

## **Null subjects in (Romance-derived) creoles: routes of evolution**

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### Introduction

Among the putatively universal characteristics of creole languages (at least those formed on the basis of Indo-European languages) is the lack of verbal inflection for person and number, and the obligatory use of overt subject pronouns (with the possible exception of null expletive subjects). This configuration obtains regardless of the status of the lexifier language. Thus, for example, Spanish- and Portuguese-based creoles, which derive from null subject lexifier languages, uniformly require overt subject pronouns in nearly all cases, as do creoles derived from French, a non-prodrop language. Prodrop languages like Spanish and Portuguese have a rich agreement system (the AGR component of INFL), which is assumed to license null pronominals in subject position, the precise mechanism varying from model to model. Subsequent research on languages with no verbal inflection, but which allow null subjects (e.g. Chinese) has produced an expansion of the notion that only a rich verbal morphology can license null pronouns. In languages lacking verbal inflection, a 'discourse-orientation' is often required to permit a null pronoun to be coindexed with an antecedent in a higher clause, or in the preceding discourse (cf. Huang 1984). Simplifying drastically, the lack of a discourse orientation (nongap topics, multiple topics, etc.) disallows null subject pronouns in some languages which lack verbal inflection, while the presence of these features allows null subjects in other languages. Discourse orientation/nongap and null topics are areal characteristics of some east Asian languages. Since Romance-based creoles do not derive from lexifier languages which completely lack verbal inflection or which have a discourse orientation, the lack of null subjects in these creoles could be a simple consequence of the lack of rich agreement morphology combined with the lack of alternative mechanisms for licensing null pronouns.

Closely related to the issue of subject pronouns in creole languages is the extent to which substratum influences can shape--even alter--fundamental patterns of creole syntax. The present study examines the question of null subject usage and areal linguistic characteristics in several representative cases. The examples range from mainstream to marginal, but all exemplify in some fashion referential null subjects in Romance-derived creoles. Although the comparative study does not yield a single configuration for all creoles, the results do suggest the fundamental validity of the lack of null pronominals in creole languages, except for special circumstances.

### Null subjects in Philippine Creole Spanish

Philippine Creole Spanish, also known as Chabacano, is spoken vestigially in the Manila Bay enclaves of Cavite and Ternate, but the major speech community is found in Zamboanga City. Zamboangueno Chabacano is the native language of the majority of the population of Zamboanga del Sur province, in the southwestern tip of the island of Mindanao; native speakers number in excess of 300,000, and perhaps another 100,000-200,000 speak Zamboangueno

Chabacano as a strong second language.<sup>1</sup> Zamboangueno is a vigorous and growing language, used in all aspects of daily life, including radio and television broadcasting, possessing some written literature, and recognized as the de facto majority language of the region. It will be shown that although PCS is nominally a non-prodrop language, and has no verbal inflection, null subjects can be licensed in certain instances. The circumstances in which such null subjects can (optionally) appear do not fit with patterns of null subject pronouns for Ibero-Romance. Nor are they fully derivable from null subject configurations permitted in the major Philippine languages which served as input during the formation of PCS. In the balance, however, PCS does not represent yet another parametric option of the pro-drop configuration. Rather, this language is hybrid in the extreme, and embodies a unique synthesis of the null argument configurations and syntactic requirements on pronominal antecedents of both Spanish and the major Philippine languages. PCS derives from the intersection of a 'classical' prodrop language (Spanish) and a language family with very different null argument options. Areal characteristics of major Philippine languages, in which 'subject' does not enjoy the same syntactically unambiguous status as in Romance languages, were instrumental in creating a limited pro-drop language which is typologically distinct from both its Romance and its Austronesian progenors.

PCS arguably permits null subjects in several configurations, of which only two are of theoretical interest for the development of a non-prodrop creole from a prodrop lexifier language (Lipski 1996a). First, and as a direct inheritance from Spanish, PCS has null expletive subjects:

(1)

a. *ya tene/tiene hente na mundo* (McKaughan 1954: 218)

'There were already people in the world'

b. *noay pa hente na mundo* (McKaughan 1954: 216)

'There were not yet people in the world'

c. *estaba ya gayot ta kay ulan duro duro* (McKaughan 1954: 214)

'Rain was [already] falling very hard'

d. Q: *Tiene muslim ke sabe chabacano?* A: *Tiene sabe, tiene no sabe* (Lipski tape Z-46)

'Are there Moslems who know Chabacano? There are [those who] know [it], there are [those who] don't know [it]'

e. *Tiene bes ta lyigá kasa di Yoni* (Lipski tape Z-31)

'There are times when [I] go to Yoni's house'

Assuming that licensing of null pronouns is an issue separate from identification of grammatical features,<sup>2</sup> a language which lacks means of identification of grammatically significant pronouns will not necessarily fail to license null expletive subjects. PCS has taken over many expletive or impersonal constructions virtually unchanged (although the more common Spanish existential *haber* was usually replaced by the vernacular *tener*).

Marginally, PCS also allows null subjects in conjoined verbal structures, where the optional presence of a conjunction between the verbs and/or the different argument structures of the individual verbs indicates that no serial construction is involved. In these cases, PCS can license null subject pronouns before the second and following verbs, provided that an overt

subject occurs with the first verb.<sup>3</sup> The presence of a (optional) conjunction appears to favor null subject pronouns even more.

(2)

a. Mama talya na bentana ta espera konmigo (McKaughan 1954: 215)

`Mama was in the window [and she was] waiting for me'

b. Ya lyama el rey kon el baw ya pregunta konele porké ele ta karga su kasa (McKaughan 1954: 216)

`The king called the turtle [and he] asked him why he carried his house'

c. Kosa le ya ase ya sake su korta-pluma ya empesa pone aguhero na buli del mana olya (McKaughan 1954: 222)

`What did he do, [he] took out his penknife [and he] began putting holes in the bottom of the pots'

d. mana Hapón ya tene kambyo de korasón ya manda kanamon sale (McKaughan 1954: 225)

`The Japanese had a change of heart [and they] ordered us (excl.) to leave'

e. si kabaw ya ri ke ri y ya abla kon komaching "no sabe bos ke amó este rio mi casa?" (McKaughan 1954: 210)

`The turtle laughed and laughed and [he] said to the monkey "Don't you know that this river is my home?"'

f. El muher tyene myedo y ya pregunta kosa le kyere (McKaughan 1954: 213)

`The woman was afraid and [she] asked what he wanted'

g. Por eso kohre kamé enseguidas y ya bisti pronto pronto (McKaughan 1954: 214)

`Therefore we (excl.) ran at once and [we] got dressed very quickly'

Although there is some syntactic evidence in favor of regarding certain conjoined clauses as not having two separate subject positions (cf. e.g. Goodall 1987), this usually occurs with a much tighter relationship between the two predicates. In Spanish, the marginal or ungrammatical status of repeated overt subject pronouns in certain conjoined constructions has at times been taken as evidence for a single subject position (e.g. Rigau 1986); in PCS, however, overt subject pronouns are never ungrammatical in conjoined constructions, and for some (perhaps most) speakers, may be required for full grammaticality.

