



CREOLICA



## JC Jamaican Patwa (Creole English)

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### Introduction

Jamaican Patwa (JC) is an English-lexified Creole, a language of ethnic identification primarily spoken in Jamaica, but also by large numbers of Jamaican emigrants in urban Britain and North America. The variety spoken by the descendants of West Indian immigrants in England (known as London Jamaican, British Creole, etc.; see Edwards 1986, Sutcliffe 1982, 1994, Sebba 1993, 2004, Patrick 2004a) will not be treated here. Other than a few lexical items and place-names, JC owes little to either the indigenous Arawaks or their Spanish conquerors, who arrived with Columbus in 1494, settled the island in 1509 from Santo Domingo, and were defeated by the English in 1655-60.

JC is the product of language contact between Africans and English-speakers, due to creolization under conditions of slavery (Alleyne 1971, 1988). The African slaves whom the Spanish brought to Jamaica in 1509 numbered only about 1,000 in 1601, and 1,500 when the British arrived in 1655 with 9,000 troops. When the Spanish fled only about 300 Africans remained, escaping to the mountainous interior. These became the core of the Jamaican Maroons, who eventually defeated the English army and established autonomous settlements by treaty in 1739 (Price 1979). Jamaican Maroons have maintained knowledge of Twi, an ancestral Akan language; they also evolved a special Maroon Spirit Language, which resembles Surinamese creoles (Bilby 1981, 1983, Hall-Alleyne 1984).

	<i>Europeans</i>	<i>Africans</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
1658	7,000	1,500	5 : 1
1677	9,000	9,000	1 : 1
1703	8,000	45,000	1 : 5
1739	10,000	99,000	1 : 10

JC did not exist in 1655, but must have by 1750, though some features are only documented from the 19th century (Lalla & D'Costa 1990). It developed during the massive increase in the African population, as indicated in the table (Alleyne 1988, Curtin 1969, Sherlock & Bennett 1998). These slaves came from both Africa and other Caribbean colonies, chiefly Suriname and Barbados. The most significant substrate influences were West and Central African languages (particularly the Kwa and Bantu families). In addition, JC was influenced by a number of non-standard regional varieties of English, ranging from the working-class speech of London, Bristol, the West Midlands

and Liverpool, to Scots and Irish English (Cassidy 1961, Cassidy & Le Page 1980). Many British dialect features survive in JC; others were altered in the process of creolization, or afterwards.

JC is a product of British colonialism, slavery and the plantation economy. Over 90% of Jamaica's population are of African origin. Other groups claim Indian, Chinese, Syrian and European heritage, but only Europeans were present before 1845 and contributed to the formation of JC. Native speakers of standard English have always constituted a small minority of Jamaica's population, yet they have largely retained control of the island's politics and official culture. This subordination of JC has contributed to Jamaican speech comprising a '(post-)creole continuum' (DeCamp 1971, Rickford 1987, Patrick 1999). The continuum model comprises a chain of minimally-distinct varieties stretching from the acrolect (Standard Jamaican English, SJE) to the most basilectal varieties (those furthest from the standard, showing the greatest continuity with their African roots). It was motivated by the inapplicability of discrete models (community bilingualism, standard-plus-dialect, and diglossia; Ferguson 1991) to the Jamaican speech community. After Emancipation in 1838, movement away from plantation life into isolated interior villages removed one source of contact with standard varieties and contributed to the maintenance and vitality of basilectal and mesolectal Jamaican Creole. Despite the availability and importance of formal education and public literacy in SJE (Shields 1989), Jamaican oral culture remains a vital and creative force, not only in the island but throughout the Americas – and worldwide, via the popularity of Jamaican vocal music.

Only mesolectal and basilectal varieties are referred to as JC here, since SJE is not a creole (Sand 1999). This chapter focuses on the basilect, as is traditional in describing Caribbean Creoles, alongside the mesolect, which most Jamaicans speak. The mesolect is better documented in empirical studies, and necessitates discussion of variation below; summary tables represent the basilect. Data are drawn both from the literature and the author's own experience living in Jamaica and doing fieldwork. Principal sources include Bailey's (1966) grammar, the *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (Cassidy & LePage 1980, hereafter *DJE*), and Alleyne's (1980) historical-comparative study. Non-linguistic works utilized include Sistren (1986), a collection of oral histories by Jamaican working-class women. Examples cited from the literature retain the original orthography; any added elements are in square brackets. Most authors follow or adapt Cassidy's (1961) quasi-phonemic system, used in the *DJE*. Fieldwork sources include the original *DJE* recordings, collected by Cassidy in 1952 and DeCamp in 1957-8; recordings made by the author from 1989 to 1992 are the source of all data not otherwise attributed.<sup>1</sup> Some elements below are discussed at greater length in Patrick (1999, 2004b).

## 1 Unmarked verbs

JC verbs which refer to past time are not usually inflected with the *-ed* suffix. Many creolists consider *-ed*, when it does occur, to be 'interference' from Standard English. This view assumes English grammar is foreign to JC speakers, yet most partially control some structures. Every JC speaker in Patrick (1999) used both unmarked verbs and the *-ed* inflection in past-reference contexts (1). Such 'interference' is not new but documented by the 19th century (Lalla & D'Costa 1990); the pure, homogeneous basilect is a modern abstraction, constructed by ignoring variation. Below, classic creolist grammatical analyses are recast as quantitative predictions in order to salvage descriptive adequacy, since creoles – like most spoken vernaculars – generally exhibit inherent variation.

The classic creole pattern of indicating the past with pre-verbal marker (so-called anterior) *ben* is not always found either, however; past-reference verbs are most commonly not marked at all. Thus JC unmarked verbs are not part of a privative opposition (Sankoff 1990): they have no unique interpretation as past or present, anterior or non-anterior. Where an unmarked verb falls within the scope of a contextual element with temporal reference (a time-adverbial, or the clause's position in a string of sequenced narrative clauses), it acquires that reference.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Fred Cassidy and Ian Hancock for access to field recordings and other materials. Fieldwork in Kingston 1989-90 was sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, Wenner-Gren Foundation (Grant #5031), and Institute of International Education. Rural fieldwork in 11 parishes, July 1992, was aided by a small grant from Georgetown University.

- (1) *ai hav twelv chiljren wit him, tuu dayd*  
 1s have twelve children with 3s two died 'I had twelve children with him, two died'

### 1.1 Statives with non-past reference

Unmarked stative verbs in Atlantic pidgins and creoles are often claimed to be non-past in reference, either characteristically (Agheyisi 1971) or categorically (Bickerton 1975), and this can be the case in JC (2). However, they may also have past reference where context allows.

- (2) *Kieti waan wan neda buk* (Bailey 1966: 38)  
 K want IND other book 'Katie wants another book'

### 1.2 Statives with past reference

Similarly, past-reference statives have been claimed to require external marking with a pre-verbal particle such as *ben* or *did* (3), glossed below as ANT to indicate past-before-past. Variationist studies confirm the classic prediction that past statives are more likely than non-statives to co-occur with such TMA particles. However, some past-reference statives are unmarked (4), while a significant proportion are inflected by mesolectal speakers (Patrick 1999: 214, 256ff).

- (3) *ten touzn yirz ago dem did penichriet aal dem ting*  
 ten thousand year-pl ago 3p ANT penetrate all DEM thing  
 '10,000 years ago they had [*already*] understood all those things'

- (4) *ii waan a piis a hais u bai*  
 3s want IND piece of ice INF buy 'He wanted to buy a piece of ice'

### 1.3 Non-statives with past reference

Non-stative verbs typically express actions which occur either instantaneously or over very brief periods of time. When unmarked, the classic prediction is that they have past reference in JC (5). The default expectation may be overridden by other elements in the context, such as a time adverbial or a co-occurring anterior marker, §2.2. On interaction of tense and noun-phrase specificity, see §15.2.

