

Tayo Causatives: The Retention in a French-lexified Contact-induced Vernacular of Transfers from New Caledonian Melanesian

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Introduction

The language known by its speakers as *Tayo* or *Patois (de St-Louis)* is a contact-induced vernacular the bulk of whose lexicon derives from French. Formed in the period 1860 to around 1910, it meets the definition of a "plantation creole" (as argued by Kihm 1995, pp. 226-230) and is a perfect touchstone against which to test the various views that have been propounded concerning the genesis of creole languages generally. Most observers agree that the lexifier language of a given pidgin/creole provides most of the lexical and grammatical morphemes, but there is a lot less agreement concerning the role of the "substrate" (non-lexifier) languages in the semantic and syntactic structure.¹ This article attempts to show how the causative constructions of Tayo reflect what can be called the highest common factor of the three principal substrate languages in this area of grammar.

The necessary background information concerning Tayo, which arose in the village of St. Louis, near Noumea, has been in the public domain since 1989 (Corne 1989, 1990a & b, 1994, 1995a & b, in press, Ehrhart-Kneher & Corne 1996, Ehrhart 1993, Kihm 1995), and will not be repeated here. We begin with a few details of the phonology and the orthography used here, since the latter differs in one important respect from that used by Ehrhart (1993) and followed in most other writings on Tayo. This is followed by a description of the causative constructions — there are two of them — in Tayo, and a brief comparison of these with the causative derivation by prefixation in the Southern Oceanic (New Caledonian Melanesian, or Kanak) substrate languages of Tayo. These are Cèmuhi, a

¹ The data for this article were collected by the author in 1996, thanks to a period of leave granted by the University of Auckland. I am grateful to Mr Vianney Wamytan and several members of his immediate family for their hospitality at St-Louis and for acting as consultants, and to Dr Sabine Ehrhart for introducing me to them. I thank Claire Moyse-Faurie and Jean-Claude Rivierre for helping me to understand better the initially none-too-clear picture I had of Drubéa causatives, and Jeff Siegel and an anonymous reviewer for their comments on an earlier version of this article, all subsisting errors being my sole responsibility.

tone language of the Centre group, Xârâcùù, a non-tone language of the South group, and Drubéa and Numèè, closely related dialects, with tones, of the Far South group.² It is assumed that the reader is broadly familiar with the *faire* + (active, never passive) infinitive construction of standard French (*je l'ai fait tuer* (*être tué) *par mes soldats* 'I had him killed by my soldiers'), the comparison with this language being largely implicit (for a basic statement of the *faire* + infinitive construction of standard French, v. Byrne *et al.* 1986, pp. 317-323). The findings are then discussed with respect to what they can tell us about substratal influence in Tayo, as well as the on-going effects of contact with the lexifier.

Phonology and orthography

Tayo is not a tone language.³ The sound system has a distinctly Melanesian cast, particularly in the suprasegmentals. Basilectal or "core" Tayo today has five oral vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ and two nasal ones /ã, õ/. /ã/ is slightly centralised, closer to [ã] than to [ã̃]; both nasal vowels are produced as one mora in word-final position, but tend to be lengthened (1½ to 2 more) elsewhere. Oral vowels are partially nasalised (but not lengthened) before /b, d, g/ (which are all prenasalised, [ᵐb, ᵐd, ᵐg]) and both before and after /m, n, ŋ/. The French front rounded vowel [y] is usually reflected in Tayo as [i]; similarly French front rounded [ø] and central [œ] as Tayo [e], French nasals [æ̃, õ̃] as Tayo [ã], French nasal [õ̃] as Tayo [õ]; these French vowels occur in French-influenced varieties of Tayo. Consonants are given in Table I.

Table I: Tayo consonants

p	f	t	s	c	ʃ	k
ᵐb	v	ᵐd	(z)	(ᵐj)	(ʒ)	ᵐg
m		n		ɲ		
		l		j	w	
		r				

The voiced counterparts of [s], [c] and [ʃ], i.e. [z], [ᵐj] and [ʒ] respectively, occur only in French-influenced varieties. [r] is usually an apical flap prevocally and intervocally, while post-vocally it disappears, either diphthongising or lengthening the vowel.

² The inclusion of Drehu, a language of the Loyalty Islands, on map 38 "New Caledonia: the building of Tayo" (Ehrhart-Kneher & Corne 1996, written about 1991) is a mistake, based on insufficient information at that time.

³ This is unsurprising for a number of reasons, not least because neither French nor Xârâcùù is a tone language and, while Cèmuhî and Drubea are, the former has three tones, the latter two, and there is little or no overlap as to which items carry which tone.

