Tayo pronouns: a sketch of the pronominal system of a French-lexicon Creole language of the South Pacific

Chris Corne
University of Auckland

1. Introduction

1.1 Tayo

Saint-Louis is a Melanesian village some 15 km from Noumea, in New Caledonia. It is situated adjacent to the Native Reservation (Réserve Autochtone de Saint-Louis, 519 hectares) on the left bank of the Thi River. The language spoken there is a Creole language whose lexical base is predominantly derived from French[1]. It is referred to by its speakers as *tayo*[2] or as *le patois (de Saint-Louis)*. Given the pejorative connotations that the word *patois* often has in French, it would seem a positive move for linguists to adopt the more distinctive *tayo*, henceforth capitalised.

Tayo has not attracted much attention. It is mentioned in passing by Rivierre (1973:17); Brou (1982:87) and Marion (1983:148) devote to it a couple of short paragraphs of a general nature; in 1978, A.-G. Haudricourt made a recording on cassette of a few sentences and two brief folk-tales (about 10 minutes in all). The existence of Tayo came to my attention in early 1987 (Corne 1987); in November 1988 a few hours were spent at Saint-Louis with two native and two non-native

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[2] For the origin and early attestations of the word *tayo*, v. Hollyman 1983:133-136.

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Corne

LEGEND

NORTH	Major language groupings
Païta	Places
cèmuhî	Languages & dialects
‖‖‖‖	language group boundaries
------	language boundaries

FAR NORTH

nyâlayu
Balade
Pouêbo
caaàc

NORTH

CENTRE NORTH

cèmuhî
Touho
Wagap

CENTRE SOUTH

xârâcùù
Boulouparis

SOUTH

FAR SOUTH

Païta
Nouméa
Yahoué
La Conception
Mont-Doré
SAINT-LOUIS
tayo
Yaté
Goro
drubéa
cìâmâ
nââ
numèè
kwényii
'kaponé'
I. Ouen
I. des Pins.

POLYNESIAN
fagauvea

LOYALTIES

164°E   166°E   168°E

20°S

22°S

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caaàc   cèmuhî   xârâcùù
nyâlayu   (Boulouparis)

drubéa   La Conception → SAINT-LOUIS (?)
          'kaponé'
          Inputs & influences on Tayo

MC french / L2 french   french
          △ Various
          Inputs

speakers of Tayo[3]. All data provided by the latter were checked with the former, but given the limited data base as well as the current paucity of information regarding the social history of Saint-Louis, this paper is necessarily somewhat tentative (cf. also Corne, in press a & b, & ms).

1.2 Social history

Saint-Louis (StL) is in fact a European artefact, a village created by the presence of the Catholic (Marist) Mission[4]. After the founding of Noumea in 1854, the French administration granted to the Mission lands straddling possible invasion routes and encouraged settlement there in order to protect the fledgling town. The Mission brought in Melanesian converts to people the area. In 1855, the first arrivals settled at La Conception, some 10km from Noumea: they came from Balade and Pouebo, and spoke respectively Nyâlayu and Caaàc, two neighbouring languages belonging to the same, Far North, linguistic group (v. Map). The following year a first attempt was made to launch the settlement of StL, near the sea: the Melanesian converts were from Touho, speakers of Cèmuhî, a three tone language which is the sole member of the Centre North group. There were disputes with local tribes, and the settlement was abandoned. In 1859, a second attempt was made at the present-day site of the Mission, this time with success. Over the following years, other converts, this time from the southern regions of New Caledonia (NC), joined those from Touho: they came from Yahoué, from the Mont-Dore, from Ouen Island, and from Païta. They came too from Bouloupari, refugees from the Melanesian uprising of 1878 and the repression that followed. Linguistically, most of these people were speakers of languages of the Far South Group (two tones): Drubéa and 'Kaponé'[5]. Those from Bouloupari may have

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[4]In what follows, the broad historical outline is largely derived from Brou (1982). Much detailed historical research remains to be done.

[5]The term 'Kaponé' is used by Leenhardt (1946:68), but not by more recent researchers. According to Haudricourt et al. (1979:18, 72-73), the Far South

been speakers of Xârâcùù or a related language/dialect, but this is not known.

The Melanesians of StL then, came from diverse parts of NC, and spoke often mutually unintelligible languages. Today, the patterns of settlement in the village reflect these various tribal origins. The village is not a 'tribe' in the traditional NC sense, although it has a *chefferie* and apparently functions as does any other Melanesian tribe/village. Rather, it is a group of people brought together, over several generations, as a direct consequence of the European presence.

