

Done already? A comparison of completive markers in the Gbe languages and Sranan Tongo

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Abstract

The expression of completive by means of post-verbal *kaba* 'already' in the Surinamese Creole Sranan Tongo is generally assumed to mainly derive from transfer from a serial verb construction in the Gbe languages (Bruyn, 2003; Winford, 2006; Winford and Migge, 2007). However, not all Gbe languages share the serial verb construction (S...V...V[finish]) upon which the Sranan Tongo completive marker *kaba* is claimed to have been modeled. In Gungbe, for example, a quantifier meaning 'all' is used to derive the completive meaning and anteriority is expressed formally by means of the adverb *kó* 'already' in pre-verbal position (Aboh, 2004a). Similarly, Ameka's (2008) analysis of Ewebe completive constructions involving 'finish' verb forms in final position suggests that such verb forms better qualify as adverbs. This would mean that such Ewebe finish constructions do not involve verb serialization. If, as it seems, finish constructions in the Surinamese Creoles do involve verb serialization while the Gbe languages seem not to, the question arises to what extent one can show that the Gbe languages did influence the emergence of completive forms in the emerging creoles. In addition, English arguably displays biclausal constructions where the verb 'finish' takes a non-finite clause as complement (e.g., finish + V-ing) to encode completion. One can therefore wonder to what extent Sranan Tongo adopts such pattern. Given that English and the Gbe languages are the main contributors to the Suriname creoles in their formative period, the relevant question to ask might actually be to what extent a combination of the English and Gbe constructions (rather than just Gbe patterns) could have contributed to the emergence of the Sranan Tongo pattern. This paper addresses this issue by studying the expression of event completion in the Sranan Tongo while comparing it to English and Gbe constructions. In particular we focus on the meanings and uses of (ad)verbs of completion 'finish' vs. 'already' and event quantifiers such as 'all' in order to advance our understanding of the emergence of the completive marker in the creoles.

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1. Introduction

This paper evaluates the contribution of the Gbe languages and English to the emergence of post-verbal completive/perfect markers in the Surinamese creole language Sranan Tongo. This language emerged from the late 17th century onwards in socio-historical and demographic settings that resulted from European colonization and Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Historical records indicate that a significant portion of the enslaved Africans deported to Surinam during the formative period of Sranan Tongo were speakers of the Gbe languages of the Kwa family (see, Smith, 1987; Arends, 1995). Sociodemographic data further suggest that the nativization of Sranan (i.e., the process by which a language acquires a native-speaking community (Sankoff and Laberge, 1973; Sankoff, 1990) was a gradual process. A continuous

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stream of enslaved African adults outnumbered locally born slaves and freemen for a prolonged period following prior colonization in the early 1650s. In late 18th century Surinam, more than a century after colonization, only a third of the slave population was locally born (Arends, 1995:269). A substantial and digitized corpus of 18th century texts in and on Early Sranan Tongo, the predecessor of contemporary Sranan Tongo, is stored in the Suriname Creole Archive (SUCA) that collects, catalogues and preserves historical texts in the Surinamese creole languages. SUCA offers a window on these languages in the earlier stages of their development.¹

In this paper we focus on the expression of completion. The expression of completion can take various forms in Sranan Tongo, but the focus of the present paper is on the construction in the reply of A2 in (1) below. In these Early Sranan Tongo examples, completion is expressed through a combination of a verb and the post-verbal element *kaba* (sometimes spelled as *kba* or *keba* in the sources). In this context, *kaba* emphasizes the completion of the action denoted by the verb *fom* ‘to hit’.

- (1) [A:] *Oe latie joe memree wie dee?*
 Q late 2SG think 1PL COP
 ‘How late you think we are?’ [‘What time do you think it is?’]
- [B:] *Wie sa dee na aitie joeroe.*
 1PL MOD COP LOC eight hour
 ‘We shall be at eight o’clock.’ [‘It will be around eight o’clock.’]
- [A:] *Tien joeroe fom kaba.* (Early Sranan Tongo, Weygandt, 1798:101)
 ten hour hit already
 ‘Ten hours have hit already.’ [‘The clock struck ten o’clock already.’]

Several explanations have been proposed in the literature to account for the emergence of completive markers in creole languages, such as Sranan Tongo and others. Muysken (1981) suggests that completive markers appear in the developing creole due to Universal Grammar operating via first and/or second language acquisition processes. Under this view, completive aspect is considered one of the unmarked categories on a hierarchy of nine aspectual categories that is governed by a universalist theory of Markedness.

Bickerton (1981) approaches the emergence of completive markers from a universalist perspective that treats differences between creole languages with regard to the meanings, uses, and status of the completive marker as indicative of different stages of a “gradual process of incorporation, which is well advanced in some creoles and has not begun in others” (Bickerton, 1981:80ff). According to Bickerton, therefore, the completive marker first originates in clause-final position from where it gradually further grammaticalizes and takes on new functions that corroborate with subsequent positions in the clause. Because completive markers occur clause-finally in Sranan Tongo, this language would instantiate the initial stage.

Boretzky (cited in Holm, 1989:163) suggests a two stage model for the emergence of creole completive markers: They first emerge in pre-verbal position on the basis of a European model or the lexifier language (e.g. I’m done eating), conforming later with semantically similar serial verb constructions in the West African languages that contributed to the creole formation process. Thus, Boretzky views the pre-verbal position of the completive marker as the original position, contrary to Bickerton who considers the clause-final position as the original position.

Other theories of the emergence of completive expressions in creoles argue for substrate influence: the creoles exhibit properties that are similar to those of their source African languages (e.g., Winford, 2000, 2006; Bruyn, 2003; Winford and Migge, 2007). In this regard, Winford (2000) suggests a grammaticalization scenario for the emergence of the Sranan Tongo completive marker: A lexical verb *kaba* ‘to finish’ develops into an adverbial completive marker via an intermediate stage in which the item participated in a serial verb construction in post-verbal position similar to serial verb constructions in the Gbe languages. This is different from the view adopted in Bruyn (2003). Rather than assuming that the various verbal and adverbial uses of *kaba* emerged internally out of the lexical verb, Bruyn (2003) traces the multifunctionality of *kaba* back to the African languages that contributed to the creole formation process. Multifunctional *kaba* can be used as a clausal connective as well as a main verb and an adverb similarly to equivalents items in the Gbe languages. For instance, the Ewe word *vo* ‘finish’ has the same range of functions as Sranan *kaba*. In a follow-up study,

¹ The Sranan Tongo texts considered for this paper are stored in the Suriname Creole Archive (SUCA), the result of a joint effort of the Radboud Universiteit van Nijmegen, the University of Amsterdam and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (Nijmegen), see www.mpi.nl. SUCA is supported by NWO.

Winford (2006) and Winford and Migge (2007) compare the completive markers of the Surinamese Creoles with their equivalents in the Gbe languages, concluding that the creole completive marker is adapted from a Gbe model.

However, not all Gbe languages share the same type of construction upon which the creole completive marker is claimed to have been modeled. While some of these languages express completion by means of a post-verbal adverbial that presumably grammaticalized from a verb in a multi- or serial verb construction, other Gbe languages resort to a pre-verbal element that is generally considered to be integrated more deeply in the TMA-verb sequence. Furthermore, some Gbe languages display a combination of these two strategies. In these languages, a pre-verbal marker is used alongside with another marker that occurs outside the verb complex to express completion. The languages differ as to the form of the element that occurs in the post-verbal position. While Ewegbe and Gungbe developed an adverbial or quantifier form that occurs post-verbally and expresses completion (cf. Ameka, 2008 and section 3.2.2), Fongbe is the only language for which it has been claimed that it resorts to verb serialization (Da Cruz, 1995). Given the diversity in strategies in the Gbe languages with regard to the expression of completion, we feel that claims such as the ones put forward by Bruyn (2003), Winford (2000, 2006) and Winford and Migge (2007) that postulate a Gbe origin of the completive markers in the Surinamese Creoles call for a more detailed investigation of the languages involved.

This paper will address the issues raised above in the following manner. Section 2 describes the expression of completion in Sranan Tongo with a focus on the various meanings and the distribution of the item *kaba*. Section 3 presents a detailed description of the diversity in the expression of completion in the Gbe languages which are considered as main substrate languages for these creoles. In section 4, we propose a new analysis of the Gbe ‘finish’ constructions in order to address the two main questions of this paper: (i) How to account for the variation we observe within the Gbe languages? (ii) To what extent our understanding of the Gbe patterns (as compared to English) sheds light on the emergence of the expression of completion in the Suriname creoles? The proposed analysis sets up a comparison between the Gbe languages, Sranan Tongo and English with regard to the expression of completion. It is shown there that one specific property of the Gbe languages as opposed to English is that they involve event quantifiers or adverbial elements that head a functional projection within the clause and force their complement to front. This Gbe morphosyntax results in such items occurring to the right-edge of the clause. Section 5 concludes the paper.²

2. Completion in Sranan Tongo and Gbe

In the preceding section we introduced the post-verbal expression of completion via *kaba* in Sranan Tongo. In the following sections we present a more detailed description of the expression of completion and address the following questions: How is completion encoded in Sranan Tongo and the Gbe languages? What is the categorical status of the markers that express completion? Do they interact with the lexical aspect or *aktionsart* of the (main) verb? Does the marking of completion change over time in Sranan Tongo? We address these questions by first considering contemporary Sranan data complemented by Early Sranan Tongo data of the 18th century, and then the Gbe languages.