Some of the features mentioned, such as the pre-nasalised stops and the lack of a voiced/unvoiced contrast with most fricatives, are shared with some Kanak languages, but a detailed comparison and analysis remain to be done.

This brief description differs from that of Ehrhart (1993:92–100) in one major respect, that of the presence of nasal vowels. In common with New Caledonian French, speech production tends to be tinged with an overall nasality (such that the local French pronunciation of, say, *apporter* 'bring' is sometimes perceived by non-locals as *importer* 'to import'). In Tayo, moreover, any vowel in contact with a nasal consonant or a prenasalised stop tends to be itself nasalised to a greater or lesser degree, as noted above. Although there is sometimes little or no phonetic difference between *gra* 'fat' and *grañ* 'big', there is a phonemic one; speakers insist that these two words are not the same, as when attempting to read Ehrhart's transcriptions, or when directly questioned on the matter (although in either case, this may reflect an awareness of the etymological source). In other contexts, however, the contrast is clear (*a* 'to', *añ* 'a, one'). As a rule of thumb, a French etymological nasal vowel has a nasal reflex in Tayo (although there are a few exceptions, such as *mana*, *mena* 'now' < *maintenant*, and also exceptions to the exceptions).⁴ A minor difference concerns the vowels /i, e/ and /u, o/: both /e/ and /o/ in open syllables are higher than their (standard) French counterparts, in both Tayo and New Caledonian French. Thus, Tayo *goyav* (New Caledonian French *goyave*) 'guava' may be (mis)perceived by non-locals as *guyav*, for example.

Given that Drubéa, Xârâcùù and Cèmuhi all, in common with Kanak languages generally, have oral vowels, nasal vowels and contextually conditioned nasal vowels, all of which may be long or short (Shintani & Païta 1990a, pp. 9-17, Moyse-Faurie 1995, p. 13, Rivierre 1980, pp. 28-50), and given that the lexifier, French, has oral vowels and nasal vowels (but length is contextually conditioned), it is not surprising that (i) Tayo should have nasal vowels, and (ii) Tayo does not have phonemic vowel length.⁵

⁴ Some occurrences of the nasal [õ] transcribed in Corne (1989) are perhaps an observational error, although the principal consultant for that study, Mr. Joseph Katé, is in fact fluent in New Caledonian French as well as Tayo. No recording equipment was available, and the work session took place in a classroom surrounded by large numbers of boisterous children. In any event, the cases of [õ] for French etymological [õ] (a feature of New Caledonian French) noted at the time correspond in fact to Tayo [ã].

⁵ Ehrhart's observational error left not only this author but also others with a professional knowledge of New Caledonian Melanesian languages, wondering how Tayo had managed, in such a "nasal-full" environment, to produce a phonology lacking phonemically nasal vowels. On the other hand, the lack of a phonemic length contrast is significant, in theoretical terms, given the congruence of the substrate languages in this respect. This matter will be addressed at a later date.

The transcription used here in cited Tayo forms is based on the unified orthography (*lortograf-linite*) developed for Mauritius by Baker & Hookoomsing (1987). The symbols *m̃* and *ñ* indicate that the preceding vowel is phonemically nasal, while [ɲ] is written as *ny* and [j] as *y*. The orthography has been adapted as follows: the prenasalised consonants are written as *b*, *d*, *g*, [c] as *tch*, [ʃ] as *ch*. The voiced consonants [z], [ʒ] and [ʒ] are ignored, their unvoiced counterparts being used in lieu (e.g. *chanche* [ʃã]e < *changer* 'to change').

Tayo causatives

Most predicate heads, whether they be one-, two- or three-argument verbs, allow a causative construction which has the effect of adding an extra argument.

Many statives (i.e. items which occur in the canonical *le* + stative + NP-subject)⁶ can be converted to the equivalent of transitive verbs by the use of the (independently occurring) verb *fe* 'do, cause, make':

- (1a) **ta beswan fe epe melanch pu twa**
'you have to thicken your mixture'
2sg/need/Cau/be-thick/mixture/for/2sg⁷
- (1b) **la fe plan ver-la** 'he filled the glass'
3sg/Cau/be-full/glass-Def
- (1c) **ma fe bwi zye pu ta** 'I'll blind you, I'll put your eyes out'
1sg/Cau/be-blind/eye/for/2sg (*bwi* < *Cèmuhi*)
- (1d) **fe debut sagay pu twa!** 'get it up!'
Cau/be-standing/spear (penis)/for/2sg
- (1e) **ta fe bruye tet pu mwa** 'you're confusing me'
2sg/Cau/be-jumbled/head/for/1sg⁸

In some cases, there is an equivalent transitive verb (e.g. the doublet *fe prop* 'Cau + be clean' and *netwaye* 'to clean'), while in others the *fe* construction is precluded by the existence of the corresponding transitive. For example,

⁶ The item *le* is a subject indexing or referencing pronoun, unmarked for person or number, but restricted to certain contexts. For details, v. Corne (1994, pp. 286-288; 1995, pp. 124-130).