- (5) *Him park him car and we siddung* (Sistren 1986: 48)  
 3s park POSS car and 1p sit down 'He parked his car and we sat down'

### 1.4 Non-statives with non-past reference

The English simple present inflection {-s} on third singular verbs, which is most often used with habitual meaning, has no equivalent marker in JC. In the absence of either a present tense or a HAB marker, unmarked non-stative verbs with non-past reference are subject to a habitual reading (6).

- (6) *Him is not a man weh lick* (Sistren 1986: 218)  
 3s COP NEG IND man REL hit 'He is not a man that hits [*people*]'



## 2.4 Anterior (or past) with adjective

Like other Atlantic CEs, copula absence is normal before JC predicates corresponding to E adjectives (Rickford 1996). Thus PAST and other preverbal markers may precede adjectival predicates, §12.

- (11) *mi ongl se im did shaat!*  
1s only say 3s PAST short 'I only said he was short!'

## 2.5 Anterior (or past) with locative

Like other TMA markers in JC, the markers *ben* and *did* can co-occur with the locative copula *de*.

- (12) *mi wen de de* (Alleyne 1980: 90)  
1s PAST LOC there 'I was there'

2	Anterior (or past) tense: summary for JC	
2.1	Statives with past reference	+
2.2	Non-statives with (past-before-) past reference	+
2.3	Anterior = counterfactual	+
2.4	Anterior with adjective	+
2.5	Anterior with locative	+

## 3 Progressive aspect

### 3.1 Indicating progressive

Progressive aspect markers are preverbal *a*, *da*, or *de*, which express duration over some period of time, however short (13). *Da* and *de* are characteristic of western Jamaica (DeCamp 1971), and are also more rural. An unmarked verb alone cannot express the progressive, though it can express habitual aspect, which is also non-punctual, §4.1. The verbal suffix *-in* varies with these PROG markers for mesolectal speakers, appearing either alone or with invariant *iz*, *woz* and, in the upper mesolect, inflected forms of *be*. The preverbal PROG markers cannot co-occur with *-in*. Progressive *a*, *da* and *de* first appear only in the mid-19th century, (14); habitual uses occur somewhat earlier.

- (13) *hongri a gi mi hel* (DeCamp, June 1958)  
hunger PROG give 1s hell 'Hunger is killing me'

- (14) *a da listen to you* (Russell 1868, in Lalla & D'Costa 1990: 197)  
1s PROG listen to 2s 'I am listening to you'

### 3.2 Indicating future

Like many European and West African languages (e.g., Bini and Gã, Holm 1988:164), JC uses the progressive to refer to future time in a periphrastic construction, *a/da/de + go + V*, corresponding to E *going to + V*. In a more decreolized version, the form *gwain* replaces the pre-verbal marker.

- (15) *wat a gwain go du, a da go gi yu a chuun* (DeCamp, June 1958)  
what 1s PROG go do 1s PROG go give 2s IND tune 'What I'm going to do, I'm going to give you a tune'

### 3.3 Anterior plus progressive

Anterior markers (in their various forms) combine straightforwardly with progressive marker *a* to give *bena*, *wena*, and *dida* with a meaning corresponding to the English past progressive (16). *Ben* also combines with *de* to give *bende*, highly stigmatized as a basilectal and rural PROG marker (17).

- (16) *jos bikaaz evribadi wena go luk pan fi- Patsi uon*  
 just because everybody PAST+PROG go look at POSS P own  
 'Just because everybody was looking at Patsy's'
- (17) *mi ben de go dong de*  
 1s PAST+PROG go down there 'I was going down there'

### 3.4 Progressive with adjective = inchoative

Several sources (Bailey 1966, Alleyne 1980, Mufwene 1986a) cite the occurrence of progressive *a* meaning 'becoming' with semantically appropriate predicate adjectives (18). Bailey notes that this construction is extremely rare, and that it is more common to have periphrasis with *get* (18b), or the comparative suffix (18c), all with the same processual interpretation.

- (18a) *Da taim i a kuol* (Bailey 1966: 79)  
 (18b) *Da taim i a get kuol*  
 (18c) *Da taim i a kuol a*  
 that time it PROG (get) cold(-er) [all:] 'At that time it was getting cold'

3	Progressive aspect: summary for JC	
3.1	Indicating progressive	+
3.2	Indicating future	+
3.3	Anterior + progressive	+
3.4	Progressive with adjective = inchoative	R

## 4 Habitual aspect

Like some conservative CEs today, Jamaican once had a general imperfective category, with a single marker *da* for both habitual and progressive (Patrick 1988). The marking patterns for these two aspectual categories have since diverged, though rural and western usage still preserves *da* for PROG and *a* for HAB, §3.1. JC has neither habitual *be* nor *do/doz*.

### 4.1 Zero marker for habitual

Habitual aspect is typically expressed by unmarked verbs in JC.

- (19) *im woz a baaba ya nuo, im chrim and im sel ais kriim*  
 3s PAST IND barber 2s know 3s trim and 3s sell ice cream  
 'He was a barber you know, he would trim [hair] and sell ice cream'

### 4.2 Progressive marker for habitual

However, habitual meaning is occasionally expressed by the marker *a*, which otherwise indicates progressive (Christie 1986, Patrick 1988; no recent cases of habitual *da/de* are reported).

- (20) *wan plies we dem a plie haki mach* (Christie 1986: 185)  
 IND place where 3p HAB play hockey match 'a place where they play hockey matches'
- (21) *She never tek notten from me. She always a gimme.* (Sistren 1987: 78)

3s never take nothing from 1s 3s always HAB give 1s  
 ‘She never took anything from me. She always gave’

### 4.3 Marker for habitual only

There is no marker in JC which is exclusively associated with habitual aspect. It thus differs from other CE varieties like Guyanese, which uses *doz* primarily but also *a*.

### 4.4 Anterior plus habitual

As non-past habitual is generally expressed by unmarked verbs, past-reference habituals take the same forms as noted in §1, §2 above: *ben* or *did*, zero, and occasional inflections. These may combine with *a* when it has habitual meaning. More common is the combined form *yuustu* + V, which may be preceded by *did*. The negative form *duont* + V (with either past or non-past reference) often has habitual meaning, (22).

- (22) *im se wan taim i yuustu sari fi dem, bot im duon sari fi dem agen*  
 3s say one time 3s PAST+HAB sorry for 3p but 3s neg sorry for 3p again  
 ‘He said at one time he used to be sorry for them, but he is not sorry for them any more’

4 Habitual aspect: summary for JC		
4.1	Zero marker for habitual	+
4.2	Progressive marker for habitual	R
4.3	Marker for habitual only	0
4.4	Anterior + habitual	+

## 5 Completive aspect

Completive aspect is signalled by *don*, a true aspectual marker. Fully grammaticalized: it possesses a range of meanings, applies to both stative and non-stative predicates (for the latter, to both atelic and telic verb situations, 23), and occurs with both verbal and non-verbal (i.e. adjectival) predicates, though it does not occur freely with other TMA markers. Whether it is a unified marker is debatable.

### 5.1 Completive only (before/after V)

In JC *don* may appear either before or after the verb phrase, or both (Alleyne 1980: 92). There are no formal restrictions regarding the stativity or transitivity of the verb; however, if *don* follows a verb with an object, it must follow the entire VP, as in (23), where it might also have preceded *riid*. Durrleman (2003) argues convincingly for two distinct *don* markers, one [+anterior] and one [+completive]. The latter can occur in either position, but only with non-statives (23), while the former is restricted to pre-V only, but not restricted by stativity (24).

- (23) *Jiemz no riid di buk don yet* (Bailey 1966: 42)  
 J NEG read DEF book COMP yet ‘James has not finished reading the book yet’

- (24) *im don nuo se mi laik im* (Durrleman 2003: 11)  
 3s ANT know that 1s like 3s ‘S/he already knows that I like her/him’

### 5.2 Completive plus adjective

Adjectives in JC take *don* under essentially the same conditions as verbs.

- (25) A: *Mi a get uol* (Alleyne 1980:99, my gloss and translation)

1s PROG get old

'I am getting old'

B: *What do you mean, "getting"?*A: *Olrail, mi don uol aredi*

alright 1s COMP old already

'Alright, I am old already!'

