntactic distinctions between RRCs and ARCs (Downing 1978; Comrie 1981). While the majority of RCs found in my corpus were RRCs, I did find evidence of ARCs, identified on the basis of characteristics cited in the literature.

A key criterion used to identify an ARC is a proper noun antecedent (e.g. de Vries 2002; Stowell 2006; Del Gobbo 2007). Given that the referents of proper nouns are

identifiable (or assumed to be by the speaker), the reference of the antecedent is established independently of the RC. Examples from KR are in (81), where the proper noun antecedent is in boldface.

- (81) a. (...) *voizine* **Dévna** [*ke té i okip lo marmay la*  
neighbour Dévna REL IPFV FIN look.after DEF children DET  
*zourné*], *lavé disparèt*.  
day have.IPFV disappear  
'(...): the neighbour Dévna, who looked after the children during the  
daytime, had disappeared.' (Story)
- b. *Zordi avec* **Fanal et le LPLP**, *ke la ropri lo flanbo de*  
today with Fanal and DEF LPLP REL PRF recapture DEF torch of  
*Lindépendans ek Liberté*, (...) *Independence and Liberty*  
'Today with *Fanal* and the *LPLP*, who have taken back the torch of the  
*Lindépendans èk Liberté*, (...) (Newspaper - *Fanal* 12)

I identified other examples as appositive as their head noun is identified independently of the RC because they are uniquely identifiable, at least in the discourse context: for example, 'the mayors' in (82a), and 'the Coronavirus crisis' in (82b).

- (82) a. (...) *kan lo bann Mer* [*ke swadizan personn té ve pi*  
when DEF PL mayor REL let's.say no-one IPFV want NEG  
*war*] *la konpri zot té antrin perd la min* (...) *see PRF understand 3PL IPFV PROG lose DET hand*  
'(...) when the mayors, who let's face it no one wanted to see anymore,  
realised that they were losing control, (...) (Newspaper - *Fanal* 20)
- b. *Zot la vi ék kriz korona la*, [*ousa la prann tout*  
3PL PRF see with crisis coronavirus DEM where PRF take all  
*domoun* (...)] *people*  
'You saw with the Coronavirus crisis, where it took everyone (...)'  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)

Another distinguishing criterion in the literature is intonation: ARCs are often described as parenthetical and this is reflected by a parenthetical intonation contour in their pronunciation (Stowell 2006); RRCs, on the other hand, are contained within the main clause intonation contour (de Vries 2002: 195). This criterion is only helpful in identifying ARCs in oral sources, which make up a smaller proportion in my corpus; most of the ARCs were found in the newspaper section of the corpus, where we cannot rely on intonation.

Another criterion found in the literature to distinguish ARCs is that they can occur non-adjacently to their antecedent, as illustrated in (83).



- (83) *Toulézan osi, li organiz in gayar fèstival dan lès, sanm la*  
 all.year also 3SG organise INDF nice festival in east with DET  
*méri Sinte Sizane, ousa bann rakontèr i done la voi, sanm*  
 town.hall Sainte Suzanne where PL storyteller FIN give DET voice with  
*bann mizisien.*  
 PL musician  
 ‘Every year as well, he organises a great festival in the East with the town hall  
 of Saint Suzanne, where storytellers are given a voice, along with musicians.’  
 (Magazine)

Several authors list the ungrammaticality of zero-marking as a morphosyntactic criterion for distinguishing between RRCs and ARCs, reporting that zero-marking is only permitted in RRCs relatives.<sup>43</sup> However, those authors are talking about languages in which zero-marking is not a default strategy for RRCs, just a strategy that is permitted. Furthermore, it does not seem to be a strict rule, as authors such as Poletto & Sanfelici (2017: 829) give evidence of zero-marking in ARCs in several Romance languages:<sup>44</sup>

- (84) a. *L’ ho detto a Mario, l’ ho visto ieri.*  
 CL.ACC have.1SG said at Mario CL.ACC have.1SG seen yesterday  
 ‘I said that to Mario, whom I saw yesterday.’ Florentine  
 b. *Mario mi imbattiu aieri stamattina partiu*  
 Mario REFL met.1SG yesterday this.morning left  
 ‘Mario, whom I met yesterday, left this morning.’ Locri, Calabria

Zero-marking in ARCs raises an analytical issue: whether to analyse the clauses as subordinate clauses or, rather, as independent clauses with a silent subject/object. Since KR allows subject and object pronouns to be omitted (cf. section 2.3), this issue is particularly relevant as the missing argument in the clause could be interpreted as an instance of subject/object omission rather than an ARC. Of the 35 ARCs identified in my corpus, six were zero-marked, two of which are in (85).

- (85) a. *Lo Komité va prézant son rapor su La réniion dovan*  
 DEF committee FUT present POSS.3SG report about La Réunion before  
*lo “51ème Session Ordinaire du Comité de Libération”*  
 DEF 51st session ordinary of.the committee of liberation  
*[sra fé an Libi (Tripoli)].*  
 COP.FUT do in Libya (Tripoli)  
 ‘The committee will present their report on La Réunion at the “51st  
 ordinary session of the Liberation Committee”, which will be held in  
 Libya (Tripoli).’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 24)

<sup>43</sup>Smits (1989: 43) for Germanic and Romance; Radford (2019: 8) among others for English; de Vries (2002: 188) states this for “at least” English and continental Scandinavian languages.

<sup>44</sup>The supposed RC in example (84a) could instead be an afterthought.

- b. *Nou na an dirèkt isi minm avek tout banna laba [lété*  
 1PL have in direct here FOC with all 3PL over.there be.IPFV  
*tèlman atensioné]* (...) *so thoughtful*  
 ‘We’re here live with all of them over there, who were so thoughtful (...)’  
 (TV)

Examples such as (85a) and (85b) are open to an analysis where they are independent sentences with no subject rather than RCs. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I was unable to test the acceptability of such examples with native speakers. Jean-Philippe Watbled (p.c) points out that zero-marked ARC is rejected by his consultants.

In this section, I have illustrated that KR has ARCs, which appear to be favourably marked with *ke* and may in fact be ungrammatical when zero-marked. I next discuss the relativising strategies found in KR, beginning with zero-marking.

### 5.2.2. Zero-marking

In this section, I show that zero-marking is overall the most common strategy for forming RRCs in KR. Given the finding from the previous section that ARCs are preferably marked (83% of them being marked and the remaining 17% not being clearly classifiable as RCs), this discussion relates only to RRCs. In support of McLellan (2019), the preference for zero-marking is found to be dependent on the function of the antecedent of the RRC, being favoured in subject and object RRCs, but not in oblique RRCs (cf. Table 5.2 below). As for genitive and object of comparison RRCs, I cannot say whether zero-marking is favoured since only one genitive example and no object of comparison examples were found in the corpus and an insufficient number of my interview participants offered a preference. However, participants did judge genitive and object of comparison RRCs as acceptable with or without a marker.<sup>45</sup>

Zero-marking is possible for RRCs on all positions of the AH: I found zero-marked subjects (86a), objects (86b), obliques (86c), temporal adjuncts (86d) and genitives (86e) in the corpus.

- (86) a. (...) *la voté in loi [i intèrdi bann rényoné ashété tro gro*  
 PRF vote INDF law FIN ban PL Reunionese buy too big  
*loto]*  
 car

<sup>45</sup>The number of participants (23 for RCs) also did not permit for a meaningful quantitative analysis of preferences of zero-marking against marked relatives, although preferences were noted where possible.

- ‘(...), (they) voted a law which bans the Reunionese from buying cars that are too big.’ (Comedy sketch)
- b. *M’a voir si mi ansouvien lo zistoir [li té i rakonte].*  
 1SG-FUT see if 1SG-FIN remember DEF story 3SG IPFV FIN tell  
 ‘I will see if I remember the story they were telling.’ (Story)
- c. *Toultan mon gran frèr té i shante in ti*  
 all.the.time POSS.1SG big brother IPFV FIN sing INDF little  
*romanse [dedan i parl «kari», (...)]*  
 song in FIN talk curry  
 ‘My older brother used to always sing a little song in which it spoke about curry, (...)’ (Story)
- d. *O moman [èl la bésé pou trape son bakténër], in min*  
 at moment 3SG.F PRF lower to trap POSS.3SG container INDF hand  
*la pass pardsi lé siène.*  
 PRF slip on DEF.PL POSS.3SG  
 ‘At the moment when she bent down to get her container, a hand slipped on top of hers.’ (Story)
- e. *In zour lo patron [Dévna té i travay sou la koupe], la*  
 one day DEF boss Dévna IPFV FIN work under DET blow PRF  
*pran in kër, la prezante aèl in bouké flër, la domann*  
 take in heart PRF present 3SG.F INDF bouquet flower PRF ask  
*aèl an mariaz.*  
 3SG.F in marriage  
 ‘One day the boss that Dévna worked for (lit. the boss whose control Dévna worked under), with great audacity, presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and asked her to marry him.’ (Story)

Zero-marked locative adjuncts and objects of comparison were not found in the corpus but were judged as acceptable by my participants. The locative adjunct example (87a) was accepted by 3/3 speakers asked and the object of comparison example (87b) by 6/9 (67%).

- (87) a. *Landrwa [mi té sava lékol] lé ant Sin-Lwi é*  
 place 1SG-FIN IPFV go school COP between Saint-Louis and  
*Sin-Lé.*  
 Saint-Leu  
 ‘The village where I went to school is between Saint-Louis and Saint-Leu.’
- b. *Lo ti marmay [lo sha lé plu gran ke li] i marsh dan*  
 DEF little child DEF cat COP more big than 3SG FIN walk in  
*lo park ankôr.*  
 DEF park again  
 ‘The little boy that the cat is bigger than is walking in the park again.’

Among the three speakers that rejected example (87b), two changed the structure such that the function relativised upon was higher up the AH, and one rejected it for the absence of *ke*. Since only one genitive example was found in the corpus, further evidence that zero-marked genitives are acceptable is provided from interviews: 9/10 (90%) participants accepted example (88).

- (88) *Lo fanm [lo syin i mord lo sak] lé pa kontan.*  
 DEF woman DEF dog FIN bite DEF bag COP NEG happy  
 ‘The woman whose bag the dog is biting is not happy.’

The object of comparison example, (87b), differs from the other examples in this section in that it does not constitute a gap strategy because the function of the antecedent is indicated by a resumptive pronoun in the RC; this is discussed further in section 5.2.2.1.

The examples in (86), (87) and (88) illustrate that zero-marking is possible for all positions of the AH, but in what follows I will argue that zero-marking is not just a possibility but a preference and that this preference depends on the function of the RC antecedent. According to Corne (1995), most RC contexts allow zero-marking, and he reports that roughly 50% of the RCs in his corpus were marked. Corne’s study obtained 276 tokens from descriptive works and texts dating from the 18th to the 20th century.<sup>46</sup> The exception he gives, where *ke* is obligatory, is following the pronoun *sa* (and those contexts are excluded from his 50% figure), illustrated in (89).

- (89) *Sa k la di aou sa*  
 PRO REL PRF say 2SG DEM  
 ‘He who told you that.’ (Cellier 1985a: 651, cited in Corne 1995: 61)

I analyse such RCs as light-headed or free relatives and will discuss them in chapter 6; I leave them aside for the remainder of this chapter.

In the APiCS chapter on KR, Bollée (2013) records that roughly 30% of relatives are marked with a relative particle (her terms). Others, such as Holm (2004: 132) and Albers (2019: 69), when giving general or background description of KR, note the optionality of the relative marker. Those authors describe the presence of *ke* as acrolectal or attribute its presence to influence from French or instances of code-switching. The former two points were also frequently noted by my participants in interviews. However, the presence of a relative marker was excluded as a distinguishing linguistic feature in the coding system to distinguish between French and KR (see section 4.1.3). Therefore, the presence of *ke* in my examples should not

<sup>46</sup>The descriptive works cited are: Chaudenson (1974), Cellier (1985a,b,c) and Papen (1978). The texts cited are: Trouette (1883), Focard (1884), Fourcade (1976), Barat, Carayol & Vogel (1977), Chaudenson (1981).

be attributed to that part of the utterance being French, i.e. the example being an instance of code switching.

My findings support previous claims that relative marking is optional in KR, and they support McLellan (2019), showing that relative marker omission is sensitive to the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RRC. Table 5.2 presents the patterns of relative marking found in the corpus.

Table 5.2.: Relative marking vis-à-vis relativised function in RRC (from corpus data)

Grammatical function		Proportion zero-marked	Total
Subject		81%	232
Object		66%	114
Oblique	Prepositional complement	33%	15
	Locative	0%	27
Temporal adjunct		40%	15
Genitive		100%	1
<b>Total</b>		67%	404

Table 5.2 shows a clear pattern: a relative marker is preferably omitted from subject and object RCs, but not from oblique and temporal adjunct RCs. Temporal adjuncts and both types of oblique do permit zero marking (as verified with native speaker judgements in the case of locatives, cf. (87a)) but favour a marker, that preference being strongest with locatives. The relationship between the function of the antecedent in the RC and relative-marking was found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the function of the antecedent in the RRC, there must be other factors affecting RRC marking, since zero-marked RRCs are not ungrammatical for any syntactic function in KR, and neither are marked relatives. In order to investigate the other factors influencing the appearance of the relative marker in subject and object RRCs, I leave obliques aside for the remainder of this discussion related to the corpus. Zero-marking occurred at a higher rate in the written sources than the oral ones: while 92% written RRCs were zero-marked (of a total of 235), only 42% of the oral sources were zero-marked (of a total of 74).<sup>48</sup> This is an interesting pattern, since written language is usually more controlled and oral communication tends to be more spontaneous. We could speculate that speakers

<sup>47</sup>A Chi-squared test was used to test whether the relationship between the two variables (the type of RC and relative-marking) was independent or not. A p-value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant.

<sup>48</sup>This is not to say that RCs are more frequent in the written language; I cannot comment upon this because I have not been able to measure the size in terms of words of each section of the corpus, but the written corpus is larger than the oral corpus.

view the zero-marked version as more “correct”, and in fact, interview comments support this suggestion. For example, “*typiquement créole*” (‘typically creole’) and “*créole pur*” (‘pure creole’) were used by participants to describe zero-marked RCs, whereas “*pas un bon créole*” (‘not good creole’) described marked RCs.

I noted above that some authors consider the presence of a relative marker to be either acrolectal, a case of code-switching, or they attribute it to influence from French. It is possible that in the written form, there is less interference from French since it is generally a less spontaneous medium of communication, so if speakers consider zero-marking to be more typical of KR and they are writing in KR, they might pay attention to this, assuming that the presence or absence of *ke* is above the level of consciousness, and interviews did suggest so, as speakers commented upon it. That said, there were occasions where speakers did not notice the difference between a minimal pair of sentences with and without *ke*. Considering zero-marking as more typical of KR, authors of the written texts in the corpus could be taking the basilect as the authentic variety, considered by speakers to be “correct” KR, even though there is not an imposed norm for the language.

In oral interaction between bilingual French-KR speakers, it is plausible that speakers are more susceptible to the influence of French features, and code-switching can occur. However, viewing the presence of *ke* as simply an instance of code-switching seems problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it is difficult to say at what point a feature like the presence of a relative marker moves from an instance of code-switching to a feature of KR grammar, and this assumes that the grammars of bilingual speakers are neatly divided into two separate systems, which is not necessarily the case (see, for example, Putnam, Carlson & Reitter 2018, López 2020, and references therein). Corne’s (1995) diachronic study revealed that relative marking has been attested in texts considered KR for centuries, and he did not find evidence of a steady increase of zero-marking over time. Comparing Corne’s figures to my corpus figures suggests that zero-marking has increased over time as only 33% relatives in my corpus are marked, compared with his 50%.<sup>49</sup> KR has always been in close contact with French, and French is the main input language of KR, so of course they will share features. We should be cautious about dismissing something as not KR just because it is found in French too, as this might inhibit us from uncovering existing patterns of relative marking in KR, like the one uncovered above, that zero-marking is sensitive to the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC.

Finally, there are likely to be sociolinguistic variables at play too, and this has indeed been mentioned in the literature: Chaudenson (1974: 365) noted that fewer marked RCs than zero-marked RCs are found in the speech of monolingual KR

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<sup>49</sup>The corpora are not directly comparable though, particularly as Corne (1995) does not state any methodological considerations for distinguishing between KR and French utterances.

speakers, as compared with bilingual speakers. All of my participants were bilingual and in fact it is rather rare nowadays to find an entirely monolingual KR speaker. Nevertheless, during interviews, several speakers reported that they would use *ke* or not depending on whom they were talking to, but it was hard to obtain a precise response about which groups a speaker would use *ke* with. A larger-scale, quantitative study of authentic language is required to draw meaningful conclusions about which populations the feature *ke* is concentrated in, which was unfortunately not possible.

The interviews were still useful for confirming the acceptability of zero-marking across the AH. In general, the interview findings reflected the corpus findings, showing a gradually increasing preference for zero-marking progressing up the functions on the AH. The acceptance ratings of marked and zero-marked RCs, categorised by the grammatical function of the head noun in the RC, is displayed in Table 5.3, along with participant comments and/or preferences where available. Discussion of Table 5.3, including illustrative examples that were judged in interview, is given below.<sup>50</sup>

Table 5.3.: Summary of acceptance ratings and comments about relative clause marking (from interviews)

Grammatical function		Zero-marked	Marked
Subject	Acceptance rate	23/23 (100%)	17/23 (74%)
	Comments	–	6 speakers: <i>françaisé</i> (“frenchified”) or “not very creole”
Object	Acceptance rate	12/16 (75%)	13/14 (93%)
	Comments	2 speakers: “something missing”	1 speaker: “ <i>ke</i> is too much” 1 speaker: “less common orally”
Locative	Acceptance rate	5/5 (100%)	3/3 (100%)
	Comments	–	Preferred by all
Prepositional complement	Acceptance rate	22/23 (96%)	20/23 (87%)
	Comments	preferred by 5	preferred by 6
Genitive	Acceptance rate	14/15 (93%)	13/16 (81%)
	Comments	–	3 rejected due to <i>ke</i> 1 speaker: “acrolectal” 1 speaker: “wouldn’t use <i>ke</i> if talking to a creolophone”
Object of comparison	Acceptance rate	7/10 (70%)	7/10 (70%)
	Comments	–	–

Table 5.3 shows that no subject RC was rejected for lack of a relative marker,

<sup>50</sup>Note that where a participant quote is given, the original was in French or KR, they are my translations.

while the marked version was rejected by some participants due to the presence of *ke*, in examples like (90).

- (90) *Lo ti fly (k)' i shant na in zoli vwa.*  
 DEF little girl REL FIN sing have INDF pretty voice  
 ‘The little girl who is singing has a pretty voice.’

Both marked and unmarked object RCs such as example (91) had high acceptance rates but, unlike for subject relatives, there were speakers that rejected the zero-marked version due to the lack of *ke*. Preferences varied though: others preferred the zero-marked version.

- (91) *Lo boug (ke) lo syin i mord la pèr.*  
 DEF guy REL DEF dog FIN bite have fear  
 ‘The guy the dog is biting is scared.’

No speaker preferred a zero-marked locative RC to a marked one, supporting the corpus findings. As for prepositional complement RCs, Table 5.3 shows that both the marked and unmarked version had high acceptance rates too. The only participant that rejected an oblique RC rejected the structure altogether rather than rejecting the example for its (zero-)marking. That participant changed the oblique RC structure of (92a) to the subject RC in (92b), thus providing some support for the principle of the AH that functions further down on the hierarchy are harder to relativise on (cf. section 5.1.3).

- (92) a. *Lo boug li lé maryé avèk i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man 3SG COP marry with FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man she is married to comes from Saint-Paul.’  
 b. *Lo boug, li lé maryé avèk in boug i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man 3SG COP marry with INDF man FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The guy, he is married to a guy who comes from Saint-Paul.’

Preferences concerning relative marking in prepositional complement RCs were divided: five expressed a preference for zero-marking (illustrated above in (92a)), but six stated a preference for the version in (93) exhibiting a relative pronoun and a fronted preposition (differing from the zero-marked option which has a stranded preposition - the difference between these structures will be elaborated upon in sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup>In using the term ‘fronted’ preposition, I do not wish to imply that it has undergone syntactic movement, but simply that it occurs at the front of the clause, out of its canonical position. Equally, in using the term ‘stranded’, I do not mean that the complement of the preposition has moved to the front of the clause, leaving the preposition behind.



- (93) *Lo boug èk ki li lé maryé i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man with REL 3SG COP marry FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man she is married to comes from Saint-Paul.’

Importantly, speakers only preferred example (93) when the short form of the preposition, *èk*, was used. However, in the stranded version of the sentence (92a), the long form *avèk* is required; *èk* is ungrammatical. The same pattern is observed when the preposition *an(sanm)* is used instead of *avèk* in the same example.

- (94) \* *Lo boug li lé maryé èk i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man 3SG COP marry with FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man she is married to comes from Saint-Paul.’

When the preposition is fronted as in (94), the long and short forms are both acceptable (but the short form preferred), but when the preposition is stranded, the long form is obligatory. See section 5.3.3 for further discussion of preposition stranding in KR.

The interviews provided additional insight into preferences for zero-marking in genitives and objects of comparison - structures that were scarcely found in the corpus, if at all (cf. Table 5.2). Table 5.3 indicates that in genitives RCs, such as example (95), more speakers rejected the marked version than the zero-marked version.

- (95) *Lo fanm (ke) lo syin i mord lo sak lé pa kontan.*  
 DEF woman REL DEF dog FIN bite DEF bag COP NEG happy  
 ‘The woman whose bag the dog is biting is not happy.’

As for object of comparison RCs, Table 5.3 indicates that the acceptance rates were even for the zero and marked versions of examples like (96).

- (96) *Lo ti marmay [(ke) lo sha lé plu gran ke li] i marsh dan*  
 DEF little child REL DEF cat COP more big than 3SG FIN walk in  
*lo park ankor.*  
 DEF park again  
 ‘The little boy that the cat is bigger than is walking in the park again.’

The majority of zero-marked RCs found in the corpus employed a gap strategy, giving no indication of the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC. However, there was some evidence of a resumptive pronoun strategy with zero-marked relatives, which is discussed in the next section.

#### 5.2.2.1. Zero marking with a resumptive pronoun strategy

Following cross-linguistic trends (see Keenan & Comrie 1977: 92), the presence of a resumptive pronoun in KR depends on the grammatical function relativised upon.

In general, resumptive pronouns became more likely the further down the AH, but this pattern was disrupted slightly in the middle of the hierarchy, with resumptive pronouns being less acceptable in oblique relatives than in object ones.

In the corpus, very little evidence was found of a resumptive pronoun strategy: only 1/282 zero-marked relatives had a resumptive pronoun (that one example was an object RC, cf. (102) below).<sup>52</sup> However, few oblique, genitive and object of comparison relatives were found in the corpus, so acceptability judgments were elicited. These judgements indicated that it is obligatory to have a resumptive pronoun for object of comparison RCs in KR (regardless of whether the RC is introduced by a relative marker):

- (97) a. *Lo ti marmay [lo sha lé plu gran ke **li**] i mars dan*  
 DEF little child DEF cat COP more big than 3SG FIN walk in  
*lo park ankor.*  
 DEF park again  
 Lit. ‘The little child the cat is bigger than him/her is walking in the park again.’
- b. \**Lo ti marmay [lo sha lé plu gran ke] i mars dan lo*  
 DEF little child DEF cat COP more big than FIN walk in DEF  
*park ankor*  
 park again.  
 Lit. ‘The little child the cat is bigger than is walking in the park again.’<sup>53</sup>

In genitive RCs, resumptive pronouns are optional: genitive RCs were judged as acceptable by all speakers with and without a resumptive pronoun, but a resumptive pronoun was preferred with zero-marked genitive RCs by 4/23 (17%) participants (i.e. *son* in example (98)), while two speakers preferred the structure without a resumptive pronoun (*lo* in example (98)); the remainder had no preference.

- (98) *Lo fanm lo syin i mord lo/son sak lé pa kontan.*  
 DEF woman DEF dog FIN bite DEF/POSS bag COP NEG happy  
 ‘The woman whose bag the dog is biting is not happy.’

As for zero-marked obliques, a resumptive pronoun was unacceptable for over half of participants interviewed: 4/7 (57%) speakers rejected example (99).

- (99) ?*Lo boug li lé maryé avèk **li** i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man 3SG COP marry with 3SG FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 Lit. ‘The man she is married to him comes from Saint-Paul.’

<sup>52</sup>Evidence of resumptive pronouns with relative-marked RCs is also minimal - see section 5.2.3.2.

<sup>53</sup>Note that this structure is also unacceptable without the comparative *ke*: \**Lo ti marmay [lo sha lé plu gran] i mars dan lo park ankor.*

Interestingly, resumptive pronouns were more acceptable in object RCs than in oblique RCs, with 8/12 (75%) participants accepting (100).

- (100) *Lo boug lo syin i mord **ali** la pèr.*  
 DEF man DEF dog FIN bite 3SG have fear  
 Lit. ‘The man the dog is biting him is scared.’

KR does not have light prepositions (like French *à* and *de*) to distinguish between direct and indirect objects. Acceptability judgements for resumptive pronouns were equally positive for dative argument relatives (indirect objects in languages like French), like (101), as for direct objects.

- (101) *Lo ti garson lo mimi i donn **ali** in balon lé kontan.*  
 DEF little boy DEF kitty FIN give 3SG INDF ball COP happy  
 ‘The little boy the kitty is giving the ball to is happy.’

The only resumptive pronoun found with a zero-marked RC in the corpus was a direct object (102); however, considering that this was the only one of 77 zero-marked object RCs, resumptive pronouns cannot be said to be common in these RCs.

- (102) *Zordi in non nou dwa port **ali** an fors.*  
 today INDF name 1PL must carry 3SG in force  
 Lit. ‘Today, a name we must carry it with force.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)

Finally, subject RCs with a resumptive pronoun received low acceptability ratings: 2/6 (33%) participants judged example (103) as acceptable, but still preferred the version without a resumptive pronoun. Note that those two speakers that accepted example (103) may have understood it with another sense: “the little girl he is singing about has a pretty voice” (see footnote 56).

- (103) *Lo ti fi **li** shant na in zoli vwa.*  
 DEF little girl 3SG sing have INDF pretty voice  
 ‘The little girl who is singing has a pretty voice.’

The corpus findings support the interview findings that resumptive pronouns are disfavoured in subject RCs: no subject RC with a resumptive pronoun was attested in the corpus (of 192 zero-marked subject RCs).

The preferences regarding resumptive pronouns as per the corpus study and the interview judgements are summarised in Table 5.4, which indicates that the acceptability of resumptive pronouns alongside zero-marking increases the further down the AH you go. This is in keeping with cross-linguistic trends for a more maximally explicit strategy to be found for positions further down the AH.

Table 5.4.: Acceptability of resumptive pronouns with respect to syntactic function relativised upon

Syntactic function in RC	Resumptive pronoun acceptability
Subjects	Disfavoured
Direct objects	Speaker-dependent; not widely preferred
Dative arguments	Speaker-dependent; not widely preferred
Obliques	Disfavoured
Genitives	Optional
Objects of comparison	Obligatory

In the next two sections, I discuss the relative markers that are found when KR relatives are marked, beginning with *ke*.

### 5.2.3. Relative complementiser *ke*

The most common relative marker attested in KR is *ke*, found in RCs on all positions of the AH. The following examples were attested in the corpus.

- (104) a. (...) *nou na mwin de suksé ke bann zèn zartis la rényon*  
1PL have less of success than PL young artist La Réunion  
[*ki fé bann sanson modern.*]  
REL.FIN do PL song modern  
‘(...) we have less success than young Reunionese artists who do modern songs.’ (Comedy sketch) Subject
- b. *Nou la retrouv de mo [ke minm mon granpèr i utiliz*  
1PL PRF find some word REL even POSS.1SG grandpa FIN use  
*pu.]*  
NEG  
‘We found words that even my grandpa doesn’t use anymore.’ Object  
(Comedy sketch)
- c. *Po lo 2-3 moun moin lé finn kroizé, [é ke moin la koz*  
for the 2-3 person 1SG COP COMPL cross and REL 1SG PRF speak  
*ansanm],*  
with  
‘For the 2-3 people I met and that I spoke to, (...)’ Oblique  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)
- d. (...) *dan landrwa [k’ nou larivé] i fé pa dézord*  
in place REL 1PL PRF=arrive FIN do NEG noise  
‘(...) in the place where we arrived don’t be noisy.’ Locative  
(Baude 2010)

- e. *Fé kui jiska tan [k' i gaingne bien dégrène ali.]*  
do cook until time REL FIN gain well break 3SG.  
‘Cook it until the time that it starts to break down.’ Temporal  
(Brochure)

Note that *ke* only occurs in two locative RCs in the corpus, and my findings indicate that a locative relative pronoun, *ousa*, is preferred for locative RCs (see section 5.2.4.3). Although no marked genitive or object of comparison examples were found in the corpus, participants confirmed that *ke* is acceptable in such RCs (cf. examples (95) and (96)).

In the examples in (104), the form of the relative marker is *ke* in all examples but the subject one (104a). The form *ki*, which occurs in (104a), is not a subject relative pronoun, although it may look to be at first sight. As proposed by Corne (1995), this form *ki* is a surface form resulting from the interaction of the relative marker *ke* and the marker of finiteness *i* (section 2.3.4). In the next section, I provide evidence to support Corne’s hypothesis that KR does not distinguish between a subject relative marker *ki* and a non-subject one *ke*, and I argue that *ke* is a relative complementiser.

### 5.2.3.1. Classification of *ke* as a relative complementiser

KR’s relative marker *ke* has all of the features typical of a relative complementiser (section 5.1.2): it is invariant, does not carry animacy features, and cannot be preceded by a preposition. Furthermore, *ke* is the same form found in complement clauses (105a), where it is also optional, as exemplified by (105b).

- (105) a. (...) *kan ou kanpran ke out péi minm lé pa aou,*  
when 2SG realise COMP POSS.2SG country FOC be NEG 2SG  
(...)  
‘(...) when you realise that your own country is not yours, (...)’  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 27)
- b. (...) *kan ou grandi ou konprann Ø na pwin domoun atèr*  
when 2SG grow 2SG understand have NEG people on.ground  
*i fini par (...)*  
FIN finish by  
‘(...) when you grow up you realise (that) there is no one on the ground  
who ends up (...)’  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 27)

In what follows, I present the evidence for analysing *ke* as a relative complementiser.

**5.2.3.1.1. *ke* is invariant** Examples like (104a), with the form *ki* introducing the RC, at first sight suggest that KR has a similar rule to French whereby *que* alternates

with *qui*, the subject relativiser (cf. Kayne 1976, among others). Some authors, such as Papen (1978: 322), list *ke* and *ki* as relative markers in KR; however, my data support Corne’s (1995) hypothesis that *ki* is not a subject relative marker, it simply occurs as a result of *ke* and *i* combining when *ke* is followed immediately by the marker of finiteness *i* (cf. section 2.3.4) in RCs. Since KR is an SVO language, the surface form *ki* most often arises when the relativised element functions as the subject of the RC because if it has another function, the subject of the RC intervenes between *ke* and *i*, meaning they do not combine. However, the surface form *ki* is not found in all marked subject RCs:

- (106) (...) *in ti fiy [ke lavé shevë noir é briyan]*.  
 INDF little girl REL have.IPFV hair black and shiny  
 ‘(...) a little girl who had black and shiny hair.’ (Story)

The reason *ki* does not occur in (106) even though it is a subject RC is because there are certain contexts, outlined in section 2.3.4, in which a verb is not preceded by the marker of finiteness *i*. The verb *avoir* ‘have’, which occurs in the past tense as *lavé* in (106), is a context that does not permit *i*.

Further evidence against analysing *ki* as a subject relative marker is that *ki* (and orthographic variants) occurs in non-subject RCs when there is no subject in the RC. I found such examples in my corpus when the relativised element functions as a direct object (107a) and a temporal (107b).

- (107) a. (...) *in linsidan diplomatik [k’ i kouv sou la sand]*.  
 INDF incident diplomatic REL FIN cover under DET sand  
 ‘(...) a diplomatic incident which (they) cover under the sand.’ (Blog)
- b. *Le tan [k’ i kui], inn demi-èr d’ tan apépré, i fo pa*  
 DEF time REL FIN cook INDF half-hour of time roughly FIN must NEG  
*delo-la i bouy.*  
 water-DEM FIN boil  
 ‘During the time that (it) cooks, half an hour or so, the water must not boil.’ (Brochure)

The same interaction between *ke* and *i* also occurs in complement clauses:

- (108) *Nou ni konprené k’ i dizé “mont”*  
 1SG 1PL-FIN understand.IPFV COMP FIN say.IPFV “climb”  
 ‘We understood that they were saying “climb”’ (Baude 2010)

To strengthen this argument, I obtained acceptability judgements from native speakers via my questionnaire (cf. section 4.2), which support Corne’s (1995) hypothesis. To investigate whether *ki* is a relative pronoun or indeed the combination of *ke* and *i*, I asked participants to judge four variants of a sentence, displayed in (109).

- (109) a. *bann marmay ke touzour i vyin lékol*  
 PL children REL always FIN come school
- b. *bann marmay ki touzour i vyin lékol*  
 PL children REL always FIN come school
- c. *bann marmay ke touzour vyin lékol*  
 PL children REL always come school
- d. *bann marmay ki touzour vyin lékol*  
 PL children REL always come school  
 ‘the children who always come to school’

The examples in (109) were designed to test whether *ke* and *i* can be separated by an adverb, and hence determine whether *ki* only occurs when *ke* and *i* are adjacent. The examples were constructed such that they required the finiteness marker as they have a tensed verb, *vyin* ‘come’. If the hypothesis that *ki* only occurs when *ke* is followed by *i* is correct, then we would expect (109a) to have the highest acceptability rating. Examples (109c) and (109d) should have low acceptability ratings because *i* is either missing or does not immediately precede the tensed verb, and (109b) is the sentence in which *ki* would be analysed as a relative pronoun, and not the combination of *ke* and *i*, because the form *ki* cannot be attributed to *ke* combining with the finiteness marker, since *i* also precedes the verb. The judgements of the sentences in (109) are given in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5.: Acceptability judgements for example (109)

Sentence <i>bann marmay__ vyin lékol</i>	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
(a) <i>ke touzour i</i>	72%	(39%)	28%	45
(b) <i>ki touzour i</i>	50%	(12%)	50%	41
(c) <i>ke touzour</i>	33%	(13%)	67%	39
(d) <i>ki touzour</i>	39%	(7%)	61%	40

The judgements in Table 5.5 largely support the predictions: (a) has the highest acceptance rate and the lowest rejection rate, and (c) and (d) have the lowest acceptance rates and the highest rejection rates. If we compare the ratings for (c) and (d), it is interesting to note that the fewest number of speakers would actually say (d) themselves (classified as strong accept; cf. section 4.3.2.2), but that (d) has a lower total rejection rate than (c). An explanation may be that (d) is accepted by some speakers as mixing with French, so speakers might judge it as something that they would hear (classified as weak accept). The fact that no option was strongly accepted is explained by participant comments: the placement of the adverb *touzour*

is preferred after *vyin*, so many speakers offered the sentence in (110) as preferred (some including *k* and others).

- (110) *bann marmay (k) i vyin touzour lékol*  
 PL children REL FIN come always school  
 ‘the children who always go to school’

The task was hence not perfect because the placement of that adverb was necessary for determining whether *ki* is composed of *ke* and *i*. The judgements do support that conclusion if we focus on the comparison of the judgements of each version of the sentence, even if they might not be perfectly natural due to the adverb placement.

Having established that *ke* is invariant and that the *ke/ki* distinction in KR does not reflect a case distinction, we can now move on to another criterion for classifying *ke* as a relative complementiser: its behaviour with prepositions.

**5.2.3.1.2. The behaviour of *ke* with prepositions** The corpus and native speaker judgements suggested that *ke* cannot be preceded by a preposition for most speakers. In three of the four RCs in the corpus marked by *ke* and functioning as complement of a preposition, the preposition was stranded, as in (111).

- (111) *Po lo 2-3 moun moin lé finn kroizé, é ke moin la koz*  
 for DEF 2-3 person 1SG be COMPL cross and REL 1SG PRF speak  
*ansanm, (...)*  
 with  
 ‘For the 2 or 3 people that I crossed, and whom I spoke with, (...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)

The one example where *ke* occurs as prepositional complement of a fronted preposition is in (112).

- (112) *Na in la la kaskas inndé brans... euh autour ke zot lété*  
 have one there PRF break INDF branch euh around REL 3PL be.IPFV  
*la la fé mark*  
 PRF PRF do mark  
 ‘There’s one who broke a few branches / euh around which they were- made a mark.’  
 (Baude 2010)

Given the rarity of examples of *ke* as the complement of a preposition (either stranded or fronted) in the corpus, the acceptability of *ke* in this position was tested via the questionnaire. The judgements, discussed below, indicate that when the preposition is fronted, a relative pronoun is preferred over *ke* by most speakers. In cases where *ke* is found, like example (112), I consider them to be rare instances of the relative pronoun *ke* (rather than the relative complementiser *ke*). The judgements



were unclear about whether it is totally ungrammatical for *ke* to be preceded by a preposition, which supports the suggestion that perhaps for some speakers, *ke* is a relative pronoun, but it is rare. Example (113) was tested in the questionnaire with each of the four relative markers given.<sup>54</sup>

- (113) *Sé la lang avèk ke/lékél/ki/kisa nou la appri in ta de*  
 COP DEF language with REL 1PL PRF learn INDF load of  
*soz.*  
 thing.  
 ‘It’s the language with which we’ve learnt a load of things.’

The acceptability judgements of each variation of example (113) are given in Table 5.6; I include the judgements of the relative pronouns *lékél*, *ki* and *kisa* for comparative purposes, but remain focused on *ke* in this discussion.

Table 5.6.: Acceptability judgements for example (113)

Sentence	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>Sé la lang avèk ke nou la apri in ta de soz</i>	20%	(10%)	80%	42
<i>Sé la lang avèk lékel nou la apri in ta de soz</i>	91%	(74%)	9%	42
<i>Sé la lang avèk ki nou la apri in ta de soz</i>	38%	(10%)	62%	40
<i>Sé la lang avèk kisa nou la apri in ta de soz</i>	28%	(8%)	72%	41

The rejection rates of *ke* in example (113) are very high, and Table 5.6 clearly shows that *lékél* is preferred in this example. This indicates that *ke* is disfavoured in a fronted PP, and a relative pronoun is favoured in such contexts. When the preposition is stranded, the reverse is true, as suggested by the judgements of (114), which tested the acceptability of the same four markers, but with a stranded preposition.

- (114) *Sé lo rési ke/lékél/ki/kisa mi travay avèk.*  
 COP DEF recipe REL 1SG-FIN work with  
 ‘It’s the recipe that I work with.’

The judgements for example (114) are given in Table 5.7.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup>Example (113) was found in the corpus with the pronoun *lékel*. Several participants pointed out that they would say *apran* instead of *appri*, but it had appeared as *appri* in the corpus, which is why this form was used. Another set of examples were tested for the same property, but for reasons of space, and because the results were affected by an error in the verb form, I do not discuss them here.

<sup>55</sup>The acceptability of these markers with a stranded preposition was also tested with an animate antecedent and found the same results: higher acceptability of *ke* and low acceptability of the other markers. The results are reported in Table 5.9 in section 5.2.4.1 and are not duplicated here for reasons of space.

Table 5.7.: Acceptability judgements for example (114)

Sentence	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>sé lo rési <b>ke</b> mi travay avèk</i>	68%	44%	32%	41
<i>sé lo rési <b>lékél</b> mi travay avèk</i>	45%	8%	55%	38
<i>sé lo rési <b>ki</b> mi travay avèk</i>	11%	5%	89%	38
<i>sé lo rési <b>kisa</b> mi travay avèk</i>	11%	3%	89%	38

Table 5.7 indicates that when the preposition is stranded, *ke* is preferred over the other markers. However, the rates are not exceptionally high for the option with *ke* either. Referring to the comments left for this question, it seems that some speakers did not understand the sentence, and other comments revealed preferences for alternative structures with a direct object RC (“it’s the recipe that I use”) instead of an oblique, again offering support for the principle of the AH that positions further down the AH are harder to relativise upon.

Overall, the judgements and comments for prepositional complement RCs indicate that the following options are available for relativising on this function: *ke* + stranded preposition, zero-marking + stranded preposition, and relative pronoun + fronted preposition. The latter two strategies appear to be equally favoured, while the former is the least preferred (see examples (92a) and (93) and surrounding discussion). In section 5.2.4, I go into detail concerning the relative pronoun strategy.

To summarise this section, I have argued that *ke* is best analysed as a relative complementiser because it is the same marker found in complement clauses, it is invariant, and evidence suggests it cannot be preceded by a preposition for most speakers. Before discussing the relative pronoun strategy, I add a brief note on the distribution of a resumptive pronoun strategy in combination with *ke*.

### 5.2.3.2. *ke* with a resumptive pronoun strategy

Similarly to zero-marked RCs (cf. section 5.2.2.1), *ke*-marked relatives did not usually occur with a resumptive pronoun, and hence such relatives constitute a gap strategy because *ke* does not contribute information about the function of the antecedent in the RC. Only 3/114 *ke*-marked RCs in the corpus occurred with a resumptive pronoun:

- (115) a. *Sa sé inn lèt [ke mwin la konu sa dopwi mon*  
 DEM COP INDF letter REL 1SG PRF remember 3SG POSS.3SG  
*enfance]*.  
 childhood

Lit. ‘That’s a letter that I’ve remembered it since my childhood.’

(Baude 2010)

- b. *Mwin la déjà euh ravajé in vyeu bonom [ke le moun i*  
 1SG PRF already euh search INDF old man REL DEF person FIN  
*ravajé alu].*  
 search 3SG

Lit. ‘I already looked for an old man that people were looking for him.’

(Baude 2010)

- c. *Na in gran basin/ mé in basin [ke la pwin d’ lo*  
 have INDF big basin but INDF basin COMP have NEG of water  
*ki koul la ddan].*  
 REL-FIN run there inside

Lit. ‘There is a big basin, but a basin that there’s no water running inside there.’

(Baude 2010)

My interview findings indicated that resumptive pronouns are even less acceptable in *ke*-marked subject and oblique RCs than zero-marked subject and oblique RCs (cf. section 5.2.2.1). Only 1/10 (10%) participants accepted example (116a) and 0/6 accepted example (116b).<sup>56</sup>

- (116) a. ? *Lo ti fiy ke li shant na in zoli vwa.*  
 DEF little girl REL 3SG sing have INDF pretty voice

Lit. ‘The little girl that she is singing has a pretty voice.’

- b. \* *Lo boug ke li lé maryé avèk li i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man REL 3SG COP marry with 3SG FIN come.from Saint-Paul

Lit. ‘The man that she is married to him is from Saint-Paul.’

Resumptive pronouns were equally obligatory in object of comparison relatives (117a) whether they were zero-marked or marked with *ke*, and the presence of *ke* did not affect judgements of resumptive pronouns in genitive RCs like (117b), they were equally acceptable.

- (117) a. *Lo ti marmay ke lo sha lé plu gran ke li i mars*  
 DEF little child REL DEF cat COP more big than 3SG FIN walk  
*dan lo park ankor.*  
 in DEF park again

Lit. ‘The little child the cat is bigger than him/her is walking in the park again.’

- b. *Lo fanm ke lo syin i mord lo/son sak lé pa kontan.*  
 DEF woman REL DEF dog FIN bite DEF/POSS bag COP NEG happy

‘The woman whose bag the dog is biting is not happy.’

<sup>56</sup>Two participants noted that example (116a) is acceptable if understood as ‘The girl who he is singing about has a pretty voice.’, i.e. not a subject relative, but an oblique one.

The judgements concerning the presence of a resumptive pronoun differed slightly between zero-marked and *ke*-marked RCs with direct objects. Their acceptability was slightly reduced when *ke* was present as compared with when the RC was zero-marked: four participants who had accepted a resumptive pronoun in the zero-marked version of the sentence in (118) rejected it when *ke* was present.

- (118) *Lo boug ke lo syin i mord ali na pèr.*  
 DEF man REL DEF dog FIN bite 3SG have fear  
 ‘The man that the dog is biting him is scared.’

Overall, the judgements suggest a lower tolerance of resumptive pronouns in *ke*-marked RCs than in zero-marked RCs for subjects through to obliques, but the presence of *ke* did not affect the acceptability of a resumptive pronoun for genitives or objects of comparison.

#### 5.2.4. Relative pronoun strategy

Evidence of a relative pronoun strategy was rare in the corpus, but questionnaire and interview results indicate that it is perfectly possible in oblique relatives. In this section, I discuss *ki*, *kisa*, *lékél* and *ousa*. I class them as relative pronouns because, although they are non-agreeing forms, unlike relative complementisers their distribution is restricted by the function of their antecedent in the RC, and they can be preceded by a preposition (cf. section 5.1.2).

##### 5.2.4.1. *ki* and *kisa*

In section 5.2.3.1, I argued that the form *ki*, a contraction of *ke* and *i*, is found when the invariant relative complementiser *ke* is followed by the marker of finiteness *i*, usually in subject relatives. However, there is a true relative pronoun *ki*, which is monosegmental, and which is not found in subject relatives but rather as a relative pronoun functioning as a prepositional complement:

- (119) (...) *ladministrasyon kont ki nou batay* (...)  
 administration against REL 1PL fight  
 ‘(...) the administration against whom we are fighting (...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)

The occurrence of *ki* in example (119) is clearly not a case of *ke* combining with the finiteness marker *i* because *ki* is not followed by a verb. In addition to the relative pronoun *ki*, there is another relative pronoun *kisa*, which also functions as a prepositional complement, as in (120).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup>The pronouns *ki* and *kisa* both have functions other than prepositional complement relative pronouns in KR. They function as interrogative pronouns with human referents, and *kisa* is extending its function into a free relative pronoun too - see section 6.3.3.

- (120) (...) *lo group maloya Maronér Koméla [ansanm **kisa** li sort de*  
 DEF group maloya Maronér Koméla with REL 3SG release two  
*lalbom]*.  
 album  
 ‘(...) the maloya group *Maronér Koméla* with whom he released two albums.’  
 (Magazine - *Kriké* 2)

The relative pronouns *ki* and *kisa* only occurred once each in the corpus, in examples (119) and (120) above, but their acceptability was confirmed in interviews, where they received high acceptability ratings in examples like (121). The acceptability of each variation of the sentence in (121) is displayed in Table 5.8 (i.e. with *ki* and *kisa*, in combination with a long or a short form of the preposition *avèk*).

- (121) *Lo boug (av)èk ki(sa) li lé maryé i sort Saint-Paul.*  
 DEF man with REL 3SG COP marry FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man with whom she is married comes from Saint-Paul.’

Table 5.8.: Acceptability judgements for variants of example (121)

Relative pronoun	with <i>avèk</i>	with <i>èk</i>
<i>ki</i>	16/17 (94%)	20/23 (87%)
<i>kisa</i>	8/12 (75%)	4/6 (67%)

As shown in Table 5.8, I obtained more judgements for the sentences with *ki* than with *kisa*. This is because a key question became whether zero-marking and a stranded preposition was preferred over a fronted preposition and relative pronoun strategy for prepositional complements. In other words, I was more interested in preferences regarding zero-marking versus a relative pronoun strategy than preferences for *ki* versus *kisa*. Since the version with *èk ki* was emerging as a preferred version of example (121) for many speakers, this became the sentence I compared with zero-marking and a stranded preposition.

While *ki* and *kisa* were widely accepted in examples like (121), where they are the complement of a fronted preposition, the questionnaire and interviews indicated that when the preposition is not fronted, they are ungrammatical for most speakers, and *ke* or zero-marking is required instead. The judgements of example (122) are given in Table 5.9, showing that both *ki* and *kisa* were rejected by more than 80% of speakers.

- (122) *Lo santèz **ke/ki/kisa** mwin la sort do lalbom **ansanm**.*  
 DEF singer REL 1SG PRF release two album with  
 ‘the singer I released two albums with.’

Table 5.9.: Acceptability judgements for example (122)

Sentence	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>lo santèz <b>ke</b> mwin la sort do lalbom <b>ansanm</b></i>	72%	(43%)	28%	40
<i>lo santèz <b>ki</b> mwin la sort do lalbom <b>ansanm</b></i>	14%	(5%)	86%	36
<i>lo santèz <b>kisa</b> mwin la sort do lalbom <b>ansanm</b></i>	19%	(8%)	81%	36

These judgements were supported in interviews: only 1/10 (10%) participants accepted *ki* or *kisa* in example (123), and the person that accepted *ki* only weakly accepted it, explaining that it is not “good creole” but one might hear it.

- (123) *Lo boug **ki(sa)** li lé maryé avèk i sort Saint-Paul.*  
 DEF man REL 3SG COP marry with FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The guy with whom she is married comes from Saint-Paul.’

Finally, for most speakers, *ki* and *kisa* carry a +human feature. When tested in examples like (124) with inanimate referents, they received much lower acceptability ratings, given in Table 5.10.<sup>58</sup>

- (124) *Sé la lang avèk lékél/ki/kisa nou la appri in ta de soz.*  
 COP DET language with REL 1PL PRF learn INDF load of  
 things.  
 ‘It’s the language with which we’ve learnt a load of things.’

Table 5.10.: Acceptability judgements for example (124)

Sentence	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>Sé la lang avèk <b>lékel</b> nou la appri in ta de soz</i>	91%	(74%)	9%	42
<i>Sé la lang avèk <b>ki</b> nou la appri in ta de soz</i>	38%	(10%)	62%	40
<i>Sé la lang avèk <b>kisa</b> nou la appri in ta de soz</i>	28%	(8%)	72%	41

The ratings given in Table 5.10 suggest that *ki* is preferred over *kisa* even with a non-human antecedent. In any case, *lékél* is clearly favoured over *ki* and *kisa* for this example with a non-human antecedent. In summary, *ki* and *kisa* are relative pronouns with a +human feature, which can function as complements of a fronted preposition, but not a stranded preposition.

<sup>58</sup>This is the same as Table 5.6, without the judgements for *ke* since they are not relevant here.

#### 5.2.4.2. *lékél*

The relative pronoun *lékél* also occurs as the complement of a fronted preposition, usually with inanimate antecedents. *Lékél* was attested three times in the corpus with that function:

- (125) a. (...) *ék in lasosiasion indépandan paran desi lékél té pe*  
 with INDF assosication independent parent upon REL IPFV can  
*bazé.*  
 base  
 ‘(...) with an independent parent association upon which it could be  
 based.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 2)
- b. *Sé la lang avèk lékél nou la appri de ta d shoz.*  
 COP DEF language with REL 1PL PRF learn INDF load of thing  
 ‘It’s the language with which we have learnt a load of things.’  
 (Documentary)
- c. *Lo resi sur lékél mwin mi travay (...)*  
 DEF recipe on REL 1SG 1SG-FIN work  
 ‘The recipe on which I work (...)  
 (Documentary)

Example (125c) was presented to participants in the questionnaire and, as Table 5.10 above shows, it was accepted by over 90% of participants. In the questionnaire, *lékél* was tested with a human antecedent in example (126), which was accepted by 61% participants, of a total of 41.<sup>59</sup>

- (126) *Lo 2-3 moun ansanm lékél mwin la koz lété sympa.*  
 DEF 2-3 people with REL 1SG PRF speak COP.IPFV nice  
 ‘The two or three people with whom I spoke were nice.’

However, when tested in interviews, *lékél* was not the favoured structure in examples with a human antecedent, such as that in (127).

- (127) *Lo boug èk lékél li lé maryé i sort Saint-Paul.*  
 DEF guy with REL 3SG COP marry FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The guy with whom she is married comes from Saint-Paul.’

Although 4/6 (67%) participants accepted example (127), no participant favoured it; the preferred structures were zero-marking and a stranded preposition (cf. section 5.2.2) or *ki* in place of *lékél* in the fronted preposition structure in (127). To summarise, *lékél* is a more marginal relative pronoun in that there are other structures available in KR, which are preferred in the contexts in which *lékél* is permitted.

<sup>59</sup>Note that there was an error in the form of the verb of this example: the long form of *koz*, *kozé* is required in this example. This may have affected the judgements.

### 5.2.4.3. *ousa*

The relative pronoun *ousa*, and its less common variant *ou*, are locative relative pronouns. I found 34 examples with these markers in the corpus, the majority of those being with *ousa* (128a), and three with *ou* (128b).

- (128) a. (...) *in lékonomi sovaz **ousa** sat na plis mwayin i*  
 INDF economy savage where DEM have more means FIN  
*domine.*  
 dominate  
 ‘(...) a savage economy where those who have more means dominate.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)
- b. (...) *an oktob 2017 dan in konférans internasional **ou** li*  
 in October 2017 at INDF conference international where 3SG  
*té roprézan anou.*  
 IPFV represent 1PL  
 ‘(...) at an international conference where he was representing us.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 24)

There was one example in the corpus with the relative marker *ouk*, which seems to be a morphologically complex marker, composed of *ou* and *ke*. Corne (1995: 62) acknowledges *ouk* alongside *ousa* as a locative relative marker.

- (129) *I dizé alor la lèr **ouk** lété a la prizon la lété dir*  
 FIN say.IPFV so DET time REL be.IPFV at DET prison DEM be.IPFV hard  
*i mété somiz de fèr si ou voulé fèr mové zafèr.*  
 FIN put.IPFV mesh of iron if 2SG want.IPFV do bad thing  
 ‘They say that time in prison was hard, apparently they put iron grids in case you wanted to do something bad.’ (Lit. ‘They say that the time where you were in prison...’)  
 (Baude 2010)

Example (129) comes from an oral recording from the Baude (2010) corpus, dated from 1970, and is the only example of *ouk* in the corpus. Unfortunately, this has not been investigated in interviews due to time constraints. Since Corne (1995) was working with a diachronic corpus, which dates up until the late 1970s, it is possible that *ouk* features in older varieties of KR, but is gradually disappearing in favour of *ousa*, judging by my corpus. However, I should point out that most of these examples with *ou/ousa/ouk* came from written sources, and Corne’s (1995) corpus was a written corpus, so it could instead be a matter of genre.

As noted in section 5.2.3, *ke* can also occur in locatives, but this is rare in my corpus, appearing only twice (see (104d)). Acceptability judgements from the questionnaire indicated that *ousa* is favoured over *ke* in locatives, for both RRCs and ARCs. Beginning with the restrictive example, three versions of example (130)



were judged by speakers. The judgements of (130) with *ke*, *ou* and *ousa* are given in Table 5.11.

- (130) *lo konférans internasional ke/ou/ousa li té roprézant anou.*  
 DEF conference international REL 3SG IPFV represent 1PL  
 ‘the international conference where he was representing us’

Table 5.11.: Acceptability judgements for example (130)

Relative marker	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>ke</i>	44%	8%	56%	48
<i>ou</i>	90%	44%	10%	50
<i>ousa</i>	94%	65%	6%	51

Table 5.11 indicates that both *ou* and *ousa* are clearly preferred over *ke*. Very few participants stated that they would actually say *ke* themselves (i.e. strong accept) in an example like (130), but the judgements do suggest that one may still hear it. This was supported by the interviews: of four participants asked, all preferred *ousa* in both examples in (131). Furthermore, *ke* was rejected by 2/4 speakers in (131b), though all four accepted *ke* in (131a).

- (131) a. *La plas ousa/ou/ke mi té sava lékol lé ant*  
 DET place REL 1SG-FIN IPFV go school COP between  
*Sin-Lwi é Sin-Lé.*  
 Saint-Louis and Saint-Leu  
 ‘The place where I went to school is between Saint-Louis and Saint-Leu.’
- b. *Lo ti bar ousa/ou/?ke ma la rankont Laura lété à*  
 DEF little bar REL 1SG PRF meet Laura be.IPFV in  
*Sin-Dni.*  
 Saint-Denis  
 ‘The little bar where I met Laura was in Saint-Denis.’

The locative ARC in example (132) was tested in the questionnaire with the same three relative markers.