Of greater interest for the typology of creole pronominal structures are instances in which PCS null subjects occur in the absence of conjoined constructions, serial verbs, or other potential mitigating factors. Although in no case in PCS are null subjects preferred over overt pronouns, they occur at a rate and in a variety of circumstances which may not be attributed to mere chance or random performance errors. In each case, the referent of the null subject pronoun is recoverable from the preceding context, usually being the same as the last-occurring overt pronoun. This usage of null subjects is most common in response to a question, with appropriate shift of pronominal reference. In some instances, null subject pronouns refer to elements more distantly removed in the preceding discourse, but this is exceptional. The following examples are illustrative of the type and range of examples that can be found in PCS:

(3)

a. El hente en bes de sende su kandela ya dale el disuyo mismo. Ya abla kon el muher ke bolbe ele el sigyente dia ... (McKaughan 1954: 212)

`The person, instead of lighting her candle, gave her his. [he] said to the woman that he would return the next day.'

b. El padre ya lyeba konele resa y ya manda konele usa un krusifiho y medalya del Birhen. Despues ya dale un kandela bendesido ke sende le y pone na su kabesa ... (McKaughan 1954: 212)

`The priest had her pray and [he] ordered her to use a cruxifix and a medallion of the Virgin. Then [he] gave her a blessed candle for [her] to light and for [her] to put on her head.'

c. El muher tyene myedo y ya pregunta kosa le kyere (McKaughan 1954: 213)

`The woman was afraid and [she] asked what he wanted.'

d. Un dia ya anda le na kasa ta lyeba konmigo anda na Balará para nada. Ya abla yo konele pwede pero nesesito kamé bolbe temprano ... (McKaughan 1954: 214)

`One day she came to my house to take me with her to Balara to go swimming. I said that [I] could, but we had to return early ...'

e. Por eso kohre kamé enseguidas y ya bisti pronto pronto. Despues ay anda na eskwela ... (McKaughan 1954: 214)

`Therefore we ran quickly and [we] got dressed rapidly. Then [we] would go to school.

f. Ya lyama kon el namuk y ya pregunta porké le ta morde kon el aninipot (McKaughan 1954: 217)

`Then [the king] called the mosquito and [he] asked why he was always biting the firefly.'

g. Un noche kwando no ay silá na kasa, el aninipot ya roba el diila komida. Sabe gayot kay el aninipot amo ya roba kay ya mira silá kon el aninipot ta sale na diila kasa ... (McKaughan 1954: 217)

`One night when they were not at home, the firefly stole their food. [they] knew that it was the firefly who had robbed them because they saw the firefly leaving their house.'

h. Al ber el kuray kon el namuk enseguidas ya entra na aguhero (McKaughan 1954: 217)

`When the crab saw the mosquito, [he] immediately went into the hole'

i. Un dia el aninipot kwando estaba ta baña na rio ya enkontra el anilyo ... (McKaughan 1954: 219)

`One day the firefly, when [we] was bathing in the river, found the ring ...'

j. Un dia el nana di Juan kwando ya empesa kosina ya mira ke todol diila mana olya kebraw ya (McKaughan 1954: 221)

`One day John's mother, when [she] began to cook, noticed that all their pots were broken'

k. Despues si Juan ta lyora ya kohre na tyange para kompral olya (McKaughan 1954: 221)

`After Juan had cried, [he] ran to the market to buy pots'

l. kwando ya mira el nana ke todol mana olya tyene mana aguhero ya rabya ke rabya (McKaughan 1954: 222)

`When the mother saw that all the pots had holes in them, [she] got very angry'

m. Antes kel kon Lakian ta trabaha, ta buta lang urinola (Frake 1980: 284)

`He used to work for Lakian; (he) just emptied urinals'

n. ya man-engkwentro konele na tyangge (Frake 1980: 297)

`[I] met her in the market'

o. ta kamina ki kamina yo, no sabe ya yo donde ya ginda (Frake 1980: 299)

`I walked and walked, I didn't know where [I] was going'

- p. Ta pwede pa kome chicharon maskin kwanto bilug ya lang el dyente (Frake 1980: 301)  
 [He] can still eat pork rinds no matter how many teeth [he has] left'
- q. Nuay kere konmigo (Frake 1980: 302)  
 `[She] didn't like me'
- r. Byen borracho gat kami, poneso ta man-pelyahan (Frake 1980: 309)  
 `We (excl.) were very drunk, that's why [we] fought each other'
- s. Q: Tiene muslim ke sabe chabacano? A: Tiene sabe, tiene no sabe (Lipski tape Z-46)  
 `Q: Are there Moslems who know Chabacano? A: There are [those who] know [it], there are  
 [those who] don't know [it]'
- t. A las seis y media ay lyigá (Lipski tape Z-45)  
 `At 6:00 [the plane] will arrive'
- u. Joben pa, tyene setenta cuatro año (Lipski tape Z-30)  
 `[I] [am] still young, [I] am 74 years old'
- v. Cuando sale afuera, ya murí (Lipski tape Z-6/R)  
 `When [he] went outside, [he] died'
- w. Kwanto que ya lyibá (Lipski tape Z-6/R)  
 `How much did [he] carry off [i.e. steal]?'
- x. ... kay necesita gat aquel mga papeles (Lipski tape Z-7/R)  
 `Because [he] really needs those papers'
- y. no puede separá konele (Lipski tape Z-7/R)  
 `[He] cannot separate from her'
- z. Q: Aquel mga bata di kwatro, sinko año, ya sabe silá inglés? A: Sabe! (Lipski tape Z-43)  
 `Q: Those children who are 4-5 years old, do they already know English? A: [They] know  
 [it].'
- aa. Ya acostumbra ya yo usá "usted", ya aprendí na español (Lipski tape Z-43)  
 `I already learned to use "usted"; [I] learned [it] in Spanish'
- ab. Q: El mga hente di Zamboanga ta aceptá el Biblia na chabacano? A: Aceptá ya silá, el  
 primero impulso, no quiere, acabar ta quiere quiere ya (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `Q: Do the people of Zamboanga accept the [version of the] Bible in Chabacano? A: They  
 accept it now; the first impression, [they] didn't like [it], then, [they] got to liking [it]'
- ac. Chabacano duro daw, duele na oído (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `It's rough Chabacano they say, [it] hurts the ears'
- ad. Un buen amiga kamé desde antes. Tiene bes ta lyigá kasa di Yoni (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `We (excl.) have been good friends for a long time. Sometimes [I] go to Yoni's house'
- ae. Tiene mas di nobenta años, pero fuerte pa (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `[They] are more than 90 years old, but [they] are still strong'
- af. Ta brinká na agua, así toka sen (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `[They = Samal children] jump in the water, [they] grab coins'
- ag. Planyá kitá dos, un dia anda pa alyá (Lipski tape Z-31)  
 `We (incl.) will make plans, one day [we] will go there'
- ah. Aquel mga bata sabe man-comprehend, entendé kosa ki ta lé, y sabe eskribí (Lipski tape  
 Z-7/R)

`Those kids know how to understand, [they] understand what they read, and [they] know how to write'

ai. Subí anay. Grasyas, no puede, kay tiene yo klase (Forman 1972: 23)

`Come on in. Thanks, [I] can't, because I have class'

aj. al akabá ya ele di banyá i nadá, ya bolbé na su kasa (Forman 1972: 145)

`After he finished bathing and swimming, [he] returned home'

ak. Quiere ba bos komigo o no quiere gayot? (PCS) (Forman 1972: 165)

`Do you want [to go] with me, or don't [you] want to at all?'

al. El maga Cristiano quien tiene miedo ya prepiri queda na monte por causa del matansa y robos de maga bata ta hace el escuela. Ya dura por tres meses tiene lang dies estudiante.

