G3 Thesis

Complex Creoles?
A corpus-based study of the different functions of the progressive particles *a*, *de* and *gwain* in Jamaican Creole

Author: Ida Nordin
Supervisor: Magnus Levin
Examinor: Mikko Laitinen
Semester: Autumn 2012
Course code: 2EN10E
Abstract
This study shows how the different ways of expressing the progressive in Jamaican Creole, using the three aspect markers *a, de* and *gwain*, differ from each other. It is a corpus study that shows that these three particles that are used have different other functions and meanings. It briefly explains the history and grammar of the creole language along with what previous studies state about the three aspect markers that are subject for this analysis.

The aim of this study is to indicate that creole languages do not necessarily have to be less complex, just because they are different from their original language. Each aspect marker and its different functions are analyzed and compared to each other, as well as contrasted with English, in order to see how and in what ways they differ.

The results of the study show that there is a tendency towards *a* being more frequently used as the progressive marker nowadays, but *de* used to be the most frequent one. *Gwain* has no other function apart from marking the progressive. These particles have undergone a grammatical change through time. There does not seem to be any clear rules for in which contexts these markers should be used. The study concludes that Jamaican Creole does not seem to have a less complex way of expressing things, at least not the progressive, rather the opposite.

**Key words:** progressive, creole language, grammar, Jamaica, aspect markers, complex, creole grammar, creole progressive
Table of content

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... 1
Table of content ............................................................................................................. 1
1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Aim, scope, research questions ........................................................................ 2
2. Theoretical Background .......................................................................................... 2
   2.1 Pidgins and Creoles .......................................................................................... 3
      2.1.1 Pidgins ....................................................................................................... 3
      2.1.2 Creoles ...................................................................................................... 4
   2.2 Creole grammar .................................................................................................. 6
      2.2.1 The TMA system ....................................................................................... 6
      2.2.2 Grammaticalization in creoles ................................................................. 6
   2.3 Jamaican Creole .................................................................................................. 7
      2.3.1 History of the island and its population .................................................... 7
      2.3.2 Features of Jamaican Creole ................................................................. 8
   2.4 The progressive .................................................................................................. 9
   2.5 The progressive in Jamaican Creole ................................................................... 10
      2.5.1 Other uses of a and de .............................................................................. 11
3. Materials and Methods ............................................................................................ 12
   3.1 Limitations of the study ................................................................................... 13
4. Results ..................................................................................................................... 13
   4.1 The instances of a .............................................................................................. 13
   4.2 The instances of de .......................................................................................... 16
   4.3 The instances of gwain .................................................................................... 18
   4.4 Other ways of expressing the progressive ....................................................... 19
   4.5 Colligations with progressives ......................................................................... 19
5. Analysis ................................................................................................................... 21
   5.1 A ....................................................................................................................... 21
   5.2 De ...................................................................................................................... 22
   5.3 Gwain ................................................................................................................ 23
   5.4 The difference between a, de and gwain .......................................................... 23
6. Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 25
Reference list ................................................................................................................. 27
Primary sources .......................................................... 27
Secondary sources .......................................................... 27
1. Introduction

When we think of the English language, very few of us exclusively think of the language spoken in England. The language has spread so many years ago and is now used as the official language in many different countries all over the world. However, there are also languages that originate from English, but are no longer considered a part of the English language. The role of the English language in these areas has developed, thanks to communication across borders, and the language has changed thanks to this.

This phenomenon is very common in areas that used to be part of the British Empire. The language of their colonizers has remained and the different peoples in these areas have used that language to communicate and trade with each other. This communication developed and made the language sound and looks increasingly different from English. It developed into a Pidgin. When a pidgin language develops into a new mother tongue of certain people, it receives a new name, a Creole.

When we study linguistics at a basic level, something we learn about creoles and pidgins is that they are less complex versions of the original language, in the sense that their grammar and vocabulary are considerably less complex and rules can be applied to many more areas, according to Mühlhäusler (1986: 135) and Yule (2007: 202). But as Le Page (1977: 231) states, it is very hard to define how something is simplified. No matter what rules, or syntax or semantics a language has, they are just as complex for that language as they are in any other. Grammatical rules are as complex as any other language’s, though they depend on the context in which they occur.

Various studies, focusing on Jamaican Creole¹, have been carried out, both on written and spoken language. According to these studies, there are certain ways of expressing the progressive aspect in JamC, with the particle a being the most frequently used. The particle de and the verb form gwain can also be used expressing the progressive in JamC, but they are not that common. The three forms are used in, for example, the following ways to express the progressive:

1. An im a ron op tu di bed (‘And she is running up to the bed’)
2. Wen dem de kot di trii (‘When they are cutting the tree’)
3. Di siem uol wich gwain in (‘The same old witch is going in’) (1960)

¹ From here and onwards, Jamaican Creole will be abbreviated into JamC.
All of these examples express ongoing processes, but still there has to be some kind of difference between them. In the previous studies, there is no explanation to how these forms differ. This is why this study might be of interest.

1.1 Aim, scope, research questions
The aim of this study is to investigate these three different ways of expressing the progressive aspect in JamC, and compare their frequencies and functions. The study will also investigate and try to explain the difference in usage between the three different ways of expressing the progressive.

The scope of this essay is, as previously mentioned, to study only the three aspect markers a, de and gwain. In order to carry this out, there are some research questions that need to be answered:

- How are a, de and gwain used in JamC?
- What alternatives are there to express the progressive in JamC, and what are the individual frequencies of these alternatives?
- What are the functional differences between the different variants?
- If any, what are the differences between the three ways of expressing the progressive? Together with which other words do they occur?
- How can it be argued that the ways of expressing the progressive are less complex in JamC than in standard English

2. Theoretical Background
In this section the history and syntax of JamC will be described, alongside with a general explanation of what a pidgin and a creole really are. The history and origin of the language is helpful in the understanding and analysis of the different ways of expressing the progressive.

In order to really understand the explanations here, in section two, there are a few terms that need to be defined and explained (Rooij, 1994: 53).

*Basilect*: a version of a language that is the most different from the original language.

The JamC that is being used today is the basilect form, since it is the most different from English.

*Acrolect*: a version of a language that is the most similar to the original language.