The Mission undertook a programme of agricultural and associated activities: by the end of 1861, plantings of vegetables, cotton, coffee, and sugar cane were under way. Until the 1960s or thereabouts, the villagers of StL found employment in the Mission's various enterprises, in particular in the cultivation of sugar cane and rice. They were not alone, however, for members of other ethnic groups were also employed. Brou (1982) mentions convicts from the penal settlements in 1868 and 'Malabars' (Indians, from Réunion) in 1869, while a middle-aged villager mentioned groups of workers from Japan, Java, and Vietnam. Today, there is a large group of Wallis Islanders installed in the immediate vicinity of StL, as well as nearby settlers of both local and metropolitan French origin. At least one American GI married a local girl during World War II and still lives in the village. In other words, StL is not now and has never been an island within an island. It has shared in and been influenced by the forces which have shaped NC history and society as well as NC French. It may be supposed that the qualitative impact of this history has been the same (or very similar) on Tayo as it has been on NC French, although the quantitative impact may turn out to be different.

The Mission was also a centre for theological study, beginning with a boarding school in 1864, a school for advanced catechists in 1885, and a seminary in 1890. These activities, bringing together people from all over NC, would have contributed to the sociolinguistic mix at

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group consists of two very closely related languages, Drubéa and the Numèè /Wêê /Kwênyïi grouping (v. Map); cf. also Rivierre (1973:13-18). One StL villager, whose ancestors came from Mont-Dore, referred to his ancestral language as Kaponé; he also saw Kaponé and Drubéa as variants of the 'same' language, and went on to claim Numèè, Wêê, and Kwênyïi as all being 'Kaponé'. The term 'Kaponé' appears to be unknown today outside of StL; its retention there presumably reflects former usage elsewhere, and justifies Leenhardt's use of it.

StL.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that there obtained at StL, but not at La Conception (below), conditions likely to lead to pidginisation and creolisation. There were several mutually unintelligible languages in contact with the French spoken by the missionaries, by administrators, by settlers. Within the village and the Reservation, while some people presumably acquired a good knowledge of French, there was a preponderance of non-Francophones. Now it is known that at La Conception, contact has been maintained with the original (ancestral) homelands; there has been some intermarriage with local tribes. For StL such information is not yet known in detail: contact with tribes of the Far South region is maintained, but relatively few StL people speak the languages concerned; in any event, none of them are used as community languages at StL. It is clear that at some stage relatively early in StL's history, pidginised versions of French became the basis of intercultural and intertribal communication and the ancestral languages were largely abandoned.

According to informants, Tayo has been the sole mother-tongue of StL since around 1910, or perhaps earlier. That is, within three or at most four generations after the founding of the Mission in 1859, Tayo had emerged and jelled as a distinct code separate from either French or pidgin varieties of French.

1.3 Present-day situation

Today everybody in StL speaks Tayo. Knowledge of French, the official and principal vehicular language of NC and the language used in the Mission school and for religious activities, is widespread but very variable from individual to individual. Preschoolers are monolingual in Tayo and competence in French among older people is dependent on individual situations and capabilities. In spite of the high proportion of shared vocabulary, French and Tayo are not mutually intelligible.

It may be estimated that over two thousand people in all have a knowledge of Tayo, about 1000 to 1100 at StL, the remainder spread over the area from Païta to Ouen Is (including Noumea), at Yaté and Goro (marriages, migrations, neighbours). For some it is a second language, including a few Francophones whose activites bring them into frequent contact with native speakers (e.g. the Mont-Dore municipal

policeman, the dairy farmer next door, and such), and in particular including the Wallis Island children who attend the Mission school where Tayo is the language of the school-yard[6].

Tayo is of course in contact with its lexifier, so that as well as the more-or-less unstable varieties of L2 Tayo, there appear to be French-influenced varieties used by native speakers. This is for the moment no more than a subjective impression, since data to hand concern speech used in the presence of, or elicited by, French speakers. Like many other Creole languages, Tayo is on the receiving end of pejorative value judgements. Even some native speakers, but especially those French who are aware of Tayo's existence, see it as merely a mish-mash of deformed French with no 'real' grammar.