`The frightened Christians who preferred to stay in the hills because of the killings and kidnappings built the school. [the school] lasted for three months [and] had only ten students' (Cuartocruz 1992: 180-1)

One major difference between the null pronoun usage exemplified in (3) and licensing of null pronouns in prodrop languages is in the type of acceptability judgements offered by native speakers. In Spanish and Portuguese, speakers unhesitatingly accept any and all sentences containing null subject pronouns, and in fact prefer null pronouns to overt pronouns in most cases. In PCS, sentences with null subject pronouns are never accepted in isolation, since the lack of AGR in these languages makes identification of the subject impossible in simple clauses. On the other hand, when presented with examples like those in (3), in which subject pronouns have been omitted following a well-defined context which permits identification, most PCS speakers acknowledge the use of null subject pronouns as acceptable. Thus, examples like (3) do not represent performance errors, hesitation phenomena or momentary lapses, and must be accounted within syntactic models of subject pronoun behavior.<sup>4</sup>

In PCS, the use of null subject pronouns in impersonal constructions occurs in free alternation with the third person plural overt pronoun *silá*, reflecting (and probably deriving directly from) the Ibero-Romance option of using 3pl. verbal inflection (in the obligatory absence of overt pronouns, cf. Jaeggli 1986) or the `impersonal *se*' for impersonal constructions:

(4)

a. ta siña kanila "English" (Lipski tape Z-32)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] teaches them "English" [the subject]'

b. necesita pa gat syempre usa chabacano (Lipski tape Z-32)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] still need to use Chabacano all the time'

c. nuay ustedes cosa que apagá, abla silá libre (Lipski tape Z-7/R)

`You don't have to pay anything; they say that [it is] free'

d. ya tira konele (Lipski tape Z-7/R)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] shot him'

e. `Kon ese, debe ya kon ese kuhí (Lipski tape Z-7/R)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] should have caught him already'

f. Ta mata konele akí na Zamboanga (Lipski tape Z-7/R)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] killed him here in Zamboanga'

g. si abla kamé el verdat, ay mata kanamon (Lipski tape Z-7/R)

'If we (excl.) tell the truth, [*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] will kill us.'

h. hende ta ablá "ta estaba" (Lipski tape Z-30)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] doesn't say "ta estaba"

i. ta manda kortá kon ese palay, ta asé kamaring grande, alyá ta juntá palay ... (Lipski tape Z-30)

`[*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] has the rice cut, [*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] makes big piles, [*pro*<sub>arb</sub>] gathers the rice up there'

Use of overt 3pl. pronouns is more frequent with verbs of reporting, or when referring to customs or activities performed by an identifiable group of people. Use of *pro*<sub>arb</sub> in turn may represent a more abstract, detached perspective. The differences between overt and null pronouns are minimal and highly permeable, and as with the *pro*<sub>arb</sub>/*se* distinction in Ibero-Romance, one form can usually be substituted for the other without substantially altering the meaning of the sentence. In PCS, use of the overt 3pl. pronoun with arbitrary reference exactly parallels the Ibero-Romance use of *pro*<sub>arb</sub> in that the speaker is necessarily excluded (cf. Suñer 1983, Jaeggli 1986).

Even after considering sentences with possibly expletive or impersonal null subjects, there still remains an important residue of true referential null subjects in PCS. These sentences exhibit a rather unusual set of syntactic configurations, in comparison with patterns of null and overt pronoun usage in more conventional null subject languages. The majority of referential null subjects in PCS occur in matrix clauses, where the null pronoun is coreferential with an NP in the preceding discourse. Null subjects in embedded clauses are relatively infrequent; there are almost no instances where a null subject in a subordinate clause is coreferential with a matrix subject.<sup>5</sup> In a few cases (e.g. 3ah), an overt preverbal subject in a matrix clause can bind a null subject, and very occasionally a null subject in a subordinate clause is coreferential with a null matrix subject. However, a thorough search of hundreds of hours of recorded material, as well as explicit questioning of native speakers, fails to reveal an instances where an overt subject in the usual postverbal position serves as antecedent for a null subject in a lower clause. On the other hand, a NULL subject can bind an OVERT subject in a subordinate clause (e.g. 3a, 3ai). This distribution differs from other AGR-less languages such as Chinese and Korean, which allow null embedded subjects, but where coreference with the matrix subject is the preferred option (e.g. via the Generalized Control Rule of Huang 1984, 1989).<sup>6</sup>

Rizzi (1986), in developing a theory of *pro* which includes occurrences in subject and object position, suggests that in some languages which lack AGR, the notion of *-features* does not play a role in the grammar. In such languages, 'any licit occurrence of *pro* can be used as nonargumental, quasi-argumental, and referential' (Rizzi 1986: 546). Since PCS shows no independent evidence of *-features*, having no person or number concordance of any kind (except for a handful of fossilized lexical items, cf. Lipski 1986), null subjects in PCS do not conform to Rizzi's original generalization (p. 543) that 'an NP is referential only if it has the specifications of person and number' and 'an NP is argumental only if it has the specification of number.'<sup>7</sup> At the same time, if the GCR does not apply to *pro* in PCS, as the parameterization offered by Cole (1987) would suggest, then assignment of *-features* to subject *pro* cannot take

place by the usual mechanisms of coindexation with an appropriately specified governing NP or AGR.<sup>8</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that referential null subjects in PCS are anything other than *pro*. However, the binding restrictions need to be explained, as does the fact that the limited null subject option in PCS is typologically quite different from null subject usage in Spanish.

#### Null arguments in Philippine languages

The behavior of null arguments in Austronesian languages, and in particular in Philippine languages, has received relatively little attention, as compared with research e.g. on certain 'rich AGR' Romance languages, and on 'AGR-less' Asian languages such as Chinese and Korean. Contemporary Zamboangueño PCS contains the highest proportion of elements from central Philippine languages grouped under the general heading of Visayan/Cebuano (cf. Frake 1971, 1980). However, it is likely that Zamboangueño formed through the common intersection of major coastal Philippine languages, which had already absorbed large numbers of Spanish lexical items, with an additional infusion of the already-formed PCS dialects of Manila Bay (cf. Lipski 1992). It is therefore instructive to briefly consider null argument behavior in the two foremost Philippine languages, both in terms of current documentation and as regards their likely contribution to the formation of PCS: Cebuano and Tagalog.

In general, Tagalog and other Philippine languages require overt subject pronouns, since verbs are not inflected for person and number. However, the term 'subject' is somewhat of a misnomer when dealing with Philippine languages; a better designation is topic-oriented languages (cf. Constantino 1965, McKaughan 1973, Schachter 1976, Schwartz 1976). Any of the nominal arguments can occupy the topic position (normally the first nominal in a clause); accompanying verbal and adjectival morphology changes accordingly. However, there are special instances where the 'subject' (i.e. topic) pronoun of a subordinate clause may be, and sometimes must be, null. Kroeger (1993: 31), based on Schachter and Otones (1972: 477), observes that 'when the nominative argument of the dependent clause is coreferential with the nominative argument of the main clause, it must be deleted.' This is true regardless of whether the nominative argument occupies the topic (first) position or another argument position. For example in (5), the nominative argument of the main clause (*ang bata*) does not occupy the first position, but it still triggers obviation of the subordinate nominative argument (in this case, as the only argument, occupying subject position).

(5)

Tinukso ni Juan ang bata, kaya umiyak (\*siya)

'Juan teased the child, so that (\*it) cried.'

In other types of subordinate clauses, a null pronoun is not required for a nominative argument which is coreferential to the nominative argument of the main clause, but when a null pronoun appears in the subordinate clause, it is always coreferential to the nominative argument of the main clause, regardless of the position in which the latter occurs (nominative arguments are underlined):



- (6)
- a. Tinanong ni Derek *si Marvin*, bago umalis [*siya*]  
 `Derek asked Marvin before [he=Marvin] left'
- b. Nagtanong *si Derek* kay Marvin, bago umalis [*siya*]  
 `Derek asked Marvin before [he=Derek] left'

The reasons for obligatory null pronouns in (5) versus optional null pronouns in (6) have not yet been completely elucidated (native speakers of Tagalog consulted by the present writer found null pronouns to be optional in both cases), but these examples illustrate the limited possibilities for embedded null subjects in Tagalog. Null pronouns in subordinate clauses must corefer to the nominative argument of the immediately superior clause; no more `distant' coreference is usually allowed.

In studying optionally null arguments in matrix clauses, McGinn (1988) has suggested that in Tagalog, only nominative subjects in preverbal position (marked by the particle *ay*) are governed (in this case, by *ay*), and thus are obligatorily realized as an overt noun or pronoun. He postulates that *ay* is present in the D-structure representation, signalling new information. When *ay* is absent, the subject is either null (presumably remaining in preverbal--ungoverned--position), or acquires government by moving postverbally, in which case it may optionally occur in overt form:

- (7)
- a. Si Pedro *ay* bumili ng tela  
 `Pedro bought some cloth.'
- b. Bumili ng tela [*si Pedro*]  
 `Pedro bought some cloth.'

The situation in Cebuano/Visayan is homologous.