The language still looked and sounded quite similar to English.
Mesolect: a version of a language that is something in between a basilect and an acrolect. The language is changing, and is increasingly different from English.

2.1 Pidgins and Creoles

From the very beginning, pidgins and creoles were thought of as destroyed and bad versions of their original language. Their speakers were considered uncivilized and poorly educated (Holm 2000:1). Holm states that it was not very long ago that this attitude changed and people realized that pidgins and creoles are new languages, and not poor versions of the originals.

2.1.1 Pidgins

When different groups of people, with different languages, want to communicate with each other, they need some kind of common language that they could use. They developed a verbal language with only a communicative purpose, a pidgin (Holm, 2000: 5–6). The language is created through interaction and the process that creates a pidgin only takes place during the life of one generation (Le Page, 1977: 241).

In order for a language to be called a pidgin, the groups that use it need to speak languages that are not related to each other and there are no people that use it as their native tongue (Muysken & Smith, 1994: 3), but two or more groups that use the same language to communicate with each other (1994: 26). A pidgin is no one’s mother tongue, according to Peter Bakker (2008: 130). The author also claims that pidgins may lack linguistic features that all native languages have.

Pidgins are, as previously mentioned, often considered less complex versions of the languages which they have derived from. Suzanne Romaine (1988: 25) states that pidgins lack inflectional morphology, for example the plural -s or the -ed ending on verbs in the past tense. The author explains that the reason for this might be that it is difficult to integrate inflectional morphemes when a pidgin is developing. The author further explains that some pidgins express subjects and objects using infixes inside of the words instead of separate parts for each clause element, or they simply omit the subject and language users have to understand it from the context.

Moreover, pidgin languages often lack distinctions of gender. Normally, they do not have different pronouns for male and female referents (Bakker, 2008: 135). They do not use prepositions to the same extent as in the original language, nor do they have copula verbs to mark tenses and the word order in pidgins can very rarely be altered and pidgins have, in the majority of cases, a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order. They separate the subject from the object to avoid confusion between the two of them. Finally, Romaine claims that pidgins are
“weakly grammaticalized” (1988: 31) and therefore they are very context-bound. The term *grammaticalization* will be defined in section 2.2.2.

Very often pidgins are considered less complex due to the fact that they lack grammar. This, however, cannot be true, since a language needs some kind of grammatical rules and structures for it to function. Mühlhäusler (1986: 135) claims that the grammatical rules can be applied onto many more types of structures in creole languages and this makes the grammar seem simpler. Romaine (1988: 34) argues that the less complex pidgin only is more regular compared to the original language. In English, several different words can be used to express the same thing. A speaker of English, for example, generally has around 25000–30000 lexical items in their vocabulary, while a pidgin speaker has only around 1500 items in their vocabulary. This is another reason why pidgins depend on their context so much. The same word can express many different things. Bakker (2008: 133) states that the vocabulary of a pidgin is normally drawn from only one or two languages.

Hopper & Traugott (2003: 223) explain that pidgins are regarded as simplified, but this can only be true for the very earliest stages in the process, where the new language is created. They might be considered as “simplified” versions of their original language, but they are actually new languages, in the process of creation. Romaine (1988: 72) suggests that a reason for pidgins to be less complex than their original language is because of the fact that the master taught the slave his own language in a simplified way. The master thought the slaves were unable to acquire their language and all its complexity, so they simplified it, kind of in the same way as we simplify our language when we talk to small children. The slaves learned the language much through imitation which led to acquisition of the language. However, just because the input is simplified does not lead to a simpler language, since children, as they grow up, acquire a language just as complex and versatile as their parents’. In addition, Romaine also states that the way we speak to children is only simpler in that sense that sentences are shortened. Language learning always begins with the understanding of a simple code that becomes more and more complex as the learning goes on.

### 2.1.2 Creoles

When the pidgin takes on a new role and starts to have native speakers it becomes a creole. This change does naturally not occur over night, but is an overlapping process with several steps. Normally, the children of people from different groups are the first to use a pidgin as their native language (Muysken & Smith, 1994: 3; Bakker, 2008: 135). The overlapping process is sometimes called a *creole continuum*, because there are several different stages of
creolization going on at the same time. During this process, the creole moves from an acrolect into a basilect, via a mesolect\(^2\) (Romaine, 1988: 161). The acrolect has many features that are similar to the lexifier (original) language, whereas the basilect is more different. Traugott (1977: 73) claims that the vocabulary changes quite quickly in this process.

Bickerton claims that “creolization is first-language learning with restricted input” (1977: 49), which means that the input only comes from the speakers of the language in that particular area. According to Romaine (1988: 155–156) there are three different ways for a pidgin to become a creole. It has either gone from a jargon to a creole, or from a jargon via a stabilized pidgin to a creole, or from a jargon, via a stabilized pidgin and an expanded pidgin to a creole. A stabilized pidgin means that the variation and inconsistencies have become more regular and structured. An expansion in a pidgin could be, for example, that more distinctions are made between different phonemes, or that different morphemes receive diverse meanings. The process could be more complicated than first stated, according to Muhlhäusler (1986:147; 176-181; 205). The input that a creole develops from varies a lot, depending on in what way the creole has developed and how the pidgin looked. Bakker makes a distinction between pidgens, creoles and pidgincreoles, where he claims that the pidgincreole is:

[A] pidgin that “has become the main language of a speech community and/or a mother tongue for some of its speakers. Pidgincreoles are not creoles, because they are not the language of an ethnic or political group or the mother tongue for the whole community. (Bakker, 2008: 131).

A pidgincreole is therefore a part of the creolization, where a pidgin becomes a creole. In the same way as in the pidgin development, creoles tend to undergo the same process when they develop into the mother tongue of a new generation. However, with children’s language, the incorrectness tends to become corrected as time goes by, while in creole languages, these corrections hardly ever occur (Romaine 1988: 257). LePage (1977: 224) states that during the creolization process, there is a bigger need for understanding the context, because the meaning is more and more understood by the context.

Hopper & Traugott (2003: 216–219) claim that creoles are more complex than pidgins, and that they vary considerably, even internally, regarding how similar, or different, they are from their original language. This depends on the speakers’ choice of words, whether they are from the basilect, a mesolect or the acrolect. Vocabulary and structural rules might remain side by side with new varieties.