2.1. Sranan Tongo

A detailed overview of the various uses of multifunctional *kaba* in contemporary Sranan Tongo is presented by Winford (2000), building upon work by Sebba (1987), Seuren (1981), Hancock (1986) and Voorhoeve (1957) among others. *Kaba* can be used as (i) a main verb meaning ‘finish’; (ii) a post-verbal aspect marker conveying the sense of completion that is best translated by ‘already’; (iii) as a clause-final time adverb, and (iv) as a clausal connective indicating sentence conjunction (conveying the sense of ‘and’ or ‘but’) and subordination (‘when’, ‘while’), see also Bruyn (2003).

2.1.1. *Kaba* as a main verb in contemporary Sranan Tongo and Early Sranan Tongo

Verbal *kaba* conveys the meanings of ‘to finish’, ‘to bring something to its end’ and ‘to get something done’. Verbal *kaba* can be transitive or intransitive. An example of intransitive *kaba* is given in (2). The informant describes a film of a woman drinking from a bottle while another woman enters the room.

² The data presented in this paper are drawn from existing and published studies on the languages under investigation. The authors further present new findings that result from interviews and elicitation with native speakers (Gbe languages, Sranan Tongo) as well as corpus studies (Sranan Tongo).

- (2) *A e tek' en batra nanga dringi,*
 3SG ASP take 3SG bottle with drink
a e dringi, a kba bijna, en (...)
 3SG ASP drink 3SG finish almost and
 'She takes her bottle, she drinks, she is almost finished, and (...)'

Transitive *kaba* can select for an NP complement as exemplified by example (3).

- (3) *Mi no kan kba ala mi moni, bika mi mu pai*
 1SG NEG can finish all 1SG money because 1SG must pay
someni paiman ete (Wilner, 2007:108)
 so-many debt yet
 'I cannot finish all my money, because I must pay so many debts already.'

In addition, transitive *kaba* can select a non-finite clausal complement that may be introduced by the prepositional complementizer *fu* (or *fo*), as in (4).

- (4) *a kba (fu) kisi pikin*
 3SG finish to get child
 'She finished having children.' (* 'She had children (already).')

In conclusion, contemporary Sranan Tongo displays both intransitive and transitive verbal uses of *kaba*. The language further exhibits instances of subordination where *kaba* selects a non-finite clause that may optionally be introduced by the complementizer *fu*. This results in constructions of the type *kaba [fu VP]* and *kaba [VP]*. At present it is not clear what governs the use of *fu* in embedded contexts, but our findings suggest that constructions of the type *kaba [VP]* are more frequent than sequences of the type *kaba [fu VP]*. When asked about this distributive asymmetry, our consultants' comments suggest that *kaba [VP]* is used in neutral contexts while *kaba [fu VP]* conveys more emphasis and seems to correlate with situations where the speaker puts focus on the completion of the event. We will return to this asymmetry in future work. It appears that this subtle semantic difference might be a 'recent' development. We do not find evidence for the existence of the *kaba [fu VP]* and *kaba [VP]* contrast in Early Sranan Tongo. Transitive and intransitive *kaba* are encountered in Early Sranan Tongo, similarly to contemporary Sranan Tongo. An example is given in (5).

- (5) a. *alla kondresanni kann kaba na wantem* (Schumann, 1783:91)
 all word-thing can finish LOC one-time
 'All wordly things can come to an end sometime.'
 b. *hutem ju sa kaba da worko?* (Schumann, 1783:76)
 Q-time 2 SG FUT finishthe work
 'When will you finish the work?'

Furthermore, we find examples such as the ones in (6), where the non-finite clause is introduced by the prepositions *fu* (6a–b) or *nanga* (6b):

- (6) a. *Mijnheer mi kaba fo schrifi* (Van Dyk c1765:102)
 my-lord 1SG finishto write
 'My lord, I am done with writing.'
 b. *da pikin no wanni kaba vo kreh* (OD. *nanga kreh*) (Schumann, 1783:91)
 the child NEG want finish to cry / with cry
 'The child does not want to stop crying.'

No examples of *kaba [VP]* are encountered in the historical sources that are stored in the Suriname Creole archive. We conclude that the *kaba [fu VP]* and *kaba [VP]* contrast that we find in contemporary Sranan Tongo does not exist in Early Sranan Tongo.

Closer scrutiny reveals other differences between Early Sranan Tongo and contemporary Sranan Tongo. In addition to verbal *kaba*, contemporary Sranan Tongo uses the verb *tapu* (< Dutch *stop* 'stop') to express event completion, but *kaba* and *tapu* convey different meanings. While *kaba* generally expresses completion, *tapu* is mainly found in cessative contexts. The different semantics of *tapu* and *kaba* in contemporary Sranan Tongo are brought out particularly in contexts

that describe the (relatively) abrupt ending of a situation due to natural causes, as for example in weather expressions. In example (7) for instance, *tapu* is grammatical while *kaba* is not³:

- (7) a. *Alen tapu*
 b. **Alen kba*
 rain finish
 'The rain has stopped.' [i.e., it is no longer raining.]

Contrary to contemporary Sranan Tongo, Early Sranan Tongo uses *kaba* in this context:

- (8) *areen no wanni kaba* (Schumann, 1783:7)
 rain NEG want finish
 'The rain does not want to stop.'

These findings suggest that verbal *kaba* was used in a wider range of contexts in Early Sranan Tongo than it is in contemporary Sranan Tongo. Over time verbal *kaba* became more specific, as *tapu* took over its cessative meaning.

In conclusion, both contemporary Sranan Tongo and Early Sranan Tongo exhibit verbal usage of *kaba*, but they differ as to the morphosyntax and the semantics of the construction. While Early Sranan Tongo displays intransitive and transitive verbal uses, transitive usage in contexts of subordination requires the presence of the complementizer *fu*. Contemporary Sranan Tongo, however, seems to have developed two strategies: *kaba* [VP] vs. *kaba* [*fu* VP]. Each strategy appears to have a specific discourse meaning that possibly involves focus, but that remains for further investigation.

2.1.2. Other uses of *kaba* in contemporary Sranan Tongo and Early Sranan Tongo

In the previous section we have shown that *kaba* can be used as main verb in contemporary Sranan Tongo and Early Sranan Tongo. Here, we discuss other uses of *kaba* on the basis of the various positions it can occupy in the clause.

Kaba can occur in postverbal position, where it expresses various related meanings, depending on the stativity of the verb. When post-verbal *kaba* occurs with a stative verb, it refers to an anterior situation or state that is "in existence and has been for some time, with some implication for the present situation" (Winford, 2000:435), as in (9a). With a non-stative verb, "it conveys the sense of a past event that leads to some result with implications for the current situation" (Winford, 2000:433), see (9b). In the case of the latter, *kaba* underscores the completion of the event denoted by the verb and highlights a resultant state.

- (9) a. *a kan dati kasmoni ben de kaba sensi katiboten* (corpus Blanker, p.c.)
 3SG can that kasmoni PST BE already since slave-time
 'It may be that kasmoni was there already in the days of slavery.'
 b. *yu syi tok, nownowdei mi leri keba taki a 'oe' musu de*
 2SG see yet now.RED-day 1SG learn already that the u must be
ini wan lo geval wan 'u'. (corpus Blanker, p.c.)
 every one LO case a u
 'You see, right, nowadays I have learned (I know) that the 'oe' must be (written) as 'u' in any case.'

Kaba can further occur in clause-final position where it functions as a time adverb that can have the entire sentence in its scope, as in (10a–b) or as a time adverb that modifies an adverbial phrase of time, as in (10c). This example further shows that when *kaba* modifies a time adverbial, the entire phrase can be fronted so that *kaba* can be found in positions in the sentence other than at the right edge of the sentence.

³ Our informants judge weather expressions with *kaba* ungrammatical, insisting that *tapu* is the appropriate form. Interestingly, however, sequences like *watra kba* are judged to be grammatical if ment to indicate that a glass of water was empty, presumably because someone drunk it and the glass could be refilled again. This could mean that *kba* requires some form of agentivity to still be determined. In this regard, G. Blanker and J. Dubbeldam (p.c.) do not find any instances of *kba* in weather expressions in their corpus of contemporary Sranan. The contrast in contemporary Sranan Tongo (6) reminds us of a similar situation in Ewegbe, one of the Gbe languages that contributed to the emergence of Sranan Tongo, where only the cessative marker *sé* can be used in this particular context; the completive marker *vo* and the perfective marker *kpó* are not allowed (Ameke, 2008:168).

- (10) a. *a sani disi a wan sani fu dertien, veertien*
the thing this COP one thing of thirteen fourteen
yari kaba (Winford, 2000:436)
year already
'This is something that happened thirteen or fourteen years ago.'
- b. *Kofi de dyaso kba.* (Sebba, 1987:72)
Kofi BE here already
'Kofi is already here.'
- c. *kon unu taki, dus, den famiri no libi, no e libi dyaso moro*
come 1PL say so the-PL family NEG live NEG IMP live here more
jaren kaba den no e libi dyaso (Winford, 2000:436)
years already 3PL NEG IMP live here
'Let's say, so, the family hasn't lived, don't live here anymore; it's years now they haven't been living here.'

The use of *kaba* in (10) is viewed by Winford (2000:436) as a final phase in the grammaticalization of verbal *kaba* 'finish' to adverbial *kaba* 'already', via an intermediate stage in which *kaba* participated in a serial verb construction in post-verbal position. We find no evidence for the grammaticalization of *kaba* in the 18th century. Even though we find examples in which post-verbal *kaba* can be viewed as a serial verb meaning 'finish' in a serial verb construction (11a), we also find examples where post-verbal *kaba* conveys the sense of 'already' rather than 'finish', as in (11b) and (11c).