A comparison of argument structures in PCS and Philippine languages reveals that PCS has not simply adopted the configurations of the latter languages, although a more subtle influence may be postulated. The limited use of null subjects in PCS is qualitatively different from patterns found in Philippine languages. For example, argument-bound null subjects in subordinate clauses, such as in (7), are almost never found in PCS. In Philippine languages, on the other hand, it is not customary to answer a question with a NULL SUBJECT + VERB combination, as in (3z). The usual answer is `yes,' `no,' etc. Philippine languages do permit null `subjects' (i.e. arguments marked with NOM) as in (7b), as long as the reference can be extracted from the preceding discourse.

#### Subject position and subject binding in PCS

PCS did not directly inherit the subject/topic distinction which prevails in Philippine languages, among other reasons because PCS lacks the full verb paradigms and rich case marking which allows for multiple variants of a simple sentence e.g. in Tagalog or Cebuano. PCS marks genitive with *di* + NP, dative with *para (di)* + NP, and accusative with *kon* + NP. The morphosyntactic relations among arguments cannot be interchanged in any regular way.

Sentences such as *Ta mira 'le kanamon* 'he sees us [excl.]' or *Anda 'le na di su casa* 'He's going to his house' cannot be produced with any alternative case markings, nor does PCS employ focalizing strategies such as left-dislocation to topicalize non-nominative arguments. Also lacking in PCS is a passive construction, which in Philippine languages provides another morphological alternative, allowing a non-actor to assume 'subject' status. The fact that all non-nominative case in PCS is assigned by particles provides the means for an explanation of the limited binding possibilities of embedded null subjects.

McGinn (1988)'s analysis of Tagalog can be modified to fit the PCS data. We assume that verbs in PCS do not assign case to their subcategorized arguments. Nominative case is assigned by INFL, but only to a postverbal position (under government). Case-marking particles (*con, di, para di*) assign the remaining cases. In the absence of the appropriate case-assigner, null arguments--including null direct objects--are possible in PCS.

Although PCS is a strongly VSO language, it permits preverbal subjects, but only when a focused reading is intended. All other (overt) subjects appear in immediate post-verbal position. In particular, pronominal subjects can never occur preverbally. If we assume an underlying SVO order, preverbal 'subject' position is not a governed position, cannot receive case, and consequently cannot be occupied by an overt subject. What appear to be preverbal 'subjects' in PCS--always referential NPs and never pronouns--are in fact left-dislocated/topicalized arguments, which receive their case through the usual chain-formation associated with topicalization (e.g. 2d, 2f, 3b, 3g). Heavy NPs are especially favored candidates for left-dislocation (e.g. 3a, 3j, 3l). Null subjects in PCS remain in the ungoverned preverbal position.

These configurations explain the binding asymmetries between null and overt subjects in PCS. A null subject cannot be bound by an overt postverbal subject in a higher clause, since the latter does not c-command the preverbal argument position of the lower clause.<sup>9</sup> It is possible for a preverbal overt 'subject' in a matrix clause (actually located in a topic position) to bind a null subject in a lower clause (cf. example 3ah), since the topicalized subject c-commands the lower clause. A null subject in the matrix clause can bind an overt postverbal subject in a subordinate clause, for example in (3a), (3ai), since the preverbal null subject c-commands the lower postverbal subject. It is also possible in theory for a preverbal null subject to be bound by a null subject in a higher clause, since c-command obtains as long as the higher subject remains in preverbal position. Such double-null subject configurations are rare, given the strain placed on pronominal identification in an AGR-less language, but combinations such as *abla sabe* '[pro<sub>i</sub>] says that [pro<sub>j</sub>] knows' occasionally occur. When questioned explicitly, however, native speakers of PCS find such sentences odd and very marginal. PCS null subjects in matrix clauses are not bound to an antecedent in the syntactic sense, but rather derive their reference from pragmatic clues from the immediately preceding context, such as the frequent use of null subjects in response to a question.

From a purely syntactic point of view, nothing should exclude the possibility for a null embedded subject to take a postverbal matrix subject as antecedent. Although the higher subject would not bind the lower one (since c-command does not obtain), binding condition B would allow any antecedent outside the embedded clause to serve as antecedent for the embedded null pronoun. For embedded null subjects, however, PCS requires syntactic binding

to establish the antecedent; matrix null subjects can find their antecedent anywhere in the immediately preceding context, including a left-dislocated subordinate clause from the same sentence (e.g. 3v, 3aj). This suggests that the null subject is behaving just as other, sentence-initial, null subjects: it is receiving its antecedent from the immediately preceding discourse. In the special case of a left-dislocated subordinate clause, the 'immediately preceding' discourse actually contains material which is syntactically linked to the clause containing the null subject. The licensing of embedded null subjects in PCS has retained the 'flavor' of the major Philippine languages, but has given a more Romance twist to the syntactic particulars. In Philippine languages such as Tagalog and Cebuano, an embedded null subject (i.e. nominative argument) must take as its antecedent the 'subject' (nominative argument) of the immediately superior clause (as in (6)). Since the nominative argument does not have to occupy a particular syntactic configuration in the matrix clause, and in particular since it does not have to c-command the lower subject, identification of the lower subject is dependent on morphological agreement, not syntactic configurations. PCS lacks the rich morphological structure which would allow the licensing of an embedded null subject, so the strictly syntactic condition of binding is the required configuration. Although Spanish does not place special restrictions on the binding of embedded null subjects (other than the usual binding conditions), the fact that Spanish is more generally a SVO language ensures that the higher subject will c-command the lower one. The default reading when verb morphology is ambiguous (e.g. in the third person) is for the lower null subject to take the higher one as its antecedent.<sup>10</sup>

(8)

Juan dice que vendrá

'John<sub>i</sub> says that [*pro*<sub>i</sub>; i preferred] will come'

By requiring syntactic binding of an embedded null subject, PCS has compensated both for the lack of Spanish verb morphology and for the lack of Philippine case-marking, which would allow greater syntactic flexibility in the identification of null subjects in embedded clauses.

The limited use of null referential subjects in PCS occurs mostly in matrix clauses, where pragmatic factors supply coreference with an antecedent in the preceding discourse. When occurring in subordinate clauses, null subjects occur almost always in positions where they can be bound by their antecedents. The use of null subjects in PCS does not duplicate the allowable configurations of either Spanish or the major Philippine languages, although there is greater affinity with the latter group. PCS shares with languages such as Tagalog and Cebuano the optional availability of null arguments in matrix clauses, but employs the criteria of syntactic binding of embedded subjects in a fashion more akin to Romance language patterns. In the development of PCS, AGR was completely eroded, thus requiring overt subjects for identification. At the macro-level, PCS shares with other Ibero-Romance based creoles the required use of overt subject pronouns. A theoretical tolerance for null arguments, patterned after Philippine languages, is tempered by the inherited Ibero-Romance requirement of full identification of subjects, either through verbal inflection or through overt arguments. If PCS were merely the combination of inherited Spanish syntactic patterns and the results of universal creole traits, the existence of null referential subjects would not be predicted. The contribution of Philippine languages was decisive, for it is only via a Philippine contribution that the cluster of

syntactic properties which define PCS subjects can be explained. In this and many other structures, PCS is hybrid in the extreme, as befits a language which was probably derived from the common intersection of Philippine languages already influenced by Spanish, rather than through the abrupt creolization of Spanish (cf. Lipski 1992). Whereas some creole developments may be explainable without reference to substrate areal characteristics, null subject behavior in PCS bears the traces of an extended symbiotic relation between first- and second-language varieties of Spanish and an intersection of Philippine languages.

A contrary case: Mauritian creole

Zamboanga PCS is of interest both to historical linguistics and to creole studies since it is a creole language derived from a freely pro-drop language, which largely disallows the type of null subjects found in the lexifier language, but which permits innovative null subject configurations which result from the intersection of the lexifier language and an exceptionally homogeneous set of substrate languages. A different case is provided by Mauritian creole (MC), which derives from French, a strongly non-prodrop language. Unlike the case of PCS, MC apparently does not bear the imprint of a coherent group of substratum languages as regards detailed syntactic configurations. According to Baker and Corne (1986: 175), the main languages spoken on Mauritius during the formative period of MC were several Bantu languages of Eastern Africa, and to a lesser extent Malagasy.