2. Tayo: notes on phonology, syntax, lexicon

2.1 Phonology

The consonant inventory is essentially that of French. Some phonemes have allophones which reflect the Melanesian substrate: /b, d, g/ are often prenasalised, /r/ is apical, trilled or flapped except postvocalically where it disappears, either lengthening or diphthonguising the vowel. The vowel system has five oral vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ and two front rounded oral vowels /ü, œ/. The usual reflex of the French front rounded vowels is /i, e/, but /ü, œ/ occur in some words. There are two phonemically nasal vowels /ẽ, õ/. The latter varies between a low back nasal [ɔ̃] and a mid back nasal [ɑ̃][7]. However, the entire question of nasality is not at present very clear. Nasal consonants (and perhaps even prenasalised stops) seem to nasalise partially a preceding oral vowel. Following a nasal consonant, only oral vowels seem to occur, e.g. /dema/ 'tomorrow' (< Fr *demain*). Reflexes of French nasal vowels can vary from oral to partially nasalised to fully nasalised vowels. It is not clear whether what is transcribed here as *mw* is a sequence of two phonemes /mw/ or a single velarised nasal consonant /mʷ/,

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[6] Marion (1983:148) claims that Tayo is dying out 'because it is bereft of a stable [i.e. traditional] base' (my translation), but this is not borne out by the facts.

[7] In NC French, the reflex of Std Fr /ɔ̃/ and /ɑ̃/ is /õ/. Tayo seems to follow a similar pattern, presumably for similar reasons of interference from Melanesian L1 (v. Hollyman 1964a:42; 1971:928).

e.g. [mwõʒe] 'eat' (< Fr *manger*). And so on[8]. Thus the transcription used here, which is based on the Unified Orthography (for Mauritian Creole, or Morisyeṅ) proposed by Baker & Hookoomsing (1987), is approximate and makes no claims to phonological accuracy. /ʃ, ʒ/ are represented as in French by *ch*, *j* respectively, phonemically nasal vowels by *eṅ (eṁ)* and *oṅ (oṁ)*, and front rounded vowels by *ü, ö*.

2.2 Morphology and syntax

Word order is usually Subject + Predicate, i.e. S V O, but the reverse order Predicate + Subject occurs sometimes in contexts which remain to be defined.

Nouns are invariable as to number and gender, so there is no article or adjective agreement. There are four articles, including *eṅ* 'a', which is also the numeral 'one'. The others are the plural partitive *te*, the postposed definite/demonstrative *-la* and its plural *le N-la*.

Verbs are invariable, although there are a few etymological doublets such as *ale* 'go' vs *va* 'future'. Tense, in the overwhelming majority of tokens in the data, is handled by contextual means or by the use of appropriate sentential adverbs (*yer* 'yesterday', *mena* 'now', *dema* 'tomorrow', ...). However, there are examples of preposed 'particles', as follows:

(i) *va*, and a variant *a*, indicate either 'future' or perhaps 'definite future'. A number of tokens were collected from the informants, and a few occur in Haudricourt's recording:

    (1)   nu a tye kel kochoṅ dema?

         'which pig shall we kill tomorrow?'

It appears to be the case that *va* is optional.

(ii) *dja*, and a variant *ja*, indicates 'past'. No examples of any Past marker were collected from the informants, but *(d)ja* occurs in Haudricourt's recording. Examples:

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[8] Local Melanesian languages likewise have nasalisation of vowels which is both combinatory and phonemic, and /mw/ varies with /m/ in certain contexts. For details, v. Rivierre (1973).

(2) eṅ picho ja pase
'a bird flew by'

(3) la chye si tet pu purp, la dja rigole
'he shat on the octopus' head (and) he laughed'

This particle also appears to be optional[9].

Other aspects and moods are indicated by verbal periphrastic means: *(oṅ)tra d(e)* 'progressive', *vyeṅ de* 'immediate past, to have just', *fini* 'completive'[10], *monya* or *kapab de* 'capability', *make de* 'nearly', *dwa* and *deve* 'obligation'.

There is no copula, although there is a presentative *se* which occurs in some constructions (interrogation, focussing):

(4) se kwa sa le   toṁbe?
    it.is what REL PRON fall
    'what fell?'

There being no copula, there is no passive either: sentences are always constructed actively with the agent in subject position:

(5) lot-la sa le   moṅti, ma va   pini   lia
    the.one REL PRON lie   I   FUT punish 3sg.
    'he who lies will be punished'

and adjectives can function as the predicate head:

(6) mwa ma malad
    I   I ill
    'I am ill'

Yes/No interrogation is handled by a rising melodic curve:

(7) le   pa deroṅje uso?
    PRON NEG disturb 2pl.
    'that's not disturbing you?'