- (132) *Apréla, Ekout mon désin la parti la Cité des arts*  
 afterwards listen POSS.1SG drawing PRF leave DEF City of.the arts  
*ousa/ou/ke la arfé inn not vernisaj ék dot klas.*  
 REL PRF do INDF other vernissage with other class  
 ‘Afterwards, *Ékout mon desin* left for the *Cité des arts*, where they did another vernissage, with other classes.’<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup>*Ékout mon desin* is the name of the arts exhibition and here it refers to the classes and the visual arts practitioners involved in the project.

The judgements of example (132), presented in Table 5.12, suggest that *ke* is even less acceptable in this example than in the RRC example (130).

Table 5.12.: Acceptability judgements for example (132)

Relative marker	Accept		Reject	Total
		(Strong)		
<i>ke</i>	15%	2%	85%	41
<i>ou</i>	73%	20%	27%	41
<i>ousa</i>	80%	35%	20%	46

The rate of rejection of *ke* is considerably higher for the ARC example than the RRC example (85% vs 56%). It should be pointed out that the rates of acceptance, and certainly of strong acceptance, were lower for *ou* and *ousa* in this ARC than they were for the RRC as well. Therefore, the higher rate of rejection of *ke* here might rather have something to do with a disliking for ARCs, which may explain Albers’ (2019) comment that ARCs do not exist in KR. I offered evidence that ARCs do exist in section 5.2.1.2 but, nevertheless, they might be restricted by genre and perhaps feel unnatural to some speakers.

To summarise, *ousa* is the preferred relative marker for locative RCs, but *ou* is acceptable in its place for most speakers, while *ke* is acceptable in its place only for some speakers. In the next section, I conclude the descriptive component of this chapter with another feature of KR’s RCs: clause-final *la*.

### 5.2.5. Clause-final *la*

A final property of KR RCs requiring brief mention is clause-final *la*. Several participants suggested adding *la* to the end of RCs presented to them in interviews, and Ramassamy (1985) notes the presence of *la* to demarcate the end of an RC. Some examples from interviews are in (133).

- (133) a. *Lo ti fiy lapou shanté la na in zoli vwa.*  
 DEF little girl PROG sing *la* have INDF pretty voice  
 ‘The little girl who is singing has a pretty voice.’
- b. *Lo boug èk ki li lé maryé la i sort Saint-Paul.*  
 DEF man with REL 3SG COP marry *la* FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man she is married to is from Saint-Paul.’

After this feature was drawn to my attention in interviews, I returned to the corpus, which unfortunately did not offer great opportunity to explore the phenomenon as only 9/439 RCs were closed with *la*, two of which are in (134).

- (134) a. *i di wa war gro madam talèr i kour la.*  
 FIN say go see big woman earlier FIN run *la*  
 ‘He says “go and see the/that lady from earlier who was running.”  
 (Baude 2010)
- b. *Lo Monsieur sa lo Monsieur Zitte la/ la trap la fi té*  
 DEF Sir DEM DEF Sir Zitte la PRF catch DET girl IPFV  
*apèl Ti Bay la.*  
 call little bay *la*  
 ‘The man, that’s Mr. Zitte, he caught the girl who was called “Ti Bay”’.  
 (Baude 2010)

The question concerning this RC-final *la* is whether it is the same *la* that forms part of KR’s determiner system, analysed by Albers (2019) as a demonstrative determiner encoding pragmatic definiteness (cf. section 2.3.2). Many of the other French Creoles also exhibit an RC-final *la*, or variants of it, such as *a*:

- (135) a. *Madam (ki) ti sante la nu profeser.*  
 woman REL PST sing DEF 1PL teacher  
 ‘The woman who sang is our teacher.’ Mauritian  
 (Syea 2017: 387)
- b. *Annou vote pou kandida nou vle a*  
 let-1PL vote for candidate 1PL want DEF  
 ‘Let’s vote for the candidate we want.’ Haitian  
 (DeGraff 2007: 111)

In those languages, RC-final *la/a* has been analysed as an instance of the definite determiner (McWhorter 2000; DeGraff 2007; Déprez 2007), though this classification is not straightforward (see, for example, Duzerol (2017: 104-119) with respect to Martinican Creole). An important difference between KR and other French Creoles is that the definite determiner is always post-nominal in the other French Creoles (e.g. Mauritian *liv la* ‘the book’), while KR has a pre-nominal definite determiner (e.g. *lo liv* ‘the book’) and a post-nominal determiner *la*, the former encoding semantic definiteness and the latter encoding pragmatic definiteness (cf. section 2.3.2). Albers (2019, manuscript submitted for publication) argues that KR has a three-way definiteness distinction, which is summarised in section 2.3.2. Albers (2021) argues that KR’s postnominal *la* actually bears similarity to Mauritian Creole’s *la*, which is usually analysed as a definite determiner.<sup>61</sup> Bollée (2004) argues that *la* in the other French Creoles is still part of an ongoing process of grammaticalisation

<sup>61</sup>Note that the properties of the definite determiner *la* of the other French Creoles, are not exactly the same as those of the definite determiners in English and French (Déprez 2007: 269). It has been shown that definites do not form a homogeneous class (see Hawkins 1978 and Löbner 1985, who follow Ebert 1971), and this is also reflected in diachronic development (e.g. Carlier & De Mulder 2010).

from demonstrative to definite article. KR’s *la* seems also to fit somewhere on this chain of grammaticalisation, if perhaps at a less advanced stage than other French Creoles.

Returning to the aforementioned question, whether the RC-final *la* in examples like those in (134) is the same item as the post-nominal *la* that Albers (2021) analyses as a demonstrative encoding pragmatic definiteness (cf. section 2.3.2) or whether it is something else, Albers (2019, manuscript submitted for publication) indicates that determiner *la* does occur RC-finally, citing the following example:

- (136) *Doktér ou la vi la lé gabyé.*  
 doctor 2SG PRF see DET COP good  
 ‘That doctor you have seen is very good.’  
 (Albers 2019: 262)

Albers (manuscript submitted for publication: 36) argues that such RCs are restrictive in the sense that they restrict the set of elements denoted in the RC; however, they are insufficient for determining the referent of that head noun: additional context is required, for example, in (136), the doctor has been mentioned in the previous discourse so the demonstrative is used.

What complicates the analysis of RC-final *la* in KR is that there are other potential analyses of certain instances of this form. Spoken French exhibits frequent use of adverbial *là* as an “expressive discourse particle” (McWhorter 2000: 156), which has been observed at the end of RCs too:

- (137) *le truc que tu m’as passé là*  
 DEF thing REL 2SG 1SG-have.2SG pass *la*  
 ‘The thing you gave me *là*’  
 (Ludwig 1996: 319, cited by Jennings & Pfänder 2018: 154)

An expressive discourse particle is thus another candidate for the classification of KR’s RC-final *la*. A final possibility (given the participants’ comments that RC-clause final *la* used to be particularly frequent) is that *la* is/was a general RC-final marker (perhaps derived from the demonstrative or from the discourse particle); however, the corpus data indicate clearly that it is not obligatory in present-day KR.

Further work is needed on RC-final *la*, with a larger corpus and judgements with native speakers, to determine its exact contribution(s) in RCs; it seems likely that there are instantiations of both the determiner and the expressive discourse particle. On this note, while I have not made fine-grained distinctions between different types of RRC (see section 5.1.1), Cabredo Hofherr (2014) indicates that such distinctions might be necessary when investigating the occurrence of different determiners on the head noun of RCs. KR is a language with a formal distinction between pragmatic

and semantic definiteness (section 2.3.2), similar to that found in the West Germanic languages of Cabredo Hofherr’s investigation, and distinctions between RRC subtypes were found by Cabredo Hofherr to affect article choice in those languages. I leave such an investigation for future research.

In this section, I have begun comparing the RCs of KR to those of French and other French-based Creoles; in the next section, I offer further comparison.

### 5.3. Comparison with Romance languages and French-based Creoles

This section presents a comparative overview of the chapter’s findings, comparing KR’s relative system with those of other Romance varieties on the one hand, and other French Creoles on the other. Table 5.13 offers a synopsis of the relativisation strategies found in KR.<sup>62</sup> It compares these characteristics with standard French (FR), the Indian Ocean Creoles of Mauritius and Seychelles (IOC) and Haitian Creole (HC).<sup>63</sup> I only include standard French in Table 5.13, because it would be beyond my aims in this context to give a comprehensive overview of non-standard varieties of French within the confines of such a table. However, I do discuss features found in non-standard varieties throughout this section, particularly as the relative systems of non-standard varieties of Romance are known to display a significant disparity to those of standard Romance varieties (e.g. Blanche-Benveniste 1990; Stark 2016; Poletto & Sanfelici 2017).

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<sup>62</sup>Brackets indicate optionality; Ø indicates no relativiser and ResP stands for resumptive pronoun.

<sup>63</sup>The information for Table 5.13 comes from the following sources: Syea (2017) for the IOC, DeGraff (2007) for Haitian; Stark (2016) for French.

Table 5.13.: Comparison of the relative systems of KR, French, Mauritian & Seychellois and Haitian

		<b>KR</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>IOC</b>	<b>HC</b>
<b>SUBJ</b>	<b>Marker</b>	( <i>ke</i> )	<i>qui</i>	( <i>ki</i> )	<i>ki</i>
	<b>ResP</b>	no	no	no	no
<b>OBJ</b>	<b>Marker</b>	( <i>ke</i> )	<i>que</i>	( <i>ki</i> )	Ø
	<b>ResP</b>	optional	no	optional	no
<b>OBL</b>	<b>Marker(s)</b>	( <i>ke</i> ) with stranded preposition  <i>ki/kisa</i> [+human] <i>lekel</i> [-human] with fronted preposition <i>ousa/ou/ke</i> (locative or temporal)	<i>qui</i> [+human] <i>lequel</i> <i>quoi</i> (but not <i>de quoi</i> ) with stranded preposition  <i>où</i> (adverbial; no preposition)	( <i>ki</i> )  <i>ki</i> with fronted preposition	Ø  <i>ki</i> with fronted preposition
	<b>ResP</b>	no	no	yes, with <i>ki</i> or Ø and in-situ preposition	yes, with Ø (follows in-situ preposition)
<b>GEN</b>	<b>Marker</b>	( <i>ke</i> )	<i>dont</i>	( <i>ki</i> )	Ø
	<b>ResP</b>	preferred	no	yes	yes
<b>O-COMP</b>	<b>Marker</b>	( <i>ke</i> )	n/a	( <i>ki</i> )	n/a
	<b>ResP</b>	obligatory		yes	

### 5.3.1. A generalised relative marker for all functions

While the Romance languages have a relative pronoun strategy in their standard, written forms, in many spoken varieties or registers of Romance languages, relative complementisers are argued to actually be the default for RCs across all positions of the AH.<sup>64</sup> Examples from French, Italian and Spanish are given in (138).

- (138) a. *L'homme **que** je suis venu avec lui*  
DEF-man REL 1SG be.1SG come.PST.PTCP with 3SG  
‘the man that I came with him’ (Guiraud 1967: 85, cited by Syea 2017: 389)

<sup>64</sup>I call the relative markers complementisers for consistency, meaning an invariant form that introduces RCs of any function; other terms used are ‘particle’ or ‘relativiser’. The behaviour of this item varies in each language; for example, in some languages, it can be preceded by a preposition, so does not fit all of the criteria for a complementiser, but as mentioned in section 5.1.2, the binary distinction between pronouns and complementisers is inadequate for some languages.

- Standard: *L'homme **avec qui** je suis venu* French
- b. *sono cose **che** uno **ne** deve parlare*  
 be.3PL thing.PL REL one them must talk  
 ‘they are things that one has to talk about them’ (Fiorentino 2007: 267)  
 Standard: *sono cose **di cui** uno deve parlare* Italian
- c. *el médico **que** he consultado*  
 DET doctor REL have.1SG consulted  
 ‘the doctor whom I have consulted’ (Blanche-Benveniste 1990: 324)  
 Standard: *El médico **a quien** hé consultado* Spanish

In section 5.2.3, we saw that KR also possesses an invariant relative marker, *ke*, found across all functions of the AH. KR’s *ke* resembles the relative *ki* found in the majority of the other French-based Creoles. A difference between the Romance languages and the French Creoles, including KR, is that in the non-standard, spoken varieties of Romance, a resumptive pronoun usually accompanies the invariant relative marker for relatives of all functions, including subjects (Poletto & Sanfelici 2017). In contrast, none of the French Creoles favour resumptive pronouns in subject RCs. In the French Creoles, following cross-linguistic trends, resumptive pronouns are found increasingly in RCs further down the hierarchy, but not in subject relatives. In the IOC and Haitian, they are obligatory for oblique, genitive and object of comparison relatives (cf. Table 5.13). KR differs from those languages in only requiring resumptive pronouns in object of comparison relatives; KR in fact disfavours resumptive pronouns in oblique relatives, which may have to do with the fact that KR permits preposition stranding while Haitian and the IOC do not (see section 5.3.3).

It is not a new phenomenon for Romance varieties to exhibit a relative complementiser and resumptive pronoun instead of a relative pronoun: this alternative system has been attested since late Latin and is attested in all old Romance varieties (Murelli 2011: 338). It is therefore no surprise that KR and other French-based Creoles have a generalised relative marker for RCs across the AH, as it is likely to have been found in the regional varieties of French involved in the formation of the French Creoles.

### 5.3.2. Zero-marking

The most striking feature of the KR relative system, which differentiates it from both other Romance varieties and other French Creoles, is its widespread zero-marking of subject RCs (cf. section 5.2.2). Stark (2016: 1029) notes that zero-marking is “almost non-existent” in Romance, although she does perhaps overlook data from regional varieties spoken outside of Europe, which are comparatively

under-researched. There are reports of zero-marking in non-standard varieties of Acadian French (Hill 2017) and Ivorian French (Moseng Knutsen 2009), for example. However, it is not clear under what conditions zero-marking is permitted, and neither Hill (2017) nor Moseng Knutsen (2009) give any examples of zero-marking in subject RCs, only object (139a) or adjunct (139b) RCs.

- (139) a. *le bateau vous voyez en arrière de lui*  
 DEF boat 2PL see in behind of 3SG  
 ‘the boat (that) you see behind him’ Acadian French
- b. *la seule manière tu vas pouvoir vivre*  
 DEF.F only way 2SG go.2SG be.able.INF live.INF  
 ‘the only way in which you will be able to live’ Acadian French  
 (Hill 2017: 21)

As for the French Creoles, Table 5.13 highlighted that the IOC and Haitian exhibit similarity to KR in that they favour zero-marking in non-subject RCs, but KR differs from them in that this language also favours zero-marking in subject RCs. In subject RCs, Haitian requires a relative marker and the IOC tends to exhibit one.<sup>65</sup> The preference for marked subject RCs goes beyond just these two Creoles: according to Kuteva & Comrie’s (2012) study of subject RC marking in 52 creole languages, zero-marking is not common, with only two languages favouring it (Louisiana Creole and Tok Pisin) and a further twelve permitting it. KR is in fact included in their sample, but they fail to identify it as a language in which the preferred strategy for subject RCs is zero-marking, a strong pattern emerging from my findings. Kuteva & Comrie (2012) rely on Corne (1995) for their KR data, and his study did not identify the patterns of relative marking as being sensitive to the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC, so this could explain their report. Kuteva & Comrie’s (2012) findings are not consistent with reports in the APiCS’s chapter on subject RCs (Michaelis, Haspelmath & the APiCS Consortium 2013). The APiCS survey reports that only 30% subject relatives are zero-marked in Louisiana Creole (Neumann-Holzschuh & Klingler 2013) - a figure which does not indicate that the language favours zero-marking. In fact, of all 74 languages included in the APiCS chapter, only 7 are reported to exhibit zero-marking in more than 50% of subject relatives, which I set as a threshold at which we can say the language favours rather than tolerates zero-marking.<sup>66</sup> The seven languages that favour zero-marking are: Pidgin Hawaiian, Tok Pisin, Reunion Creole (Kréol Rényoné), Sri Lankan Malay, Sri-Lanka

<sup>65</sup>See Alleesaib & Henri (2007), which argues that relativiser drop is possible in subject relatives but sensitive to the determiner of the antecedent

<sup>66</sup>The data collection methods will vary for each chapter in the APiCS though, so this is not exactly a standardised measure.



Portuguese, Ma'á/Mbugu and Yimas-Arafundi Pidgin. KR is the only French-based Creole in this group, so it stands out with respect to this feature.

Furthermore, Downing (1978) and Comrie (1981) argue that from a cross-linguistic perspective, zero-marking is rare as a main strategy for subject RCs. As suggested by Corne (1995), it seems likely that this feature has been inherited from Malagasy, a language which permits zero-marked RCs and only relativises on subjects:

- (140) *(ny) tovolahy (izay) manasa lamba amin'io savony io*  
 (the) young.man (that) washes clothes with'that soap that  
 'The young man that washes clothes with that soap' (Keenan 2008: 483)

However, it is unclear from the literature whether Malagasy favours zero-marking or simply permits it.

### 5.3.3. Preposition stranding

A feature distinguishing KR from many of the other French Creoles, and from the Romance languages, including standard French, is its tolerance of preposition stranding in prepositional complement relatives (cf. section 5.2.3.1.2), which the former languages do not allow (Syea 2017: 401 for the French Creoles; Zribi-Hertz 1984: 2 and Law 2006: 3165 for Romance). However, it must be noted that preposition stranding is attested in non-standard varieties of French (Guiraud 1967; Murelli 2011), illustrated in (141).

- (141) *L'homme qu' il est venu avec.*  
 DEF=man REL 3SG be.3SG come.PST.PTCP with  
 'The man that he came with.' (Guiraud 1967: 41)

I will return to preposition stranding in (varieties of) French following my discussion of the French Creoles. In KR, several strategies are available for relativising upon prepositional complements: zero marking or *ke* with preposition stranding, or preposition fronting with a relative pronoun. Like KR, the IOC allow a fronted PP with a relative marker (142a).

- (142) a. *Madam ar ki to ti pe koz la malad.*  
 lady with REL 2SG PST PROG speak DEF ill  
 'The lady with whom you were talking is ill.'<sup>67</sup> IOC  
 (Syea 2017: 390)

<sup>67</sup>Other Creoles such as Haitian allow a resumptive pronoun in the place of *ki* when the preposition is fronted. For example:

- (i) *kuto avèk li m kupe pen ã...*  
 knife with 3SG 1SG cut bread DEF  
 'The knife with which I cut the bread...'  
 (Koopman 1982: 179, cited by Syea 2017: 392)

- b. *Lo fanm èk ki ou té i koz lé malad.*  
 DEF lady with REL 2SG IPFV FIN speak COP ill  
 ‘The lady with whom you were talking is ill.’ KR

The IOC’s relative marker *ki* and KR’s *ke* appear to have different properties: example (142a) indicates that IOC *ki* can be preceded by a preposition, while KR’s *ke* cannot (cf. section 5.2.3) - a relative pronoun is required in KR when the relativised element is the complement of a fronted preposition. The unacceptability of *ke* preceding a preposition was taken as evidence for its status as a relative complementiser. Alleesaib (2012) shows that the classification of Mauritian *ki*, on the other hand, fits neither that of complementiser nor relative pronoun, exhibiting features of both.

KR and the IOC differ in the second strategy that they have available for prepositional complements: the IOC does not permit preposition stranding (143a) (Syea 2017: 390), but KR does (143b). Instead, the IOC must have a resumptive pronoun if the preposition occurs in-situ, as indicated in (143a).

- (143) a. *Madam (ki) to ti pe koz ar \*(li) la malad.*  
 lady REL 2SG PST PROG speak with 3SG DEF ill  
 ‘The lady that you were talking with is ill.’ IOC  
 (Syea 2017: 390)
- b. *Lo fanm (ke) ou té i koz avèk lé malad.*  
 DEF lady REL 2SG IPFV FIN speak with COP ill  
 ‘The lady that who you were talking with is ill.’ KR

Aside from Louisiana Creole, which does permit preposition stranding (144), the other French Creoles pattern with the IOC in not permitting it, according to Syea (2017: 401).

- (144) *tu le piti nu te kuri lekol avek*  
 all the child 1PL PST go school with  
 ‘all the children we went to school with’ Louisiana Creole  
 (Neumann-Holzschuh 1985: 176, cited by Syea 2017: 401)

It could be that the status of the relative marker (as pronoun or complementiser) has an impact on whether the language permits preposition stranding, but there may be other factors involved too, which require further investigation. On this matter, a note on the exact nature of preposition stranding found in non-standard French (cf. (141)) is required, as there have been debates as to whether it is the same phenomenon as found in English. Zribi-Hertz (1984) argued that prepositions without an adjacent complement in French are not the same as the ones found in English, showing that, outside of RCs, they are permitted in different contexts in

each language. To separate the phenomena found in the two languages, Zribi-Hertz (1984) and others since (e.g. Roberge 2012; Poplack, Zentz & Dion 2012; Kaiser 2012) distinguish stranded prepositions (found in English) from what Zribi-Hertz termed ‘orphan prepositions’ (found in French). In English, phrase-final prepositions are found in WH-questions and in passives, but according to Zribi-Hertz (1984), they are ungrammatical even in non-standard varieties of French in both of these contexts, illustrated respectively in (145a) and (145b) from Zribi-Hertz (1984: 2).<sup>68</sup>

- (145) a. \* *Qui as-tu pris photos de?*  
 who have.2SG-2SG take.PST.PTCP photo.PL of  
 ‘Who have you taken photos of?’  
 b. \* *Ce lit a été dormi dedans.*  
 DEM bed have.3SG be.PST.PTCP sleep.PST.PTCP in  
 ‘This bed has been slept in.’

On the other hand, Zribi-Hertz (1984) points out that there are instances in which (even standard) French permits a phrase-final preposition but English does not. She calls these orphan prepositions; illustrative examples are in (146).

- (146) a. *Je connais bien cette valise, car je voyage toujours avec.*  
 1SG know.1SG well DEM.F suitcase because 1SG travel.1SG always  
 with  
 ‘I know this suitcase well, for I always travel with \*(it).’  
 (Zribi-Hertz 1984: 1)  
 b. *Lui avait trouvé ce charbon là, puis il se chauffait avec.*  
 3SG have.IPFV find.PST.PTCP DEM coal there then 3SG REFL  
 warm.IPFV.3SG with  
 ‘He had found that coal, then he warmed himself up with \*(it).’  
 (Poplack, Zentz & Dion 2012: 218)

The difference is argued to be that preposition stranding is traceable back to a referent in the sentence, whereas the null complement of an orphan preposition is not.<sup>69</sup> Instead, the missing complement can be understood as a deictic element, a discourse anaphor, or as a bound variable, and thus behaves like a pronoun (see Zribi-Hertz 1984 and Authier 2016). Differences are proposed in their syntactic analyses. Preposition stranding has been argued to involve a movement operation, where the

<sup>68</sup>However, there are studies that have found that both types of preposition stranding in (145) are possible in some varieties (e.g. King & Roberge (1990) on Prince Edward Island Acadian French). Nonetheless, it remains true that most varieties of French do not permit the structures in (145).

<sup>69</sup>Note, however, that some authors use the terms ‘preposition stranding’ and ‘orphan prepositions’ interchangeably, thus not seemingly distinguishing them.

complement of the preposition is moved out of its position, leaving a trace (Zribi-Hertz 1984; Radford 1997). Orphan prepositions, on the other hand, are argued to not involve any movement. Instead, the preposition governs a null pronominal argument (Zribi-Hertz 1984). However, such analyses are incompatible with the architecture of RRG, the framework used in this thesis, which does not permit null elements or movement operations. I shall return to this in section 5.4.1.1.1. Alternative analyses of the prepositions found without an adjacent complement in French are that they are intransitive prepositions (Tuller 1991) or adverbs (Cervoni 1991). Evidence in favour of either of those analyses is that some French prepositions change form when they have no complement e.g. *sur* > *dessus*, *dans* > *dedans*, *sous* > *dessous*. However, Zribi-Hertz (1984: 11) and Authier (2016: 240) point out that the long forms are still also used as prepositions with a complement.

The question arising from this is whether the RC-final prepositions in French are instances of preposition stranding as in English or, rather, orphan prepositions with the same structure as those found in contexts like (146). Poplack, Zentz & Dion (2012) argue that the complement-less prepositions that occur in French RCs are the result of an internal development in French - an extension by analogy of the possibility of stranding a preposition in the other, main-clause contexts in French.

Whatever the analysis adopted, the observation that authors agree on is that different languages (in this case, cognate ones) have a different set of prepositions that can occur without a complement, and each preposition may occur complement-less in some contexts but not others. For orphan prepositions in French, authors have suggested that it depends on whether the preposition is strong or weak, weak prepositions generally being excluded from occurring as orphan prepositions (Zribi-Hertz 1984).<sup>70</sup> For the stranded preposition phenomenon, authors have generally placed emphasis on the role of lexical conditioning, which is idiosyncratic to the language in question (Poplack, Zentz & Dion 2012).

With this in mind, I return to KR. I offer some insights regarding the possibility of phrase-final prepositions, but admit that further work is needed to understand the exact constraints on it. I will limit myself to the RC context. Table 5.14 details the prepositions found in the corpus and whether they are found fronted or stranded. Where a preposition was not found stranded/fronted in the corpus, it was verified with acceptability judgements of a native speaker.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Strong prepositions are considered ones with a heavier semantic content, while weak prepositions are functional. Examples of the latter are French *à* and *de*.

<sup>71</sup>This was the case for: *avèk* (stranded); *èk* (both); *sanm* (both); *kont* (stranded); *dan* (both); *dési* (stranded), *su* (stranded).

Table 5.14.: Prepositions found in KR stranded and fronted prepositional complement relatives

Preposition	occurs stranded	occurs fronted
<i>avèk</i> ‘with’	✓	✓
<i>èk</i> ‘with’	✗	✓
<i>ansanm</i> ‘with’	✓	✓
<i>sanm</i> ‘with’	✗	✓
<i>kont</i> ‘against’	✓	✓
<i>dodan</i> ‘in(side)’	✓	✓
<i>dann</i> ‘in’	✗	✓
<i>otour</i> ‘around/about’	✓	✓
<i>dési</i> ‘on’	✓	✓
<i>sur</i> ‘on’	✗	✓

It should be noted that of all those prepositions that occur fronted, this should be taken to mean that they occur fronted followed by a relative pronoun (cf. the structure in (119), for example). An exception to this is with *dodan*:

- (147) *Toultan mon gran frèr té i shante in ti romanse*  
all.the.time POSS.1SG big brother IPFV FIN sing INDF little song  
*dedan i parl «kari», (...)*  
in FIN talk curry  
‘All the time my brother used to sing a song in which they spoke about curry,  
(...)’ (Story)

According to the participant asked, a relative pronoun would render (147) unacceptable. In section 5.4.1.1.1, I present an RRG analysis of prepositional complement relatives with a phrase-final preposition, arguing that the prepositions in Table 5.14 that can be stranded are transitive prepositions, except for *dedan*, which is better analysed as an intransitive preposition. One reason for this is that the prepositions aside from *dedan* systematically occur in the corpus (outside of RCs) as prepositions with a complement, while *dedan* systematically occurs without one and is rejected in acceptability judgements of the constructed sentences in (148), in which it has a complement (whereas *dann* is acceptable in such examples).

- (148) a. *Kèl zépisse i mète dann/\*dedan kari ?*  
which spice FIN put in curry  
‘Which spices go in curry?’  
b. *Rès izolé dann/\*dedan zot kaz.*  
stay isolated in POSS.2PL house  
‘Stay isolated in your house.’

This indicates that *dedan* is inherently intransitive, but the other prepositions are not.

### 5.3.4. Relativisable positions on the AH

As indicated in Table 5.13, there is variation in the positions of the AH that a language permits relativisation upon (cf. section 5.1.3). Standard French does not permit relativisation on objects of comparison (149), while KR can relativise on all positions of the AH including objects of comparison (cf. example (97)).

- (149) \* *La fille que Marie est plus forte que est sa*  
 DEF girl REL Marie be.3SG more strong.F than be.3SG POSS.F.SG  
*soeur.*  
 sister  
 ‘The girl that Marie is stronger than is her sister.’ French  
 (Syea 2017: 386)

Nevertheless, KR requires a resumptive pronoun in object of comparison RCs, and this same strategy is in fact attested in non-standard French, illustrated in (150).

- (150) *celui<sub>i</sub> qu’il était plus grand que lui<sub>i</sub>*  
 the.one REL-3SG be.IPFV.3SG more tall than 3SG  
 Lit. ‘the one that he was taller than him’ Non-standard French  
 (Cannings 1978, cited by Zribi-Hertz 1984: 27)

Some French Creoles pattern with KR in permitting relativisation on objects of comparison (e.g. IOC), but others pattern with standard French, only permitting relativisation up to genitives (e.g. Haitian), according to Syea (2017). It is possible that the availability of object of comparison relatives correlates with the availability of certain relativising strategies: a resumptive pronoun and complementiser strategy may be required for this strategy to be relativised upon. Relative markers are not apparently found in Haitian Creole aside from in subject relatives, and standard French has no relative pronoun for object of comparison relatives, so neither language has this strategy available to it at this point in the AH.

### 5.3.5. Conclusion

To conclude this comparative section, I have highlighted that the most distinctive feature of the KR relative system is its preference for zero-marking in subject RCs, which is rare not only in Romance and the French Creoles, but cross-linguistically (Downing 1978: 385). Another feature which distinguishes KR from standard French and most of the French-based Creoles is the possibility of stranding a preposition in oblique RCs (cf. section 5.2.3.1.2). Although this feature, found in KR and

in Louisiana Creole, may find explanation in non-standard varieties of French, a detailed comparative investigation is necessary to understand why it is not permitted in the other French-based Creoles. Within the relative system, the key similarity that KR shares with non-standard Romance varieties is an invariant relative marker for relatives of all functions. However, in KR, we saw that relative-marking with *ke* is disfavoured over zero-marking for most RCs, and the types of RC that favour relative marking over zero-marking (i.e. oblique relatives) actually favour a relative pronoun rather than *ke*.

## 5.4. RRG analysis of headed relative clauses

The relativisation strategies found in KR are primarily gap strategies, which do not make explicit the syntactic function of the antecedent within the RC. This raises an important issue to be explained: how is the syntactic function of the antecedent in the RC interpreted by listeners?

In the Chomskyan tradition, externally headed RRCs are analysed as Complementiser Phrases (CPs) contained within a DP. In this framework, clauses are built by combining words to build phrases, which are made up of a head and a complement. Phrases can combine ('merge') with the preceding constituent to form larger phrases of the same type - in those cases, the preceding constituent is called the 'specifier' of the phrase (Radford 2019: 15). The CP is headed by a complementiser, which, in KR, would be filled by an overt complementiser *ke* when it is present, or would be an empty position in zero-marked RCs. The specifier position, which can likewise be empty, hosts relative pronouns. There are two key analyses for the derivation of RCs in the generative tradition: the matching analysis (dating back to Lees 1960, 1961; Chomsky 1965) and the raising analysis (dating back to Schachter 1973; Vergnaud 1974; Kayne 1994), each of which have been developed in a large body of work (recent works include Cinque 2008, 2020; Radford 2016, 2019; Sportiche 2017; Salzmann 2018, among many others). In brief, under the raising analysis, a copy of the RC antecedent originates within the RC as a DP headed by a *wh*-word. The DP containing the copy undergoes *wh*-movement to the front of the RC, and the lower copy of the antecedent is deleted at PF - the phonetic component of the grammar that converts syntactic structures into phonetic forms (Radford 1997: 521). On the matching analysis, the antecedent is generated in-situ in the matrix clause and there is a copy of it generated inside the RC, but under the alternative analysis, the raising analysis, that is not the case. Instead, the antecedent is generated within the RC and undergoes *wh*-movement to the specifier position, from which it undergoes another movement operation - raising - to an external position just above the RC. Therefore, the antecedent is not generated in-situ; it moves from the RC to an

external position.

Within the Chomskyan framework, the gap strategy found in RCs of languages like KR is captured by proposing two levels of syntactic structure: an underlying representation and a surface representation, which can differ from one another. The syntactic positions that host relative pronouns and complementisers are present even if the marker is not, the position is just filled by an empty constituent if there is no overt marking. In contrast, RRG does not allow empty underlying syntactic positions or movement operations, so while other frameworks would explain missing arguments via such syntactic operations explained above, this is not possible in RRG. Instead, the explanation is achieved with reference to the syntax-semantics linking algorithm (cf. section 3.4). In addition to the general linking principles, Van Valin (2012) added construction-specific linking rules for recovering the missing argument of headed RCs and hence satisfying the Completeness Constraint - the requirement for all referring expressions in the syntactic representation to be linked to argument slots in the semantic representation (logical structures of the predicates) and vice versa. In what follows, I present an RRG analysis of headed RCs in KR. I build upon existing work on RCs in RRG (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Pavey 2004; Van Valin 2005, 2012; París forthcoming), and develop CSs for KR's RRCs and ARCs.

### 5.4.1. Restrictive relatives

In RRG, RRCs are treated in a similar way to adjectives in attributive function, as they are both nominal modifiers (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Pavey 2004; Van Valin 2005; Van Valin 2012; París forthcoming). In the syntactic representation, they are found in the periphery of the nucleus of an RP because they are an optional modifier rather than a core argument (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 497).

The syntactic template of RCs and the process for recovering the missing argument depends in part on the type of relative marker that introduces them. I outline the analysis for zero-marked and *ke*-marked RRCs in section 5.4.1.1 and the analysis for RCs with a relative pronoun in section 5.4.1.2.

#### 5.4.1.1. Zero-marked or *ke*-marked

Zero- and *ke*-marked RRCs have essentially the same syntactic template and analysis, minus the presence of the relative complementiser *ke*, whose absence has no consequence for the issue of recovering the syntactic function of the antecedent, given that *ke* does not provide any information concerning this. I use example (104b), repeated as (151), to illustrate the analysis of RRCs.



- (151) *Nou la rotrouv de mo ke minm mon granpèr i utiliz pu.*  
 1PL PRF find some word REL even POSS.1SG grandpa FIN use NEG  
 ‘We found words that even my grandpa doesn’t use anymore.’

The syntactic template for (151) is provided in Figure 5.1, leaving out the operator projections since they are not relevant to the discussion.<sup>72</sup>

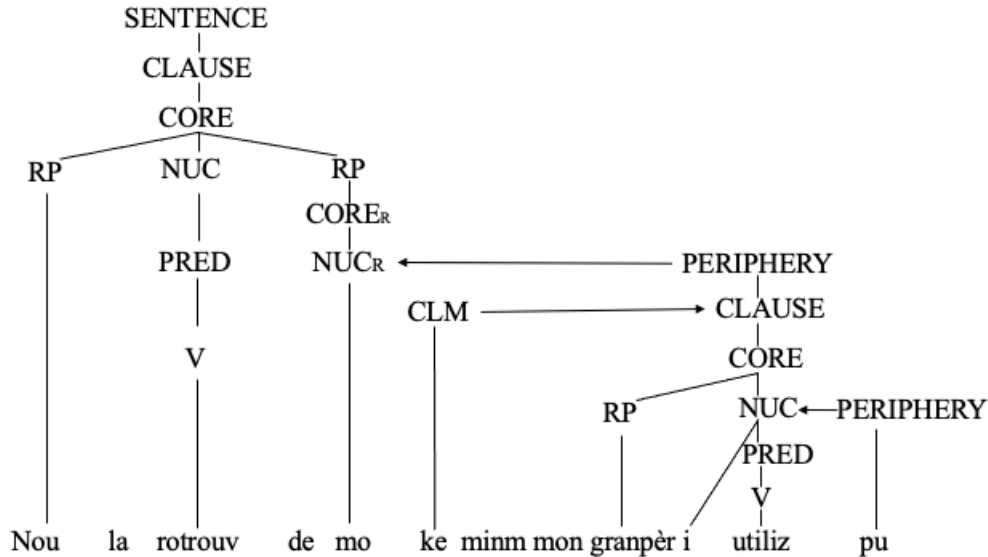


Figure 5.1.: Syntactic representation of RRC in KR

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, *ke* is represented as a clause linkage marker (CLM). In RRG, CLMs are a functional category of element, which link units in complex constructions. The category can include, for example, complementisers, adpositions and case markers (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 476). In section 5.2.3, we saw that *ke* has the properties of a relative complementiser, so it is analysed as a CLM. The omission of the relative marker *ke* in KR does not change the syntactic template significantly: zero-marked RRCs have the same syntactic template as in Figure 5.1, minus the CLM, which is not obligatory: the RC can still join to the nucleus of the RP without a CLM.

Since the issue of interpreting the missing argument is an issue regarding comprehension (on the side of the hearer) rather than production, the issue relates to the linking from syntax to semantics rather than the reverse. Proceeding with the steps of the syntax-to-semantics linking algorithm (section 3.4), I have already produced the labelled tree structure in Figure 5.1, which is the first step. The second step is to derive as much information as possible from the overt morphosyntactic features of the clause, before retrieving the LS of the predicates in the sentence and assign-

<sup>72</sup>Finiteness marker *i* is contained within the nucleus as it is required by finite verbs for nucleus formation.

ing macroroles. Let us proceed with this: the LS of the matrix clause predicate of example (151) is in (152), and that of the RC predicate in (153).<sup>73</sup>

(152) Matrix clause predicate LS (*find*)

INGR **found'** (a, b)

(153) RC predicate LS (*use*)

**do'**(x, [ **use'** (x, y)])

The first argument in each of the above LSs is assigned the macrorole of actor, and the second argument is assigned that of undergoer, as per the actor-undergoer hierarchy (cf. section 3.2). We now link everything in the cores of Figure 5.1 to an argument position in the LS in (152) and (153), the result of which is in (154) and (155).

(154) Matrix clause predicate LS (*find*)

INGR **found'** (*nou*, *mo*)

(155) RC predicate LS (*use*)

**do'**(*granpèr*, [ **use'** (*granpèr*, y)])

Having followed all of the general syntax-semantics linking rules, we still have a missing argument in the RC LS (155) so are required to turn to the construction-specific linking rules for externally headed RCs proposed by Van Valin (2012: 57):

(156) **Rules governing linking from syntax to semantics in externally headed RCs**

- (a) Retrieve from the lexicon an attributive LS and substitute the LS of the verb in the RC for the second argument.
- (b) Co-index the first argument in the attributive LS with either the unlinked argument position in the RC LS, or, if there is a relative pronoun, to the argument position linked to the relative pronoun.
- (c) Insert the attributive LS into the argument position in the matrix LS occupied by the head noun, replacing the variable in the first argument position in the attributive LS with the head noun.

Headed RCs are represented as attributive predications in RRG, since they are modifiers. The attributive predication is reflected in the semantic representation of RCs: headed RCs have the logical structure **be'**(x, [**pred'**]).<sup>74</sup> Let us now apply step (a) of (156) to our example, substituting the LS of the RC verb (155) into the second argument position of the attributive LS:

<sup>73</sup>The verbs are classified into *Aktionsart* classes using the tests in Van Valin (2005: 35).

<sup>74</sup>For illustrating the linking in this example, I will use *w* instead of *x* for the attributive LS, since *x* was already used in the LS of the relative clause verb.

(157)  $\text{be}'(w, [\text{do}'(\text{granp\`er}, [\text{use}'(\text{granp\`er}, y))])$

Proceeding with step (b), we co-index the first argument in the attributive LS with the unlinked argument position in the RC LS:

(158)  $\text{be}'(w_i, [\text{do}'(\text{granp\`er}, [\text{use}'(\text{granp\`er}, y_i))])$

Finally, at step (c), we insert the attributive LS (158) into the argument position occupied by the head noun in the matrix clause LS (154), replacing the variable in the first argument position in the attributive LS with the head noun:

(159)  $\text{INGR found}'(\text{nou}, (\text{be}'(\underline{\text{moi}}, [\text{do}'(\text{granp\`er}, [\text{use}'(\text{granp\`er}, y_i))])))$

The argument, *mo*, which is shared by the matrix clause and RC, is underlined and co-indexed with the argument position in the RC (Van Valin 2012: 56). Crucially, the Completeness Constraint (cf. section 3.4) is now satisfied and all argument slots have been filled. Figure 5.2 illustrates the steps taken in the mapping between syntax and semantics, combining the general linking rules and the construction-specific rules for externally headed RCs.

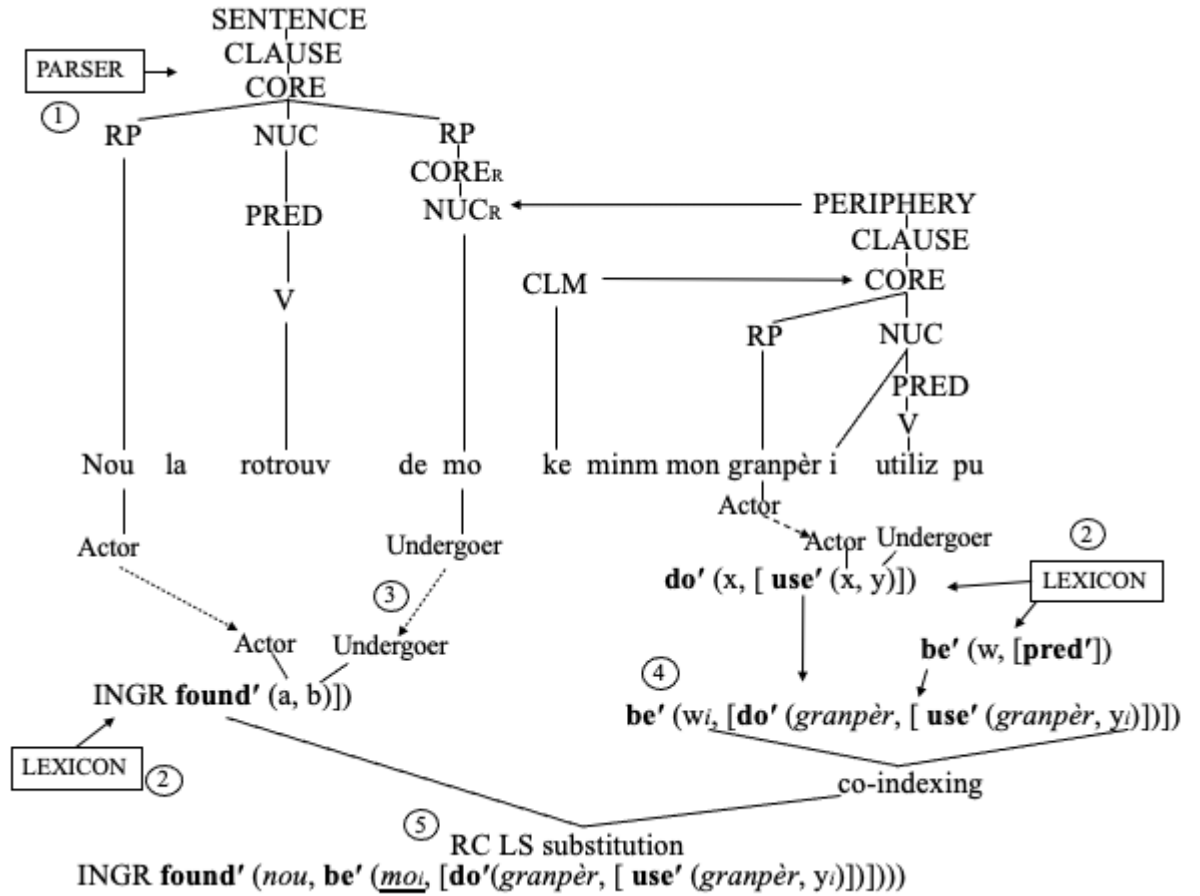


Figure 5.2.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in RRCs

With this as the basic model for retrieving the missing argument in headed RCs, I will now deal with some additional issues posed by RCs in KR (though not uniquely this language) that have not been explicitly developed in previous work on RCs within RRG.

**5.4.1.1.1. Stranded prepositions** As revealed in section 5.2.2, one of the preferred strategies for prepositional complement RCs is zero-marking and a stranded preposition, illustrated in (160).

- (160) *Lo boug li la maryé avèk i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man 3SG PRF marry with FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man she married is from Saint-Paul (Lit. the man she married with is from Saint-Paul)’

Recall from section 5.3.3 that some authors distinguish between stranded prepositions and orphan prepositions. This difference is normally captured in the syntax, the former involving the movement of a complement and the latter involving the preposition governing an empty pronominal position. However, in RRG, both of these options are ruled out for the syntactic representation. The missing complement (if there is indeed a missing complement and the preposition is not intransitive) and any potential differences between different types of complement-less prepositions would have to be explained via other means, i.e. in the linking between syntax and semantics. I will offer an analysis of RCs with a clause-final preposition but leave a comparison with other types of complement-less preposition in KR to future research.

My explanation for RC-final prepositions without an adjacent complement proceeds in a similar vein to how Van Valin (2005: 155-156) deals with preposition stranding in English questions such as “Who did Sandy present the flowers to?”. The preposition *avèk* is non-predicative in example (160): the second argument is licensed by the predicate *maryé*, not by the preposition.<sup>75</sup> The preposition is effectively a case marker assigned by the predicate (cf. Van Valin 2005: 21-22), and it is obligatory as judged by my consultants:

- (161) *Mi sa maryé \*((av)èk) in boug zanti.*  
 1SG-FIN FUT marry PREP INDF man nice  
 ‘I am going to marry a nice man.’

In the proposed syntactic representation for example (160), given in Figure 5.3, the preposition *avèk* in (160) still occurs as a PP in an argument position in the core, but it has no complement, and we do not propose an empty RP slot as this would be incompatible with the architecture of RRG.

<sup>75</sup>See section 3.1.4 for the difference between predicative and non-predicative prepositions in RRG.

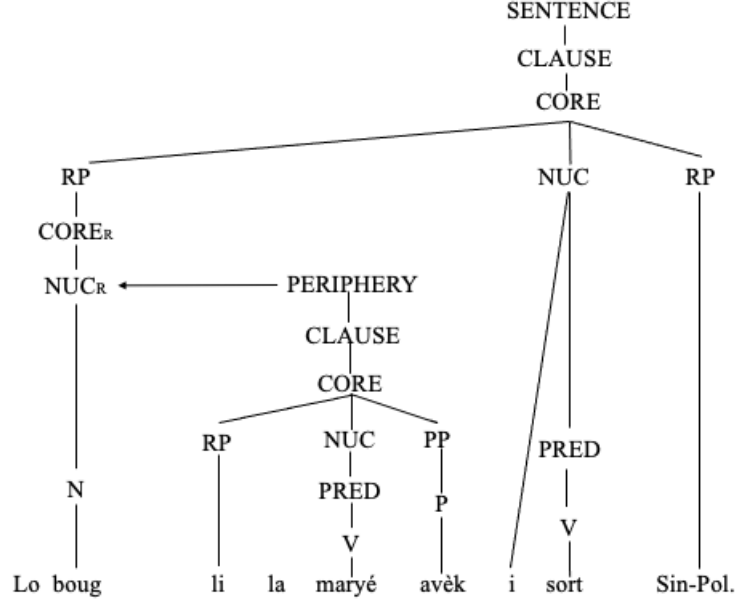


Figure 5.3.: Syntactic representation of RRCs with a stranded preposition

There is evidence to suggest that a PP with no complement filling an argument slot has a precedent in KR grammar, which justifies the syntactic template in Figure 5.3. Examples are in (162).

- (162) a. *Kank tomate lé bien kui (la sosse en krème), mète le morso*  
 when tomato COP well cook DET sauce in cream put DEF piece  
*volay dedan, tourne bien.*  
 poultry in turn well'  
 'When the tomato is cooked (the sauce creamy), put the piece of meat  
 in, stir thoroughly.' (Brochure)
- b. *bon nou va pa revenir dessus paske lu la fé (...)*  
 well 1PL FUT NEG return PREP because 3SG PRF do  
 'Well we are not going to return to it because he has done (...)' (TV)

It is not necessarily important that the examples in (162) could exhibit a different type of complement-less preposition, i.e. an intransitive one. The important point is that the existence of intransitive prepositions means that KR has in its syntactic inventory PPs with no complement filling an argument slot.

Let us now return to the retrieval of the argument in the RC. In the linking of argument slots in the syntax with argument positions in the LS of the predicate, the preposition indicates that the complement of the preposition should be linked to the non-actor argument in the LS of the predicate. However, since there is no RP complement to link to the argument position in the LS of *marry*, the Completeness Constraint is not satisfied because the second argument in the LS is unlinked. The argument is recovered by co-indexing the missing argument in the LS with the head

of the RC, *boug* ‘man’, following the same RC linking procedure as for the previous example (cf. Figure 5.2). This linking is exemplified in Figure 5.4.

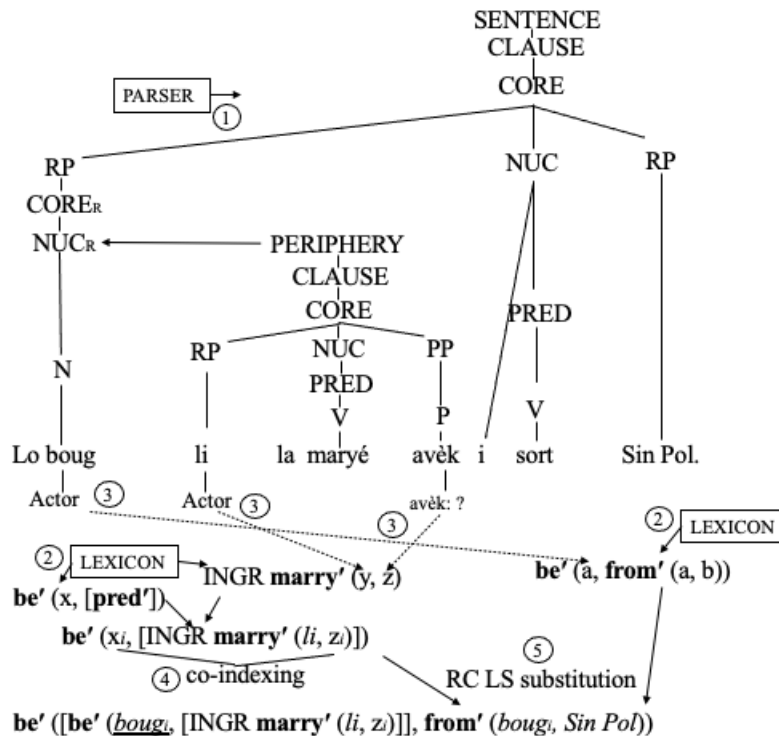


Figure 5.4.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in RRCs with a stranded preposition

Regarding the semantics-to-syntax linking, this analysis makes the correct prediction that we cannot have preposition stranding with a relative pronoun in KR, because relative pronouns are placed in the PRCS (cf. section 5.4.1.2). According to the syntactic template selection principle, if the PRCS is filled, then the number of slots in the core is reduced by one. This means there would be one too many arguments in the syntactic template than there are in the LS. As suggested in section 5.3.3, one of the factors affecting the availability of preposition stranding in the other French-based Creoles could be that they have a relative pronoun rather than a complementiser (analysed as a CLM), and that supports this analysis.<sup>76</sup>

In section 5.3.3, I suggested that all of the prepositions found in KR's RCs (see Table 5.14) should be treated as transitive prepositions and would receive an analysis along the lines proposed above, with the exception of *dedan*, which I argued is intransitive. In RCs with *dedan*, I would argue that the preposition has a lexically incorporated argument whose referent is recovered pragmatically. In the next section, I explain the RRG analysis of RRCs with a relative pronoun.

<sup>76</sup>It should be noted that English does allow preposition stranding with relative pronouns, and hence this language violates the principle that the number of core slots should be reduced by 1 if the PRCS is filled, but Van Valin (2005: 143) describes this violation as a cross-linguistic rarity (which would, I assume, be specified in the language-specific CS).

#### 5.4.1.2. With a relative pronoun

RCs with a relative pronoun have a slightly different syntactic template: relative pronouns are placed in the PRCS rather than being analysed as CLMs like complementisers are. There are two types of RC exhibiting a relative pronoun in KR: locative RCs (163a) and prepositional complement RCs (163b).

- (163) a. *Lo ti bar ousa mwin la rankont Laura lé Sin-Dni.*  
 DEF little bar where 1SG PRF meet Laura COP Saint-Denis  
 ‘The little bar where I met Laura is in Saint-Denis.’
- b. *Lo boug èk ki li lé maryé i sort Sin-Pol.*  
 DEF man with REL 3SG COP marry FIN come.from Saint-Paul  
 ‘The man with whom she is married is from Saint-Paul.’

Beginning with locative RCs, the syntactic template for example (163a) is given in Figure 5.5, illustrating the PRCS.

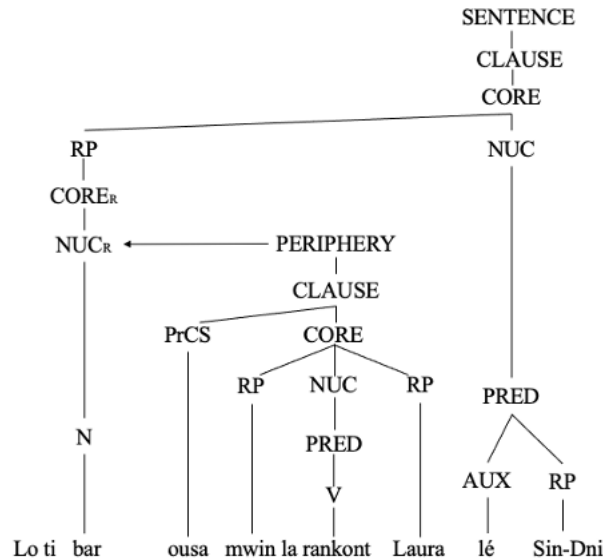


Figure 5.5.: Syntactic representation of locative RRCs with a relative pronoun

The construction-specific linking rules for RCs in example (156) are not actually required because the antecedent is not an argument of the predicate in the RC, so all of the argument slots in the LS of the matrix and RC are filled. We can rely on the general linking principles for this type of RC. In doing so, we encounter an issue not found for the relatives that are arguments: the PRCS is filled by *ousa*, but it is not linked to an argument position in the LS, which means that the Completeness Constraint is not satisfied. Usually, the element in the PRCS is linked to the last remaining unlinked argument position in the LS. If there are no remaining unlinked positions, following the detailed syntax-to-semantics linking principles in Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 559), the *wh*-word is treated as a predicative preposition, for

which we must retrieve a logical structure from the lexicon. As is done for questions such as “Where did Robin see Pat?”, discussed by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 334), we can propose an abstract locative higher predicate: **be-LOC'** (x, y), where the *x* argument is filled by the *wh*-word and the *y* argument is filled by the core LS. The RC in example (163a) thus has the LS **be-LOC'** (*ousa*, (**do'**(*mwin*, [**meet'** (*mwin*, *Laura*)))]), and the relative pronoun *ousa* is co-indexed with its antecedent, *lo ti bar*.

This analysis explains why locative RCs are preferably marked with *ousa* rather than with *ke* or zero-marking because a more explicit strategy is preferable when the antecedent does not have an argument role in the RC. For zero-marked locative RCs, the Completeness Constraint would still be satisfied as there would be no empty positions in the syntax nor the semantics. Recovery of the syntactic function of the antecedent would need to be done pragmatically: if all positions are filled in all of the LSs, then the listener deduces that the antecedent has an adverbial function in the relative, the type of which is determined via the type of head, i.e. if it is a place, then the antecedent is interpreted as having a locative function in the RC. This strategy of recovering the function of the antecedent in the RC is less direct than that for *ousa*, which carries a locative feature and triggers the retrieval of a locative higher predicate when it occurs in the PRCS but is not linked to an argument position in the LS.

The second type of RC exhibiting a relative pronoun in KR are those in which the relativised element functions as the complement of a fronted preposition (163b). In such examples, the PP containing the relative pronoun is found in the PRCS, as illustrated by Figure 5.6, which represents example (163b).