- (11) a. *Mi wensi da tem joe jam kaba joe no kisi ogeri* (van Dyk c1765:54)
1SG wish the time 2SG eat finish 2SG NEG get evil
'I wish that when you have finished eating, you will not get sick.'
- b. *siksi juru fumm kaba* (Schumann, 1783:46)
six hour strike already
'Six o'clock struck already.' (*'Six hours finished striking'.)
- c. *Mi klari kaba* (van Dyk c1765:54)
1SG ready already
'I am ready already.' (*'I finished being ready'.)

We further find examples of clause-final *kaba* that are ambiguous between 'finish' and 'already'. Note that a 'finish' interpretation of clause-final *kaba* would not have been possible under a grammaticalization scenario.

- (12) *Mastra pipi de negere kom na hosse kaba* (van Dyk c1765:54)
master pipe be/there black come LOC house already/finish
'Master, here's the pipe. The blacks have come to the house (already).'

The earliest attestation of *kaba* in a full sentence is a judicial report from 1745 (van den Berg and Arends, 2004).⁴ It is the interrogation of Cadet in the case against Coridon, who is accused of sorcery. The example reports what Coridon told Cadet.

- (13) *mi doe langa hem caba (...) mie pothie hem na wan sij caba* (Court Records 1745)
1SG do with 3SG already 1SG put 3SG LOC a side already
'I did him already (...) I put him on one side already.'

Here, *caba* appears not in immediate post-verbal position but in clause-final position. The findings presented above suggest that if adverbial *kaba* results from grammaticalization along the path suggested by Winford (2000), the process of grammaticalization must have been completed before 1745, as we find no evidence for grammaticalization in the historical sources (see also van den Berg, 2006, 2007).

Kaba can further function as a clausal connective conjoining coordinate clauses, as shown in (14) for Early Sranan Tongo. In (14a) *kaba* simply conjoins two coordinate clauses ('and'), while in (14b) *kaba* appears to express adversative/contrastive coordination ('but'). Both uses are encountered in contemporary Sranan Tongo as well as in Early Sranan Tongo.

⁴ *Kaba* is not found in full sentences in historical sources of earlier dates. For example, *kaba* appears without any discourse context on the word list of Herlein (1718), where it is translated with 'Gedaan', meaning 'done' (Herlein, 1718:123).

- (14) a. *da mastra a za harki zo zanti of mi takki*
 the master 3SG FUT hear such thing or 1SG say
da zanti a za kiel da man fo mi kaba a za slibi
 that thing 3SG FUT kill the man of 1SG and 3SG FUT sleep
lange mi na tappe (van Dyk c1765:65)
 with 1SG LOC top
 'If the master hears such a thing if/or I say such a thing, he will kill my husband and sleep with me on top of it.'
- b. *ju pulu krapátu, kaba heddi libi na inni buba,*
 2SG remove tick but head leave LOC in skin
a meki afuh (Schumann, 1783:90)
 3SG make boil
 'If you remove a tick but the head is left in the skin, it causes a boil.'

When used as a connective in adversative/contrastive coordination, *kaba* expresses that the relationship between the coordinate clauses is one of simple contrast or opposition and often one of counter-expectation. The meaning of counter-expectation can be traced back to a widely attested effect that is triggered by the resultant state meaning of finish-verbs in general (Detges, 2000). The resultant state meaning triggers an inference that is brought about in situations "where speakers react to some counter-expectation on the hearer's side: 'IN SPITE OF WHAT YOU THINK, the job is FINISHED now' > 'The job is ALREADY finished'" (Detges, 2000:141). Indeed, some of the Early Sranan Tongo examples of post-verbal and clause-final *kaba* above can be interpreted as expressing counter-expectation. A case in point is the use of *kaba* in the dialogue in the introductory section of this paper that marks counter-expectation, it is repeated here for convenience:

- (15) [A:] *Oe latie joe memree wie dee?*
 Q late 2SG think 1PL COP
 'How late you think we are?' ['What time do you think it is?']
- [B:] *Wie sa dee na aitie joeroe.*
 1PL MOD COP LOC eight hour
 'We shall be at eight o'clock.' ['It will be around eight o'clock.']
- [A:] *Tien joeroe fom kaba.* (Weygandt 1798:101)
 ten hour hit already
 'Ten hours have hit already.' ['The clock hit ten o'clock already.']

Speaker A asks speaker B what time it is, as A realizes that time passed by more quickly than they are aware of. While speaker B estimates that it may be around eight o'clock, speaker A informs him of the real time, i.e., ten o'clock, is much later than they both anticipated.

It appears from this description that the usage of *kaba* to express counter-expectation relates to two surface positions that may in turn correlate with two grammatical functions: an aspect verb or an adverb in post-verbal position versus a clausal-connective. In this regard, it is important to note that in some of the historical sources this type of counter-expectation can be further expressed by the adverb *alredi* 'already' (< English *already*). Schumann (1783:7) comments on the co-occurrence of *kaba* and *alredi* that they belong to different registers or ethnolects: *alreddi* is part of the European variety of Sranan Tongo (*Bakratongo*) whereas *kaba* is typical of the variety of Sranan Tongo spoken by the (descendants of) enslaved Africans (*Ningretongo*). *Alredi* is encountered in two other sources of Early Sranan Tongo, that is Van Dyk's (c1765) language primer, where it always occurs in clause-final position, and the Sranan Tongo version of the Saramaka Peace Treaty of 1762. Even though it may be true that *kaba* and *alredi* represent different registers or ethnolects, they may alternatively represent different stages of the language. *Alredi* can be traced back to the period when Suriname was under British control (1650–1667), while *kaba* may be a later addition, that subsequently replaced *alredi* in the course of the 18th century. Support for this scenario is provided by a comparison of two language primers written in the middle and near the end of the 18th century. In contexts where Van Dyk (c1765) uses *alredi*, Weygandt (1798) uses *kaba*, see (16).

- (16) a. *joe lassi noefe alredi* (van Dyk c1765:105)
 2SG lose enough already
 'You lost enough already.'
- b. *Wie kuyrie nofo kaba* (Weygandt, 1798:99)
 1PL stroll enough already
 'We have strolled enough already.'

This section shows that, in addition to the use of *kaba* as a main verb meaning ‘to finish’, *kaba* can serve as a post-verbal expression of completive aspect, a clause-final time adverb and a clausal connective indicating sentence conjunction. All these usages are found in the sources of Early Sranan Tongo as well as in contemporary Sranan Tongo. Note that the demise of *alredi* did not bring about a dramatic change in the meanings and uses of *kaba* in the 18th century. The following table presents an overview of all the functions and uses of *kaba* in the sources of Early Sranan (Table 1).

Table 1

Various uses and positions of *kaba* in the sources of Early Sranan.

	1707–1767 CR	1718 HL	1762 SPT	c1765 VD	1770 N	1781 SCH	1783 SCH	1790 STED	1798 WEY
Verbal <i>kaba</i>									
<i>kaba</i> _{intransitive}	–	–	–	12	2	6	9	–	9
<i>kaba</i> NP _{object}	–	–	–	–	–	3	4	–	–
<i>kaba fu</i> V	–	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	–
Verbal/adverbial <i>kaba</i>									
VP <i>kaba</i>	–	1	–	8	1	8	42	–	21
S <i>kaba</i>	4	–	–	13	–	5	21	–	31
Connective <i>kaba</i>									
<i>and</i> -coordination (<i>kaba</i> S)	–	–	–	20	–	62	17	1	–
<i>but</i> -coordination (<i>kaba</i> S)	–	–	–	3	–	1	11	–	1
<i>when/while</i> -subordination	–	–	–	1	–	3	2	–	–
Total	4	1		59	3	88	107	1	61

In short, we find no evidence for a ‘recent’ grammaticalization of *kaba*. Indeed, the various uses of *kaba* seem relatively stable throughout the history of Sranan and they may have emerged more or less simultaneously in the earliest stages of the language. Can we trace these uses back to the languages that contributed to the development of the Surinamese Creoles, or as internal developments? In the following section we investigate similar constructions in the Gbe languages.

3. Completion in the Gbe languages

The Gbe languages form a language continuum that spans from southeastern Ghana, southern Togo and Benin to southwestern Nigeria. As is often discussed in the literature, the Gbe languages are isolating and barely show any inflectional morphology. Verbs in these languages typically occur as bare forms and “subject-verb agreement for person and number and finiteness specifications are never overtly expressed on the verb or predicate head” (Aboh and Essegbey, 2010b:10), as illustrated by the following Gungbe examples.

- (17) a. Ûn sà xwé cè
1_{SG} sell house my
‘I have sold my house.’
- b. Núsónú ló fá gbáú, zé-é dọ àdò jí
soup DET cold too.much take-3_{SG} PREP stove on
‘The soup is too cold, put it on the stove.’

The Gbe languages are aspectual languages. They do not rely on morphologically marked fine-grained tense distinctions. Instead, tense specifications are derived from a combination of factors, some extralinguistic (i.e., the context of the utterance) and some linguistic (i.e., adverbs and aspect markers that combine with the verb, and lexical aspectual specification of the latter (i.e., aktionsart)). So the unmarked non-stative verb *sà* ‘sell’ in (17a) has past time reference, while stative and inchoative verbs such as *fá* ‘be cold’ in (17b) have present time reference. Stative and inchoative verbs can receive a past time reference reading when they are combined with time adverbs, see for example, *qáí* ‘before’ in (18).

- (18) Tògán mítòn nyrán qáí àmòn din é jò gbětó kpélé
chief our be.wicked before but now 3_{SG} become human a.bit
‘Our president used to be a wicked person, but he has changed now to become a bit human.’

The time adverb in the first clause situates the event in the past, preceding speech time, while the state verb in the following clause has present time reference. In addition to *qáí* ‘before’, the Gbe languages exhibit various other adverbial and verbal combinations that relate to temporal and aspectual distinctions that will be treated in more detail in the next sections.