For negative questions like (7), the *wi/noṅ* response follows the

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[9]In view of the importance of Anterior/Past marking in all other varieties of Creole French, considerable effort was expended in the field trying to provoke contexts where such marking might have been expected to occur, but to no avail. S. Ehrhart (p.c., June 1989), while stressing the tentative nature of her results to date, confirms *(d)ja* as an optional Past marker.

[10]S. Ehrhart (p.c. May 1989) notes *fini* as 'Past'. The interpretation of 'completive' is guesswork on my part: *fini* does not occur at all in my data, except as a transitive verb 'finish' + direct object.

same pattern as in other NC Melanesian languages: *wi* 'your statement is correct', *noñ* 'your statement is wrong'. So in reply to (7), *wi* means 'that is not disturbing us', *noñ* 'that IS disturbing us' – a source of numerous misunderstandings in French - Melanesian contact situations. Interrogative elements are all direct reflexes of French. The pronouns are *ki?* 'who', *kwa?* 'what', *kel?* 'which one'; they follow the verb:

(8) ta di kwa?

     'what did you say? what are you saying?'

The interrogative adverbs are *u?* 'where', *koñ?* 'when', *kombyeñ?* 'how many', *purkwa?* 'why', *koma?* 'how'. The interrogative adjective is *kel?*, preposed to the noun.

Negation uses *pa* preposed to the verb:

(9) ma pa   monya vyeñ dema

    I   NEG able   come tomorrow

    'I can't come tomorrow'

Other negative adverbs are *jame* 'never', *nepli* 'no longer'. The negative of the existential verb *(e)na* is *napa*.

There is a subordinator *sa* which is used for relative clauses and in certain interrogatives (direct and indirect):

(10) mek -la   sa   ma parle ave lia, la tombe malad

     man DEF REL I   speak with him he fall   ill

     'the man with whom I spoke is ill'

(11) se   kwa sa   le   arive ave twa -la?

     it.is what REL PRON happen with you DEF

     'what's up with you?'

(12) ma pa   kone sa   ta ule

     I   NEG know REL 2sg want

     'I don't know what you want'

2.3 Lexicon

While no in-depth study of the lexicon has yet been attempted, a few observations can be made.

Many lexical items are simply French (including NC French) adapted to Tayo phonology, such as *tye* 'kill', *rigarde* 'look at', *mwoñje* 'eat',

kompran 'understand', *benye* 'bathe', *oṅwoye* 'send, throw', *plere/plŏre* 'cry', all verbs derived from French infinitive forms. Verbs such as *di* 'say', *wa* 'see', *ule* 'wish, want', *dwa/deve* 'obligation' are derived from French finite verb forms, while *mor* 'die' is from the French past participle. Similar forms occur in other French-lexicon Creoles, but Tayo has its specificities, e.g. *monya* 'be able'.

Nouns display similar adaptations, e.g. *bi* 'penis' (< Fr *bitte*), *gel* 'face' (< Fr *gueule*). Tayo, like all other French-lexicon Creoles, often agglutinates the French etymological article to the noun (cf. Baker 1984): *dilo* 'water', *dife* 'fire', *disab* 'sand', *laser* 'nun', *latab* 'table', *lapli* 'rain'. It is not known at this stage how stable or how extensive this phenomon may be.

While the bulk of the lexicon comes from French, some items come from Melanesian languages, e.g. *tchibwi* 'mouse, rat' (< *ciibwi* 'rat', Nyâlayu, Caaàc /Caawac, Cèmuhî; cf. Xârâcùù *siibù*, Drubéa /Numèè *cĩĩbu*), and there are words from other sources as well, e.g. *bizoṅ* 'cannabis' (< *Bizon*, a brand of tobacco). Etymologies of Tayo words may provide valuable information. For example, there is no published information on what language was spoken at Bouloupari prior to the revolt of 1878; should any Tayo words of indisputable Xârâcùù origin be discovered, this would suggest that (a dialect of) that language was the tongue of the Bouloupari refugees who came to StL. Baker (1982b) has established for Morisyeṅ a correlation between the numbers of speakers of non-Francophone groups and the proportions of the Morisyeṅ lexicon derived from their languages. Is there an analogous correlation for Tayo?

