

Multiple causation for Jamaican Creole quotative/complementiser 'say'

Joseph T. Farquharson

Universität Bielefeld

Several studies (e.g. Cassidy & Le Page 1967; Allsopp 1996; Jaganauth 2001) have pointed out the multifunctional nature of the morpheme *se* in Jamaican. The etymology of the morpheme is not clear cut and it has been considered as deriving either from phonetically similar Akan words whose functions partially overlap with the Jamaican word, or the phonetic and functional conflation of English-derived *se* 'to say' and the Akan words (Allsopp 1996: 489), or being the result of the grammaticalisation of English-derived *se* 'to say' with or without influence from one or more African models.

In addition to its idiomatic uses as an exclamative and introducer of hypothetical propositions, Jamaican *se* also functions as a quotative verb/marker introducing direct and indirect reported discourse, a quotative complementiser used to introduce indirect reported discourse after predicates denoting utterance and implied utterance, a *that*-complementiser introducing finite complements of evaluative predicates and predicates of cognition and perception, and also as an utterance-final dismissive marker.

The presentation builds on the descriptive foundation established by Jaganauth (2001) by outlining the grammatical behaviour of *se* in Jamaican. However, the paper goes further by seeking to unravel the complicated diachrony of this multifunctional item. Its functions are closely compared to those of similar items in potential substrate languages (e.g. Akan, Gbe, Igbo, Koongo, Yoruba). Using extant descriptions coupled with elicited data, it is demonstrated that Akan is probably not the best model for the Jamaican morpheme. The typological literature on the sources and behaviour of quotatives/complementisers (e.g. Güldemann 2008) is also used to revise current theories regarding the history of *se*.

Finally, the presentation argues that Jamaican *se* provides a very good snapshot of the role of several processes in the birth and development of creole languages, and attempts, in a principled way to demonstrate the contribution made by the superstrate, substrate languages via second language learning, first language effects, and universal factors.