Three subgroups of Gbe languages are distinguished on the basis of diachronic as well as synchronic analyses of phonological, lexical and grammatical features (Capo, 1991; Stewart, 1994; Kluge, 2007): Western Gbe (with Ewe and

Gen among others), Central Gbe (Aja) and Eastern Gbe (Fon, Gun, Phla-Phera). These subgroups of Gbe languages differ with regard to the categorial status and position of the markers of completion. Therefore, one can only argue for Gbe influence in Sranan Tongo completive expressions once the variation in Gbe languages is explained in a principled manner and further evaluated against Sranan data. In this regard, the following sections discuss the differences between the Gbe languages and propose an integrated analysis of the expression of completion that can in turn shed light on the Sranan Tongo facts.

3.1. Western Gbe: The case of Ewegbe

With homogenous activities, the completive marker *vɔ* (<*vɔ* ‘finish’) expresses total completion, whereas it has an imminent completion reading with bounded events (Ameka, 2008:163–172).

- (19) nyónu má dzi ví vɔ
 woman DIST bear child COMPL
 ‘That woman has finished having children.’

In addition to this completive marker, Ewegbe displays a cessative marker *se* (< *sé* ‘end’) which refers to situations that have ended abruptly or unexpectedly, as indicated by the interpretation in (20).

- (20) nyónu má dzi ví sé
 woman DIST bear child CESS
 ‘That woman has stopped having children.’

Finally, Ewegbe also exhibits an existential perfective marker *kpó* that is a grammaticalized form of the verb ‘see/look’. This existential perfective marker describes situations that have existed before the moment of utterance or will have existed after it. With not-yet-realized situations, it has an attemptive sense. This marker is illustrated in the following example, adapted from Ameka (2008:161). Such an example could be used in a context where there is some doubt as to the age of a bride and a participant expressing his doubt utters (21) thus implying that because she seems to have already given birth, she is not so young after all:

- (21) nyónu má dzi ví kpó
 woman DIST bear child XPV
 ‘That woman has given birth to children before.’

In all these examples, the completive, cessative, and existential perfective markers occur post-verbally. In addition, all these items have verbal cognates which can function as main predicates, thus suggesting that the sentences in (19)–(21) are instances of serial verb constructions (see Aboh, 2009a for discussion).

Ameka (2008) demonstrates, however, that these markers better qualify as adverbs in these contexts. These elements pass several tests that are relevant for determining adverbhood in Ewegbe: They can co-occur with other adverbials, they cannot be marked for any verbal categories, such as TMA markers, some (namely *v* and *kpó*) can undergo triplication, a typical property of adverbials in Ewe, and finally they co-occur with their verbal cognate which they mark for completion, cessation or existential perfective. An example is given in (22) where the first *vɔ* expresses the predicate ‘finish’, while the second token expresses completion. This sentence is actually a good piece of evidence that such constructions are not serial verb constructions because a series like (22) where the two tokens of *vɔ* are full verbs simply has no possible meaning in this language.⁵

- (22) atíke-a vɔ vɔ (Ewe, Ameka, 2008:163)
 medicine-DEF finish finish
 ‘The medicine is already finished.’

One may object that (22) represents an instance of reduplication. If so, the appropriate interpretation would be one whereby there is emphasis on the verb, and the sentence would mean something like “the medicine is really finished”, contrary to facts. In addition, the Gbe languages do not generally display predicate reduplication constructions that would

⁵ A reviewer suggests that the facts discussed here are not incompatible with the idea that *vɔ* in Ewegbe completive constructions started out as an SVC but further developed into an adverbial marker. While this view is in principle possible, our demonstration in section 4, that similar Fongbe constructions are not SVC’s, either suggests that such a developmental path is improbable.

correspond to the example in (22). Finally, Ameka's (2008) analysis that the second token of *vɔ* is adverbial is supported by the fact that both Ewegbe and Gengbe (a related Western Gbe language) allow the usage of the verb *vɔ* in constructions where one clearly has the sense of 'already' in English rather than the verb 'finish'.

- (23) a. Kwésíwá vɔ [Gengbe, E.O. Aboh, 2010; Aboh, J. Enaku p.c. May 25th 2010]
 Kwesicome finish
 'Kwesi has already come.'
 b. Kwésíjò vɔ
 Kwesileave finish
 'Kwesi has already left.'
 c. Kwésítsi vɔ
 Kwesigrow.up finish
 'Kofi has already grown up.'

The case of example (23c) is particularly telling because it could be said of a teenager, who obviously will continue growing up. In the context of this sentence, however, the speaker considers the referent sufficiently grown up to qualify for certain tasks in the community, rather than to mean that he has completely grown up.

Following Ameka (2008), we therefore conclude that the constructions schematized in (19–23) involve adverbial modification whereby adverbial forms derived from distinct verbs (e.g., *kpɔ* 'to see/look'; *vɔ* 'to finish') express notions such as cessative, completive and existential perfective. These adverbs occur in post-verbal position as indicated in (24).

- (24) subject-TMA-V-XPobject-Adverb[COMPLETIVE/CESSATIVE/EXISTENTIAL PERFECTIVE]

In the context of a comparison between the Gbe languages and the Suriname creoles, this description would suggest that the input that led to the emergence of these creoles contained Western Gbe patterns such as (24) where cessative, completive, and existential perfective is expressed via adverbial elements that occur post-verbally. These adverbs typically have verbal cognates that may also be used as main predicate. Let us now turn to the expression of completion in the Eastern Gbe languages to see whether we find similar patterns there.

3.2. Eastern Gbe: the case of Fongbe and Gungbe

Eastern Gbe languages display an interesting asymmetry when it comes to the expression of completion. Taking Fongbe and Gungbe as illustrating cases, it appears that while Fongbe is similar to Ewegbe (i.e., Western Gbe) in expressing completive with the marker *vò* in post-verbal position, Gungbe lacks such a possibility and rather resorts to a quantifier-like element meaning 'all'. Yet, Fongbe and Gungbe differ from Ewegbe because they involve an adverb-like item meaning 'already' that occurs between the subject and the verb. We first discuss Fongbe.

3.2.1. Fongbe

According to Da Cruz (1995), Fongbe expresses event completion by means of two verbal elements, *vò* and *fó*, which both mean 'finish', as shown in (25).

- (25) a. Kòkù wà àzǝ́ ɔ́ fó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:363)
 Koku do work DET finish
 'Koku finished doing the work.'
 b. Kòkù dǝ́ mǝ́línkún ɔ́ vó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:363)
 Koku eat rice DET finish
 'Koku finished eating the rice.'

Depending on the context, these forms can also be used to cover the meaning of cessation similarly to the examples discussed above for Ewegbe. Da Cruz (1995:361) argues that these constructions involve serial verb constructions (SVC) where the subject 'X did something, which he has finished doing'. According to this author, the examples in (25) are instances of control constructions whereby the external argument of the second verb (an empty pronominal element) is controlled by the subject of the first verb.⁶ In terms of this analysis the sentence in (25a) can be paraphrased as *Koku* did

⁶ This view conforms to the characterization of SVCs which are commonly defined as monoclauses involving a series of lexical verbs which may share the same arguments (see also footnote 14).

the work and finished doing it, while example (25b) corresponds to a situation where *Koku* ate the rice and finished eating it. This analysis further suggests that the two verbs in these examples are lexical verbs.

An apparent argument that *v* and *fó* are lexical verbs in (25a–b) is that they can be used as transitive verbs participating in a two-place construction (26a–b), as well as intransitive verbs with an inchoative meaning in a one-place construction similar to Ewe *v* ‘finish’ (26c–d).

- (26) a. Kókù fó àzǒ ó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:362)
 Koku finish work DET
 ‘Koku finished the work.’
 b. Kókù vò mǎlinkún ó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:362)
 Koku finish rice DET
 ‘Koku finished the rice.’
 c. mǎlinkún ó fó (Fongbe Da Cruz, 1995: 363)
 work DET finish
 ‘The rice is finished.’
 d. Azǒ ó vò (Fongbe Da Cruz, 1995: 363)
 work DET finish
 ‘The work is finished.’

Recall, however, from Ameka’s (2008) analysis of similar constructions in Ewegbe that what matters is not so much whether the completive expressions have verbal cognates (all Gbe languages do), but whether the completive element (here *vò*) exhibits genuine verbal properties in such contexts. Indeed, Ameka (2008) concludes that the Ewegbe completive expressions involve adverbial elements rather than lexical verbs. Anticipating on the discussion in section 4, we argue there that Da Cruz’ (1995) characterization in terms of SVC is misleading. We show, in the light of Ameka (2008), that completive constructions in Fongbe and Gungbe involve adverbial-like elements as well.

Returning to the expression of completion in Fongbe, this language also exhibits a pre-verbal marker *kó* that expresses completive aspect too. The categorical status of *kò* is under debate. Lefebvre and Brousseau (2002) distinguish between two instances of *kò*—an adverbial *kò* expressing the meaning of ‘already’ and an anterior aspect marker. Accordingly, the two elements can co-occur as indicated in (27).

- (27) Siká kó nò kò dǎ wó (Fongbe, Lefebvre and Brousseau, 2002:90)
 Sika ANT HAB already prepare dough dough
 ‘Sika had, out of habit, already prepared dough.’