### 5.3 Anterior (or other pre-verbal markers) plus completive

This construction does not occur in either the literature or recorded data for JC.

5	Completive aspect: summary for JC	
5.1	Completive only (before/after V)	+
5.2	Completive + adjective	+
5.3	Anterior (or other markers) + completive	0

## 6 Irrealis mode

The irrealis mode combines a number of semantically diverse functions which have in common that they do not express any already accomplished or presently occurring event, state or action.

### 6.1 Future (= progressive marker)

The progressive construction with (*a*) *go* is often employed to express prospective future meaning by periphrasis in JC (§3.2) -- though this use of *go* is not to be confused with its use as a main verb (26, both clauses). There is also a general future marker, *wi*. Durreleman (2003) analyses *wi* as future tense, but (*a*) *go* as prospective aspect (below, proximal future, or PROX), since PROG must precede it. In addition, both proximal future and other irrealis (unrealized) meanings are frequently conveyed with only the adverb *suun* (< E *soon*), as in the almost-proverbial response *suun kom*.<sup>2</sup>

(26) *mi wi go de sonde, but mi a go go a tong nou*

1s FUT go there Sunday but 1s PROX FUT go to town now

'I will go there on Sunday, but I'm going to town now'

### 6.2 Anterior plus irrealis = conditional

### 6.3 Anterior plus irrealis = future in the past

### 6.4 Anterior plus irrealis = future perfect

JC does not seem to allow the combination of either *ben* or *did* with the general future *wi*, unlike some other CE varieties (Alleyne 1980:86). These functions are filled instead by modal *wuda* (9), §7.3. Conditionals may also occur simply with *ef* in the protasis and optional *wi* + V in the apodosis. Prospective aspect marker (*a*) *go* does co-occur with *ben* or *did*, but not with these meanings; thus ...\**vena go kaal*... and ...\**dida go kaal*... in (27). For counterfactual examples, see §2.3.

(27) *yu di nuo ya niem wuda go kaal?*

2s PAST know POSS name MOD+PROG PROX call

(Roberts 1973: 27)

'Did you know your name would be called?'

<sup>2</sup> An irrealis example occurs in *Yardie* (Headley 1992), a novel of Jamaicans in London, where D. says sarcastically:

*You soon tell me seh Blue nah work fe ouno again*

2s soon tell 1s comp B NEG work for 2p again 'Next you'll tell me that Blue doesn't work for you anymore'

6	Irrealis mode: summary for JC	
6.1	Future (= progressive marker)	+
6.2	Anterior + irrealis = conditional	0
6.3	Anterior + irrealis = future in the past	0
6.4	Anterior + irrealis = future perfect	0

## 7 Other combinations of verbal markers

### 7.1 Irrealis plus progressive

This combination of TMA markers does not occur in JC.

### 7.2 Anterior plus irrealis plus progressive

This construction does not appear in the literature nor in available natural data, but see §6.4.

### 7.3 Other auxiliary-like elements

JC lacks the E auxiliaries *be*, *do*, *have*, and any distinct participial forms, but has an extensive group of modals and quasi-modals which occur in various combinations with each other and with negative morphemes. Bailey (1966: 45,141) divides them into two groups by order of occurrence:

- Mod-1: *kuda* 'could', *shuda* 'should', *wuda* 'would', *maita* 'may, might' and *wi* 'will'  
 Mod-2: *hafi* 'have to', *mos(a)* 'must', *kyan* 'can', and *fi* 'ought'

Double modals may then occur in the order (Mod-1) (Mod-2), followed by a tense marker (if any) and an aspect marker (if any), and the Verb, giving the order M-T-A. One combination not noted in Bailey is *kuda kyan* (28). Triple modals may also occur as (Mod-1) *mos* (Mod-2) Verb, with \**mos mos* prohibited (29). Ellipsis such as E has in *We do* or *Wouldn't we?* cannot occur with JC modals. Mesolectal modals not in Bailey include *had woz tu* 'had to' (a pattern often extended to *waantid woz tu* 'wanted to'); the epistemic quasi-modal *sapuosi* 'supposed to, ought to' occurs in both mesolect and basilect. The rhetorical question or interjection *No mos* indicates something which is obvious or to be expected. Mod-1 negated forms all suffix syllabic *-n*, giving *kudn*, *shudn*, *wudn*, *maitn*, while Mod-2 negated forms are *mos* > *mosn*, *hafi* > *naafi* and *fi* > *no fi*; *wi* has no negated form, while *kyán* > *kyàan* requires both a length and tone change. See further §8 on *for*, §6 for *wi*.

Durrleman (2003), a detailed analysis of functional projections within the JC clausal domain, reorganises Bailey's groups into three (Mod-2= *mos*, Mod-3= *hafi*, *kyan*), locating Tense (including *wi*) immediately after Mod-1, Anteriority immediately below Mod-3, and Aspect below that.

- (28) *y' ongl a gi im a moni im kuda kyan bai a bed an bai sopm stil*  
 2s only PROG give 3s IND money 3s MOD-1 MOD-3 buy IND bed and buy something else  
 'You're only giving him enough money so he can buy a bed and something else'

- (29) *wi wuda mos hafi riich soon*  
 1p MOD-1 MOD-2 MOD-3 arrive soon 'We really ought to arrive soon!'

7	Other combinations of verbal markers: summary for JC	
7.1	Irrealis + progressive	0
7.2	Anterior + irrealis + progressive	0
7.3	Other auxiliary-like elements	+

## 8 Complementizers

### 8.1 Zero infinitive marker

Verbs need no complementizer before an infinitive; adjectives do. Non-finite verbs are uninflected.

- (30) *jos kom dong an staat shat aal di man-dem*  
 just come down and start shoot all DEF man-PL 'He just came down and started to shoot all the men'

### 8.2 'For' as infinitive marker

*Fi*, lexically related to E *for*, often occurs before infinitives, as in the purposive clause in (31); Baker & Huber (2001:201) note a 1735 case. In such a construction either *fi* or *go* can precede the non-finite verb; here, both do. *Fi* is common but optional with a number of verb types licensed for zero-infinitives in other languages, e.g. ability (*iebl* 'be able'), affective (*shiem* 'be ashamed'), desiderative (*waan* 'want') and pseudo-desiderative (*beg* 'beg'), obligation, inceptive (*staat*, 30) and other verbs. Sentences like (32) are unremarkable in JC, but infinitival *fi* cannot be deleted. Bickerton (1981:59) claims that *go* + V indicates completion of the purposed action while *fi* + V does not. In JC the contrast may be related to aspectual *fi* and (*a*) *go* versus tense *wi*, in that *fi* + infinitive is semantically open, while *go* + infinitive conveys intention, urgency or emphasis, similar to the proximal future. Mesolectal speakers alternate *fi* with *tu*, which is semantically unrestricted.

- (31) *spen mai faiv dala fi go bai wan mango!*  
 spend POSS five dollar to go buy one mango 'Spend my five dollars to buy one mango!'
- (32) *Jan iizi fi krai* (Bailey 1966: 125)  
 J easy to cry 'John cries easily'

### 8.3 'For' as a (quasi-) modal

*Fi* also occurs before verbs that would be non-finite in English, with deontic modal force, §7.3.

- (33) *Tell her sey yuh a fi-me, and she fi cool down* (Sistren 1986: 360)  
 tell 3s that you COP mine, and 3s MOD cool down 'Tell her you're mine, and she should cool down'

### 8.4 'For' introducing a tensed clause

This construction evidently does not appear in JC.

### 8.5 Subordinator from superstrate 'that'

Like English *that*, JC *dat* can introduce subordinate clauses.

- (34) *ai andastan dat dem kaana him, im did get shat*  
 1s understand that 3p corner 3s 3s PAST get shot 'I understand they cornered him, he got shot'

## 8.6 Distinct subordinator after verb of speaking

The complementizer *se* introduces embedded clauses after the psychologically-related verb-types of speech, thought, emotion or perception, as in other creoles (35, 39). The subordinator *se* cannot co-occur with the homophonous verb *se* 'say', which attests to its partly grammaticalized nature, §14.4.