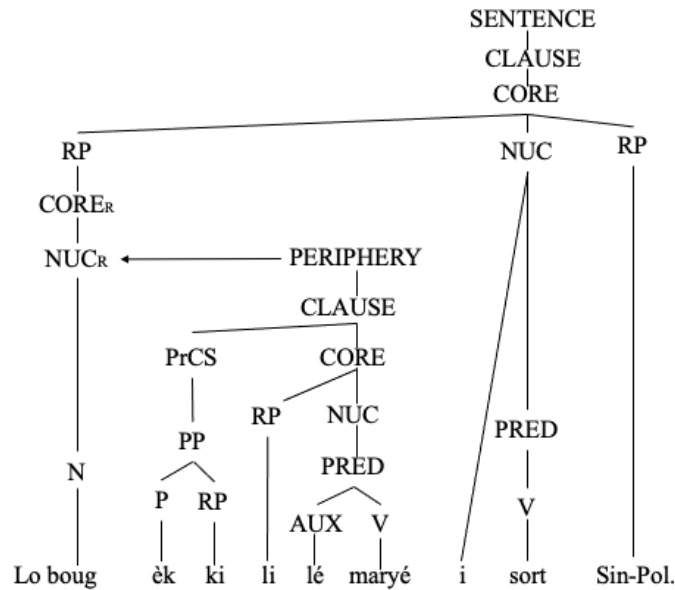


Figure 5.6.: Syntactic representation of fronted prepositional complement RRCs



The difference in the steps of the linking algorithm for RCs containing a relative pronoun was noted in (156): in step (b), rather than co-indexing the first argument in the attributive LS with the unlinked argument position in the RC LS, it is linked to the argument position linked to the relative pronoun. In the case of example (163b), the prepositional complement is an argument of the RC verb. As noted in the previous section, *èk* is a non-predicative preposition, acting as a case marker in this example, so the recovery of the function of the antecedent in the RC is made easier. The CS for RRCs is given in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15.: Constructional Schema for KR restrictive relative clauses

Construction: KR RRCs
SYNTAX:
Juncture: nuclear <sub>RP</sub>
Nexus: subordination (peripheral)
Construction type: clausal modifier (a modifier that is a clause, not a modifier of a clause)
Unit templates:
Main clause: Default
RC template: external head
RC: Default, [-PrCS] (Figure 5.1) or [+PrCS] (Figures 5.5 & 5.6)
Linking: syntax → semantics
MORPHOLOGY: Optional CLM ( <i>ke</i> ) if there is no relative pronoun
SEMANTICS: restrictive modifier; <b>be'</b> (x ,[ <b>pred'</b> (...y...)]), where y is either a relative pronoun or lexically unfilled
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: none (outside potential focus domain)
Focus structure: all elements are non-focal

The purpose of the CS is to specify the syntactic, semantic, morphological and pragmatic features which are specific to the construction rather than being general linking rules or general principles of the language, which can be assumed to apply unless otherwise specified. It essentially provides a summary of the specific features of the KR RRC discussed in this section. In the next section, I explain the analysis of ARCs.

## 5.4.2. Appositive relatives

The syntactic differences between RRCs and ARCs are reflected in their slightly different syntactic templates. An ARC occurs in the periphery at the level of the

RP rather than at the level of the nucleus of the RP (Van Valin 2005: 222; París forthcoming). This captures the fact that it does not restrict the reference of the head noun, but rather modifies the whole RP. The syntactic representation of the ARC in example (132) is given in Figure 5.7.

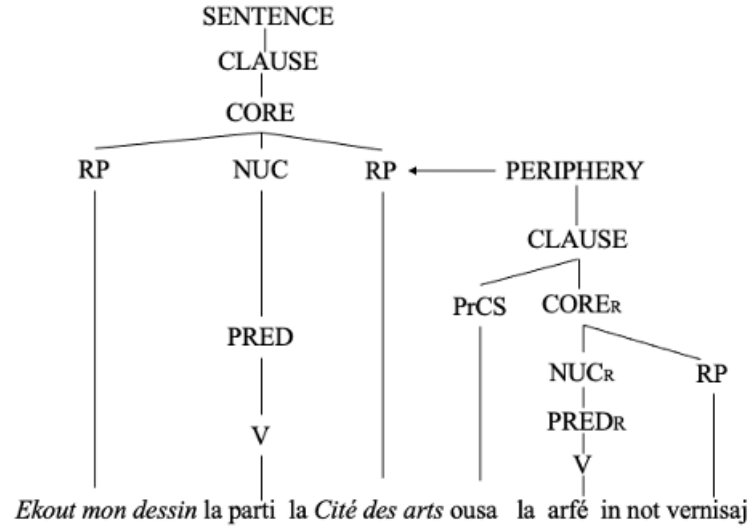


Figure 5.7.: Syntactic representation of appositive relative clauses

Although the syntactic template is slightly different for an ARC, the recovery of the missing argument follows the same procedure as RRCs. The differences between RRCs and ARCs, pointed out just above and in section 5.2.1.2, are reflected in their CSs (compare Table 5.15 with Table 5.16).

Table 5.16.: Constructional Schema for KR appositive relative clauses

Construction: KR appositive RCs
SYNTAX:
Juncture: RP
Nexus: subordination (peripheral)
Construction type: clausal modifier (a modifier that is a clause, not a modifier of a clause)
Unit templates:
Main clause: Default
RC template: external head
RC: Default, [-PrCS] or [+PrCS] (Figure 5.7)
Linking: syntax → semantics
MORPHOLOGY: Optional CLM ( <i>ke</i> ) if there is no relative pronoun
SEMANTICS: modifier; <b>be'</b> ( <i>x</i> , [ <b>pred'</b> (... <i>y</i> ...)]), where <i>y</i> is either a relative pronoun or lexically unfilled
PRAGMATICS:
Focus structure: predicate focus

A few of those differences should be highlighted. As noted above, the level of juncture is different, but aside from that, the syntax and morphology are the same as for RRCs. The semantics and pragmatics of ARCs differs from that of RRCs. ARCs are not restrictive modifiers, rather, they contain an assertion about their antecedent. Their content is hence not presupposed, which means they have a different focus structure to RRCs, which are non-focal because they are presupposed. ARCs have default predicate focus.

## 5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has built upon the basic understanding of RCs in KR offered by Corne (1995) and McLellan (2019). In addition to adding support for the patterns of relative marking uncovered by McLellan (2019), that zero-marking is overwhelmingly favoured in subject and object RCs, but not obliques, I revealed the relativising strategies found with RCs for functions further down the AH. Firstly, I found that an invariant marker, *ke*, can mark all RCs, regardless of function, though they may all alternatively be zero-marked. I argued that *ke* is best analysed as a relative complementiser, providing evidence that it is invariant, does not carry animacy features, and cannot be preceded by a preposition. I revealed previously un-noted patterns concerning the acceptability of resumptive pronouns across the AH, finding

that they are obligatory in object of comparison RCs, preferred in genitive RCs, strongly disfavoured in subject and oblique RCs, and subject to speaker-dependent variation in object RCs.

For oblique RCs, I found that a relative pronoun strategy is available, both for locative and prepositional complement RCs. The relative pronoun *ousa* is the preferred relative marker for locative RCs, *ou* being acceptable in its place for most speakers, but *ke* only for some speakers. The relative pronouns found in prepositional complement RCs were *ki*, *kisa* and *lékél*, which occur as the complement of a fronted preposition. This relative pronoun strategy was found to be equally as favoured as zero-marking with a stranded preposition, and both of those strategies were favoured over *ke* with a stranded preposition.

I compared the relative system of KR to those of other Romance varieties and other French-based Creoles, highlighting that the most distinctive feature of KR's system is its preference for zero-marking in subject RCs. On the other hand, it shares similarities with non-standard Romance varieties, exhibiting an invariant relative marker found across the AH, and it exhibits similarities with the other French Creoles in that that marker is optional for all other positions of the AH. Finally, I developed an RRG analysis for the RCs discussed in the chapter, building upon previous work on RCs, but adding explanation regarding preposition stranding, which correctly predicts that KR does not permit preposition stranding with a relative pronoun, but only in zero-marked or *ke*-marked RCs.

## 6. Free relative clauses

### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with free RCs (FRCs), also known as headless RCs, in KR. As outlined in chapter 5, headed RCs are clauses that modify an antecedent, which is usually a nominal, in a sentence. Headless RCs, rather than modifying an antecedent, are clauses that take the place of a phrasal constituent in a sentence, forming a referential phrase themselves. The difference between headed (164a) and headless (164b) RCs is illustrated below.

- (164) a. I like the hat [that you bought].  
b. I like [what you bought].

FRCs often take the place of a NP as in (164b) above, but they can also replace PPs as does (165a) below.

- (165) a. You can't smoke [where the kids are playing].  
b. You can't smoke [<sub>PP</sub> in the place(s) where the kids are playing].  
(Šimík 2020: 2)

In addition to what I will call a 'plain' FRC, following Šimík (2020), I will also treat *-ever* type FRCs. In English, these are FRCs formed with a *wh*-word and an *-ever* suffix.

- (166) a. I like [whatever you bought].  
b. You can't smoke [wherever the kids are playing].

*-Ever* type FRCs can function as an argument or adjunct like the examples in (166), but they can also function as a free adjunct as in example (167).

- (167) [Whatever I say], she does not listen.

As reflected in the admittedly anglocentric terminology, this type of FRC has been much discussed in relation to English, but far less in other languages. This chapter hopes to contribute to our typological understanding of these constructions by adding data from a lesser-known language.

Cross-linguistically, FRCs have been likened to indirect interrogative clauses (168) due to their superficial similarities, often being introduced by the same set of *wh*-pronouns (Keenan & Hull 1973; Posner 1985; Caponigro 2003 among others).

(168) I wonder [<sub>IND-INT</sub> what she bought].

In languages whose free relative pronouns are identical to their interrogative pronouns, these two types of clauses do look similar, but can often be distinguished on the basis of the selectional behaviour of the matrix verb: whether they select NPs or questions (Caponigro 2003: 8; van Riemsdijk 2006: 338). While we could replace the FRC in example (164b) with an NP that is truth-conditionally equivalent (169a), we cannot do the same with the clause in example (168), as demonstrated in (169b).

- (169) a. I like [<sub>NP</sub> the thing you bought.]  
 b. \*I wonder [<sub>NP</sub> the thing she bought.]

Another distinguishing criterion is that indirect interrogatives can be replaced with a *whether*-clause but FRCs cannot (Caponigro 2003: 12):

- (170) a. \*I like [<sub>y/n-INT</sub> whether you bought it.]  
 b. I wonder [<sub>y/n-INT</sub> whether she bought it.]

Note that these criteria are not always decisive: there are certain verbs, such as *know*, that can take a question (171b) or an NP (171c), so in such cases there can be an ambiguity (Caponigro 2003: 13).

- (171) a. I don't know [what she studied].  
 b. I don't know [<sub>y/n-INT</sub> whether she studied Maths].  
 c. I don't know [<sub>NP</sub> the thing she studied].

In KR, by far the most common strategy for forming FRCs is not with an interrogative pronoun, but rather with *sak*, which has several phonological variants: *sat*, *sék*, *sét* and *sad*.<sup>77</sup> I will call RCs formed with any of these variants '*sak*-relatives'.

- (172) *Ti-Pierre té i agard trankiman **sak** té i espas.*  
 little-Pierre IPFV FIN watch peacefully FR IPFV FIN happen  
 'Little Pierre was peacefully watching what was happening.' (Story)

I argue that the pronoun *sak* originates from the combination of a demonstrative and complementiser, but has been reanalysed as one word, which functions as a free relative pronoun (section 6.2.2). The same five forms that are found as free relative

<sup>77</sup>However, in section 6.3.1, I present examples in which *sak* occurs in what could be an indirect interrogative clause, cf. examples in (206) and (207).

pronouns, as in (172), are also found as possessed and demonstrative pronouns, as in (173) (see section 2.3.1.2).<sup>78</sup> In section 6.2, I discuss whether we are dealing with the same pronoun in the two contexts exemplified by (172) and (173).

- (173) a. *Pran loto-la, **sak** papa lé kasé.*  
 take car-DEM DEM father COP broken  
 ‘Take this car, father’s is broken.’ (Constructed; accepted in interview)
- b. *Trap **sak**-la.*  
 catch DEM-DEM  
 ‘Catch that one.’ (Albers 2019: 267)

Although *sak*-relatives are the most widespread form of FRC in KR, there is evidence that FRCs can also be formed with interrogative pronouns, illustrated in (174).

- (174) a. (...) *mé li va konèt egzakteman **kosa** li vé dir.*  
 but 3SG FUT know exactly what 3SG want say  
 ‘(...) but he will know exactly what he means.’  
 (Interview; Participant 36)
- b. *Bin li la pa rogardé **kisa** i té maléré.*  
 well 3SG PRF NEG look who FIN COP.IPFV unlucky  
 ‘Well he didn’t look at who was unlucky.’ (Baude 2010)

The acceptability of the interrogative pronouns *kisa* and *kosa* in FRCs is low as compared with *sak* and variants and is affected by a number of factors to be discussed in section 6.3. Before offering further detail concerning the semantic and syntactic issues relevant to the study of FRCs in KR, I present in (175) a list of the forms of FRC found in the language.<sup>79</sup> In sections 6.2 and 6.3, I discuss these forms in detail. I make no claim that the list in (175) is comprehensive: given the extent of variation found in KR, it is not feasible to guarantee coverage of all possible forms found across the island. What I aim to do is outline what the most widespread forms are synchronically and point out some other existing formulations, even if they are slightly rarer.<sup>80</sup> There is variation between speakers on the interpretations of the forms, but I aim to give an overall picture of the possible interpretations.

(175) List of FRC forms

<sup>78</sup>I use *sak* for the examples here, but note that all five variants are possible in the examples in (172) and (173). Evidence of this is presented in section 6.2 and a full list of free relative forms is presented in (175).

<sup>79</sup>Where the examples do not come from the corpus, they are constructed examples that were tested in interviews and accepted by at least some participants.

<sup>80</sup>I should point out that, concerning the variants of *sak*, the corpus numbers alone should not necessarily indicate that one form is more widespread than another, because orthographic choices come into play too.

- a. **sak**; 69 corpus attestations; widely accepted in interview.  
*sak nou la bozwin pou viv*  
 FR 1PL have need to live  
 ‘what we need to live’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)
- b. **sat**; 164 corpus attestations; widely accepted in interview.  
*sat nou gingn fé*  
 FR 1PL can do  
 ‘what we can do’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 19)
- c. **sét**; 0 corpus attestations; widely accepted in interview.  
*sét mon kamarad i di*  
 FR POSS.1SG friend FIN say  
 ‘what my friend says’ (Produced in interview)
- d. **sék**; 12 corpus attestations; widely accepted in interview.  
*sek mi amèn*  
 FR 1SG-FIN bring  
 ‘what I bring’ (TV)
- e. **sad**; 0 corpus attestations; accepted by some in interview.  
*Ma koz èk sad i okip sa.*  
 1SG.FUT speak with FR FIN look.after DEM  
 ‘I will speak to the person who is in charge of that.’ (Constructed)
- f. **sat ke**; 0 corpus attestations; accepted by some in interview.  
*Zot i pé invit sat ke zot i vé*  
 3PL FIN can invite DEM REL 3PL FIN want  
 ‘They can invite who they want.’ (Constructed)
- g. **kisa ‘who’**; 1 corpus attestation; accepted by some in interview.<sup>81</sup>  
*kisa i té malheureuse*  
 who FIN be.IPFV unhappy  
 ‘who was unhappy’ (Baude 2010)
- h. **kosa ‘what’**; 10 corpus attestations; accepted by some in interview.  
*kosa li kab fé*  
 what 3SG can do  
 ‘what he can do’ (Children’s story)
- i. **kwé ‘what’**; 4 corpus attestations; accepted by some in interview.  
*kwé ou la bezwin*  
 what 2SG have need  
 ‘what you need’ (Baude 2010)

<sup>81</sup>Note that a variant of *kisa*, *ki*, is also possible as a free relative pronoun. *Ki* did not occur in the corpus though, and, for reasons of time, I could not investigate it.



- j. **ousa** ‘where’ 11 corpus attestations

*ousa zot i rès*  
where 3PL FIN live

‘where they live’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)

- k. **kansa** ‘when’ 1 corpus attestation

*di amwin kansa ou pas!*  
say 1SG when 2SG come

‘tell me when you come!’ (SMS)

- l. **koman** ‘how’ 21 corpus attestations

*koman zot la fonksioné*  
how 3PL PRF work

‘how they worked’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

FRCs have been given very little attention in the creole literature generally, and in KR they are poorly understood. Though mentioned in general overviews of the language, FRCs have not been the subject of detailed investigation until now. This chapter investigates the possible forms of FRC in KR, their structure and their possible interpretations. The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: in the next part of this introduction (section 6.1.1), I go into further detail about the syntactic types of RC that have been grouped under the term ‘free relative clause’ and in section 6.1.2 I examine how FRCs have been classified in semantic terms. The KR data are presented and discussed in the subsequent sections. Exploring the distribution of FRC forms in KR, I classify them in syntactic and semantic terms. I begin with *sak*-relatives in section 6.2 and I discuss FRCs formed with interrogative pronouns in section 6.3, with special attention given to *kisa* ‘who’ and *kosa* ‘what’. Section 6.4 is dedicated to the various strategies for expressing free-choice meanings (section 6.1.2.3) similar to the English *-ever*-type FRCs (cf. (166)). An RRG analysis of various types of FRC is presented in section 6.5, and I conclude the chapter in section 6.6. The KR data come from the corpus, the questionnaire, interviews with 40 native speakers (cf. chapter 4) and, on occasion, the literature.

### 6.1.1. Syntactic types of free relative

The aim of this section is twofold: first, to introduce different structural sub-types of clause that have been grouped under the label ‘free relative clause’, including those which are less prototypical, not always fitting stricter definitions of FRCs. Second, to report some important discussions from the literature regarding the syntactic structure of FRCs, which will be relevant to their study in KR. This lays the ground for the analysis in section 6.5, which offers a way of dealing with these issues in RRG, a framework in which FRC structures have received little attention.

### 6.1.1.1. Light-headed relatives

Free, or headless, RCs are named as such as they typically have no overt antecedent in the sentence. However, as some authors have pointed out, this is not always strictly the case (e.g. Smits 1989; Citko 1999, 2004; Rebuschi 2001; de Vries 2002). The term ‘light-headed relative’, coined by Citko (1999, 2004), designates a third category of RC with respect to headedness.<sup>82</sup> Authors often group light-headed RCs with FRCs; however, they are structurally different from truly headless relatives in that they do have an antecedent in the sentence. This antecedent is described as ‘light’ as it is a pronominal element rather than a full lexical noun. Light-headed RCs have been found in several languages from different language groups: Slavic (176a), Germanic (176b) and Romance (176c), to give some examples from Citko (2004: 97).

#### (176) Light-headed relatives

- a. *Jan czyta to, co Maria czyta.*  
Jan reads this what Maria reads  
‘Jan reads what Maria reads.’ Polish
  - b. *Mary ißt das was auch John ißt.*  
Mary eats that what also John eats  
‘Mary eats what John eats.’ German
  - c. *Jean lit ce qu’ il aime.*  
Jean reads this that he likes  
‘Jean reads what he likes.’ French
- (Citko 2004: 97)

The light head is usually a demonstrative pronoun - *to*, *das* and *ce* in the examples in (176) - but may also be an article (177a) or a quantifier (177b).

- (177) a. ***Lo*** *que tú crees no es cierto.*  
the.N COMP you.SG believe.2SG not is true  
‘What/that which you believe is not true.’ Spanish  
(Caponigro 2021: 16)
- b. *Pojadę wszędzie, gdzie rosną magnolia.*  
go.1sg everywhere where grow magnolias  
‘I will go everywhere magnolias grow.’ Polish  
(Caponigro 2021: 17)

Whether or not KR’s *sak*-relatives (172) are light-headed synchronically is an important question that will be addressed in this chapter. I will argue in sections

<sup>82</sup>Other terms used in the literature are ‘semi-free relative’ (Smits 1989; Rebuschi 2001) and ‘false free relative’ (de Vries 2002).

6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2 that KR has two distinct light-headed structures involving *sak* and variants, but that they co-exist with a true free relative structure (section 6.2.2.3).

#### 6.1.1.2. Free adjunct free relatives

As noted at the start of this introduction, FRCs are clauses that usually replace a phrasal constituent in a sentence, the clause functioning as an argument or adjunct in that sentence, but they can also function as free adjuncts (cf. example (167)). Plain FRCs are reportedly ungrammatical in free adjunct FRCs: an *-ever*-like morpheme is required (Izvorski 2000), illustrated by (178).

- (178) a. \*What you like, you will enjoy Ben's cooking.  
 b. Whatever you like, you will enjoy Ben's cooking.

Free adjuncts are sentence-level adverbials with no overt logical connector to the main clause (Izvorski 2000: 232). In the generative literature, FRCs are described as clauses but have been attributed the syntax of DPs, ADJPs or Adverb Phrases (ADVPs) containing a CP, rather than bare CPs, because of their distribution.<sup>83</sup> However, Izvorski (2000) proposes that free adjunct FRCs must be ascribed bare CP structure because DPs and ADJPs cannot usually occur as free adjuncts. Besides Izvorski (2000), little attention has been paid to free adjunct FRCs in the syntactic and typological literature.<sup>84</sup> I hope to contribute to filling this gap in two ways: first, by discussing how this type of RC patterns in KR and (to some extent) its lexifier French, which, like many other languages, does not have a direct equivalent of the English *-ever* forms with the same distributional freedom and second, by offering a syntactic analysis of free adjunct FRCs within RRG.<sup>85</sup> Before doing so, I finish this introduction with an overview of how FRCs have been grouped in semantic terms. In the remainder of this thesis, I use the term 'free relative clause (FRC)' as an umbrella term to refer to all of the structural types of FRC discussed in this section, including those which are light-headed. When discussing one of those sub-types more specifically, I will refer to them as 'truly free' FRCs or 'light-headed' RCs.

#### 6.1.2. Semantic types of free relative

Semantically speaking, there are several sub-types of FRC. In this section, I will give a brief typology of them in order to be able to describe the semantic interpretations

<sup>83</sup>See, for example, de Vries (2002) and van Riemsdijk (2006) for the syntactic treatment of FRCs in the generative tradition.

<sup>84</sup>Some authors do not consider free adjunct FRCs to be FRCs. For example, Caponigro (2003: 111) excludes them on the basis that they cannot be paraphrased with a DP or a PP. I do not use such strict criteria and do consider them in my typology of FRCs.

<sup>85</sup>French does have items like *quiconque* 'whoever' (formal register) and *qui/quoi que ce soit* Lit.'who/what that it be', but their distribution and register are more restricted than English *-ever*. This issue requires further work in French.

of FRCs in KR.<sup>86</sup> In the preceding sections, I differentiated between plain FRCs and *-ever* type FRCs on the one hand, and between argument, adjunct and free adjunct FRCs on the other hand. There are, in certain instances, semantic motivations for these distinctions too, in that a particular type is associated with a particular interpretation. However, as we will see, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the form and meaning of FRCs in English nor KR. Plain FRCs are often associated with a ‘maximal’ reading (section 6.1.2.1); *-ever* type FRCs are often associated with either a ‘universal-like’ (section 6.1.2.2) or a ‘free choice’ reading (section 6.1.2.3), and free adjunct FRCs are always associated with a free choice reading, which, more specifically, bears a concessive relation to the main clause (section 6.1.2.4). In what follows, I explain the meaning of these terms. Much of the semantic literature is based on English. Thus, my explanations rely on English examples.

### 6.1.2.1. Maximal

Maximal FRCs are the type of FRC that have been described as equivalent to definite NPs (e.g. Jacobson 1995; Rullmann 1995; Caponigro 2003, 2021). Example (179a) can be paraphrased by the definite NP in (179b).

- (179) a. Jie ate [what Adam cooked].  
       b. Jie ate [the food that Adam cooked].  
           (Caponigro 2003: 48)

Being equivalent to definite NPs, maximal FRCs are referential and maximal (Caponigro 2021: 7). The property of being maximal means that they refer to the maximal element of the set denoted by the FRC. The set can be composed of an atomic individual (just one) or a plural individual (the sum of more than one atomic individuals).<sup>87</sup> The maximal element of a set is the largest individual of that set, i.e. the sum of all of the atomic individuals in that set, which can of course be just one.<sup>88</sup> To illustrate this with example (179a), the FRC *what Adam cooked* refers to the set of things that Adam cooked (that are contextually relevant). The speaker can utter the sentence in (179a) in a context where Adam cooked just an egg, and the FRC will refer to the maximal individual of that set, which in this case is a

<sup>86</sup>The RRG analysis of FRCs presented in section 6.5 does rely on a linking algorithm between the syntax and the semantics, so there is some level of semantic analysis, but for readers interested in a detailed formal semantic analysis of FRCs, see, for example, Jacobson (1995) and Grosu & Landman (1998).

<sup>87</sup>My use of the term ‘individual’ follows Caponigro (2021: 50) and semantic convention. It characterises “any object in the ontology of the domain of discourse— any human or non-human, animate or inanimate, abstract or concrete object we can talk about, including places, time points or intervals, manners, and reasons.”

<sup>88</sup>See Caponigro (2021: 8-9), for a more detailed explanation of maximality.

singular set. If a speaker utters the same sentence in a context where Adam cooked an egg, toast and bacon, then the FRC in (179a) refers to the maximal set of things that Adam cooked and no less, i.e. the egg, the toast and the bacon, not just one or two of them.

This type of FRC has also been labelled ‘non-conditional’ (Smits 1989: 40), ‘DP-like standard free relative’ (Caponigro 2003) and ‘definite/specific’ (van Riemsdijk 2006: 346).

#### 6.1.2.2. Universal-like

Another term frequently found in the FRC literature is ‘universal’ (e.g. Cooper 1983; van Riemsdijk 2006). In many contexts, *-ever* type FRCs, such as that in (180a), receive a reading equivalent to a universally quantified expression, and can be paraphrased as such, illustrated by (180b).

- (180) a. Whatever Adam presented sounded plausible.  
       b. Everything Adam presented sounded plausible.  
       (Šimík 2020: 9)

Note that an alternative reading - a free choice reading - is also available for *-ever* type FRCs (see section 6.1.2.3). The distinction between maximal and universal FRCs might seem a little unclear. Taking the plain maximal FRC in example (181a), if it refers to the maximal set of things that Adam presented, and if that set is plural, it is essentially also equivalent to the universally quantified expression in example (181b).

- (181) a. What Adam presented sounded plausible. (= The things Adam presented sounded plausible.)  
       b. Everything Adam presented sounded plausible.

However, the difference between the maximal and universal types can be explained as follows. Maximality is a property of definite NPs and FRCs, which are referring expressions. The maximality property results in what looks like a universal, but this result is achieved via summing individuals in a set such that the referring expression refers to a full (maximal) set, not by quantifying over that set (Rullmann 1995: 148). Universals, on the other hand, are quantifiers, which quantify over a referring expression, and quantificational expressions require an overt marker (Caponigro 2021: 2). There has been debate over whether *-ever* FRCs are true universals (see Tredinnick 1994 and Iatridou & Varlakosta 1996 for arguments in favour and Jacobson 1995, Dayal 1997 and Caponigro 2003 for arguments against). However, the classification of English *-ever* FRCs as universals or not does not necessarily mean

the same classification for KR's FRCs. Whether KR has universal-like FRCs will be discussed in section 6.4 and I will refer to this reading as the 'universal-like' reading rather than 'universal', thereby not committing to analysing this type of FRC as a 'true' universally quantified expression.

### 6.1.2.3. Free choice

The other interpretation typically associated with *-ever* FRCs is one that does not seem to be as available in some languages as it is in English (von Stechow 2000, Caponigro & Fălăuş 2018, Šimík 2020). Rather than a universal-like interpretation, under a free-choice reading, an FRC is interpreted as referring to a subset (which could be just one element) of the things that could satisfy the description in the FRC in different possible worlds.<sup>89</sup>

(182) I will eat whatever you have. ( $\neq$  I will eat everything you have.)

Caponigro (2021: 13) characterises free choice FRCs as having an obligatory inference of ignorance and/or indifference. In example (182), there is an inference that the speaker does not know what food their interlocutor has ('ignorance inference') and/or that they do not mind what they eat ('indifference inference'). Caponigro (2021) points out that if we replaced *whatever* with plain *what* in example (182), the interpretation that the speaker does not know what food their interlocutor has, or that they do not mind what is given to them, is also available, but crucially for Caponigro (2021), the inference is obligatory with *whatever* but not with plain *what*. Although both the indifference and the ignorance inferences are available in English, some languages only have one, which is usually the ignorance inference (Caponigro 2021: 14).

Dayal (1997), who calls this interpretation an 'identity reading', raised the argument that these FRCs have a modal dimension in that they denote the property/ies that their referent has in several alternative worlds, which can differ from the actual world.<sup>90</sup> In each alternative world, there will be a unique referent, and an alternative world is defined as such only if the referent of the FRC in that world is different from that in another alternative world.<sup>91</sup> This variable reference of the FRC has since been called a 'variation requirement' (Šimík 2020: 15). Illustrating this with

<sup>89</sup>Examples like (182) are often more appropriately paraphrased with *anything*, e.g. 'I will eat anything you have'. *Any* has also been analysed as a universal (Jacobson 1995: 479), so depending how you look at it, we could still be dealing with a universal here, but a different type. The distinction between the two readings is important though and for clarity I will refer to this reading as free choice, not universal.

<sup>90</sup>Note that Dayal (1997) uses the term 'free choice' for the *-ever* reading described in the previous section, which I have called 'universal-like'. My terminology is thus in contradiction with Dayal's; however, I follow Caponigro (2021) in employing the term 'free choice' for this reading instead, as I think the term 'universal-like' for the previous type is more transparent.

<sup>91</sup>See (Dayal 1997: 107-108) for a semantic formalisation of this.

example (182), *whatever you have* denotes the set of food items that the interlocutor has in alternative worlds. In one world, this might be crisps, in another world, it might be nuts, etc.

As noted above, Caponigro (2021) only classifies FRCs as free choice FRCs if they have an overt marker triggering one or both of the inferences of ignorance or indifference. In my description of KR, when using the term ‘free choice’, I refer to the reading described in this section, but do not require it to be morphosyntactically marked with an *-ever* like morpheme to be classified as such, the main reason being that KR does have this interpretation but it is not always morphosyntactically marked. In the next section, I describe a syntactic sub-type of free choice FRC that has a consistent semantic relation to the main clause.

#### 6.1.2.4. Free adjunct free relatives: concessive

Free adjunct FRCs, at least those in English with *-ever*, have a consistent semantic interpretation: they are always concessive and can be paraphrased with a “*no matter*” clause (183b) (Izvorski 2000; van Riemsdijk 2006: 356).

- (183) a. Whatever you like, you will enjoy Ben’s cooking.  
b. No matter what you like, you will enjoy Ben’s cooking.

Concession is a type of semantic relationship between two clauses where the truth of the proposition in the main clause holds in spite of the conditions expressed by the subordinate clause (e.g. Izvorski 2000: 233; Van Valin 2006: 165). Concession is related to the semantic relationship between the two clauses, but the FRC itself is a free choice FRC in that it evokes several alternative worlds, in each of which the FRC has a different referent.

To conclude this section, I summarise the different semantic types of FRC in Table 6.1. In the following section, I examine how KR’s FRCs fit into these typologies, beginning with *sak*-relatives.

Table 6.1.: Semantic types of free relative clause

Type	Properties
Maximal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent to a definite NP.</li> <li>• Referential.</li> <li>• Refers to the largest individual of a set of individuals.</li> </ul>
Universal-like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent to a universally quantified expression.</li> <li>• Has an overt quantifier.</li> </ul>
Free choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRC has a denotation over multiple alternative worlds.</li> <li>• Variation requirement: the FRC has a different referent in each alternative world.</li> </ul>
Concessive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The type always found in free adjunct FRCs.</li> <li>• Equivalent to a <i>no matter</i> clause.</li> <li>• Truth of the main clause holds in spite of the conditions expressed in the FRC.</li> </ul>

## 6.2. *sak*, *sék*, *sat*, *sét* and *sad* relatives

In this section, I present the data on *sak* and its variants *sat*, *sék*, *sét* and *sad*, which all occur in RCs but also as possessed/demonstrative pronouns (for illustration of the latter, see section 2.3.1.2 and example (173), this chapter). *Sak* appears to have originated in a light-headed RC structure from French *ça* (DEM) + *que* (COMP). I will outline the distribution of the five forms in RCs and compare it to the distribution of these same forms in demonstratives that was outlined in section 2.3.1.2. Relevant to the analysis of these forms, the key questions to be discussed are whether *sak*, *sék*, *sat*, *sét* and *sad* really are all free variants; whether the lexical item that appears in RCs is the same item that appears in the demonstrative environment; which interpretations *sak*-relatives can receive, and what their syntactic structure is. A response to the latter question is outlined fully in section 6.5, where I present an RRG analysis; the aim of this section is to discuss the data leading to that analysis.

On the basis of my synchronic data, I argue that two different light-headed structures exist for *sak*-relatives (one being largely obsolete now), alongside a truly free FRC structure; in other words, there are, or have been over the history of KR, three distinct structures for *sak*-relatives. I speculate about what has led to this in section 6.2.1, and in section 6.2.2, I present the data leading me to propose that *sak*-relatives come in three different structural types. I will begin with an overview of the distribution of *sak* and variants in FRCs. All five variants are found in FRCs:

- (184) a. ***Sak*** *nou la bozwin pou viv lé tro sher:* (...) (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)  
FR 1PL have need to live COP too expensive  
‘What we need in order to live is too expensive: (...)’
- b. (...) *nou poua fé **sat** nou vé,* (...)   
1PL able.FUT do FR 1PL want



- ‘(...), we will be able to do what we want, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 19)
- c. *Mi rozèt pa sèt mon kamarad i di.*  
 1SG-FIN reject NEG FR POSS.1SG friend FIN say  
 ‘I don’t reject what my compatriot says.’ (Interview, Participant 3)
- d. (...) *apré sék bann gramoun-la i di.*  
 according.to FR PL old.person-DEM FIN say  
 ‘(...) according to what those elderly people say.’ (Baude 2010)
- e. *Tikok i mazine osi sad Tikarl la di ali lot-kou.*  
 little-cockerel FIN imagine also FR Little-Carl PRF say 2SG other-time  
 ‘Little-Cockerel is also thinking about what Little-Carl said the other time.’ (*Zistoir Tikok*, C Fontaine, cited by Quartier & Gauvin 2022: 238)

*Sak* and variants are not specified for animacy: they can refer to inanimates (184) and animates (185). *Sak* and variants can refer to single or plural entities.

- (185) a. *Sak la pa voulu alé, i fezé monté leskalyé.*  
 FR PRF NEG want go FIN make.IPFV climb stair  
 ‘Those who didn’t want to go, they made them go up the stairs.’  
 (Baude 2010)
- b. (...) *sat i di sa li lé manter.*  
 FR FIN say DEM 3SG COP liar  
 ‘(...), whoever/he who says that is a liar.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)
- c. *Zot i pé invit sék/sét zot i vé.*  
 3PL FIN can invite FR 3PL FIN want  
 ‘They can invite who they want.’ (Constructed; accepted in interviews)
- d. *Sad la parti lager la pwin la sas.*  
 FR PRF leave war have NEG DEF luck  
 ‘Those who went to war are unlucky.’ (Papen 1978: 328)

In the RC context, *sak* and *sat* were by far the most frequent variants in my corpus (see figures in (175)); however, in interviews, participants frequently mentioned the variants *sek* and *set*, and the interviews revealed no overall preference for any one of those four variants. Papen (1978: 327), Watbled (2021b: 82) and Quartier & Gauvin (2022: 458) list *sad* as a variant of *sak* but do not give details about how common it is. On the basis of my data, *sad* appears to be rarer in the RC context: it did not occur in my corpus, some participants rejected it in interviews and some noted that it was rare or old. It was largely younger speakers who rejected it, which suggests that it may have been more frequent in older varieties of KR; however, it clearly remains in some peoples’ grammars. I therefore treat it as a free variant of *sak* going forwards and I discuss how the five variants may have arisen in the next section.

### 6.2.1. The development of five variants in a relative and a possessed/demonstrative contexts

In section 2.3.1.2, I outlined the distribution of *sak* and variants in a possessed/demonstrative context, and in the previous section, I outlined the distribution of these same five variants in an FRC context. In this section, I will make a few remarks about how these five variants might have arisen, making clear that these are speculations since this is not a historical study.

The form *sad* likely originated in the possessed/demonstrative context from French *ça de* ‘that of’. The *sat* form plausibly arose in that same context via the devoicing of the *d* in *sad* (Watbled 2021c: 82). The form *sak* arose in the FRC context from the combination of the French demonstrative *ça* and complementiser *que* (i.e. it originated in a light-headed RC headed by *ça* (*sa*)). The variant *sat* possibly also developed in the FRC context from *sak*, via a process of assimilation to the *s* in the place of articulation. As for how the *é* variants (*sék* and *sét*) emerged, one factor influencing this vowel change may have been the French demonstrative determiner *cet/cette* ‘this’ and another may have been French *ce que* ‘what’.

It therefore looks as though there were several complementary factors working together such that these five forms emerged. The functional overlap of the *t*-forms in the demonstrative and the FRC contexts probably caused speakers to gradually analyse all five forms as free variants, which meant that *sak* took on the demonstrative function in addition to its original FRC function, and likewise *sad* emerged in the FRC context in addition to its original demonstrative function. Nevertheless, we should not forget about French influence, which could have been competing against the pressure to analyse all five forms as free variants in both contexts. My finding of a lower frequency of *sad* in an FRC context suggests that close contact with French may be offering a competing pressure against analysing the five forms as one, and instead associating the *d*-form to the contexts where French *de* would have occurred, i.e. not FRCs. In the next section, I examine the data and evaluate the structure of *sak*-relatives and whether or not the *sak* (and variants) found in FRCs is the same as the demonstrative *sak* (and variants).

### 6.2.2. Three types of *sak*-relative

#### 6.2.2.1. Light-headed relatives with *sa* as their head

On the assumption that the pronoun *sak* originated from a light-headed RC structure with French *ça* (DEM) + *que* (COMP), one of the first questions we would naturally ask is whether *sak*-relatives are still light-headed with *sa* as a light head. Certain authors, such as Chaudenson (1974: 365) and Corne (1995: 61), suggest in their

own terms that *sak*-relatives are light-headed, through their descriptions and their orthographic choices, representing *sak* as two words.<sup>92</sup>

- (186) a. *sa k lé vni a sin-zozéf*  
 DEM COMP be come to Saint-Joseph  
 ‘those who came to Saint-Joseph’ (Chaudenson 1974: 265)
- b. *sa ke moi m i vé manzé*  
 DEM COMP 1SG 1SG FIN want eat  
 ‘what I want to eat’ (Barat, Carayol & Vogel 1977: 13, cited by Corne 1995: 61)

In the written sources in my corpus, it is extremely rare for *sak* and variants to be represented as two words - in the majority of examples, native speakers represented *sak* (and variants) as one word. Of course, spelling is not a reliable way to check whether *sak* constitutes one word or two, particularly in a language that does not have an official writing system (cf. section 2.2.4), but it does give us some insight into how native speakers analyse the sequence. That *sak* and variants are considered by speakers to be one word rather than two is supported by a number of comments from interview participants, who explained that they conceive of *sak* and variants as one word.

The combination of *sa* and *k* in relative clauses may therefore have been reanalysed as *sak*. ‘Reanalysis’ is defined by Langacker (1977: 58) as “change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modifications of its surface manifestation”. Following the reanalysis of *sa ke* as *sak*, there have been surface changes, illustrated by the phonological variants *sat*, *sad*, *sét* and *sék*. Although reanalysis does not always lead to grammaticalisation, I argue that in this case, reanalysis of the two words *sa ke* into one word *sak* is resulting, or has resulted, in grammaticalisation of *sak* into a free relative pronoun - a process that is probably still ongoing. ‘Grammaticalisation’ refers to the process by which a lexical word becomes a grammatical word or when a grammatical word acquires a new grammatical function (e.g. Hopper & Traugott 1993; Diessel 1999a: 116). In this case, we are talking about the grammaticalisation of *sak* as a free relative pronoun.<sup>93</sup> Demonstratives are a well-known source for relative pronouns among other functions and in fact, Diessel (1999b: 11) describes coalescence with other free forms as a phonological criterion for diagnosing the grammaticalisation of demonstratives, which seems to fit the case of *sak*. This change means a syntactic re-bracketing such that *sa* is no longer external to the RC, illustrated for example (186b) in (187).

- (187) *sa [ke mwoi mi vé manzé] → [sak moi mi vé manzé]*

<sup>92</sup>Note that neither of Chaudenson’s or Corne’s aim is to provide a syntactic analysis.

<sup>93</sup>However, authors have had trouble tracing the lexical origin of the demonstrative itself (Diessel 1999a: 150).

Corne's (1995) and Chaudenson's (1974) descriptions of *sak*-relatives imply that they are light-headed, as Corne (1995: 61) describes *sa* as an antecedent, and both authors discuss *sak*-relatives in the context of the conditions of optionality of the relative marker *ke*, noting that *ke* is obligatory following the demonstrative *sa*. My data support Corne's and Chaudenson's observations that *sa* cannot occur as the antecedent of a zero-marked RC, and I extend this point to argue that this is so because *sa k* has formed a new pronoun in *sak* (and variants), which is required in the FRC context. In my corpus, I did find three RCs with *sa* alone, in what look to be light-headed RCs headed by *sa* and with no relative complementiser. Those three examples, given in (188), offer some counter-evidence to the argument that light-headed RCs headed by *sa* no longer exist. However, I found 253 FRCs with *sak* and variants, showing that zero-marked light-headed RCs with *sa* as their head are comparatively rare.

- (188) a. *Kann bann domoun ronpwin zazalé la koni sa i sar fé*  
 when PL people roundabout zazalé PRF know PRO FIN FUT do  
*konm prozé, (...)*  
 as project  
 'when the people from the Salazie roundabout found out what (they)  
 were going to do as a project, (...)' (Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)
- b. *Toutsat nou fé lé kalké su sa zot la desid po zot.*  
 everything 1PL do COP model on PRO 3PL PRF decide for 3PL  
 'Everything we do is modelled on what they have decided for themselves.'  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)
- c. *Ah oui sa i parté apran dann lékol maron i aprené kelke*  
 ah yes PRO FIN go learn in school maroon FIN learn some  
*shoz la.*  
 thing there  
 'Ah yes those who went to the maroon school learnt something there.'  
 (Baude 2010)

When zero-marked light-headed RCs were tested in the questionnaire, they received low acceptability judgements as compared with *sak*:

- (189) a. *Sa(k) lété prezanté lété pa voté.*  
 DEM be.IPFV present be.IPFV NEG vote  
 'What was presented was not passed.' (Accepted by 32% (of 40) with *sa*  
 and 86% (of 43) with *sak*)
- b. *Mi va maryé èk sa(k) mi vé.*  
 1SG FUT marry with DEM 1SG want  
 'I will marry who I like.' (Accepted by 36% (of 36) with *sa* and 90% (of  
 40) with *sak*)

Given the occurrence of three zero-marked light-headed *sa* RCs in the corpus, cf. (188), and the fact that such RCs were not totally rejected in the questionnaire, cf. (189), I do not rule out that there is still a light-headed RC headed by *sa*, but it seems that for the majority of speakers, *sak* is one word. It should also be pointed out that the structure with *sa* in (188) and (189) could be a new innovation rather than a remnant of an old light-headed RC structure, and *sa* could also be a new free relative pronoun.

The presence of the variants *sat*, *sét* and *sad*, i.e. non-*k* variants, offers some evidence to suggest that *sak* was reanalysed as a single unit - a new free relative pronoun - because *sak* is interchangeable with the other variants in FRCs, yet those non-*k* variants do not contain the complementiser *ke*, unless we decided to analyse *t* and *d* as complementisers or alternative realisations of *ke*. This does not seem particularly desirable as *t* and *d* are not found in a complementiser position elsewhere in the language, i.e. in complement clauses or headed RCs. They do occur in the demonstrative/possessed context, where they are obligatorily followed by either a nominal complement or adverb *là* rather than a clause (section 2.3.1.2), so a more appropriate alternative might be to analyse *k*, *t* and *d* as some kind of general linkage marker. Under that analysis, the semantic contribution of the linkage marker would be interpreted via what follows it: a nominal complement triggers a relationship of possession between the demonstrative and the complement, *là* triggers a deictic demonstrative pronoun interpretation, and if a clause follows it, then it forms a referential phrase denoting whatever satisfies the description given in the clause. Below, I argue that postulating that *k*, *t* and *d* are general linkage markers is not the best analysis.

The observation that *sak* occurs in the demonstrative/possessed context (see (173)) is further reason to believe that there does exist a form *sak* that cannot be broken down into a demonstrative pronoun and a complementiser, because it is not followed by a clause in those environments so there cannot be a complementiser contained within this *sak*. To account for this, we either have to analyse *k* as a general linkage marker (even though it is clearly more specifically a complementiser elsewhere in the language, cf. section 5.2.3), or analyse *sak* as a single unit at least in the demonstrative context. The latter is preferable for reasons outlined below.

The proposal that *k*, *t* and *d* are general linkage markers runs into trouble when we consider the following data. Example (190), in which *sat/sak* is followed by a relative complementiser *ke*, was accepted by three of my participants with *sat* (but not with *sak*, see section 6.2.2.2).

- (190) ***Sat***/***sak*** [***ke*** *mwɪn la vi yèr*] *lété sher*.  
 DEM REL 1SG PRF see yesterday be.IPFV expensive  
 ‘The one I saw yesterday was expensive.’

If *k*, *t* and *d* were some category of general linkage marker, then their job is not very well explained in examples like (190) where they occur with another linkage marker - the complementiser *ke* - which would occupy the same position in the syntactic structure.<sup>94</sup> The possibility of this structure provides support for the assumption that *k/t/d* is incorporated into a word with *sa* and there is no need to postulate the general linkage marker. We saw with headed RCs in chapter 5 that a relative marker is not required in KR so the language allows this type of linkage without a linkage marker. Since *k/t/d* markers do not tell us anything about the relationship between *sa* and what follows, we may as well assume that they are incorporated into one word with *sa*, even if their origins were in a linkage marker that did indicate the type of linkage (i.e. *ke* for complementation and *de* for possession).

To provide an interim summary, *sak* and variants seem to have originated from a light-headed RC structure (*sa* DEM-*k* COMP), but the synchronic data suggest that this light-headed structure is now rare. Example (190) indicates that a different light-headed structure, headed by the new demonstrative pronoun *sat* (and variants), exists, and this structure is the topic of the next section.

#### 6.2.2.2. Light-headed relatives with *sat* and variants as their head

The question addressed in section 6.2.2.1 was whether *sak*-relatives form light-headed relatives with a light head *sa*, but the fact that *sak*, *sat*, *sék*, *sét* or *sad* themselves are demonstrative pronouns in KR (cf. sections 2.3.1.2 and 6.2.1) - good candidates for a light head - raises the question of whether in fact there are light-headed relatives headed by *sak* and variants.<sup>95</sup> Judgements of the constructed example (190) suggests that there are. However, it seems to be rare because in the corpus and, to my knowledge, the literature, I have not found any attestations of an RC with *sat/sak/sad/sék/sét* followed by a complementiser *ke*, like example (190). Interviews with native speakers found that examples like (190) are acceptable with *sat* for a non-negligible number of speakers (9/14 speakers accepted a sentence with *sat ke*), although *sak* is rejected by all but one when followed by a complementiser *ke*.<sup>96</sup> An implication of the judgements of example (190) is that we could in theory propose that all *sak*-relatives are light-headed RCs with *sak* and variants as their head, and that usually they occur with zero relative marking, as represented in (191).

<sup>94</sup>A 'clause linkage marker' in my RRG analysis, cf. section 6.5.

<sup>95</sup>Thanks to Jean-Philippe Watbled for raising this as a hypothesis.

<sup>96</sup>Speakers who accepted the *sat ke* structure were concentrated more in the north of the island, but it was not a large enough scale study to make a generalisation. A hypothesis for future research is thus that the availability of a light-headed structure with *sat* as the demonstrative head and a complementiser *ke*, is a feature of northern varieties of KR.

- (191) **Sat/sak** [Ø mwin la vi yèr] lété sher.  
 DEM REL 1SG PRF see yesterday be.IPFV expensive  
 ‘The one I saw yesterday was expensive.’

Given that headed RCs do not require a relative marker, and in fact usually prefer to omit it, this would be in keeping with the patterns of relative marking in headed RCs in the language (see section 5.2.2). Additional evidence, alongside the judgements of example (190), that indicates that light-headed RCs headed by *sak* and variants exist too comes from example (192), which was produced by an interview participant.

- (192) Lo fiy, **sat/sak** pou **ki** ou ékri in shanson, lé zèn.  
 DEF girl DEM for who 2SG write INDF song COP young  
 ‘The girl, the one for whom you are writing a song, is young.’

In example (192), *sak/sat* is the head of a light-headed RC in which the relative pronoun *ki*, whose antecedent is *sak/sat*, functions as the object of a preposition. The presence of *ki* indicates that *sat/sak* is not a free relative pronoun in this sentence and that *k/t* is not a complementiser, but instead, that *sat/sak* is occurring in its other function as a demonstrative pronoun (cf. section 2.3.1.2), which is co-referent with the preceding NP *lo fiy*.

Examples with a complementiser (190) or relative pronoun (192) in addition to *sak/sat* are rare but offer support for the argument that *sak* and variants can occur as the demonstrative head of light-headed RCs. The question is whether *sak* and variants are still demonstrative heads of light-headed RCs in examples where there is no relative marker, or are instead free relative pronouns. Some evidence for the former comes from an examination of the contexts in which *sak*-relatives can occur: in some instances of *sak*-relatives in the corpus, *sak* and variants display some of the pragmatic uses of a demonstrative, thus suggesting that these RCs are indeed headed by the demonstrative pronoun.

Demonstratives are a diverse class, but one which are argued to be universal to human language (Diessel & Coventry 2020). Diessel (1999b) and Himmelmann (1996) distinguish four major pragmatic uses of demonstratives. The first, which Diessel (1999b) argues is the most basic function of demonstratives is exophoric, referring to an entity in the speech situation (e.g. **this** cut on my leg hurts). The other three uses, which Himmelmann (1996) argues are equally basic uses are endophoric: anaphoric/tracking (refer to a previous NP, e.g. *I saw a woman on the street yesterday. **This** woman came up to me and...*), discourse deictic (refer anaphorically or cataphorically to a proposition in the discourse, e.g. *My friend got made redundant yesterday but they told her by email. **That** really shocked me.*) and recognitional (have a referent whose identity is recovered via shared knowledge, e.g. ***those** people we met the other day*).

*Sat* occurs in an anaphoric use in example (192). In that example, the structure is clearly light-headed (due to the presence of *ki*), but we also observe *sak* and variants with an anaphoric use in examples with no relative marking, such as that in (193).

- (193) *Navé dot té i koz pa dutou-dutou kréol, kisoï sak*  
 have.IPFV other IPFV FIN speak NEG at.all-at.all creole that.it.be DEM  
*zot paran lavé pa transmèt azot la lang, (...)*  
 POSS.3PL parent have.IPFV NEG pass.on 3PL DET language  
 ‘There were others who didn’t speak Creole at all, be that those whose  
 parents had not passed on the language, (...)’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)

Furthermore, in interviews, when presented with examples like (194), the majority of participants accepted them.

- (194) *Lo ti fiy, sak i shant, na in zoli vwa.*  
 DEF little girl DEM FIN sing have INDF pretty voice  
 ‘The little girl, the one who is singing, has a pretty voice.’ (Accepted by 6/8,  
 75%)

In examples like (193) and (194), *sat/sak* has an anaphoric use, so they are compatible with the idea that *sak/sat* is a demonstrative head, which is co-referential with an antecedent NP. The recurring comments from interviews concerning example (194) were that there has to be several girls, and the RC identifies which girl is being referred to.

According to Diessel (1999a: 110), grammaticalisation of demonstratives into other grammatical items originates from the endophoric uses of demonstratives (see functions listed above). Examples (193) and (194) indicate that demonstrative *sak* does occur with an anaphoric use, creating the environment for grammaticalisation to potentially occur. In his discussion of the grammaticalisation process of demonstratives into other functional words, Diessel (1999b) points out a structure that he calls ‘determinative’, and whose presence he considers to be an early sign of grammaticalisation. In determinatives, the demonstrative acts as the head of an RC, but does not have any of the four aforementioned functions of a demonstrative (exophoric, anaphoric, discourse deictic, recognitional). Himmelmann (1997), who also acknowledges determinatives, argues that the head is semantically empty and serves as an anchor for the following RC. An English example is in (195).

- (195) **Those** who backed a similar plan last year hailed the message.

There are plenty of examples of this type in KR, where *sak* strays from the demonstrative functions listed above and serves rather as an anchor for the RC: an example is in (196).



- (196) *Zot i protèz pa **sak** lé atèr.*  
 3PL FIN protect NEG PRO COP on.ground  
 ‘They do not protect those who are on the ground.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

It is clear that *sak* and variants have become the basic form for forming FRCs in KR (see figures in (175)), which suggests that the grammaticalisation of these free relative pronouns is fairly advanced. To summarise, I have shown that there are RCs whose structure is clearly light-headed because demonstrative *sak* is accompanied by a relative marker in a RC (cf. (190), (192)), and that there are other examples where, although there is no relative marker, the context indicates that *sak* is being used as a demonstrative, exhibiting the pragmatic functions of a demonstrative. However, it is clear that *sak* has grammaticalised as a free relative pronoun in the FRC context, or that this process is occurring, because not all examples exhibit the core pragmatic functions of a demonstrative. In the next section, I offer further arguments that a truly free FRC structure with *sak* and variants as free relative pronouns co-exists with the light-headed RCs described in this section.

### 6.2.2.3. The emergence of new free relative pronouns

The evidence considered in the previous section pointed towards the conclusion that *sak*-relatives can be light-headed, with *sak* and variants as demonstrative heads. The *sak*-headed structure is a development from the original *sa*-headed structure, which is largely non-existent now (cf. section 6.2.2.1). However, I will argue that although the light-headed structures do exist, so too does a true FRC structure. I would argue that two simultaneous processes of grammaticalisation have been working towards the same result: *sak* and variants being analysed as true free relative pronouns. Firstly, there was *sa + ke* from the original light-headed RC (section 6.2.2.1), which contributed to the development of the new demonstrative pronoun *sak*, and secondly, that newer demonstrative pronoun *sak* then occurring as the head of a second light-headed RC structure (section 6.2.2.2) has subsequently contributed to the development of a new free relative pronoun. Diessel (1999a) reminds us that it is constructions that grammaticalise, not just words, and this combination of two different processes of grammaticalisation within the same construction very much supports Diessel’s point. In this section, I offer evidence that truly free *sak*-relatives do exist.

According to my participants, example (197) is compatible with a reading where the speaker does not know or care what their family wants, i.e. the speaker can be expressing ignorance and indifference, which are the inferences associated with a free choice interpretation (cf. section 6.1.2), although there is no explicit free choice marking in example (197).

(197) If I won the *Freedomillion*<sup>97</sup>...

*Mi asétré sak/sat/sét/sék/sad mon famiy i vé*  
 1SG-FIN buy.COND FR POSS.1SG family FIN want

‘I’d buy whatever my family want.’

In interviews, I found that *sak*-relatives can readily receive a free choice reading, another example being in (198).

(198) *Ma maryé èk sak/sat/sét/sék/sad mi vé.*  
 1SG-FUT marry with FR 1SG-FIN want

‘I will marry whoever I like.’

World knowledge tells us that humans get married, so we would expect *sak* to refer to humans, but participants frequently explained that it could really mean anything - a dog, a chair, whatever - so would be used to emphasise a point about the speaker marrying truly whoever/whatever they please.

Translation tasks (cf. section 4.3.2.3) also indicated that free choice meanings are available for *sak*-relatives. When participants translated the French sentence (199a) into KR, sentences such as that in (199b) were produced, with *sat* having a free choice interpretation.

(199) a. *Il tombe amoureux de quiconque il rencontre.*  
 3SG fall.PRS.3SG in.love of whoever 3SG meet.3SG

‘He falls in love with whoever he meets.’