⁷ The abbreviations in the glosses are: Cau - causative, Def - definite article, Emp - emphasis, Fut - future, Pl - plural, Prep - preposition, Prog - progressive, Neg - negator, Rel - relativizer, SI - subject indexing pronoun, 1/2/3 - first, second, third person, sg - singular, pl - plural.

⁸ The possessive is constructed of the preposition *pu* + the independent pronoun. *Pu* also functions as a conjunction, as in sentences (3a, c) below. It is glossed here simply as 'for' in both cases.

loñ 'be long' does not allow ***fe loñ**, only **dere** 'to stretch/lay (something) out' (< Drubéa) and **aloñche** 'to stretch (something) out, lay (something) down' occurring as the transitive equivalents of **loñ**.

There is a broadly equivalent procedure, in semantic terms, which embeds a sentence with a stative predicate, such as (2a), as a subordinate clause, as in (2b), using **fe pu**:

(2a) **le bruye tet pu mwa** 'I'm confused'
SI/jumbled/head/for/1sg

(2b) **ta fe pu le bruye tet pu mwa** 'you're confusing me'
2sg/Cau/for/SI/jumbled/head/for/1sg

While (1e) **ta fe bruye tet pu mwa** seems to be the equivalent of (2b), not all statives allow the direct "prefixing" of **fe**:

(3a) **ta fe pu ma pa koñtañ** 'you make me unhappy'
2sg/Cau/for/1sg/Neg/happy

(3b) ***ta pa fe koñtañ mwa**, ***ta fe pa(-)koñtañ mwa**,
***ta pa fe mwa koñtañ**

(3c) **la fe pu ma añretar** 'he made me late'
3sg/Cau/for/1sg/late

(3d) ***la fe añretar mwa**, ***la fe mwa añretar**

There are many statives which clearly derive from French adjectives and which, from a French perspective, look distinctly "odd" when they occur prefixed by **fe**: **fe sek** 'to dry, drain' (*sec, sécher*), **fe grañ** 'to enlarge' (*grand, agrandir*), **fe drwa** 'to straighten up' (*droit, redresser*), **fe gra** 'to fatten' (*gras, engraisser*), and some of the examples in (1) above. Others however derive from French past participles which often are phonetically indistinguishable from infinitives. The result is sentences in Tayo which are superficially French in physiognomy, to a greater or lesser degree (allowing for postpositioning of **nu** in 4c; the French "equivalent" of 4b is an unlikely sentence in French, but is entirely interpretable):

(4a) **na mwayañ de fe puse sinyam isi?** 'can one grow yams here?'
have/means/Prep/Cau/be-grown/yam/here
(*il y a moyen de faire pousser des ignames ici?*)

(4b) **fe kreve lañp-la** 'extinguish the lantern'
Cau/be-dead/lantern-Def
(**fais crever [for éteindre] la lampe*)

(4c) **la fe reveye nu** 'she woke us up'
3sg/Cau/be-awake/1pl
(*elle nous a fait réveiller*)

Others include such as *kwi* 'be cooked', *mon̄te* 'be erected, be put up, be mounted', *koñstrwi* 'be built, be constructed', *fri* 'be fried', *bwi* 'be boiled' (homophonous with *bwi* 'blind', cf. 1c above): note the stative glosses given, where the French etyma constructed with *faire* would in each case be an infinitive, i.e. the nominalised form of the active verb. We return to this in a moment.

Let us now consider (4a-c) more closely. The items *puse*, *kreve* and *reveye* are all statives, as can be seen from (5a-c):

(5a) *le puse sinyam pu twa?* 'have your yams grown?'

SI/be-grown/yam/for/2sg

(5b) *le kreve tu sel lamp-la* 'the lantern went out by itself'

SI/be-dead/all/alone/lantern-Def

(5c) *le reveye som-la* 'the man is awake'

SI/be-awake/man-Def

None of these can be used transitively.⁹ That is to say, taking *reveye* as an example, that **la reveye nu* 'she woke us' is impossible, and that (4c) *la fe reveye nu* cannot have the meaning 'she caused us to be awakened by a third party', contrary to one reading of the French *elle nous a fait réveiller*. The fact that French must, if an agent is to be expressed, use a causative with such intransitives as *cuire*, *frir*, *bouillir* (*la viande cuit* 'the meat cooks', *je fais cuire la viande* 'I cook the meat') is relevant only insofar as it is precisely this constraint that has contributed to the Tayo reanalysis of these items as statives.