- (35) *Ruoz-dem tel im se a Claris mash di pat* (Bailey 1966: 111)  
 R-PLUR tell 3s that HL C break DEF pot  
 'Rose and the others told her that it was Claris who broke the pot'

## 8.7 Zero subordinator

The most commonly chosen option for clause subordination in JC is the simple absence of a complementizer, as in English. This example might also have featured *se* as complementizer.

- (36) *mi tingk dem a tek kuok tuu, ya no*  
 1s think \_\_ 3p PROG take coke too 2s know 'I think (that) they were taking coke too, y'know'

8	Complementizers: summary for JC	
8.1	Zero infinitive marker	+
8.2	'For' as infinitive marker	+
8.3	'For' as a (quasi-) modal	+
8.4	'For' introducing a tensed clause	0
8.5	Subordinator from superstrate 'that'	+
8.6	Distinct subordinator after verb of speaking	+
8.7	Zero subordinator	+

## 9 Dependent clauses

JC has a number of options for relative pronouns, including zero (§9.6), *huu*, *huufa*, *we* or *wa*, *a*, and *da(t)* (see *DJE* entries). The relative pronouns probably originate from interrogative pronouns, while the others come from deictics. Both *huu* and *huufa* are restricted to [+human] referents; the latter is basilectal (possibly < *fi-huu*, §16), while the former is meso- and acro-lectal. Relativization strategies include overt relativizers, resumptive pronouns, and null relativizers; null is the default in existential sentences with indefinite relativized NPs. Christie (1996) analyzes a range of relative clauses, including the very common cases which are simultaneously the locus of focusing strategies (pseudo-clefting, left-dislocation).

### 9.1 Subordinate clauses (non-embedded)

Subordinate clauses cover a range similar to those in English, and may follow or, as in conditional example (37), precede the main clause; other non-embedded types include temporal clauses (38).

- (37) *if yu av wan baks a machiz, yu mos jraa chrii stik*  
 if 2s have ind box of matches, 2s must draw three sticks  
 'If you have a box of matches, you must draw three sticks'
- (38) *weneva taim dat im kom, im gwain plie a trik* (*DJE*:469)  
 when COMP 3s come 3s PROX play IND trick 'When she comes she is going to play a prank'

## 9.2 Subordinate clauses (embedded)

Quotative verbs, verbs of perception and psychic state, and desiderative verbs, among others, take embedded clause complements in JC much as in English; see §8.

- (39) *Him find seh dem corner him* (Sistren 1986: 83)  
 3s find that they corner 3s 'He found that they [*had*] cornered him'

## 9.3 Relative clauses (relative pronoun = subject)

The relative clause on subject position in (40) has English-like *huu* 'who'.

- (40) *aal huu insaid a di man likl plees daiv dong pan de grong*  
 all REL inside of DEF man little place dive down on DEF ground  
 'All who were inside of the man's little place dove down on the ground'

## 9.4 Relative clauses (relative pronoun = direct object)

The basilectal form *wa(t)* replaces the object in both relative clauses of (41). Resumptive pronouns occur inside relative clauses, often when the NP is possessive (42), and also occur commonly in SJE.

- (41) *ii hiyr wa mi mada a taak an neva yiyir wat mi se*  
 3s hear REL 1s mother PROG talk and NEG+PAST hear REL 1s say  
 'He heard what my mother was saying and didn't hear what I said'

- (42) *di uman we dem tiif ar biebi gaan a stieshan* (Christie 1996: 58)  
 DEF woman REL 3p steal POSS baby \_\_ gone to station  
 'The woman whose baby they stole has gone to the station'

## 9.5 Relative clauses (relative pronoun = object of a preposition)

Prepositions in JC may take relative clauses as their complements (43, 44); pied-piping is impossible.

- (43) *mi rispek ar tu di dot we shi waak pan*  
 1s respect 3s to DEF earth REL she walk upon 'I respect her to the earth that she walks upon'

- (44) *di man whey Chalice did a dance wid woman* (Sutcliffe 1990: 43)  
 DEF man REL C PAST PROG dance with \_\_ woman  
 'the woman of the man Chalice had been dancing with'

## 9.6 Relative clauses (zero relative pronoun)

Finally, as in vernacular English, relative clauses may occur with no object relative pronoun at all. However, in JC subject relatives can also be deleted (45), unlike standard English.

- (45) *So di wan woz gowin tu stiil it noo tek op wat him did dig*  
 so DEF one \_\_ PAST going to steal it now take up REL 3s PAST dig  
 'So the one who was going to steal it now took up what he had dug'

9	Dependent clauses: summary for JC	
9.1	Subordinate clauses (non-embedded)	+
9.2	Subordinate clauses (embedded)	+
9.3	Relative clauses (relative pronoun=subject)	+
9.4	Relative clauses (relative pronoun=direct object)	+
9.5	Relative clauses (relative pronoun=obj. of prep.)	+
9.6	Relative clauses (zero relative pronoun)	+

## 10 Negation

### 10.1 Single negation (verbal)

JC has the most common pattern of sentential negation in pidgins and creoles, a single invariant negator preceding the VP or predicate adjective (adverbs may intervene). The basilectal negator is *no*, but most speakers also have tense-neutral pre-V *duon(t)*, past *neva* and sometimes *nat* (especially before the mesolectal progressive construction Zero + Verb + *-in*). *Duont* is often imperfective but not restricted to habitual or psychic state verbs, *contra* Bailey (1966:54). Coalescence of *no* + PROG *a* > *naa* (*naa* can also indicate future, §6.1). *No* and *duont* also occur in negative imperatives, and as negative tags on declaratives of either polarity (47), where *duont* may be preposed. Rarely, negative suffix *-n* compounds with a negative preposition (102). *Ain't* does not occur, nor does *weren't*.

(46) *a man jos a faiya shat, im no biznis huu it kyach*

IND man just PROG fire shot 3s NEG care who it catch

'A man's just firing shots, he doesn't care who they hit'

(47) *ya nuo we ai di liv di firs taim, duont?*

2s know where 1s PAST live DEF first time NEG

(Roberts 1973: 20)

'You know where I used to live, right?'

### 10.2 Discontinuous double negation

This structure is not part of JC grammar.

### 10.3 Negative concord

JC has negative concord, the spreading of negation throughout a sentence so that a sentential negator agrees with negative nominals and/or adverbials (48). Such concord is common in the world's languages, including many dialects of English. In JC it is a variable feature which does not apply on every possible occasion; the number and selection of constituents receiving sympathetic negation is subject to both grammatical restrictions and speaker variation. Unlike e.g. African American Vernacular English (Labov 1972), JC has no negative inversion, because it has no auxiliary inversion.

(48) *dat manggo chwii dier, notn neva du it*

DEM mango tree there, nothing never do it 'That mango tree there, nothing ever happened to it'

10	Negation: summary for JC	
10.1	Single negation (verbal)	+
10.2	Discontinuous double negation	0
10.3	Negative concord	+

## 11 Passive

The passive in JC comprises a variety of structures ranging from English-like constructions in the upper mesolect and acrolect, including *be* + past participle (+ *by*-phrase for agents), and *get* + past participle, to the bare-verb forms of the ‘passive equivalent’ (§11.2). Intermediate structures include the use of an indefinite subject (*dem* ‘they’) in pseudo-active constructions, and *be* or *get* with verbs showing no passive morphology. JC shows no evidence of any distinct participial forms (though for a number of frequent irregular verbs, the base form matches the E participle, e.g. *gaan* ‘leave’).

### 11.1 Passive construction

A lower mesolectal speaker produced both (49) and (50) below; (49) shows a standard-like *get*-passive (though in JC the normal form is *shat* ‘shoot’), while (50) shows *get* with a clearly uninflected verb. The *dem*-phrase in (49) might also be translated as ‘He was shot...’. Alleyne (1980: 97ff) argues that such pseudo-active sentences with *dem* are the underlying form of the sentences exemplified in the next section; that predicate adjective uses are derived from them (§12); and that the latter are not precisely equivalent semantically to passives in English.