Avolonto (1992) and Aboh (2004a) on the other hand argue that *kò* is best thought of as an adverb. Avolonto who discusses this element in details, based his argumentation on the fact that *kò* realizes different positions. We give an example in (28a) where this element occurs in three different positions with different scope properties (Avolonto, 1992:40). The sequence in (28b) further describes the distributive properties of this marker:

- (28) a. Síká kò ná kò nò kò xò àsón
 Cica already IRR already HAB already buy crab
 ‘Cica would already have been buying crab(s)’
 b. ...kò...ná...kò...nò...kò...[VP]

This example indicates that the scope of *kò* depends on its structural position. Avolonto (1992:37) concluded from this that *kò* is an adverb in Fongbe, which can adjoin to the different phrases it scopes over, that is, the verb phrase and the aspectual phrases headed by the habitual and irrealis aspectual markers, respectively. This would mean that there is no distinct anteriority marker in Fongbe. Instead expression of anteriority is conveyed by the adverb meaning ‘already’. In this regard, it is interesting that this marker can co-occur with the verb *fó* ‘finish’ to express event completion, showing that these items are not in complementary distribution.

- (29) Kókù kò wà àzǒ ó fó
 Koku already do work DET finish
 ‘Koku has already finished doing the work.’

Finally, Fongbe is similar to Ewegbe in involving an existential perfective that is also marked by a derivative of the verb *kpón* ‘to look’, hence the following Fongbe equivalent of Ewegbe (21).

- (30) nyònu éné kò jì ví kpón
 woman this already give child EXT
 'That woman has given birth to children before.'

Interim conclusion: The findings presented above show that Ewegbe and Fongbe are similar in many respects. The languages lack a distinct anterior marker and display the same asymmetry between bare action verbs and bare state/inchoative verbs: the former are interpreted as perfective while the latter are read as encoding present state. In addition, the two languages make use of a form *vò* derived from the verb 'finish' to encode completion. In such contexts, *vò* occurs post-verbally. While Fongbe and Ewegbe are similar with regard to the distribution and interpretation of this form, a contradiction emerges as to its formal analysis: Ameka (2008) analysed Ewegbe *vò* as an adverbial element, while Da Cruz (1995) claims that it is a lexical verb that enters serialization. Either these two approaches reveal different stages of grammaticalization with Ewegbe being more advanced than Fongbe, or one of the two approaches is misleading. We return to this discussion in section 4. Finally, Fongbe and Ewegbe differ with regard to the middle field adverb *kò* 'already'. This adverb occurs in Fongbe (but not in Ewegbe) where it may enter various verbal constructions and may encode completion.

3.2.2. Gungbe

Gungbe resembles Fongbe in that it displays the post-verbal existential perfective marker *kpón* (31a) as well as the pre-verbal marker *kò* (31b) which expresses the meaning of 'already'.

- (31) a. nàwè éné kò jì ví kpón
 Woman this already give child EXT
 'That woman has given birth to children before.'
- b. Sàgbó ná kò sà hwèví lò
 Sagbo FUT kò sell fish DET
 'Sagbo will have already sold the fish'

As already mentioned in Aboh (2004a,b), *kò* does not occur in a fixed position in the clause and can precede or follow the habitual marker (similarly to the Fongbe facts discussed above).⁷ Because this marker functions as an adverb with the meaning of 'already' it does not require the predicate to be computed in the past and can actually occur with expressions with future meaning. This is the case in the following two examples where *kò* occurs with a prospective.

- (32) a. Lési ló kò jró ná bí mì nòntè kpèlé
 rice DET already want PREP cook 2PL wait a.little.bit
 'The rice is almost ready, (please) wait a little bit.'
- b. Sàgbó kò tò wxé étòn ná gbà
 Sagbo already PROG house POSS PROSP build.NR
 'Kojo is already about to build his house.'

Given these data, we adopt Avolonto's analysis according to which the marker *kò* is not a marker with the fixed meaning 'anterior'. Instead, this element is more comparable to an adverb that can enter various constructions where it essentially encodes the meaning 'already' and may scope over the verb phrase or the aspect phrase that it precedes. The different positions that this element occupies in the clause indicate its different scope positions.

While Fongbe and Gungbe differ from Ewegbe with regard to the usage of a pre-verbal marker expressing 'already', Gungbe differs from both Fongbe and Ewegbe when it comes to the usage of verbs derived from 'finish' as expression of completion. Recall from previous discussion that both Fongbe and Ewegbe display such verbs in post-verbal position even though Gbe linguists differ as to their categorial status.

In Gungbe (as in Fongbe and Ewegbe), the verbs *vò* and *fó* can be used to encode termination (Hazoumè, 1978; Aboh, 2004a). In example (33a), *vò* is used intransitively, unlike in (33b) where the verb is transitive.

- (33) a. àzón vò sòn tò mè
 Work finish from country
 'There is no more work in the country.'
- b. yòkpó lè vò lèsi cè
 child PL finish rice 1SG.POSS
 'The children finished my rice.'

⁷ Aboh (2004a) misleadingly used the gloss "ANT" for anterior which was incorrectly interpreted by Winford and Migge (2007) as suggesting that *kò* is an aspect marker for anterior.

Fó can be used in a similar context as indicated by the sentence under (34).

- (34) àzónwàtó lè kò fó àzón ló
 worker PL kò finish work DET
 'The workers already finished the job.'

Unlike Fongbe and Ewegbe, however, these verbs cannot be used post-verbally to encode a completed action or state. This explains the ungrammatical sentences in (35).

- (35) a. *àzónwàtó lè kò wà àzón ló fó
 worker PL kò do work DET finish
 'The workers already finished the job.'
 b. *àzónwàtó lè kò wà àzón ló vò
 worker PL kò do work DET finish
 'The workers already finished the job.'

Instead, Gungbe realizes semantic equivalents of the Fongbe and Ewegbe completive constructions by resorting to the quantifier *kpó* 'all' in post-verbal position.

- (36) a. Dónà wà àzón kpó
 Dona do work all
 'Dona did the work completely.'
 'Dona did all the work.'
 b. Dónà qù lési ló kpó
 Dona eat rice DET all
 'Dona ate the rice completely.'
 'Dona ate all the rice.'
 c. ví cè hwén kpó
 child 1SG.POSS grow.up all
 'My child has completely grown up.'

It appears from these examples that when the verb is transitive, the post-verbal quantifier has scope either over the verb phrase or the internal argument hence the ambiguous sentences in (36a-b). Example (36c) on the other hand indicates that the quantifier may also scope over the VP only.

That the element *kpó* is a quantifier in Gungbe is indicated by the following example where we observe that it marks the DP 'all the children' in subject position (37a) and in focus position (37b).

- (37) a. [yòkpó lè kpó] kò qù lési ló
 child PL all already eat rice DET
 'All the children have already eaten the rice.'
 b. [yòkpó lè kpó] wè yé kò má lési ló ná
 child PL all FOC 3SG already share rice DET PREP
 'They already shared the rice to all the children.'

Just as we saw in the Fongbe example (29), expression of completion in these languages allows a combination of the marker *kò* and *kpó* as illustrated in (38).

- (38) Dóná kò wà àzón ló kpó
 Dona already do work DET all
 'Dona has already done the work completely.'
 'Dona has already finished doing the work.'
 'Dona has already done all the work.'

Interim conclusion: The examples discussed in these sections show that Gungbe and Fongbe are similar in that they involve the adverb *kò* 'already' which can also combine with certain verbs to express completion. In this regard, these two languages differ from Ewegbe which does not seem to involve such a pre-verbal marker with the sense of 'already.'

Gungbe, however differs from both Fongbe and Ewegebe when it comes to the usage of the verbs *fó/vò* ‘finish’ to mark another predicate for completion. While Gungbe resorts to the quantifier ‘all’ in such constructions, Fongbe and Ewegebe use the element *vò* in post-verbal position. Yet, if we were to consider Ameka’s (2008) and Da Cruz’ (1995) analyses of these constructions in Ewegebe and Fongbe, Gungbe would be more similar to Ewegebe in that these two languages resort to non-verbal elements (a quantifier and an adverb, respectively) that encode completion and scope over the event expressed by the VP. The only difference between Gungbe and Ewegebe therefore would be that the former uses a distinct quantifier form while the adverb in Ewegebe is a cognate of the verb *vò*. The description in light of Ameka’s (2008) and Da Cruz’ (1995) analyses would therefore suggest the variation in (39), where (39a) holds of Western Gbe (Ewegebe) and some Eastern Gbe (i.e., Gungbe) while that in (39b), which represents a serial verb construction, holds for some Eastern Gbe (i.e., Fongbe). The pattern in (39c) involves languages like Gungbe and Fongbe where there may be an adverbial element equivalent to ‘already’ between the subject and the verb.

- (39) a. Eastern and Western Gbe (Ewegebe; Gungbe)
subject-TMA-V-XPobject-Adverb[COMPLETIVE/CESSATIVE/EXISTENTIAL PERFECTIVE]
b. Eastern Gbe (Fongbe)
subject-TMA-V-XPobject-V[COMPLETIVE/CESSATIVE/EXISTENTIAL PERFECTIVE]
c. Eastern Gbe (Fongbe, Gungbe)
subject-(kò[COMPLETIVE])-Tense-(kò[COMPLETIVE])-Aspect-(kò[COMPLETIVE])-V-XPobject

While one may assume the variation in (39) as plausible explanation for the Gbe facts discussed thus far, close scrutiny of Da Cruz’ (1995) analysis formulated in (39b) suggests that it might not be adequate.

4. Toward an analysis of *fó*, *vò* and *kaba* in completive constructions

Recall from previous discussion in section 3.2.1 that in terms of Da Cruz (1995), the Fongbe constructions such as those in (40) are instances of serial verb constructions.⁸

- (40) a. Kòkù wà àzǒ ó fó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:363)
Koku do work DET finish
‘Koku finished doing the work.’
b. Kòkù dũ mǎlinkún ó vò (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:363)
Koku eat rice DET finish
‘Koku finished eating the rice.’