Baker and Corne (1982, 1986) suggest that MC may have developed some of its more unique syntactic patterns in tandem with some African languages, but neither Malagasy nor Bantu languages are null subject languages (strictly speaking, most Bantu languages can be regarded as 'null subject' languages, since they combine obligatory preverbal subject clitics--most of which probably are situated in INFL rather than SPEC/IP--and optional free-standing subject pronouns). The lexifier language of MC, 17th and 18th century French (plus more recent contact with metropolitan French), does not allow any type of null subject. However, MC allows for a variety of null subjects in circumstances which cannot be attributed directly either to French or to substrate languages. Baker and Corne (1982: 89-90) give examples of 'indefinite subject deletion,' e.g.

(9)

lôtâ, *0* ti degrad karo kan ar pios

'Long ago, [people] cleared canefields with a pickaxe'

In such sentences, it can be argued that *pro*<sub>arb</sub> or another quasi-argument is the optional null subject. However, Adone (1994) provides ample evidence of non-arbitrary referential null subjects in MC. Like PCS, MC allows null subjects in matrix clauses in answer to questions, but only if an accompanying preverbal TMA particle (instantiating INFL) is present (Adone 1994: 115-6):

(10)

a. to papa ki *0* pe fer? *0* pe lave

'What is your father doing? [He] is washing [clothes]'

b. \**0* al lekol

`[he/she] goes to school'

Adone suggests that the (preverbal) null subject is properly governed by the particle in INFL. However, similar to PCS and unlike e.g. Chinese, MC does not allow an embedded null subject to be bound by a matrix subject:

(11)

Zańi dir 0\*<sub>i/j</sub> pa kon Mari

`John<sub>i</sub> says that [he]<sub>i/j</sub>\* does not know Mary

Adone takes this as evidence that the null subject must be a variable. To satisfy the Empty Category Principle, this variable must be both properly governed (by the particle in INFL) and identified (presumably by a topic or 'an abstract operator which may be coindexed with the discourse topic' (Adone 1994: 116)).

Equally interesting is the acquisitional sequence of subjects in MC. Again according to Adone (1994), children at first produce an extraordinarily high number (> 60%) of null subjects and objects, irrespective of the existence of governing particles in INFL. Adone supports the idea that early child language has not yet developed functional categories, hence there is no INFL, no IP, and no SPEC/IP which provides the usual preverbal 'subject' position. The second acquisitional stage of MC is characterized by a sudden jump to 75%-90% use of overt subject pronouns, together with the emergence of some particles in INFL. Two possible explanations are advanced for this radical change. In the first, the new availability of SPEC/IP triggers universal tendencies (observed in most creoles) for this position to be filled by a lexical subject. The second hypothesis is that children at stage II have not yet learned that INFL particles (which are [-AGR]) properly govern the subject position, and thus allow for null subjects.

The third acquisitional stage approximates adult language. Children apparently realize that INFL particles can license a null subject, so the number of null subjects increases to adult levels, although never coming close to the figures representing the earliest developmental stage. At the same time, the binding restrictions entailed by the status of the null subject as variable come into play, so that an embedded null subject can never be bound by a (c-commanding) matrix subject.

The MC data are of great interest to creole studies, since not only does MC permit a limited range of null subjects, but its lexifier language is a strictly non-prodrop language, and no feature of the known substratum languages suggests a source for null subjects in contemporary MC. That the use of null subjects in MC is a relatively recent development is indicated by the lack of comparable constructions in the other Indian Ocean French creoles, e.g. Seychelles creole.<sup>11</sup> In Seselwa, subject pronouns, including the resumptive pronoun *i*, are required at all times; responses with omitted pronouns are considered highly deviant even in rapid speech:

(12)

a. U papa, qui \*(i) i pe fe?

b. \*(i) pe lavé

Although the data offered by Adone are quite limited, null subjects in MC appear to be limited to colloquial spoken discourse, normally in response to questions or comments by an interlocutor which provide pragmatic discourse identification of the null subject. Adone provides no examples of an acceptable embedded null subject, except when the subject is coindexed with (and A'-bound by) a left-dislocated element:

(13)

sa madam la, mo rapel *o* ti vini

`This lady, I remember [she] came'

In this sentence, it could be argued that chain formation has created the A'-binding configuration, which is not unlike other constructions which occur among the Romance languages, including French. This may very well be the original construction, which eventually gave rise to null subjects in matrix clauses, together with the restriction that such subjects be properly governed by an INFL particle. The preceding sentence clearly contains an A'-bound variable, which creates the expectation that missing subjects are to be analyzed as variables rather than as *pro*. Left-dislocated structures of this sort do not represent a major deviation from French or creole patterns. If the original left-dislocated sentences all contained a preverbal particle in the embedded clause (e.g. *ti*), then this particle may have come to be regarded as essential to permitting the extraction. In other words, the particle would be analyzed as belonging to INFL and providing the required proper government of the trace of the fronted NP. It would be interesting to know whether a sentence such as:

(14)

?? sa madam la, mo rapel *o* al lekol

`That woman, I recall [she] goes to school'

has ever been acceptable in MC. Assuming that such sentences are uniformly unacceptable (as would be the case if a preverbal INFL particle were required to properly govern the trace), the question becomes WHY extraction and left-dislocation can only occur in the presence of a preverbal particle. One possible reason might be to avoid confusion with serial verb constructions in which both verbs have the same subject. Indian Ocean French creoles are unique among non-West African creoles in permitting a limited form of verb serialization. The typical serial construction combines two bare verb stems with no intervening particle, linked to a single subject argument. A sentence containing a left-dislocated subject of a subordinate verb combined with a particle in INFL would create no ambiguity, asince the presence of the particle would signal the presence of a subject disjoint from the matrix subject.

At this point, the previous line of reasoning is purely conjectural, but it is not inconsistent with known facts about the development of null subjects in MC. First, null subjects are never a frequent option, compared, e.g. with topic-prominent languages like Chinese, or with rich-INFL languages such as Spanish or Portuguese. Moreover, MC shows none of the topic-prominent characteristics usually associated with prodrop language lacking INFL: there are no multiple or nongap topics, nor is there a clear discourse orientation. The use of null subjects seems therefore to be both a relatively recent innovation, and a sparingly used option. The source of

the limited null subject option in MC does not necessarily have to be sought in the interaction of French and putative substratum languages.

Limited null subjects in English provide a useful comparison to the MC data. In colloquial (North American) English, it is not unusual to see posted messages, telegrams, and short notes such as 'be back in an hour,' 'will call upon arrival,' 'have eaten already,' 'waited two hours and then left,' not to mention subjectless 'diary sentences' (Haegeman 1990). In most cases the implied subject is 'I' or 'we,' etc. When such sentences appear e.g. on signs posted on doors, it is not possible to speak of 'discourse binding,' but rather shared presuppositions by writer and reader as to the identification of the null subject.

A key feature of these 'subjectless sentences' in English is the fact that they are more often written than spoken, and that the understood subject is nearly always {I} or {we}. Moreover, there are virtually no convincing examples of embedded null subjects which are coreferential with null or overt matrix sentences, although conjoined coreferential subjects are marginally possible: '[be] back in half an hour and will open for business then.' In MC, null subject sentences are most often used in response to questions; in English, this option is much less frequent, although not entirely ungrammatical:

(15)

- a. What's your father doing? *O* [\*is] washing.
- b. What does your father do each morning? ??*O* goes to work.

In the first example, *washing* could be regarded as a nominalized gerund, thus not as a verb in a subjectless sentence; the sentence is usually ungrammatical if an auxiliary verb accompanies the gerund. The second response is more clearly ungrammatical in combining a null subject with a conjugated main verb. However, I am aware of no cases where colloquial English permits an embedded null subject which is bound by any sort of matrix subject, e.g.:

(16)

- a. What does your father say about the Cowboys?
- b. \*[He] says that \*[they] will win.
- c. \*[He] says that \*[he] will buy a season's ticket.