However, there are cases where two analyses are possible, and (given bilingualism among the St-Louis people) it is entirely possible that the same surface strings are interpreted differently by different speakers:¹⁰

(6a) *ma fe mon̄te lya desi cheval pu lya*

'I made him mount his horse'

1sg/Cau/be-mounted/3sg/on/horse/for/3sg

or 1sg/Cau/to-mount/3sg ...

⁹ With occasional nonce exceptions, as *e pi fo kwi lapo* 'and then one must cook the skin' (Ehrhart 1992, p. 155, sentence 54).

¹⁰ On the other hand, some verbs, such as *bruye*, while usually used as statives as in the examples above, can also be used as active and transitive verbs:

(i) *la ke bruye tet pu mwa* 'he certainly confuses me'

3sg/Emp/confuse/head/for/1sg

This appears to indicate change in progress, whereby what is almost certainly the original [+stative] nature of *bruye* is reinterpreted in French terms as an active, transitive verb, cf. French *brouiller* 'to confuse, mess up, befuddle' (*ke* < obsolete *ryan̄ ke* < French *rien que*). See also the following note.

- (6b) **sa fe kwi lavyan** 'they cooked the meat'
 3pl/Cau/be-cooked/meat
 or 3pl/Cau/to-cook/meat

Other one- and two-argument non-stative verbs are relatively straightforward. Intransitives can be made transitive by the use of **fe**: **kule** 'to drip', **fe kule** 'to run (a tap)'; **tete** 'breast; to suckle (intransitive)', **fe tete** 'to suckle (transitive)'; **tombe** 'to fall', **fe tombe** 'to fell, cause to fall'; **parle** 'to speak', **fe parle** 'to interrogate', and so on, while transitives can gain an extra argument. Examples:

- (7a) **ma fe parle lya pu war sa la va di**
 'I questioned him to see what he'd say'
 1sg/Cau/speak/3sg/for/see/Rel/3sg/Fut/say
- (7b) **ma trañ de fe mwanche tule peti-la**
 'I'm feeding the children'
 1sg/Prog/Prep/Cau/eat/Pl/child-Def¹¹
- (7c) **fam-la la fe tete peti pu lya** 'the woman is suckling her child'
 woman-Def/SI-3sg/Cau/suckle/child/for/3sg
- (7d) **ta fe met lya tchu** 'make her wear her shoes'
 2sg/Cau/put/3sg/shoe

Causative derivation by prefixation in Drubéa, Xârâcùù and Cèmuhi
 In general, these findings correspond well to the intersection of French on the one hand, and Drubéa, Cèmuhi, Xârâcùù and other New Caledonian Melanesian languages on the other. In common with other Oceanic languages, these latter all have a causative prefix: *ve-* in Drubéa (Shintani & Païta 1990a, p. 45), *pá-* and a closely related but distributionally restricted *pà-* in Cèmuhi (Rivierre 1980, pp. 262-264, 285-286)¹², *fa-* in Xârâcùù (Moysse-Faurie 1995, p. 180-181).

Shintani & Païta's treatment is summary (six lines, five examples), but a search of their Drubéa dictionary (1990b) provides sufficient data to see that in essence Drubéa follows the same pattern (apart from a "verbal

¹¹ Cf. **ma trañ de fe mwanche pu tule peti-la** 'I am preparing the children's food, I am preparing food for the children', i.e. **mwanche** is here a noun. Note the difference in the two glosses: the first corresponds to the Tayo analysis of the sentence, the second to a French-influenced one. This is seen in the two French translations which were offered: the first, offered by an older speaker (about 45 years old), was *je suis en train de faire le repas des petits*, the second, produced by a younger speaker (a teenager still at school), was *je fais à manger pour les enfants*.

¹² In what follows, tones are ignored except for the *pá-/pà-* distinction in Cèmuhi. All other diacritics indicate vowel quality.

suffix" *-re* [1990a, p. 42]) as Cèmuhi and Xârâcùù. Most verbals in these languages accept the causative prefix, except where there are semantic incompatibilities, and thus gain an extra argument. In particular, all of them use the causative with stative verbs, as in Drubéa *dra-re* 'be standing, to stand', *ve-dra-re* 'to stop, (put in) place, erect', Xârâcùù *tââ* 'be standing, to stand', *fa-tââ* 'to erect, put into a standing position, block', Cèmuhi *cu(u)-* 'be standing, to stand', *pà-cuu-li* 'to put into a standing position, build, erect, lift up'.