2.4 As the above shows, Tayo syntax and morphology (and phonology to a lesser extent) are strikingly similar to those of other French-lexicon Creoles, but there are a number of specificities. Among these are the forms (and perhaps use) of the articles, the form *sa* of the relative pronoun, and the widespread lack of Past (or Anterior) marking. But it is in its system of personal pronouns that Tayo is perhaps most different from other Creoles of French lexical base.

3. The personal pronouns

The forms of the personal pronouns are partially displayed in Table I.

TABLE I
Tayo personal pronouns

		Subject & subject index	Independent pronoun	Unmarked dependent & subject index
Singular	1	ma	mwa	
	2	ta	twa	
	3	la	lia	**le**
Plural	1	nu	nu	
	2	uzot, uso	uzot, uso	
	3	sa, sola	sola, lezot	

The Table omits the possessive forms, which will be discussed in due course. Nor does it note variants which occur in rapid speech, where the singular forms of the independent pronouns are subject to simplification: *mwa ma, twa ta, lia* (disyllabic) *lya* (monosyllabic). There remain areas requiring further study (including the possessives): (i) there is a dual, constructed lexically and which appears to be optional: *nu de/dō*; (ii) there is presumably a semantic distinction between *sola* and *lezot*, the former indicating (sometimes) a specific group (the *-la* may be connected with the definite article *-la*); (iii) the posterior quality of the phoneme /a/ gives rise to forms of *ma, ta* which are phonetically rather close to *mo, to*.

3.1 Subject pronouns/indices

The subject pronoun appears either alone, preposed to the predicate, or as a subject index within VP when the subject function is filled by an independent pronoun or by a noun group (a lexical agent):

(13) sa wa mwa
  'they see/saw/will see me'[11]

(14) dema ma tye mwa
  'I shall kill myself tomorrow'[12]

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[11] Three different tenses are given in this gloss to illustrate the lack of tense marking. In all following examples, only one tense is indicated in the gloss.

[12] Note the use of the pronoun *mwa*, here used reflexively with no overt reflexive marking. For a debate on Creole French reflexives, v. Carden & Stewart (1988, 1989); Corne (1988, 1989).

(15) lezot sa vyeṅ wa mwa e sola sa reste

'they came to see me and they (another specific group)
stayed (behind)'

(16) chyeṅ-la la rule par ter

'the dog is rolling around on the ground'

3.2 The independent pronoun

This often occurs as subject, generally but not always followed by the
subject index:

(17) lezot sa wa mwa

'they saw me' (apparently = (13))

Adjectival predicate heads require both the independent and the index:

(18) mwa ma malad

'I am ill'

The independent pronoun is also used as the object of a verb or a
preposition, e.g. (13)-(15).

3.3 The pronoun *le*

This pronoun is maximally unmarked (for person and number). It
occurs in three broad contexts in the data to hand, and sporadically
in other contexts (after a lexical subject). These contexts are:

(a) as a subject which is (i) impersonal:

(19) le botoṁ mena lapli tombe

'it is fine now that it has rained'

(ii) inanimate:

(20) le pa deroṅje uso?

'that's not disturbing you?'

(21) le dur pu koṅveṅk lezot

'it is hard to convince them, they are hard to convince'

(iii) indexed to a postposed subject
((21) above is perhaps an example, too):

(22) le boṅ chigom-la

'the chewing-gum is good'

(23) le fu lia

'he's mad'

(b) after a focussed independent pronoun:

    (24) la di ke se lia le fe sa

        'he said it was he who did it'

    (25) nu di ke se nu le fe sa

        'we said it was we who did it'

    (26) lezot le wa mwa

        'THEY see me' (cf. (17))[13]

(c) after a non-personal pronoun:

    (27) person le wa mwa

        'nobody saw me'

    (28) ta wa loto sa le vyeñ?

        'do/can you see the car which is coming?'

    (29) se ki le vyeñ laba?

        'who is (that who is) coming over there?'

3.4 Possession

The possessive consists of Noun + *pu* + independent pronoun:

    (30) tete bi   pu   mwa

        suck penis POSS me

        'give me a blow-job'

This is the citation form, and the only one accepted by the two native-speaker informants. However, the two non-native consultants claimed the following paradigm:

    (31) N ma/mwa/pu mwa, N ta/twa/pu twa, N pu lia,

        N (pu) nuzot/vuzot/lezot

(Note here the non-native forms *nuzot, vuzot*.) They opined that the non-use of *pu* was characteristic of younger speakers. These non-native intuitions receive some support from native-speaker data: (i) a child was overheard to use *N ma*; (ii) a speaker on Haudricourt's recording uses *tet ta* 'your head' twice; (iii) the same speaker has *tet pu purp* as well as *tet purp* 'the octopus' head'; (iv) one native-speaker consultant provided (32):

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[13] The semantics of this example need to be checked. The sporadic occurrence of *le* after a lexical subject suggests that *le* may perhaps stand in for any subject index.