French

b. *Lu tomb amoro de sat lu kwaz.*  
 3SG fall in.love of FR 3SG cross

‘He falls in love with whoever he meets.’

KR

Furthermore, for a considerable number of speakers, plain *sak*-relatives are even possible in free adjunct FRCs, which reportedly do not allow light-headed RCs (Izvorski 2000: 232; cf. section 6.1.2). For example, participants were asked to translate the French sentence in (200a), and two participants translated it into KR with *sat/sét*, exemplified in (200b) and (200c).<sup>98</sup>

(200) a. *Quoi qu’il ait pu arriver dans*  
 what that=3SG have.SBJV.3SG can.PST.PTCP happen.INF in  
*le passé, il faut pas traiter des gens*  
 DEFpast 3SG must.PRS.3SG NEG treat.INF INDF people.PL like  
*comme ça.*  
 that

‘Whatever happened in the past, you cannot treat people like that.’

French

<sup>97</sup>A cash prize game played on a local radio station.

<sup>98</sup>Alternative ways of expressing free choice are explored in section 6.4.

- b. *Sat la ariv lontan, trèt pa domoune komsa.*  
 FR PRF happen before treat NEG people like.that  
 ‘Whatever happened in the past, you cannot treat people like that.’
- c. *Sét la pu arivé dan lo pasé, i fo pa trété lé jan koma.*  
 FR PRF can happen in DEF past FIN must NEG treat DEF.PL people like.that  
 ‘Whatever happened in the last, you cannot treat people like that.’

The translation task thus indicated that a free choice interpretation is available with plain *sak*-relatives, which seems to dispute Izvorski’s (2000: 232) claim that an *ever*-type particle is required in the FRC. It should be noted that *sak* and variants are compatible with free choice markers, which will be discussed in section 6.4.

Translations in the opposite direction also indicated that *sak*-relatives can receive a free choice interpretation. For example, participants translated (201a) into French with sentences such as that in (201b), which has explicit free choice marking (*peu importe* ‘no matter’).

- (201) a. *Sak la ariv aou dan lo pasé, i fo pa trèt domoune koma.*  
 FR PRF happen 2SG in DEF past FIN must NEG treat people like.that  
 ‘Whatever happened to you in the past, you cannot treat people like that.’
- b. *Peu importe ce qui t’est arrivé dans le passé, c’est pas la peine de traiter des gens comme ça.*  
 little matter DEM REL 2SG=AUX.3SG happen.PST.PTCP in DEF past it=be.3SG NEG DEF.F trouble to treat INDF people like DEM  
 ‘Whatever happened to you in the past, there’s no point treating people like that.’ French

Examples (197), (198), (199b), (200b), and (201a) lend support for the argument that KR does have a free relative pronoun, *sak/sat/sét/sad/sék*, forming true FRCs rather than light-headed RCs with a demonstrative head, particularly since they can occur in free adjunct FRCs, in which they are not referential, which is a property of demonstratives.

To conclude my discussion of *sak*-relatives, I have argued that we are seeing two simultaneous channels of grammaticalisation within the FRC construction, which are working in harmony towards the emergence of a true free relative pronoun *sak* (and variants). The first channel of grammaticalisation, involving *ça* and *ke* (section 6.2.2.1), is advanced: few speakers allow relatives with *sa* as a light head

without being followed by *ke*. The reanalysis of *sa ke* into *sak* led to the emergence of phonological variants like *sat*, which was also emerging in parallel from a possessed/demonstrative context from *ça de*. These two factors led to an analysis of the five forms *sak*, *sat*, *sad*, *sét* and *sék* as new demonstrative pronouns at the same time that they were emerging as relative pronouns. The second channel of grammaticalisation is that where the new demonstrative pronouns, *sak* and variants, occur as the head of light-headed RCs themselves, which are usually zero-marked but can occur with an overt complementiser *ke* (section 6.2.2.2). I presented evidence that *sak* also occurs in RCs where it clearly does not have a demonstrative function and looks, instead, to be a true free relative pronoun. As such, I have argued that there are three structures in existence for *sak*-relatives: two light headed structures (one with *sa* (illustrated by (188a), (188c)) and one with *sak/sat/sad/sét/sék* (illustrated by (191), (192), (194)) at their respective heads) and one truly free FRC structure (illustrated by (197), (198), (199b), (200b), (201a)). The original light-headed structure is now largely obsolete.

Although it could be argued that a single analysis for *sak*-relatives would be neater, we would not be able to account for the diverse set of data, which is reflective of the high degree of variation in the language and the fact that these structures are in the process of grammaticalisation, which can take a long time, might be at different stages for different linguistic groups or individuals on the island, and will not necessarily ever reach a final, stable stage given the high degree of variation in KR. In the next section, I turn to FRCs formed with interrogative pronouns.

### 6.3. Free relatives formed with interrogative pronouns

The most frequent form of FRC in KR is without doubt *sak*-relatives. However, relatives with a *wh*-pronoun are possible (cf. examples (175g)-(175l)). In this section I explore the distribution of interrogative pronouns in FRCs, limiting my discussion to two *wh*-words: *kosa* ‘what’ and *kisa* ‘who’. The acceptability of *kisa* and *kosa* is far lower than that of *sak* and its equivalents in FRCs, but they are accepted by some speakers in certain contexts and are attested, albeit rarely, in the corpus.<sup>99</sup> There remains some uncertainty about which contexts do permit *kisa* and *kosa* - a matter which is complicated by the high degree of variation in native speaker judgements. Variation in these judgements can be seen as a result of the combination of a few factors: firstly, there is a high degree of variation in the language - speakers do have

<sup>99</sup>The acceptability of *ousa* ‘where’, *kansa* ‘when’ and *koman* ‘how’, illustrated in (175j), (175k) and (175l) respectively, is not necessarily low, but was not investigated in the same detail for reasons of time. For reasons of space, I do not discuss those *wh*-pronouns any further.

different individual grammars and this is reflected in their judgements. Secondly, speakers can be inconsistent with their judgements and do not always accurately report their own language use (see section 4.3.2.2). Despite these issues, I am able to make some claims in the following sections about the acceptability of *kisa* and *kosa* in FRCs. The main claim is that the syntactic function of the FRC within the sentence is the most important factor affecting acceptability of both pronouns: *kisa* and *kosa* are more acceptable in FRCs which are objects than those which are subjects or free adjuncts. For object FRCs, the syntactic function of the relative pronoun within the FRC also affects its acceptability: FRCs with object relative pronouns are more acceptable than with subject relative pronouns. The second claim I make is that there are lexical constraints at play at least for *kosa*: *kosa* is more likely to occur in FRCs when the clause is the object of certain types of verb: verbs of cognition and verbs of perception. As for *kisa*, at least for a subsection of participants, it appears to be more acceptable when a free choice interpretation is available.

### 6.3.1. *kosa*

The syntactic function of the FRC in the sentence and the syntactic function of *kosa* within the FRC has a considerable impact on the acceptability of *kosa* in FRCs. In the corpus, no FRC introduced by *kosa* functioned as a subject or free adjunct in the sentence, and constructed examples like those in (202) were accepted at low rates.

- (202) a. \**Kosa* *li fé kwi lé plat.*  
           what 3SG make cook COP tasteless  
           ‘What he cooks is tasteless.’ (Accepted by 3/10, 30%)
- b. \**Kosa té i don ali pou manzé, li té i plèr.*  
           what IPFV FIN give 3SG to eat 3SG IPFV FIN cry  
           ‘Whatever he was given to eat, he cried.’ (Accepted by 2/8, 25%)

Accompanying the rejections of examples like (202a) and (202b) were comments such as “*kosa* is a question word”, suggesting that there may be processing reasons for the rejection of *kosa* in subject and free adjunct FRCs. Subject and free adjunct FRCs occur sentence-initially and therefore in those FRCs, *kosa* occurs in the same position as a question word.<sup>100</sup> I will point out here that *kosa* is perfectly grammatical in free adjunct FRCs with the addition of a free choice element such as *ninport* or *pé import*.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Nevertheless, this constraint does not reflect a cross-linguistic trend; other languages permit *wh*-pronouns sentence-initially in non-interrogative sentences.

<sup>101</sup>On very rare occasions, some participants actually did produce *kosa* in their translations from French to KR. For example:

- (203) *Nimport kosa li la di aou té ninport kwé.*  
 FC what 3SG PRF say 2SG be.IPFV FC what  
 ‘Whatever he said to you, it was rubbish.’ (Participant 26)

On one hand, this might lend support to the idea that a sentence-initial *wh*-word causes speakers to expect a question, so non-question *wh*-words in this position cause processing issues; on the other hand, it might rather lend support to Izvorski’s (2000) argument that explicit free choice markers are required in free adjunct FRCs, and plain FRCs are not permitted.<sup>102</sup>

While plain subject and free adjunct FRCs with *kosa* are ungrammatical for most speakers, object FRCs are not: all *kosa* FRCs found in my corpus were objects of a matrix verb, like example (204).

- (204) *I fo zame nou oubli kosa Verges èk Lepervanche la di*  
 FIN must never 1PL forget what Verges and Lepervanches PRF say  
*dovan lo Gran Lasanblé, (...)*  
 before DEF Grand Assembly  
 ‘We must never forget what Verges and Lepervanche said before the Grand Assembly, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 20)

The FRC in (204) is the object of the matrix verb *oubli* ‘forget’ and within the RC itself, *kosa* functions as an object. However, when the function of *kosa* within the RC is a subject, its acceptability is reduced. For example, the constructed sentence in (205a), in which *kosa* is the subject of the FRC, was only accepted by a third of speakers, while the sentence in example (205b), in which *kosa* is the object of the FRC, was accepted by half.

- (205) a. ? *Nou va dabor manz kosa lé fré.*  
 1PL FUT first eat what COP cold  
 ‘We will eat what is cold first.’ (Accepted by 5/15 33%)

- 
- (ii) *kosa la ariv aou dan out pasé, trèt pa domoun koma*  
 what PRF happen 2SG in your past treat NEG people like.that  
 ‘Whatever happened to you in the past, don’t treat people like that.’

This was very rare though and one concern with this is that those participants were primed by my prior interview questions, or that they are actually intending this as a question in the initial clause. The point remains that for the majority of speakers, *kosa* is not possible in free adjuncts without a free choice marker, yet we should not rule out that for some speakers it is acceptable.

<sup>102</sup>Given the rare acceptability of *kisa* and *kosa* in FRCs, one of my lines of investigation was whether they are reserved for a particular semantic interpretation, such as the free choice one (cf. section 6.1.2). I therefore did not take Izvorski’s (2000) finding that they require an overt free choice marker for granted as I wondered whether perhaps the use of a certain pronoun (*kisa/kosa*) could constitute the free choice marking if those pronouns are exclusively found with this interpretation. As it happens, this did not appear to be the case. More will be said on free choice strategies in section 6.4.

- b. *Nou va manz kosa domoune i amèn.*  
 1PL FUT eat what people FIN bring  
 ‘We will eat what people bring.’ (Accepted by 6/12 50%)

As noted at the start of this section, the acceptability of *kosa* is in part speaker-dependent and it seems that speakers have different acceptability cut-off points regarding which syntactic functions they will accept *kosa* in. For some speakers, *kosa* is virtually not in their grammar as a free relative pronoun; for others, it is in free variation with *sak* as an object free relative pronoun in object FRCs, and for others still, it is acceptable even in FRCs that do not function as objects. The extent to which there is free variation between *kosa* and *sak* varies for different speakers. This can be represented by the scale of acceptability I propose in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2.: Acceptability of *kosa* vis-à-vis syntactic function

Syntactic function:	of FR clause	of <i>kosa</i> within FR clause
High acceptability	Object	Object
		Subject
Low acceptability	Free adjunct or subject	

Aside from syntactic function and speaker-variation, there is one remaining factor that I argue has an impact on the acceptability of *kosa* in FRCs: the matrix verb of which the *kosa*-clause is an object. Table 6.3 gives the matrix verbs of the clauses that are introduced with *kosa* in the corpus.<sup>103</sup> The Table suggests that there may be a lexical constraint on the occurrence of *kosa*: it is more likely to occur with verbs of cognition than other types of verb.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Given the scarcity of examples with *kosa* that are not in a direct interrogative context in my corpus, I expanded the materials for this investigation to include the passages printed in the 800-page pedagogical grammar by Quartier & Gauvin (2022). These authors use a corpus of KR literature, from which they include passages for the grammatical lessons in the book.

<sup>104</sup>Due to the nature of the corpus, it was not feasible to check the frequencies of the verbs in the entire corpus. Therefore, I cannot rule out that it is just that these verbs are more frequent in the corpus anyway.

Table 6.3.: Matrix verbs of clauses introduced by *kosa* in the corpus

	Matrix verb	Tokens
<b>cognition</b>	<i>koné</i> ‘know’ (8); <i>kompran</i> ‘understand’ (4); <i>sé</i> ‘know’ (3); <i>mazin</i> ‘imagine’ (2); <i>réfléshi</i> ‘think/reflect’ (1); <i>kalkil</i> ‘work out’ (1); <i>oubli</i> ‘forget’ (1)	20
<b>perception</b>	<i>oir</i> ‘look’ (4); <i>gard</i> ‘watch’ (1)	5
<b>speech</b>	<i>di</i> ‘say’ (3); <i>d’mandé</i> ‘ask’ (1)	4
<b>other</b>	<i>partaz</i> ‘share’ (2); <i>rod</i> ‘look for’ (1)	3

Of the verbs in Table 6.3, *koné* ‘know’, *di* ‘say’, *oubli* ‘forget’ and *mazin* ‘imagine’ also occur in the corpus with a *sak*-relative as their object:

- (206) a. (...) *ou i koné sak m’i shant pou ou.*  
 2SG FIN know what 1SG=FIN sing for 2SG  
 ‘(...), you know what I’m singing for you.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 6)
- b. *mi laiss aou di sat ou vé.*  
 1SG-FIN let 2SG say what 2SG want  
 ‘I’ll let you say what you want.’ (SMS)
- c. (...) *oubli pa sak nout momon la aprann anou.*  
 forget NEG what our mother PRF teach 1PL  
 ‘(...) don’t forget what our mother taught us.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)
- d. *Tikok i mazine osi sad Tikarl la di ali*  
 Little-cockerel FIN imagine also what Little-Carl PRF say 2SG  
*lot-kou.*  
 other-time  
 ‘Little-Cockerel is also thinking about what Little-Carl said to him the other time.’ (*Zistoir Tikok*, C Fontaine, cited by Quartier & Gauvin (2022: 238))

The interchangeability of *sak* and *kosa* in examples with a matrix predicate that is a verb of cognition was investigated in interviews. Participants accepted both *sak* and *kosa* in example (207) and reported no difference in meaning.

- (207) *Mi rapèl pu kosa/sak mwìn la aprann lékol.*  
 1SG-FIN remember NEG what 1SG PRF learn school  
 ‘I can’t remember what I learnt at school’

Recalling the discussion in the introduction of this chapter, the distinction between indirect interrogatives and FRCs is particularly difficult with certain predicates that can take either questions or NPs. Indeed, many of those verbs of cognition can take



either. This introduces the question of whether in fact the distinction between *sak*-relatives and what look like FRCs formed with *wh*-pronouns marks a formal distinction between FRCs and indirect interrogatives in KR. It is plausible that there is in fact a subtle semantic difference between *sak* and *kosa* in example (207), but participants might be unable to articulate it due to its subtlety.

However, the proposal that acceptable *kosa* FRCs are in fact indirect interrogatives does not hold when we consider that one of the only examples with *kosa* with a high acceptance rate in interviews was that in (208).

- (208) *Mi èm byin kosa ou la aseté!*  
 1SG-FIN like well what 2SG PRF bought  
 ‘I like what you bought!’ (Accepted by 14/16, 88%)

The verb *like* does not take questions, so we cannot propose that the *kosa* clause in example (208) is an indirect interrogative. I propose the following conclusion for now: *wh*-pronouns are permitted in indirect interrogatives but their context of use is expanding into the FRC domain. This would explain why *wh*-pronouns are most highly attested with matrix verbs like *know*, which can take questions, and are uncontroversially accepted in examples like (207). This proposal would also explain why *kosa* is most acceptable in clauses which are objects of a matrix verb, as this is the syntactic position in which indirect interrogative clauses occur, so it is logical that they would extend their function as free relative pronouns in this position before, perhaps, eventually becoming acceptable in other positions. In the next section, I add a brief note on an alternative form for *kosa*: *kwé* ‘what’.

### 6.3.2. *kwé*

The form *kwé* ‘what’ is a variant of *kosa* but is even rarer in FRCs in the corpus, only occurring four times.<sup>105</sup>

- (209) (...) *aou peu cherché kwé ou la bezwin.*  
 2SG can search what 2SG have need  
 ‘(...) you can look for what you need.’ (Baude 2010)

I was unable to investigate this pronoun in detail due to time constraints, but I can make some observations. For some speakers, *kwé* is of a different register to *kosa*: it is more informal and for some but not all, less polite. *Kwé* is equally unacceptable in subject and free adjunct FRCs:

- (210) a. \**Kwé li fé kwi lé plat.*  
 what 3SG make cook COP tasteless  
 ‘What he cooks is tasteless.’ (Accepted by 1/4, 25%)

<sup>105</sup>Note that *kwé* is common in interrogatives though.

- b. \* *Kwé* Marianne la asté, mi pari aou ke sa i fatig  
 what Marianne PRF buy 1SG-FIN bet 2SG COMP that FIN tire  
 la pos.  
 the purse  
 ‘Whatever Marianne bought, I bet you it is expensive.’ (Accepted by  
 0/1)

*Kwé* seems to be less acceptable than *kosa* in object FRCs. For example, *kwé* was rejected by the majority of participants in example (211), where *kosa* was almost unanimously accepted (see (208)).

- (211) *Mi èm byin kwé ou la asté!*  
 1SG-FIN like well what 2SG PRF buy  
 ‘I like what you bought!’ (Accepted by 1/6, 17%)

As I established above, example (211) has a matrix predicate that does not take questions. *Kwé* was accepted in example (212), with a matrix clause predicate that does take questions.

- (212) *Mi rapèl pu kwé mwìn la aprann lékol.*  
 1SG-FIN remember NEG what 1SG PRF learn school  
 ‘I can’t remember what I learnt at school.’ (accepted by 4/6, 67%)

Therefore, it could be that *kwé* has not encroached in the FRC context as much as *kosa* has. Finally, there could be other differences in their distribution in that when the form *kwé* occurs in an FRC, it can occur in-situ:

- (213) (...) *Serge Sinamalé la éspliké koman zot la fonksioné parlaba, kisa*  
 Serge Sinamalé PRF explain how 3PL PRF function that.way who  
*zot la vi é sirtou té kwé zot resanti (...)*  
 3PL PRF see and especially COP.IPFV what POSS.3SG feeling  
 ‘(...) Serge Sinamalé explained how they functioned there, who they saw, and  
 in particular what their feelings were (...)’ (Lit. it was what their feelings’)  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

A parallel in-situ structure has been noticed in Reunion French (214a), and is discussed in Ledegen (2007, 2016).

- (214) a. *Je (ne) sais pas ce que c’est.*  
 1SG NEG know.1SG NEG what it-be.3SG  
 Standard French  
 b. *Je (ne) sais pas c’est quoi.*  
 1SG NEG know.1SG NEG it-be.3SG what  
 ‘I don’t know what it is.’  
 Reunion French

According to Ledegen (2007: 15), this in-situ structure is not sociolinguistically marked in Reunion French, while it is in standard French. In fact, Jean-Philippe Watbled (p.c) points out that it is the default option in Reunion French. Unfortunately, an investigation of this construction in KR was unfeasible in the limited time for interviews but should be considered in future research.

### 6.3.3. *kisa*

Similarly to *kosa*, *kisa* is an interrogative pronoun that has low acceptability in most FRC contexts as compared with *sak* and variants. In the literature, *kisa* is hardly acknowledged as a free relative pronoun. Papen (1978: 327) gives one example, where *kisa* is followed by a relative complementiser *ke*, and he translates the relative pronoun as *who/what*.

- (215) *Li koné pa kisa ki pas.*  
 3SG know NEG REL REL happen  
 ‘He doesn’t know what is happening.’ (Papen 1978: 328)

Papen (1978) puts a question mark following his example (215), but offers no explanation. *Kisa* seems to rarely occur followed by *ke* as in (215) in modern KR, but in this section I provide evidence that *kisa* alone can occur as a free relative pronoun.<sup>106</sup> However, *kisa* is restricted to human referents, so an interpretation of *kisa* as ‘what’ would be unexpected in modern-day KR. Evidence that *kisa* is reserved for human referents comes from my questionnaire, in which *kisa* was virtually totally rejected in the inanimate example (216), where *kosa* and *sak* received favourable judgements, but *kisa* received high ratings in the animate example (217).

- (216) *nou poua fé \*kisa/kosa/sak nou vé.*  
 1PL can.FUT do what 1PL want  
 ‘We will be able to do what we want.’  
 Acceptance rates: *kisa* 5% (of 37); *sak* 92% (of 39); *kosa* 67% (of 36)
- (217) *Mi va maryé èk kisa mi vé.*  
 1SG FUT marry with who 1SG want  
 ‘I will marry who I want.’  
 Accepted by 85% (of 34)

<sup>106</sup>I found one example with *kisa ke* (iii) in the older section of the corpus - interviews recorded in the 1970s which belong to the Baude (2010) corpus.

(iii) *la parti par kisa ke la koni*  
 PRF leave by who COMP PRF know  
 ‘(She) went with who (she) knew.’

In this section, I outline what can be said of *kisa*'s distribution in FRCs, reminding the reader of the comments made in the introduction to this section about varied acceptability judgements. Like *kosa*, *kisa* was not found in the corpus in a subject or free adjunct FRC, and was also rejected by the majority of participants from subject (218a) and free adjunct FRCs (218b) in interviews.

- (218) a. \* ***Kisa*** *i giny fé kwi manzé va amin in nafèr.*  
 who FIN can do cook food FUT bring INDF thing  
 Intended: 'Whoever/those who can cook will bring something.'  
 (Accepted by 3/15, 20%)
- b. \* ***Kisa*** *i vyin, mwin sra kontan.*  
 who FIN come 1SG be.FUT happy  
 Intended: 'Whoever comes, I will be happy.'  
 (Accepted by 2/12, 17%)

Like for *kosa*, if a free choice marker is added to *kisa* in the free adjunct FRC, *kisa* becomes grammatical.

- (219) *Pé import/Ninport kisa i vyin, mwin sra kontan.*  
 little matter who FIN come 1SG be.FUT happy  
 'Whoever comes, I will be happy.'  
 (Accepted by 9/9)

There were only 10 examples of *kisa* as free relative pronoun in my corpus, but just like for *kosa*, the examples of *kisa* were all found in object FRCs.<sup>107</sup>

- (220) a. *Si ankor ou di amwin kisa ou lété (...)*  
 if again 2SG say 1SG who 2SG be.IPFV  
 'If again you tell me who you were (...)' (Radio)
- b. *Serge Sinamalé la éspliké koman zot la fonksioné parlaba, kisa*  
 Serge Sinamalé PRF explain how 3PL PRF function that.way who  
*zot la vi, (...)*  
 3PL PRF see  
 'Serge Sinamalé explained how they functioned there, who they saw,  
 (...)'
- (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

Interestingly, all but one *kisa*-clause was the complement of a verb also listed in Table 6.3: *koné* 'know', *di* 'say', *gard* 'look'. The only example that did not feature one of those verbs is given in example (220b), where the matrix verb is *éspliké* 'explain' and thus is a verb of speech, which fits into the groups of verbs in Table 6.3.

<sup>107</sup>As with *kosa*, I expanded the corpus to include the passages printed in Quartier & Gauvin (2022), due to low numbers of examples of *kisa*. See footnote 103.

The hypothesis made for *kosa* in section 6.3.1, that this pronoun originates in an indirect interrogative clause but is encroaching into the FRC environment, may apply to *kisa* too.

Like for *kosa* (cf. Table 6.2), the syntactic function of the pronoun within the FRC also affects the acceptability of *kisa*. For example, changing example (221a) such that *kisa* was a subject rather than an object in the RC (221b) significantly reduced its acceptance: while (221a) was accepted by all participants asked, less than half accepted (221b).

- (221) a. *Zot i pé invit **kisa** zot i vé.*  
 3PL FIN can invite who 3PL FIN want  
 ‘They can invite who they want.’  
 (Accepted by 30/30)
- b. *?Zot i pé invit **kisa** i èm dansé.*  
 3PL FIN can invite who FIN like danse  
 ‘They can invite whoever/those who like to dance.’  
 (Accepted by 12/25, 48%)

There are clearly syntactic constraints at play, affecting the type of FRC in which *kisa* is permitted, but I will argue that, for some speakers, there are also semantic constraints on the occurrence of *kisa* as a free relative pronoun. The only examples of FRCs with *kisa* that were accepted unanimously were those in (222), which are clearly not indirect interrogatives because their matrix verbs *invite* and *marry* do not take questions.

- (222) a. *Zot i pé invit **kisa** zot i vé.*  
 3PL FIN can invite who 3PL FIN want  
 ‘They can invite who they want.’
- b. *Ma maryé èk **kisa** mi vé.*  
 1SG.FUT marry with who 1SG-FIN want  
 ‘I will marry who I want.’

Examples (222a) and (222b) are ones whose context favours a free choice reading, or at least have that reading available. This raised the question of whether perhaps *kisa* is restricted to a free choice reading, and that it was not actually a syntactic constraint against *kisa* FRCs in subject position. However, this was not found to be the case, as example (223), where the ignorance and indifference interpretations (associated with the free choice reading) were made clear to participants, is still unacceptable.

- (223) \****Kisa** la fé lo krim i sava prizon lontan.*  
 who PRF do DET crime FIN go prison long.time

Intended: ‘Whoever has done the crime is going to prison for a long time.’  
 (Accepted by 3/13, 23%)

Attempts were also made to achieve the free choice reading by modifying the sentence, including the tense of the verb, such that the sentence does not refer to a specific crime and is generic, but example (224) was also rejected.

- (224) \* *Kisa va fé krim koma va rès prizon lontan.*  
 who FUT do crime like.that FUT go prison long.time  
 Intended: ‘Whoever does a crime like that will stay in prison for a long time.’

The hypothesis I tentatively put forward is that for certain speakers, but certainly not all, the free choice context is favoured for *kisa*, but this constraint works alongside the syntactic constraints disfavouring *kisa*-clauses as subjects and the pronoun itself as a subject in the FRC. We can summarise the constraints with a modification to the acceptability scale for *kosa* in Table 6.2: the addition of a semantic dimension.

Table 6.4.: Acceptability of *kisa* vis-à-vis syntax and semantics

Syntactic function:	of FR clause	in FR clause	Interpretation
High acceptability	Object	Object	Free choice
		Subject	
Low acceptability	Free adjunct/ subject	Subject/object	Specific

KR is not the only language in which restrictions against plain *wh*-words in subject FRCs exist, which leads to the question of whether there are any cross-linguistic trends at play. In English too, there is significantly reduced acceptability of *who* in FRCs when *who* functions as the subject of the FRC, regardless of whether the FRC is the subject or object of the matrix clause verb (Caponigro 2003: 23):

- (225) a. ?? Who doesn’t sleep enough feels tired the following morning.  
 b. ?? I admire who works hard.  
 c. I will marry who you choose.  
 d. You are not gonna meet who I am going out with.  
 (Caponigro 2003: 23)

The acceptability of examples (225a) and (225b) is markedly improved with the addition of *-ever*. Patterson & Caponigro (2016) dedicate a paper to this puzzle, noting that the equivalents of *who* are perfectly acceptable in similar examples in other languages - Italian and Spanish.

- (226) a. *Hanno premiato solo chi è arrivato primo.*  
 have.3PL award.PRF.3PL only who is arrive.PRF first  
 ‘They gave an award only to the person who arrived first.’ Italian
- b. *Le dí las gracias a quien me ayudó.*  
 3SG give.PST.1SG DET thanks to who 1SG help.PST.3SG  
 ‘I thanked the person who helped me.’ Spanish  
 (Patterson & Caponigro 2016: 3)

Patterson & Caponigro (2016) encounter problems trying to find a watertight explanation for this “degraded status” of *who* in English, whose behaviour is not mirrored by that of English *what*. This already constitutes a difference between the problem in English and that in KR, where there are fairly strict constraints affecting both *kisa* and *kosa*. Nonetheless, even though *kisa* and *kosa* both have a degraded status, they do still have seemingly different patterns of acceptability from one another (which are admittedly still poorly understood), the possible semantic constraint for *kisa* not being identifiable for *kosa*.

All of the explanations Patterson & Caponigro (2016) explore eventually run into one of two problems: either it does not explain why the acceptability of *what* is not reduced by the same token, or it is not supported by cross-linguistic generalisations. One argument they explore, which I think we can apply to the KR puzzle without quite the same trouble they run into for English, is a processing one: *wh*-pronouns are disfavoured in subject position because the listener initially parses it as a question, which leads to a heavier processing load when they understand it is not a question. For Patterson & Caponigro (2016), this explanation does not work for two reasons: first, the same issue is not present with English *what*. However, we do not have that problem for KR, because the issue is present for *kisa* and *kosa*. The issue we do share with Patterson & Caponigro (2016) is that if it was a processing issue then we should expect to see the same in other languages, but we do not (cf. (226)). I think we might be dismissing this explanation too soon though. For one, languages *are* different - they are governed by different mechanisms and change in different or similar directions at different rates and processing relies on recognising patterns, which evidently vary and develop along different lines across languages.

What Patterson & Caponigro (2016) ultimately conclude is that *wh*-words do exhibit different patterns in different languages. They acknowledge that there seems to be a general strategy whereby languages permit the extension of *wh*-words from interrogatives into other constructions such as FRCs, and they argue that this extension is not only grammatically driven, but that there is some form of lexical licensing involved too, which starts with the licensing of specific *wh*-words. What these authors also mention, which is extremely important in the context of KR, is the existence of other competing forms. The grammaticalisation of *sa ke* into a free

relative pronoun (section 6.2) has probably obstructed the path of *kisa* and *kosa* extending their functions into FRCs.

In the next section, I look at the various ways in which *wh*-pronouns and *sak*-type pronouns can be modified such that they receive a free choice interpretation.

## 6.4. Free choice marking strategies

The free choice reading is the one typically associated with the *-ever* suffix in English and characterised by having inferences of indifference and/or ignorance (section 6.1.2.3).

- (227) a. I will eat whatever you have.  
b. Whatever you say, I won't listen.

In section 6.1.2, I distinguished between a truly free choice reading and a universal reading, noting that in many contexts, English *-ever* is ambiguous between the two readings. I also noted that the truly free choice reading available for English with *-ever* is reported not to be as available in some other languages; in this section, I explore this issue in KR. In section 6.2.2.3, I showed that *sak* and variants can actually receive a truly free choice reading when they occur bare, i.e. with no additional free choice marking (cf. examples (197), (198), (199b), (200b), and (201a)), and this is even possible when they occur in free adjunct FRCs (227b). The aim of this section is to exemplify the alternative ways of obtaining a free choice interpretation with overt marking.

During the collection of this data, I found a high degree of variation, to the extent that some speakers produced free choice markers that very few other speakers recognised. The wide range of free choice-marking strategies attested highlight that this is an area requiring further research, as it was not feasible to determine the exact constraints on the distribution of each marker, including sociolinguistic ones. Furthermore, while the method of enquiry enabled me to reveal certain existing free choice-marking strategies, there are limitations with translations and acceptability judgements in that they may not reflect how a speaker would express the free choice meaning in natural speech. This section should therefore be considered as a starting point for future research on the expression of free choice in this language. In the next section, I discuss the marker *tout*, which is widely attested and accepted. The issue I raise is whether it is a true free choice marker (section 6.1.2.3) or rather a universal (section 6.1.2.2). In the subsequent section, I present the alternative means identified for expressing the free choice meaning.



### 6.4.1. *tout*: free choice marker or universal?

The marker *tout* (< French *tout* ‘all’) was the most widely accepted addition to *sak* and variants in FRCs, and it occurred 55 times in the corpus, some examples of which are in (228).

- (228) a. ***Toutsat*** *lé dakor ansanm tousala, alon sign lo shart (...)*  
 FC.FR COP agree with all.that let’s sign DEF charter  
 ‘Whoever agrees with all of that, sign the charter (...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)
- b. ***Toutsat*** *nou gingn fer alon fer ali.*  
 FC.FR 1PL can do let’s do 3SG  
 ‘Whatever we can do, let’s do it.’ (Newspaper, *Fanal* 23)
- c. (...) *li la pran plézir ékout tout sak «gramouné la di»*  
 3SG PRF take pleasure listen FC FR old.people PRF say  
 ‘(...) he took pleasure in listening to whatever his elders said.’  
 (Magazine, *Kriké* 5)

In interviews, speakers confirmed that *tout* can occur with *sak* and variants when the FRC is an argument in the main clause, like in example (229a), and when it is a free adjunct, like in (229b).

- (229) a. *Mi asetré toutsak/sat mon fami i vé.*  
 1SG-FIN buy.COND FC-FR POSS.1SG family FIN want  
 ‘I would buy whatever my family want.’ (Accepted by 8/8)
- b. ***Toutsak/sat*** *té i don ali pou manzé, li té i plèr.*  
 FC-FR IPFV FIN give 3SG to eat 3SG IPFV FIN cry  
 ‘Whatever you gave him to eat, he cried.’ (Accepted by 15/17, 88%)

However, the interview data suggest that for most speakers, *tout* is only possible in free adjunct FRCs when it has a universal-like interpretation because *toutsak* cannot pick out a single referent in a hypothetical world, it picks out the whole set. When *tout* is added to *sak* to create a free adjunct FRC with a single hypothetical referent, rather than one that is open to a universal-like interpretation, it is infelicitous, exemplified by the judgements of (230a) and (230b).

- (230) a. ? ***Toutsak/sat*** *i giny lo kours samdi prosin, mwìn sra pa*  
 FC-FR FIN win the race Saturday next 1SG be.FUT NEG  
*kontan (minm si mi èm ali).*  
 happy even if 1SG-FIN like 3SG  
 Intended: ‘Whoever wins the race next Saturday, I won’t be happy  
 (even if I like them).’ (Accepted by 3/11, 27%)

- b. ? *Toutsak mi sa fé apré mon lisans, mi sa pa rès*  
 FC-FR 1SG-FIN FUT do after POSS.1SG degree 1SG FUT NEG stay  
*tèrla.*  
 here  
 Intended: ‘Whatever I do after my degree, I am not staying here.’  
 (Accepted by 0/4)

Three participants did accept the sentence in (230a), confirming that they found it acceptable even if only one person can win the race. These participants then translated the sentence into French, which provided further confirmation that for these speakers, it has a true free choice reading: they translated it with *peu importe qui gagne la course* ‘no matter/whoever who wins the race’. On the other hand, those that rejected the same example (the majority of speakers) explained that *toutsak* must refer to more than one person so it does not work, under the assumption that only one person can win the race. This indicates that *tout*, for a larger proportion of speakers, is not in fact a free choice marker, but rather a universal.

#### 6.4.2. Other means for expressing free choice

In this section, I discuss alternative means for expressing free choice that came up in interviews, but note that these strategies require further investigation to determine their exact interpretations and distributions, which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this research.

##### *Ninport, kinport and pé import*

Alongside *tout*, *ninport* (< French *n’importe* ‘no matter’) was also widely accepted and produced in translation tasks. Slightly less frequently, so were *pé inport* (< French *peu importe* ‘no matter’) and *kinport* (< French *qu’importe* ‘what matter’). Unlike *tout*, these three forms do result in a truly free choice interpretation for all speakers questioned. Some speakers consider these three forms acrolectal or francisé, while such comments did not occur for sentences with *tout* despite it also having a counterpart with an identical form in French. All three forms can occur in free adjunct FRCs with *sak* and variants, and with *kisa* and *kosa*, with a free choice reading.

Speakers produced *ninport*, *kinport* and *pé inport* with *sak* and variants in their translations of the French sentences in part (a) of (231)-(233). The KR examples are labelled with the participant number that produced the translation.

- (231) a. *Quoi qu’il ait pu te dire, c’est bête.*  
 what that-3SG have.SBJV.3SG can 2SG say it=be.3SG stupid

- b. *Pé inport sak li la di aou lé bèt.*  
 little matter what 3SG PRF say 2SG COP stupid (P-19)
- c. *Ninport sak/sat lu la di aou, lé kouyon.*  
 no.matter what 3SG PRF say 2SG COP stupid (P-40)  
 ‘Whatever he might have said to you, it’s stupid.’
- (232) a. *Quoi que je fasse après ma licence, je vais pas rester*  
 what that 1SG do.SBJV.1SG after my degree 1SG go.1SG NEG stay  
*ici.*  
 here
- b. *Pé inport sék mi fé, mé mi rès pas isi.*  
 little matter what 1SG-FIN do but 1SG-FIN stay NEG here (P-20)
- c. *Kinport sék ma fèr aprè ma lisans, mé mi resra*  
 what.matter what 1SG.FUT do after my degree but 1SG-FIN stay.FUT  
*pa isi.*  
 NEG here (P-10)  
 ‘Whatever I do after my degree, I’m not going to stay here.’
- (233) a. *Quoi qu’il ait pu arriver dans le passé,*  
 what that-3SG have.SBJV.3SG can.PST.PTCP happen in DEF past  
*il faut pas traiter des gens comme ça.*  
 3SG must NEG treat INDF people like DEM
- b. *Ninport sat la arivé dan lo pasé, fo pa trèt domoune*  
 no.matter FR PRF happen in DEF past must NEG treat people  
*komsa.*  
 like.that (P-40)
- c. *Kimport sék la arivé avan, ou pé pa trèt domoune*  
 what.matter FR PRF happen before 2SG can NEG treat people  
*komsa.*  
 like.that (P-10)
- d. *Pé inport sék la ariv dan le pasé, i fo pa trèt lo*  
 little matter FR PRF happen in DEF past FIN must NEG treat DEF  
*bann domoune koma.*  
 PL people like.that (P-38)  
 ‘Whatever happened in the past, you cannot treat people like that.’

*Ninport*, *kinport* and *pé inport* can be added to *sak* and variants, but they can also be added to *kosa* and *kisa*, with the consequence that FRCs with these pronouns become acceptable sentences (cf. sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.3 for discussion of the low acceptability of *kisa* and *kosa* in plain FRCs).

- (234) a. *Pé inport kosa mi fé aprè ma lisans, mi kal*  
 little matter what 1SG-FIN do after POSS.1SG degree 1SG-FIN stall  
*pa tèrlà.*  
 NEG here

‘Whatever I do after my degree, I am not staying here.’ (P-36)

- b. **Ninport kosa** li la di aou té ninport kwé.  
no.matter what 3SG PRF say 2SG be.IPFV no.matter what

‘Whatever he said to you was rubbish.’ (P-26)

- c. **Pé inport kisa** i vyin, mi sra kontan.  
little matter who FIN come 1SG-FIN COP.FUT happy

‘Whoever comes, I’ll be happy.’ (P-26)

- d. **Kinport kosa** la ariv aou dan lo pasé, i fo trèt pa  
what.matter what PRF happen 2SG in DEF past FIN must NEG treat  
domoun koma.

people like.that

‘Whatever happened to you in the past, you cannot treat people like that.’ (P-30)

Finally, *ninport* was also produced in a translation followed by *kel* (< FR *quel(le)*) ‘which’:

- (235) **Ninport kel** moune li rankont, li tomb amoro.  
no.matter which person 3SG meet 3SG fall in.love

‘Whoever he meets, he falls in love.’ (P-25)

It is less clear whether *ninport* and variants are as acceptable when modifying an FRC that is an argument of a main clause predicate, as in (236), rather than a free adjunct as in the above examples.

- (236) *Mi asetré ninport kosa/sak* ma fami i vé.  
1SG-FIN buy.COND FC what POSS.1SG family FIN want

‘I will buy whatever my family want.’

Example (236) was accepted by 3/4 (75%) speakers with *kosa* and 0/2 (0%) with *sak*. This could indicate that *ninport* preferably precedes a *wh*-pronoun if in argument position (though clearly not when in free adjunct position, as the above examples illustrate that *sak* is perfectly acceptable with *ninport* in free adjunct FRCs). It could be that, for some speakers, *sak* requires *ninport* in free adjunct FRCs for syntactic reasons, but not in argument position, and in argument position plain *sak*-relatives can already receive a free choice reading (cf. section 6.2.2.3) so the additional free choice marking is not required. Further judgements are required to investigate this.

### **sof**

The marker *sof* (< French *sauf* ‘except’) was produced by two participants during the acceptability judgement task. They both offered the sentence in (237) after being presented with the same sentence with *ninport* in the place of *sof*.

- (237) ***Sof sak la arivé, fo pa trèt domoun koma.***  
 FC FR PRF happen must NEG treat people like.that  
 ‘Whatever happened, you can’t treat people like that.’ (P-34)

Example (237) was later presented to four other consultants for acceptability judgements, and only one of the four accepted it. The three speakers that either accepted this sentence or produced it themselves were from the south of the island, so it could be a regional feature, but this must be tested in future research. Note also that in example (237), the participants that accepted it pointed out that the ignorance interpretation does not hold: the speaker knows what has happened.

Two speakers that rejected example (237) offered another expression with *sof* that they would use, with *koman* ‘how’, indicating that *sof* may trigger inferences associated with free choice FRCs (i.e. indifference or ignorance), but with a different structure (not a FRC).

- (238) ***Sof koman, i fo mi wayaj in kou sèt ané.***  
 FC how FIN must 1SG-FIN travel INDF bit this year  
 ‘No matter how, I must travel a bit this year.’ (P-1)

Note that *sof* still occurs in KR with the meaning of ‘except’, but perhaps has grammaticalised into a free choice marker in some dialects of KR.

### ***kissrès***

One participant produced example (239) with *kissrès* (< French *qui/que serait-ce* ‘what/who it would be’) in the translation task (translating example (231a)).

- (239) ***Kissrès sak li la (pu) di aou, lé bèt.***  
 FC FR 3SG PRF can say 2SG COP stupid  
 ‘Whatever he might have said to you, it’s stupid.’ (P-24)

When tested with further participants, *kissrès* was not recognised by 8/14 (57%) of them. Those that either did recognise it or used it themselves were of a range of ages, from 20 to 65, and from different areas on the island.

### ***kwék, kék and kwak***

*Kwék*, *kwak* and *kék* are pronunciatonal variants of a free choice marker derived from French *quoi que* ‘what that’. They were produced in translation tasks, in free adjunct FRCs:

- (240) a. ***Kék li noré pu di aou, lé bête.***  
 FC.FR 3SG have.COND can say 2SG COP stupid  
 ‘Whatever he might have said to you, it’s stupid.’ (P-24)

- b. ***Kwék/kwak*** *mi fé aprè ma lisans, mi rès pa*  
 FC.FR 1SG-FIN do after POSS.1SG degree 1SG-FIN stay NEG  
*térlà.*  
 here  
 ‘Whatever I do after my degree, I’m not going to stay here.’ (P-31)
- c. ***Kwék*** *mi di ali, li fé lo kontrè.*  
 FC.FR 1SG-FIN say 3SG 3SG do DEF opposite  
 ‘Whatever I say to him, he does the opposite.’ (P-31)

Example (240b) was tested with further participants and was accepted by 4/4 (100%) participants. However, for one participant, this strategy was francisé. It is unclear whether these markers can occur in FRCs that are arguments rather than free adjuncts.

### ***kinm***

One participant (P-40) produced the sentences in (241) with *kinm* (< French *quand même* ‘nevertheless’) during the translation task. This participant produced the marker both in combination with *sak* and variants (241a) and without *sak/sat* (241b).

- (241) a. ***Kinm*** *sat mi fé aprè mon lisans, mi rès pa*  
 FC what 1SG-FIN do after POSS.1SG degree 1SG-FIN stay NEG  
*tèrla.*  
 here  
 ‘Whatever I do after my degree, I am not staying here.’
- b. ***Kinm*** *mi giny mon lisans, mi rès pa tèrlà.*  
 FC 1SG-FIN gain my degree 1SG-FIN stay NEG here  
 ‘Whatever I get in my degree, I am not staying here.’

This free choice marking strategy was produced by the final interviewee and hence could not be tested with other participants.

### ***Ma pa la èk***

One final strategy attested in the translation task was the phrase *ma pa là èk x*, which means ‘I don’t care about *x*’ (Lit. ‘I’m not there with *x*’).

- (242) *Ma pa la èk kisa/sak/sat i giny ni, ma èt kontan.*  
 1SG NEG there with who FIN can come 1SG-FUT be.INF happy  
 ‘I don’t care who comes, I will be happy.’ (P-25)

Rather than necessarily being a free choice strategy, this overtly expresses one of the inferences that is obligatorily present for a free choice FRC: indifference.

It highlights that we might need to look at the wider discourse context to better understand how speakers of KR express the meanings associated with *-ever*, if it is not done with a single morpheme.

## Modals

The free choice reading is inherently linked to modal inferences since it evokes a set of alternatives in hypothetical worlds (Šimík 2020). Modals such as *pouvwar/pé* ‘can’ also featured in KR translations of free choice FRCs, either with *sak* and variants alone, or alongside other free choice marking strategies seen in this section, as illustrated by the examples below, where part (a) is the French sentence participants were asked to translate.

- (243) a. *Quoi qu’il ait pu te dire, c’est bête.*  
 what that-3SG have.SBJV.3SG can 2SG say it=be.3SG stupid
- b. *Kék li noré pu di aou, lé bête.*  
 FC.FR 3SG have.COND can say 2SG COP stupid (P-24)
- c. *Sék li la pu di aou lé bet.*  
 FR 3SG PRF can say 2SG COP stupid (P-32)  
 ‘Whatever he might have said to you, it’s stupid.’
- (244) a. *Qui qu’il rencontre, il tombe amoureux.*  
 who that 3SG meet.3SG 3SG fall.3SG in.love
- b. *Ninport ki pé vnir, li tomb amoro.*  
 no.matter who can come 3SG fall in.love  
 ‘Whoever he meets, he falls in love.’ (P-34)

However, it should be noted that for examples (243b) and (243c), the presence of the modal may have been an influence of the French sentence, since it contained the verb *pouvoir* ‘can’.

Throughout this section, I have highlighted that KR appears to have a wealth of strategies for marking free choice, which are subject to speaker-variation, and which each need further investigation to determine their exact distribution and interpretation, including the inferences they carry (indifference and/or ignorance). I leave this to future work; in the next section, I offer analyses for the FRC constructions discussed in this chapter.

## 6.5. RRG analyses of free relative constructions in KR

FRCs have been treated briefly in RRG by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 503-505) and París (forthcoming: 10-12), but in different ways which will be outlined in this

section. I build upon this work, offering RRG analyses of the types of FRC discussed in this chapter: light-headed RCs, true FRCs, and free adjunct FRCs. Neither light-headed RCs nor free adjunct FRCs have been discussed in RRG so I expand the framework in this sense. I begin with light-headed RCs, which receive effectively the same analysis as headed RCs (section 5.4).

### 6.5.1. Light-headed relatives

In sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2, I proposed that two light-headed structures exist, or at least have done at a previous point in KR: one headed by *sa* and the other headed by *sak* or a variant. I propose the same analysis for both of those light-headed structures, which I analyse along the lines of headed RCs with *ke* or zero-marking (cf. section 5.4.1.1): the light head (*sa*, or *sak* or variant) assumes the role that the full nominal antecedent would in a headed RC. Recall that the structure with *sak* or a variant as the head may often be zero-marked (cf. section 6.2.2.2). I will use example (245) to illustrate the analysis of light-headed RCs.

- (245) *Sat té la la valid in Konstitision Kontkolonial* (...)   
 DEM IPFV there PRF ratify a constitution counter-colonial   
 ‘Those who were there validated a counter-colonial constitution (...)’   
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 19)

The first step in the syntax-semantics linking is for the parser to output a labelled tree structure, which is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Although our original example (245) does not have a relativiser, I illustrate where a relativiser goes when it is present (which it is, in, for example, (190)). When the relative marker is absent, the syntactic structure simply lacks a CLM. As we saw in section 5.4.1.1 on headed RCs, the presence or absence of a CLM does not have implications for the subsequent steps of the linking algorithm.



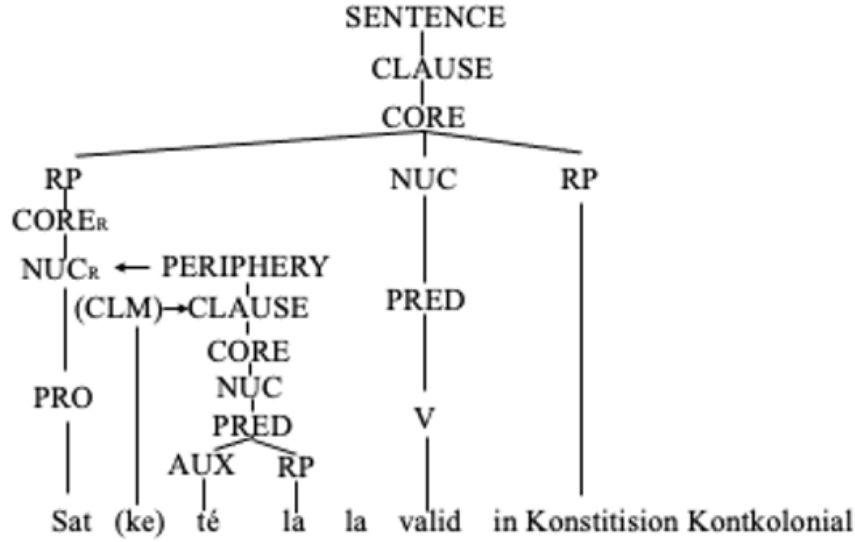


Figure 6.1.: Syntactic representation of light-headed relative clauses in KR

In Figure 6.1, the light head *sat* is the nucleus of an argument RP, and the RC modifies this nucleus just as a headed RRC modifies its antecedent (cf. Figure 5.1). Similarly, there is therefore a missing argument in the RC that needs to be recovered. This issue was outlined in section 5.4 for headed RCs. The same procedure is followed for light-headed RCs, relying on the construction-specific linking rules developed by Van Valin (2012) in addition to the general linking principles. Proceeding with this, the next step is to derive as much information as possible from the overt morphosyntactic features of the clause, before retrieving the LS of the predicates in the sentence and assigning macroroles. The LS of the RC predicate and the matrix clause predicate are found in (246a) and (246b) respectively.

- (246) a. LS of relative clause predicate  
**be-LOC'** (*z*, *y*)  
 b. LS of matrix clause predicate  
**[do'(a, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME ratified' (b)]**

Everything in the cores of Figure 6.1 is then linked to an argument position in the LS:

- (247) a. **be-LOC'** (*la*, *y*)  
 b. **[do'(sat, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME ratified' (*Konstitision Kontkolonial*)]**

Having followed the general syntax-semantics linking rules, there is still a missing argument in (247a). The construction-specific linking rules developed by Van Valin (2012) for externally headed RCs, outlined in (156), section 5.4.1.1, are called upon. First, an attributive LS is retrieved from the lexicon since headed RCs are modifiers. The second argument is the LS of the RC predicate. The attributive LS is given

in (248a) and the substitution of the RC LS into the second argument position is given in (248b).

- (248) a.  $\text{be}' (x, [\text{pred}'])$   
 b.  $\text{be}' (x, [\text{be-LOC}' (la, y)])$

The next step is to co-index the first argument in the attributive LS with the unlinked argument position in the RC LS.

- (249)  $\text{be}' (x_i, [\text{be-LOC}' (la, y_i)])$

Finally, the attributive LS in (249) is inserted into the argument position occupied by the head noun in the matrix clause LS (247b), replacing the variable in the first argument position in the attributive LS with the head noun, which is *sat*.

- (250)  $[\text{do}'(\text{be}' (\underline{\text{sat}}_i, [\text{be-LOC}' (la, y_i)]), \emptyset)] \text{ CAUSE } [\text{BECOME } \textbf{ratified}' (Konstitution Kontkolonial)]$

The argument, *sat*, which is shared by the matrix clause and the RC is underlined and co-indexed with the argument position in the RC (Van Valin 2012: 56). The Completeness Constraint is now satisfied, and all argument slots have been filled. Figure 6.2 illustrates the mapping between syntax and semantics, and the CS for KR's light-headed RCs is provided in Table 6.5.

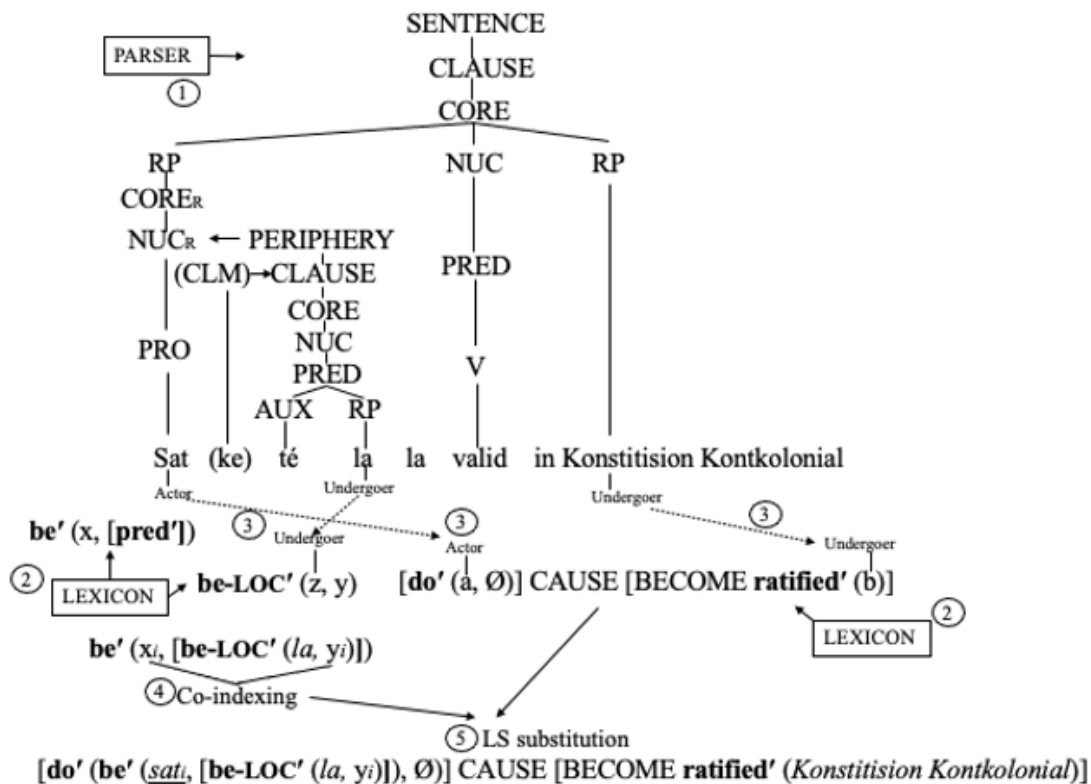


Figure 6.2.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in light-headed relative clauses

Table 6.5.: Constructional Schema for KR light-headed relative clauses

Construction: KR light-headed RCs
SYNTAX:
Juncture: nuclear <sub>RP</sub>
Nexus: subordination (peripheral)
Construction type: clausal modifier
Unit templates:
Main clause: Default
RC template: external head
RC: Default, [-PrCS] (Figure 6.1)
Linking: syntax → semantics
MORPHOLOGY:
Head noun: pronominal e.g. <i>sa, sak, sat, sad, sék, sét</i>
CLM <i>ke</i> : optional if head is <i>sak/sat/sad/sét/sék</i> , favoured if head is <i>sa</i>
SEMANTICS: restrictive modifier; <b>be'</b> (x, [ <b>pred'</b> (...y...)]), where y is lexically unfilled
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: none (outside potential focus domain)
Focus structure: all elements are non-focal

### 6.5.2. Free relatives

In this section, I provide an analysis for the true FRC structure, in which *sak* and variants are analysed as free relative pronouns (section 6.2.2.3). The same analysis is adopted for FRCs with *wh*-pronouns (*kisa* ‘who’ and *kosa* ‘what’). This analysis builds upon the analyses of FRCs by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 503-505) and by París (forthcoming: 10-12), which differ from one another, and I adopt elements of each in my own analysis. In what follows, I will explain each of their analyses. Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) treat argument FRCs as NPs (RPs) filling a core argument slot in the matrix clause.<sup>108</sup> These RPs are clauses which, in languages such as English, are introduced by a *wh*-pronoun found in the PRCS. The *wh*-word is found in the PRCS in English because it occurs at the front of the clause even when it is not a subject (thus not its canonical position), and *wh*-words are found in the PRCS position in other constructions in the language (i.e. in interrogatives), so a uniform position for these elements is assumed (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 504). This is illustrated in Figure 6.3, a simplified version of that in Van Valin & LaPolla

<sup>108</sup>Note that their original terminology NP has been updated with the term RP (see Van Valin 2008b).