\(^2\) See definition of acrolect and basilect in section 1.1
2.2 Creole grammar

All creole languages do not share the same grammatical rules and structures. However, according to Holm (2000: 171) many of them have several features in common, that they do not share with their original language. For example, their morphemes are free rather than bound to the words. They use words instead of endings to create grammatical differences, such as tenses and aspects.

2.2.1 The TMA system

One thing that characterizes creole languages is that all creoles use a system of particles before the verbs that go by the name TMA system. TMA stands for Tense, Mood and Aspect and the particles that are used express these three letters. This system is used in creoles all over the world, and it does not matter which their original language is (Bakker, 2008: 142).

Bakker et al (1994: 248) explain that in creole languages, there are a certain number of grammaticalized morphemes that almost always come before the verb and almost always appear in the same order and almost always have the same semantic values. They are grammaticalized in the sense that they have no real lexical meaning, but only a grammatical function (see section 2.2.2, below for a further explanation of grammaticalization). These morphemes are organized and linked to the TMA system. Linguists learned about this system when they discovered that all creoles share the same structures. The morphemes are also organized in the order of TMA: the tense morpheme comes first, then the mood morpheme and the aspect morpheme comes closest to the verb.

Poplack & Tagliamonte (2001: 4) suggest that at first, since creole languages lack inflections, it was believed that they lacked tenses completely. However, since tense is not expressed by inflected verbs, but by tense markers, the authors claim that in creole languages, tenses categories are relative instead of absolute. Absolute tense categories express time explicitly in a word, but in relative tense categories time is expressed in the discourse context. The fact that creoles heavily rely on their context is one of the biggest differences between creoles and their lexifier languages.

Poplack & Tagliamonte (2001: 4) claim this system to be the grammar of creole languages. Words occur in established organized patterns that may be considered to function as grammatical rules.

2.2.2 Grammaticalization in creoles

Up until this point, only the external language factors, such as social interaction and the history of the speakers, have been discussed. But there are also internal factors that affect the
development of all languages. For instance, words can start to lose their lexical meaning and
develop a more grammatical function. This phenomenon is referred to as grammaticalization
(Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 1)

Hopper & Traugott (2003: 224) claim that grammaticalization in creole languages
takes place without them being affected by any process of grammaticalization that takes place
in the original languages. The authors claim that one reason for changes to take place within
creoles (especially in the Caribbean) is the distance they often have from the people and
languages from which they have originated. The former African slaves no longer have any
input from African languages, and therefore they change (2003: 227).

Grammaticalization in creole languages can in many ways equal the process called
creolization (see section 2.1.2). The language changes, the meaning of words is widened or
narrowed down and the usage of words changes. The changes take place in the same way,
through interaction between people. Hopper & Traugott (2003: 229) argue that, in the same
way as the English verb do now has a more grammatical than lexical function, words and their
meanings change in creole languages, at different paces and during different time.

2.3 Jamaican Creole

Here below, the history of Jamaican creole, the grammatical features of the language and how
it has been affected and changed grammatically will be explained.

2.3.1 History of the island and its population

Holm (2000: 93–95) explains that, originally, the people that inhabited the island of Jamaica
were Arawak Indians. In the beginning of the 1500’s, the Spaniards began their settlement on
the island and brought around 300 slaves from Africa and South America. In the middle of the
1600’s, the British wanted to claim Jamaica and attacked the island.

When the British had settled, they wanted to exploit the land and started to grow
crops. For their exploitation, they needed more slaves to work in the fields and imported
massive numbers of slaves and in the middle of the 1700’s, 92% of the Jamaican population
were slaves. By this time, there is some evidence that a creole-like English has emerged
among the slaves, but also people that were masters spoke this so called broken English.

When slavery was abolished, the formerly exploited people moved up into the
mountains. Since the area was quite inaccessible, they could preserve their language and it
was not affected by outer influence to any great extent, and therefore the language has kept
more or less the same form as it had, 250 years ago (Holm, 2000: 93–95).
Lalla & D’Costa (1990: 79–81) describe JamC as derived from a pidgin developed from contact between people of different linguistic backgrounds. This contact was, according to the authors, both between master and slaves and between slaves. The language of higher prestige – English in this case – influenced the pidgin from the masters, but the languages that the slaves knew originally also affected the new language that they used to communicate. Lalla & D’Costa add that since the British continued to import slaves, there was a continuous input of African languages during all the years that Jamaica was under British rule.

However, there were some factors that made the language even more versatile. The English that was used in the colony did not entirely correspond to the English that was being used in the British Isles. Various varieties of English contributed to the input of the pidgin or the creole and many people from different social classes used the language and therefore it could sound and look quite different depending on who and where it was used. The fact that the island became more or less isolated from input from the British English led to preservation of older forms (see below, section 2.3.2, for explanation) (Lalla & D’Costa, 1990: 80).

2.3.2 Features of Jamaican Creole

Jamaican Creole has a few characteristics that can be used to define how the language has developed. According to Cassidy (1982: 5–9) there are five of them: preservation, borrowing, new formation, transferred meaning and special preference.

*Preservations* are words and expressions that were common in English at the time when Jamaica was colonized, but now they have nearly fallen out of use in today’s English. These words are still very frequent in JamC and in some cases, they are even pronounced as they were 300 years ago. For example, in JamC, the word *moonshine* is used over *moonlight*, although the latter is far more frequently used in present day Standard English. *Borrowings* are words that do not come from English, but which have become English words thanks to JamC, which has borrowed them from another language and included them in their own vocabulary, such as *cashew*, from Portuguese.

There are different kinds of *new formations* in Jamaican Creole. There could be alterations in spelling or pronunciation. Phenomena already existing in the language could also be composed into new formations and receive new meanings. Words can blend together, be combined or reduplicated and through that express new things. There are also a few creations in JamC that are *backformations, malapropisms, or onomatopoetic constructions*. Backformations are words that are created by removing affixes from words to create new ones. Malapropisms are words that are used, mistakenly, in the wrong way and onomatopoetic
words are words that imitate the sound they represent, for example, *fee-fee* for a whistle (OED, 2012).