(32) ta   wa   chigom -la   le   kole doṅ lapo Ø
     you see ch.-gum DEF PRON stuck PREP skin Ø

     deryer   pu   twa
     behind   POSS you

'you see the chewing-gum's stuck to your backside'.

On the basis of these data there appear to be two possibilities. The first is that an original N *pu* PRON is subject to on-going phonetic erosion. The second is that the two are merely stylistic variants which reflect a former semantic distinction: in at least some Far North and North Melanesian languages of NC, there is indeed a semantic distinction between the possessive suffix construction, although the nature of the distinction varies from language to language (Hollyman, ms)[14].

3.5 Transmission and evolution

If the pronominal system of Tayo is compared with the general Melanesian system, parallels are obvious. Tayo apparently does not have an obligatory dual/plural distinction, nor does it have in the first person dual/plural an exclusive/inclusive contrast. But there is the subject index within VP, there are the independent pronouns, and there are the possessive structures discussed above. The pronoun *le* is a dependent pronoun (or subject index) which is unmarked for person and number: the use of the marked subject indices has meant that *le* has been restricted to precise semantactic roles[15].

The Tayo system, which shows evidence of both transmission and internal evolution, can be seen as revealing some of the influences which contributed to the formation of the language. First, there is clearly an adaption of French pronominal forms: *mwa, twa, nu, uzot, lezot, sa*[16]. Second, *ma, ta* may be reanalyses of the French possessive adjectives[17],

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[14] Both forms appear in S. Ehrhart's data (p.c.), which suggests that the first possibility is the more likely.

[15] Cf. the considerably more generalised role of *i* in Solomons Pijin (Keesing n.d. & 1988). The dispute between Keesing and Mühlhäusler (1987) concerns essentially the 'when' of *i* in Pidgin English, but Keesing is undoubtedly correct in seeing *i* in present-day Pijin as reflecting the Melanesian pattern.

[16] Popular French has *ça* (Tayo *sa*) as a pejorative third person pronoun: *ça veut être payé, mais ça veut pas travailler* 'they/he/she want(s) to be paid, but don't/doesn't want to work'

[17] Cf. *my* as subject pronoun in Chinese Pidgin English (Baker 1987b).

but are perhaps more likely to have evolved as 'eroded' forms of *mwa, twa*. Similarly, and by the same rule of deletion of [+hi, +voc, +cons] segments, *la* may have come from *lia*, itself perhaps from Fr *lui-là*[18]. *Sola* may be from Fr *ceuz-là*, or could be a descendant of Tayo *sa* + the definite article *-la* (back /a/ raised to /o/, cf. the rapid-style forms *mo, to* of *ma, ta*). While *uzot* is clearly from Fr *vous autres*, the variant *uso* shows, apart from loss of *-t*, devoicing of /s/ cf. *picho* 'bird' from Fr *pigeon*, where /ʒ/ → /ʃ/. *Le* is almost certainly a reanalysis of Fr *il est* (cf. note 18 concerning *la*). Finally, the way in which the pronominal system actually works is a diluted reflex of the Melanesian pattern, making substratal influence a near certainty[19].

4. Discussion and conclusions

The foregoing shows clearly the potentially pivotal role of Tayo for theories of Creole genesis.

4.1 Tayo is the only French-lexicon Creole known in the creation of which Africans played no role: it is the product of assorted groups of displaced Melanesians using French lexical items to create a vehicle of community and interethnic communication. The parallel with the English-lexicon pidgin languages of the South Pacific is imperfect: in these cases the pidgin has remained an L2 for the vast majority of its speakers, creolisation (nativisation) being a relatively recent and somewhat restricted phenomenon. Thus, as L2s, these languages have perhaps been proportionately more influenced by their Oceanic substrates than has Tayo, where the early loss of the ancestral languages and the continuing influence of French have reduced the contribution of the substrates.