(1997: 504).<sup>109</sup>

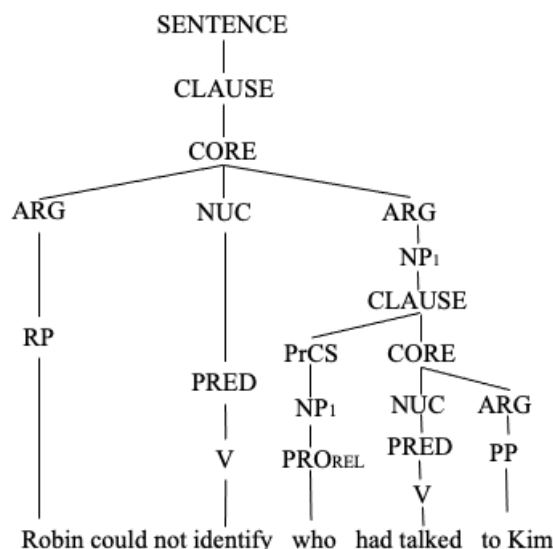


Figure 6.3.: Syntactic template for English FRC

As indicated in Figure 6.3, the NP in the argument node is co-indexed with the *wh*-word in the PRCS to indicate that they refer to the same entity. Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) do not offer a semantic representation of this example or exemplify the linking between syntax and semantics.

París (forthcoming: 11) calls for specific treatment for FRCs (i.e. the proposal of construction-specific rules). His analysis has some important differences to that of Van Valin & LaPolla (1997). París (forthcoming: 10) uses examples (251) and (252) in his explanation.

(251) What John said surprised Sally.

(252) *Los que rompieron el libro corrieron a sus casas.*  
 those.MPL that tear.PST.3PL the-MSG book run.PST.3PL to their house.PL  
 ‘Those who tore the book apart ran to their houses.’ Spanish  
 (París forthcoming: 10)

Although the Spanish *los que* relative in (252) looks like what I analyse as a light-headed RC, with a pronominal head (*los*), París (forthcoming) treats the two RCs in (251) and (252) as one and the same type, both headless relatives. He analyses *what* and *los que* both as pronouns functioning as an RP argument of the matrix clause. His syntactic template for example (252) is in Figure 6.4.

<sup>109</sup>It is simplified in that an additional PP is removed because it not relevant for our purposes. Also note that ‘ARG’ is no longer used to label nodes, and NP has been replaced with RP in the framework (see footnote 108).

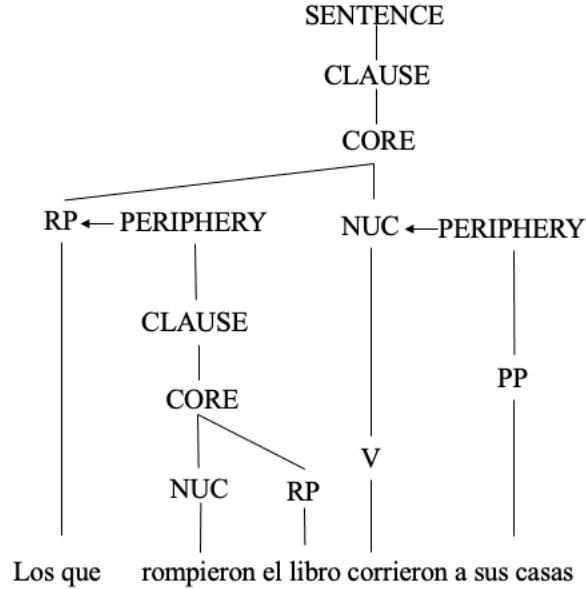


Figure 6.4.: Spanish *los que* headless relative from París (forthcoming)

The difference between the two analyses is that for Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), FRCs are not complex RPs, but rather RPs without a layered structure, which contain a clause (which has a layered structure). For París (forthcoming), on the other hand, the FRC is an RP with a layered structure: the pronoun is modified by the RC. París’s reasoning for representing the pronoun as the argument of the matrix clause rather than representing the clause as an argument of the matrix clause is that it is the pronoun, rather than the whole clause, that controls inflection on the main verb. KR does not have agreement between a verb and any of its arguments, so we cannot use this as evidence in this language.

París (forthcoming) offers a semantic representation of FRCs. In that representation, the LS of the RC does not directly fill in an argument slot in the LS of the matrix predicate. Instead, it contributes part of the information of that argument. He therefore posits a structurally parallel LS for headed and headless RCs, but with a key difference: in the LS of the headless relative, the position usually occupied by the head of a headed RC is occupied by the FRC pronoun (*what/los que*). The slot usually filled by a relative pronoun in a headed RC is instead filled with a variable ( $x$ ), co-indexed with the pronoun. In other words, there is no relative pronoun in the same sense; he hence calls these “pronounless”. I prefer to keep the terms free or headless RCs, since there is still a pronoun, but of a different type to those found in headed RCs. París’s semantics representation for example (251) is given in (253).

- (253) [ $\text{do}'(\text{what}_i, [\text{be}' [\text{do}'(\text{John}, [\text{say}'(\text{John}, x_i)])])$ ]] CAUSE [BECOME surprised'(Sandy)]

In my analysis of KR's FRCs, I will adopt a syntactic template like that proposed by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) for KR's FRCs, adding a minor note. Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) argue that the RP containing the FRC does not have a layered structure on the basis that, like pronouns and proper nouns, it does not take operators. However, they do not explain how they would analyse elements like English *-ever*. I would propose that *-ever* could be analysed as an operator, and therefore, when it occurs in an English FRC, we would have to propose that the RP containing the free relative pronoun does have a layered structure. This is not a great issue since, outside of their discussion of FRCs, Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 59) point out that NPs (RPs) headed by pronouns and proper nouns do sometimes take modifiers and hence may in fact have a layered structure. I will assume that RPs with *sak* and variants have a layered structure because, as exemplified by (254), they can be modified by *tout* 'all' (cf. section 6.4.1), which should be analysed as an operator: it is a quantifier, which modifies the core of the RP. However, we can still maintain that the RP containing the whole FRC (rather than the RP containing the free relative pronoun) does not have a layered structure. I will return to this below.

- (254) *Mi asetré toutsak mon fami i vé.*  
 1SG-FIN buy.COND all=FR POSS.1SG family FIN want  
 'I would buy whatever (everything) my family want.'

París's analysis, on the other hand, does assume a layered RP structure for the FRC because the RC occurs in the periphery of the RP in his syntactic representation (Figure 6.4), and if it did not have a layered structure, it would have no periphery. However, the fact that it occurs in the periphery constitutes an issue for an analysis of KR. In FRCs in KR, the RC modifier is not syntactically optional; it is impossible to have the relative pronoun *sak* alone (see (255)), so it does not seem logical to represent it in the periphery, which hosts optional elements.<sup>110</sup> I therefore prefer to adopt a syntactic structure like that proposed by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997).

- (255) \* *Mi asetré sak*  
 1SG-FIN buy.COND FR  
 'I would buy what'

As in English, interrogative pronouns occur at the front of the clause in KR. However, *sak* and variants are not interrogative pronouns. I still represent them in the PRCS in the KR syntactic template for FRCs (Figure 6.5) because they always occur at the front of the clause, irrespective of their relation to the predicate, and the PRCS is a position that is motivated by word order, occurring at the beginning of the

<sup>110</sup>By the same token, this is admittedly a weakness of the analysis proposed in section 6.5.1 for LHRs with *sak* as their head.

clause (cf. section 3.1.1). If *sak* and variants were treated as core arguments instead, problems would arise during the linking between syntax and semantics: according to the general linking principles, the element in the PRCS fills the last unlinked argument position in the LS of the core, so if *sak* was contained in an argument node inside the core instead of the PRCS, we would not be able to explain which argument slot *sak* links to in the LS of the FRC predicate. To illustrate the analysis of KR's FRCs, I use example (256); its syntactic representation is in Figure 6.5, leaving out the operator projection as it is not relevant for my present purposes.

- (256) *Mi astéré sak mon famiy i vé.*  
 1SG-FIN buy.COND FR POSS.1SG family FIN want  
 ‘I would buy what(ever) my family want.’

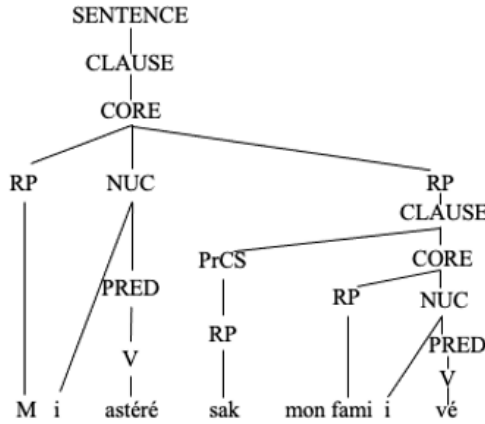


Figure 6.5.: Syntactic representation of FRCs in KR

As noted above, París (forthcoming: 10) points out that it is not the case that the LS of the RC predicate simply fills an argument slot in the LS of the matrix clause predicate. Rather, the LS of the RC contributes information that helps to restrict the referent of the RP that fills the argument slot of the matrix clause predicate. Therefore, we do require construction-specific rules in order to interpret the function of the FRC in the matrix clause. In order to capture this, I propose that we treat KR's FRCs in a similar way to how internally headed RCs of the Bambara type in (257) have been analysed in RRG as per Van Valin (2012). Such RCs in fact have a semantic representation similar to that proposed by París (forthcoming) for FRCs, as we will see below.

- (257) [*Ne ye so min ye*] *tye ye san*  
 1SG PST horse REL see man PST buy  
 ‘The man bought the horse that I saw.’  
 (Bird 1968, cited by Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 59)
- Bambara

The head of the RC in the Bambara example (257) is lexical (*so* ‘horse’) and this type of RC is equivalent to an externally headed RC in English. However, FRCs can be viewed as internally headed, the head being the FRC pronoun rather than a lexical noun. We can apply the construction-specific linking rules for internally-headed RCs in (258), developed in Van Valin (2012: 60), to KR’s FRCs.

- (258) Construction-specific linking rules for linking syntax to semantics in internally headed RCs.
- a. Retrieve from the lexicon an attributive LS and substitute the LS of the verb in the RC for the second argument.
  - b. Co-index the first argument in the attributive LS with the argument in the RC LS identified as the head noun.
  - c. Insert the attributive LS into the open argument position in the matrix LS.

Beginning first with the general linking principles, we have already executed the first step in the analysis of (256), in Figure 6.5: a labelled tree structure. The LSs of the predicates are then retrieved:

- (259)
- a. LS of matrix clause predicate  
INGR **buy**' (x, y)
  - b. LS of RC predicate  
**want**' (x, y)

Following LS retrieval, macroroles are assigned: the *x* arguments in both LSs in (259) are assigned actor, and the *y* arguments are assigned undergoer. Argument positions in the LS are linked to syntactic slots in the syntactic representation. Following the general linking principles, if there is anything in the PRCS, it links to the last remaining argument position in the LS; this is how *sak* is linked to the second argument position in (260b).

- (260)
- a. LS of matrix clause predicate  
INGR **buy**' (*m(win)*, y)
  - b. LS of RC predicate  
**want**' (*mon fami*, *sak*)

Following París (forthcoming), it is not the LS of the RC predicate that directly fills in an argument slot in the matrix predicate LS, but rather it contributes information to restrict the reference of that argument. As such, the *y* argument in (260a) is still unlinked in the matrix clause at this stage. It is here that we turn to the construction-specific linking rules from (258). The first step is to retrieve an



attributive LS from the lexicon (261a) and substitute the LS of the RC predicate (260b) into it:

- (261) a. **be'** ( $x$ , **pred'**)  
 b. **be'** ( $x$ , [**want'** (*mon fami*, *sak*)])

Following this, the unfilled variable  $x$  is co-indexed with the head of the FRC (which is always the free relative pronoun), as illustrated in (262). This is much the same as Paris's semantic representation of FRCs (see (253)).

- (262) **be'** ( $x_i$ , [**want'** (*mon fami*, *sak\_i*)])

Finally, the attributive LS in (262) is linked to the empty argument slot in the matrix LS, and the Completeness Constraint is satisfied.

- (263) INGR **buy'** ( $m(win)$ , **be'** ( $sak_i$ , [**want'** (*mon fami*, *sak\_i*)])

The linking is illustrated in Figure 6.6.

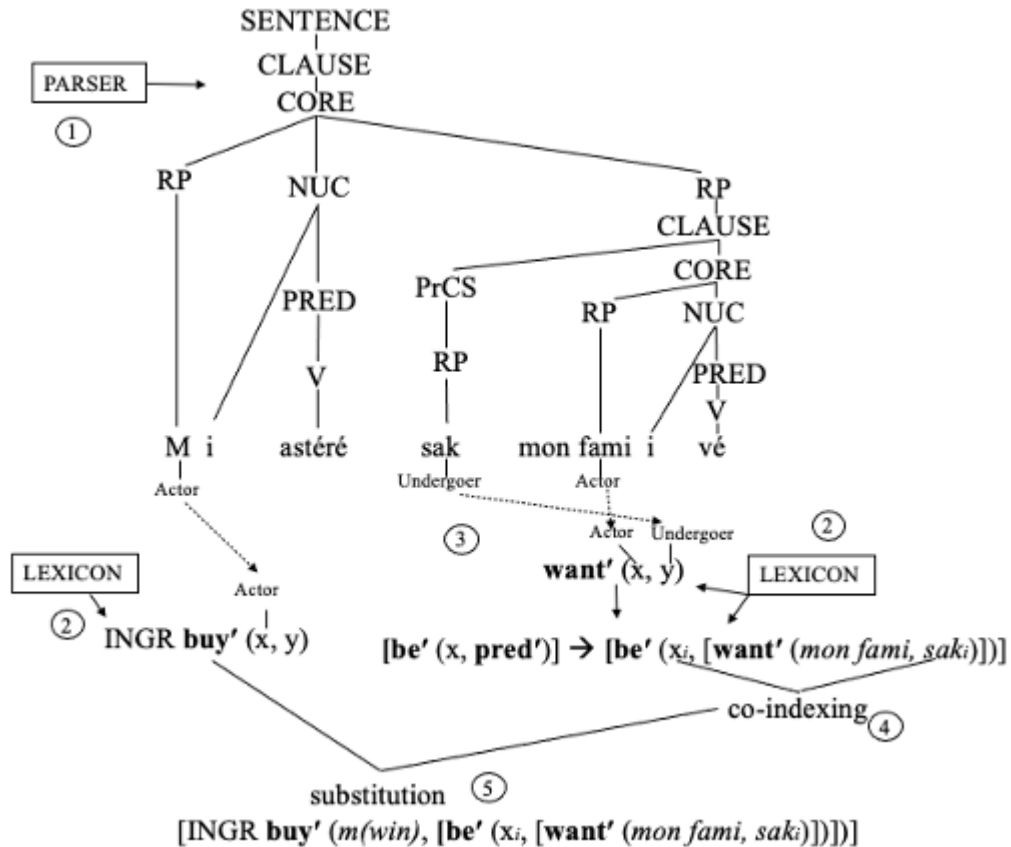


Figure 6.6.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in FRCs

Above, it was pointed out that RPs with *sak* must have a layered structure because they can take operators such as *tout* 'all'. We must therefore assume that

the RP contained within the PRCS has a layered structure, illustrated in Figure 6.7, while the RP that contains the FRC does not.

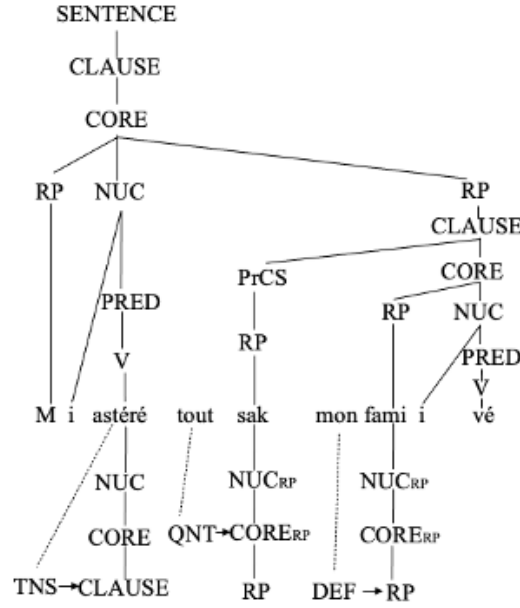


Figure 6.7.: Operator and constituent projections of *sak*-FRCs modified by *tout*

As mentioned at the start of this section, this analysis is also adopted for FRCs with *wh*-words. *Wh*-pronouns would occupy the PRCS for the same reasons that *sak* does, and the additional reason that when they function as interrogative pronouns, they are found at the front of the clause. The CS for FRCs is in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6.: Constructional Schema for KR free relative clauses

Construction: KR FRCs
SYNTAX:
Juncture: RP
Nexus: subordination
Construction type: clausal RP
Unit templates:
Main clause: Default
FRC: Default, [+PrCS] (Figure 6.5)
Linking: syntax → semantics
MORPHOLOGY:
Head is free relative pronoun ( <i>sak</i> and variants; <i>wh</i> -pronouns are possible in certain contexts, notably if RC is not S/A of the matrix clause)
SEMANTICS: restrictive modifier; <b>be'</b> ( <i>x</i> , [ <b>pred'</b> (... <i>y</i> ...)]), where <i>x</i> is co-indexed with the free relative pronoun and <i>y</i> is lexically unfilled
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: none (outside potential focus domain)
Focus structure: all elements are non-focal

### 6.5.3. Free adjunct free relatives

Free adjunct FRCs have not yet been considered in the RRG literature and have received very little attention in the syntactic literature more broadly. Izvorski (2000), one of few authors who have discussed the syntax of free adjunct FRCs, argues that free adjunct FRCs must be CPs, i.e. clauses, rather than being assigned the syntax of sub-clausal phrases like DPs, as is done with argument FRCs. This is because only clauses can function as sentential adjuncts; phrasal units cannot. This is illustrated with, for example, the following ungrammatical sentences from Izvorski (2000: 238), with DPs as sentential adjuncts with a concessive interpretation.

- (264) a. \* His stupidity, I still love him.  
 b. \* His many good qualities, he still did not get the job.

Following Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), I analysed argument FRCs as RPs containing a clause, which is essentially the RRG parallel to a DP merged with a CP. For free adjunct FRCs, on the other hand, I will analyse them as clauses rather than RPs containing a clause. The internal structure of the clause is the same as that of FRCs (cf. Figure 6.5), but with the addition of a free choice marker. The syntactic representation of the free adjunct FRC example (265) is in Figure 6.8.

- (265) *Ninport sak i giny lo kours samdi prosin, mwin sra pa*  
 FC FR FIN win DEF race Saturday next 1SG be.FUT NEG  
*kontan.*  
 happy  
 ‘Whoever wins the race next Saturday, I won’t be happy.’

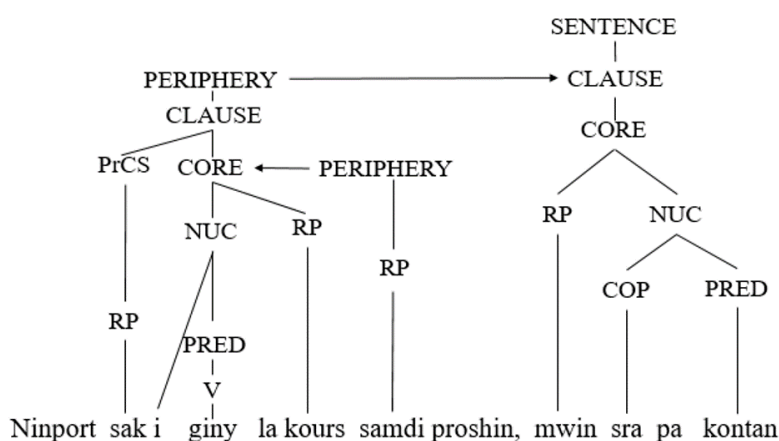


Figure 6.8.: Syntactic representation of free adjunct FRCs

The relationship between the FRC and the matrix clause is different to the relationship between an argument FRC and its matrix clause; neither clause depends

on the other to fill an argument slot in their LS. Since the FRC is not embedded in the main clause, it is not an argument or a case of daughter subordination, but rather a case of ad-clausal subordination. The clauses are semantically linked: the free adjunct is semantically subordinate to the matrix clause. Free adjunct FRCs bear a concessive relation to the main clause; concession is defined as a type of interclausal semantic relation where “the content of the main clause holds unexpectedly, given the content of the subordinate clause” (Van Valin 2005: 207). The free choice marker, *ninport* in example (265), is what enables the hearer to determine the relationship between the two clauses. In section 6.2.2.3, I argued that such FRCs can actually occur without an overt free choice marker, and still be interpretable. I propose a different analysis for such FRCs at the end of this section. Proceeding with the linking between syntax and semantics of examples with an overt marker like that in (265), the logical structures of the RC and matrix clause predicates are retrieved from the lexicon.

- (266) a. LS of RC predicate  
           INGR **win'** (y, z)  
       b. LS of matrix predicate  
           **be'**(x, [**happy'**])

The argument slots in the LS are linked to argument positions in the syntactic representation without any issue. The free choice marker, *ninport* in this example, permits the hearer to determine the semantic relationship between the clauses as concessive. This inter-clausal relationship is formalised as [LS<sub>1</sub>] **IN.SPITE.OF'** [LS<sub>2</sub>] (Van Valin 2005: 207). The linking is illustrated in Figure 6.9.

This analysis is compatible with the following free choice markers identified in section 6.1.2.3: *ninport*, *kinport*, *pé inport*, *sof*, *kissrès* and *kinm*. An analysis of the exact semantic contribution of each of these elements needs developing, to better understand how exactly the hearer goes from hearing the free choice item to retrieving the LS for the concessive relationship between the clauses. However, further study on these free choice items is needed in order to develop this analysis and, therefore, I must leave this to future research.

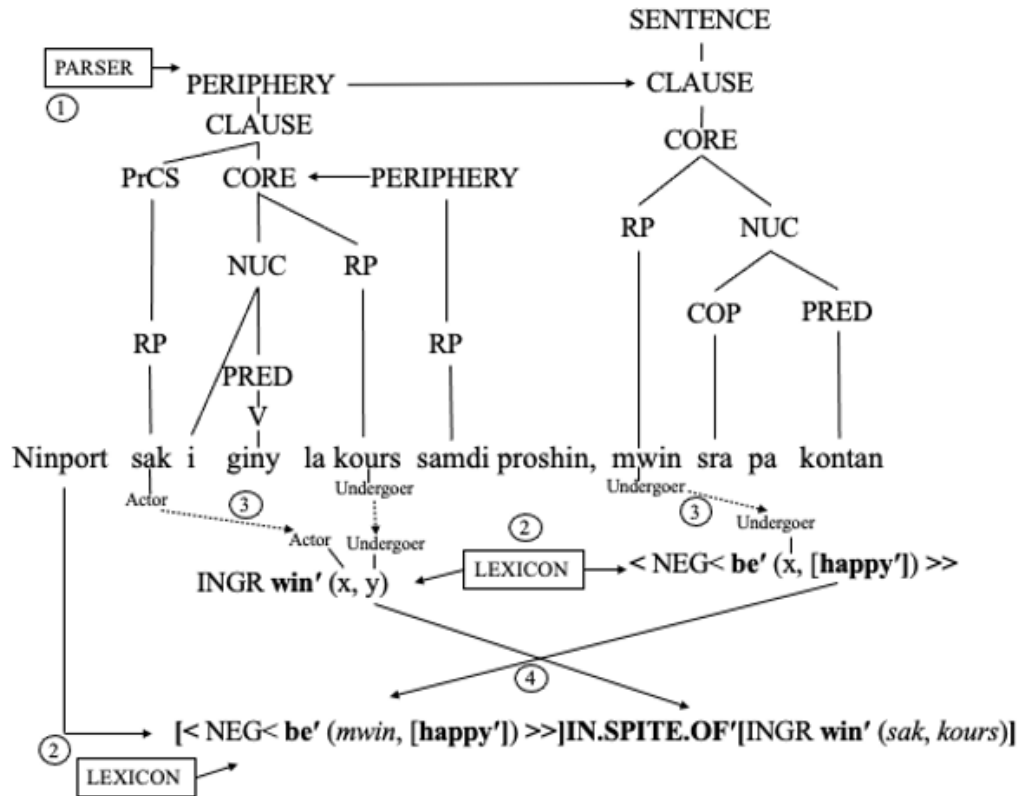


Figure 6.9.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in free adjunct FRCs

Before concluding this section, I will propose an analysis for the free adjunct FRCs without an overt free choice marker and with *tout*, where the FRC is a hanging topic.

### Hanging topic analysis

Izvorski (2000: 232) argues that externally-headed RCs (i.e. light-headed) cannot occur as free adjuncts and that free adjunct FRCs must occur with an *-ever* like particle. However, as we saw in section 6.1.2.3, KR examples like that in (267) can occur with plain *sak*-relatives.

- (267) *Sak i vyin, mwin sra kontan.*  
 FR FIN come 1SG be.FUT happy  
 ‘Whoever comes, I’ll be happy.’ (Lit. ‘Those who come, I’ll be happy.’)

In section 6.4.1, I argued that *tout*, while it occurs in what look like free adjunct FRCs with a free choice interpretation, for most speakers, it is actually a universal marker because it is incompatible with a free choice reading that selects a single referent amongst multiple possible referents. In this section, I will propose an alternative analysis to that presented above. This analysis is applicable to KR examples with either no overt free choice marker (267), or with the marker *tout*, like in example (268). Under this analysis, RCs like those in (267) and (268) can be light-headed.



‘Those who did Latin, it works very well.’  
(Pekarek Doehler, De Stefani & Horlacher 2015: 2)

In terms of linking between the syntax and the semantics, the linking in the matrix clause is unproblematic as the argument slot in the syntactic representation links to the argument slot in the matrix LS. The linking in the RC, since it is light-headed, follows the steps outlined in section 6.5.1. The content of the PRDP is necessarily topical, and since it is not co-referential with anything in the core, the relationship between the two is interpreted pragmatically.

## 6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given an overview of the FRC system of KR, showing that *sak*-relatives are the most widely attested forms of FRCs. The data indicate that there are three different FRC structures for *sak*-relatives: a light-headed RC headed by demonstrative *sa* (which is rare now), a light-headed structure with *sak/sat/sad/sék/sét* as demonstrative heads, and a true FRC structure in which *sak/sat/sad/sék/sét* are free relative pronouns, not demonstratives. I argued that the true FRC structure is the result of two channels of grammaticalisation, i.e. the former two light-headed RC structures together are leading to, or have led to, the grammaticalisation of these demonstratives into free relative pronouns.

The dominance of *sak*-relatives in KR’s FRC system appears to have been at the detriment of its *wh*-pronouns, which are usual candidates for becoming free relative pronouns in a language. I showed that *kisa* and *kosa* are acceptable as free relative pronouns, which was not well-acknowledged in the literature, but I demonstrated that there are constraints on their occurrence in this function, the clearest one being the syntactic function of the FRC in the main clause: subject and free adjunct FRCs with *kisa/kosa* are unacceptable for the majority of participants. I also highlighted some potential semantic constraints, which, for now, remain hypotheses requiring further work. For *kisa*, I suggested that it may favour a free choice reading; for *kosa*, I argued that they occur more often as clauses that are complements of verbs of cognition. While FRCs with *kosa* and *kisa* have clearly originated from indirect interrogative clauses, I presented evidence that they have extended their function into FRCs as they occur in contexts in which we can rule out an indirect interrogative analysis of them.

In exploring the semantic interpretations available for FRCs in KR, I drew attention to the fact that there is not a one-to-one mapping between form and function in these structures, and that there are diverse ways of expressing the free choice meaning associated with English *-ever*. Further investigation of how the function of

free choice is expressed in grammar is needed from a cross-linguistic perspective because, although authors have identified certain languages in which a true free choice meaning is less available from FRCs, there is poor understanding of the alternative means that languages have for expressing this function.

In section 6.5, I presented an RRG analysis of the constructions seen in this chapter, expanding the theory's treatment of FRCs in several ways: I proposed an analysis of light-headed RCs along the lines of headed RCs (section 6.5.1); I proposed an analysis of true FRCs along the lines of the RRG analysis of internally-headed RCs Van Valin (2012), but taking elements of the FRC analyses in Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) and París (forthcoming) and finally, I proposed an analysis of free adjunct FRCs, which have received little attention in the syntactic literature more broadly.



## Part 3.

### Cleft constructions

## 7. Introduction: clefts and focus

Part 3 of this thesis is dedicated to focus constructions containing a relative-like clause, which are considered within the broader family of relative constructions. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the concept of focus and explain how it interacts with syntax, and to explain how the RCs found in focus constructions are related to RRCs and ARCs. The explanation in this chapter is based on the cross-linguistic literature, but focuses on English and French. KR examples of the two types of cleft construction to be discussed are given in (272) and (273), following examples of RRCs (270) and ARCs (271).

(270) Restrictive relative clause

(...) *mi rogard bann marmay [i oz pa tro kozé]*  
 1SG-FIN watch PL children FIN dare NEG much speak

‘(...) I watch the children who aren’t really daring to speak, (...)’  
 (Documentary)

(271) Appositive relative clause

(...): *voizine Dévna [ke té i okip lo marmay la zourné],*  
 neighbour Dévna REL IPFV FIN look.after DEF children DET day  
*lavé disparèt.*  
 have.IPFV disappear

‘(...): the neighbour Dévna, who looked after the children during the day-time, had disappeared.’  
 (Story)

(272) *Sé*-cleft (equivalent to *it*-cleft)

*Sé ou i fé koz amwin là.*  
 COP 2SG FIN make speak 1SG there

‘it is you who is making me speak’  
 (Baude 2010)

(273) *Nana*-construction (parallel to *there*-construction)

*na in nafèr la ariv pou ou*  
 have INDF thing PRF arrive for 2SG

‘There’s something that has arrived for you’  
 (SMS)

The relative-like clauses in (272) and (273) are part of constructions that exhibit focus structure articulations deviating from the canonical predicate focus structure. In the remainder of this chapter, I explain how, beginning in section 7.1 with an explanation of how syntax can interact with focus structure in a grammar. I outline three focus structure articulations distinguished by Lambrecht (1994, 2001), and some devices that a language may have for exhibiting those focus structure configurations. One such strategy is a cleft construction, which will be the principal topic of chapters 8 and 9. The aim of this chapter is to theoretically foreground the KR data presented in those two chapters. In section 7.2, I discuss *it*-clefts and *there*-constructions in more detail, preparing for the discussion of KR *sé*-clefts and KR *nana*-constructions in chapters 8 and 9 respectively. Throughout this chapter, I highlight discussion from the literature concerning clefts in French. Since French is the lexifier of KR, an important question to be addressed in chapters 8 and 9 is whether KR behaves like its lexifier with regards to the interaction of syntax and focus.

## 7.1. The syntax of focus

Lambrecht (1994: 213) defines focus as “the semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition”. The presupposition is the information that the speaker assumes to be known or accepted as true by the hearer, while the pragmatic assertion is the new information in the utterance (see section 3.5). To clarify what is meant by ‘new’, Lambrecht emphasises that focus is relational: the focus need not be new information in the sense that it was previously unknown to the hearer, but rather, it is that the relation between the focal element and a proposition expressed in the (rest of the) sentence is new.

Some authors, such as Kiss (1998), distinguish between different types of focus, but Lambrecht does not. For those authors that do make a distinction, focus signals the presence of a set of alternatives; in information focus, that set is open, but in exhaustive (identificational) focus, it signals that the value is the only possible alternative and in contrastive (corrective) focus, the value is contrasted against an alternative in the discourse (Cruschina & Remberger 2017: 514).

### 7.1.1. Focus structure articulations

Focus structure is defined by Lambrecht (1994: 222) as “the conventional association of a focus meaning with a sentence form.” According to Lambrecht (1994, 2001), there are three types of focus structure that a sentence can have: predicate-focus, argument-focus and sentence-focus. Predicate-focus is the universally unmarked

focus category, meaning it is the focus structure articulation that occurs most frequently, according to Lambrecht. Predicate-focus sentences like (274a) and (274b) follow a subject-predicate structure, where the subject (and other topical elements) is within the presupposition and the predicate is in focus.<sup>111</sup>

(274) Q: How's your car?

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| a. | My car/ it broke DOWN.   | English |
| b. | <i>(Ma voiture) elle est en PANNE.</i><br>my car 3SG.F be.3SG in breakdown<br>‘(My car) it is broken down.’<br>(Lambrecht 1994: 223) | French  |

Lambrecht's (1994; 2001) argument-focus, on the other hand, is a case of narrow focus, where the focus lies on an argument of the predicate. Languages have different means for realising argument focus. To exemplify this, I turn to the typology of the interaction between focus structure and syntax proposed by Van Valin (1999) (see also Vallduví 1991, 1992). English is classified as a language with flexible focus structure and rigid word order. In English, the focus in a simple sentence can fall anywhere in the clause. Therefore, in (275a) below, English can mark the preverbal subject *foot* as focal via prosody. Within the Romance languages, individual languages seem to operate on a continuum of rigidity regarding focus structure and word order. Italian and Catalan, for example, have fairly rigid focus structure, not normally permitting preverbal subject focus (Leonetti 2017).<sup>112</sup> However, these languages have flexible word order and may avoid preverbal subject focus via subject-verb inversion, as illustrated by the Italian example in (275b). French, on the more rigid end of the spectrum, is typically characterised as having both rigid focus structure and rigid word order. The possible position of focus in the clause is restricted: French does not normally allow clause-initial or preverbal focus. In addition to rigid focus structure, it also has rigid syntax, and the subject-inversion construction is not as available in French as it is in other Romance languages such as Italian.<sup>113</sup> Instead, argument focus is usually achieved via clefting, illustrated in (275c).

(275) Q: Is your knee hurting?

<sup>111</sup>See section 3.5 for Lambrecht's definition of presupposition. The topic/topical elements are understood to be “the thing which the proposition expressed by the sentence is about” (Lambrecht 1994: 118).

<sup>112</sup>Note that it is information focus which is disallowed in this position, but not contrastive focus (Bentley 2007, 2008).

<sup>113</sup>However, see, for example, Lahousse (2011, 2022), Lahousse & Lamiroy (2012) and Leonetti (2017), for a nuanced account of French word order, showing that VS is possible in modern French and that the stark opposition often presented between French on the one hand and Spanish and Italian on the other should perhaps be softened.

- a. No, my FOOT hurts. English
- b. *No, mi fa male il PIEDE.*  
 No 1SG.ACC do hurt the foot  
 Lit.: ‘No, hurts me my foot.’ Italian
- c. *Non, c’est mon PIED qui me fait mal.*  
 No it=be.3SG POSS.1SG.M foot REL 1SG.ACC do.3SG bad  
 ‘No, it is my foot that is hurting me.’ French  
 (Lambrecht 2001: 486; translation my own)

Note that languages may have more than one focalising strategy available; for example, clefting is also possible in English and Italian. In argument-focus sentences like those in (275), the predicate contains the presupposition given by the context i.e. that something is hurting in example (275).

The third focus structure articulation is sentence focus, also known as ‘thetic focus’, ‘broad focus’ or ‘all focus’. Sentence-focus structures typically occur in contexts where the entire proposition is new to the hearer and which therefore do not involve a presupposition. While in English prosody is a possible strategy for marking sentence focus, French again relies on clefting, as example (276) illustrates.

- (276) Q: Why are you walking so slowly?
- a. My foot hurts
- b. *J’ai mon PIED qui me fait MAL.*  
 1SG=have.1SG my foot REL 1SG.ACC do.3SG bad  
 Lit. ‘I have my foot that hurts me.’  
 (Lambrecht 2001: 487; translation my own)

In the next section, I go into further detail about focalising strategies other than clefts, before discussing clefts in detail in section 7.2.

### 7.1.2. (Alternative) focalisation strategies

In this section, I introduce some of the alternative focalising devices to clefts, in order to foreground the discussion of focalising strategies in KR in section 8.3.2, where I begin to situate the KR *sé*-cleft as a focalisation strategy in the language by comparing it with other such devices available.

#### 7.1.2.1. Focus fronting

Focus fronting is a focalisation strategy whereby a narrow focused constituent is found at the front of the clause, which may not be its canonical syntactic position. This strategy is discussed in the Romance literature, often in relation to Italian and Spanish (see Bentley 2010; Bianchi 2015; Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2015;

Cruschina & Remberger 2017 among others). In these languages, and more broadly in Romance, focus fronting is argued to be largely restricted to contrastive/corrective focus, but is also associated with mirative focus (Cruschina & Remberger 2017: 514).<sup>114</sup> Some examples are in (277), where the Italian example is contrastive and the Spanish one mirative.

- (277) a. *Lucía hanno licenziato.*  
 Lucy (they) have fired  
 ‘It is Lucy who they have fired.’ Italian  
 (Bianchi 2015: 61)
- b. *¡Por Dios, dos botellas se han bebido!*  
 for God two bottles REFL have.3PL drunk  
 ‘My God! Two bottles they have drunk!’ Spanish (Jiménez-Fernández 2015: 50)

In those contexts where Italian and Spanish exhibit focus fronting to realise argument focus, French reportedly prefers a cleft construction (Belletti 2005). However, certain authors point out that focus fronting is possible in French, just under stricter conditions than for Italian and Spanish (see De Cat 2007; Cruschina & Remberger 2017; Authier & Haegeman 2019). Some examples from Authier & Haegeman (2019: 46), exhibiting mirative focus, are below.

- (278) a. *Des sauterelles grillées ils mangent dans ce pays.*  
 some grasshopper.PL grilled 3PL eat.3PL in DEM country  
 ‘Grilled grasshoppers they eat in this country.’ French
- b. *Dix points de suture ils lui ont fait.*  
 ten stitches 3PL 3PL.ACC have.3PL make.PST.PTCP  
 ‘Ten stitches they gave him.’ French

Focus fronting is described by Maurer & the APiCS Consortium (2013) as a strategy found in Creoles for (contrastively) focalising NPs. They do not discuss the focalisation of other constituent types, limiting their discussion to the focalisation of NPs. The focal constituent can be accompanied by a focus particle, which either precedes (279a) or follows (279b) the NP.

- (279) a. ***Duh** Sara we duh talk about.*  
 FOC Sara 1PL PROG talk about  
 ‘It’s Sara we are talking about.’ Gullah  
 (Mufwene 2004, cited by Klein 2013)

<sup>114</sup>Mirative focus is “focus conveying unexpected new information” (Cruschina 2012: 117). See Delancey (1997, 2001).

- b. *Hén we bì fufúu dí biífi dí mi mujée bì mandá dá*  
 3SG FOC TNS steal DEF.SG letter that 1SG woman TNS send give  
*mi.*  
 1SG  
 ‘HE had stolen the letter that my wife had sent to me.’ Saramaccan  
 (Veenstra 1996, cited by Aboh, Veenstra & Smith 2013)

Maurer & the APiCS Consortium (2013) also report languages that allow focus fronting with no focus particle, i.e. of the type illustrated by the Romance examples (277a), (277b), (278a) and (278b). In section 8.3.2, I point out that KR does allow focus fronting, usually accompanied with a focus particle, *minm*.

#### 7.1.2.2. Focus particles

In the preceding section, I offered examples of focus fronting accompanied by a focus particle. Focus particles come in two types, which I will distinguish as focus-associated particles and focus-marking particles. Focus-marking particles constitute a strategy for realising argument focus by marking that constituent as focal with a dedicated morpheme (Büiring 2009: 200). An example from Chickasaw, which can mark subjects or objects as focal with an affix, is in (280).

- (280) *hat:ak-akot koni(ã) pisa.*  
 man-FOC.SBJ skunk sees  
 ‘The man sees the skunk.’ Chickasaw  
 (Büiring 2009: 200)

Focus-associated particles, the second type, have been discussed for many languages, including English and French. This category includes words such as *even*, *only* and *too* (see, for example, König 1991 and Herburger 2000).<sup>115</sup> Their range of meanings (as well as that of their cross-linguistic equivalents) is diverse and context-dependent, but their key properties are that they interact with the focus of a sentence and they are very free in terms of the position in the sentence that they occupy (König 1991: 5). What differentiates them from focus-marking particles is that they have lexical meaning rather than solely grammatical meaning. I will return to focus particles in section 8.3.2 where I discuss KR’s *minm*.

#### 7.1.2.3. Prosodic focus

In addition to syntactic strategies, languages may also have phonological and phonetic strategies for realising focus phrases. For example, patterns of stress alignment or prosodic phrasing may change due to focus. In English, focus is often realised

<sup>115</sup>These words are often categorised as adverbs.

via pitch accents (Büiring 2009: 188). The focalised constituent can remain in its canonical syntactic position as in (281).

- (281) A: Cleo drives a Prius.  
 B: NO, she drives a CAMry (not a Prius).  
 (Authier & Haegeman 2019: 41)

Unfortunately, an investigation of prosodic focus in KR is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further discussion of the relationship between prosody and focus, see, for example, Büiring (2009), Féry & Ishihara (2010) and Gürer (2020).

## 7.2. Cleft constructions

Cleft constructions are bi-clausal constructions which express a single proposition (282a).<sup>116</sup> By bi-clausal, I mean that the construction has two finite verbs, one of those being a copular verb. Clefts have a monoclausal counterpart (282b) with the same truth-conditions (but different semantic and discourse-pragmatic features).

- (282) a. It was John [who left].  
 b. John left.

Illustrated by example (282a), the prototypical cleft construction consists of a pronoun (which I will call a ‘cleft pronoun’), a copula, the clefted element and a relative-like clause. I will call the relative-like clause a ‘cleft relative clause (CRC)’ as, although it looks similar on the surface, it is distinct from RRCs and ARCs (see section 7.2.1.1.3). Cleft constructions are often argued to be focus-marking devices, the *it*-cleft (282a) and its cross-linguistic equivalents being associated with narrow focus. In addition to the typically narrow focus cleft with a BE copula, some languages have a cleft construction with a HAVE copula. This is particularly common in French, and is associated with broad focus; an example is in (283), which is appropriate in an out-of-the-blue context, where all of the response is new information.

- (283) *Y’a le téléphone qui sonne!*  
 PF-have.3SG DEF telephone that ring.3SG  
 ‘The phone’s ringing!’ (Lambrecht 1988a: 137)

The types of cleft available, their frequency, and the functions that they fulfil differ across languages, as a result of competing factors individual to each language (De Cesare 2014). Clefts are reportedly found at a higher frequency in French than in

<sup>116</sup>Note that monoclausal analyses of clefts have been proposed though: see, for example, Meinunger (1997) and Frascarelli & Ramaglia (2013).



other languages such as English, Italian or Spanish (Lambrecht 2001; Dufter 2009; Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012 among others).<sup>117</sup> Some authors associate the higher frequency of clefts in French with its lower availability of other focalising strategies such as marking focus by prosody or via subject-verb inversion, which are common strategies in other languages (e.g. Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012). Lambrecht (1986) argues that the reason for the high frequency of the cleft construction in French is because the cleft is a device that permits spoken French to satisfy the constraints in its grammar against pre-verbal subject focus and its dispreference for lexical subjects (transitive or intransitive, cf. 7.2.2.2.1). In the following two sections, I go into further detail about the *it*-cleft type (282a) and the *avoir*-cleft type (283), whose KR counterparts (272) and (273) will be the topics of chapter 8 and chapter 9 respectively.

### 7.2.1. *It*-cleft type

The *it*-cleft (282a) and its cross-linguistic equivalents are well-documented. The French equivalent structure, the *c'est*-cleft, is in (284).

- (284) *C'est mon fiancé qui danse.*  
 it=be.3SG POSS.1SG.M fiancé who dance.3SG  
 'My fiancé is dancing/ It's my fiancé who is dancing.'  
 (Karssenbergh & Lahousse 2018: 516)

Prototypically, this type of cleft, involving a BE copula, exhibits narrow focus on the clefted constituent and has been argued to be a type of specificational sentence (e.g. Declerck 1988; Lambrecht 2001: 484; Pavey 2004). 'Specificational' signifies that a value (the clefted constituent) is specified for a variable (in the CRC): in (284), the value *my fiancée* is specified for the variable X in 'X is dancing'. In what follows, I give further details concerning the structure (section 7.2.1.1), and the discourse-pragmatic functions and information structural properties (section 7.2.1.2) associated with the *it/c'est*-cleft type.

#### 7.2.1.1. Syntactic properties

As noted above, the typical cleft contains a cleft pronoun, a copula, the clefted constituent and a CRC, though a cleft pronoun is not obligatory in all languages, as we will see for KR in section 8.2.

<sup>117</sup>Comparable data for measuring this is difficult to obtain so not all authors give frequency measurements, but Dufter (2009) does, using a parallel corpus of European Parliament Proceedings (EUROPARL, <http://www.statmt.org/europarl/>). The data presented in De Cesare et al. (2014: 80), whose focus is on comparing Italian with other languages including French, also supports this claim. The authors constructed a comparative corpus, *Italian Constituent Order in a Contrastive Perspective* (ICOP).

**7.2.1.1.1. Copula** The copula for the *it/c'est*-cleft is a form of the verb ‘be’. In non-compositional accounts of cleft constructions, the copula is viewed as having the pragmatic function of marking focus, and not a semantic role of assigning its arguments theta roles (Lambrecht 2001: 470).<sup>118</sup> That this is the case in French is supported by the fact that the copula has become to a large extent invariable, occurring usually in the third person singular. In previous varieties of French, and in other Romance languages such as Italian, the copula agrees in person with the clefted constituent (Dufter 2008; Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012; De Cesare 2017). However, in Modern French, person agreement is ungrammatical: the third person singular form is generalised. This is illustrated by the comparison between Middle French and Modern French in (285).

- (285) a. *Ce estes vous qui je doy remercier.*  
 it be.2PL 2PL that 1SG must.1SG thank.INF  
 ‘It is you whom I have to thank.’ Middle French
- b. *C’est/\*êtes vous que je dois remercier.*  
 it=be.3SG/be.2PL 2PL that 1SG must.1SG thank.INF  
 ‘It is you whom I have to thank.’ Modern French  
 (Dufter 2008: 34)

Note that the French copula can agree in number with the clefted constituent, but this is not obligatory like it is in other Romance languages (Dufter 2008; Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012: 408). In fact, it is very common for the copula not to agree in number with the clefted constituent in spoken French.

- (286) *C’est/ Ce sont eux qui choisissent.*  
 it=be.3SG it be.3PL 3PL who choose.3PL  
 ‘It’s them who choose.’ (adapted from Dufter 2008: 35)

Furthermore, the French copula does not often agree in tense with the verb in the CRC (Dufter 2008). However, a generalisation has been made, beyond French, that this is true of specificational sentences when there is still present-moment relevance (Declerck 1988).

In the creole literature, authors have remarked that many creole languages have an element that introduces a focal constituent at the beginning of the clause, and the categorial status of that element has been discussed since it is often identical to a copula (Byrne, Caskey & Donald Winford 1993: x). Examples from Krio and KR are in (287).

- (287) a. Krio (English-based)

<sup>118</sup>By ‘non-compositional’, I mean ones that do not assume that the cleft construction is the sum of the meaning of its parts, but rather, that the construction as a whole has a form-function mapping.

*na snek kil am*  
FOC snake kill him

‘THE SNAKE killed him/ It is the snake that killed him.’

(Alleyne 1980, cited by Byrne, Caskey & Donald Winford 1993: x)

- b. Kréol Rényoné (French-based)

(...) *sé lo sistinm i blok ali* (...)  
FOC the system FIN block him

‘(...) THE SYSTEM blocks him/ It is the system that blocks him (...)’

(Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

Examples like those in (287) present an analytical issue: whether the initial element, the focus marker, is a copular verb and the whole construction is a biclausal cleft construction parallel to the *it*- and *c’est*-clefts of English and French, or whether the focus marker is, rather, a particle, and the construction is monoclausal. The fact that examples (287a) and (287b) do not contain a relative marker does not mean that there is not an RC: as we saw in section 5.2.2, KR’s RCs are usually zero-marked. In their chapter on the focalisation of NPs, Maurer & the APiCS Consortium (2013) recognise focus constructions as clefts either if the focus marker is a copula (rather than a focal particle) and/or if the background clause is overtly marked with a relative marker. In the absence of both a copula and a relative marker, the construction would be considered focus fronting (with a focus particle, cf. section 8.3.2). One of the questions I address in chapter 8 is therefore whether focus constructions with *sé* like (287b) are indeed clefts or whether *sé* is, rather, a focus particle. I argue for the former.

**7.2.1.1.2. Clefted constituent** In the examples offered thus-far, the clefted constituent is an NP functioning as a subject in the CRC. However, the clefted constituent may assume other syntactic functions in the CRC, such as object or adverbial. The adverbials found in English, French and Italian clefts are realised as ADVPs (288a), PPs (288b), clausal phrases (288c) and NPs (De Cesare & Garassino 2018).

- (288) a. It was [then] that uh I fell in love with music like Hamilton Harty and a bit of Stanford. (Hasselgård 2004: 7)
- b. It’s only [with hindsight] that you realise just how influential it was in terms of setting things up for the digital future. (De Cesare & Garassino 2018: 270)
- c. It was [after Luke was sent to prison] that Marie found out she was pregnant. (De Cesare & Garassino 2018: 271)

In some languages, the clefted constituent can be a predicate. A certain type of predicate clefting involving the repetition of the clefted predicate, as in the Haitian

examples in (289), has attracted attention in the creole literature (see Muysken 1977; Lumsden 1990; Cozier 2006; Glaude & Zribi-Hertz 2012, 2014 among others).<sup>119</sup>

- (289) a. *Se malad Bouki malad, li pa mouri.*  
 HL ill Bouki ill 3SG NEG dead  
 ‘Bouki is SICK, not dead.’ Haitian
- b. *Se mache Bouki te mache, li pa te kouri.*  
 HL walk Bouki ANT walk 3SG NEG ANT run  
 ‘Bouki had WALKED, not run.’ Haitian  
 (DeGraff 2007: 113)

The properties of this type of predicate clefting are different from predicate clefting in English, which is restricted. While the English translation of example (289a) would allow for an adjectival predicate to be clefted (cf. *It is sick that Bouki is, not dead*), clefting a verbal predicate in English is restricted (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985): *?It is/was walk(ed) that Bouki had done, not run*. Firstly, it requires the addition of a verb like ‘do’ in the CRC, and secondly, it is more acceptable if the verb form is changed to a non-finite form (Cozier 2006). Another difference between predicate clefting in English and the type of predicate clefting illustrated in (289) is the repetition of the predicate, which is not found in English. A final important difference is that in the Haitian-type predicate clefts in (289), the verb cannot occur with any complements, whereas in the English approximate equivalent it can: *It was [walk to the shop] that Bouki had done* (Cozier 2006).

Predicate clefting in the creole literature is usually discussed in relation to the Caribbean Creoles, which had large influence from West African languages. In the West African Kwa languages, predicate clefting of the type in example (289) is possible and therefore its presence in the Caribbean Creoles is attributed to input from this language group (e.g. Muysken 1977; Seuren 1993). As for whether the IOC have predicate clefting of this type, Corne (1982) claimed that it was possible at some stage in the IOC, which did have some West African language influence. Seuren (1993) argues that if there did exist predicate clefting at one stage of the IOC, it is now obsolete, possibly because the proportion of enslaved people who spoke a Kwa language was very small on these islands, certainly compared with that on the Caribbean islands. My data suggest that KR does not have the predicate-clefting structure found in Haitian (see section 8.2.2).

**7.2.1.1.3. Cleft relative clause** The CRC is termed as such because it shares similarities, at least at first sight, with RRCs and ARCs. They are similar in the

<sup>119</sup>Haitian *se* is glossed as a highlighter by DeGraff (2007) in the examples in (289). To my understanding, the term ‘highlighter’ in this context subsumes copulas and particles (see Maurer & the APiCS Consortium 2013).

sense that, in languages like English, they are introduced by a relative marker. Like RRCs and ARCs, the CRC usually contains a missing argument or adjunct (unless there is a resumptive pronoun). In RCs, that missing argument or adjunct is co-indexed with an antecedent head noun, but in cleft constructions, it is co-indexed with the clefted constituent, which need not be nominal, and can be of a different constituent type. This point differentiates CRCs from RRCs but not ARCs, which can have antecedents of different constituent types.

Finally, while RRCs and ARCs modify their antecedent, the former narrowing down its reference and the latter adding additional information, CRCs have neither of these functions. They cannot be restrictive because their antecedent (the clefted constituent) can be a pronoun or a proper noun, and although this is also true of ARCs, the function of a CRC is not simply to add additional information about the clefted constituent. Rather, the clefted constituent provides a value for the variable expressed by the CRC. Lambrecht (2001) argues that all RCs are predicates, and he does not view one type of RC as more basic than another (in contrast to many authors, who view RRCs as the most basic type, cf. section 5.1). Lambrecht (2001: 473) argues that what headed RCs (restrictive, appositive and cleft) share is that they are “predicates with an unsatisfied external subject requirement (where “subject” is understood in the semantic sense of “argument to which a predicate applies”)”. Their specific semantico-pragmatico function is understood by observing their external syntax: how they participate in the overall construction in which they appear (Lambrecht 2001; Pavey 2004).

#### 7.2.1.2. Focus structure and discourse-pragmatic properties

**7.2.1.2.1. “Typical” *it*-clefts** As noted at the start of this section, *it*-clefts are typically described as sentences that specify a value for a variable. The typical focus structure articulation associated with the *it*-/*c’est*-cleft is that of narrow focus, the clefted constituent containing the focus. The function of this focalisation is either corrective/contrastive, or to provide new information (e.g. Belletti 2015; De Cesare 2017: 544).<sup>120</sup> These two functions are illustrated respectively in the French/English examples in (290) and (291).

(290) A: *J’ai entendu dire que Stella lit Kant.*

A: ‘I heard that Stella reads Kant.’

<sup>120</sup>The terms ‘corrective’ and ‘contrastive’ are used interchangeably by some in the literature. To be precise, I consider corrective contexts to be a subtype of contrastive context. In corrective contexts, the correct value is specified instead of another value that the interlocutor had previously assumed (Destruel 2013). In contrastive contexts, another possible value is explicitly contrasted against the one specified in the cleft. The corrective function is hence a subtype of the contrastive function, as another value is explicitly contrasted; the only difference is whether or not another value has previously been assumed by the interlocutor.

B: *No, c'est Eva qui lit Kant.*

B: 'No, it's Eva who reads Kant.'

(291) A: *Qui est-ce qui lit Kant?*

A: 'Who reads Kant?'

B: *C'est Stella qui lit Kant.*

B: It's Stella who reads Kant.

(De Cesare 2017: 544)

In example (290), the value specified by the clefted constituent (*Eva*) is explicitly contrasted with another value (*Stella*), while in example (291) it is not. However, some authors describe both structures as contrastive because they both specify a value for a variable, and in doing so, there is inherently a contrast being made against other possible values (see e.g. Declerck 1988; Pavey 2004). It has been suggested that different contexts simply offer different degrees of contrastiveness (Lambrecht 1994: 290; Pavey 2004: 40).

It is generally agreed that the syntactic structure of *it*-clefts and their cross-linguistic equivalents convey a logical presupposition (e.g. in (290) and (291), there is a presupposition that someone reads Kant). The information could be presupposed via the context, the previous discourse, or generally assumed world knowledge (Lambrecht 2001). Finally, typical *it*-clefts are associated with an exhaustive interpretation (Destruel 2013: 42), which Declerck (1988: 30) argues to be a feature of specificational sentences more broadly.