The limited English and MC data offer another possibility for the null subjects found in MC; they are not necessarily variables as suggested by Adone (1994), unless an arbitrary and nonintuitive virtual A'-binder (e.g. a 'discourse antecedent') is postulated, but rather a simple *pro* restricted to matrix position via the language-specific pragmatic restriction that feature identification can only be effected through reference to preceding discourse, not to elements contained in the same sentence. This would be similar to Philippine Creole Spanish, although resulting from different inputs. Since null subjects in MC occur only in matrix clauses which lack a COMP position (no fronted interrogative or complementizer), they fit the description of NULL CONSTANTS as described by Rizzi (1994a, 1994b): these are elements which are [-pronominal], [-anaphoric] and [-variable]. Null constants are only found in languages in which 'root' sentences can be of the form IP rather than CP; they occupy the subject [SPEC IP] position of subjectless 'diary sentences' such as [*I*] *bought a new car today*. They also characterize early child language, in which subjects are routinely eliminated cross-linguistically; in

non-prodrop languages such as English and French null subjects in child language are null constants, whereas evidence from early child language in prodrop languages such as Italian suggests that null subjects rapidly converge to adult *pro* (Rizzi 1994a, 1994b). Null constants are referential but not pronominal and do not require licensing through feature identification. As R-elements null constants cannot be A-bound, thus precluding their use in embedded clauses (in which case they would typically be coreferential with an NP in the matrix clause, for the usual pragmatic reasons).

If this line of reasoning is correct, it means that MC has not developed a new syntactic category, nor has it transmuted a pronoun into a variable, linked via chain formation with a virtual 'discourse operator,' but rather has extended into free speech an option which has always been part of French, English, and child language in non-prodrop languages, namely the possibility for elliptically eliminating a subject pronoun in a simple clause uttered in direct response to a question or statement which clearly and unambiguously establishes the reference for the null pronoun in question (cf. colloquial French [*je*] [*ne*] *sais pas* '[I] don't know'). Under this analysis, MC is more like English than like Chinese. MC does not permit multiple or non-gap topics, nor does it permit the wide range of null argument options found in Chinese. As analyzed by Adone (1994), MC is not a 'topic prominent' language; what appears superficially as a 'subject' is indeed a subject in the syntactic sense: SPEC/IP. In this respect, MC also differs from PCS, where preverbal 'subjects' are fronted or topicalized constituents, and whose substratum languages definitely establish topic rather than semantic subject as the syntactically most crucial criterion.

In partial summary, MC, while exhibiting a number of interesting innovations with respect to the lexifier language, does not provide a true counterexample to the robustness of the non-prodrop option in creole languages in the absence of strong substratum pressures. That possible substrata had little or nothing to do with the limited null subject option in MC is indicated by the apparently late date of emergence of this phenomenon, and its absence in genetically related Indian Ocean creoles.

#### Null subjects in African learners' French

Null subjects are also optionally found in Burundi French pidgin (Niedzielski 1989), following the patterns of the native KiRundi substrate:

(17)

ashètè bié = [*je*] achète de la bière 'I buy beer.'

Makouta-Mboukou (1973: 202) describes French subjectless sentences produced by speakers of Lingala and kiKongo (cf. also Champion 1974: 161):

(18)

- a. [*ils*] arrivèrent à Jérusalem 'they arrived in Jerusalem'
- b. [*c'*] était un bon matin de juin 'It was a fine June morning'

In these instances the verbs are correctly conjugated, albeit with the French verbal agreement system which does not permit unambiguous identification of most subjects. Although Makouta-



Mboukou admits the possibility (suggested by Champion 1974: 161) that the optionality of free-standing subject pronouns in Lingala and kiKongo might be a factor (subject clitics, an integral part of the verb complex, are obligatory in both languages), he also feels that imperfect acquisition of French, based on confusion with the following preposed participial structures, is equally viable:

(19)

Arrivés à la gare, ils virent leur père `Having arrived at the station, they saw their father'

#### Null subjects in Afro-Hispanic creoles

Null subjects of the sort found in MC are occasionally found in other Afro-European creoles, such as Papiamentu (PAP) and Palenquero (PAL). The most common circumstance (in addition to serial verb constructions, which arguably involve only a single subject position) involves conjoined structures. Although there is some syntactic evidence in favor of regarding certain conjoined clauses as not having two separate subject positions (cf. e.g. Goodall 1987), this usually occurs with a much tighter relationship between the two predicates. In Spanish, the marginal or ungrammatical status of repeated overt subject pronouns in certain conjoined constructions has at times been taken as evidence for a single subject position (e.g. Rigau 1986); in Spanish-based creoles (SBC), however, overt subject pronouns are never ungrammatical in conjoined constructions, and for some speakers, may be required for full grammaticality.

(20)

a. suto á sé limpiá yuka, sé limpiá aló; ejperá kodte aló, é sé kotá aló (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 220)

`We clean the yucca [and we] clean the rice; [we] wait for the rice harvest [and we] cut the rice'

b. tigre á teneba de to: á teneba yuka ... maíz (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 225)

`Tiger had everything; [he] had yucca ... [and] corn'

c. tío tigre á ten muchacha, á ten sebbesa, á ten rron, á ten de to akí (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 225)

`Uncle Tiger had women, [he] had beer, [he] had rum, [he] had everything here'

d. konejo á kojé plata i á metelo aí mbosa (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 227)

`Rabbit took the money and [he] put it there in his pocket'

e. i toro á sé yegá, á sé pegao ndurísimo ku flende (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 237)

`the bull comes [and he] hits him very hard with his forehead'

f. Djei el a bolbe pega manera sekat na e telefon, sigui kuchi-kuchi basta ratu (PAP) (Maurer 1988: 104)

`Then he grabbed the telephone again, like an octopus, [and he] kept on chatting for a long time'

g. Tur hende a kore dreña kas i bai lur ya yalusí kiko ta pasa (PAP) (Maurer 1988: 105)

`Everybody ran home and [they] went to the window to see what was happening'

A related case, found particularly in Palenquero, involves a matrix null subject which corefers to the subject of an immediately preceding sentence (pronounced by the same speaker):

(21)

- a. akí ta asé kaló. ta sudao (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 212)  
 `It's hot here. [I] am sweaty.'
- b. entonse, suto á sé limpiá yuka, sé limpió aló; ejperá kodte aló, á sé kotá aló. Depué i á sé kotá aló, á sé jarriá p'akí pa montonala. á (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 220)  
 `Then we clean the yucca, [we] clean the rice; [we then] wait for the rice harvest, [we] cut the rice. After we have cut the rice, we bring it here to pile it up.'
- c. é sé polé pasá ri aí nu. Sé salí nu. (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 237)  
 `He can't get past here. [he] can't get out.'
- d. puí kumu é ta sentao aká, taba sentao a Malagana (PAL) (Friedemann and Patiño 1983: 253)  
 `Well just like she is sitting here, she was sitting in Malagana'
- e. ese ma muela lo ke suto seba teneba, seba taba asina nu, teneba pa saká nu ba (PAL) (Schwegler, transcription)  
 `The molars that we used to have were not [rotten] like that. [we] didn't have them so that they had to be pulled'
- f. bo aké matá moná chikito, bo aké-ba bae pa barra, pero moná chikito matá jende ngande, aké kelá libre. (PAL) (Schwegler transcription)  
 `If you kill a little boy, you would go to jail, but if a little boy killed an adult, [he] would remain free.'
- g. tin kaminda di kana, maske ta poko smalitu ((PAP) (Maurer 1988: 134)  
 `There is a footpath, although [it] is a little narrow'
- h. To ané asé ta akí ku bo? A tené uno amonte (PAL) (Schwegler transcription)  
 `Are all of them [your children] here with you? [I] have one up in the hills.'
- i. Kuando uté aseba ta yegá a la karretera, ¿kumo aseba ablá? (PAL) (Schwegler transcription)  
 `When you got to the [main] road, what did [you] usually say?'