Lastly, the meaning of words can be transferred from their original usage into a new one. The same word is used, but the meaning transfers and become a new one, for example different plants have received the same names. The last characteristic feature of JamC, according to Cassidy (1982) is when a word or a form is preferred over another on Jamaica, though the word does not necessarily have to be a Jamaican one originally. Some, very frequent words, originate from Spanish, for example, and they are used in the Jamaican language to a larger extent than the British variety.

2.4 The progressive
According to Estling Vannestål (2007: 194–195), there are very many different uses of the progressive in English. It is used, for example, to express something that is ongoing for a limited period of time, to describe a change in process, something that is not permanent, or to talk about the future, especially with verbs that express a motion. In English it is expressed by using the auxiliary *be* + verb in *ing*-form, such as ‘John is eating’, or ‘I am going to eat’. In JamC, the progressive is expressed in a grammatically similar way, using an aspect marker *a* before the verb. The verb then comes in the infinitive form (Durrleman-Tame, 2008: 33).

According to Levin (forthcoming, 2013), the progressive is associated with aspect, also in English, and aspect generally has got something to do with the time referred to in a sentence or an utterance. It refers to a situation in progress and its duration is limited. This hypothesis is confirmed in the corpus study that has been carried out by Kranich (2010: 191), where the overall majority of progressives refer to a limited duration of time. However, in the latest century, there has been an increase in the frequency of progressives referring to an unlimited amount of time. So the construction is probably undergoing some grammaticalization process (see further explanation in 2.2.2).

Levin further on explains that in English, the progressive is only rarely used with “verbs with strictly stative meaning” (Levin, forthcoming 2013), such as *know*, but it can be used with stative verbs, in which cases the progressive puts emphasis to the sentence, as in “I’m *loving* it”. This is supported by Kranich (2010: 46), who claims that mental states that are not limited to a certain duration of time, such as ‘think’, can hardly ever be expressed with the progressive.
2.5 The progressive in Jamaican Creole

It is quite clear how to express the progressive in English, by using the verb *be* + *-ing* on the following verb. This construction is used, whether a situation in progress, or a future event is being referred to. However, in JamC, the case is not that simple. According to Michael Aceto, carribean creoles use *de*, *da* or *a* to express the progressive (2006: 212). In the corpus of this study, only two of these are found, *de* and *a*. Though, a third is quite frequently used and it is the verb *gwain*. Here below the different ways of expressing the progressive are explained. Thereafter, in section 4 and 5, they will be compared to each other, in order to see if there is any difference between their functions.

Bickerton (1975: 74) explains that creole speakers use *a* before the verb instead of the *-ing* at the end of the verb. The author also explains that the particle *a* has a few different functions in the creole (1975: 33–35). He states that *a* is the most common TMA marker in the language. It is a progressive marker, both for past and present progressive, but it is also used when referring to a series of repeated actions, both in the present and in the past. This is supported by Bailey (2009: 79;139), who refers to *a* being the far most frequent progressive marker in JamC.

Bickerton (1975: 33–35) also claims that *a* can only be used as a progressive marker for non-stative verbs, i.e., verbs that do not express any mental state. It is impossible to say “I am knowing” in JamC (*mi a no*). On Jamaica Language3 (2012) it is stated that *a* is a “continuous aspect marker” and used to express sentences such as “I am talking” – “mi a taak”. The verb that is ongoing is in its infinitive form.

According to Jamaica Language (2012), the particle *de* is a “state or location marker” and used to express sentences like “I am/was talking” – “mi de taak”, but according to the homepage, the difference is that the subject is in the process of talking. Bailey (2009: 139) also mentions *de* as a progressive marker, without specifying any certain context where it could be used. Here, as well as with *a*, the verb that is in the ongoing process is in its infinitive form, instead of the standard English *-ing* form.

Jamaica Language (2012) explains that *gwain* is used to mark a positive future intention, that is, corresponding to English, where the progressive construction often is used to express a future event. An example could be “I am going to talk” – “mi gwain taak”. This is the only area of use for this marker, according to Jamaica Language. According to Tometro

---

Hopkins, *gwain* corresponds to the English construction *be going to* in the creole language *Gullah*. It is used to express something in the future (Hopkins, 1994: 67).

According to Bailey (2009: 139), *a* is the most frequent progressive marker in JamC, but she also claims that *da*, *-in* (ending of verb) and *iz* + *-in* also can occur. However, she states that they only express the present progressive, something that is ongoing at the time of reference.

To express a negative progressive (I am *not* talking) the JamC uses *naa* as an aspect marker (*mii naa taak*) and the progressive in the past tense is also expressed differently with positive and negative particles (*ena* and *nehna*) (“Jamaica Language”, 2012). *Ena* is also mentioned by Bailey (2009: 140).

### 2.5.1 Other uses of *a* and *de*

The particles *a* and *de* have other uses in JamC, which complicates the understanding to some extent. *A* does not always mark the progressive aspect but it also functions as a pronoun, a determiner, a preposition and a verb. Bailey (2009: 139–140) claims that *a*, can mean *to* and *of*, and also *is*. She also claims that *a* is also an indefinite article in JamC. According to Durrleman-Tame (2008: 101–104) *a* has five different functions, progressive marker, preposition, determiner, interrogative and focus marker. The interrogative and the focus markers are not mentioned by Bailey.

The interrogative refers to *a* followed by a noun or adjective receives the meaning of *it is* or *they are*. The author claims that this is a construction from African languages and sometimes it can be equal to Spanish, for example, where there is no need for an explicit subject in a clause, apart from when emphasis is on the subject in the clause (Fant, Hermerén & Österberg, 2004: 112). This might be a result of the JamC undergoing input, not only from English, but from several other languages during long periods of time. The focus aspect has to do with emphasis, which can be made by using the *a* marker followed by, for example, an adjective, in order to put emphasis on it (Durrleman-Tame, 2008: 113). In the following example, both *a* and the repeated verb puts emphasis to the loudness of the playing. “*a loud loud im plie*” (“S/he plays LOUDLY”), but *a* is not translated into anything special.