- (49) *iz so im get shat op. Dem shat im...*  
 COP so 3s get shoot up 3p shoot 3s ‘That’s how he got shot up. They shot him...’
- (50) *wi duon ste lang, wi get uol op in di shap, reli*  
 1p NEG stay long 1p get hold up in DEF shop really  
 ‘We didn’t stay long, we got held up in the shop, really’

### 11.2 Passive equivalent

A passive equivalent surfaces in the ability of many JC transitive verbs to take on a passive meaning with subjects that in English would be their objects, (51). Note that in this lexical passive example, a normally non-stative verb acquires a stative meaning.

- (51) *di huol choch lak op, an lak aaf di lait*  
 DEF whole church lock up and turn off DEF light  
 ‘The whole church was locked up, and the lights were turned off’ or ‘...and someone turned off the lights’

11	Passive: summary for JC	
11.1	Passive construction	+
11.2	Passive equivalent	+

## 12 Adjectives: verbs?

Adjectives may be the head of a predicative phrase requiring no copula, §2.4; Rickford (1996) finds copula absence to be effectively categorical in the JC basilect. Like verbs, adjectives may be negated by *no*, §10.1, and may be the complement of a modal, §7.3. Bailey (1966:42) argues that adjectives differ from verbs on four grounds: (a) their attributive functions, (b) the ability to take intensifiers, (c)

the ability to serve as complement to process verb *get* (examples in §3.4, §5.2), and (d) the ability to accept comparative (*-a*) and superlative (*-is*) suffixes (though the superlative does not predicate). Semantically appropriate adjectives, more rarely, may function with causative meaning, (52).

- (52) *aal it mek it kuol di milk* (Roberts 1973: 34)  
 all 3s make 3s cold def milk [of a milk truck] 'It even makes the milk get cold'

### 12.1 Preverbal markers before adjectives

Pre-verbal markers occur before JC adjectives. See examples in §2.4 (PAST), §3.4 (PROG), §4.4 (HAB), §5.2 (completive), and §7.3 (adjectives are possible with all auxiliary elements listed).

### 12.2 Preverbal markers before nouns

There are no unambiguous cases of pre-verbal markers occurring before nouns in JC. However, TMA markers occur freely before the equative copula *a*, which joins two nominal elements, §13.1.

### 12.3 Preverbal markers before locatives

Preverbal markers may occur before the locative copula *de*, §2.5.

### 12.4 Predicate clefting: adjectives or adjectival verbs

Predicate clefting in JC consists of fronting an adjective, introducing it with the pre-posed focus particle *a* (also called the 'highlighter', §13.4-5), and leaving a copy in its original position in the main clause, (53). In mesolectal speech *a* is frequently replaced by invariant *iz*.

- (53) *a sik Samwel sik* (Bailey 1966: 86)  
 HL sick Samuel sick 'Samuel is really sick'

### 12.5 Predicate clefting: other verbs

Verbs can be clefted in exactly the same way, (54); this was part of Holm's (1988) motivation for arguing that creoles have 'adjectival verbs'. Modals (§7.3) generally do not occur in predicate clefting, with the exception of *mos(i)*; this may either be clefted itself (55), or precede the clefted element (*A gaan im mosi gaan aredi*), in which case it is unstressed.

- (54) *a swel it swel, luk da. A bigfut dem gi mi.*  
 HL swell 3s swell, look there. HL bigfoot 3p give 1s.  
 'It really swelled up, look there. Someone gave me the bigfoot'

- (55) *a mos im mosi go aredi*  
 HL must 3s must go already 'She really must have gone already'

### 12.6 Comparison with 'pass'

The comparative construction with 'pass', frequently found in Atlantic creoles, does not occur in JC. However, JC does have an intensifier of similar form which might be related to this construction.

- (56) *paas ogli* (DJE: 341)  
 pass ugly 'extremely ugly'

### 12.7 Comparison as in superstrate

The comparative suffix *-a* (< E *-er*) may occur on adjectives, but not verbs. Basilectal JC also uses *muoran* (< E *more than*), which functions as a single morpheme, and comparative morpheme *na* 'as'.

- (57) *Samwel wok haad muoran Boti* (Bailey 1966: 127)  
 S works hard COMP B 'Samuel works harder than Bertie'

12	Adjectives: verbs? summary for JC	
12.1	Preverbal markers before adjectives	+
12.2	Preverbal markers before nouns	0
12.3	Preverbal markers before locatives	+
12.4	Predicate clefting: adj. or adjectival verbs	+
12.5	Predicate clefting: other verbs	+
12.6	Comparison with 'pass'	0
12.7	Comparison as in superstrate	+

### 13 The copula

JC distinguishes between the tense-neutral copulas for equation (*a*), location (*de*) and adjectival predication (zero). This is obscured in the mesolect, where each alternates with non-concord (but tense-marked) *iz* or *woz* – contraction is rare – and the overt forms occasionally alternate with zero.

#### 13.1 Equative copula (with NP)

The equative copula, which joins two nominal elements, is *a*, varying with non-concord *iz/woz* in the mesolect. In contrast with other environments, the copula is categorical in this syntactic environment: Rickford (1996) finds it present over 80% of the time in basilectal speech. The older JC form is *da* (59). Equative *a* is tense-neutral, and may be preceded by past *ben* or *did*.

- (58) *di saiyans man a mi kozin* (Sistren 1986: 46)  
 def science man COP POSS cousin 'The science man is my cousin'
- (59) *ebry day da fishing day, but ebry day no fe catch fish* (Rampini 1873, quoted in DJE: 141)  
 every day COP fishing day, but every day NEG FUT catch fish  
 'Every day is a fishing day, but you won't catch fish every day'

#### 13.2 Locative copula (with expression of place)

The basic locative copula is *de*. This tense-neutral basilectal form occurs before a prepositional locative phrase (*Im de a yaad* 'She is at home'), where it alternates with *iz/woz* and zero. Rickford finds verbal *de* "the most persistent of the creole copulas" (1996:366), occurring in about two-thirds of all locatives. *De* is the only form that can occur question-finally (61). It is homophonous with *de* 'there', and both forms may well derive from E *there*.

- (60) *House never deh nearby* (Sistren 1986: 46)  
 House NEG+PAST LOC nearby 'There were no houses nearby'
- (61) *(a/iz) we im de?*  
 (HL) where 3s LOC 'Where is she?'

#### 13.3 Zero copula with adjective

Zero copula is normal before predicate adjectives in JC (11), as also before quantitative adjectives (e.g. *likl* 'little', *nof* 'much, many; abundant' and *tumoch* 'too many, a great deal'), though non-concord *iz/woz* sometimes occurs. The frequency contrast with locatives is thus striking and has served as evidence in arguments about the creole ancestry of AAVE, where a contrast also occurs; the facts are complex (Holm 1976, 1984, Baugh 1980, Rickford 1996, 1999).

### 13.4 Highlighter with question words

The focus particle *a* (older form *da*) may occur clause-initially before a fronted constituent, which generally receives contrast or emphasis. JC distinguishes between the clefting of predicative and non-predicative elements (§12.4-5): the former, but not the latter, are copied in their original position. This applies to question words (61, 62), which are given a falling intonation. As with other focus constructions, *a* varies with mesolectal *iz* (but not *woz*). Clefting question words does not convey focus or emphasis: it is simply the normal construction for *wh*-movement.

- (62) *yong man, a wa du yu?*  
 young man, HL what bother 2s      ‘Young man, what is it that’s bothering you/wrong with you?’

### 13.5 Highlighter with other structures

Other elements that may be clefted include manner adverbials (63), locatives and temporal phrases (64), as well as nouns and pronominals (65), all without copying.

