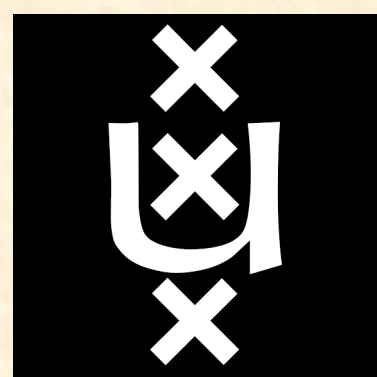


A Diachronic Study of Transparency in Sranan



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What is transparency?

One-to-one correspondence between form and meaning ¹	<u>Transparent (Turkish)</u> <i>acı -n -dır -ıl -ma -dı -k</i> feel.pain-REFL-CAUS-PASS-NEG-PST-1.PL ‘we were not made to grieve’ ²	<u>Opaque (Italian)</u> <i>le</i> 3SG.F.DAT ‘to her’
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What affects Transparency?

Language contact:

Contact between typologically-distant languages forces speakers to maximise intelligibility by using transparent structures¹

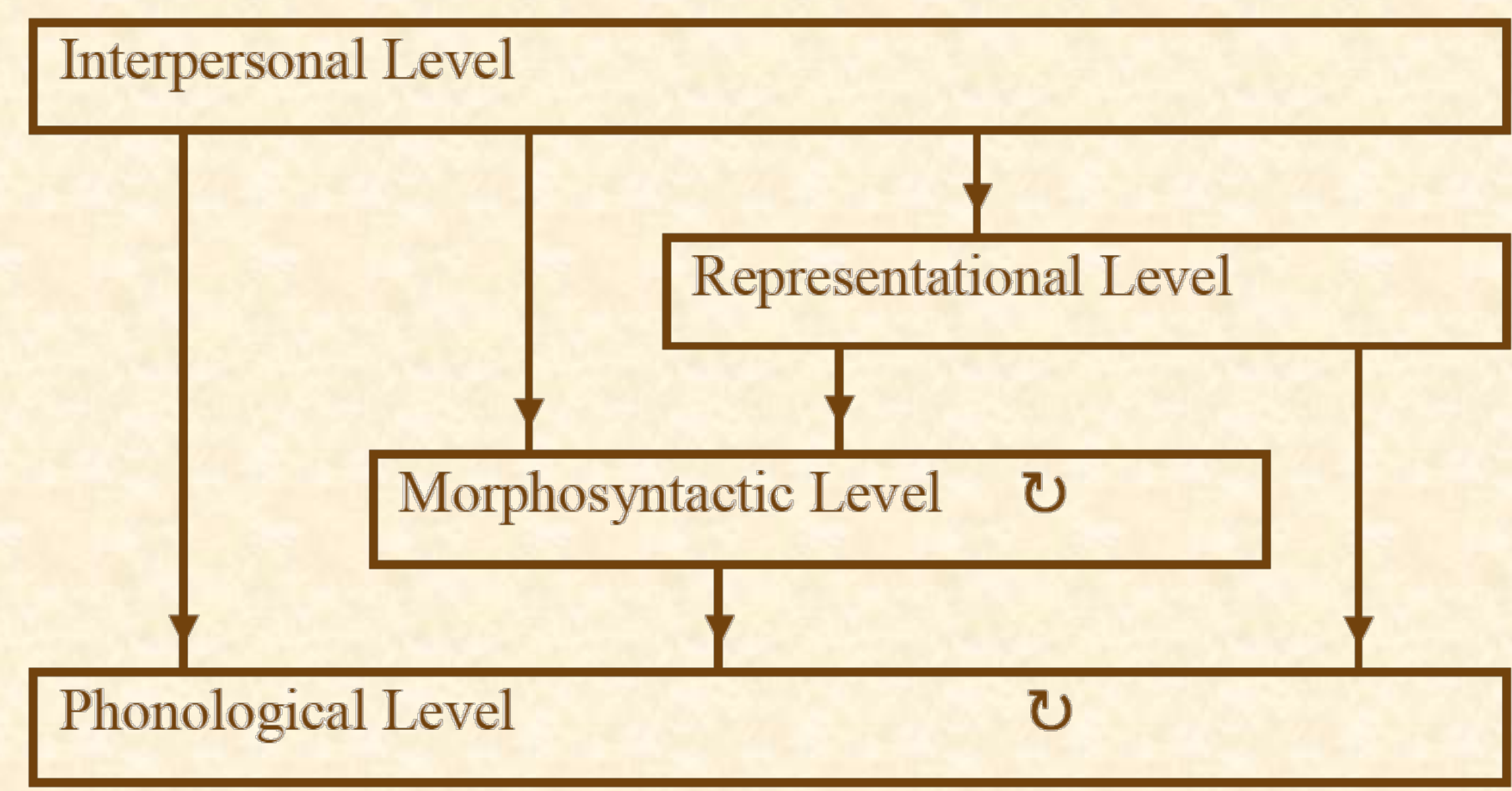
Creoles represent a case of extreme language contact and have been found to be more transparent than their contributing languages¹