According to Jamaica Language (2012), *de* is used to express states or locations, as previously mentioned. However, it is also used, not only to express states and locations in the progressive, but also in the simple present, where *de* functions as a main verb. It can often be translated into the verb *be* in its different forms where the subject is located somewhere, as in “*dehn de ya*” (they are here). This can be compared to the Spanish verb “*estar*” (translates into
be), that is used to refer to different locations (Fant, Hermerén & Österberg, 2004: 215). De is also sometimes referred to as equivalent to the English adverb there.

3. Materials and Methods

This is a comparative quantitative corpus-based study. In Le Page’s book Jamaican Creole: an historical introduction to Jamaican Creole (1960) there are four JamC texts, transcribed and translated into comprehensible English. In the corpus, a few poems and other linguistic and cultural information from a webpage named Jumeika Langwij (Jamaica Language, 2012) have also been included. On this webpage, as in the stories, there are English translations to what is written. This is useful for the analysis, so that it can be interpreted what functions the different particles have and how they have changed over time.

The texts from LePage are old stories that have been recorded (spoken language) in 1955 (LePage, 1960: 132) and the texts from Jamaica Language are updated regularly, the latest update was made in November, 2012. These two different texts are used so that comparisons can be made between the different strata in the development of the creole, if there is a tendency towards another usage of the different progressive markers. It might be the case that the language in LePage from 1955 has not come as far in the creolization process as the language has on the homepage from 2012.

The Jamaican stories consist of 9568 words, and the corpus from Jamaica Language consists of 1369 words. According to Jamaica Language, features that are found in LePage (1960) belong to the mesolect variety of JamC, whereas the texts on the homepage represent the basilect variety. The texts are from different stages in the creolization process (see section 2.1.2).

There might also be a difference between the two texts in the sense that the stories have a different purpose than the information on Jamaica Language does. The language in the stories is also spoken, whereas the homepage information is not. Thanks to this, a comparison can also be made between spoken tendencies and written tendencies.

Frequencies of the particle a, de and gwain as progressive markers in the corpus will be looked at. Out of all the instances that are found of these particles, it will be determined which are progressive markers and which other functions they may have. The frequencies of these different particles will be compared, and the words they occur together with, their colligations will also be analyzed. Their other functions will also be compared to what
previous studies say about them. In order to do the calculations, Laurence Anthony’s AntConc
has been used\(^4\).

3.1 Limitations of the study
There are a few gaps and limitations of this study. For instance, the material that is
investigated is not as extensive as was wished for. It might be the case that the tendencies that
are found only exist in the sample from the corpora that are used in this study.

4. Results
In this section, the frequencies and functions of the particles and words that can be used to to
express the progressive in JamC will be presented; the particles \(a\), \(de\) and \(gwain\) that Bailey
(2009: 139) and Jamaica Language (2012) present. The results will be followed by the
analyses in section 5. The examples from Jamaica Language will be marked with (2012) and
the examples from LePage will be marked with (1960).

4.1 The instances of \(a\)
Out of the approximately 12000 words in this Jamaican Creole corpus, there are 381 instances
of the particle \(a\) that have been determined. Out of these 381, there are 16 progressive aspect
markers, 86 determiners, 173 prepositions and 41 \(be\) correspondents. There is 1 infinitive
marker, 26 interrogative and emphatic markers, 28 pronouns, 1 instance of the verb \(have\) and
5 instances that translate into the combination of pronoun and verb \(it\) \(is\). There are 4 instances
of the negative progressive marker \(n\a\), but no instances of either \(ena\), nor \(nehna\) (cf. Bailey,
2009; Bickerton, 1975; Jamaica Language, 2012). This is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below.

\(^4\) Available online at http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html
As can be seen in the figures above, the particle *a* has many different functions. In 3% of the cases in (1960) and 10% of the cases in (2012) it marks the progressive as in examples (2) and (3):

(2) Dehn aalzwie *a* mekop niuu wod (‘They are always making up new words’) (2012)
(3) Wa yu *a* du doun de? (‘What are you doing down there’) (1960)
In 8% of the cases in (1960), a marks Interrogative/emphasis, by putting emphasis on the phrase that follows or marking that it is a question, but there is no equivalent in standard English, as in (4) and (5). There is only one instance of this phenomenon in the texts from 2012, and 12 in the corpus from 1960.

(4)    A dis a ya sistim (‘It is this system’) (2012)
(5)    A yu duu mi so! (‘You do me so!’) (1960)

In some cases, where a has the function of marking a question, sometimes in the progressive, and sometimes not, however, a does not mark the progressive in the instances of progressive, de does. In example (6), de marks the progressive, and functions as an auxiliary and a marks the question. In (2012), there are no examples of a functioning as an interrogative marker. In the following example, a has no standard English equivalent.

(6)    A we unu de go? (‘Where are you going?’) (1960)

A very frequent function of a is the determiner function. The most frequent function of a is as a preposition, and it is only the context that determines whether they translate into ‘to’, ‘on’ or ‘in’ for example. The preposition function is even more frequent in (2012), but the determiner function is not at all that frequent in (2012).

A quite often also translates into different forms of the main verb be, both in the past and present tense and for all different people (there are instances that translate to am, is, was and are, for example). This is shown in examples (7) and (8).

(7)    Wat a yu? (‘What are you?’) (1960)
(8)    Sens Jumiekan a wahn huoral langwij (‘Since Jamaican is an oral language’) (2012)

Sometimes the personal pronoun it is also implicitly included in a, where a is translated into it is, as in the examples (4) above and (9) below.

(9)    A so in shaapin (‘It is so she sharpens’) (1960)
Of the 389 instances of a, 2 were unclear. There were also 4 instances of naa, the negative progressive marker (cf. Bailey, 2009:140), however, none of them marked a progressive aspect, but were only translated to the adverb never. Ehna (also ena) and nehna did not occur at all in the corpus. Naa is used as in example (10):

(10) Andro naa piik (‘Andrew never peeks’) (1960)

The differences of the functions of a will be analyzed in section 5.1.

4.2 The instances of de

As Bailey states, de can also mark the progressive aspect. There are 205 instances of de in the corpus in this study. But only 8 of them are found in the (2012) texts. 124 out of the 205 mark the progressive, 4 are pronouns, 35 are different forms of the main verb be, 2 are determiners, there are 38 prepositions (there) and 1 instance of a passive construction auxiliary be and 1 instance of the verb make.