For what it is worth, it may be noted that Tayo is the only endogenous French-lexicon Creole: it arose in NC with NC Melanesian

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[18] Or, *la* may be a reanalysis of Fr *(i)l a* 'he has', cf. the analogous derivation of the Reunionese perfective auxiliary *la* (Baker 1982a:211-216). In fact, given the phonology of spoken, popular, NC French, this is perhaps the likelier explanation.

[19] Popular French does have double pronouns: a tonic pronoun (e.g. *moi*) frequently precedes a cliticised atonic subject pronoun (*moi je...*). It also employs a resumptive, atonic clitic with NP subjects: *la femme elle ...* In neither case, *pace* speakers of Standard French and authors of school textbooks, is any particular emphasis involved. But this could at best have had a convergent, supporting role: the forms are different from those in Tayo, and in any event the role of *le* in Tayo cannot be explained by reference to French.

languages supplying most non-French input. (The endogenous status of Tayo has to be seen in the light of the fact that there was population displacement and loss of contact with the ancestral language – if not society; this is a feature of exogenous Creole genesis.) But the stark dichotomy established by some writers (e.g. Chaudenson 1986) between exo-/endogenous Creoles does not appear to have much to recommend it. It implies that the linguistic product of exogenesis is different from that of endogenesis, and what predictive power (if any) attaches to this hypothesis is unclear. There certainly does not appear to be any qualitative difference between Tayo and any other brand of Creole French: the Melanesian influence (pronouns, VS sentences) is no more extensive than that of the Bantu languages in Isle de France Creole (morphology, Baker 1984, 1989; preverbal markers, Corne 1983, Baker & Corne 1986; verb fronting, Corne 1986).

Tayo fills a gap in a crude chronological and developmental continuum. At one end of the continuum there are pidgin L2 varieties of French, such as Tây Bôy (Reinecke 1971) or Burundi Pidgin French (Niedzielski 1989). Then there are more elaborated varieties, such as the *français populaire d'Abidjan* (Hattiger 1983, Lescutier 1983), currently beginning the process of creolisation. There is Tayo, a recently emerged and jelled Creole. At the other pole of the continuum there is Isle de France Creole, which emerged and jelled in the 18th Century (Baker & Corne 1982, 1986; Baker 1982b, 1984), and the American Creoles of the 17th (Baker 1987a)[20]. Pronoun placement (pre- or postposed to the verb), tense/aspect marking, and articles appear to be some of the defining features of this continuum; there are no doubt others[21].

In NC, contact L2 varieties of French are common, both historically and today. For example, the Javanese L2 French described by Hollyman (1964b) is still extant[22]. While many Melanesians have an

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[20] Reunionese is a levelled and partially creolised variety of French (Bollee 1977, Baker & Corne 1982) which does not fit on this particular continuum. For the geneses of 17th and 18th Century varieties of Creole French and their interrelationships, v. Baker (1987a).

[21] Tense/aspect marking across this continuum seems to correlate (rather roughly, to be sure) with the develpment of the Morisyen preverbal marking system as attested in early texts (Baker 1982a:224-236), v. Corne & Niedzielski (in preparation).

[22] A contemporary sample occurs on the recording *L'île aux cent visages*, produced by Jacqueline Sénès, PAN records (Noumea) P. 1021.

excellent command of French, many others use L2 varieties ranging from adequate to very limited (Schooling 1982). Such was undoubtedly the case at StL throughout most of the period from 1856 to around the turn of the century (and perhaps later). The question then is to what extent Tayo reflects such contact varieties and to what extent it has evolved away from them towards its own norms (that it has done so is indisputable). The dearth of preverbal markers is reminiscent of a pidgin, for example[23], but the pronominal system as described here is far from the characteristic 'simplicity' of contact varieties of language.

An aside: the presence of workers of various origins in the rice paddies and cane fields alongside people from the village no doubt gave rise to diverse kinds of pidgin L2 French. These may well have had a minor role in the formation of Tayo. The presence of Indians ('Malabars') from Reunion might suggest some Reunionese input to Tayo, but no linguistic feature found so far is exclusively shared by Tayo and Reunionese[24]. (The formal accident of *la* and *le* in both languages can be discounted, as their function in each is completely different.)