Indeed, this author argues that the sentences in (40) share all the properties of SVCs with the exception that the internal argument is not shared by the two verbs. Accordingly, sentence (40b) is ambiguous and does not entail that the rice is finished. That is, *Kòkù* can finish eating his rice meal without necessarily finishing the rice. No such ambiguity arises though in the sentence (41), which necessarily entails that the rice is finished.

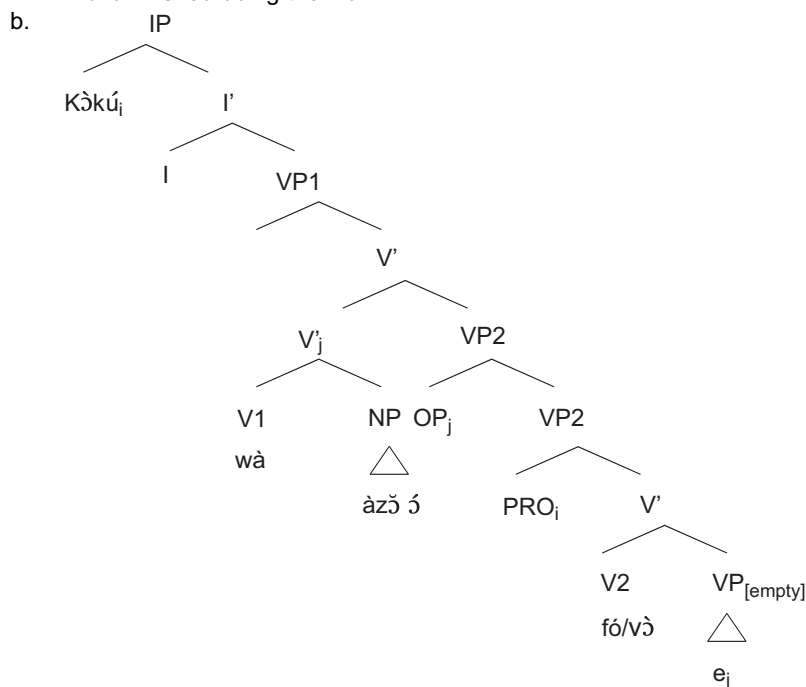
- (41) Kòkù vò mǎlinkún ó (Fongbe, Da Cruz, 1995:362)
Koku finish rice DET
‘Koku finished the rice.’

This sort of data shows that in the so-called ‘finish’ constructions, the verb *fó/vò* has scope over the event expressed by the preceding verb phrase. In this regard, Da Cruz (1995:372) further argues that *fó* and *vò* display selectional restrictions on the VP they scope over because they can only combine with “accomplishment verbs or activity verbs which are interpreted as quasi-accomplishments”. Accordingly, Da Cruz (1995) proposes that these constructions should be analyzed as control constructions whereby the subject of *fó/vò* is controlled (or bound) by the subject of the verb it combines with. Because these ‘finish’ verbs take scope over the verb phrase they combine with, this author further proposes that their internal argument is an empty verbal phrase. This empty verbal phrase is licensed (i.e., bound) by a null operator that in turn is co-indexed with the preceding VP. As one can see from the following representation, the result

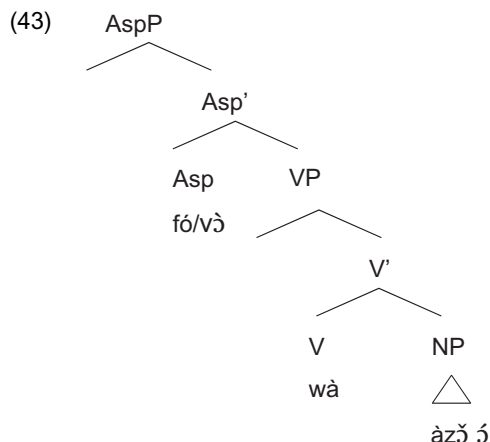
⁸ Westermann (1930:126) describes SVCs in Ewegebe as follows: The chief features of this are that all the verbs stand next to each other without being connected, that all have the same tense or mood, and that in the event of their having a common subject and object, these stand with the first, the others remaining bare. Should a conjunction stand between two verbs, the subject and object must be repeated.

of this analysis is that all verbs in this series (including the empty one) share the same index “j”, while the subject *Kòkù* and PRO share the same index as well (Da Cruz, 1995:375). Representation (42b) stands for the example in (42a).⁹

- (42) a. *Kòkù wà àzǝ ɔ́ fɔ́/vɔ́*
 Koku do work DET finish
 ‘Koku finished doing the work.’



This analysis raises many questions which we will not discuss here, but one obvious point that arises here is that the ‘finish’ verbs—which Da Cruz (1995) refers to as aspectual verbs—do not only have selectional requirements on the preceding verb phrase (VP), but they also require an empty VP as complement. The latter is identified via an adjoined operator which itself is co-indexed with the preceding verb phrase. Aside from the fact that such selectional properties appear rather exceptional in the Gbe context, the question one must ask is what blocks the structure in (43) in Gbe? Put differently, what excludes a situation where the ‘finish’ verb takes the VP it scopes over (e.g., *wà àzǝ ɔ́* ‘do the work’ in 44a) as its complement?



⁹ This analysis is a mere adaptation of Carstens (1988) and Law and Veenstra (1992).

Da Cruz (1995:365) rejects this analysis on the basis of surface word order because the ‘finish’ verb here precedes the VP it scopes over apparently contrary to the empirical facts.¹⁰ Yet, as we argue, in line with Aboh’s (2004a) view that Gbe languages are head-initial, several facts suggest that the ‘finish’ verbs *fó/vò* in Gbe head a functional projection different from Asp(ect) which licenses its complement to the right underlyingly. The surface order, however, derives via leftward movement of the constituent containing the verb phrase to the left of the functional projection hosting the ‘finish’ verb. Adopting an analysis along these lines implies that the Gbe ‘finish’ constructions are not SVCs, pace Da Cruz (1995).

According to Da Cruz (1995) ‘finish’ verbs in Fongbe (and by extension in related languages) are aspectual verbs that enter a control SVC structure. Durrleman-Tame (2007, 2008:50), on the other hand, treats these elements as completive markers that merge in an aspect position, thus similarly to other aspect markers in Gbe. Close scrutiny reveals that both views are untenable.

Indeed, aspectual verbs and aspect markers in Gbe necessarily take scope to the right and often appear to linearly precede the constituent they scope over. Accordingly, these occur pre-verbally rather than post-verbally in Gbe. Consider, for instance, the eventuality marker *wá* which derives from the verb ‘to come’ (Tossa, 1993) and the habitual marker which derives from the verb ‘to stay’ (Aboh, 2004a). Both must precede the verb they scope over.

- (44) Súrù wá nò dà lèsi ló [Gungbe]
 Suru come HAB cook rice DET
 ‘Suru eventually often cooked the rice’

In Gbe languages where such a TMA marker can follow the main verb, as is the case for the habitual marker in Gengbe and Ewegbe, it must cliticize to the verb or remain adjacent to it (45a). Therefore, Gbe aspect markers that derive from verb roots typically precede rather than follow the VP. The ungrammatical example (45b) shows that nothing can intervene between the verb and the aspect marker in these languages.

- (45) a. Kwésíyì-nà yòvódé
 Kwe-sigo-HAB Europe
 ‘Kwesi often goes to Europe’
 b. *Kwésí yì yòvódénà
 Kwe-si go Europe-HAB

These facts make Da Cruz’ (1995) and Durrleman-Tame’s (2008) analyses in terms of aspect head (Asp) completely unexpected.

This is even more so when one recalls Ameka’s (2008) analysis where the same items are analyzed as adverbials, rather than TMA markers. Our objection to the TMA and SVC analysis is indeed reinforced by the fact that while TMA markers cannot be generally separated from the verb they scope over by intervening adjuncts (e.g., location, goal), ‘finish’ verbs can. The following examples from Gengbe show that the ‘finish’ verb can be split off the first verb by an intervening adjunct. The same facts hold for Ewegbe (J. Enaku p.c. May 25th 2010).

- (46) a. Wó [dù mónlú á vò] [lè àxwhé ámè]
 3PL eat rice DET finish be- LOC house in
 ‘They ate all the rice in the house’
 ‘They finished eating rice in the house’

¹⁰ As is made clear in Da Cruz (1995:365) this structure (i.e., which corresponds to his representation 10) derives from Avolonto’s (1992, 1995) analysis of Fongbe clause structure (see also Kinyalolo, 1992, 1993, 1997). Aboh (1993, 1996, 1998, 2004a, 2004b) further adopts this view for the analysis of clause structure in Gbe. A crucial aspect of this school of thought is that Gbe languages allow for certain elements to be used both as lexical verbs as well as aspect markers. For instance, Aboh (2004a:160, 168 and subsequent work) shows that the Gungbe habitual aspect markers can also function as main predicate in other contexts. A similar discussion is found in Tossa’ (1993) analysis of the eventuality marker *wá* in Fongbe which derives from the verb *wá* ‘to come’. In discussing the interaction between clause structure and word order in Gbe, Aboh (1993, 1996, 1998, 2004a,b) further argues, contra Da Cruz (1995), that these languages are consistently head-initial and that sequences where a complement surfaces to the left of its selecting head must be analyzed as an instance of movement or generalized pied-piping of that complement to the left of the selecting head as represented in (49) (cf. Aboh, 2004a, 2005). Aboh based his demonstration on empirical facts from the nominal domain, the clausal periphery involving clause-final discourse markers and namely the aspect domain involving OV order as well as a clause-final particle (cf. Aboh, 2004a:chapter 6, 2005). In his analysis of the progressive, prospective, and purposive aspects, for instance, Aboh argues that the surface order derives from movement of a constituent containing the verb phrase to the specifier of the clause-final particle functioning as nominalizer. In her reaction to Da Cruz (1995), Durrleman-Tame (2008) extends this pied-piping analysis to *fó* and *vò* constructions in Fongbe and concludes that the VP raises to the left of the Aspect head expressed by *fó/vò* (cf. her representation 115 on page 50). Our analysis below is within the spirit of Aboh’s pied-piping view of aspectually derived OV structures in Gbe (Aboh, 2004b). We further show, contra Durrleman-Tame (2008) that *fó/vò* are not mere aspect markers but better qualify as event quantifiers.