With other verbs, there is a similar parallelism of derivation, as in Drubéa *cie-re* 'bathe (oneself)', *ve-cie-re* 'bathe (someone else)', *pwi-re* 'to cook (intransitive)' (< *pwi* 'cooked'), *ve-pwi-re* 'to cook (transitive)', *ci-re* 'to suckle (intransitive)', *ve-ci-re* 'to suckle (transitive)'; Xârâcùù *mwé* 'to dive, plunge' and *ùmwé* 'bathe (oneself)', *fa-mwé* 'bathe (someone else)', *ji* 'breast; to suckle (intransitive)', *fa-ji* 'to suckle (transitive)'; Cèmuhi *wiè* 'go out', *pá-wiè-hî* 'cause to leave', *magat/meget* 'cooked, hot', *pá-magètè-hî* 'to cook (transitive)', *ti-* 'breast', *dit-* 'suckle (intransitive)', *pà-diti-* 'suckle (transitive)'. Note that while the same pattern occurs throughout, there is not an exact correspondance in the details. For example, Cèmuhi does not happen to derive a transitive verb 'to bathe' (**pá-piwön*) from an intransitive one (*piwön*), while the other two do. This lack of precise congruence of detail (as to the assorted suffixes, or as to which exact lexical bases serve as the departure-point for the derivation, or as to the exact semantics) is frequent among the three languages, but the syntactic pattern as such is both constant and highly productive.

In Cèmuhi at least, the causative prefix occurs with impersonal dependent verbs, such as *bwölii-èg* 'he is late' (late/3sg), giving, for example, *go pá-bwölii-èg* 'you make him late' (2sg/Cau/late/3sg). Although some of the resulting sentences translate easily into French (*tu le mets en retard*), many do not: *go pá-mwoti-èg* 'you make him afraid' (2sg/Cau/fear/3sg), for example, gives *tu fais (en sorte) que je suis effrayé*. Tayo appears to have generalised the *fe pu* + clause construction in the Tayo equivalents of this Cèmuhi structure (cf. the examples in [3] above).

Discussion

It is perhaps because of the lack of precise congruence among the Kanak languages (as well as the French input of semantically complex single lexical items, v. below) that Tayo does not have the *fe* construction with all the statives that one might expect on the basis of the Drubéa, Xârâcùù and Cèmuhi data, but there can be no doubt that Tayo uses its verb *fe* as an equivalent of the causative prefixes of the Kanak input languages, certainly where statives are concerned, and I would be inclined to treat it in the same way when it precedes non-statives. Cases of *fe* + non-stative are instances of greater or lesser congruence between French and Kanak structures (v. below). To speak of congruence here, as between French on the one hand and the New Caledonian Melanesian languages on the other, means that the position of non-subject pronouns has to be ignored, from the French point

of view, but their post-positioning in Tayo allows *fe* immediately to precede the verb, i.e. to behave as a prefix. The *fe pu* + clause construction is perhaps best seen as a disguised case of Kanak influence, but is in any case an innovation (v. below).

The examples (6a, b) illustrate one aspect of congruence, quite apart from any question of current bilingualism and competing current interpretations. In the plurilingual contact situation which ultimately produced Tayo, speakers using either an essentially French grammar — and there were some — and speakers using an essentially Kanak grammar — the majority — produced more or less identical surface strings from different underlying conceptions. Regardless of directionality, in either case the underlying structure, through its surface manifestation, had somewhere to transfer to. As Siegel puts it, interpreting Andersen's (1983, p. 178) "Transfer to Somewhere Principle",

transfer can only occur if there is a feature in the L2 superficially similar enough to a feature in the L1 that it can be misinterpreted or reanalysed to correspond to L1 rules. (Siegel, ms [1997], p. 30)

It would appear to be the case that, in Tayo genesis as in many (all?) other cases of creole genesis, L1 and L2 are sometimes reversible, depending on who is speaking and who listening. A French speaker producing an analogue of (6b) provides a Kanak speaker with a string interpretable in terms of that speaker's L1, and the reverse is also true.

It is also true, albeit in a less straightforward way, in the case of *fe* + stative strings produced by the majority L1 Kanak speakers. Kanak-internal formative period, such strings posed no problem of interpretation. Further, although "un-French" in character, they are semantically interpretable by L1 French speakers, since they are perceptually transparent in the sense that they use a syntactic arrangement of basic lexical items as opposed to less transparent and semantically complex single lexical items (*fe sek* as opposed to *sécher*, for example): one form, one meaning. This "transparent and semantically complex single lexical items" or invariance, can be seen as an example of French providing basic lexical items which have been reanalysed according to the broad rules of Kanak grammar, i.e., the Kanak pattern of Causative prefix + stative has in this case also had somewhere to transfer to.