**7.2.1.2.2. Informative-presupposition clefts** Prince (1978) and several other authors have noted a subtype of *it*-cleft which Prince (1978) called 'informative-presupposition clefts', in which the CRC contains information that the hearer is *not* expected to have known.

(292) A: But why is the topic so important?

B: Apparently, it is the topic that enables the listener to compute the intended antecedents of each sentence in the paragraph.

(Prince 1978: 902)

These informative-presupposition clefts are widely acknowledged in the literature, and in a range of languages, including French (Lambrecht 2001; Hasselgård 2004; Dufter 2009; Karssenberg & Lahousse 2018 among others).

(293) *C'est avec plaisir que je vous invite à participer à ce*  
it=be.3SG with pleasure COMP 1SG 2PL invite to participate.INF in DEM  
*seminaire.*  
seminar

‘It is with pleasure that I invite you to this seminar.’ French  
(Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland 2004: 535)

This type of cleft poses problems as it does not have many of the properties cited as typical of clefts in the previous section: they are not contrastive or exhaustive (e.g. Pavey 2004: 33; Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland 2004: 535; Lahousse & Borremans 2014). For example, in (293), it is not necessarily *only* ‘with pleasure’, it could also be with pride that the speaker is inviting their interlocutor.

However, Lambrecht (2001) argues that the two cleft types need not be distinguished and that in instances where the content of the CRC may not be assumed to be known to the speaker (which he argues is a matter of degree, depending on world knowledge rather than grammar), the structure is used for rhetorical purposes and the listener pragmatically accommodates the presupposition.

**7.2.1.2.3. All-focus *c’est*-clefts** All-focus clefts have also been identified for *c’est*-clefts (e.g. Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland 2004; Karssenberg & Lahousse 2018: 523), though far less than the two focus-structure articulations mentioned in the previous two sections.

(294) *Tu sembles inquiète. Qu’est-ce qui se passe?*  
‘You look worried. What happened?’

*C’est le petit qui est tombé dans l’escalier*  
it=be.3SG the little who be.3SG fall.PST.PTCP on the=stairs

‘The young one fell down the stairs.’ French  
(Clech-Darbon, Rebuschi & Rialland 1999: 84, cited by Karssenberg & Lahousse 2018: 523)

I did not find any KR examples where *sé*-clefts were clearly all-focus (see section 8.3.1). An all-focus articulation was instead associated with *nana*-clefts (discussed in chapter 9), equivalent to the *there*-clefts discussed in the next section. Note that different focus structure articulations of *c’est*-clefts may be identified on the basis of different prosodic patterns (see Rialland, Doetjes & Rebuschi 2002), but as noted in section 7.1.2.3, an investigation of prosody is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## 7.2.2. *There*-cleft type

*There*-clefts are a less well-studied type of cleft, found particularly frequently in spoken French (e.g. Karssenberg & Lahousse 2017), in which they are termed *il y a*-clefts or *avoir*-clefts. English and French examples are in (295) and (296).

- (295) There was one man (that) kept interrupting.  
(Huddleston 1984: 469, cited by Davidse & Kimps 2016)
- (296) a. *Il y a mon fiancé qui danse.*  
EXPL PF have.3SG POSS.1SG.M fiancé REL dance.3SG  
'My fiancé is dancing/There's my fiancé who's dancing.' French  
(Karssenberg & Lahousse 2018: 516)
- b. *J'ai mon pied qui me fait mal.*  
1SG=have.1SG POSS.1SG.M foot REL 1SG.ACC do.3SG bad  
'My foot hurts./ I have my foot that hurts.' French  
(Lambrecht 2001: 508)

These structures share similarities with the *c'est/it*-cleft in that the sentence has a monoclausal counterpart (cf. (282b)). It is important to point out that the monoclausal counterpart of a cleft may not necessarily be acceptable on a pragmatic level, but the point remains that they are truth-conditionally equivalent (Lambrecht 1988a: 115; Karssenberg 2018: 23). Unlike *c'est/it*-clefts, *there/avoir*-clefts are typically associated with broad focus and their discourse function is usually to introduce a new referent into the discourse and then predicate something about that referent, or to report an event (Lambrecht 1988a). As such, they are described as presentational or event-reporting clefts (Lambrecht 1986, 1988a, 2001). I will use the term 'presentational' to refer to both types, as the event-reporting type can be seen as presenting an event. In these sentences, the whole sentence is in focus. However, there is a sub-type of *there/avoir*-cleft that exhibits narrow focus and has a specificational function. In the subsequent sections, I offer further detail concerning the syntactic properties of *there/avoir*-clefts (section 7.2.2.1) and their focus structure articulations and discourse-pragmatic properties (section 7.2.2.2).

### 7.2.2.1. Syntactic properties

*There/avoir*-clefts, like *it/c'est*-clefts, consist of a cleft pronoun, a copula, a clefted constituent and a CRC. With respect to these components, English and French differ: the French *avoir*-cleft has a 'have' copula which can be preceded either by an impersonal pronoun *il* and a pronominal adverbial *y* as in (296a), or by a personal pronoun as in (296b). In English, on the other hand, the copula is the same copula found in the *it*-cleft ('be'); the cleft pronoun *there* (rather than *it*) is what signals that it is a different type of cleft. KR patterns with French in exhibiting a 'have' copula for this construction (cf. section 9.2.2).

One of the differences between *avoir/there*-clefts and *it/c'est*-clefts regards the range of constituents that can be clefted. There is limited discussion in the literature concerning clefted constituents that are not NPs in *avoir/there* clefts, while



in *it/c'est*-clefts, the clefted constituent can be of different constituent types (cf. section 7.2.1.1.2). According to Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland (2004: 531), *avoir* clefts cannot cleft all types of constituent: the clefted constituent must be a DP (their terms). Furthermore, the clefted constituent must have subject function in the CRC. However, Davidse (2000: 1106) argues that this is not the case for *there*-clefts, offering examples such as that in (297).<sup>121</sup>

(297) There's [on the table] that you may have left it. (Davidse 2000: 1106)

A reported feature of presentational clefts in English is that they more freely allow relative marker omission, though this omission is considered substandard (Lambrecht 1988b, 2000, 2001; Davidse 2000):

(298) There was a ball of fire shot up through the seats in front of me. (Lambrecht 2000: 319)

To my knowledge, this is discussed primarily in relation to American English rather than British English. De Cesare (2017) reports that relative marker omission is also possible in French, illustrated in (299).

(299) *J'ai ma mère elle est malade.*  
 1SG-have.1SG POSS.1SG.F mother 3SG.F be.3SG sick  
 'I have my mum who is ill.' (De Cesare 2017: 552)

However, in De Cesare's (2017) example (299), the CRC contains a resumptive pronoun, and it is unclear to me how the possibility of example (299) being a case of asyndetic co-ordination rather than a cleft construction is ruled out. In section 9.2.4, I show that KR overwhelmingly favours relative marker omission in its equivalent structure, *nana*-clefts.

## 7.2.2.2. Focus structure and discourse-pragmatic properties

**7.2.2.2.1. Presentational clefts** The typical function associated with *there/avoir*-clefts is to present a new referent or event (Lambrecht 1988a; Karssenbergh & Lahousse 2018: 524).<sup>122</sup>

(300) a. *Y'a Jean qu' a téléphoné*  
 PF-have.3SG Jean REL have.3SG call.PST.PTCP  
 'Jean called' (Lambrecht 1988a: 136)

<sup>121</sup>This has at least reduced acceptability to me.

<sup>122</sup>Lambrecht (1988a) actually distinguishes between presentational and event-reporting clefts. For him, the event-reporting *avoir*-cleft differs from the presentational *avoir*-cleft in that its function is not to present the clefted entity in the first clause; the clefted element is simply a participant in the event. However, as pointed out by Karssenbergh & Lahousse (2018), this distinction is difficult to make when working with corpus data, and I hence follow those authors (among others) in collapsing the two.

- b. *Y'a le téléphone qui sonne!*  
 PF-have.3SG DEF telephone REL ring.3SG  
 'The phone's ringing!' (Lambrecht 1988a: 137)

Considering why a speaker would use a bi-clausal construction instead of a mono-clausal one in such contexts, Lambrecht (1986: 116) argues that the division of labour between the two clauses is driven by a communicative maxim governed by a universal cognitive constraint: "Do not introduce a referent and talk about it in the same clause".<sup>123</sup> Another motivation for the bi-clausal structure is that it satisfies the Preferred Argument Structure proposed by Du Bois (1987). The Preferred Argument Structure of a clause is dictated by a Lexical Argument Constraint, which states that there is a dispreference against having two lexical arguments in one clause. In a transitive clause, the A argument is the one least likely to be realised lexically, and Du Bois (1987) hence posits a further constraint: the Non-Lexical A Constraint.<sup>124</sup> It is argued for French (Lambrecht 1987, 1988a) that the language not only disfavours lexical transitive subjects, but also intransitive ones. The *avoir*-cleft occurs particularly frequently in spoken French and Lambrecht argues that it is because the cleft construction allows French to satisfy its preferred clause structure: there is one lexical NP functioning as the syntactic object of AVOIR in the first clause, and it is co-indexed with a subject relative pronoun in the second clause, which also avoids a lexical NP in subject position. French avoids foci in subject position, so the cleft structure allows it to satisfy this constraint too. This section highlights that there are formal as well as functional motivations for clefts.

**7.2.2.2.2. Specificational clefts** The most commonly reported type of *there/avoir*-cleft is the presentational type, but another type of cleft has been identified by some authors: a specificational *avoir/there*-cleft (Lambrecht 1988a, 2001; Davidse & Kimps 2016; Karssen et al. 2017; Verwimp & Lahousse 2017; Karssen 2018; Karssen & Lahousse 2017, 2018). The difference between these specificational clefts and *it/c'est*-clefts, which are typically specificational (cf. section 7.2.1), is that the specificational *there*-cleft is non-exhaustive: it contributes a value for a variable, but the value is one from an open set (Lambrecht 2001: 504). Examples from English (301) and French (302) are below.

- (301) A: I've really just got to fill them in on lexicographers' needs just because we've been doing a lot of it but there's other people that you think are doing kind of creative corpus lexicography.

<sup>123</sup>This is true more so for presentational clefts than event-reporting clefts (cf. footnote 122 for Lambrecht's distinction between these two subtypes of presentational cleft).

<sup>124</sup>See section 3.3 for what is meant by the A argument.

B: Well, **there’s McCarthy who’s just building a new one.**

(Davidse & Kimps 2016: 9)

- (302) A: *Quelle est votre meilleure série du moment?* French  
 ‘What’s your favourite TV show right now?’

B: “*How I Met Your Mother*” *c’est génial, y’ a aussi “Lost”*  
 How I met your mother it-be.3SG great PF have.3SG also *Lost*  
*qui est bien.*  
 REL be.3SG good

“‘How I Met Your Mother’ is great, there’s also ‘Lost’ that is good.”

(Karssenbergh & Lahousse 2018: 533)

Karssenbergh (2018: 65) points out that specificational *avoir*-clefts can have a clefted constituent with object function, while presentational ones reportedly only have clefted constituents functioning as subjects in the CRC (Lambrecht 1988b: 330; Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland 2004).

Karssenbergh & Lahousse (2017) point out that most French examples given in the literature are clefts with a definite NP as clefted constituent (e.g. (300)), painting a picture that this is a characteristic of *il y a*-clefts, yet in their corpus study, they found that a much larger proportion (73%) of *il y a*-clefts actually clefted an indefinite NP. These authors found that the definiteness of the NP correlates with the information structure type of the cleft, presentational clefts (which are all-focus) favouring indefinite NPs, and specificational clefts (which are narrow focus) favouring definite NPs. As they note, this pattern is to be an expected implication of the presentational function of the cleft, since they introduce a new referent, which is likely to be coded as indefinite, and in fact, the presentational cleft is sometimes described as a means for avoiding indefinite subjects (e.g. Lambrecht 1994, 2002; Karssenbergh & Lahousse 2017). In the next section, I conclude this introduction to *avoir/there*-clefts with a discussion of their similarity to a related construction.

### 7.2.2.3. Distinguishing *there*-clefts from related constructions

*There/avoir*-clefts are similar in surface form to existential sentences with an RC, and the two can be difficult to distinguish. Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015: 2), building upon McNally (2011), define existentials as “constructions with non-canonical morphosyntax which express a proposition about the existence or presence of someone or something in a context”. An existential construction can be composed of an expletive, a proform, a copula, a pivot and a coda. Cross-linguistically, the only obligatory component is the pivot, which can be an NP, a DP, a quantifier phrase or a clause (Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 2). Some examples of English (303a) and French (303b) existentials are below.

- (303) a. There are mice in the cellar. (Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 2)
- b. *Il y a un chien dans la cuisine.*  
 EXPL PF have.3SG INDF dog in DEF.F kitchen  
 ‘There is a dog in the kitchen.’ (Bergen & Plauché 2005: 2)

In example (303a), the proform is *there*, the copula *are*, the pivot *mice*, and the coda *in the cellar*. If the pivot is a complex noun, modified by an RC, the surface form is identical to a cleft:

- (304) Q: What’s all the noise?  
 A: There are children who are playing football outside.

The fundamental semantic difference between a *there/avoir*-cleft and an existential is that an existential serves to state the existence, presence or lack of something in a context whereas a cleft does not, it serves the functions listed in section 7.2.2.2. Clefts have a counterpart with canonical syntax (i.e. a monoclausal counterpart with SV order, with no existential copula), whereas existential constructions do not, as illustrated in (305) (Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 93).

- (305) a. There is no justice.  
 b. ?Justice is not (there).

Another distinguishing criterion between existentials and presentational clefts is that the RC in an existential sentence can be removed but the CRC of a presentational cleft cannot because it contains the main assertion. Karssenbergh (2018) points out that this criterion does not apply to specificational *avoir* clefts. I return to these distinctions in section 9.1 and throughout chapter 9, where I show that the distinction between existentials and *nana*-clefts is not always clear.

### 7.3. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to introduce two types of cleft and to highlight some of the particularities of the interaction between syntax and focus structure in the lexifier of KR, French. There is a dearth of research offering a comparative investigation of this domain of grammar between a Creole and its lexifier. This chapter has highlighted that while the two cleft types have typical functions associated to them cross-linguistically, their breadth of functions and their frequency of use in discourse is language-dependent to some extent, because the use of clefts is not only driven by functional needs, it can also be driven by formal needs, by convention, or a combination of these factors. Examining clefts in creole languages will allow us to

investigate the role that language contact may play among the various motivations for the use of cleft constructions in languages. Furthermore, study of the French Creoles offers the opportunity to compare whether or not the Creole has inherited the constraints on syntax and focus structure of its lexifier. Given that clefts are found to be particularly characteristic of oral French grammar, which was the type of language involved in the creolisation process, studying clefts in French-based Creoles will likely offer an interesting comparison of the aforementioned constraints against preverbal subject focus, the number of lexical NPs in a clause and the possible positions of focus in the clause. If the Creole differs from its lexifier with respect to these constraints, are cleft constructions found at a different frequency in the Creole, or fulfilling different functions? How likely is a Creole to inherit information structural preferences or constraints from its lexifier? These are big questions which the following two chapters do not promise to answer, but rather begin addressing.

The KR *sé*-cleft (272) and *nana*-cleft (273) have received very little attention in the literature. From a syntactic point of view, it has been argued that a relative marker is optional in RCs, including the relative-like clauses in focus constructions with *sé* or *nana* (Corne 1995; McLellan 2019). However, to my knowledge, there has been little to no discussion of the other syntactic components of the constructions, nor of their discourse-pragmatic functions in KR. The following two chapters bridge this gap in our knowledge of clefting in KR.

## 8. Sé-clefts

## 8.1. Introduction

RC has a focus construction introduced by *sé*, exemplified in (306), and above in (272).

- (306) (...) *sé nou va desid koman itiliz nout mer* (...)   
 COP 1PL FUT decide how use POSS.1PL sea   
 ‘(...), it is us who will decide how to use our sea (...)’   
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 19)

I analyse *sé* as a copula, and consider constructions like that in (306) to be cleft constructions parallel to the English *it*-cleft and French *c'est*-cleft (cf. section 7.2.1), an important difference being that the CRC is often not introduced by a relative marker, much like RRCs in the language (cf. section 5.2.2). Nevertheless, it can be introduced by a marker, as illustrated in (307).

- (307) *Sé la mashine k'i konvien pa (...)*  
 COP DET system REL=FIN work NEG  
 'It is the system that does not work (...)' (Blog)

In a previous analysis of *sé* focus constructions by Bollée (2013), *sé* is analysed as a focus particle rather than a copula. According to her classification of focus constructions, which follows that of Maurer & the APiCS Consortium (2013), to be considered a cleft construction, the structure must either have a copula (rather than a focus particle), or the RC must be introduced by a relative marker (cf. section 7.2.1.1.1). Given that Bollée (2013) analyses *sé* as a focus particle, the structure in example (306) would not be considered a cleft construction in their classification. However, I will argue in this chapter that *sé* is in fact a copula, and that the two structures in (306) and (307) are variants of one biclausal cleft construction, the difference being the presence or absence of a relative marker.

In the next section, I outline the structure of the *sé*-cleft: I provide evidence for analysing *sé* as a copula rather than a focus particle and outline the distribution of this copula in clefts as compared with KR's other copula, *lé*. I then discuss the types of constituent that can be clefted in KR (section 8.2.2) and patterns of CRC marking

(section 8.2.3). In section 8.3, I consider the role of the *sé*-cleft as a construction in the grammar of KR, first discussing its discourse-pragmatic functions and second considering it against alternative strategies that the language has for exhibiting narrow focus. In section 8.4, I offer an RRG analysis of *sé*-clefts, which builds upon work by Pavey (2004), Moezzi-pour (2010, 2012) and París (forthcoming). In section 8.5, I conclude the chapter. The data reported in this chapter come from the corpus study (cf. section 4.1), from which 225 clefts were found, and from interviews with 14 native speakers (cf. section 4.3).

## 8.2. The structure of the *sé*-cleft

The *sé*-cleft is composed of a copula, a clefted constituent and a CRC. The English and French parallel cleft constructions require a cleft pronoun (*it* and *ce* respectively, cf. (284)), since these languages do not allow sentences with no subject. In contrast, as KR allows subjectless sentences, *sé*-clefts do not require a cleft pronoun. The KR cleft usually begins with the copula *sé* (but occasionally *lé*), which I do not consider to contain a clitic subject pronoun in synchronic KR (cf. section 2.3.5). Further support for this argument comes from the observation that the copula can be preceded by a pronominal subject, as in example (308), where *sa* (DEM) precedes the copula *sé*.

- (308) *Sa sé an judo i fé sa*  
 DEM COP in Judo FIN do DEM  
 ‘It is in Judo that they do that.’ (Baude 2010)

Example (308) is the only example in the corpus of a cleft containing a pronominal subject, so a cleft pronoun cannot be considered an essential component of the construction. In this respect, KR behaves like other Romance languages, for example Italian, which do not require an overt subject, and do not exhibit one in their cleft construction. I proceed with a discussion of the copula in *sé*-clefts.

### 8.2.1. Copula

As outlined above, Bollée (2013) analyses *sé* as a focus particle rather than a copula. In section 2.3.5, I gave evidence that *sé* is indeed a copula as it occurs in copular constructions elsewhere in the language. I argued that KR has two copulas, *sé* and *lé*, which have different distributions, *sé* being favoured in specifying copular constructions and *lé* being favoured in predicative ones. I provide further evidence, from cleft constructions, that *sé* is a copula in the next section. In section 8.2.1.2, I contribute further to our understanding of the distribution of these two copulas, showing that *sé* is the preferred copula in cleft constructions.

### 8.2.1.1. Sé is a copula

A copula is defined here as a verb taking inflection, while a particle is an invariant form. Further evidence that *sé* is a copular verb comes from the observation that it inflects for tense. The future tense form, *sra*, occurs in the corpus with and without a relative marker:

- (309) a. (...) *sra pa in tribunal kolonial ke va anbar anou, va anpès*  
 COP NEG INDF tribunal colonial REL FUT bar 1PL FUT stop  
*anou arash nout liberté.*  
 1PL snatch POSS.1PL freedom  
 ‘(...) it will not be a colonial tribunal that will bar us, will stop us from claiming our freedom.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)
- b. *Somanké demin sra zot va port la mizik La Renyon*  
 surely tomorrow COP.FUT 3PL FUT carry DET music La Réunion  
*anlèr.*  
 above  
 ‘Surely tomorrow it will be them who will carry the music of La Réunion up top.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 3)

The past tense form, *sété*, is also found in the corpus in cleft constructions with (310a) and without (310b) a relative marker:

- (310) a. *Zot lété in ti pé koupab mé sété pa zot ke*  
 3PL COP.PST INDF little bit guilty but COP.PST NEG 3PL REL  
*noré fé le krim.*  
 have.COND do DEF crime  
 ‘They were a little bit guilty, but it wasn’t them who were alleged to have done the crime.’ (Baude 2010)
- b. *Sété la vyé pèrson i parté a la mézon i parté*  
 COP.PST DET old person FIN leave.IPFV to DET house FIN leave.IPFV  
*rogardé (...)*  
 look  
 ‘It was the old person (who) went to the house, went to look (...)’ (Baude 2010)

It must be noted that example (310b) could be two sentences rather than a cleft construction: ‘It was the old person. He/she went to the house, went to look’, in which case, it would not be relevant here. In the corpus, there are no other examples of a cleft construction with *sété* and a zero-marked CRC, but such structures were accepted by native speakers in interviews, illustrated in (311).

- (311) *Non, sété an janvyé nou la parti.*  
 no COP.PST in January 1PL PRF leave  
 ‘No, it was in January (that) we left.’ (Accepted by 4/4)



Given that *sé* inflects for tense, it should be analysed as a copula rather than a particle. This adds to the evidence already presented in section 2.3.5 that *sé* is a copula since it occurs in other copular constructions. In the next section, I discuss the distribution of the copulas in cleft constructions, including their frequency in the corpus.

### 8.2.1.2. The distribution of copulas in cleft constructions

Table 8.1 details the copular forms found in cleft constructions in the corpus.<sup>125</sup>

Table 8.1.: Copular forms found in clefts in the corpus

Form	s-	l-		Total
Past	<i>sété</i> 5	<i>lété</i> 1	<i>té</i> 3	9
Present	<i>sé</i> 189	<i>lé</i> 12		201
Future	<i>sra</i> 14			14
Total	94%	6%		224

As indicated in Table 8.1, in addition to the past tense form *sété*, there is also an *l*-form, *lété*, and an abbreviated form *té* (which is distinct from the imperfect preverbal marker introduced in section 2.3.3). All forms of the verb ‘be’ appear as copulas in clefts. However, the distribution is striking: most cleft constructions found in the corpus exhibit a present-tense copula, and the proportion of those present-tense forms which exhibit *sé* far outweighs that which exhibit *lé*. In what follows, I examine the distribution of the *s*- and *l*- forms in the present tense and in the past tense. I do not discuss the future tense forms given that there is only one possible form.

**8.2.1.2.1. Present tense** The form found in the majority of present tense cleft constructions in the corpus is *sé*. The low proportion of clefts occurring with *lé* suggests that *sé* is associated with the cleft construction. Interview findings supported this suggestion: no speaker rejected a cleft construction on the basis of *sé* being the copula in the given example. On the other hand, the acceptability of *lé* was lower than *sé* in interviews, being rejected by several speakers in certain contexts. There were four speakers that consistently did accept *lé* in all clefts presented to them. However, many speakers rejected *lé* as the copula in clefts in which the clefted constituent functions as a subject of the CRC. For example, 6/11 (55%) rejected example (312), while no speaker rejected the same example with *sé*.

<sup>125</sup>The calculation of the percentages of *s*- and *l*- forms excludes the *sra* form since there is no *l*-form in the future, and excludes *té*, since this is neither an *l*- nor an *s*- form.

- (312) ? *Lé Eloise i sava Lérmítaz.*  
 COP Eloise FIN go Érmítage  
 ‘It’s Eloisie who is going to the Ermitage beach.’

The type of clefted constituent may have an impact on the acceptability of *lé* as a copula, because example (313) was only rejected by 1/7 (14%).

- (313) *Lé èk Romain Noémie i sava Boukan Kanot.*  
 COP with Romain Noémie FIN go Boucan Canot  
 ‘It’s with Romain that Noémie is going to Boucan Canot beach.’

In section 2.3.5.1, I noted that *lé* was found less often with nominal predicates in other types of copular construction. Therefore, another factor to take into account is that a large proportion (70%) of the 225 clefts found in the corpus have an NP as the clefted constituent (functioning as the subject or object of the CRC). However, an examination of the 64 clefts in the corpus that had a non-nominal constituent revealed that *sé* was still favoured with non-nominal constituents: *lé* only occurred instead of *sé* in 4/64 (6%) of such examples. This indicates that regardless of the constituent type of the clefted element, *sé* is the preferred copula in clefts. Nevertheless, the acceptability of *lé* might be improved when the clefted constituent is not nominal (perhaps since *lé* usually occurs with non-nominal predicates), as indicated by the native speaker judgements.

Another factor that may be relevant for the distribution of copulas in clefts was negation: in the corpus, a higher proportion of examples with *lé* had negation over the copula: 5/12 (42%) *lé* clefts had a negated copula, whereas 10/188 (5%) *sé*-clefts did. Another copular form which deserves mention in relation to negation is *la* (2.3.5.3). Six of seven occurrences of this copula in a cleft construction were in the negative, an example of which is in (314).<sup>126</sup>

- (314) *Mwin lé paré pou toto sh bann moustik la pa zot i sa anpèsh*  
 1SG COP ready to hit PL mosquito COP NEG 3PL FIN FUT prevent  
*amwin pass in bon vakans!!*  
 1SG spend INDF good holiday  
 ‘I am ready to hit the mosquitos, it is not them that will stop me from having  
 a good holiday!!’ (Blog)

The form *la* has several different functions in KR, one of which is a present tense form of the verb *nana* ‘have’. The form *la* is sometimes described as a pronunciation variant of the copula *lé* (e.g. Albers 2019: 57). Rather than being a variant of *lé* (a ‘be’ copula) in constructions like that in (314), I suggest that it could instead be a ‘have’ copula. Such constructions with a ‘have’ copula negate the existence, presence

<sup>126</sup>These are not included in the count for *sé*-clefts (cf. Table 8.1) because, as explained below, I classify them as *nana*-clefts instead.

or relevance of something. The proposal that example (314) is an instance of a ‘have’ copula rather than a ‘be’ copula has support when we consider the presuppositions involved in *it*-clefts and their cross-linguistic equivalents (cf. section 7.2.1.2.1). If we analyse *la* in example (314) as a form of ‘be’, there is a presupposition, created by the narrow focus, that something else will stop the speaker from having a good holiday. This presupposition is not present if the copula is an existential ‘have’, which seems more appropriate in the context of example (314). Although *la* can certainly occur as a variant of *lé* elsewhere (see section 2.3.5.3), this study suggests that *la* is not a common copula in cleft constructions, and where it is found, it is best analysed as a *nana*-construction, which I treat in chapter 9, rather than a *sé*-cleft (see section 9.2.2).

**8.2.1.2.2. Past tense** In the past tense, although the copula attested more often in the corpus was *sété*, interviews revealed that *lété* is the preferred copula for the native speakers that I interviewed. When presented with *lété* and *sété* in example (315), 7/9 (78%) speakers expressed a preference for *lété*. One speaker preferred *sété* and the remaining speaker had no preference.

- (315) *Non, lété/sété Lérmítaz Noémie i té yèr.*  
 no COP.PST L’Érmitage Noémie FIN COP.PST yesterday  
 ‘No, it was the Érmitage beach that Noémie was at yesterday.’

For several of the speakers that preferred *lété*, it was because it was more Creole (and less French) than *sété*. Nevertheless, *sété* was still accepted by the majority of speakers that were asked (cf. example (311)).

**8.2.1.2.3. “Frozenness” of tense in the copula** Although the copula in cleft constructions does occur with temporal inflection, KR follows a general trend for the present tense copula to be found in cleft constructions even when the verb of the CRC is not in the present tense (e.g. Declerck 1988; Dufter 2008, cf. section 7.2.1.1.1). In the corpus, the present-tense form *sé* was found with CRC verbs in the perfect, imperfect and future:

- (316) a. *sé* + perfect  
*Sé zot la réaliz bann reportaz-la, (...)*  
 COP 3PL PRF make PL report-DEM  
 ‘It’s them who made those reports, (...)’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 6)
- b. *sé* + imperfect  
*Sé lé vyé moun i dansé!*  
 COP DEF.PL old person FIN dance.IPFV  
 ‘It’s the old people who used to dance that!’ (Baude 2010)

c. *sé* + future

(...) *sé li nora la responsabilité* (...)  
COP 3SG have.FUT DET responsibility

‘(...) it’s him who will have the responsibility (...)’

(Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

The acceptability of a discrepancy between the tenses of the copula and the CRC verb was confirmed in interviews via examples (317a) and (317b), which were accepted by 8/8 and 2/2 respectively.

(317) a. *Sé Lérmitaz (ke) Noémie i té yèr.*  
COP L’Érmitage REL Noémie FIN COP.IPFV yesterday  
‘It is the Ermitage that Noémie was at yesterday.’

b. *Sé domin (ke) Romin va alé Boucan Kanot.*  
COP tomorrow REL Romain FUT go Boucan Kanot  
‘It is tomorrow that Romain will go to Boucan Canot.’

Note that the past-tense form *lété* was generally preferred by my participants over *sé* in example (317a), yet two speakers noted that *sé* might be used by a “high social class”. As for example (317b), neither of the two speakers consulted had a preference for the future tense form *sra* over *sé*.

To conclude this section, I have argued that the form *sé* is a copula rather than a focus particle, counter to a previous analysis by Bollée (2013). Evidence for this came from the observation that *sé* inflects for tense and occurs in other copular constructions in the language (cf. section 2.3.5.2). While these observations mean that the best analysis for *sé* is a copula, a few other observations were made that indicated that at the same time, this form might be developing into a marker of a narrow focus construction. Those observations are that the present-tense form tends to occur even when the verb in the CRC is not in the present tense, and that the other copular forms *lé* and *la* are more frequently found with negation. We could say therefore that *sé* is losing some of its copular verb properties in this construction. In the next section, I discuss which constituent types may be clefted in KR.

### 8.2.2. Clefted constituent

Other authors discussing *sé*-clefts in KR (i.e. Corne 1995 and Bollée 2013) only treat the clefting of NPs, but I have found that KR does permit the clefting of other constituent types: ADVPs (318a), PPs (318b) and adverbial clauses (318c).

(318) a. (...) *sé la-dsu ke banna i regard.*  
COP there-upon REL 3PL FIN look

‘(...)it’s there that people watch.’

(Baude 2010)

- b. *Sé èk lo MIR é Serge Sinamalé ke nou la avans kom*  
 COP with DEF MIR and Serge Sinamalé REL 1PL PRF advance as  
*i fo po amin nout konba dan bann gran lasanblé*  
 FIN must to bring POSS.1PL fight in PL grand assembly  
*internasional.*  
 international  
 ‘It’s with the MIR and Serge Sinamalé that we’ve advanced as we must  
 to bring our fight to the grand international assemblies.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)
- c. (...) *sé kan li la bésé an okipan sa marmit*  
 COP when 3SG PRF lower in look.after POSS.3SG pot  
*komsa ke la pas ali in kou dan sa tèt.*  
 like.that REL PRF pass 3SG INDF blow on POSS.3SG head  
 ‘(...) it’s when he bent down to pick up his pot like that that he was hit  
 on the head.’  
 (Baude 2010)

As evident by the examples in (318), the clefted constituent can function as an adverbial in the CRC. We have seen in many of the examples presented thus far (cf. (309a), (309b), (310a), (310b)) that it can also have the function of subject, and example (319) illustrates that it can also have object function.

- (319) *Sé lo sistinm i fo kasé an promié.*  
 COP the system FIN must break PREP first  
 ‘It’s the system that we have to break first.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

In adverbial clefts in the corpus, very often the clefted constituent was an anaphoric phrase: *la* ‘there/then’, *komsa* ‘like that’ or *posa* ‘for that’. These phrases express time/place, manner and reason, respectively.

- (320) *Sé la k’ in kanar l’ arivé.*  
 COP then REL INDF duck PRF arrive  
 ‘It was then that a duck arrived.’  
 (Story)
- (321) (...) *i fo dir mon lang matèrnèl sé kréol rényoné é*  
 FIN must say POSS.1SG language maternal COP creole reunionese and  
*sé kommsa sa mon limazinasyon i anport amoin.*  
 COP like.that DEM POSS.1SG imagination FIN carry 1SG  
 ‘(...) I must say my mother tongue is Reunion Creole and it is like that that  
 my imagination carries me.’  
 (Blog)
- (322) *Tééé! Félicitation! kosa ma lave di aou! mi té koné ou*  
 Ey congratulations what 1SG have.IPFV say 2SG 1SG IPFV know 2SG  
*té sar gagné! Sé poussa ma la di aou mi koz pu ék*  
 IPFV go.FUT win COP for.that 1SG PRF say 2SG 1SG speak more with  
*ou si ou gingn pa!*  
 2SG if 2SG win NEG

‘Yaaayyy! Congratulations! What did I tell you! I knew you were going to win! That’s why I said I would not speak to you if you didn’t win!’ (SMS)

Of 67 adverbial *sé*-clefts in the corpus, 78% clefted an anaphoric phrase as in the examples above.<sup>127</sup> I return to this point in section 8.3.1 when discussing the discourse-pragmatic functions of *sé*-clefts.

Before moving on, I will add a note on predicate clefting, since this has received much attention in the creole literature (cf. section 7.2.1.1.2). Seuren (1993: 57) reports that no author has found evidence of predicate clefting (involving predicate doubling, cf. section 7.2.1.1.2) in KR.<sup>128</sup> I did not find any predicate clefts in my corpus either, and native speaker judgements from interviews indicated that KR does not have predicate clefts of the type found in Haitian involving doubling of the predicate (cf. (289)): the constructed examples in (323) were categorically rejected by all 7 participants asked.

- (323) a. \**Sé naz (ke) Romin i naz.*  
 COP swim REL Romain FIN swim  
 ‘Romain is SWIMMING.’  
 b. \**Sé kontan (ke) Eloiz lé kontan.*  
 COP happy REL Eloise COP happy  
 ‘Eloise is HAPPY.’

Prior to judging the sentences in example (323), the speakers completed an elicitation task, and no participant produced a predicate cleft in that task. Instead, participants produced structures with prosodic focus on the predicate. It may be that a certain type of predicate clefting (not the verb doubling type found in languages like Haitian) is possible in KR under certain conditions, like in English (cf. section 7.2.1.1.2), but unfortunately, this could not be investigated due to time constraints and so remains to be investigated in future research.

### 8.2.3. Cleft relative clause

In section 5.2.2, I showed that KR’s RRCs are often zero-marked, but that patterns of RC marking are sensitive to the function of the antecedent in the RC, zero-marking being favoured in subject and object RRCs but not in oblique RRCs. Corne (1995) argued that the relative marker is favoured in focus constructions with *sé* (what I have classified as *sé*-cleft constructions in this chapter). However, my data do not

<sup>127</sup>This figure of 67 includes clefts with an adverbial clause as clefted constituent.

<sup>128</sup>The predicate cleft structure with predicate doubling is also found in the West African Kwa languages and its presence in some Creoles been attributed to influence from those languages. Seuren (1993) reports that there are no records of slaves being imported from West Africa to Reunion Island.

support this suggestion. Table 8.2 shows the distribution of RC marking in *sé*-clefts according to the syntactic role of the clefted element in the CRC, and compares it with the findings for RRCs from Table 5.2.

Table 8.2.: Relative marking of *sé*-cleft relative clauses and restrictive relative clauses

		Relative-marked	Total
Subject	<i>sé</i> -CRC	34%	134
	RRC	19%	232
Object	<i>sé</i> -CRC	31%	26
	RRC	34%	114
Adverbial	<i>sé</i> -CRC	43%	68
Oblique	RRC	88%	42

Table 8.2 shows that subject and object CRCs, like RRCs, disfavour a relative marker, but this preference for zero-marking is the strongest for subject RRCs. The difference between relative-marking in subject RRCs as compared with relative-marking in subject CRCs was found to be statistically significant ( $p=0.04$ ), but the difference between relative marking in object RRCs and CRCs was not significant ( $p=0.96$ ).<sup>129</sup> Oblique RRCs (including locatives and prepositional complements) strongly favour a relative marker, which indicated that for RRCs, zero-marking is sensitive to the function of the antecedent in the RC. However, Table 8.2 suggests that there is not a strong preference for either zero-marking or relative-marking in adverbial *sé*-CRCs, thus it seems that relative-marking in *sé*-CRCs is not sensitive to the function of the clefted constituent in the CRC. Indeed, the relationship between the function of the antecedent in the RC and relative-marking was found to be significant for RRCs ( $p<0.05$ ), but not for CRCs ( $p=0.78$ ).

Acceptability judgements generally supported the corpus finding that zero-marking is favoured in CRCs but that *ke* is acceptable. For subject clefts, all 9 speakers asked accepted both versions of the example in (324) with and without a relative marker, and three speakers expressed a preference for the zero-marked version.

- (324) *Sé Eloise (k)i sava Lérmítaz.*  
 COP Eloise REL-FIN go Érmitage  
 ‘It is Eloise who is going to the Ermitage beach.’

As for object clefts, of the 9 speakers that judged example (325), three expressed a preference for the zero-marked version against two who expressed a preference for the *ke*-marked version.

<sup>129</sup>A Chi-squared test was used to test whether the relationship between the two variables was independent or not. A p-value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant.

- (325) *Sé li (ke) mwin la vi!*  
 COP 3SG REL 1SG PRF see  
 ‘It’s him that I saw!’

Of the 7 speakers asked to judge the adverbial cleft in (326) with and without a relative marker, four expressed a preference for the zero-marked version and one expressed a preference for the marked version, but noted that others would say the zero-marked version.

- (326) *Sé Boucan Kanot (ke) Noémie i sava.*  
 COP Boucan Canot REL Noémie FIN go  
 ‘It is Boucan Canot that Noémie is going to.’

Preferences regarding the relative marker for (cleft or restrictive) RCs in which the clefted constituent or antecedent had a locative function differed between the two types of RC. While in RRCs, *ousa* is preferred and *ke* has reduced acceptability (cf. section 5.2.4.3), the same is not true of CRCs. Instead, zero-marking or *ke* is preferred over *ousa*, which was still judged as acceptable in locative CRCs, but was described as heavy and therefore less preferable among my participants. *Ousa* did not appear in any clefts in the corpus.

Like in RRCs and ARCs, in CRCs there is a form *ki* resulting from fusion of *ke* and the finiteness marker *i* (cf. section 5.2.3.1.1). Due to the SVO word order of KR, the interaction most often occurs in subject CRCs such as that in (327), where there is no intervening material between the relative marker and the finiteness marker.

- (327) *La sé ou ki répon pi là!*  
 there COP 2SG REL-FIN respond NEG there  
 ‘Now it’s you who is not responding anymore!’ (SMS)

Nevertheless, the interaction does occur in CRCs in which the clefted element is not a subject, if the CRC has no subject and hence there is nothing to separate *ke* from *i*:

- (328) *Sé sa k’i aplé fé la rantré?*  
 COP DEM REL-FIN call.IPFV do DET return  
 ‘It’s that that they called “make a comeback”?’ (Baude 2010)

Likewise, the surface form *ki* does not occur in all marked subject CRCs: in contexts in which the CRC verb does not permit finiteness marker *i*, *ke* occurs.

- (329) (...) *sé nou ke la pa kompri* (...)  
 COP 1PL REL PRF NEG understand  
 ‘(...) it’s us who didn’t understand (...)’ (Baude 2010)



The data indicate therefore that *ke* interacts with *i* in CRCs just as it does in other RCs. However, there was one counter-example found in the corpus, where the form *ki* occurs with auxiliary *la*, which does not permit finiteness marker *i* in the preceding position (cf. section 2.3.4).

- (330) *Sé* [NAME] *Étang-Salé ki la done amoin*  
 COP NAME Étang-Salé REL PRF give 1SG  
 ‘It’s [NAME] from Étang-Salé who gave it to me’ (SMS)

There are a few possible explanations for the occurrence of *ki* in example (330), the first relating to contact with French. For illustrative purposes, I offer a French translation of example (330) in (331).

- (331) *C’est* [NAME] *d’ Étang-Salé qui me l’a*  
 it=be.3SG NAME from Étang-Salé REL 1SG.ACC it=have.3SG  
*donné.*  
 give.PST.PTCP  
 ‘It’s [NAME] from Étang-Salé who gave it to me.’ Standard French

The absence of a preposition *de* ‘from’ and the position and form of the dative object pronoun differentiate example (330) from Standard French. However, example (330) is very close to what we could find in non-standard French: instead of the preverbal dative object pronoun, we could find post-verbal *à moi*. This would result in ‘*C’est [NAME] d’Étang-Salé qui l’a donné à moi*’. A possibility is hence that example (330) is in fact French.

Another possibility is that, if we do consider the utterance in (330) to be KR, the speaker has over-generalised *ki* into a subject relative pronoun in KR, given the high frequency of *ke* and *i* co-occurring adjacently in subject RCs. Given that this only occurred once in a total of 330 examples of subject RCs (restrictive, non-restrictive and cleft), 69 of which contained a relative marker, there is not strong evidence to suggest that a new subject relative pronoun is developing. Native speaker judgements supported this argument, as *ki* was rejected by 3/3 speakers from a similar, constructed example where *ki* precedes *la*:

- (332) *Eske sé ou ke/\*ki la téléphon amwin zordi?*  
 Q COP 2SG REL PRF ring 1SG today  
 ‘Was it you that rang me today?’

This concludes my description of the structure of KR *sé*-clefts. In the next section, I consider the function of this construction in the grammar of KR.

### 8.3. The role of the *sé*-cleft in KR grammar

The use of cleft constructions can be motivated by formal or functional considerations, or both (section 7.2.1.2). *It*-clefts and their cross-linguistic parallels are often described as focalising strategies which place narrow focus on the clefted constituent. On the other hand, there are languages such as French, in which there are additional, formal, motivations for the use of cleft constructions. Namely, clefts permit the language to avoid pre-verbal focus and lexical subjects. Some authors therefore argue that the frequency of clefts in a given language correlates with the availability of other focalising devices.<sup>130</sup> This section is dedicated to situating the cleft construction in the broader grammar of KR, and to better understanding the syntax of focus in this language. To do this, I first illustrate the discourse-pragmatic functions found for *sé*-clefts in the corpus in section 8.3.1 and then discuss the other means available in KR for expressing narrow focus in section 8.3.2. Note that the discussion is based on qualitative analyses; a quantitative analysis of the different functions performed by *sé*-clefts and of other narrow focus marking devices found in the corpus is beyond the scope of this thesis.

#### 8.3.1. Discourse-pragmatic functions

Both contrastive and informative-presupposition clefts (section 7.2.1.2) were attested in the corpus, but there were no clear examples of all-focus clefts (cf. example (335)).<sup>131</sup> An example of a contrastive *sé*-cleft is in (333).

(333) Preceding context: “Oh yeah, so your mother understood then?”

*Bin là sé mwin lavé pa konpri*  
well there COP 1SG have.IPFV NEG understand

‘Well there it is me who hadn’t understood.’ (Baude 2010)

Example (334) illustrates the informative-presupposition type of cleft (cf. section 7.2.1.2.2), where the information in the CRC is likely unknown to the hearer:

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<sup>130</sup>However, note that some authors such as Dufter (2008, 2009) have argued against this “compensation” account, which views the cleft as a construction that compensates for a lack of alternative focalisation strategies in the language. Dufter (2008) uses corpus evidence to insist on the broader functions of clefts beyond marking narrow focus. See also Karssenberg (2018: 235) for evidence against the compensation view.

<sup>131</sup>Where possible, clefts were coded regarding the discourse-status of the clefted constituent (as new/old/accessible etc.) and the information in the CRC, but this was not possible for all examples. For example, the SMS messages did not provide the context to allow for this. For that reason, I do discuss the different types found, but do not provide figures as to the proportion of each type found in the corpus.

- (334) *La kour dérièr lé moin an zizit mé sé la ke le*  
 DET courtyard behind COP less PREP pretty but COP there REL DEF  
*monn i viv an longër d'journé: (...)*  
 people FIN live PREP length of.day  
 'The courtyard behind is less pretty but it is there that people stay during  
 the day: (...)' (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)

There are other examples, such as (335), which may be analysed either as all-focus or as narrow-focus clefts.

- (335) "At the beginning of the school year, all the schools in the Saint-Pierre commune were given a copy of the new Armand Creole/French dictionary, alongside two books from the collection *Kosa in shoz*".

*Sé la réfèran LVR la sirkonskripsion Sin-Pièr la*  
 COP DET representative LVR DET district Saint-Pierre PST.PRF  
*fé in demann finansman CLÉA é banna la di alon.*  
 make INDF demand financement CLEA and 3PL PST.PRF say ok

'It's the representative of LVR for the Saint-Pierre district who made a finance application to CLEA, and they said ok.' (Magazine - *Kriké* 4)

One may argue that example (335) is all-focus since the information in the clefted constituent and the CRC is new. On the other hand, one could argue that the cleft structure grammatically triggers a presupposition which signals to the reader that the sentence is about how the dictionary provision was funded, without having to introduce this as the topic. It hence works as a space-saving device, allowing the most important information to be conveyed in a context where space is limited: a short magazine column. I did not find any examples where *sé*-clefts were clearly all-focus without alternative explanations. An all-focus structure articulation is instead associated with *nana*-clefts, discussed in chapter 9.

As pointed out in section 8.2.2, the majority of adverbial clefts found in the corpus had a fixed anaphoric expression as the clefted constituent (*la* 'there/then', *komsa* 'like that' or *posa* 'for that'), and in harmony with findings in the cross-linguistic literature (e.g. Hasselgård 2004; De Cesare & Garassino 2018), adverbial clefts in KR were found to perform a slightly different range of discourse-pragmatic functions, often being of the informative-presupposition type. For example, adverbial clefts are argued to often perform discourse-linking functions and this is illustrated in (336), where the cleft serves a transitional purpose, a function likely to be found in storytelling.

- (336) “Beneath a big tree, on the last little branch up above, a little bird – in fact, a friend of Little Pierre – was happily chirping away: “Hey! You could say that all is calm today!””

*Sé la k' in kanar l' arivé.*  
COP then REL INDF duck PRF arrive

‘It was then that a duck arrived.’ (Story)

Adverbial clefts also appeared to be a cohesive device in argumentative writing in the corpus, as in (337). In such examples, because the information in the CRC is presupposed by the cleft structure, the speaker presents it as factual, thus strengthening the argument.

- (337) *Lé ga, nout lang sé lo promyé manifèstasyon lo zéni*  
DEF.PL guy POSS.1PL language COP DEF first manifestation DEF spirit  
*nout pèp é nout pèp sé nout rasine, sé la*  
POSS.1PL people and POSS.1PL people COP POSS.1PL root COP there  
*ké ni gingn la fors pou avansé (...)*  
REL 1PL gain DET force to advance

‘Guys, our language is the first manifestation of the spirit of our people, and our people are our roots; it is there that we gain the power to advance (...)’  
(Blog)

Some authors (Dufter 2009; Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012; De Cesare & Garassino 2018) have argued for other languages that adverbial clefts have, to some degree, conventionalised, in the sense that they are associated with these particular discourse functions. The observation that 78% adverbial clefts in the corpus had a fixed anaphoric expression as the clefted constituent (cf. section 8.2.2) supports an argument that adverbial clefts are becoming conventionalised in KR too. In the next section, I consider the alternative strategies attested in KR for exhibiting narrow focus.

### 8.3.2. Alternative narrow focus devices in KR

As noted in section 7.1.2, languages have different strategies for realising focus structure configurations that differ from the canonical predicate focus. In order to better understand the role of the *sé*-cleft as a focalisation device in the grammar of KR, it is useful to examine which other strategies are available in this language and, in particular, examine whether the constraints on the position of focus in French are also found in this French-lexified Creole. I will argue that, on the basis of a preliminary investigation, this is not the case: KR is freer regarding the possible positions of focus in the sentence, and notably does allow preverbal focus.

French has a well-known constraint against preverbal subject focus (e.g. Lambrecht 1986, 1994; Van Valin 1999). Belletti (2005) argues that this constraint is so strong that even in response to a subject-constituent question, speakers will often produce a (reduced) cleft, illustrated in example (338).<sup>132</sup>

- (338) *Qui est parti?* French  
 ‘Who left?’

*C’est Jean (qui est parti).*  
 it-be.3SG Jean who be.3SG leave.PST.PTCP

‘It’s Jean (who left).’ (Belletti 2005: 1)

My interview data suggest that KR does not require a (reduced) cleft in response to a subject constituent question, though it can occur. During the elicitation task (cf. section 4.3.2.1), speakers produced three types of response to the subject constituent question in (339), which are illustrated by (339a), (339b) and (339c).

- (339) *Kisa i sava Boukan Kanot?*  
 ‘Who is going to Boucan Canot?’
- a. *Noémie i sava Boukan Kanot.*  
 Noémie FIN go Boucan Canot  
 ‘Noémie is going to Boucan Canot.’ Canonical word order
- b. *Sé Noémie i sava Boukan Kanot.*  
 COP Noémie FIN go Boucan Canot  
 ‘It’s Noémie that is going to Boucan Canot.’ Cleft
- c. *Sé Noémie, Noémie i sava Boukan Kanot.*  
 COP Noémie Noémie FIN go Boucan Canot  
 ‘It’s Noémie, Noémie is going to Boucan Canot.’ Reduced cleft &  
canonical word order

Of the 9 participants asked, a response like (339a), with canonical word order, was produced by 4 participants; a response like (339b), with a cleft construction, was produced by 4; and response (339c), which is a reduced cleft followed by a canonical sentence, was produced by one participant.<sup>133</sup> This range of responses suggests that KR exhibits variation in this regard; the preferences may be speaker-dependent or reflect regional variation but unfortunately this is not a large enough sample to draw insights on this matter. What it does seem to suggest, given that nearly half of the speakers did not produce a cleft, is that there is unlikely to be a strong constraint against pre-verbal subject (information) focus. It should also be pointed out that speaker-dependent variation may also depend on influence from French.

<sup>132</sup>A reduced cleft is one without the CRC.

<sup>133</sup>Not all participants produced the same sentence word-for-word, but the important detail is whether it was a (reduced) cleft or not.



- (343) (...) *azot osi i manti lo pep, lo pir zot i manti azot minm.*  
 3PL also FIN lie DEF people DEF worst 3PL FIN lie 3PL REFL  
 ‘(...) they also lie to the people, the worst is that they lie to themselves.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

In the reflexive (343) and the focus particle (341) use, *minm* follows the constituent in its scope, whereas in its lexical meanings ‘even’ (342a) or ‘same’ (342b), it precedes the constituent in its scope. Closely related to the function of reflexive is that of intensifier (e.g. Kemmer 1993; Gast & Siemund 2006). Gast & Siemund (2006) outline that, cross-linguistically, authors have assigned different lexical categories to the forms that function as intensifiers in languages, as a result of their language-specific properties. Among them are nouns, adjectives and focus particles, the latter being associated with forms that do not inflect. Some points that unite these forms, regardless of which lexical category they are assigned, are that they “carry emphatic stress” and are “in association with a nominal constituent” (Gast & Siemund 2006: 5). Furthermore, the intensifying function is defined by Gast & Siemund (2006: 5) as follows: “they evoke alternatives of a specific type which are paradigmatically opposed to the referent of the NP they relate to.” Intensifiers are hence particularly relevant to the study of *sé*-clefts because they make explicit the contrastive function of narrow focus.

Examples of *minm* as an intensifier are not rare in my corpus: of 193 tokens of *minm* in the searchable component of the corpus, I identified 41 examples without the meanings noted above (‘even’, ‘same’ or reflexive), where *minm* instead functions as an intensifier.<sup>135</sup>

- (344) *Nout liberté tanou sa minm y donn anou la fors lev*  
 POSS.1SG freedom ours DEM FOC FIN give 1PL DET strength rise  
*dobout.*  
 standing  
 ‘Our freedom is ours it’s that that gives us the strength to rise up.’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 13)

In all of the examples found, *minm* follows the focalised constituent, and that constituent is usually nominal as in example (344) above, but can also be an adverb:

- (345) (...) *sra po nou osi in lonér kontini lo konba terla minm*  
 be.FUT for 1PL also INDF honour continue DEF fight there FOC  
*ousa la komansé.*  
 where PRF start  
 ‘(...) it will also be an honour for us to continue the fight there where it all started’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

<sup>135</sup>In order to delimit this search, for reasons of time, I only searched this spelling formation (*minm*). Alternative spellings are possible too: *mèm*, *mem*.

Interviews revealed that *minm* can follow a verb too, but the meaning is different: it indicates that the action has been going on and is still going on:

- (346) *Li naz minm.*  
 3SG swim *minm*  
 ‘He is still swimming.’

These observations certainly support König’s (1991) argument that the meaning and behaviour of focus particles that have lexical meaning too (what I have called focus-associated particles), are highly language-specific and context-dependent (cf. section 7.1.2.1). An in-depth study of the meanings associated with *minm*, including its focus-marking function, merits further investigation. While observations have been made about the existence of alternative focalising structures, a comparison of the relative frequencies of clefting as compared with focus fronting and *minm* as a focalisation strategy (with or without focus fronting) was not possible. I suggest that a detailed comparison of these strategies, and their interaction with prosody, would provide a fuller picture of the interaction between syntax and focus structure in KR and should be the subject of future research.

To conclude, the aim of this section has been to consider the function of the *sé*-cleft from a broader perspective, taking account of the functions assumed by this construction in KR as well as other factors that might affect the frequency of clefts as a focalisation device in the language. The functions attested for the *sé*-cleft in KR follow cross-linguistic trends: they are often found in contrastive contexts, but the informative-presupposition type, where new information is found in the CRC, is also common in the corpus. Some argue that the high frequency of clefts found in French is due to this language’s lack of alternative focalisation devices, which is a result of its rigid constraints on focus structure and on word order. I highlighted in this section that KR does not seem to be as rigid in this regard: preverbal focus is permitted in KR, and there is evidence of another narrow focus strategy involving *minm*, which can be accompanied with focus fronting. Focus fronting seems also to be possible without *minm* for some speakers. However, some authors argue that the “compensation” account of clefts in French is overstated. Dufter (2008), for example, argues against explanations for the high frequency of clefting in French that rely on the lack of alternative focalisation devices in the language. He emphasises the broad range of functions, beyond narrow focus marking, that clefts have. This may consequently impact the differences stated here between KR and its lexifier. A detailed comparative investigation of KR and French would illuminate their differences, or similarities, more precisely, so I suggest this as an avenue for future research (though I admit that it is not always easy to find suitable comparable corpora). In the next section, I present an RRG analysis of *sé*-clefts.



## 8.4. RRG analysis of *sé*-clefts

Previous analyses of *it*-clefts and their cross-linguistic equivalents either take a constructional approach to the analysis of clefts (e.g. Davidse 2000; Lambrecht 2001), or a derivational approach. Derivational analyses either focus on the similarities between cleft constructions and other copular constructions or the similarities between cleft sentences and their monoclausal counterparts. Authors in the former camp propose what are known as extrapositional analyses (e.g. Jespersen 1927; Gundel 1977; Percus 1997; Belletti 2015), which derive clefts from other copular constructions, and authors in the latter camp propose what are known as expletive analyses (e.g. Williams 1980; Delahunty 1981), which derive clefts from their non-cleft counterparts. Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) is a particularly advantageous framework for analysing cleft constructions, which clearly involve an interaction of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The RRG analysis is non-derivational because there is only one syntactic representation, rather than a surface representation and an underlying representation of the syntactic structure. RRG gives clefts construction-specific treatment, allowing us to capture their syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties, which are not recoverable in a compositional analysis. This has the benefit of bringing to light the similarities of the cleft construction both to other copular constructions and to other relative constructions (Pavey 2004: 79).