One major difference between the type of null pronoun usage exemplified in the preceding examples and licensing of null pronouns in prodrop languages is in the type of acceptability judgements offered by native speakers. In Spanish and Portuguese, speakers unhesitatingly accept any and all sentences containing null subject pronouns, and in fact prefer null pronouns to overt pronouns in most cases. Among the creole languages in question, sentences with null subject pronouns are never accepted in isolation, since the lack of AGR in these languages makes identification of the subject impossible in simple clauses. On the other hand, when presented with examples like those above, in which subject pronouns have been omitted following a well-defined context which permits identification, most creole speakers acknowledge the use of null subject pronouns as acceptable. These examples do not represent performance errors, hesitation phenomena or momentary lapses, and must be accounted within syntactic models of subject pronoun behavior.

Closer examination of the data reveals that more than one configuration of putative null subject pronouns is at work, with some of the instances being analyzable within already existing typologies. In some cases, what appears to be a referential null subject pronoun may in fact be *pro*<sub>arb</sub> and/or a null expletive pronoun, since in one form or another, all the creoles use the

absence of overt subject pronouns in impersonal sentences. Some occurrences of null subject pronouns in the SBC could be construed ambiguously as fully referential or as arbitrary or expletive. The use of third person plural expressions with a generic impersonal meaning is unremarkable, being widespread in Ibero-Romance.

#### Null subjects in Chinese pidgin Spanish

There is at least one other instance of null subjects being used in a Spanish-based pidgin, in this case a contact vernacular which developed among Chinese contract laborers brought to Cuba and Peru in the second half of the 19th century. In the second half of the 19th century, Cuba received at least 150,000 Chinese laborers, known as *culíes* (English *coolie*), who worked in the sugar plantations and mills as virtual slaves, side by side with Africans and workers from other Caribbean islands. The linguistic conditions surrounding the lives of Chinese laborers in Cuba closely parallels that of African-born slaves, and according to available evidence, Chinese workers' acquisition of Spanish followed similar paths. Moreover, the linguistic model for Chinese workers was frequently the speech of Africans who had already learned some Spanish, as well as the Spanish spoken as a second language by workers from (Afro-American creole speaking) Caribbean territories. Finally, since most of the Chinese were recruited through the Portuguese colony of Macau, where a Portuguese-based pidgin and creole was spoken among the native Chinese population, there exists the possibility that some of the Chinese workers added their knowledge of a Portuguese creole to the already rich mix of creole and creoloid elements present in 19th century Cuba.

Most Chinese laborers taken to Cuba were from the Macau-Canton area, and spoke Cantonese. Both Portuguese traders in Macao and British traders in Hong Kong participated in the Chinese labor trade to Spanish America, although most of the workers contracted by the British went to the British West Indies. From the beginning, relations between Chinese and Africans in Cuba were not cordial. Each group regarded the other with hostility and considered itself superior. Africans saw that some Chinese could purchase out their indentured contracts or otherwise 'buy their freedom,' and were technically subject to the same abject slavery as were Africans. Chinese and Africans traded mutual accusations of ignorance and superstition, of unhealthy food practices and living habits, and of savage behavior. Some plantation owners segregated Chinese and African workers in separate barracks to prevent conflict and violence, but even in these instances the two groups worked together in the fields, and in many cases also shared living quarters. Most Chinese brought to Cuba were men, and some married African women, thereby initiating the inevitable rapprochement of the two races. Common misery did the rest, and by the time of the Cuban independence wars of the late 1800's, it was a common sight for blacks and Chinese to fight together with Cubans of European origin as *mambises* or rebel fighters. At the same time, after importation of Chinese laborers ceased in 1873, there was a gradual movement away from the sugar plantations. Even during the Chinese labor trade, the coolies also worked in tobacco factories, and as their contracts were completed, many Chinese began the slow but steady move to Cuban cities, where they established themselves in small family-owned businesses, similar to their compatriots in other parts of Latin America.

Chinese-Cuban volunteers first fought in the Ten Years War (1868-1878), where many realized acts of heroism.

To date, there has been little linguistic research on Chinese laborers' acquisition of Spanish, the possible contributions of this Sino-Hispanic interlanguage to the ongoing development of Cuban Spanish, the possible contributions of Macao creole Portuguese to the speech of the coolies, and the interaction of Chinese-Spanish pidgin with other Spanish-based pidgins and creoles already present in Cuba when the Chinese workers arrived (Lipski 1996b, 1998). In comparison with Africans in Cuba, the number of Chinese was small indeed, although once the Chinese moved to urban environments, their pidginized Spanish became nearly as familiar to middle-class Cubans as the speech of African slaves.

In grammatical terms, there are few similarities between Cantonese and any previously attested first- or second-language variety of Spanish. There are, however, general tendencies of Cantonese which correspond with most African languages found in Cuba and Peru, and which result in similar configurations in the resulting Spanish pidgin. For example, Cantonese has no verbal inflexion, using only invariable monomorphemic verbs. There is no noun-adjective agreement, nor are there case-marked pronominal forms. One area in which Chinese pidgin Spanish departs from the usual patterns of pidgins and creoles based on Ibero-Romance has to do with retention vs. omission of overt subject pronouns. Like Spanish, Cantonese permits null subjects. The manner in which null subjects are licensed is quite different however, given that Chinese languages have no subject-verb agreement, and arguably have no INFL node whatsoever. Subject identification is effected through discourse-level constraints, intimately linked to the possibility for null and non-gap topics, and syntactic binding of null subjects by discourse antecedents (cf. Chung 1984, Cole 1987, Gilligan 1987, Hermon and Yoon 1989, Huang 1984, Jaeggli and Safir 1989, Raposo 1986, Rizzi 1986, Suñer and Yépez 1988, Wheeler 1982). The high frequency of null subjects in Cantonese (which are often preferred over overt pronominal subjects in normal discourse contexts) is often carried over to Chinese pidgin Spanish, a feature which runs against the normal stable/expanded pidgin and creole tendency to employ overt subject pronouns to compensate for loss of verbal inflexion. A few Hispano-Chinese examples are:

(22)

si [0] pue, coje y si no, leja! (Feijóo 1981: 145);

`If [you] can, take [it], if not, leave [it]

Vete, vete, [0] no puele molí aquí (Feijóo 1981: 153).

`Go! [you] can't die here.'

Tú, Malena, jabla mucho; [0] no tlabaja, [0] no jase na; to lo día [0] sentá la sillón (Francisco de Paula Gelabert; in Bueno 1984: 459-463);

`You Magdalena, talk too much; [you] don't work, [you] don't do anything, all day long [you are] sitting in a chair'

yo pue cojé la cocina, tú come y halla sabloso, ¿poqué [0] lice esa cosa aholá? (Francisco de Paula Gelabert; en Bueno 1984: 459-463)

`I take care of the kitchen, you eat and find [the food] tasty, why do [you] say such things now?'

[0] No quelé tlabajá ... [0] No sabel, capitán ... Yo no sabel ... Chino buenas costumbres. [0] Sel inolante, todo inolante, jué. [0] No sabel nala ... (Bueno 1959: 54-73)  
`[I] don't want to work, [I] don't know, Captain, I don't know; Chinese has good manners, [I] am innocent, completely innocent, judge. [I] don't know anything.'

Subject pronouns were used in Chinese pidgin Spanish when contrastive focus or emphasis was needed:

(23)

Cuando tu quele pasiau yo compla manta vapó, yo compla uno palasó ... Yo tiene plata en lo Banco, tú pa mi casa mejó. ... (Santa Cruz 1982: 294)

`When you want to go for a ride I'll buy a steamer blanket, I'll buy a parasol, I have money in the bank, you [should] be in my house'

Tú tlabaja mucho. Tú tumba mucha caña y ganá mucho dinelo ... (Feijóo 1981: 153-4)

`You work hard. You cut a lot of sugar cane and earn a lot of money.'