There is thus an interplay between French/Kanak congruence, purely intra-Kanak congruence, and the Transfer to Somewhere principle. Collectively, these provided, in the pool of variants available for retention in the emerging contact-induced vernacular, a frequently occurring strategy of preposing of causative *fe*, as a result of the presence in that pool of features of both the French and the Kanak inputs. There is a fortuitous formal similarity between French causative (in the present tense) *fais/t* ([fɛ], [fe]) + infinitive verb on the one hand and the Kanak causative prefixes *ve-*, *pa-*, *fa-* + verbal on the other, a sort of congruence in both form and function which

no doubt favoured the transfer, but in any event, the frequency of this transferred feature allowed its retention. As noted above, the causative prefix occurs (in Cèmuhi at least) with verbals which are difficult to render into French if one is restricted to the lexical item *faire* (as opposed to *rendre*, which has no reflex in causative contexts in Tayo, as far as has been determined to date). It may turn out to be the case that there is a lack of congruence in this respect between Cèmuhi as opposed to Drubéa and/or Xârâcùù. Pending further information on this point, a reasonable view is that the **fe pu** + clause structure is an innovation, and one which conforms to the transparency/invariance criterion.

This area of Tayo grammar, in spite of the paucity of data concerning on-going change and in spite of the mild doubt concerning **fe pu**, allows a slightly more refined view of Tayo than that derivable from an examination of the pronominal system and the relativisation and thematisation structures (Corne 1995a & b). If the general view is identical (morphology from French; an essentially Kanak semantic organisation, based on the highest common factor, i.e. congruence; an essentially Kanak syntax; innovations; detail peculiar to Tayo), the Tayo causatives show a little of how French/Kanak partial congruence promotes, in the emergent contact-induced vernacular, the retention of frequent transfers which are due to principles of invariance, semantic transparency, and somewhere to transfer to. Tayo has selected those French patterns which, through the word-order change that places object pronouns after the verb, correspond to the Kanak pattern, allowing **fe** to be treated as a prefix. This selection is not however systematic and it has occurred within the broader process of transferring the Kanak causative prefix (as the Tayo verb **fe**). It is not systematic, because Tayo also has semantically complex verbs, such as **dere** (< Drubéa) and **alonche**, in place of the more transparent (invariant) ***fe lon** (although most such semantically complex items may well turn out to be later adoptions from French). Thus, although the French syntactic input is clear, it occurs only under certain constraints and within a predominantly Kanak framework.

On present information, syntax which is clearly and only French (and which has no Kanak-inspired competing syntax) occurs in Tayo only when there is a complete lack of congruence among the substrate Kanak languages, or when there is a high degree of frequency in the French structures concerned. For example, the small set of adjectives which are preposed to the noun in Tayo include, among others, **grañ** 'big, long, tall', **gro** 'big, fat', **peti** 'little, young', **vye** 'old', **move** 'bad', **sel** 'only, sole', **mem** 'same', **premye** 'first', and **dernye** 'last'. Such adjectives are reflexes of the members of a small subset of highly frequent, preposed adjectives in French. Their preposing in Tayo can only have come from French, since neither Cèmuhi nor Xârâcùù allow this order for these items; Drubéa does for two of them, but in a suspect manner: the usual stative for 'big' is *kaa*, and it is postposed, but there exists a preposed *teomoo*, while 'small' is usually postposed *virii*, with a special preposed *dii*; both *teomoo* and *dii* appear to occur only with items introduced by the dominant culture, French

(*teomoo mwagacā* 'big store, supermarket', *dii dria* 'small deer'). We return to this in a moment. All other cases of syntax examined to date from a French/Kanak comparative perspective, including the causatives, show that what is superficially French is in fact the result of congruence of surface form or the result of transfer to somewhere, i.e. reanalysis of French lexical items and/or syntactic strings. It is, for example, no accident that Tayo imperatives, the forms of all of which have French models, constitute but a subset of all (putatively) available French models and that that subset corresponds exactly to Kanak notions of ordering and forbidding (Corne 1995a & b, in press).