Time:

- Languages change over time
- With frequent use, structures are reduced to make processing easier. -> *going to* -> *gonna* -> opaque structure
- Therefore, Creoles are predicted to become less transparent over time

How do we compare transparency across varieties?

Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG)³



- 4 levels of analysis
- Defines linguistic units between which one-to-one mappings can occur

Opaque Features⁴

- Apposition
- Cross-reference
- Discontinuity
- Grammatical agreement (clausal + phrasal)
- Gender
- Stem/affix alternation
- Tense copying

Hypothesis

Transparency decreases in Creoles over time¹



Research Question

How has transparency changed in Sranan from the 18^c to the 20^c?

Sranan

- English-lexicon Creole used as a *lingua franca* in Suriname⁵
 - More than 20 languages used in Suriname e.g. Amerindian, European, Creole, Asian languages
- Contributions from Gbe, Kikongo, Dutch and Portuguese
- Has written records from as early as the late 17^c, which is unusual for Creoles⁶

Methodology

Check for opaque features in texts:

- 18^c: A Grammar of Early Sranan (van den Berg, 2007)⁶
- 18^c: Early Suriname Creole Texts (Arends & Perl, 1995)⁷
- 18^c-20^c: Syntactic Developments in Sranan (Arends, 1989)⁸
- 20^c: A Linguistic Description of Sranan (Voorhoeve, 1962)⁹

Results

+ = yes; - = no; ? = uncertain; * = no evidence for or against

Feature	18 ^c	19 ^c	20 ^c
Apposition	+	*	+
Cross-reference	-	-	-
Discontinuity	-	-	-
Grammatical agreement	-	-	-
Gender	-	-	-
Nominal expletives	+	?	*
Tense copying	-	-	-
Stem/affix alternation	-	-	-

e.g. Apposition
ma sontron tog, j e- -- ptjin boi nanga furmofo -- j e-lon go
but sometimes you -- small boy with a thieving mouth -- you run right there
(Voorhoeve 1962:16)

Discussion

- Transparency seems to have remained the same from the 18^c to the 20^c for all the features except nominal expletives. This goes against our hypothesis.
- We require more data to determine expletives changed.
- The fact that nominal expletives were found in the 18^c together with apposition goes partially against the predictions of the Transparency Hierarchy⁴.
- Sranan probably did not change because it is used as a *lingua franca*. In this role it is important that Sranan be highly learnable, which is associated with high transparency^{10;11}.
- As a language formed during colonialism and as a *lingua franca*, Sranan has had and continues to have a large proportion of adult learners, who tend to prefer transparent structures^{11;12}

Conclusion

Sranan does not appear to have become more or less transparent over time, probably because it is used as a *lingua franca*.

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