- (63) *a so it swel op fram i dakta kot it op so?*  
 HL so 3s swell up from DEF doctor cut it up so ‘Did it swell up like that because the doctor cut it?’
- (64) *afta it kom oot a di fut, a chrii die schriet hit bon mi*  
 after 3s come out of DEF foot HL three day straight 3s burn 1s  
 ‘After it came out of my foot, it’s three days straight that it burned me’
- (65) *a dat mi a tel yu*  
 HL that 1s PROG tell 2s      ‘That’s what I’m telling you’

### 13.6 Existential (‘have’ = ‘there is’)

JC normally expresses existence with the invariant verb (*h*)*av* plus an indefinite pronoun subject, e.g. *dem* ‘they’ or *yu* ‘you’. Occasionally it is expressed with locative copula *de* as in (91), §13.2.

- (66) *dee hav a grup a man niem Stepaz an yu hav dis poliis gai we badigyaaad Siyaga*  
 3p exist IND group of man name S and 2s exist DEM police guy REL bodyguard S  
 ‘There was a group of men called the Steppers, and there was a policeman who bodyguarded Seaga’

13	The copula: summary for JC	
13.1	Equative copula (with NP)	+
13.2	Locative copula (with expression of place)	+
13.3	Zero copula with adjective	+
13.4	Highlighter with question words	+
13.5	Highlighter with other structures	+
13.6	Existential (‘have’ = ‘there is’)	+

## 14 Serial verbs

Serial verbs are identified here as non-modal verbs occurring in strings without any overt marker of subordination or coordination, with a single TMA and/or negation marker and interpretation (if any), and a single expressed subject. They are “not attested in the earliest texts” (Lalla & D’Costa 1990:71) but appear in the 19th century. In addition to the functions illustrated below (directional, dative, comparative), the occurrence of others (instrumental, comitative, benefactive) is considered important for typological and historical grouping of creoles (Sebba 1987, Muysken & Veenstra 1995); JC possesses most types (Veenstra 1990).

### 14.1 Directional with ‘go’

Directionals are the most common, and almost certainly the earliest (c. 1820, Lalla & D’Costa 1990), serials in JC. The verb *go* occurs in a variety of positions, either as initial or subsequent verb in a string (67), or as a final element (after the dominant verbs), optionally preceding a locative (68). The original sense of motion away from some point may be relatively strong, as in the first verb of (67), or subject to semantic bleaching, as in the second, which is practically an empty complementizer.

- (67) *wi go Ambasada Tiyata go watch koubwai*  
 1p go A T go watch cowboy  
 ‘We would go to the Ambassador Theatre to watch cowboy [movies]’
- (68) *yu a tek di bos go Kingstan?* (DJE: 199)  
 2s PROG take DEF bus go K  
 ‘Are you taking the bus to Kingston?’

### 14.2 Directional with ‘come’

The JC verb *kom* also carries the corresponding ‘motion towards’ meaning, and may likewise appear as initial or a subsequent verb, or as final element optionally preceding a locative (69; unusually, this speaker hyper-corrects by inflecting the second verb, which marks its dominant status compared to *kom*). This verb may also undergo various degrees of semantic bleaching, so that it can co-occur in serial constructions with full-verb *go*. Further, *kom* seems to lend itself to reduplication, and to affective use conveying a sense of indignation, much like the semi-auxiliary use of *come* in AAVE (Spears 1982), as in the 19th-century citation in (70).

- (69) *di bredfruit chrii briek aaf, bot it neva kom fel an di ous*  
 DEF breadfruit tree break off but 3s NEG+PAST come fall on DEF house  
 ‘[A piece of] the breadfruit tree broke off, but it didn’t fall on the house here’
- (70) *dis naga man come come collar me de same like a say me da him sexis* (Murray 1877, in DJE: 116)  
 DEM negro man come come collar 1s DEF same like say 1s COP POSS sex  
 ‘This black man comes and collars me just as if I were the same sex as he’

### 14.3 Serial ‘give’ meaning ‘to, for’

The serial dative use of *gi* (< E *give*) in JC serial verb constructions is common.

- (71) *kyari bak di dok gi Big Bwai*  
 carry back DEF duck give B B  
 ‘Take back the duck to Big Boy’

### 14.4 Serial ‘say’ meaning ‘that’

This construction dating to 1820 (Lalla 1981) is discussed as a complementizer in §8.6. The syntactic status of such elements as verbs or complementizers has been debated for other Atlantic Creoles (Bickerton 1981, Sebba 1987); the status of JC *se* appears to be intermediate according to Sebba’s tests. It is likely that use of *se* as a complementizer is the result of reanalysis and grammaticalization, deriving from its use as a full verb in serial constructions (Mühlhäusler 1997; Mohan 1978).

- (72) *fieba se Jaaj naa kom* (Bailey 1966: 112)  
 favor COMP J NEG+PROG come  
 ‘[It] seems as if George is not coming’

### 14.5 Serial ‘pass’ meaning ‘more than’

This use of *paas* ‘pass’ rarely occurs in JC and is not, strictly speaking, a serial construction.

- (73) *manggo de a yaad, paas plenti* (FG Cassidy, p c)  
 mango LOC at yard, pass plenty  
 ‘There are a great many mangoes at home, more than enough’

## 14.6 Three serial verb constructions

Triple serials, as in other languages, involve one or more directional members. They are often interrupted by the argument of one of the verbs, and not all verbs need share a subject, thus violating the definition of serials given by Jansen, Koopman & Muysken (1978) and some later theorists.

- (74) *im wan mi fi go kya im kom* (Alleyne 1980: 91)  
 3s want 1s INF go carry 3s come 'He wants me to bring him'

## 14.7 Serial verb constructions with 4 or more verbs

There seems to be no reason in principle that 4-verb serials cannot occur, but none have been found.

14	Serial verbs: summary for JC	
14.1	Directional with 'go'	+
14.2	Directional with 'come'	+
14.3	Serial 'give' meaning 'to, for'	+
14.4	Serial 'say' meaning 'that'	+
14.5	Serial 'pass' meaning 'more than'	<b>R</b>
14.6	3 serial verb constructions	+
14.7	Construction with 4 or more serial verbs	?

## 15 Noun phrase

Though the classes of count, mass and proper nouns largely accommodate the properties of JC nominals, noun-class membership is not the same as in English. Some E mass items are count items in JC, while a number of JC abstract nouns may take indefinite quantifiers or definite articles not possible in English (Bailey 1966:21ff). Human proper names may take the associative plural, §15.5.

### 15.1 Bare nouns (generic, definite)

Genericity is often expressed via bare nouns, but not always. The absence of inflection for number must be distinguished from the absence of a determiner (article, demonstrative, possessive, numeral, quantifier, etc.). Bare nouns which have neither are often generic (75: *cow, goat*), but not necessarily (76: *gunshot*). Generic nouns may take plural *-dem* (and plural *-s*), as in (81), but very rarely do so.

- (75) *Papa have him knife weh him use to stick cow and him knife... fi kill goat* (Sistren 1986: 33)  
 P have POSS knife REL 3s use INF stick cow and POSS knife INF kill goat  
 'Papa had his knife that he used to stick cows and his knife... for killing goats'
- (76) *Police shoot Starman inna dance... dem rain down gunshot pon him* (Sistren 1986: 192)  
 police shoot S in dance 3p rain down gunshot on 3s  
 'The police shot Starman at a dance... they rained down gunshots on him'

### 15.2 Indefinite article

The basilectal indefinite article is *wan* (< E *one*). It also refers to the numeral 'one', but its article function is distinct from its numeral function. Like the E indefinite article *a*, *wan* is used only in the singular; plural indefinites are bare or take quantifiers (e.g. *nof, plenti* 'a lot', *som* 'some' and *tumoch*, §13.3). Generic nouns, being neither singular nor plural, cannot be preceded by *wan* (though they may take the definite article, as in English).

However, article use in JC is constrained not by the feature [ $\pm$ definite], but rather by the feature [ $\pm$ specific]. Bickerton (1981) argued that non-specific NPs in creoles have no article, which is generally true for JC, and that among specific NPs those which are presupposed receive the definite article while those which are existentially asserted receive the indefinite article. Exceptions to this in JC include bare nouns with a variety of readings, e.g. [-definite, + specific] as in (76), with the result that bare nouns, like bare verbs (§1), have no single necessary interpretation. As the indefinite article is not always obligatory, its occurrence can convey emphasis, as in (77).