One aspect of the evolution of Tayo has not been widely mentioned in the literature. Numerous remarks by St-Louis people (Ehrhart 1993, pp. 28-32) bear witness to the evolution of the language, and to language shift:

It is our generation which lost the [Melanesian] language. We were the ones who lost it. Afterwards, it was badly-spoken French. (...) (Ehrhart 1993, p. 29; my translation)

In the old days, you would not have understood anything of the language of St-Louis, there was a lot more Drubéa in it then than now. There is an evolution of the St-Louis language, Drubéa is more and more giving way to French. Soon, everyone here will speak only good French. (Ehrhart 1993, p. 30; my translation)

In fact, while most such change today appears to affect vocabulary to a greater extent than syntax, it is not possible to be certain (in the absence of early texts) when clearly French-derived structures came into use. It is known that there are competing structures. For example, the French-style thematisation by relativisation consisting of *se NP ki + clause* 'it-is NP who' competes with the Kanak-style thematisation *NP le VP* 'NP VPs' (*NP + SI + VP*) (and with the "hybrid" *se NP le VP*) (Corne 1994, 1995a & b),¹³ just as (2a) *le bruye tet pu mwa* 'I'm confused' (*SI/jumbled/head/for/1sg*), with the word order predicate + subject, has a competitor in *tet pu mwa le bruye*, with the reverse word order.¹⁴ This latter may be simply a matter of a marked thematisation becoming the unmarked subject + predicate word order, a common enough phenomenon cross-linguistically, but if so it is unlikely that the word order of French is entirely foreign to this development. Most such "more French" competing constructions seem to be characteristic of younger speakers, but many of them do occur also in the usage of the more elderly speakers. The case of the preposed adjectives mentioned above is instructive, in that the grammar is clearly of French origin, there is no

¹³ *le fu lya* 'he is crazy' vs. *se lya ki fu*, *lya le fu*, *se lya le fu* 'HE is the one who is crazy'.

¹⁴ Also in the causative *ta fe pu tet pu mwa le bruye*, cf. (2b).

congruence with the substrate languages apart from the suspect Drubéa items, and the preposed adjectives occur in spite of extensive substrate congruence, i.e., the semantic equivalents are all postposed in the substrate languages but this congruence has left no present trace in Tayo. We cannot know for certain what the originators of Tayo, i.e. the first generation of adults and their second-generation offspring, did with such adjectives, but we can guess. Today, young speakers produce such strings as **añ mek fañ move** 'a really bad guy' (cf. New Caledonian French *un mec fin mauvais*); these are rejected as "not Tayo" by older speakers (Ehrhart 1993, p. 147), who regularly recast such strings as stative clauses (**le tro move mek-la** 'the guy is really bad'), so that 'a really bad guy came along' would be rendered as **le tro move mek sa le vyañ** (SI/very/bad/guy/Rel/SI/come) or as **añ mek la vyañ, le tro move mek-la** (a/guy/SI-3sg/come, SI/very/bad/guy-Def). Projected into the past, it may be supposed that such alternatives were the norm; thus, today's **nu fe añ grañ lafet** 'we have a great celebration' may well have been rendered by **le grañ lafet sa nu fe** 'the celebration we have is great' (SI/big/celebration/Rel/1pl/make), a sentence perfectly acceptable today. Another example: **tle move chañ** 'the bad people' as opposed to **tle chañ sa le move** (Pl/people/Rel/SI/bad). If, as seems likely, the French structure prevailed simply because the collocations in which the Tayo adjectives occur are all highly frequent ones in the superstrate, it may be that there are other similar cases awaiting discovery. So far, no other cases have been clearly identified, such comparative study being in its infancy, but the potential is there. Cases such as the preposed adjectives may mean that the sheer accident of Tayo's "discovery" in 1988 while some members of the first monolingual generation (born ca. 1910–1920) were still alive (and many of these still are), has provided an inestimable window of descriptive opportunity, before the Kanak framework of the language has been buried under layers of French influence, leaving only scattered traces of its original nature.

What we see today is the transfer by individuals of French patterns into Tayo, or the analysis of Tayo strings according to French grammar (cf. sentences [6a, b] above). Time will tell if these are retained to become a new form of Tayo, closer to French. We also see the retention in Tayo of what were originally, in the past, individual transfers of the Kanak causative prefixes, as well as what appears to be a purely Tayo innovation, the **fe pu** construction. If **fe** is seen as a causative prefix, then at least some Tayo causatives look superficially like straightforward relexification: they are not, of course, since the substrate languages all differ in the precise details, as discussed earlier. Similarly, some structures ([7b] is an example) look like direct inheritances from French, but they too conform to the general Kanak pattern.

Tayo illustrates, in all the areas of grammar examined to date from a comparative perspective, the processes involved in the formation of a new contact-induced vernacular, from the original individual transfers (unobservable but to some extent deducible) through to the retention of

some of these in the new language (as it exists at present, some 140 years after the foundation of St. Louis) and the emergence of innovations, and on to the continuing effects of bilingualism in the superstrate giving rise to individual transfers, some of which are beginning to be, or are likely to be, retained ("decreolisation"). The basic principle is congruence among the substrate languages: the fact that the strings produced, by transfer of the Kanak causative prefixial pattern, are rather far from French in some cases constituted no barrier to their retention in Tayo, since its purpose was an inter-Kanak, intra-village communication medium. The superficial congruence with French can only have promoted transfer. Where there is no congruence, innovations may arise to fill the gap, or when there is a high degree of frequency, the French pattern may prevail.