One of the key issues that linguists disagree on is the role of the cleft pronoun (e.g. English *it*/ French *ce*). Evident from the name, expletive approaches consider the cleft pronoun to be an expletive pronoun, fulfilling a syntactic requirement but not contributing semantically to the sentence. Extrapositional approaches, on the other hand, do attribute a semantic role to the cleft pronoun and argue that it is referential. As for constructional accounts of clefts, some analyses attribute a semantic role to the cleft pronoun (e.g. Davidse 2000; Hedberg 2000), but others, (e.g. Lambrecht 2001) do not.<sup>136</sup> Lambrecht (2001) instead attributes the pronoun and the copula together the pragmatic role of focus marking. Given that there is no cleft pronoun in the KR cleft, Lambrecht's analysis is to be preferred: in KR it is the copula alone that has the role of marking the cleft construction.

Pavey (2004), who offers an RRG analysis of English *it*-clefts, argues that the role of the cleft pronoun is not simply expletive. This is with good reason: in English, the language to which her analysis applies, the cleft pronoun determines the semantic/pragmatic type of cleft construction that it is, as both the presentational/existential type and the specificational types of cleft involve a BE copula in English. The pronoun *it* indicates that the construction is of the specificational,

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<sup>136</sup>Davidse (2000) argues that the pronoun has a quantificational role, and Hedberg (2000) argues that it is referential.

narrow focus type, while the pronoun *there* indicates that it is of the presentational type (cf. section 7.2.2 and chapter 9).<sup>137</sup> However, this is language-specific. In KR, neither construction involves a cleft pronoun and it is the copula that indicates the semantic/pragmatic cleft type: BE is usually found in specificational clefts and HAVE is found in presentational ones.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, in Pavey’s analysis, the cleft pronoun is not a referring expression and does not appear in the semantic representation or the linking. Instead, she specifies in the CS for English *it*-clefts that the cleft pronoun indicates the semantic-pragmatic type of cleft. Its absence in KR therefore does not cause any issues in applying the linking algorithm that Pavey (2004) proposes to KR *sé*-clefts.

In what follows, I will outline the RRG analysis for *sé*-clefts, following Pavey (2004) and París (forthcoming). The RRG analysis is inspired by Lambrecht’s work. Firstly, it applies intuitions from Lambrecht (2001) that the RC predicate assigns a semantic role to the clefted constituent and the copula assigns a pragmatic role (that of focus) to the clefted constituent.<sup>139</sup> This explains how the bi-clausal syntactic structure of a cleft produces a sentence with the same truth conditions as a monoclausal counterpart: only one verb can assign semantic roles. Secondly, the RRG analysis uses Lambrecht’s (1994) distinction between pragmatic predicate and semantic predicate. The difference between the two is as follows: the semantic predicate is the element that assigns semantic roles, and the pragmatic predicate is the focus. In an argument-focus sentence such as “*My CAR broke down*”, the syntactic subject is *my car* and the semantic predicate is *broke down*. However, *my car* constitutes the “new” information, and is the pragmatic predicate, and *broke down* is the pragmatic subject. Thus, the pragmatic predicate can be a semantic argument/a referring expression. In a *sé*-cleft (and its cross-linguistic equivalents), the main function of the sentence is to specify the value for the variable, and the value (i.e. the clefted constituent) is considered the pragmatic predicate and is (usually) a semantic argument. In the next section, I present the RRG analysis.

### 8.4.1. Argument clefted constituents

Beginning with argument clefted constituents, I will use example (347) to illustrate the RRG analysis of *sé*-clefts.

- (347) *se nou la ekri nout listwar*  
 COP 1PL PRF write POSS.1PL story

<sup>137</sup>Note that *this* and *that* can also occur as cleft pronoun in specificational clefts instead of *it*.

<sup>138</sup>Note that HAVE does occur in a sub-type of specificational cleft: see paragraph 7.2.2.2.2 and chapter 9

<sup>139</sup>Though note that in the case where the clefted constituent is an adjunct, the RC predicate does not assign it a semantic role. The analysis for such cases is presented in section 8.4.2.

‘It is us who have written our story’

(Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

Given that the *sé*-cleft is considered a specificational sentence, it has the specificational LS in (348), which is the same LS as for other specificational sentences (Pavey 2004: 215; Van Valin 2005: 55). The specification of a value for a variable is the core meaning expressed by the sentence, rather than whatever is expressed in the CRC, which is backgrounded.<sup>140</sup>

(348) LS of specificational sentences

**be'** (x, y)

X = VARIABLE Y = VALUE

Note that the **be'** does not represent the copula, but rather the predicative relation of the sentence. The *x* argument, the variable, is filled with the predicate of the CRC, and the *y* argument, the value, is filled by the clefted constituent. The syntactic representation for example (347) is given in Figure 8.1. Because the *sé*-cleft is a syntactic structure associated with narrow focus on the clefted constituent, the actual focus domain forms part of the syntactic template for the construction (see Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 234; Pavey 2004: 234).

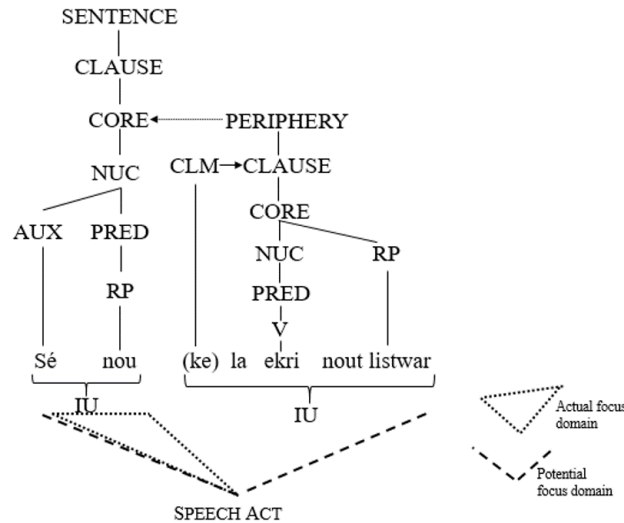


Figure 8.1.: Syntactic representation of KR *sé*-cleft with focus projection

Note that this syntactic representation differentiates clefts from regular specificational structures, in which the variable is represented as an RP in the core and

<sup>140</sup>Note that the LS of specificational sentences is different to that of other copular sentences, whose LSs are represented below, following Van Valin (2005: 55).

- (iv) a. Attributive and Identificational  
**be'**(x, [**pred'**])
- b. Equational  
**equate'**(x, y)

the value is a predicate. In the cleft construction, the variable is actually expressed in the CRC and, as shown in Figure 8.1, it is not in an argument slot. However, Pavey (2004) points out that the core similarity between the *it*-cleft and other specificational structures is their pragmatic function, and that clefts do not necessarily resemble other specificational sentences syntactically. In what follows, I explain the motivation for the syntactic template in Figure 8.1, which is heavily influenced by pragmatics rather than semantics.

Usually, the syntactic template is motivated by the semantic representation so, given that the clefted constituent is not a semantic predicate, we would not usually find it under the PRED node in the syntactic representation. However, RRG places emphasis, on the one hand, on the role of constructions in a grammar, and on the other hand, on the equal importance of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In the case of the *sé*-cleft, placing the clefted constituent under the PRED node is pragmatically motivated, rather than semantically motivated because, as noted above, it is a pragmatic predicate. The role of the pragmatic predicate in the case of clefts is to provide the value in the specificational structure, and this is the main pragmatic function of the sentence, which is why the clefted constituent is the (pragmatic) predicate of the matrix core (Lambrecht 2001, Pavey 2004).

The CRC is placed in the periphery of the core. It is placed in the periphery for several reasons: firstly, because the CRC relies on the clefted constituent for the interpretation of one of its arguments, it is dependent (Pavey 2004: 209). Secondly, representing the CRC in the periphery rather than in the core reflects the fact that, like RRCs and ARCs, the CRC can be omitted (see the reduced clefts in (338) and (339c)) (Pavey 2004: 208). The fact that it is embedded, as signified by the (optional) presence of a relative marker, means that the clause is subordinate. Analysing *sé*-clefts as instances of peripheral subordination rather than daughter subordination (cf. section 3.1.5) reflects the fact that the CRC is not in focus (Pavey 2004: 212; París forthcoming: 15). In complex sentences, there is a constraint on the potential focus domain: it only extends into subordinate clauses if the clause is a direct daughter of the matrix clause (Van Valin 2005).

Representing the CRC in the periphery of the core differentiates the CRC from RRCs (Figure 5.1) and ARCs (Figure 5.7), which modify the nucleus of the RP, and the RP respectively. However, the three clause types are similar in their internal syntax: they have a missing argument/adjunct and the CLM, like for RRCs and ARCs, is optional - this position can be removed without otherwise changing the syntactic structure (or the steps in the linking procedure). The external syntax of the three RCs - the type of antecedent that they have and their relationship to that antecedent (cf. section 7.2.1.1.3) - is where they differ, and this is reflected in how they pattern with respect to operator scope: CRCs are not within the scope of the

operators of the clefted constituent (Pavey 2004: 199). For example, definiteness operates on the level of the RP (Van Valin 2005: 24), and in an RRC, definiteness has scope over the head noun and the RC whereas in a cleft, definiteness does not have scope over the CRC because the CRC does not modify the clefted constituent in the same way that an RRC does its antecedent. This is illustrated in Figure 8.2, which compares the *sé*-CRC (349a) and the RRC in (349b).<sup>141</sup>

(349) a. *Sé*-cleft

(...) *sé lo sistinm i fo kasé* (...)  
COP DEF system REL must break

‘(...) it is the system we must break (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 22)

b. RRC

(...) *nou lé dan nout péi, é lo sistinm i edik*  
1PL COP in POSS.1PL country and DEF system FIN educate  
*nout bann marmay i di aou* (...)  
POSS.3SG PL children FIN say 2SG

‘(...) we are in our country, and the system that educates our children tells you (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)

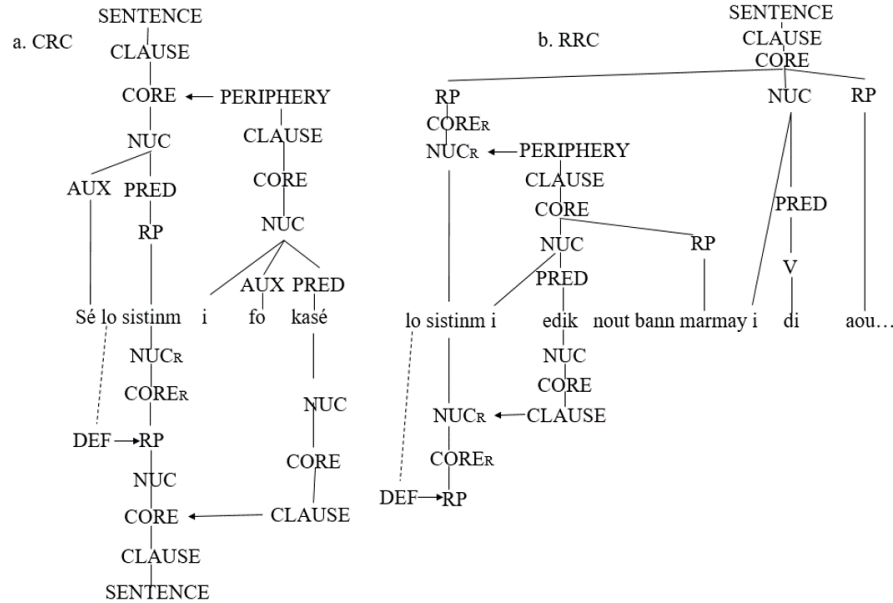


Figure 8.2.: Comparison of operator scope in *sé*-clefts and RRCs

The syntactic structure therefore highlights that while the internal structure of RCs is the same, the external syntax is different and it is that which determines the semantico-pragmatic function of the RC (Lambrecht 2001: 473; Pavey 2004: 200; París forthcoming; cf. section 7.2.1.1.3). The difference between CRCs and RRCs

<sup>141</sup>I note that *fo* may not be best represented under the AUX node in Figure 8.2, but this issue is beyond my present aims.

in terms of their external syntax seems well-motivated, but one area of the analyses proposed by these authors that seems underdeveloped is the difference between ARCs and CRCs. This requires careful thought and I have been unable to give this issue due attention, particularly as I have limited data on ARCs. I will nonetheless offer some thoughts. ARCs and CRCs exhibit similarities in that the ARC modifies the whole RP and hence is not within the scope of the RP's operators like an RRC is. Nevertheless, an ARC still modifies its antecedent (the whole RP) and is thus attributive. We cannot say the same for the CRC and the clefted constituent: the CRC does not exactly modify the clefted constituent, but rather, it contains the variable that is filled by the clefted constituent (the value). This difference is reflected in the semantic representation of clefts on the one hand, and (restrictive and appositive) RCs on the other. A LS *be'* (x, y) is retrieved for CRCs and for (appositive/restrictive) RCs, but the appositive/restrictive RC head noun fills the first argument position and the RC predicate fills the second (cf. section 5.4.1). In clefts, it is the reverse: the predicate of the CRC fills the first argument position and the clefted constituent fills the second (see (348)). That the CRC does not exactly modify the clefted constituent could make one question its placement in the periphery at all, but the motivations for this placement were given above. Here, I will add that it is exactly this mismatch between syntax and semantics that makes clefts so puzzling and highlights the necessity of considering how these two elements of the grammar fit together and can be affected by pragmatics.

With this in mind, I turn to the linking between syntax and semantics. Pavay (2004: 257) proposes some additional construction-specific linking rules for the *it*-cleft construction:

- (350) Construction-specific rules for linking from syntax-semantics in *it*-clefts (Pavay 2004: 257)
- a. Retrieve from the lexicon a specificational LS and substitute the LS of the verb in the cleft clause for the *x* argument
  - b. If there is no pre/postcore slot element in the cleft clause, then treat the clefted constituent as if it were in the pre/post core slot for linking purposes; if there is an element in the pre/postcore slot in the cleft clause; coindex the clefted constituent with it.
  - c. Coindex the 'y' argument in the specificational LS with the constituent in the cleft clause LS linked to the clefted constituent following (b).

Concerning step (b), in KR, all argument clefts are either zero-marked or marked with *ke* (section 8.2.3), which is a complementiser, not a relative pronoun. Therefore, a syntactic template with a PRCS will never be found for this type of cleft. Proceeding with steps (a) and (c) with respect to our example (347), I substitute

the LS of the CRC verb (351b) into the LS of the specifiational sentence (351a), resulting in (351c).

- (351) a. Specifiational LS of clefts  
           **be'** (x, y)  
       b. CRC predicate LS  
           **do'** (w, [**write'** (w, (z))])  
       c. Substitution  
           **be'** ([**do'**(w<sub>i</sub>, [**write'** (w<sub>i</sub>, listwar))]), nou<sub>i</sub>)

I illustrate the steps in the linking in Figure 8.3.

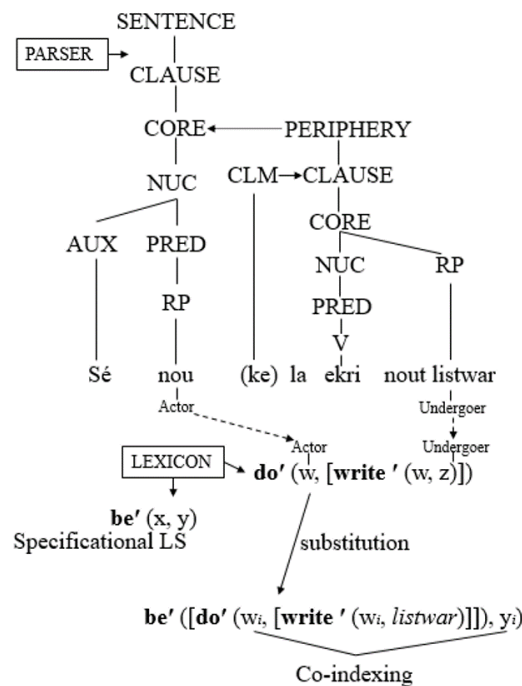


Figure 8.3.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in *sé*-clefts

Before moving on to the analysis with adjunct clefted constituents, I will add a brief note on some points arising in the linking from semantics to syntax, the reverse direction to that which has just been illustrated. In assigning macroroles from the LS of the specifiational sentence, there are two issues: firstly, the first argument is a predicate rather than a referring expression, and it is referring expressions that assume thematic roles, and secondly, the second argument of the specifiational structure is a referring expression but it is also a predicate - a pragmatic predicate (Pavey 2004: 248). However, macroroles can be assigned in the LS of the CRC, which fills the first argument slot of the specifiational LS. Given that one of the arguments of the CRC predicate is co-indexed with the clefted constituent, the clefted constituent can be assigned a thematic role following the co-indexation (Pavey

2004: 248). In the next section, I discuss the analysis for clefted constituents that are adjuncts rather than arguments.

### 8.4.2. Adjunct clefted constituents

Not all clefted constituents fill an argument role in the LS of the CRC predicate. The LS for a specificational sentence is still retrieved in such cases as the sentence is still specificational. The issue is how to co-index the second argument of that specificational LS (i.e. the value) with a semantic position in the CRC. The solution proposed by Pavey (2004: 225) is to call an abstract predicate: **be-LOC'** for locatives and **be-TEMP'** for temporals. Calling an abstract predicate has a precedent in RRG (as already seen in section 5.4.1.2): Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 337) propose an abstract predicate for adjunct *wh*-words, and in a similar vein, I proposed one during the analysis of locative RCs with *ousa* in section 5.4.1.2. To illustrate this analysis, I will use example (352).

- (352) (...) *sé la ke le monn i viv* (...) (Magazine - *Kriké* 5)  
           COP there REL DEF people FIN live  
           ‘(...) it’s there that people live (...)’

Given that the clefted constituent is a locative adjunct in example (352), a locative abstract predicate (353) is called. The *x* argument is filled by the location and the *y* argument by the predicate of the CRC (analysed here as a state predicate), illustrated in (354).

- (353) **be-LOC'**(*x*, *y*)  
 (354) **be-LOC'**(*x*, [**live'**(*w*)])

The specificational structure can then be called; the LS in (354) is substituted in for the first argument and the clefted constituent substituted in for the second argument. The second argument of the specificational structure can be co-indexed with a position in the LS of the CRC now.

- (355) **be'**([**be-LOC'**(*x<sub>i</sub>*, [**live'**(*lo monn*)])], *z<sub>i</sub>*)

Previous analyses have not proposed how to analyse clefts with clefted constituents functioning as adjuncts of manner or reason in the CRC, which were fairly frequent in my corpus and should be addressed. I propose that these are analysed in a very similar fashion, by retrieving an abstract predicate e.g. **be-MANNER'** or **be-CAUSE'**. Although this has not been proposed before, the same justifications as for locatives and temporals apply. A higher predicate was proposed for locatives and temporals to facilitate the linking between syntax and semantics when the PRCS



contains the *wh*-words *where* and *when*. The same would need to be done if and when, for example, the *wh*-words *how* and *why* occurred in the PRCS in English.

Before concluding this chapter, in Table 8.3 I give the CS for *sé*-clefts in KR, which details the morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of the cleft, including those language-specific features of the construction.

Table 8.3.: Constructional Schema for KR *sé*-clefts

Construction: KR <i>sé</i> -cleft
SYNTAX:
Juncture: core
Nexus: subordination (peripheral)
Construction type: cleft
Unit templates: Narrow focus cleft (Figure 8.1)
Linking: syntax → semantics additional rules
MORPHOLOGY:
Optional CLM ( <i>ke</i> )
Copula: default <i>sé</i> ; <i>lé</i> in some conditions (speaker-dependent; favoured with non-nominal clefted constituents)
SEMANTICS: specificational: <b>be'</b> ( <i>x</i> , <i>y</i> ), where <i>x</i> is filled by the CRC predicate and <i>y</i> by the clefted constituent (pragmatic predicate)
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: unspecified
Focus structure: narrow focus on clefted constituent

## 8.5. Conclusion

Chapter 7 introduced the relationship between focus and syntax, and the types of cleft found in other languages, including the lexifier of KR, French. That chapter foregrounded the data presented in this chapter, particularly by outlining the formal and functional motivations for the high occurrence of clefts in French, and by describing the structural properties of clefts in that language and others. In this chapter, I outlined in detail the structural properties of the KR *sé*-cleft, which will enable a future comparison between KR and other languages regarding this cross-linguistically common construction that until now was poorly understood in KR.

I argued against a previous analysis by Bollée (2013) that KR focus constructions with *sé* are cases of focus fronting. Instead, I gave evidence that *sé* is best analysed as a copula given that it inflects for tense and is found in other copular constructions. I contributed further to our understanding of copulas in KR, showing that *sé* is by

far the preferred copula in cleft constructions, which fits my broader finding that *sé* is favoured over *lé* in specifying sentences. The *sé*-cleft does not usually have a cleft pronoun, unlike the equivalent in French which, being a language that requires a subject, requires a cleft pronoun. In this regard, KR patterns with other pro-drop Romance languages rather than with its lexifier. While previous sources on clefts in KR have only considered the clefting of NPs, I showed that KR can also cleft ADVPs, PPs and adverbial clauses. Unlike some of the other French Creoles, such as Haitian, KR does not have a predicate clefting structure involving the repetition of a clefted predicate. I provided negative evidence for this from interviews, unlike previous observations, which have either not commented upon the issue of predicate clefting or have relied on not observing the phenomenon (presumably, in corpora) to conclude that it does not exist in KR. Finally, I compared RC marking in CRCs and RRCs. I revealed that RC marking is sensitive to the function of the antecedent in RRCs, but not in CRCs. Zero-marking is favoured across cleft constituent functions, the function of the clefted constituent not affecting relative marking at a level of statistical significance.

This chapter addressed a particularly under-researched area in KR: the syntax of focus. I began to investigate this area of KR grammar in a comparative perspective with its lexifier, French, which is often used in the literature as an example of a language with rigid word order and rigid focus structure. I argued that KR has an alternative focalising device with *minm* that can be found in the same contexts as the *sé*-cleft and can accompany preverbal focus, which is known to be highly constrained in French. I called for in-depth comparison of these two focalisation strategies, as well as prosody, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the syntax of focus in KR and hence the degree to which KR differs from French in this regard.

In section 8.4, I offered an RRG analysis of KR's *sé*-clefts, which followed Pavey's (2004) analysis for English *it*-clefts. Despite some differences in form between the *it*-cleft and the *sé*-cleft, the analysis is applicable to both languages, which highlights the ability of RRG to capture the cross-linguistic functional, pragmatic underpinning of this construction, all while preserving language-specific elements. Specifically, the absence of a cleft pronoun and of a relative marker in KR does not markedly change the analysis: these are features that can be captured in the language-specific syntactic templates and CSs. Given that RRG does not allow for empty underlying elements, and that KR does not have a cleft pronoun, an RRG analysis that captures the facts in languages like KR that do not have a cleft pronoun and in languages like English which do have one cannot grant the cleft pronoun a semantic role. Instead, the cleft pronoun, along with the copula, assigns the pragmatic role of focus. When the cleft pronoun is not present (i.e. in KR), it is simply the copula alone that fulfils this pragmatic role. The similarities between the cleft construction and other copular

constructions is captured in the semantic representation: the *sé*-cleft is assigned the LS of a specificational construction. The similarity between the *sé*-CRC and RRCs and ARCs is also clear: their internal structure is the same, but they differ in terms of the function that they have in the construction in which they occur, depending on the nature of their antecedent and their relation to that antecedent. Finally, although there are two verbs (the copula and the CRC verb), it is only the CRC verb that assigns semantic roles, which explains how this bi-clausal construction expresses a single proposition. Given that it is difficult to derive the full meaning of the cleft construction via a compositional analysis, the *sé*-cleft is a construction that exemplifies well the strength of the RRG framework as one which places equal importance on the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic components of the grammar.

## 9. *Nana* constructions

### 9.1. Introduction

KR has a group of constructions involving a ‘have’ copula followed by a nominal constituent and an RC. Like *avoir*-clefts, *nana*-clefts of two different types exist: those exhibiting broad focus and those exhibiting narrow focus (cf. section 7.2.2.2). The aim of this chapter is primarily to discuss *nana*-constructions that are clefts, but in doing so, I must distinguish them from existentials (see section 7.2.2.3) and, as we will see, this distinction is not always clear-cut. In Table 9.1, I summarise the criteria noted in section 7.2.2 that can be used to distinguish the three constructions to be discussed in this chapter.

Table 9.1.: Distinguishing three *nana*-constructions

	<b>Broad focus cleft</b>	<b>Narrow focus cleft</b>	<b>Existential construction</b>
<b>Function</b>	Introduce a referent into the discourse and predicate something about it/report an event.	Specify non-exhaustively a value for a variable.	Express a proposition about the existence, presence or lack of something in a context.
<b>Distingui- shing criteria</b>	Have a mono-clausal SV (subject-verb) counterpart, i.e. can be de-clefted.	Have a mono-clausal SV counterpart, i.e. can be de-clefted.	No SV counterpart.
	RC cannot be removed.	RC can be removed.	RC can be removed.
	Function of antecedent in RC must be subject.	Function of antecedent in RC can be non-subject.	Function of antecedent in RC can be non-subject.

As Table 9.1 shows, a distinction between clefts and existentials can be made

first on semantic grounds. Existentials express a proposition about the existence, presence or lack of something or someone in a context. An example from the corpus that clearly does that is in (356).

- (356) (...) *dann la komine Bras Panon nena in zoli lékol i apèl «*  
in DET commune Bras Panon have INDF nice school FIN call  
*Ma Pensée ».*  
my thought  
‘(...) in the commune Bras Panon, there is a nice school that is called *Ma Pensée*.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 1)

Applying the criteria from Table 9.1, firstly, the construction in (356) cannot be declifted: this would give ‘a nice school is called *Ma Pensée*’, where the main semantic contribution of the sentence is about the name of the school, but this is not the case. Rather, the main predication is about the existence of this school; the RC specifying its name provides information to restrict the reference of the antecedent. Furthermore, a key feature of existentials is that the proposition is about a(n implicit) context (cf. definition in Table 9.1 and discussion in Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 59-62). This context can be enriched or made explicit in an adverbial (Bentley 2020), which is what we see in (356) (*dann la komine Bras Panon*).

KR also has a subtype of existential which lacks an audible pivot, illustrated in (357). These will be described in section 9.3, and an RRG analysis presented in section 9.4.3.2.

- (357) *Nana i mèt sintir nwar (...)*  
have FIN put belt black  
‘There are (people) who wear a black belt (...)’ (Baude 2010)

Broad focus *nana*-clefts, on the other hand, have a presentational or event-reporting function (cf. section 7.2.2.2.1), illustrated by the examples in (358).

- (358) a. *hier soir néna un num privé la tel amwin su*  
yesterday night have INDF number private PRF phone 1SG on  
*mon orange*  
POSS.1SG orange  
‘Last night a private number phoned me on my Orange’ (Lit. ...there’s a private number that phoned me...) (SMS)
- b. *na in fanm lavé done amwin inn!*  
have INDF woman have.PST give 1SG one  
‘A woman gave me one!’ (Lit. ‘There is a woman that gave me one’) (Baude 2010)

The examples in (358) are clearly not existentials as they are easily de-clefted and do not serve an existential function but rather, they present a referent/event. The RC of those examples cannot be removed: this would leave “*there’s a private number*” and “*there’s a woman*”, neither of which are the main assertions of the respective sentences in (358a) and (358b).

The *nana*-constructions in my corpus tended to exhibit broad focus, though narrow focus *nana*-clefts are also attested (359).

- (359) a. *Le band plastik oui mai le kapuch et l tour i sort pa lé*  
 DEF band plastic yes but DEF hood and DEF block FIN leave NEG be  
*fixé na k le dedan i sort*  
 fixed have only DEF inside FIN leave  
 ‘The plastic band yes but the hood and the block don’t come out they’re  
 fixed there’s only the inside that comes out.’ (SMS)
- b. *Na ali sava é Tida.*  
 have 3SG go and Tida  
 ‘There’s him who’s going and Tida.’ (Baude 2010)

Authors have described narrow focus *there*- and *avoir*-clefts as specificational clefts, in the sense that a value is specified for a variable (section 7.2.2.2.2). In (359b), the value *ali* ‘him’ is specified for the variable X in ‘X is going’. Like for their English and French equivalents, what differentiates specificational *nana*-clefts from specificational *sé*-clefts is that specificational *nana*-clefts are non-exhaustive: there can be several values which satisfy the variable. This is exemplified in (359b), with the addition of *é Tida* ‘and Tida’. I will argue, following Pavey (2004), that this type of cleft is a sub-type of existential, but rather than offering a proposition about the existence, presence or relevance of the clefted constituent, these constructions assert that a value exists for the variable in the RC. This is reflected in the semantic representation that I propose for them in section 9.4.1. In contrast, I do not consider broad focus *nana*-clefts to be a sub-type of existential, and this too is reflected in their semantic representation, given in section 9.4.2.

In this chapter, I discuss the structure of *nana*-constructions, exploring the difficulties of drawing a firm distinction between *nana*-clefts and *nana* existentials in KR. In doing so, I take account of their discourse-pragmatic function, as this is a criterion for their distinction (cf. Table 9.1). Section 9.2 is dedicated to *nana*-clefts, drawing distinctions between the narrow focus and broad focus types where relevant. In section 9.3, I discuss true existential *nana*-constructions, but focus only on existentials without a pivot (cf. (357)) as they are distinctive. In section 9.4, I propose an RRG analysis of narrow focus *nana*-clefts (section 9.4.1), broad focus *nana*-clefts (section 9.4.2), existential *nana*-constructions (section 9.4.3), and those existentials like (357) without a pivot (section 9.4.3.2). The majority of the data presented in

this chapter come from the corpus, where I found 193 *nana*-clefts (slightly less than the 225 *sé*-clefts found) and 16 *nana* existentials with no pivot (cf. (357)).<sup>142</sup> This data is supplemented where possible with interview data consisting of acceptability judgements.<sup>143</sup>

## 9.2. The structure of *nana*-clefts

In this section, I discuss each component of the *nana*-cleft in turn, beginning with the cleft pronoun. Where relevant, I outline how *nana*-clefts are difficult to distinguish from *nana* existentials, applying the criteria from the literature outlined in Table 9.1.

### 9.2.1. Cleft pronoun

The majority of *nana*-clefts are impersonal, like their French counterparts, but unlike French *il y a*-clefts, do not have an expletive subject. However, I have identified 8 instances of a *nana*-cleft with a subject. The subject is not an impersonal subject, but rather a personal pronoun: a 1SG pronoun in five examples (360a), (360b)); a 1PL subject in three examples (360c) and a 2SG subject in one example (360d).<sup>144</sup>

- (360) a. *dayeur euh mavé papa ke lé parti an sèrvìs*  
besides euh 1SG-have.IPFV Dad REL be leave in army  
‘Besides, um, I had Dad who left for the army.’ (Baude 2010)
- b. *Paske mi na in kouzine lé mins mins mins, koné kom, kom*  
Because 1SG have INDF cousin COP thin thin thin know like like  
*Samiha!*  
Samiha  
‘Because I have a cousin who is thin thin thin, you know, like Samiha!’  
(Baude 2010)
- c. *nou néna Danny, Manion é Shantal ke lé là*  
1PL have Danny Manion and Chantelle REL COP there  
‘We have Danny, Manion and Chantelle who are here’ (TV)
- d. *ou na boko de fé komsa ki ariv*  
2SG have lots of fact like.that REL-FIN happen  
‘you have lots of things like that that happen’ (TV)

Rather than predicating about possession of the post-copular NP, such structures instead seem to serve a presentational/event-reporting function typical of broad

<sup>142</sup>This figure includes examples for which it is hard to identify whether their true function is that of an existential or a cleft. I do not include counts for the number of narrow and broad focus clefts because it was not always possible to determine, particularly in the SMS corpus, where the previous context is not available.

<sup>143</sup>Interview data on these structures is more limited than for other chapters due to time constraints.

<sup>144</sup>In example (360a), the pronominal subject is contracted with the copula (*mwin l/navé*).

focus clefts, and I hence classify them as such. Further indication that they are clefts comes from the observation that, for the most-part, they can be declefted (example (360b) is perhaps a borderline case because a personal possessive pronoun would need to be added), and the main assertion is contained within the RC.

The majority of discussion in the literature on French concerns the *avoir*-cleft with *il y a*, containing an impersonal subject (cf. (296a)). However, examples with a first person subject are often given in the literature (cf. (296b)), but there is little discussion about the difference between them (though see Lambrecht 1988b: 333-334 and Conti 2010). Further work is needed to explain what differentiates those structures which have a personal pronoun subject from those which are impersonal. A possibility is that the subject constitutes the aboutness topic of the sentence.<sup>145</sup> Broad-focus sentences, while typically described as lacking an aboutness topic, are argued by some authors to have an implicit stage topic (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 27; Karssenberg & Lahousse 2018: 521). A stage topic is one which defines spatial and/or temporal parameters (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 8). It could be argued that what differentiates the clefts with a personal pronoun from impersonal ones is that the aboutness topic is the personal pronoun in the former (it situates the sentence in relation to the speaker, hearer or a third party) whereas those with an impersonal structure have an implicit spatio-temporal topic. Further work is required on these constructions, particularly the exact role of the cleft pronoun and as such, I will not present an analysis of these *nana*-clefts, leaving this to future research.

### 9.2.2. Copula

Like French, KR exhibits a ‘have’ copula rather than a ‘be’ copula in presentational clefts and existentials. The verbal paradigm for *avoir* ‘have’ in KR is in Table 9.2. The forms in *n*- and *l*- are not marked for person. They are variants whose distribution has not received much attention in the KR literature, but I will shed some light on it in this section.

Table 9.2.: Paradigm of verb HAVE

<b>Past</b>	<i>navé</i>	<i>lavé</i>
<b>Present</b>	<i>na(na)</i>	<i>la</i>
<b>Future</b>	<i>nora</i>	<i>lora</i>

Note that the form *nana* freely alternates with *néna*. The forms of the copula

<sup>145</sup>The aboutness topic is typically described as “what the sentence is about”. (Strawson 1964, Reinhart 1981, Lambrecht 1988a, Erteschik-Shir 1997 among others).



attested in *nana*-clefts and their frequency in the corpus are shown in Table 9.3.<sup>146</sup> I will refer to constructions involving any of these forms of the copula as ‘*nana*-constructions’.

Table 9.3.: Forms of the copula in *nana*-constructions in the corpus

Tense	Form	Number of occurrences
<b>Present</b>	<i>na</i>	127
	<i>nana</i>	43
	<i>la</i>	7
<b>Past</b>	<i>navé</i>	5
	<i>lavé</i>	8
<b>Future</b>	<i>nora</i>	2

Table 9.3 indicates that *na* is by far the most common form of copula, followed by *nana* (/néna). The occurrence of *la* in these constructions is infrequent and seems to be associated with negation: 6/7 (86%) instances of *la* are negated, exemplified in (361a).<sup>147</sup> The one example without negation is in (361b).

- (361) a. *La pa toulmonn i koz parèy.*  
have NEG everybody FIN speak same  
‘Not everyone speaks the same.’ (Lit. There’s not everyone who speaks the same.) (Baude 2010)
- b. *é la dé jan i di aou “atrap le zavann (...)*  
and have INDF people FIN say 2SG catch DEF wind  
‘and there are people that say to you “catch the wind (...)’  
(Baude 2010)

Note that the *n*- forms can occur with negation, though only 2/178 (1%) examples with an *n*- form exhibited this type of negation over the copula.<sup>148</sup>

- (362) (...) *na pwin inn i sava rod la vérité (...)*  
have NEG one FIN FUT search DET truth  
‘(...) there is not one that will search the truth (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)

<sup>146</sup>The forms in Table 9.3 add up to 192. The remaining example exhibited the form *mavé* (360a), which is a contraction of the 1SG pronoun and either the form *navé* or *lavé*.

<sup>147</sup>These structures were also discussed in section 8.2.1.2.1 as their status as ‘be’ or ‘have’ clefts is unclear given that *la* is a variant of the copula *lé* ‘be’ as well as a form of ‘have’. I classify them as ‘have’ clefts because if we analyse *la* as a form of ‘be’ in such constructions, there is a presupposition created by the narrow focus, which is not there if the copula is an existential ‘have’. See section 8.2.1.2.1.

<sup>148</sup>*Nana*-constructions with an *n*-form copula did exhibit another type of negation: there were 4 examples in the corpus with a negative indefinite pronoun as the post-copular NP:

- (v) *na pi riyn y marsh*  
have NEG nothing FIN work  
‘There is nothing that works anymore’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

The figures in Table 9.3 indicate that the *l*-form is not disfavoured over the *n*-form in the past tense (negation has not affected this: none of the past tense examples occurred with negation). Lambrecht (1988a: 137) notes that in the French *avoir*-cleft, the present tense form is “frozen”, occurring in the present tense even when the CRC verb is not. The present tense form is found for past and future reference in KR too: of 76 examples in the corpus where the CRC verb is not in the present tense, 59 (78%) still have a present-tense copula, an example of which is in (363).

- (363) *Ant désanm 1985 é zanvié 1986 na minm in délégasion*  
 between December 1985 and January 1986 have even INDF delegation  
*lo MIR lavé parti an Libi, (...)*  
 the MIR have.PST go in Libya  
 ‘Between December 1985 and January 1986, there’s even a delegation of the  
 MIR that went to Libya, (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

To summarise, the primary copula found in *nana*-constructions is a present-tense *n*-form (*na* or *nana*) of ‘have’, rather than an *l*-form (*la*). When *la* does occur, in the majority of cases it exhibits negation over the copula.

### 9.2.3. Clefted constituent

#### 9.2.3.1. Syntactic role in the RC

Some authors have pointed out that *avoir*/*there*-clefts only cleft nominal constituents with subject function in the CRC (cf. section 7.2.2.1) and this is even used as a diagnostic for distinguishing a cleft from another type of RC (i.e. if it has object function then it is not a cleft). However, Karssenbergh (2018: 65) argues that this only holds for presentational clefts, and not specificational ones. I found 7 examples in which the clefted constituent was an object in the CRC, but they were not all specificational; some examples are in (364). The examples in (364) are not specificational because they do not provide a value for a variable.

- (364) a. (...) *na in nafèr i fo remarké.*  
 have INDF thing FIN must note  
 ‘(...) there is something you must note.’ (Brochure)
- b. *Nana des mots mi konpran (...)*  
 have INDF words 1SG-FIN understand  
 ‘There are words that I understand (...)’ (Baude 2010)

If these are not specificational clefts, then we might instead consider whether they are existentials rather than clefts. The existential meaning, that of asserting or denying the existence, presence, or relevance of something in a given context, is possible for the examples in (364). However, they are decleftable (i.e. have

a monoclausal counterpart, which existentials do not), which leaves examples like (364a) and (364b) difficult to classify.

There were 18 *nana*-constructions in which the post-copular constituent had an adverbial function in the RC: 6 were realised as ADVPs and 12 as NPs.

- (365) a. *Na riynk komsa réniomé va aprann son listwar (...)*  
 have only like.that Reunionese FUT learn POSS.3SG history  
 Lit. ‘There is no other way (lit. only like that) that Reunionese people  
 will learn their history (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 24)
- b. *Na défwa mwin lé oblizé (...)*  
 have INDF-time 1SG COP obliged  
 ‘there are times when I have to (...)’ (Baude 2010)

The *nana*-construction in example (365a) is a narrow focus, specificational cleft, indicated by the fact that it is de-cleftable and the CRC contains backgrounded information rather than new, focal information. Adverbial *there/avoir*-clefts have not received much attention in the literature. They are less common than nominal ones in my corpus: only 9% of *nana*-clefts have an adverbial clefted constituent, compared with 30% of *sé*-clefts (cf. Table 8.2). Unlike example (365a), example (365b) has broad focus. Example (365b) could be considered an existential, but it can also be de-clefted and thus constitutes another example where it is hard to determine whether the meaning of the sentence is to assert the existence, presence or relevance of something, or whether the cleft is rather being used as a means for including a constituent within focus. A point in favour of the cleft analysis for example (365b) is that the example is not about a context or a contextualised situation, but in true existentials, the existence, presence or absence is predicated of a context. In the next section, I discuss the definiteness of the post-copular pivot (those which are nominal).

### 9.2.3.2. Definiteness

In the literature, examples offered of French presentational clefts typically cleft a definite NP. However, as noted in section 7.2.2.2.2, Karssenbergh & Lahousse (2017) found in a corpus study that a larger proportion of French *il y a*-clefts had an indefinite clefted constituent than a definite one, but that this correlated with the focus structure articulation of the clefts, definites being favoured in narrow focus clefts and indefinites in broad focus clefts. In *nana*-clefts in the corpus, I found the following types of definite NPs in post-copular position: personal pronouns (366a), proper nouns (366b), NPs with *lo* ‘the’ (366c) and nouns with a possessive article (366d).

- (366) a. *na ali sava é Tida*  
 have 3SG go and Tida  
 ‘There’s him who’s going and Tida’ (Baude 2010)
- b. *Na NAME et NAME i rente ek nous ce soir i*  
 have NAME and NAME FIN return with 1PL this evening FIN  
*derange pa*  
 bother NEG  
 ‘There’s X and Y who are coming back with us this evening if you don’t mind’ (SMS)
- c. *An plus lavé lo tan té in peu gaté (...)*  
 in more have.IPFV DEF weather IPFV INDF bit spoiled  
 ‘Also there was the weather which was horrible (...)’ (Baude 2010)
- d. (...) *parske navé mon fis la pas*  
 because have.IPFV POSS.1SG son PRF come  
 ‘(...) because there was my son that came’ (Baude 2010)

There were two instances of a *nana*-cleft with a universal quantifier (367a), and six with a quantificational expression (367b).<sup>149</sup>

- (367) a. *La pa toulmonn i koz parèy.*  
 have NEG everyone FIN speak same  
 ‘Not everyone speaks the same.’ (Lit. there’s not everyone who speaks the same’) (Baude 2010)
- b. (...) *dernié zéléksion na plis 60% domoun la pa parti voté(...)*  
 last election have more 60% people PRF NEG go vote  
 Lit. ‘(...) last elections there is more than 60% of people that did not go to vote (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 16)

Definite post-copular NPs were far less frequent than indefinite ones in *nana*-clefts: of the 186 *nana*-clefts to which the category of definiteness can apply, 20 (11%) had a definite clefted NP (of the types listed above).<sup>150</sup> On the other hand, 133 *nana*-clefts (72%) had an indefinite clefted constituent, either being marked with an indefinite determiner *in* (368a) or *de* (368b), another indefinite marker such

<sup>149</sup>Quantificational expressions include expressions like *many* and *some* when they have a quantificational reading rather than a cardinal one (see Milsark 1979). To exemplify the difference between the two readings, the sentence in (via) can either have a cardinal reading, paraphrased in (vib), or a proportional quantificational reading, paraphrased in (vic).

- (vi) a. Some eggs hatched.  
 b. An indefinite number of eggs hatched.  
 c. Some of the eggs hatched, others did not.

<sup>150</sup>*Nana*-clefts with an ADVP in the post-copular position (cf. section 9.2.3.1) could not be classified according to definiteness.

as *bonpé* ‘lots’ (368c), or the clefted constituent was a negative indefinite pronoun (368d).<sup>151</sup>

- (368) a. *Mé na in nafèr zot na poin le droi manjé: (...)*  
 but have INDF thing 2PL have NEG DEF right eat  
 ‘But there is something that you cannot eat: (...)’ (Brochure)
- b. *nana de mo mi konpran*  
 have INDF words 1SG-FIN understand  
 ‘there are words that I understand’ (Baude 2010)
- c. *Mé dan nout péi na bonpe réniyé i komans rouv lo*  
 but in our country have lots Reunionese FIN start open DEF  
*zié (...)*  
 eye  
 ‘but in our country there are a lot of Reunionese who are starting to  
 open their eyes (...)’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 21)
- d. *Na ryin i di le nor lé en o, le sud lé en ba.*  
 have nothing FIN say DEF north COP in high DEF south COP in low  
 ‘There is nothing that says the north is at the top and the south is at  
 the bottom’ (Documentary)

There were two remaining types of NP that cannot be categorised as definite or indefinite based on a grammatical marker in the NP: bare NPs (cf. section 2.3.2) and those marked with plural marker *bann*. There were 21 instances of a *nana*-construction with the former and three with the latter.

All *nana*-constructions with a bare NP had a non-specific reading (369), and 18 of those had *demoun* or *moun* ‘people’ as the noun, illustrated in (369a).

- (369) a. (...) *na moun i di nou na pwin lidantité(...)*  
 have people FIN say 1SG have NEG identity  
 ‘(...)there are people who say we have no identity(...)’  
 (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)
- b. *Néna mizisyen i zoué rock, jazz, klasik é byen sîr séga ek*  
 have musician FIN play rock jazz classical and well sure séga and  
*maloya.*  
 maloya  
 ‘There are musicians who play rock, jazz, classical and of course, séga  
 and maloya.’ (Magazine - *Kriké* 2)

The *nana*-clefts with a bare NP hence seem to add to the already larger proportion of *nana*-clefts with an indefinite clefted constituent. Turning now to those examples

<sup>151</sup>The determiner *de* is a plural indefinite marker. Albers (2019: 141) argues that *de* is rare in her corpus, but that it is more frequent in certain expressions, notably after *na*. She points out that it requires more research in other registers (the register of her corpus is familial).

with *bann*, this form is a plural marker that can combine with determiners, certain quantifiers and numerals (Albers 2019: 141-143). NPs with *bann* can also receive various readings: definite, non-specific and generic (Albers 2019: 219). The three instances of a *nana*-cleft with a *bann*-N as a clefted constituent are given in (370).

- (370) a. *Mé na sirtou bann péi afrikin ek Linion Afrikinn la*  
 but have especially PL country African with Union African PRF  
*tiynbo ek nou podvré.*  
 hold with 1PL really  
 ‘but there are especially the African countries with the African Union  
 that have really stood with us.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)
- b. (...), *na bann gran lantopriz la di la zwé volér po gingn lo*  
 have PL big company PRF say PRF play thief to win the  
*kontra.*  
 contract  
 ‘(...), there’s (the) big companies that they say played the thief to win  
 contracts.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)
- c. *Po konet: (néna bann Russ la fine komans difiz vaksin*  
 to know have PL Russian PRF COMPL start diffuse vaccine  
*zot la fé (...))*  
 3PL PRF make  
 ‘For information: (there’s the Russians who have started to disseminate  
 the vaccine that they have made, (...))’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)

Examples (370a) and (370c) have a definite reading. For (370a), all of the African countries are members of the African Union, so the NP is maximal, a property of definites. For (370c), the NP contains a Proper Noun and is hence also definite. Furthermore, edition 26 of *Fanal* has a French translation, and the French equivalent of (370c) is “*les russes ont déjà commencé...*”. The interpretation of example (370b) is less clear, though: it could have an indefinite, non-specific reading.

Overall, in this section, I have shown that KR *nana*-clefts more often have an indefinite clefted constituent. The large number of such examples raises the question of whether the *nana*-cleft is formally motivated by a tendency to avoid indefinite subjects. Evidence that that is the case comes from examples with an indefinite clefted constituent with the role of subject in the RC, and for which the function of the construction is not clearly presentational or specificational. One of the most common types of *nana*-construction (constituting 22% of all *nana*-constructions) are those which cleft translational equivalents of an indefinite expression meaning ‘some people’: *demoune* (371a), *des gens* (371b), *désertin* (371c).

- (371) a. *na demoune i mète piman*  
 have people FIN put chilli

- ‘Some people put chilli’ (Lit. There are people who put chilli) (Brochure)
- b. *Na des gens i san mové vréman hin!*  
 have INDF people FIN smell bad really hey  
 ‘Some people smell really bad hey!’ (Lit. There are people who smell really bad hey!) (Baude 2010)
- c. (...) *na désertin i konpran pa sa*  
 have some FIN understand NEG DEM  
 ‘(...) some people don’t understand that.’ (Lit. There are people who don’t understand that) (Baude 2010)

These structures can hardly be said to introduce a referent into discourse and then predicate something about it, which is the function of a presentational cleft. The high frequency of such examples may be treated as evidence that KR tendentially avoids indefinite subjects and that the *nana*-cleft is a strategy for doing so, reflecting cross-linguistic patterns (see section 7.2.2.2.1).

#### 9.2.4. Cleft relative clause

Of 193 *nana*-clefts in my corpus, only 20 (11%) were marked with a relativiser. This marker was *ke*, which interacts with the finiteness marker *i* in the same manner as in RCs (cf. section 5.2.3.1.1) and *sé*-CRCs (cf. section 8.2.3) to form *ki* when they occur adjacently, as in (372b).

- (372) a. *nana in étudiant ke lé avèk le Père Blin*  
 have INDF student REL COP with DEF Father Blin  
 ‘there is a student who is with Father Blin’ (Baude 2010)
- b. *na une kestyon ki intrig amwin in pé: (...)*  
 have one question REL-FIN intrigue 1SG INDF bit  
 ‘There is a question which intrigues me a little: (...)’ (TV)

These figures indicate that zero-marking is by far preferred over a relative marker in *nana*-constructions. This could be a product of the fact that the clefted constituent usually functions as subject in the *nana*-CRC, and across other types of RC, subject RCs are preferably zero-marked (cf. Table 8.2). It was not the case that the 20 relative-marked *nana*-clefts had a non-subject clefted constituent though: all of the relative-marked *nana*-CRCs had clefted constituents functioning as subject in the CRC. On the other hand, *nana*-clefts with a personal pronoun subject (section 9.2.1) were more often relative-marked: 5/8 (63%) of them had a relative marker, compared with just 15/185 (8%) impersonal *nana*-clefts.

To summarise this section, I have explored the features of *nana*-clefts, highlighting instances where *nana*-constructions are difficult to classify truly as clefts rather than

existentials. In the next section, I discuss a sub-type of true existential found in KR: those without a pivot.

### 9.3. Existential *nana* constructions

The purpose of this chapter has not been to describe existential *nana*-constructions, but in investigating *nana*-clefts, the comparison has been unavoidable. I illustrated a true existential in (356), and I dedicate this section to a specific type of existential found in KR, without an audible pivot (the post-copular NP). I found 16 instances of this structure, illustrated in (373).

- (373) a. *Nana i mèt sintir nwar (...)*  
have FIN put belt black  
‘There are (some) who wear a black belt (...)’ (Baude 2010)
- b. (...) *minm si néna i di lapa danzéré (...)*  
even if have FIN say be-NEG dangerous  
‘(...) even if there are (some) who say it is not dangerous (...)’  
(Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)

Although all of the 16 examples in the corpus had a human interpretation of the pivot, verification with a native speaker revealed that such examples are possible with an inanimate interpretation. That speaker confirmed that the constructed example (374) could be uttered in a context where you are talking about clothes in a shop, for example, or a group of people. It thus seems best to analyse the missing pivot as equivalent to an indefinite pronoun ‘some’. Note that this structure looks to be synchronically equivalent to Romance existentials with INDE (*en/ne*) and no pivot (see Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 177-179), and may have derived from that structure (e.g. French *il y en a qui...*).

- (374) *Nana mi èm, nana mi èm pa.*  
have 1SG-FIN like have 1SG-FIN like NEG  
‘There are some that I like, there are some that I do not like.’

The long form of the copula, *nana*, is required in these existentials where there is no audible pivot: the short forms *na* and *la* are never found in the corpus in such examples, and were rejected in interviews when asked for their acceptability in example (375).<sup>152</sup>

- (375) *Nana/\*na/\*la i mèt tro piman dann kari.*  
have FIN put too.much chilli in curry

<sup>152</sup>Note that *la* is accepted in example (375) but not with the intended meaning: it is accepted if *la* is adverbial ‘there/now’ rather than a copula (a form of ‘have’). The interpretation of the sentence with *la* would be ‘(they/he/she) are/is putting too much chilli in the curry there/now’.



‘There are (people) who put too much chilli in their curry.’

According to Corne (1995: 64), the relative marker *ke* is “usual” in this type of *nana*-construction, but otherwise, *ke* is almost invariably omitted in *nana*- constructions. I did not find it to be the case that this type of *nana*-construction was more frequently relative-marked: of the 16 occurrences of this construction in my corpus, only one was marked, illustrated in (376).

- (376) (...) *nana k' davwar lavé de po!*  
have REL must.have wash of skin  
‘(...) there are some who must have washed their skin!’ (Baude 2010)

I do not consider the *nana*-constructions described in this section to be clefts because the essential function of a cleft is to place the clefted constituent within focus, and if there is no clefted constituent, this cannot be done. In definitions of existential sentences, the pivot (the post-copular NP) is described as the one obligatory component (Francez 2007; McNally 2011: 1833; Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 2). Although this construction does not have an audible pivot, the construction has a consistent form-meaning mapping: when there is no pivot, it is obligatorily interpreted as ‘some’, which can be animate or inanimate. It has the function of an existential as it serves to assert the existence of (an indefinite number of) people or things described in the RC. In my analysis I propose that the RC has the structure of an FRC, and the clause has no subject, as is perfectly possible in KR (see section 2.3). In the next section, I offer RRG analyses of the constructions described in this chapter.

## 9.4. RRG analysis of *nana*-constructions

In this chapter we have seen a family of related *nana*-constructions that differ slightly in their syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties. In this section, I present an RRG analysis of each type, building upon previous work within RRG on narrow focus clefts (discussed in section 8.4) and on existentials and presentational clefts by Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015). I begin with narrow focus *nana*-clefts in the next section, as these receive a similar analysis to the narrow focus *sé*-clefts analysed in section 8.4.

### 9.4.1. Narrow focus *nana*-clefts

I will argue here that narrow focus *nana*-clefts have the same syntactic representation as *sé*-clefts (Figure 8.1) but different semantics. I use example (377) to illustrate the analysis.

- (377) *na ali i sava*  
 have 3SG FIN go  
 ‘There’s him that’s going’ (Baude 2010)

The syntactic structure and focus structure projection of (377) is illustrated in Figure 9.1.

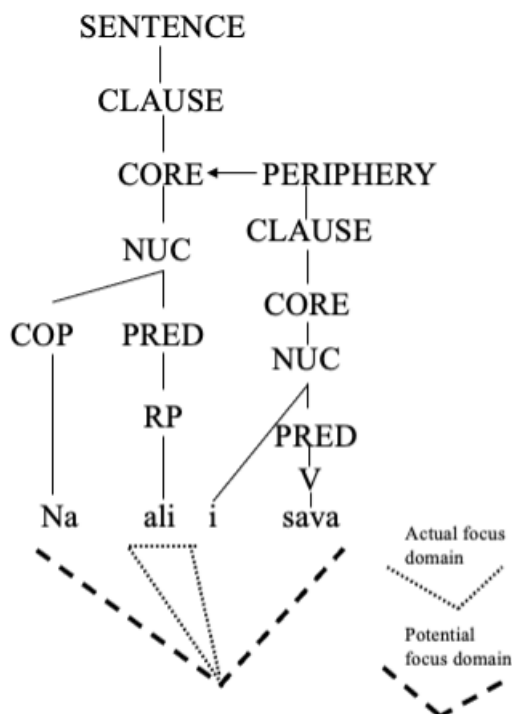


Figure 9.1.: Syntactic representation of narrow focus *nana*-clefts

Narrow focus *nana*-clefts are similar to *sé*-clefts in that they provide a value for a variable. However, as pointed out in section 9.1, while *it*-clefts (equivalent to *sé*-clefts) specify a value for a variable, *there*-clefts (equivalent to *nana*-clefts) assert that a value exists for the variable (Pavey 2004: 156). This reflects their different presuppositions: *it*-clefts presuppose the existence of the variable, but *there*-clefts do not, they assert it. I follow Pavey (2004) in considering that narrow focus *there*-clefts are a type of existential, but rather than asserting the existence of the clefted constituent, they assert that the clefted constituent exists as an element that satisfies the description in the CRC. In other words, it is a case of asserting the relevance of something/someone in a context, which falls within the broader definition of existentials. I depart from Pavey’s (2004) analysis slightly by proposing a modification to the LS that she suggests for narrow focus *there*-clefts. In order to differentiate between *it*-clefts and narrow focus *there*-clefts, Pavey (2004: 221) proposed that the LS of *there*-clefts be **exist’**(*x*, *y*) (recall that the LS for the *it*-cleft is **be’**(*x*, *y*)). In both LSs, the *x* argument is filled by the CRC predicate (the variable)

and the *y* argument is filled by the clefted constituent. However, a small issue with Pavey's proposed LS for *there*-clefts is that there is already an existential predicate **exist'**, proposed by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 115), and it occurs with only one argument (**exist'** (*x*)). Therefore, I propose an adjustment to the predicate, to differentiate the type of existential predication found in a narrow focus *there*-cleft, since the latter has two arguments. I propose to use **exist-thr'** (*x*, *y*) for narrow focus *nana*-clefts. The use of 'thr' follows the convention proposed by Lyons (1999: 237) to distinguish the pleonastic, existential *there* (represented as 'thr') from the deictic *there*. Existentials have an implicit context and not necessarily an explicit location, therefore 'thr' is appropriate.