- b. Wó [dù mólnú á] [lè àxw hé ámé] vò
 3PL eat rice DET be- LOC house in finish
 'They ate all the rice in the house'
 'They finished eating rice in the house'

Da Cruz (1995:365) provides comparable data from Fongbe (47a) of which example (47b) is the Gungbe equivalent:

- (47) a. Asíba ná [sá sèn] [dó hò] fò [Fongbe]
 Asiba IRR pass.on paint put door finish
 'Asiba will finish painting the door.'
 b. Asíba ná [sá sèn] [dó hò] kpó [Gungbe]
 Asiba IRR pass.on paint put door finish
 'Asiba will finish painting the door.'

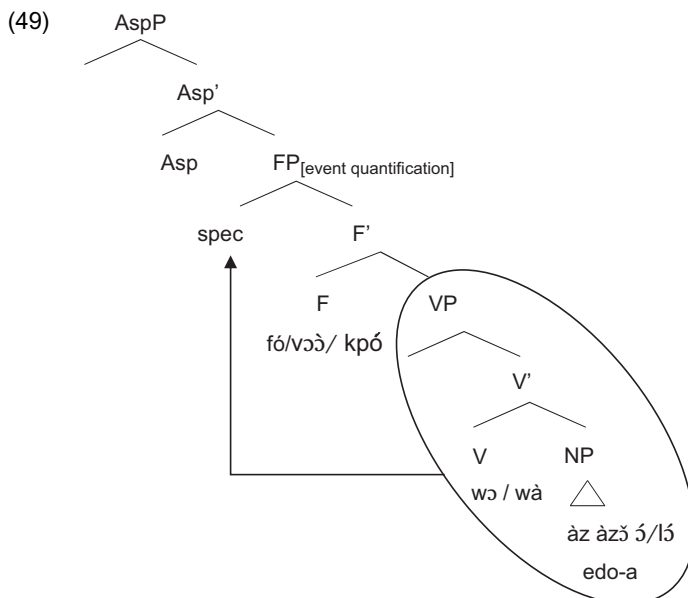
The example in (47a) is particularly telling because it shows that the element *fó* can follow the VP including the main verb, the internal argument and the adjunct. Interestingly, however, such sequencing is typically excluded in serial verb constructions in both Fongbe and Gungbe of which we give two examples here.

- (48) a. *Asíba ná dà mòlínkún ó nú ví lé dù [Fongbe]
 Asiba IRR cook rice DET PREP child PL eat
 'Asiba will cook the rice for the children (and) eat it.'
 b. *Asíba ná dà lésì ló ná ví lé dù [Gungbe]
 Asiba IRR cook rice DET PREP child PL eat
 'Asiba will cook the rice for the children (and) eat it.'

That both our representatives of Eastern Gbe languages exclude series where the adjunct would intervene between the first and second verb, unlike in completive constructions such as those in (46) and (47), indicates that the grammatical equivalents in (46) and (47) are not verbal series after all.

We take these facts to strongly indicate that the 'finish' construction in Eastern Gbe is not an SVC as analyzed by Da Cruz (1995) and related work, nor do these elements represent mere aspect markers inserted in an aspect position as suggested in Durreleman-Tame (2008:50). Instead, these constructions appear akin to the Western Gbe finish constructions which Ameka (2008) analyses as involving adverbials. Our analysis, however differs from that of Ameka (2008) in terms of the framework adopted as well as its conclusions for Gbe and the Suriname creoles.

Building on Aboh's (2004a, 2005, 2009a) analysis of aspectually determined OV structures in Gbe, we propose that 'finish' constructions express event quantification and head a functional projection, labeled here as $FP_{[event\ quantification]}$ whereby the quantifier head is expressed by the so-called 'finish' verb *fó/vò* in Fongbe and Ewegebe and *kpó* in Gungbe. We further propose that this event quantifier head forces movement of the verb phrase into its specifier as depicted in (49).



This analysis accounts for the fact that the ‘finish’ verbs behave like functional elements such as adverbs in terms of their scope properties even though they are heads under this structure. This should not be surprising though given that several studies on Kwa languages (Stewart, 1998; Aboh, 2004a; Aboh and Nauze, 2008; Aboh and Essegbey, 2010b) indicate that these languages involve middle field adverbs which are heads. The data presented in this paper further suggest that in addition to such head-like adverbs that scope over the event, the Gbe languages also include quantifier-like elements that can also scope over the event, as argued for by Ameka (2008). That Gungbe uses the quantifier *kpó* ‘all’ in such constructions is very insightful in this respect. Indeed, the literature on floating quantifiers such as ‘all’ in English or *tout* in French makes clear that there might be a structural relation between such event quantifiers and adverbs in general (see Cirillo, 2009 for discussion). But what matters for the current discussion is that under the analysis in (49), the Ewegbe and Fongbe ‘finish’ verbs *fó/vò* and the Gungbe quantifier *kpó* express F, where they encode quantification.

F appears to have the morphosyntax of quantifier-like elements such as nominal quantifiers ‘all’ or ‘every’ as well as determiners in Gbe because it must appear at the right of the phrase it scopes over. Aboh (2004a,b, 2005, 2009a, 2010) and much related work analyze such word order arguing that similar scope marking elements force their complement (i.e., the phrase under their scope) to front. Indeed, Aboh presents ample empirical evidence based on the determiner system, the INFL-domain and the complementizer domain of the Gbe languages demonstrating that these languages involve certain classes of scope markers whose primary property is to force movement of their complement to their specifier position. Consider the following two examples illustrating this property with regard to the quantifier *kpó* ‘all’ which also occurs inside the noun phrase as already mentioned in section 3.2.2.

- (50) a. *Ví lé [[kò lón] kpó]*
 child PL already jump all
 ‘The children have finished jumping.’
 b. *[[Mótò lé] kpó] glé*
 car PL all break.down
 ‘All the cars broke down.’

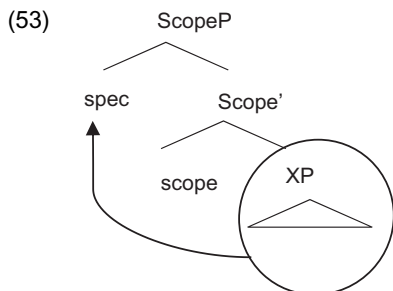
As the bracketing indicates, the quantifier *kpó* systematically occurs to the right of the constituent that it scopes over: a VP in (50a) and a DP in (50b). Such alignment is consistent with that of other nominal modifiers and determiners such as the plural marker *lé* but it is also consistent with the relative position of discourse related markers such as the focus marker *wě* which is shown in example (51) to follow the constituent it scopes over including the sentence as a whole. Example (51c) instantiates the so-called clausal determiner as discussed in Lefebvre (1998), Aboh (2004a) and much related work.

- (51) a. *Ví lé wě [[kò lón] kpó]*
 child PL FOC already jump all
 ‘The children have finished JUMPING.’
 b. *Ví lé [[kò lón] kpó] wě*
 child PL already jump all FOC
 ‘THE CHILDREN HAVE FINISHED JUMPING.’ [Context: Why is it so calm all of the sudden?]
 c. *dé yòkpó lé hòn ló*
 as child PL flee DET
 ‘That the children fled... (as you know).’

In addition, the Fongbe example in (52a) and the Ewegbe sentence in (52b) instantiate sentence-final negative markers, which Aboh (2010) and Aboh and Essegbey (2010a) treats on a par with other scope taking elements that require pied-piping of their complement to the left. The Ewegbe example is particularly interesting in this respect as it shows that the negative particle *o* must occur to the right edge of the embedded clause even though it is associated to the preverbal negative marker of the matrix *me*.

- (52) a. *Kòkú ná xò àsón ó ă* [Fongbe]
 Koku FUT buy crab det NEG
 ‘Koku will not buy the crab.’
 b. *Kofi me glo be Asiba a va o* [Ewegbe]
 Kofi NEG say that Asiba fut come NEG
 ‘Kofi did not say that Asiba will not come.’

All these facts point to the generalization that in the Gbe languages, elements that mark predicates for quantification, anaphoric reference, or other discourse specifications must occur to the right of that predicate. We conclude that the ‘finish’ verbs belong to this class of quantificational expressions, which force their complement to front. Aboh (2004a,b, 2006, 2009a, 2010) shows that such ordering basically derives from a general principle in Gbe as depicted in (53) where these scope markers systematically attract their complement in their specifier position. We will not discuss the details of this analysis here and the reader is referred to Aboh’s own work for further discussion.



Given this specific property of the Gbe morphosyntax, we are now in a position to diagnose substrate influence in creoles by probing into scope markers that may show a similar behavior. Thus, Gbe influence in the Suriname creoles can be demonstrated if the creole scope markers that emerge from the contact between Gbe and English, retain the Gbe syntax whereby their complement must front as depicted in (53).

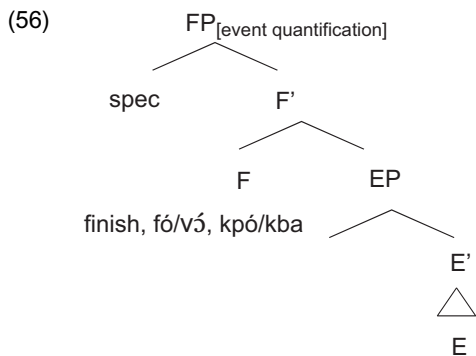
But before we draw such a conclusion, we must make sure that English which is also involved in the development of the Suriname creoles does not display a converging structure. In this regard, it is important to observe that ‘finish’ constructions across Romance and Germanic generally require a non-finite context as illustrated in (54).