The overall findings are presented in Figures 3 and 4 below:

![Pie chart showing the distribution of de's functions in LePage (1960)](image)

**Figure 3. The different functions of the particles de in LePage (1960)**
The particle *de* does clearly not have as many different functions as *a* does. As can be seen in figure 3 above, approximately two thirds of all the instances mark the progressive aspect; they function as an auxiliary verb (*be*) in many of the cases, as in examples (11) and (12).

(11)  *Hin de ded!* (‘He *is* dying!’) (1960)
(12)  *[w]e dem de sie* (‘[w]hat they *are* saying’)

The progressives occur in different times, in the past, present of future as in the examples (13), (14) and (15) below, where (13) is a progressive future, (14) is a progressive present and (15) is a progressive past:

(13)  *Andro nuo de go hapm* (‘Andrew knows *it is* going to happen’) (1960)
(14)  *A we unu de go?* (‘Where *are you* going?’) (1960)
(15)  *Andro de bihan, de kom* (‘Andrew was behind, *was coming*’) (1960)

In the instances where *de* functions as different forms of the main verb *be*, such as (16):

(16)  *Wen Wilyam de pan di brink* (‘When William is upon the brink’) (1960)

The progressive passive is a construction as in example (17):
(17) De nuo wa de don (‘they know what is being done’) (1960)

_De_ also represents the relative pronoun _that_ and the personal pronoun _they_ quite frequently. These instances are analyzed in section 5.2.

### 4.3 The instances of gwain

The verb-like word _gwain_ (in some cases _goin_) in the corpus has a progressive-like function. There are 39 instances of this verb form, and all of them create a progressive-like aspect. However, they lack the auxiliary verb _be_, that both _a_ and _de_ function as, and in some cases, they also lack the infinite marker _to_ in the translations, in the progressive-like future constructions. Since _gwain_ does not occur at all in (2012), the figure below only shows its representation in LePage.

![Pie chart showing different functions of _gwain/goin_ in LePage (1960)]

**Figure 5 Different functions of _gwain/goin_ in LePage (1960)**

_Gwain_ (or _going_) either express the progressive present or the progressive future as illustrated in examples (18) and (19) and they also demonstrate the lack of auxiliaries and/or infinite markers:

(18) So yu _gwain_ find out (‘So you going to find out’) (1960)
(19) Di trii gyal _gwain_ in (‘The three girl going in’) (1960)

In some cases, _gwain_ marks the future, as in example (18), but in some cases, it is the verb _go_ that is in progress, as in example (19)
4.4 Other ways of expressing the progressive
While compiling the corpus, other ways of expressing the progressive were discovered, apart from *a* and *de*. They will briefly be explained below. In the corpus, there are some cases of progressive constructions that are quite similar to the English construction and similar to what Bailey (2009: 139) also claims, with the particular verb that expresses the action in progress written in the *-in* form. Example (20) illustrates this:

(20) dem wor *iitin* (‘they were eating’) (1960)

The frequency of these constructions is hard to count, since they all look different, depending on what verb is in progression.

Bailey also mentioned the particle *da* as a progressive marker, but the 4 instances of *da* that are found in this corpus do not mark the progressive, but they are either determiners (the) or relative pronouns (that).

4.5 Colligations with progressives
In order to try to understand how the different progressive markers differ from each other the words that surround them, their colligations\(^5\) will need to be observed. They are listed in the tables below\(^6\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Instances</th>
<th>Colligate before <em>a</em></th>
<th>Frequency Instances</th>
<th>Colligate before <em>de</em></th>
<th>Frequency Instances</th>
<th>Colligate before <em>gwain</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ (%)</td>
<td>+ (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (53%)</td>
<td>him/im/it (‘he/she/it’) + other 3(^{rd}) person subject</td>
<td>39 (32%)</td>
<td>in/im/hin/ (‘he/she’) + other 3(^{rd}) person subject</td>
<td>22 (65%)</td>
<td>in/im/hin/in/shi (‘he/she’) + other 3(^{rd}) person subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
<td>wi/we (‘we’)</td>
<td>25 (21%)</td>
<td>Wa (‘what’)</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>almi (‘I’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>dem/dehm (‘they’)</td>
<td>12 (10%)</td>
<td>yu (‘you’)</td>
<td>2 (5.8%)</td>
<td>a (aux. ‘be’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>yu (‘you’)</td>
<td>11 (9%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (5.8%)</td>
<td>yu (‘you’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (8%)</td>
<td>mi (‘I’)</td>
<td>2 (5.8%)</td>
<td>we (‘we’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
<td>Noun (object)</td>
<td>2 (5.8%)</td>
<td>dem/de (they)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>dem (they)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Colligations before markers

---

\(^5\) "The grouping of words or other grammatical elements in syntactic structures by virtue of the classes of which they are members and the categories with which they are involved" (OED, 2012).

\(^6\) All the percentages are rounded to the closest whole number.

\(^7\) There was no subject or object preceding the progressive.
All of the particles are most frequent with the third person singular, but then they start to differ. *A* is secondly mostly used with first person plural, and *gwain* with first person singular. *De*, on the other hand, is secondly most frequent with the relative pronoun *wa* (what). *De* is the only particle that can appear without any personal pronoun, as the first word in a phrase. For example in (21)

(21) *De* sliip masa! (‘Is sleeping, master’) (1960)

The context tells us who is sleeping, but the phrase does not explicitly tell us this.