- (77) *one tracing di day up deh* (Sistren 1986: 231)  
 IND shouting match DEF day up there 'A real shouting match took place up there that day'

Strikingly, NP specificity also affects the tense interpretation of bare, non-stative, transitive verbs (§1.3). This can be seen via the contrast between (78a), where the default interpretation is past when a [+definite, +specific] object occurs, and (78b), where it is non-past, for a [-definite, -specific] object. The introduction of the indefinite article *wan* in (78c), which has a [-definite, + specific] object, forces a past reading, in line with the other [+specific] case. Example (76) also suggests that at least some cases formally like (78b) are semantically like (78c).

- (78a) *di uman sel di manggo* 'the woman sold the mango'  
 (78b) *di uman sel manggo* 'the woman sells mangoes'  
 (78c) *di uman sel wan manggo* 'the woman sold a mango'  
 DEF woman sell (DEF/Ø/IND) mango

### 15.3 Definite article (from superstrate deictic)

The JC definite article is *di* (< E *the*). *Di* generally appears with semantically definite nouns, but it is governed by the feature [+specific], §15.2; it is also absent more often than E *the*. *Di* is not used (except in mesolectal speech) to indicate the generic.

- (79) *di man-dem dig di hole and di woman-dem plant di corn* (Sistren 1986: 48)  
 DEF man-PL dig DEF hole and DEF woman-PL plant DEF corn  
 'The men dug the holes and the women planted the corn'

### 15.4 Plural marker (= 'they')

The basilectal plural-marker in JC is post-nominal *-dem*. This suffix presumably derives from the 3p pronoun *dem* 'they, them, their', and the same form also serves as the plural demonstrative, §15.6. However, plural *-dem* is distinguished from these by its post-nominal position. Perhaps owing to incomplete grammaticalization, *-dem* can only occur on 3rd person nouns, not in such direct-address constructions as English *You boys* (\**Yu bwai-dem*), and it almost never occurs in an NP headed by the plural demonstrative pre-nominal *dem*. It is restricted to [+definite] NPs, and strongly tends to appear in NPs containing the definite article *di* (though it also appears with other definite determiners such as possessives, demonstratives, etc.), §15.3. Though *-dem* normally attaches to the pluralized noun directly, it occasionally occurs after an embedded noun structure (80).

- (80) *A she haffi carry di box a liquor-dem from downstairs?* (Sistren 1986: 231)  
 HL 3s MOD carry DEF box of liquor-PL from downstairs  
 'Is it her job to carry [the boxes [of liquor]] from downstairs?'  
 (81) *frenz an a uol-dem, neva falo frenz an a uol*  
 friend-PL on a whole-PL NEG+ PAST follow friend-PL on a whole-PL 'In general, never follow friends'

As with tense-marking morphology, the plural *-s* suffix appears in the speech of most Jamaicans, but is commonly ascribed by creolists to decreolization or English interference. Yet, while *-dem* appears relatively late in Jamaican texts, variation between *-s* and zero is attested in the earliest records.<sup>3</sup> Plural *-dem* and *-s* rarely co-occur in a noun phrase, but it is not ruled out by mesolectal grammar (*contra* e.g. Mufwene 1986b); cases like (81) make clear that the two occupy different positions. In fact, their variable marking of plural is constrained by different factors. Patrick, Carranza & Kendall (1993) found plural *-dem* to be semantically conditioned, appearing more often with nouns denoting humans than inanimate objects, as illustrated in (79: *man-dem*, but *hole-Ø*); but *-s* proved indifferent to animacy, in the same corpus. Plural *-dem* variability is not conditioned by social or phonological factors, but *-s* is. The most frequent pattern in plural-reference noun phrases is the absence of any inflection (bare nouns).<sup>4</sup> The relationship between the different ways of marking noun number is inherently variable, and complex – not a simple matter of code-switching or dialect mixing.

### 15.5 Personal noun plus plural marker

Like other Atlantic Creoles, AAVE, and African substrate languages (Holm 1988:193) JC has an associative plural. It consists of a proper name plus *-dem* (82, 35). This construction semantically resembles E co-ordinate structures but, instead of using a conjunction, affixes a plural pronoun.

- (82) *im kyaan sie it gud an Miss Waaka dem laaf afta im* (Roberts 1973: 18)  
 3s can+NEG say 3s good and M W -pl laugh after 3s  
 'He can't say it properly, and Miss Walker and the class laugh at him'

### 15.6 Demonstrative

Demonstratives in JC include singular *dis* 'this' and *dat* 'that' and plural *dem* 'these, those', which is however not a 'plural marker' any more than other [+plural] pre-N forms (e.g. E *some, three*). Distal *dat* combines with *de* 'there' as *dat-de*; proximal *dis* can combine with *ya* 'here' as *dis-ya*, with archaic variants *disa, disaya, dishya, desha*; while *dem* combines with both to give *dem-de, dem-ya*. As well as serving as demonstrative pronouns, all of these may function as demonstrative adjectives, either preceding the noun, as in *dis-ya ting*, or incorporating it, as in *dis ting-ya* 'this (here) thing (here)'. Both *dat* and *dis* have a single ambiguous variant, *da*, that may immediately precede a noun followed by the locative particle, e.g. *da ting-ya* 'this thing (here)' or *da ting-de* 'that thing there' (83). Demonstrative *dem* occurs also in Early Modern English (EModE) and 17th-century Hiberno English. *Dara/dari* is an archaic form of *dat*, which combines as above (DJE: 143).

- (83) *Hou dem spiik da wie de an wii spiik da wie, yu no?*  
 how 3p speak DEM way there and 1p speak DEM way 2s know  
 'How come they speak that way and we [only] speak this way, you know?'

### 15.7 Demonstrative plus definite or plural

Singular demonstratives are incompatible with plural markers, and the plural pre-N demonstrative *dem* does not co-occur with the post-N pluralizer *-dem*. All demonstratives are [+definite]; however, they do not co-occur with the definite article, which occupies the same pre-N slot.

<sup>3</sup> Plural *-dem* is not attested before the 19th century (Lalla & D'Costa 1990:73); for *-s*, see D'Costa & Lalla (1989, Ch. 1).

<sup>4</sup> Patrick, Carranza & Kendall (1993) found that uninflected NPs occurred slightly over half of the time (sample N=1,501), while NPs marked with *-dem* occurred at a rate of 12% in those environments where such marking was possible.

### 15.8 Relative clause followed by definite or plural marker

This structure does not appear to occur in JC.

### 15.9 Prenominal adjective

The normal position for adjectives in JC is pre-nominal (84); see also §12.

- (84) *a neva sii a big man baal so in aal mi laif*  
 1s PAST+NEG see IND big man cry so in all POSS life  
 'I've never in all my life seen a grown man cry like that'

### 15.10 Postnominal adjective

Postnominal adjectives in JC are predicates outside the noun phrase, rather than elements within it.

### 15.11 Gender agreement

JC does not have gender agreement within the noun phrase.

15	Noun phrase: summary for JC	
15.1	Bare nouns (generic, definite)	+
15.2	Indefinite article	+
15.3	Definite article (from superstrate deictic)	+
15.4	Plural marker (= 'they')	+
15.5	Personal noun plus plural marker	+
15.6	Demonstrative	+
15.7	Demonstrative plus definite or plural	0
15.8	Relative clause followed by definite or plural marker	0
15.9	Prenominal adjective	+
15.10	Postnominal adjective	0
15.11	Gender agreement	0

## 16 Possession

Possessive structures are generally similar whether they are headed by a possessor noun or pronoun.

### 16.1 Nouns: juxtaposition [possessor + possessed]

This construction is common: bare nouns may have possessive force (85, 96), unlike English. The same order occurs in complex possessive phrases (86) and in non-possessive Noun-Noun compounds, e.g. kin-terms such as *biebi-madda* (Patrick 1995).