Aló ta balato ahola; yo ba complá una aloba ... (Francisco de Paula Gelabert; in Bueno 1984: 459-463)

`Rice is cheap now; I'm going to buy a sack'

Yo no so pícalo, yo so chino honlá ... (Francisco de Paula Gelabert; in Bueno 1984: 459-463)

`I'm not a scoundrel; I am an honorable Chinese.'

Macau creole Portuguese is among the few creoles (in addition to Philippine Creole Spanish) which also freely allows null subjects, usually when the referent can be extracted from the immediately preceding discourse. A few examples are:

(24)

From "Sium Lopes co su nhónha" (Ferreira 1973: 145):

---Ai, credo! Que ramêde! Sa~ iou-sua marido! --- nhónha gritá.--- Vôs azinha iscondê!

---Iscondê? [0] Vai únde iscondê, demónia? --- Lopes priguntá ...

`Oh, heavens! What a mess! It's my husband! the girl cried. You go hide! Hide? Where should [I] go hide? Lopes asked.

Introduction to the comedy "Qui-nova, Chencho" (Ferreira 1973: 165):

Iou-sua avô-cong, quelóra [0] já tocá Pacapio, azinha-azinha [0] mudá vai Pénha ficá. [0]

Non-pôde achá casa bem-fêto, já virá nós tudo ficá na vacaria.

`My grandfather, when [he] came from Pacapio, then [he] moved to Penha. [We] couldn't find a well-built house, so we returned to the parsonage.'

The use of null subjects in Chinese Cuban pidgin Spanish cannot necessarily be attributed to Macau creole Portuguese, since the number of Chinese workers in Cuba who were proficient in this creole was probably very small, given that the majority of the workers came from the interior of Canton province, and not from the Portuguese colony. More logically, both the pidgin Spanish and Macau Portuguese creole derive the frequent appearance of null subjects from the Cantonese substrate. As far as the limited corpus (based exclusively on written--largely literary--reconstructions) is concerned, neither Chinese pidgin Spanish nor Macau

Creole Portuguese exhibits the full range of syntactic properties which encompass null subject usage in Chinese languages: there is no evidence of null or nongap topics, or of multiple topics. There are some instances of null objects in both Macau creole Portuguese and Chinese pidgin Spanish, which suggests a further rapprochement with the Cantonese substratum.

## Conclusions

The preceding cross-linguistic study demonstrates that there is no single mechanism for null-subject usage among creole languages. Areal substratal traits have influenced some creoles, while in other cases pragmatic ellipsis within the European lexifier languages is the immediate source of null subjects in the corresponding creoles, which are in fact null constants. Common to all attested null subjects in Romance-derived creoles is the fact that they do not behave syntactically as a fully independent null pronominal *pro* nor as an A'-bound variable, but rather as an elliptical construction (technically a null constant) pragmatically linked to surrounding discourse. Both substratal and language-internal factors can thus result in the absence of overt subjects in creole languages, but the lack of true null pronominals in (at least Romance-derived) creoles is sustained.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Data on Zamboangueno and other PCS dialects were personally collected during fieldwork in 1985, under the auspices of a Fulbright Research Fellowship. Additional information on the syntactic behavior of PCS is found in Apostol (1962-67, 1967), Batalha (1960), Batausa (1969), Domingo (1967), Evangelista (1972), Forman (1972), Frake (1971, 1980), Lipski (1986, 1992), Llamado (1972), Macansantos (1971), McKaughan (1954), Maño (1967), Miranda (1956), Riego de Dios (1976a, 1976b, 1978), Whinnom (1956).

<sup>2</sup> Although the two phenomena are frequently intertwined; cf. Hermon and Yoon (1989), Jaeggli and Safir (1989).

<sup>3</sup> This is not an automatic consequence of non-prodrop creoles, nor even of creoles which license null expletive subjects. Sa~o Tomé creole, like PCS, requires overt subject pronouns. However, ST permits null subject pronouns in the second and succeeding instance of conjoined sentences (Ferraz 1979: 79-80). ST does not have null expletive subjects (Ferraz 1979: 65). Cape Verde creole, on the other hand, allows null expletive subjects, but does not permit null subject pronouns in conjoined phrases (Silva 1957: 188).

<sup>4</sup> A few of the examples in (3) might be amenable to alternative analysis in which null referential subjects are not present. For example, *pro*<sub>arb</sub> and/or null expletive pronouns are permitted in some cases. In PCS this usage alternates with the use of the third person plural pronoun *silá* in impersonal constructions. Spanish and Portuguese both allow an

arbitrary/impersonal reading to accompany a third person singular verb (provided at least that the verb is not unaccusative), but only a null *pro*<sub>arb</sub> can occur. Use of an overt pronoun (e.g. *ellos dicen* 'they say') requires a definite reference. Ibero-Romance based creoles all of which normally require overt subject pronouns, typically permit an overt third person plural pronoun to have an impersonal construal (e.g. Papiamentu *nan bisa Palenquero ma hende/ané asé ablá*, PCS *abla silá* 'they say'). Some occurrences of null subject pronouns in PCS could be construed ambiguously as fully referential or as arbitrary or expletive. Conceivably the *pwede* of (3d) could be analyzed as arbitrary 'it is possible,' rather than postulating a null first person singular pronoun, although the presence of *yo* 'I' in the immediately preceding clause makes this less likely. In example (3g) the *sabe*, which presumably lacks the overt pronoun *silá* 'they,' could also be an impersonal construction. Example (3p) (whose surrounding context was not given), is perfectly acceptable in PCS as an impersonal sentence; similarly in (3r) the reciprocal *ta man-pelyahan* could perhaps be construed as a general 'there was a lot of fighting.'

<sup>5</sup> Forman (1972: 167) notes that 'zero anaphora is very frequent in Z[amboangueno] discourse.' However, he does not elaborate on this comment, although numerous examples of null arguments (some of which are reproduced in the present work) are given throughout his study.

<sup>6</sup> It might be supposed that a PCS null 'subject' is a variable bound by a null operator, presumably in topic position. This is the approach taken, e.g. by Huang (1984, 1989) for null objects and some null subjects in Chinese. PCS, however, shows no other evidence of null topics. PCS also permits overt elements in COMP in sentences containing null subjects (e.g. 3o, 3w); in other instances, null operators in embedded clauses move first to COMP, where they cannot co-occur, e.g., with a WH-word or other operator (cf. e.g. Raposo 1986). Finally, postulating a null operator, in topic position, COMP, or elsewhere, would not account for the near impossibility of binding a null subject in a lower clause, which, as has been shown, does not usually occur in PCS.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Chung (1984) for cases of object *pro* in Chamorro in the absence of a mechanism for assigning  $\theta$ -features.

<sup>8</sup> Rizzi (1986: 546, fn. 44) comments on the fact that in Chinese and similar languages, embedded subject *pro* must corefer to the closest superordinate subject (i.e. the GCR), hinting that in at least some cases this may be a preferred tendency rather than a grammatical rule. He suggests that such behavior is best handled as a 'processing strategy,' presumably as part of discourse grammar. Raposo (1986), in turn, suggests that what appear to be null objects in Portuguese (which he analyzes as variables bound by a null operator) result from the parameterization of a rule of Predication in the LF' module, which in languages like Portuguese and Chinese can refer to a pragmatic topic. Bao (1999) gives examples of similar null subject and null object behavior in (Chinese-influenced) Singapore English.

<sup>9</sup> Forman (1972: 166-7) cites evidence from some Philippine languages which also permit this type of 'zero anaphora,' and hints that Philippine language structures may lie at the root of the PCS null subjects.

<sup>10</sup> Apparent exceptions such as (30) always appear to involve the verb *abla* 'to say' in the matrix clause, together with a modal-like verb such as *puede* 'be able' or *sabe* 'know how to' in the subordinate clause. It may be that the subordinate clause is behaving as a quote (e.g. 'He said "I can"'), or that the subject of the lower verb is *pro*<sub>arb</sub> ('He said "it's possible"').

<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Suzanne Calvo for sharing data on her native language, Seselwa.

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