There are so many more instances of *de* expressing the progressive, compared to *a*. Out of all of the 124 progressive instances, *de* occur together with different verbs compared to *a* and *gwain*. In the table below, all of the colligates with the progressive markers are listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Colligate verb after <em>a</em></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Colligate verb after <em>de</em></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Colligate verb after <em>gwain</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instances + (%)</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
<td>53 (51%)</td>
<td>6 (29%)</td>
<td>Kil (‘kill’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>Go (‘go’)</td>
<td>18 (17%)</td>
<td>Sliip (‘sleep’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Siev (‘save’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>Kom (‘come’)</td>
<td>10 (10%)</td>
<td>Duu (‘do’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Duu (‘do’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Kot (‘cut’)</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>Kom (‘come’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Go (‘go’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Chried (‘trade’)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>Hapm (‘happen’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Bring (‘bring’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Bwail (‘boil’)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>Bi (‘be’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Iit (‘eat’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Stie (‘stay’)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>Kot (‘cut’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Dig (‘dig’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Ron (‘run’)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>Lait (‘light’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Fål (‘fall’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Taak (‘talk’)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>Tel (‘tell’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Put (‘put’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Miekop (‘make up’)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>Snor (‘snore’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Bii (‘be’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (6.7%)</td>
<td>Adzing (‘?’)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>Get (‘get’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Colligations after markers

The verb *go* is quite frequent with all of the particles, but by far most frequent with *de*. Many of the verbs are dynamic, but not all of them. Especially *sleep* and *be* are more stative verbs. The verbs will be analyzed in section 5, below.
5. Analysis

In this section, the different particles and their functions will be analyzed and compared to each other. The findings will also be compared to the theory in section 2. The figure below summarizes the different functions and frequencies of the progressive markers.

![Figure 6. Frequencies and functions of particles in corpus](image)

Figure 6. Frequencies and functions of particles in corpus

A is a lot more frequent than both of the others together, but only 15 out of 368 are progressive markers. With *de*, 124 out of 206 mark progressives and with *gwain/goin* all of them are progressive-like constructions. As stated by Bakker (1994), the progressive marker, which is an *aspect* marker, comes closest to the verb in the phrase, all according to the TMA system.

5.1 A

The most surprising function that *a* has is also the one that is the most difficult to grasp. It is when *a* marks questions and really do not have an explicit function. In some cases, where there is a question, it is implicitly understood that *a* can be translated into *it is*. This type of function is mentioned by Durrleman-Tame (2008: 103), where *a* has an emphatic and/or interrogative function.

Many examples of *a* representing the main verb *be* were found in this corpus. This function was brought up by Bailey (2009), but not by Durrleman-Tame (2008). It is however, only the context that can help determine whether the *a* represents *be* in the past or present tense, or whether there is one person or many people performing the action. As in examples (7) and (8), *a* looks the same in JamC, but represent both *is* and *are* in English. This corresponds to a large extent to what is stated by LePage (1987), and Romaine (1988), that the context is considerably more important for understanding creole languages.

When it comes to the negative progressive marker *naa* (cf. Jamaica Lanugage), the 4 instances that were found were all translated into *never* and the verbs that followed were not
translated into the progressive form. It could, of course, be interpreted as a possible progressive (example (10)) and translated into “Andrew is never peeking”. However, this makes no sense in the context and it could therefore be argued that naa does not mark the progressive aspect. According to Romaine (1988:34), creoles are context-bound, and a construction that does not fit into the context can therefore not be very likely.

The particle a has undergone grammaticalization to a certain extent. This particle is most likely still undergoing a grammatical change, since it can be noted that in (2012) the determiner function of a is not at all that frequent (only 6% compared to 26% in (1960)). According to Jamaica Language (2012), a is a determiner in the mesolect variety of JamC, but not in the basilect. As Romaine states (1988: 155–156) the further into the creolization process a language is, the more diverse meanings different particles get. In LePage, a could function as many different prepositions (in, to, of, at and on), but in the newer texts, it only corresponds to two different prepositions (of and in). There is a tendency that suggests that a might receive increasingly standardized functions as the creolization continues. There is a tendency that shows that a might increasingly become a grammatical particle instead of a lexical item (cf. Hopper & Traugott, 2003).

LePage (1987: 224) states that the further in the process of creolization a language goes, the more it depends on the context for understanding. This appears not to be true, according to the tendencies that show that the functions and meanings of a are decreasing.

5.2 De

In the same way as with a, there is no telling whether de marks the past, present or the future, apart from the context, as illustrated in (13), (14) and (15) above. In contrast to what Bickerton states (1975: 33-35), there is actually one occurrence of the progressive with de with a stative verb in (22).

(22) andro de ron de, de nuo wa de don (‘Andrew was around there, is knowing what is being done’) (1960)

In this example, there are 4 instances of de, and they all represent a different function. The first one is a form of the verb be, the second is a preposition there, the third one is an auxiliary that marks the progressive and the fourth and last one is both an auxiliary and a main verb at the same time. It is the auxiliary verb be that marks the progress of the same verb being without having to be repeated. The third de is the most interesting one, since it marks a
progressive stative verb, to know, something that was claimed to be impossible with a (cf. Bickerton, 1975:33–35). Though, Jamaica Language (2012) states that de is used to mark states or locations, so supposedly this type of progressive is possible to express with de. The verb sleep is also very frequent together with the particle de.

De most frequently marks the present progressive, ongoing processes that are translated with the -ing form in English (example (11) and (12)). Since de is so much less frequent in (2012) than in (1960), it is likely to assume that it is not as commonly used in the basilect JamC.

As shown in Figures 4.3 and 4.4, de has quite different functions in the different corpora. In the (1960) corpus, 16% of all the instances of de correspond to the verb be, but in the (2012) corpus, 32% are equivalent to be in English. This might also indicate that the function of de is changing during the creolization process and that the texts from 1960 represent a form of pidgincreoles (cf. Bakker, 2008:131). De moves from being an auxiliary verb, indicating the progressive, towards becoming a main verb to a greater extent. This, however is very rare, or really not existent. The possible answer is that there is a difference between spoken language (1960) and written language (2012).

In the (2012) corpus, there are not at all that many instances of de as a preposition, compared to in the texts from (1960). This suggests that de is losing its prepositional function as well, or that it does not have a prepositional function to the same extent in spoken language.

5.3 Gwain

As shown in Figure 3, the marker gwain expresses both future events, present ongoing events and events that used to be ongoing in the past. This does not correspond to what is stated on Jamaica Language (2012), i.e that gwain is only used to express the future. This is only true in 2/3 of all the instances of gwain.

5.4 The difference between a, de and gwain

According to Bailey (2009: 139), a was supposed to be the most frequent progressive marker in JamC. But as can be seen in figure 6, de is far more frequent in the corpus in this study. It occurs less frequently than a, but marks the progressive in more cases than a does. Only a very small percentage of the instances of a actually mark the progressive aspect.