I see no point at this stage in speculating on how Bickerton's Human Bioprogram for Language (HBL) hypothesis (1981, 1984) will stack up against Tayo. The social history fits well enough, as far as is known to date, with that of Mauritius as described by Baker (1982a&b): the hedge is important, as it is not (yet) known when the last significant numbers of new inputs occurred (possibly the refugees from Bouloupari in 1878), nor when native speakers of the emergent Creole outnumbered pidgin speakers within the village. Baker argues that the timing of such demographic 'events' is crucial for the emergence and jelling of a (more or less) homogeneous Creole from a pre-Creole continuum, and hypothesises that the HBL (in some form) plays a crucial role within these parameters. One would therefore expect Tayo to have bioprogram-derived features. There appears to be at least one glaring omission: Tayo does not have an Anterior (or even

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[23] Relexification of NC Pidgin English seems an unlikely hypothesis, although there were (and are) people from the New Hebrides/Vanuatu in NC. For Pidgin English in NC and the Loyalties, v. Hollyman (1976).

[24] Although NC French has a few borrowings from Reunion; e.g. *brèdes* 'culinary preparation of leaves of certain plants', *bois noir* 'tree, Albizzia sp., used often to provide shade for coffee bushes', *caféerie* 'coffee plantation', *chouchoute* 'choko, Sechium edule Sw.': v. Hollyman (1962).

a fully integrated Past) marker, which is one of the basic features pre-
dicted by the HBL (Bickerton 1984:182). However, since work on Tayo
is in its infancy, a more complete picture of the social history and of
the language itself is needed before Tayo can be used to check the
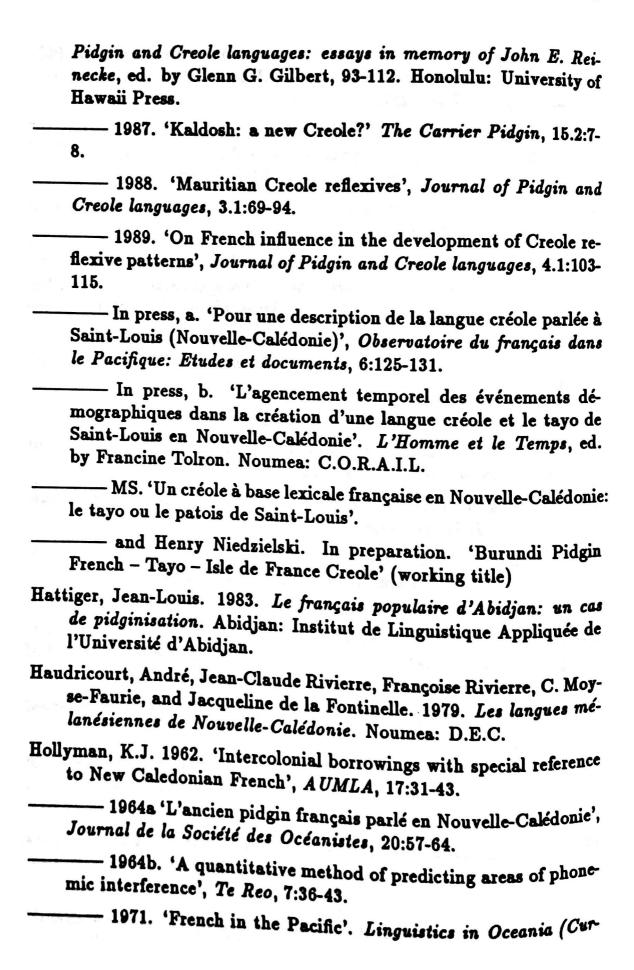predictions made by Bickerton's hypothesis.

4.2 Tayo is thus an important witness to the processes undergone by
French in the pidginisation-creolisation cycle, to the role of the sub-
strate in this act of language creation, and to the operation of univer-
sals in Creole genesis. It is already clear that Tayo poses a problem
for those (mainly French-speaking) scholars who would like to deny
substratal influence (e.g. Wittmann & Fournier 1983). It is equally
obvious that substratomaniacs have a problem too: the genesis of Tayo
is manifestly separate from all other French-lexicon Creoles, but shares
with them a large number of features[25]. And it is conceivable that Tayo
will lead to important modifications in the HBL hypothesis and per-
haps ultimately to a unified theory of language creation. Whatever the
future of Creole studies may hold, Tayo can no longer be overlooked.

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[25] Chaudenson (1986) is correct in stressing the importance of the French input
in Creole formation. His hypothesis that 'Creoles result from an "acceleration"
and a "radicalisation" of processes which are essentially internal to the functioning
of French, without excluding a priori the influence of other languages' (1986:86;
my translation) is however grossly overstated. Neither the tense/aspect marking
system of Morisyen nor the pronominal system of Tayo can be ascribed to any kind
of French, anywhere or anywhen.

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