Pursuing this semantic analysis for example (377), the LS for the CRC verb *go* is in (378) (from Van Valin 2005: 66).

(378) **do'**(*x*, [**move.away.from.ref.point'** (*x*)]) & INGR **be-at'** (*y*, *x*)

The *y* argument, the location, is not given in our example (377) and is recovered from the previous context (the preceding conversation is about going to a dance). The next step is to substitute this LS into the LS of the cleft and co-index the missing *x* argument with the clefted constituent:

(379) **exist-thr'**([**do'**(*ali<sub>i</sub>*, [**move.away.from.ref.point'** (*ali<sub>i</sub>*)]) & INGR **be-at'** (*y*, *ali<sub>i</sub>*)]], *ali<sub>i</sub>*)

The linking between syntax and semantics in narrow focus *nana*-clefts is given in Figure 9.2. As discussed with respect to narrow focus *sé*-clefts in section 8.4, a potential issue with the syntactic representation is that the clefted constituent is a predicate in the syntax but not in the semantics. However, as justified in section 8.4, the syntactic structure of clefts is driven heavily by pragmatics. The clefted constituent is a pragmatic predicate, being the focus of the sentence. While they share the same syntactic template, the semantic difference between narrow focus *nana*-clefts and *sé*-clefts is reflected in the semantics rather than the syntax. The CS for narrow focus *nana*-clefts is in Table 9.4.

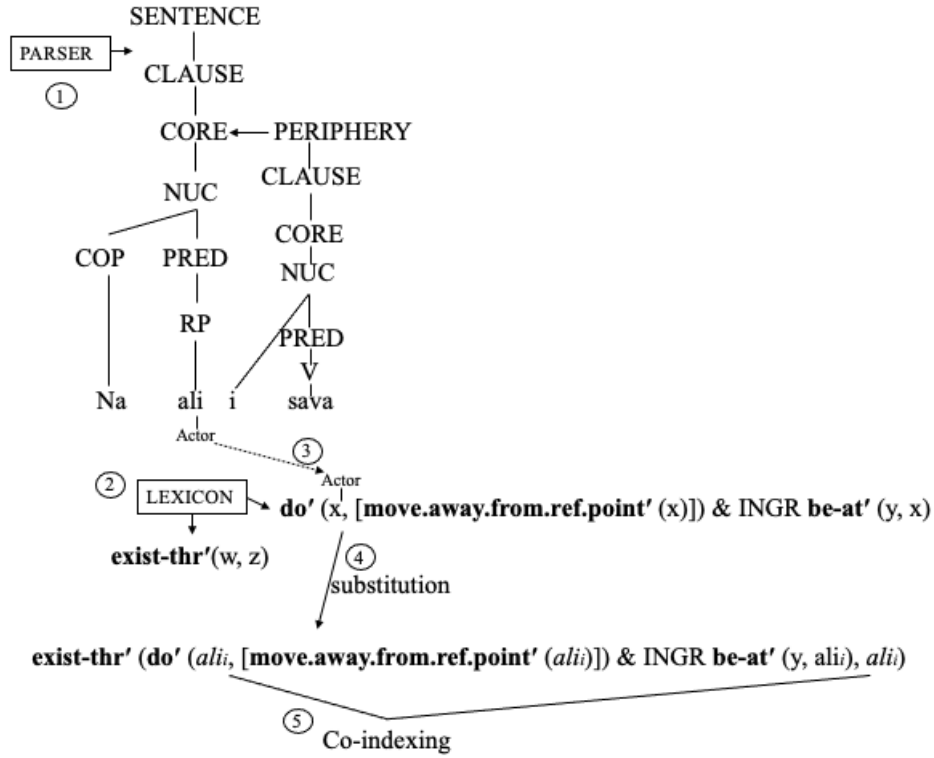


Figure 9.2.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in narrow focus *nana*-clefts

Table 9.4.: Constructional Schema for narrow focus *nana*-clefts

Construction: Narrow focus <i>nana</i> -cleft
SYNTAX:
Juncture: core
Nexus: subordination (peripheral)
Construction type: cleft
Unit templates: narrow focus cleft (Figure 9.1/Figure 8.1)
Linking: syntax → semantics additional rules (co-index clefted constituent with empty argument in CRC)
MORPHOLOGY:
Optional CLM ( <i>ke</i> )
Copula: <i>na(na)</i> default; <i>la</i> (usually with negation)
SEMANTICS: assert the existence of a value for a variable
<b>exist-thr'</b> ( <i>x</i> , <i>y</i> ), where <i>x</i> is filled by the CRC predicate and <i>y</i> by the clefted constituent
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: unspecified
Focus structure: narrow focus on clefted constituent

### 9.4.2. Broad focus *nana*-clefts

To illustrate the RRG analysis of broad focus *nana*-clefts, I use example (380).

- (380) *hier soir néna un num privé la tel amwin su mon*  
 yesterday night have INDF number private PRF phone 1SG on POSS.1SG  
*orange*  
 orange  
 ‘last night there’s a private number that phoned me on my Orange’ (SMS)

Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015: 158) propose that the semantic representation of a presentational *there*-sentence is the same as its monoclausal counterpart. This captures the fact that they are semantically equivalent to their monoclausal counterpart and that it is their focus structure and syntactic structure that differ. The semantic representation of example (380) is given in (381).

- (381)  $\text{do}'(x, [\text{ring}'(x, y)])$

What differentiates a broad focus cleft from its monoclausal counterpart is its focus structure: the clefted constituent is within focus in the cleft, while this constituent would not be in focus in the canonical monoclausal counterpart. Regarding the syntactic representation of broad-focus presentational *nana* constructions, I will present two analyses. In section 9.4.2.1, I argue that the majority of broad focus *nana*-constructions, while being functionally equivalent to French presentational clefts, are in fact monoclausal, and therefore do not truly classify as clefts at all. I point out that this monoclausal structure is likely to have developed from a bi-clausal one, and I present an analysis of that bi-clausal structure in the subsequent section (section 9.4.2.2). The majority of the data are compatible with the monoclausal analysis, suggesting that this is the prevalent structure, but there are two examples that may require a bi-clausal analysis, indicating that the monoclausal structure may not yet have entirely replaced the bi-clausal one. The semantic representation remains the same for both. I will begin with the monoclausal analysis.

#### 9.4.2.1. Monoclausal analysis

The majority of broad focus *nana*-clefts are compatible with a monoclausal analysis. The syntactic representation for this analysis of example (380), with the focus structure projection, is given in Figure 9.3.

Under this analysis, the broad-focus *nana*-construction is not a bi-clausal cleft at all but rather, a monoclausal sentence in which *nana* functions as a broad focus construction marker. The argument for this is that *nana* has lost (or is losing) its copular verb properties (cf. section 9.2.2) and the construction typically has no relative marker (cf. section 9.2.4): these two observations together mean we do not need to assume a bi-clausal structure. I present the evidence in favour of this monoclausal analysis in this section, and in section 9.4.2.1, I present a bi-clausal

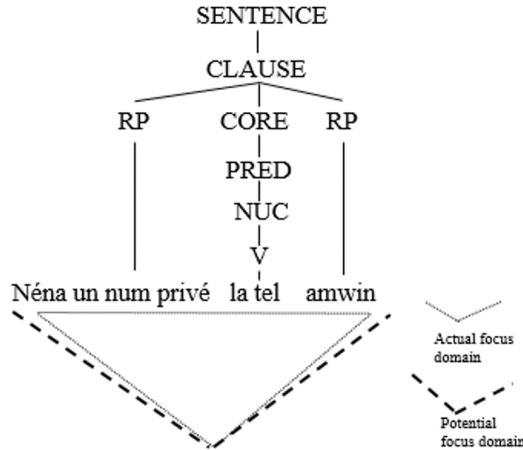


Figure 9.3.: Syntactic representation of monoclausal broad focus *nana*-constructions

analysis which may be required for two examples, and argue that the monoclausal structure is likely to have derived from that bi-clausal structure.

*Nana*-clefts very rarely exhibit a relative marker: of the 18 instances of a relative-marked *nana*-construction, 17 of them are open to a classification as true existentials (whose analysis will be presented in section 9.4.3), as they are examples whose function is plausibly to assert the existence or presence of something in a given context rather than to introduce an entity or event. As outlined in section 9.2, the function of a *nana*-construction is not always clear. The one relative-marked example which is certainly not open to an existential analysis is given in (382). Instead, this is a narrow focus cleft, which is indeed bi-clausal and whose analysis was presented in section 9.4.1.

- (382) (...) *nora aryink wa sanzé pvréman.*  
have.FUT nothing-REL FUT change really  
‘(...) there will be nothing that changes really.’ (Newspaper - *Fanal* 25)

The evidence that, coupled with the lack of relativiser, suggests that presentational *nana*-constructions are monoclausal is that almost all (supposed) *nana*-clefts occur with *na(na)* in the present-tense regardless of the tense of the CRC verb (cf. section 9.2.2), suggesting that the copula has lost its verbal properties and may instead be functioning as a marker of a broad focus construction. A monoclausal analysis is incompatible with *nana*-constructions in which *nana* does carry temporal inflection though, as that would clearly indicate its verbal properties. In those instances, we would have to assume that they are true existentials or that they are narrow focus clefts. If neither of those are possible, they would require a bi-clausal analysis. Of the 16 examples in which an inflected form of *nana* occurs, two cannot necessarily be classified as existentials or narrow focus clefts; these examples will be

presented under a bi-clausal analysis in the following section.

To examine whether *nana* is losing its verbal properties in this broad-focus construction, another feature we can turn to is negation. There are eight *nana* constructions with a negated copula: six of those exhibit the copula *la*, one *nora* and the remaining one *na*. The *nora* example has been dealt with above as it already exhibits verbal properties and cannot be a construction marker instead of a copula (this was an example open to an existential analysis). Secondly, the fact that the form *la* typically occurs with negation (cf. section 9.2.2) is further evidence that *nana* is developing into a broad focus construction marker, as this different form (*la*) is generalising to the negated contexts. As for the remaining two examples with *na*, exemplified in (383), I classify them as narrow focus clefts:

- (383) a. Summary of the preceding context in the newspaper article: The media are as responsible as the government for the lack of information concerning Coronavirus.

*na pwin inn i sava rod la vérité (...)*

have NEG one FIN FUT search the truth

‘There’s not one that is going out searching the truth (...)’

(Newspaper - *Fanal* 26)

- b. Summary of the preceding context in the newspaper article: A politician has been caught pocketing state money that is meant to be used on roads.

*Mé na pwin riynk sa la parl osi koripsion su lo dosié,*

but have NEG only that PRF talk as.much corruption on the file

(...)

‘But there’s not only that which points to corruption on the file, (...)’

(Newspaper - *Fanal* 23)

In a monoclausal analysis, the linking is straight-forward and does not require any additional principles as there are no missing arguments. The pragmatic role of *nana*, marking a broad focus construction, would be specified in the CS. A final point to note is that the supposed clefted constituent (under a bi-clausal analysis) usually has the function of subject in the supposed CRC, so when there is no relative marker, there is no word order change from a canonical, monoclausal sentence without *nana*. To exemplify this, consider the difference between the supposed bi-clausal cleft in (384a) and its monoclausal counterpart in (384b).

- (384) a. *néna un num privé la tel amwin*

have INDF number private PRF phone 1SG

‘there is a private number that phoned me’

- b. *un num privé la tel amwin*  
 INDF number private PRF phone 1SG  
 ‘a private number phoned me’

This point also extends to adverbials because again, the adverbial phrase can occur at the front of the clause anyway, so *nana* indicates that the whole sentence is in focus - it need not accompany any additional word order changes. As discussed in section 9.2.3.1, all examples in which the post-copular NP is an object in the RC are classified as either specificational narrow focus clefts or as existentials, not broad focus *nana*-clefts.

To summarise, the observations that broad focus *nana*-clefts exhibit no relative marking and that *nana* is losing its verbal properties in this construction (not taking negation or temporal inflection) offers evidence for the argument that presentational *nana*-constructions are actually monoclausal, and that *nana* is a marker of a broad-focus construction. Where a *nana*-construction does exhibit negation or temporal inflection on the copula or a relative marker, in almost all instances, the example is compatible either with an analysis as a narrow focus cleft or as an existential. There were two potential exceptions to this, which will be examined in the following section, where I offer a bi-clausal analysis that is compatible with these two examples.

#### 9.4.2.2. Bi-clausal analysis

A bi-clausal analysis of broad focus *nana*-clefts may be required for two exceptions not compatible with a monoclausal cleft analysis:

- (385) a. (...) *navé mon fils la pas*  
           have.PST my son PRF pass  
           ‘(...) there was my son that came’ (Baude 2010)
- b. (...) *lavé le tan té in peu gaté* (...)  
           have.PST the weather IPFV a bit spoiled  
           ‘(...) there was the weather that was rubbish (...)’ (Baude 2010)

These examples cannot be monoclausal broad focus clefts because the copula carries temporal inflection in both examples, thus exhibiting verbal properties. The examples in (385) contain a definite post-copular NP, and definites are known to be constrained in the pivot position of existentials (this is known as the ‘definiteness effect’, see Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015: 161) and references therein), which disfavors an analysis of these examples as existentials. However, there are exceptions to the definiteness effect and, notably, Abbott (1993) argues that definite pivots (whose existence is presupposed) are licensed in existentials of the contextualised type (as opposed to non-contextualised existentials). The function of an existential is to express a proposition about the existence, presence or relevance of something,



and it is important to point out that this is in relation to a context, which is specific and salient in what Abbott (1993) calls contextualised existentials (see Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 46-47). Therefore, the focus of the existential is to draw attention to the existence of the pivot in the salient context, rather than its mere existence in the world. Thus, the examples in (385) could be contextualised existentials, and not constitute counterexamples to the monoclausal analysis of broad focus *nana* clefts proposed in the previous section. Nevertheless, in this section, I will propose a bi-clausal analysis of these examples, using (386) to illustrate it.

- (386) *lavé le tan té in peu gaté*  
 have.PST the weather IPFV a bit spoiled  
 ‘there was the weather that was rubbish’ (Baude 2010)

The syntactic representation of example (386) is given in Figure 9.4. I include the CLM position to indicate where a relative marker would go if it were present.

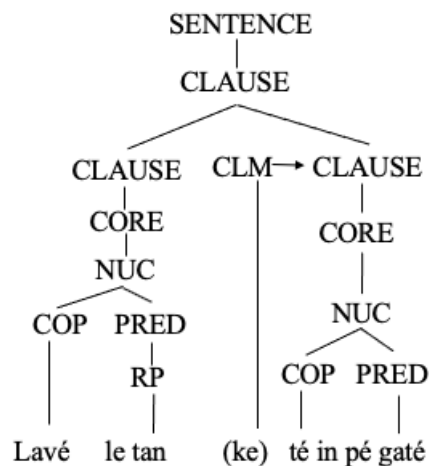


Figure 9.4.: Syntactic representation of broad focus *nana*-clefts

This syntactic structure shows that the CRC has the same internal structure as other RCs, with an optional CLM, but the overall structure differs from that of *sé*-clefts (cf. Figure 8.1) and narrow focus *nana*-clefts (cf. Figure 9.1) in that it involves clausal co-subordination rather than peripheral subordination. The reason for this is that the CRC is by necessity in focus in the broad focus cleft, and there is a constraint on the potential focus domain in complex sentences: it only extends into subordinate clauses if the clause is a direct daughter of the matrix clause (Van Valin 2005), which therefore rules out peripheral subordination. Daughter subordination would not be appropriate either as this is reserved for arguments, and the CRC is not an argument. Furthermore, given that the CRC in the broad focus *nana*-cleft contains the main assertion of the sentence, rather than presupposed information, it

would not be logical to place it in the periphery, as it cannot be removed. Clausal co-subordination is the appropriate type of juncture because the second clause depends on the first for the interpretation of one of its arguments and the two clauses share clausal operators: tense and illocutionary force. In section 9.2.2, I noted that there are cases where *nana* occurs in the present tense and the CRC does not. In those cases, the two clauses would not share the tense operator. However, the occurrence of *nana* in such examples was pointed out to be evidence that the structure is actually monoclausal. In all such examples of broad focus *nana*-clefts with *nana* in the present tense and another verb in a different tense, there is no relative marker and thus those examples are classified as monoclausal.

As pointed out at the start of section 9.4.2, the semantic representation of broad focus *nana*-clefts is the same as that of its monoclausal counterpart, so only the predicate of the CRC assigns semantic roles. One way in which the syntactic representation does not match the semantics, therefore, is that the clefted constituent is a predicate in the syntactic representation but not in the semantic representation. However, as explained for *sé*-clefts (cf. section 8.4) and narrow focus *nana*-clefts (cf. section 9.4.1), clefts are perfect examples of where syntactic structure is driven not only by semantics, but by pragmatics too. The clefted constituent in the presentational *nana*-cleft, like that in the other types of cleft, is a pragmatic predicate, being (part of) the focus of the sentence. In order for the missing argument in the LS of the predicate to be filled, it has to be co-indexed with the clefted constituent. The linking between syntax and semantics for presentational *nana*-clefts is illustrated in Figure 9.5, and the CS for presentational clefts under this analysis is in Table 9.5.

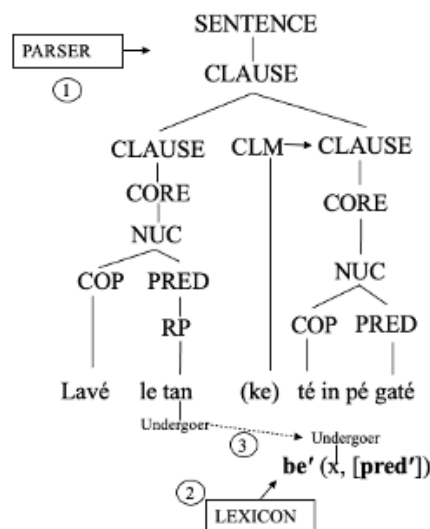


Figure 9.5.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in *nana*-clefts

Table 9.5.: Constructional Schema for broad focus *nana*-clefts

Construction: KR broad focus <i>nana</i> -cleft
SYNTAX:
Juncture: core
Nexus: Clausal co-subordination
Construction type: cleft
Unit templates: broad focus cleft (Figure 9.4)
Linking: syntax → semantics additional rules (co-index the clefted constituent with the missing argument in CRC)
MORPHOLOGY:
Optional CLM ( <i>ke</i> ), but disfavoured
Copula: <i>na(na)</i>
PRAGMATICS:
Illocutionary force: unspecified
Focus structure: sentence focus

In summary, the corpus data of broad focus *nana*-constructions indicate that these structures are monoclausal. Evidence for this is the fact that they exhibit no relative marking and that *nana* does not exhibit verbal properties in this construction (not taking negation or temporal inflection). In these constructions, *nana* is a marker of a broad-focus construction. We saw in section 9.4.2.1 that where a *nana*-construction does exhibit negation or temporal inflection on the copula or a relative marker, in almost all instances, the example is compatible with an analysis either as a narrow focus cleft or an existential. There were two potential exceptions to this, (385a) and (385b), which is why I proposed a bi-clausal analysis for those constructions in this section, although I pointed out that the two exceptions could instead be contextualised existentials (Abbott 1993). Under the bi-clausal analysis, the cleft is a case of clausal co-subordination. The examples in (385), which potentially required this bi-clausal analysis, are from the older section of the corpus (collected in the 1970s), so it could be the case that the structure has changed, though more data is required to strengthen this claim. The data seems to suggest that a once bi-clausal structure has become monoclausal, though some remnants of the bi-clausal structure remain.

### 9.4.3. True existential *nana*-constructions

In this chapter, I have highlighted that the distinction between clefts and existentials is not always clear-cut because their form is identical when an existential sentence has an RC. The semantic difference between the two is that the latter serve to assert

the existence, presence or lack of something/someone in a context, whereas clefts do not, and this is reflected in their semantic representation. In this section, I first illustrate the RRG analysis for existentials with a pivot, then those without.

#### 9.4.3.1. Nana existentials with a pivot

I will use example (387), to illustrate the analysis for existentials.

- (387) (...) *dann la komine Bras Panon nena in zoli lékol i apèl « Ma Pensée ».*  
in DET commune Bras Panon have INDF nice school FIN call  
*Ma Pensée* ».  
my thought  
‘(...) in the commune Bras Panon, there is a nice school that is called *Ma Pensée*’

(Magazine - *Kriké* 1)

The syntactic structure for example (387) is given in Figure 9.6.

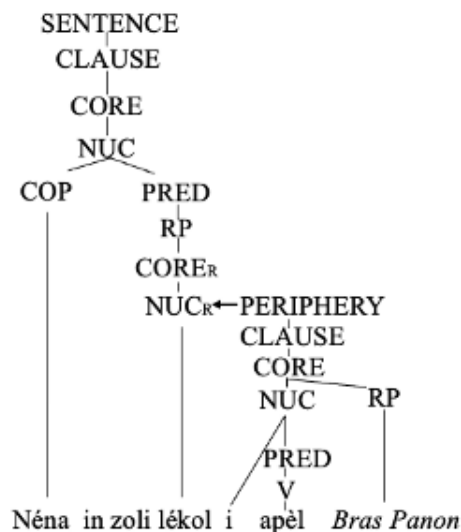


Figure 9.6.: Syntactic representation of existential *nana*-constructions

The predicate is the post-copular NP and it is a complex RP. It is modified by an RRC and hence the RC joins at the nucleus of the RP, but if it was appositive, it would join at the level of the RP. I adopt the LS for existential sentences **exist'** (x), from Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 115).<sup>153</sup> We are interested in *nana* existentials in

<sup>153</sup> Adopting **exist'** (x) as the LS for existentials has disadvantages, pointed out by Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015): it does not differentiate between existentials and sentences with the verb <exist> (compare 'there is no coffee' vs 'coffee does not exist' (Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 3)). Instead, Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015) propose an alternative LS **be'** (x, y), where x is an implicit argument. On the other hand, this LS uses the same predicate as other types of copular construction, not allowing us to differentiate as clearly between them. Given that my primary purpose is to expose the differences between different types of cleft, and I have done so using an **exist-thr'** predicate, for consistency, I adopt **exist'** (x) for existentials rather than **be'** (x, y).

which the pivot is modified by an RC, so the single argument of the existential LS is filled with a complex RP. The LS of the RC predicate in our example (387) is in (388).

(388) **be'** (*z*, [**called'** (*Bras Panon*)])

The *z* argument is missing but is retrieved via the linking rules for RCs (cf. section 5.4). The LS of RCs is **be'** (*a*, *b*), where *a* is the head of the RC and *b* is the RC LS. Substituting our example (388) into this LS gives:

(389) **be'**(*lékol<sub>i</sub>*, [**be'** (*z<sub>i</sub>*, [**called'** (*Bras Panon*)])])

The *z* argument is co-indexed with the head noun, and LS of the modified RP (389) can then be substituted into the LS of existentials (**exist'** (*x*)) to give the following:

(390) **exist'** ([**be'**(*lékol<sub>i</sub>*, [**be'** (*z<sub>i</sub>*, [**called'** (*Bras Panon*)])])])

The recovery of the missing argument in the RC follows the principles presented for RRCs, which will not be repeated here for reasons of space. In the next section, I present an analysis for those *nana*-constructions which have no overt pivot.

#### 9.4.3.2. *nana* existentials with no pivot

I argued in section 9.3 that *nana*-constructions with no post-copular nominal are a sub-type of existential sentence, which serve to assert the existence or presence of people/things in a context. I will use example (391) to illustrate the analysis for these constructions. The syntactic representation of that example is in Figure 9.7.

(391) (...), *néna i viv dan la souffrants*, (...)  
           have FIN live in DET suffering  
           ‘(...) there are (people) who live in suffering, (...)’ (TV)

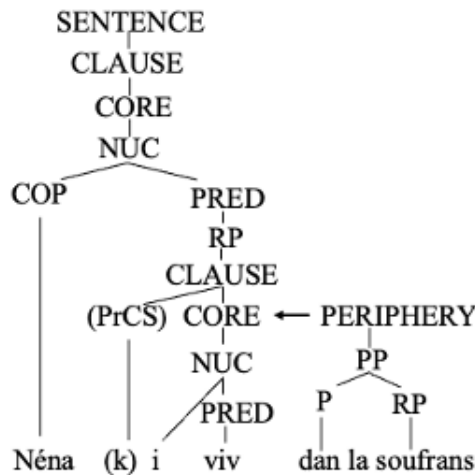


Figure 9.7.: Syntactic representation of existential *nana*-constructions with no pivot

The majority (15/16, 94%) of these examples were zero-marked, but if a relative marker is present, I place it in the PRCS. The argument of the existential sentence is an RP which itself is a clause, and the structure of the RC is like that of an FRC (cf. section 6.5.2). If the relative marker is present, it is placed in the PRCS; the missing argument in the RC can therefore be interpreted via the general linking principles, which state that the PRCS links to the last remaining argument position. For this to happen, the relative marker *k* has to be analysed as a relative pronoun rather than a complementiser (otherwise it would be a CLM).

If, as is usual, there is no relativiser, the missing argument is interpreted as a plural indefinite subject. This has a precedent in KR grammar because sentences with no subject are usually interpreted as impersonals: in languages that require a subject, like English, the subject would be ‘people’. The semantic representation of these sentences is that of regular existentials (see section 9.4.3.1): **exist'** (*x*), where *x* is filled with the RC predicate. The semantic representation for example (391) is given in (392).

(392) **exist'** ([**live'**(*y*)])

The linking between syntax and semantics in these sentences is illustrated in Figure 9.8.

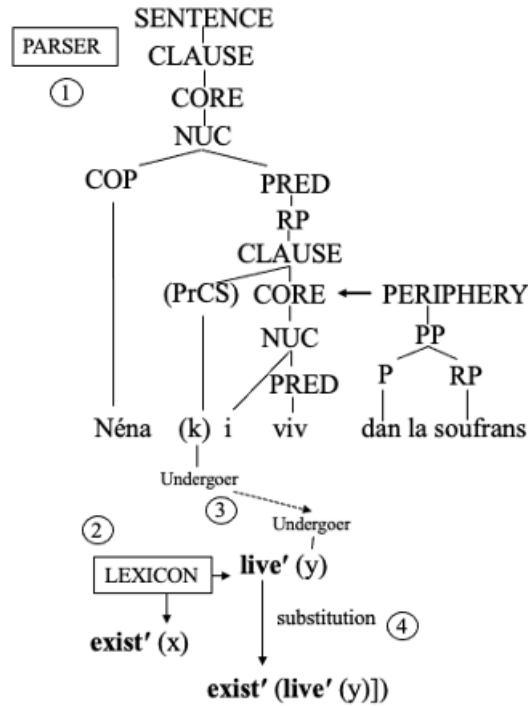


Figure 9.8.: Syntax-to-semantics linking in existential *nana*-constructions with no pivot

## 9.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed a family of related constructions tied by the presence of *nana* ‘have’ and an RC in the construction. I divided them into several subtypes: broad focus presentational *nana*-constructions, narrow focus *nana*-clefts (which I argued are a sub-type of existential), true existential *nana*-constructions, and another sub-type of existential that has no pivot. While the main focus of the chapter has been on clefts, I have aimed to demonstrate that given their similarity in form, it is not always easy to distinguish *nana*-clefts from true existential constructions on the basis of their function because, in many cases, they can plausibly be taken to be expressing a proposition about the existence, presence or relevance of something or someone in a context, yet fit diagnostics of cleft sentences such as having a monoclausal, declefted counterpart. One possible explanation for this is that those clefts are instead formally motivated by a tendency to avoid indefinite subjects, support for which was found in the large proportion of indefinite clefted constituents in *nana*-clefts.

I distinguished between the different *nana*-constructions primarily on the basis of their discourse-pragmatic function, but revealed important morpho-syntactic differences between them, too. I proposed the same syntactic structure for narrow focus *nana*-clefts as for *sé*-clefts, differentiating the two via their semantic representations. I provided evidence that broad focus *nana*-constructions have developed

from bi-clausal clefts into monoclausal constructions marked with a broad focus construction marker (*nana*), though there is still some evidence of the former bi-clausal structure, which I proposed is a case of clausal co-subordination.

I captured similarities and contrasts between the different *nana*-constructions and the *sé*-cleft via their semantic representations. Narrow focus *nana*-clefts were differentiated from narrow focus *sé*-clefts by the predicate of their LS, which captured the fact that *sé*-clefts specify a value for a variable exhaustively whereas *nana*-clefts do so non-exhaustively. The similarity of the latter to true existentials is reflected also in their semantic representations. For narrow focus *nana*-clefts, I suggested a new predicate (**exist-thr'** (x, y)), which is related to the **exist'** (x) used for regular existentials, but has an additional argument because such structures express a proposition about the presence, absence or relevance of a value *for a variable*. The contrast between existentials with an RC on one hand, and cleft constructions on the other, was captured not only in their semantic representations, but also their syntactic ones. An RC modifying the pivot in an existential attaches at the layer of the RP (ARCs) or the nucleus of the RP (RRCs), whereas the CRC of a narrow focus cleft attaches to the core of the copular clause.



Part 4.

Conclusion

## 10. Conclusions

In this thesis, I investigated a cluster of related constructions, combining fresh data from corpora, a questionnaire, and interviews with 40 native speakers of KR. This mixed methodology enabled me to uncover trends found in the relative system of KR, verify them and fill in gaps in knowledge by consulting native speakers. To conclude, I offer a summary of the findings, followed by some reflections on the limitations of the research and finally, its implications.

### 10.1. Summary of findings

Chapter 5 built upon Corne (1995) and McLellan (2019) to offer a detailed picture of relativising strategies in KR. While it is widely acknowledged in broad descriptions of KR that this language has an optional relative marker, I strengthened the claim made in McLellan (2019) that the presence of the relative marker is sensitive to the function of the antecedent in the RC, being disfavoured in subject and object RCs but favoured in oblique RCs, adding a significant amount of data and showing that the relationship between the presence of a relative marker and the function of the antecedent in the RC is significant. Chapter 5 added a far deeper understanding of RCs in which the relativised function is not subject or object, which is where most previous descriptions stop. Given the comparative rarity of RCs in which the relativised element functions as an oblique, genitive or object of comparison, the methodologies used by Corne (1995) and McLellan (2019) were inadequate for describing the relativising strategies for these functions, because such RCs scarcely appear in corpora. The value of my fieldwork is clear in this regard.

By comparing KR's relative system with those of other Romance languages and French-based Creoles, I highlighted that zero-marking in subject RCs is the most distinctive feature of KR's relative system, not being well-attested cross-linguistically as a favoured strategy for subject RCs. Yet, the strategies found across the AH in KR's relative system do reflect the rationale behind the AH: it is argued that more explicit strategies, such as a pronoun retention strategy, tend to be found to relativise on positions lower down on the AH because those functions are harder to relativise on, so by that same token, if subjects are reportedly the easiest function to relativise on (evidenced by the fact that they are the most frequently found in

the languages of the world and are easier to process), they should require the least explicit strategy, which is exactly what we find in KR. Object RCs, also high up on the AH, frequently employ a gap strategy, but the strategies become more explicit for obliques and lower positions on the AH: a relative pronoun strategy is common for oblique RCs, and in KR's genitive and object of comparison RCs, about which little was known prior to this thesis, a resumptive pronoun is favoured (for genitives) or required (for objects of comparison). In other words, a more explicit strategy is found for KR's oblique RCs than for its subject and direct object RCs, and a maximally explicit strategy is found for its genitive and object of comparison RCs. As predicted by the AH, the role of frequency appears to be important in explaining the relativising strategies found in KR: subject RCs are by far the most frequent type of RC found in KR and are the most likely to be zero-marked.

Chapter 6 was the first study dedicated to FRs in KR. One of the chapter's primary objectives was to ascertain whether the structure of *sak*-relatives is truly free or, rather, light-headed. The data presented a complex picture, which I made sense of by proposing that there are (or have been) three different structures: a light-headed structure headed by demonstrative *sa* (which is largely obsolete in modern KR), a light-headed structure headed by demonstrative *sak*, and true FRCs with a new free relative pronoun *sak* (and variants). I argued that the two former structures have been working together towards the same result: *sak* grammaticalising into a free relative pronoun. While proposing three different structures for *sak*-relatives did not make for a neat analysis of the system, this finding, and the complexity of the analysis is entirely expected given the high level of variation found in KR and the fact that these structures are grammaticalising. That *sak*-relatives dominate the FRC system became clear when I considered their distribution as compared with that of the *wh*-pronouns *kisa* 'who' and *kosa* 'what' in FRCs. Counter to cross-linguistic trends whereby the free relative pronouns in a language are often identical to its interrogative pronouns, in KR, *kisa* and *kosa* were shown to have low acceptability as free relative pronouns. I began solving the puzzle of the conditions of acceptability of the latter two pronouns in FRCs, arguing that their acceptability is highest when occurring as an object in an FRC which itself functions as object in a matrix clause, but is low when the FRC functions as subject or free adjunct. The syntactic constraints on the distribution of *wh*-pronouns in FRCs was explained by the fact that the path of these interrogative pronouns into FRCs is via an indirect interrogative clause, which always occurs as the complement of a verb, and thus the reanalysis of *kisa* and *kosa* as free relative pronouns takes place in object FRCs.

FRCs were the domain of KR grammar exhibiting the most inter-speaker variation among the constructions in this thesis, and chapter 6 highlighted a key issue in the syntax-semantic interface of FRCs more generally: there is not a one-to-one

mapping between form and function in these constructions. Our understanding of the expression of free choice has been dominated by the study of English *-ever* in the literature, but some authors (von Fintel 2000; Caponigro & Fălăuş 2018; Šimík 2020) have noted that the availability of a truly free choice reading, not equivalent to a universal, is less available in some languages. I indicated that this may be the case for KR and informal French. Although other authors have highlighted the reduced availability of a free choice interpretation of FRCs, there remains poor understanding of the alternative means that languages have for expressing the function of free choice, if it is not via an *ever*-like morpheme inside a FRC. I pointed out that we may need to look beyond FRCs to better understand this function in language, paying attention to the discourse-syntax interface.

This thesis is the first, to my knowledge, to tackle the syntax of focus in KR. Taking the well-studied English and French clefts as a point of comparison, I explored the structural, semantic and discourse-pragmatic features of *sé*-clefts and *nana*-constructions. The *sé*-cleft is typically associated with narrow focus and the *nana*-cleft with broad focus, yet a narrow focus articulation is also well-attested for *nana*-clefts. In chapter 8, I departed from a previous analysis of KR's *sé* focus constructions, arguing that they are cleft constructions rather than cases of focus fronting as had been suggested by Bollée (2013). The argument for my cleft analysis was that *sé* is a copula rather than a particle, since it inflects for tense and occurs in other copular constructions in the language. Given that *sé* is a copular verb, I analysed focus constructions with *sé* as bi-clausal even when the second clause is not introduced by *ke*. Beyond clefts, I furthered understanding of the distribution of *sé* and another copula *lé* (sections 2.3.5 and 8.2.1) in KR, showing that *lé* is the preferred copula in predicative copular constructions, while *sé* is preferred in specifying copular constructions, the *sé*-cleft being considered a type of specificational construction.

Comparing the CRCs of *sé*-clefts with RRCs, I uncovered some differences in KR: firstly, the relative marker found in marked *sé*-CRCs is preferably *ke*, regardless of the syntactic function of the clefted constituent, whereas in oblique RRCs, *ousa* was unanimously favoured in locatives. Furthermore, while relative-marking was found to be sensitive to the function of the antecedent in RRCs, this was not the case in CRCs. My data did not support Corne's (1995) claim that a relative marker is favoured in focus constructions with *sé*: just like for subject and object RRCs, subject and object CRCs were preferably zero-marked. After examining the structure of the *sé*-cleft, I zoomed out to consider the function of this construction in the grammar of KR, taking account of its discourse-pragmatic properties and comparing it with other strategies available for expressing narrow focus in KR. I pointed out that an alternative focalising strategy - a focus-associated particle *minm* - exists

as a competing strategy for marking narrow focus in KR, and that KR permits focus fronting. The availability of these other focalising strategies in KR (which can also be found in combination with one another) indicated that KR may rely less on clefting for exhibiting narrow focus than its lexifier French.

Chapter 9 explored a family of related constructions involving *nana* and an RC. I distinguished between three different types of *nana*-construction: broad focus presentational constructions (functionally equivalent to presentational clefts, but monoclausal in KR), narrow focus clefts and existentials. In exploring these three construction types, I highlighted the difficulty of classifying certain examples, which shared diagnostic properties of more than one construction. Chapter 9 thus drew attention to a broader gap in knowledge, meriting further work from a cross-linguistic perspective: a deeper understanding of the differences between presentational clefts and existentials is required. The overarching differences between the various types of *nana*-construction investigated in chapter 9 are in their semantics and their focus structure: presentational *nana*-constructions and existentials exhibit broad focus, while narrow focus *nana*-clefts exhibit narrow focus. Presentational *nana*-constructions introduce a referent or event into the discourse but can also be formally motivated by a tendency to avoid indefinite subjects in KR, while existentials express a proposition about the existence, presence or relevance of something or someone in a context. I identified a sub-type of existential in KR, which look as though they have no audible pivot, but I analysed these constructions as having a clausal pivot with the structure of an FRC with no subject. As for narrow focus *nana*-clefts, while I classified them as clefts, building upon Pavey (2004) I argued that unlike presentational *nana*-constructions, they are a sub-type of existential. They share similarities with the *sé*-cleft in that they specify a value for a variable but they do so non-exhaustively. They are thus existential in the sense that they express a proposition about the existence, presence or relevance of a value for a variable. Finally, I advanced a proposal that broad focus *nana*-constructions, which are functionally equivalent to French presentational *avoir* clefts, are in fact monoclausal in KR, a structure which is likely to have developed from a once bi-clausal cleft.

In my analyses of relative and cleft constructions, I took the basic model of analysing RRCs, ARCs and CRCs in RRG (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Pavey 2004; Moezzi-pour 2010; Van Valin 2012; Paris forthcoming), expanding and adapting it in several ways. The particular areas in which I have expanded the treatment of relative and cleft constructions in RRG in ways which will have theoretical importance beyond the analysis of KR are: explicitly addressing preposition stranding in the RC context (section 5.4.1.1.1); distinguishing light-headed RCs from true FRCs (section 6.5.1); offering an analysis of free adjunct FRCs (section 6.5.3); suggesting a modification to Pavey's (2004) analysis of narrow focus *there*-clefts (and *nana*-

clefts) to reflect the observation that they are a sub-type of existential requiring their own LS (section 9.4.1), and offering a new analysis of broad focus presentational clefts, involving clausal co-subordination (section 9.4.2.2) (though I argued that in KR, a monoclausal structure is more frequent). The analyses of free adjunct free relatives, of narrow focus ‘have’ clefts and of presentational clefts contribute to filling particularly large gaps in the syntactic literature, beyond RRG.

In my analyses, I exemplified the similarities and differences between different types of relative construction. Aside from true FRCs, what the constructions have in common is a missing argument or adjunct, which is interpreted with reference to the syntax to semantics linking algorithm. The relative constructions are differentiated by their external syntax: RRCs are integrated into the RP, joining at the nuclear level, while ARCs join at the RP level, reflecting the fact that they are not integrated within the RP. As for CRCs, the syntactic structure of narrow focus *sé*-clefts and narrow focus *nana*-clefts is identical, joining at the periphery of the core of the preceding copular clause containing the clefted constituent. Presentational *nana* clefts, under a bi-clausal analysis, are instances of clausal co-subordination instead, reflecting the fact that the two clauses share an argument and operators, but the CRC contains the main assertion rather than being presupposed like narrow focus CRCs.

## 10.2. Limitations

One of the limitations of this research is that while I was able to uncover a high degree of variation in KR and include a wide spread of participants, in terms of ages and regions of the island, I was unable to truly take into account sociolinguistic variables such as age, gender and region when examining that variation. At the outset I hoped to uncover regional trends, but I soon discovered the complexity of the multiple interacting sociolinguistic factors, which would place a sociolinguistic analysis beyond the scope of this thesis as I would need large participant numbers to draw meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, while I interviewed speakers from various regions in the lowlands of the island, I was unable to interview speakers from the central, mountainous region of the island, so their dialect of KR may not be represented in this thesis.

Another shortcoming of the study is not investigating the interaction of prosody and syntax in KR’s relative and cleft constructions. The improved understanding of the syntax of relative and cleft constructions offered by this study would benefit from an integrated analysis of their prosody. In the RC context, this could shed light on the differences between RRC and ARCs (and whether the latter can indeed be zero-marked, cf. section 5.2.1.2), and could lead to greater understanding of relative

marker omission. Without an investigation of prosody, we have less than the full picture of KR's behaviour concerning focus structure. However, it was not within the remit of this thesis to give a complete picture of focus in KR, but rather to begin research down this path.

It would have been beneficial for the fieldwork to have included a greater weighting towards elicitation tasks (and slightly less on acceptability judgements), in order to be able to describe the language in its most natural terms. Because of the delay of the fieldwork trip due to COVID-19, the trip came at a relatively late stage. The priority for the fieldwork trip had to be verifying the corpus findings, which meant large numbers of acceptability judgements. Concerns with the heavier weighting towards acceptability judgements are that participants were probably primed to a greater degree than they would be with elicitation tasks, and secondly, as noted in section 4.3.2, acceptability judgements could be affected by several things: participants are not always able to imagine themselves in the context; judgements may have been interfered with by French influence; participants know there is a high degree of variation, so some are hesitant to reject anything, and participants can be inconsistent. Finally, some of my participants are involved in language activism, which may have affected their acceptability judgements, possibly giving judgements influenced by prescriptivism rather than solely grammaticality. However, such participants, being sensitive to and interested in issues regarding language, were good at differentiating between what was not correct according to them but that one may hear, and what no one would say, so offered particularly useful insight.

### 10.3. Implications

Previous work, cited in the introduction to this thesis, has provided us with a sound grounding for the study of KR in the 20th and early 21st centuries, and a historical account of the development of this language. Contributing fresh data collected between 2019-2022, this study has offered an up-to-date account of the relative system of 21st century KR, as well as several other aspects of its grammar: its copulas, focus marking and existential constructions. Given that much previous work on KR has constituted broad overviews of the language, sometimes with a historical perspective, the constructions dealt with in this thesis had not been described before in such detail. While many studies on KR have been concerned with diachronic aspects of the language, I have offered a better understanding of synchronic KR. The benefit of a synchronic study for understanding the mechanisms of language change has come to light as we have been able to see the result of diachronic language change in synchrony. This thesis contributes to what I hope will be a growing tradition of studying this lesser-known language within formal linguistics.

This thesis offered the first analysis of KR grammar within RRG, and was the first analysis of any Creole in this framework. In doing so, I provided further evidence of RRG's ability to offer the tools to analyse any language in its own terms, thanks to its crucial distinction between semantically motivated universals on the one hand, and language-specific elements that can be found in a language's syntactic templates and constructions on the other. I contributed to our theoretical understanding of relative and cleft constructions by exemplifying and building upon previous explanations of how we can analyse these constructions, which involve a missing argument or adjunct, in a framework that does not permit empty syntactic positions or movement operations. With reference to the algorithm linking syntax, semantics and pragmatics, this framework allowed me to illuminate the similarities and differences between a cluster of related constructions whose form is very similar, but whose semantics and discourse-pragmatic functions clearly differentiate them.

My study of relative and cleft constructions in KR offers a springboard for future research, which could improve theoretical understanding in a number of grammatical domains. A first area of interest is the expression of free choice. As noted above, I highlighted that there is a degree of fluidity between the function of free choice and its formal expression in KR, deserving future investigation in this language and beyond. We need to find innovative ways of investigating how languages can express a truly free choice meaning not equivalent to a universal, taking into account the whole discourse context.

A second area of research that could build upon this thesis is a comparison of narrow focalising devices in KR. Comparing the *sé*-cleft against the alternative focus marking device *minm*, along with an investigation of prosody as a focalisation strategy, would provide a more complete understanding of the syntax of focus in KR. In turn, this would enable us to make stronger claims when comparing KR with its lexifier, French, which is well-known for having strict constraints on its syntax and focus structure. Further work in this domain would ultimately contribute to improving understanding of how syntax can be affected by focus structure requirements in a language, and the role that language contact might play in this component of the grammar.

Finally, this thesis offers a good starting point for a comparison of the distribution of complement-less prepositions in global varieties of French and the French-based Creoles. I found that complement-less prepositions do exist in RC-final position in KR, and I analysed them as true cases of preposition stranding rather than as intransitive prepositions. A comparison of micro-variation in the acceptability of complement-less prepositions could shed light on the cross-linguistically rare phenomenon of preposition stranding and bring to light the parameters involved in its licensing.



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# A. Corpus materials

Where possible, I provide a hyperlink to the website containing the source.

Table A.1.: List of corpus sources

Source	Date
<b>Written</b>	
Blog: <i>Oté</i>	2019
Brochure: Expo 2015 “Nout manjé”	2015
Children’s play script: “Pou in grape létshi”	2009
Children’s story: “Ti Pierre èk le Lou”	2016
Children’s story: “La femme devenue vache”	2013
Magazine: 7 editions of <i>Kriké</i>	2014-17
Newspaper: 19 editions of <i>Fanal</i>	2015-20
SMS4Science Corpus: 12,000 SMS	2008
<b>Oral</b>	
Documentary film clips:	
“Zourné internacional la lang matérnèl 2017”	2017
“Zourné internacional la lang matérnèl 2018”	2018
Baude (2010) oral corpus of KR	
19 interview recordings	1970-78
9 interview recordings	2005
Radio clip: conversation between Bruno & Francky ( <i>Radio Free Dom</i> )	2020
TV Programme: <i>Koz Pou Nou</i> (1 episode)	
“ <i>Koz pou nou</i> avec J Huges Lucian et Francky de <i>Free Dom</i> ”	2019
YouTube Comedy Sketches (by <i>Le Letchi</i> )	
“Tonton politicien”	2020
“Celui qui défendait la musique réunionnaise”	2016

## B. Distinguishing between KR and French

Table B.1 details the coding scale for distinguishing between French and KR. Examples for each point on the scale are given in their original form in the first line. All parts of the sentence that could be written using French orthography are written in the line below.

Table B.1.: Coding system for distinguishing between KR and French

French	<p>Belongs to French system, and the translation in KR would be different. No vocabulary unique to Reunion.</p> <p>(393) <i>c moi ki 2vait tenvoyer 1msg</i> (original SMS)</p> <p><i>c'est moi qui devait t'envoyer un</i>  it.be.3sg me who should.IPFV 2sg-send a  <i>message</i>  message</p> <p>‘it’s me who was meant to send you a message.’</p>
Reunion French	<p>Belongs to French system but contains lexical item(s) unique to (French/KR) speakers in Reunion island.</p> <p>(394) <i>é L èT en train d m'kozé trankilmen</i> (original SMS)</p> <p><i>et elle était en train de</i>  and she be.3SG.IPFV PROG PREP  <i>me kozer tranquillement</i>  1SG.ACC speak calmly</p> <p>‘And she was speaking to me calmly.’</p>
“Floating”	<p>Could be found in both systems.</p> <p>(395) a. <i>kan sé mwini ki koup</i>  when COP 1SG REL.FIN cut (KR)</p> <p>b. <i>quand c'est moi qui coupe</i>  when it.be me who cut (French)</p> <p>‘when it’s me who cuts’</p>
Kréol Rényoné	<p>Belongs to KR system, and has a distinct French translation.</p> <p>(396) a. <i>zot lété un ti peu koupab mé</i>  3PL be.IPFV a small little guilty but  <i>sété pa zot ke noré fé lo</i>  be.IPFV NEG 3PL REL have.COND done the  <i>krim</i>  crime</p> <p>b. <i>Ils étaient un petit peu coupable</i>  3PL be.IPFV.3PL a little bit guilty  <i>mais c'était pas eux qui</i>  but it-be.IPFV.3PL NEG 3PL REL  <i>auraient fait le crime</i>  have.COND.3PL do.PST.PTCP the crime</p> <p>‘They were a little bit guilty, but it wasn’t them who had done the crime.’</p>

## C. Relative clause elicitation task

The relative clause elicitation task, including the exact images, are taken from Pavesi (1986). Below each figure, I list the question that was asked.



Figure C.1.: Subject relative clause elicitation

- (397) *Kisa i lé lo numéro 3?*  
 who FIN COP DEF number 3  
 ‘Who is number 3?’



Figure C.2.: Direct object relative clause elicitation

- (398) *Kisa i lé lo numéro 5?*  
 who FIN COP DEF number 5

‘Who is number 5?’

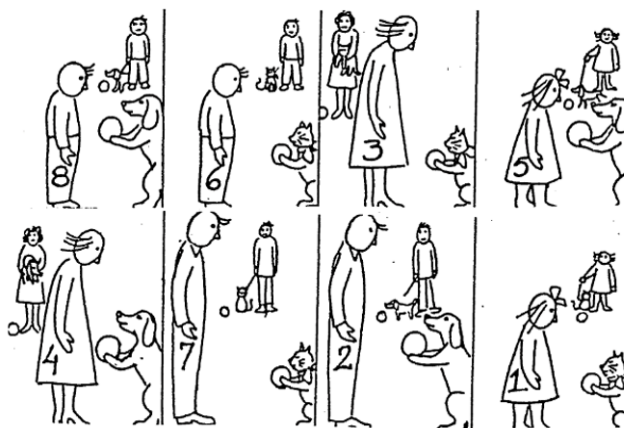


Figure C.3.: Indirect object relative clause elicitation

- (399) *Kisa i lé lo numéro 6?*  
 who FIN COP DEF number 6  
 ‘Who is number 6?’



Figure C.4.: Genitive relative clause elicitation

- (400) *Kisa i lé lo numéro 3?*  
 who FIN COP DEF number 3  
 ‘Who is number 3?’



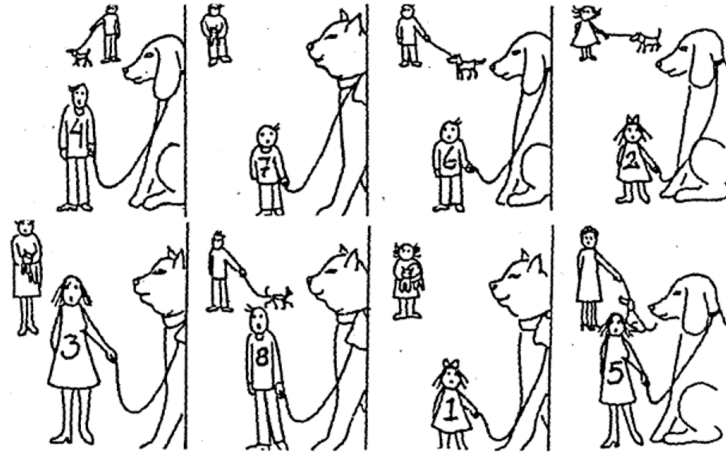


Figure C.5.: Object of comparison relative clause elicitation

- (401) *Kisa i lé lo numéro 7?*  
 who FIN COP DEF number 7  
 ‘Who is number 7?’

## D. Cleft construction elicitation task

As part of the task instructions, participants were introduced to three characters (Romain, Éloïse and Noémie), and the locations in Figure D.1, which would be used for the task. Note that the images of Grand Anse and l'Érmitage are my own. For copyright reasons, I am not reproducing the image of Boucan Canot.



Figure D.1.: Locations used for cleft elicitation task

Following an introduction to the characters and locations, participants were told that they would be shown a series of slides (on a PowerPoint) depicting a state of affairs. Alongside each slide, a sentence would be read in KR. If the sentence did not correspond to the information given by the pictures on the slide, they were asked to respond to that sentence and correct what was said. This was designed to elicit a cleft construction. In what follows, I give each slide and the accompanying sentence that was used to elicit a cleft, and an indication of an example of what might be expected.

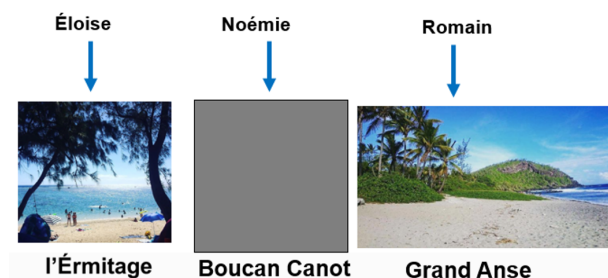


Figure D.2.: Subject and adverbial cleft elicitation

Alongside Figure D.2, participants were given the sentence in (402) to elicit either a subject cleft (e.g. “No, it’s Eloise who is going to the Ermitage”) or an adverbial cleft (e.g. “No it’s Boucan Canot that Noémie is going to”).

- (402) *Noémie i sava lérmitaz.*  
 Noémie FIN go l’Ermitage  
 ‘Noémie is going to the Ermitage.’

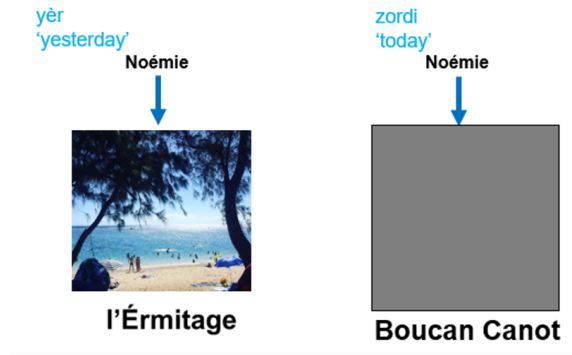


Figure D.3.: Past tense cleft elicitation

Alongside Figure D.3, participants were given the sentence in (403), designed to elicit a cleft with past-tense time reference (e.g. “No, it was the Ermitage that Noémie was at yesterday”).

- (403) *Noémie té Boukan Kano yèr.*  
 Noémie be.IPFV Boucan Canot yesterday  
 ‘Noémie was at Boucan Canot yesterday.’

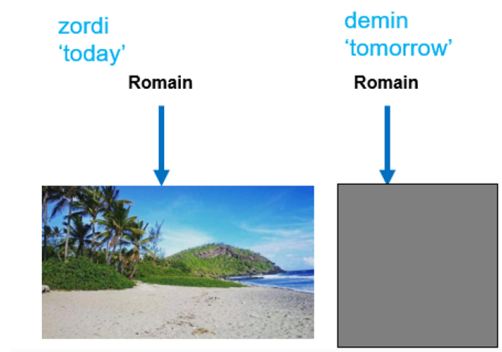


Figure D.4.: Future tense cleft elicitation

Alongside Figure D.4, participants were given the sentence in (404), designed to elicit a cleft with future-tense time reference (e.g. “No, it will be/is tomorrow that Romain goes to Boucan Canot”).

- (404) *Romain i sava Boucan Canot zordi.*  
 Romain FIN go Boucan Canot today  
 ‘Romain is going to Boucan Canot today.’



Figure D.5.: Adverbial cleft elicitation

Alongside the image in Figure D.5, participants were given the sentence in (405), designed to elicit an adverbial cleft (e.g. “No, it’s with Romain that Noémie is going to the Ermitage”).

- (405) *Noémie i sava lermitez èk Éloise.*  
 Noémie FIN go Ermitage with Eloise  
 ‘Noémie is going to the Ermitage with Éloise.’