According to the corpus, both a and de can be translated into various forms of the verb be. Bailey (2009: 32–33) claims that a connects two nominal phrases and de needs to be followed by some kind of location. This can be compared to Spanish, which has two different
verbs for the English *be* (*ser* and *estar*) and they differ in the sense that *ser* expresses subject complements and permanent states, whereas *estar* expresses location and temporary states (Fant, Hermerén & Österberg, 2004: 215). This appears to be true, for the examples that are found in this corpus, such as (23) and (24).

(23) Babiabuo *a* ded (‘Babiabuo is dead’) (1960)
(24) Kwashi *de* pan di trii (‘Quashi is upon the tree’) (1960)

This could be connected to the fact that the Spanish conquerors were the first foreign people to settle on the island and this might have influenced the language that was created, or that it is remaining from their original African languages (cf. Holm, 2000: 93–95).

However, there are no further explanations in Bailey to when *de* should be used instead of *a*, or *gwain* when expressing the progressive. In table 2 the verbs that occur with these three different progressive markers are listed. There is no major difference between the verbs that are used in progressive constructions. Which marker is used does not matter, all of them function with the same verbs. *Go* is used with all of the constructions and *go* is also the verb that is used most frequently in the progressive in American English, according to COCA, since it is used to express the future with the -*ing* form. In the instances with *go* the progressive expresses a future event, something that *is going to* happen. So there is no difference in this aspect between the different markers. This contradicts what both Bailey (2009: 139) and Jamaica Language (2012) stated.

When it comes to the instances that are ongoing processes, *sleep*, is highly frequent with *de* due to one of the Jamaican stories, where the protagonist is sleeping for a long time. Jamaica Language (2012) explained that *de* is used for expressing states and locations in the progressive and *a* to express ongoing events. To be sleeping can be considered as a state and therefore it is more logical to express it with *de* instead of *a*. With *try*, *a* marks ongoing processes that cannot be considered as states nor locations. Here, what Jamaica Language (2012) claims appears to be true. *De* also occurs together with the verb *be* in the -*ing* form. This is increasing in present English (cf. Levin, forthcoming 2013), but is decreasing together with the marker *de* in the basilect JamC.

The marker *gwain* does not occur at all in the corpus from the homepage Jamaica Language (2012). All of the instances are found in LePage (1960). This makes it likely to

---

8 Corpus of Contemporary American English [http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/](http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/)
believe that *gwain* pertains to the older, mesolect stratum of JamC, since it does not occur in modern writing. However, the construction with *gwain* is mentioned in the grammar section at Jamaica Language as an alternative to express the progressive. It could also be the case that *gwain* is a more spoken feature of the language.

The verb form *iitin* is similar to the -*ing* form in English, however, the spelling is different. *Gwain/goin* is very similar to the English -*ing* form as well, but with the “going” construction in English, the future is almost always expressed. With *gwain/goin* in JamC, not all examples express future time. One third of the examples express ongoing events, such as illustrated in example (18).

6. Conclusion

In this study, I argue that the ways of expressing the progressive in JamC is not at all less complex than that of English, which is the lexifier language of the creole. JamC sometimes has a more complex way of expressing things, sometimes the understanding is very context-bound, other times far more words and expressions than the English language does are being used in JamC.

On the other hand, it can also be argued that, due to the fact that JamC uses the very same verb form, regardless of whether JamC speakers want to express something in the past, present or future, and that no distinctions are made between plural or singular subject, their language is less complex and less varied than English. In order to claim something to be less complex, any English speaker would be able to understand the less complex form of their language. However, this is not the case, creoles are completely different languages, hence it can be argued that creoles are not less complex than any other languages.

The particles *a* and *de* can function as prepositions, determiners, main verbs, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, adverbs and emphatic markers. They do not exclusively mark progressives. However, *gwain* only function as a progressive marker.

There are no clear differences between the different markers when it comes to the verb in progressive that is marked, the ongoing or future action. There seem to be a tendency that shows that *de* marks states to a greater extent that *a* does, but this is not an exclusive rule. *Gwain* almost exclusively refer to future intentions.

It can be argued that *de* and *gwain* are decreasing in usage, or that they are not as commonly used in writing, compared to *a*. They are far less frequent, or do not occur at all, in the corpus from 2012. However, in the corpus from 1960, *de* is used far more often to mark
the progressive, compared to *a*. *Gwain* marks only the progressive, but it is not at all that frequent compared to *de*. There is therefore a tendency that could show that *de* used to be the progressive marker, but during the creolization process, this has changed. It can also be argued that this is a feature of spoken language, rather than written.

Nor do there seem to be any difference between the three markers regarding which person they refer to. The third person is mostly frequent with all of the markers in the corpora. However, *de* is the only marker that is preceded by *wa* (‘what’) in the sense of “what is going to happen”.

During the creolization process, there have also been a few grammatical changes. *A* is increasingly losing its lexical function and is becoming a more grammatical item. *De*, on the other hand, seems to receive a more lexical function, as a main verb, instead of an auxiliary. However, this is very unlikely and therefore it is argued that *de* functions differently in spoken language compared to written language.

Finally, a suggestion for further studies would be to use a bigger corpus, with only written, present-day Jamaican Creole, in order to more thoroughly determine how the progressive is expressed in JamC.
Reference list

Primary sources

Secondary sources
Bickerton, Derek (1975), Dynamics of a creole system, London: Cambridge University Press
Durrelman-Tame, Stephanie (2008), The syntax of Jamaican Creole: a cartographic perspective, Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Estling Vannestål, Maria (2007), A university grammar of English: with a Swedish perspective, Stockholm: Studentlitteratur
Fant, Lars, Hermerén, Ingrid & Österberg, Rakel (2004), Bonniers spanska grammatik Stockholm: Bonnier

Hopper, Paul J. & Traugott, Elizabeth Closs (2003), Grammaticalization, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press


Kranich, Svenja (2010), The progressive in modern English: a corpus-based study of grammaticalization and related changes, Amsterdam: Rodopi

Lalla, Barbara & D'Costa, Jean (1990), Language in exile: three hundred years of Jamaican Creole, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press


Mühlhäusler, Peter (1986), Pidgin & Creole linguistics, Oxford: Blackwell


Yule, George (2007), The study of language, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press