- (54) a. Jean a fini [de laver la voiture] [French]
 John has finished PREP wash the car [English]
 b. John finished [washing the car] [English]

In these languages, the bracketed sequence under the scope of ‘finish’ follows it, is non-finite and appears to involve more structure than just the VP. This observation is interesting given that we showed in section 2.1. that Early Sranan Tongo displayed a similar pattern where *kba* primarily selects for a non-finite complement that it precedes. Contemporary Sranan Tongo, on the other hand, exhibits structures where *kba* selects for both non-finite and finite clausal complements as well as DP complements, so a pattern rather similar to that in (54). On the basis of these findings, we hypothesize that the bracketed sequences in (54) are equivalent to a phrase containing the VP. With regard to English, this would mean that the bracketed sequence involves the functional projection whose head hosts the mark of gerund and imperfective *-ing*, which selects for little *v* the introducer of the external argument, which in turn contains the lexical verb and the internal argument as indicated in (55a). The French example on the other hand indicates that in this language, the bracketed sequence minimally contains a functional projection that expresses non-finiteness encoded by the preposition ‘*de*’, which in turn embeds the VP, (55b).

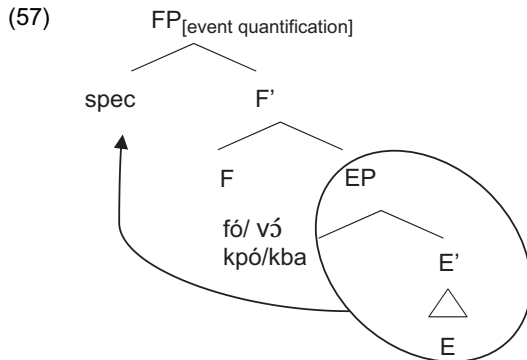
- (55) a. [_{INGP} [_{ING} *-ing* [_{VP} [_v [_{VP} [_{DP}]]]]]]]
 b. [_{FP} [_F *de* [_{VP} [_v [_{VP} [_{DP}]]]]]]]

For the sake of argumentation, let us hypothesize that these structures embed an event phrase (that minimally embeds the VP). Let us further assume that ‘finish’ constructions cross-linguistically involve an event quantifier head that takes this event phrase (EP) as complement. Given these assumptions, the facts discussed in this paper suggest that EP can be represented by a VP, as in Gbe, or a non-finite (small) clause as in Romance, Germanic and Sranan Tongo. In addition, languages may differ as to whether the quantifier head is expressed by a lexical verb (e.g., English), an ordinary quantifier (e.g., Gungbe) or a root (e.g., Ewegbe, Fongbe, Sranan Tongo). Because this element is a root in Ewegbe, Fongbe, and Sranan Tongo, it is not specified for any category, which is why *fó/vó/kaba* can be used as a verb or a quantificational element in these languages. The general underlying structure is represented in (56).



If this is the right characterization, the construction appears universal. What is specific to the Gbe languages though, is that:

- (i) They tend to use a root to express this position. Unlike English therefore, the Gbe languages display completive expressions where ‘finish’ sometimes occurs as a lexical verb (Fongbe), sometimes as an adverb (Ewegbe). In addition, some Gbe languages lack the finish construction but resort to a nominal quantifier instead (Gungbe). What this means is that in a situation of contact, these languages will provide a range of variation where the ‘finish’ expression will sometimes be realized as a verb, an adverb, or a pure quantifier.
- (ii) The morphosyntax of these languages requires that the complement of the event quantifier raises to its specifier position as indicated below.



Taking these two aspects as possible diagnostics of Gbe influence, let us now reconsider Sranan Tongo.

In our discussion in section we showed that the element *kaba* can fulfill various functions in the clause, namely that in completive expressions, it can be used either as a lexical verb (with both transitive and intransitive usages) or as an adverb with the meaning of already. Verbal *kaba* precedes its complement, while completive *kaba* equivalent to ‘already’ tend to follow the element it scopes over. This surface order matches that of Gbe. In addition, a remarkable property of *kaba* in Sranan that recalls the distribution of similar completive expressions in Gbe (e.g., Gungbe) is that it may occur inside a noun phrase. In example (10c) repeated here as (59), *kaba* occurs within the noun phrase headed by *jarens* ‘year’, which has been fronted in clause-initial position.

- (59) *kon unu taki, dus, den famiri no libi, no e libi dyaso moro*
 come 1PL say so the- PL family NEG live NEG IMP live here more
jaren kaba den no e libi dyaso (Winford, 2000:436)
 years already 3PL NEG IMP live here’
 Let’s say, so, the family hasn’t lived, don’t live here anymore; it’s years now they haven’t been living here.’

Examples of this sort show that Sranan Tongo *kaba* has inherited the different properties of its Gbe counterparts. What is remarkable in this discussion is that we find in this one language, properties that are observed across different Gbe dialects. This conclusion reinforces our hypothesis that the Gbe languages influenced the development of *kaba* in Sranan Tongo, but it also supports our analysis that though the Gbe facts look unrelated on the surface, they appear to be manifestations of the same underlying structure (57). A direct consequence of this analysis is that unlike the verb ‘finish’ in English, *kaba* can also be used as an adverb (just as we saw in Ewegbe). Our first diagnostic has therefore been verified, but so is our second diagnostic as well: *kaba* can occur post-verbally, similarly to its ‘finish’ equivalents in the Gbe languages. Just as we saw for Gbe, this distributive property also makes *kaba* formally distinct from Sranan Tongo garden variety TMA markers. As can be seen from the examples in (5) and (9), repeated here as (60a-c) for convenience, TMA markers (e.g., *kann*, *sa*, *ben*) must precede the element they scope over, unlike post-verbal *kaba*, which follows the constituent it scopes over.

- (60) a. *alla kondresanni kann kaba na wantem* (Schumann, 1783:91)
 all word-thing can finish LOC one-time
 ‘All wordly things can come to an end sometime.’

- b. *hutem ju sa kaba da worko?* (Schumann, 1783:76)
 Q-time 2_{SG} FUT finish the work
 'When will you finish the work?'
- c. *a kan dati kasmoni ben de kaba sensi katiboten* (corpus Blanker, p.c.)
 3_{SG} can that kasmoni PST BE already since slave-time
 'It may be that kasmoni was there already in the days of slavery.'

Within the context of competition and selection of syntactic features as proposed in Mufwene (2001) and Aboh (2009b), the different properties that we just surveyed lead us to conclude that Sranan Tongo retained the Gbe pattern to encode completive. Indeed, while English, Gbe and Sranan Tongo could be argued to exhibit the underlying structure in (56), only Gbe and Sranan Tongo display the surface order generated by (57) whereby the complement precedes the quantificational scope-taking element. In addition, only these two language types allow for roots to be used as means of expression of their functional sequence. Consequently, it is also in these languages that we observe that the morphological form used to express the verb 'finish' occupies various positions in the clause and crucially can be used either as lexical verb or some quantificational or adverbial element. It is also in these languages that we see the same item occurring inside the noun phrase where it encodes completion or totality. Put together, these observations constitute strong evidence that the Suriname Creoles inherit the Gbe pattern of scope marking (rather than mere aspect expression).

5. Conclusion

The preceding discussion shows that it is not enough to detect surface similarities between the creole and the contributing languages to prove that a certain creole feature results from transfer from the languages that contributed to the emergence of the creole. Such similarities may be coincidental or result from other (universal) processes of language acquisition (Muysken et al., 1986). In our view, the similarities with regard to the category of completive in the Gbe languages on the one hand and the Surinamese Creoles on the other as reported by Winford (2000, 2006, 2008) and Winford and Migge (2007) can be explained by the underlying structure in (56). Under this representation, languages in general seem to have access to a structure whereby specific event quantifiers (e.g. already, finish) may quantify over the VP or a phrase that contains the VP. The proposed analysis further suggests that such constructions do not derive from verb serialization but rather from more basic structure building processes and how they relate to event quantification.

Not all languages, however, make wide usage of the possibility in (57) whereby the complement of a scope-marker (such as a quantifier) fronts systematically, making the quantifier appear to the right edge. The Gbe languages appear to massively resort to such a syntactic operation. In addition, these languages being isolating, tend to allow lexical roots to fulfill multiple functions thus leading to situations where the same root can be assigned different word category according to the structural context in which it occurs. This tendency, which is congruent with English, has also been retained in the creole. Therefore, the creole appears to have retained a combination of Gbe morpho-syntax together with some English properties. This, we think, explains the fact, already observed by Winford and Migge (2007:84) and further illustrated in this paper, that *kaba* and its Gbe counterparts are not identical in status or function: the Surinamese completive marker is compatible with both stative and non-stative situations, including achievement verbs, whereas the Gbe completive marker is more limited, as it is compatible only with non-static situations and punctual occurrences. Furthermore, Sranan Tongo *kaba* may take a non-finite clause as complement as well as a VP as complement. Such a structure is not possible in the Gbe languages where the 'finish' construction is more integrated in the functional sequence of the clause. We therefore reach a situation whereby even though the event quantifying element *kaba* displays the morphosyntax of the Gbe languages when it comes to scope properties as well as surface order, this element also exhibits selectional requirements that derive from properties of English 'finish' constructions. Thus we conclude that in contact situations, the emerging functional items recombine varying properties of the languages in contact into a coherent new system that represents the emerging grammar (Aboh, 2006, 2009b).

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