A continuing project, of which this article is but the latest instalment, is to compare and contrast Cèmuhi, Drubéa and Xârâcùù semantax in order to discover what they have in common and where they differ, and to examine Tayo to see to what extent the commonalities are reflected in that language, and where they are not, to account for such "gaps". The remarks concerning the preposed adjectives, which appear to be one such gap, indicate one possible line of explanation; the suggestion offered, that in spite of congruence in the substrate languages (postposition), the French pattern has prevailed because of its frequency, is weakly supported by the few data concerning the "French" interpretation of some Tayo causatives by some speakers. It is hoped that this project will provide in due course further refinement of the principles governing the transfer and retention of substratal features, thus supplementing Siegel's (ms [1997]) findings for Melanesian Pidgin English.

Siegel examines in some detail the seven core grammatical features of Central Eastern Oceanic languages described by Keesing (1988) and which are also characteristic of Melanesian Pidgin English. These are:

- (i) subject referencing pronouns in the verb phrase;
- (ii) transitive suffixes on the verb;
- (iii) adjectives functioning as stative verbs;
- (iv) preverbal causative marker or prefix;
- (v) post-nominal possessive marker;
- (vi) third person plural pronoun used as a plural marker;
- (vii) exclusiveness and dual number marked in the pronoun system.

Tayo similarly displays some of these features. Among those which also occur in the three main substrate languages of Tayo are subject referencing pronouns in the VP (Corne 1990a, 1995b, in press), adjectives which function as stative verbs (Corne 1995b), the preverbal causative marker/prefix *fe*, post-nominal possessive junctors (Corne in press, Ehrhart 1993, pp. 149–150), a set of dual pronouns although not all speakers now use these systematically (Corne 1990a, 1995b, in press). There is no transitive suffix on the verb, nor are the third person plural pronouns (*sa*, *sola*, *lesot*) and the

plural markers (**tule, tle, te**) identical; this is because, with respect to the latter, only Cèmuhî has this pattern, and then only referring to feminine sex (not grammatical gender), while with respect to the former, again it is only Cèmuhî which has a transitive suffix. Tayo also shows other areas of syntax and semantics where the influence of the Kanak languages is evident: relativisation and thematisation (Corne 1994, 1995b, in press), interrogatives, imperatives, the impersonal independent verb **na** 'have, possess; be present; there Tense-BE' (Corne 1995b, in press), tense/aspect marking (Kihm 1995, Sandeman, in prep.) and nominal determiners (Kihm 1995).¹⁵ In all these cases, the Tayo patterns reflect what can be called the highest common factor of the three substrate languages: where there is congruence among the substrate languages, in a given area of semantax (the interaction of syntax and semantics), one finds in Tayo an analogous system based on what the substrate languages hold in common. The Tayo analogue of the highest common factor may, indeed usually does, have other, innovative features, and not infrequently corresponds superficially to apparently congruent French features.

Siegel (ms [1997]) provides the beginnings of a principled account of substrate influence in Melanesian Pidgin English, starting from the processes of language mixing and levelling in contact situations. These processes provide the mechanism for the incorporation of substrate features in pidgins and creoles:

Since the transfer of features from the first language (L1) is common in second language acquisition, it is [likely] that such transfer by individuals is the ultimate source of substrate features in pidgins, creoles or other contact varieties [...]. In other words, in the early stages of language contact, individuals attempt to speak a common second language (L2), either the superstrate language itself or a newly emerging contact variety using its lexicon, and doing so, transfer features from their [L1s], the substrate languages, onto forms of the L2. These L2 forms with some L1 properties join the pool of variants which are available as potential models when social conditions are right for the stabilization of a new contact variety, such as a pidgin or a creole. At this time, "levelling" occurs — the elimination of some variants and the retention of others, which may include some of those resulting from transfer. Thus, features do not pass directly from substrate languages into a pidgin, a creole or any other contact variety. Rather, some features are first transferred by individuals in trying to speak a second language and a subset of these features are later retained by the community in the stabilization of the new variety. (Siegel ms [1997], p. 2; emphasis added)

¹⁵ Kihm's comparison is restricted to just Tayo and Drubéa; Corne's comparisons include both Drubéa and Cèmuhî, and sometimes, as here, Xârâcùù.

His article concentrates on the constraints on transfer and retention of morphosyntactic structures, i.e. to the apparent reanalysis and repatterning of L2 (lexifier/superstrate) forms according to L1 grammatical rules. The aim here has been less ambitious, but the data adduced are consistent with Siegel's account.

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