- (85) *go in yuh house go sleep, but lef people yard and lef people house* (Sistren 1986: 164)  
 go in POSS house go sleep but leave people-Ø yard and leave people-Ø house  
 'Go in your own house and sleep, leave other people's yards and other people's houses [alone]'
- (86) *Me aunty never like we to mix wid we faada family* (Sistren 1987: 164)  
 POSS aunt NEG+PAST like 1p INF mix with POSS father family  
 'My aunt didn't like us to mingle with our father's family'

### 16.2 Nouns: preposition [possessed (of) possessor]

The prepositional construction with *a 'of'*, parallel to English, is less common but well-known in JC.

- (87) *wel, natchrali! mi fiil di anz a dopi, man*  
 well naturally 1s feel DEF hand-PL of duppy man 'Well, naturally! I've felt the hands of ghosts, man'

### 16.3 Nouns: possessive adjective [possessor HIS possessed]

No unambiguous examples of this construction could be found in JC, nor does possessive *-s*; usage of the latter powerfully marks a speaker as deploying SJE.

### 16.4 Possessive adjectives: pronominal

Possessive adjectives in JC occur pronominally, and cannot occur after a noun or in place of one. In phonological form they are not distinct from personal pronouns: *mi* 'my', *yu* 'your (sg.)', *im* 'his/her/its', *wi* 'our', *unu* 'your (pl.)', and *dem* 'their' are homophonous with the personal pronouns corresponding to E 'I', 'you (sg.)', 'he/she/it', 'we', 'you (pl.)' and 'they', §17.1-6. Other forms also occur in the mesolect, §17.3, and with interrogatives, §17.8. The possessive adjective can be prefixed with prepositional element *fi-* and followed by the possessed noun (88). This *fi-* construction is reported in a 1736 quotation from Guinea Coast English, notably earlier than in Jamaica (Lalla & D'Costa 1990: 101, 103; but see Baker & Huber 2001: 198, for a 1780 citation). *Fi-* may also combine with proper nouns in the same construction, §16.6, and gender- or case-marked mesolect pronouns, as *fi-ar* 'her', §17.3. The adjective of possession *uon(a)* 'own' cannot occur alone but may follow a possessive adjective and precede the noun, e.g., *(fi-) mi uona ting* 'my own thing'.

- (88) 'How yuh mean?' she said. 'Den no *fi -me work me put yuh inna?*' (Sistren 1986: 126)  
 QW 2s mean 3s said then NEG POSS-1s work 1s put 2s in  
 'What do you mean?' she said. 'Then wasn't it *my* job I gave you?'

### 16.5 Possessive pronouns: distinct

Possessive pronouns in JC typically occur after an equative copula (89), and are homophonous with the *fi-* form of possessive adjectives, but grammatically distinct: instead of modifying a noun they replace it. Again, *uon(a)* may occur as adjective of possession, following the possessive pronoun.

- (89) *Mi nuo di fuor touzn mi mek a fi-mi!*  
 1s know DEF four thousand 1s make cop POSS-1s! 'I know the four thousand [*dollars*] I make is *mine!*'

### 16.6 Possessive pronoun as emphatic possessive adjective

Though not intrinsically emphatic, *fi-* may be stressed in either of the above constructions. The presence of *uon(a)* further emphasises possession, appearing with the possessive adjective to contrastive effect (16).

16	Possession: summary for JC	
16.1	Nouns: juxtaposition [possessor + possessed]	+
16.2	Nouns: preposition [possessed (of) possessor]	+
16.3	Nouns: possessive adjective [possessor <i>HIS</i> possessed]	0
16.4	Possessive adjectives: prenominal	+
16.5	Possessive pronouns: distinct	+
16.6	Possessive pronoun as emphatic possessive adjective	+

## 17 Pronouns: case distinctions

JC basilectal personal pronouns do not distinguish case or gender; animacy, person and number are systematically distinguished, however. In the mesolect some standard-like forms alternate, while case and gender distinctions occur but inconsistently (96). The mesolectal system is thus not more regular than English, nor does it display fewer dimensions of contrast: i.e., it is not simpler. First and second person basilectal pronouns display syllable-final lax vowels, not permitted by English phonotactics but quite common in West African languages (Ladefoged 1964) and other Atlantic Creoles. Rickford's (1979) treatment of Guyanese Creole rules for lax and tense vowels in pronouns largely applies to JC also. Most JC pronouns appear to derive from English oblique pronouns, except for *wi* (there is no *us* form) and *unu*. Subject *mi* and neuter *im* also occur in 17th-century Hiberno English. JC's lack of pronoun case (apart from *huufa* 'whose') means it only distinguishes "between overt and covert forms... the minimal case distinction we should expect to find in any language" (Radford 1997:206-07), and thus lacks "uninterpretable case-features; those which have been retained are interpretable person-, number- and gender-features" (1997: 182-83).

### 17.1 Personal pronouns: first person singular

(90) <i>mi</i>	'I, me, my'
<i>a, ai</i>	'I'
<i>mai</i>	'my'

- (91) *mi no biliiv nobadi de, tu mi, laik Mada R*  
 1s NEG believe nobody LOC to 1s like Mother R' I don't believe there's anybody, to me, like Mother R'

Diphthongal *ai* 'I' is common in educated and formal speech. In vernacular Rastafarian speech, it has ideological significance and is a productive prefix in, e.g., *I-man, I-an-I, I-dren* (Pollard 1980).

### 17.2 Personal pronouns: second person singular

(92) <i>yu</i>	'you, you, your'
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### 17.3 Personal pronouns: third person singular

(93) <i>im</i>	'he, him, his; she, her, her; it, it, its'
<i>(h)i(t)</i>	'it, it, its'
<i>(h)ii</i>	'he'
<i>shi</i>	'she'
<i>ar</i>	'her, her'

- (94) *rub ole wuman back, 'im mek yu tas'e 'im pepperpot* (Watson 1991: 151)  
 rub old woman back 3s let 2s taste POSS pepperpot  
 'Rub an old woman's back, and she will let you taste her pepperpot' [soup]

Third person singular *im* ‘he, she, it’ refers to males and females alike, animals or inanimate things. Mesolectal speakers also use *(h)ii* ‘he’ and *shi* ‘she’ for masculine and feminine subjects, respectively, and *ar* ‘her’ for feminine oblique cases. These standard-like elements find their way into derived forms, e.g. possessive adjectives, §16.4. Less productive is inanimate pronoun *i/ it/hit*. Being a marked form, *ar* cannot be clefted. Hyper-correct subject forms in oblique positions are rare.

#### 17.4 Personal pronouns: first person plural

(95) *wi* ‘we, us, our’  
*owa* ‘our’

(96) *mek wi go ina owa pakit an bai di lika oot a wi pakit!*  
let 1p go in POSS pocket and buy DEF liquor out of POSS pocket  
‘Let us go in our pockets and buy the liquor out of our own pockets!’

#### 17.5 Personal pronouns: second person plural

(97) *unu, yu* ‘you, you, your’

(98) *bwai unu kudn blodbaat gi di man chii ondred dala*  
boy 2p MOD EMPH give DEF man three hundred dollar  
‘Boy, y’all couldn’t even give the man three hundred dollars’

*Unu*, like Southern US *y’all*, does not take singular reference, though it can be indefinite like E *one*. The most stigmatized of JC pronouns, it has been traced to Igbo *unu* (DJE, Allsopp 1996, Parkvall 2000) or to convergent sources, e.g. Wolof *yena*, Kikongo *yeno*, Kimbundu *yenu*, Common Bantu *\*nu* (Holm 2000). It has not been found in texts before the later 19th century (Lalla & D’Costa 1990: 78, Baker & Huber 2001: 200). Because of the stigma, *unu* is often replaced in the mesolect with plural *yu*.

#### 17.6 Personal pronouns: third person plural

(99) *dem* ‘they, them, their’

(100) *dem build so much house till dem all build house in di middle of di road* (Sistren 1986:286)  
3p build so many house till 3p even build house in DEF middle of DEF road  
‘They built so many houses that they even build houses in the middle of the road’

#### 17.7 Reflexive pronouns: distinct form

JC reflexive pronouns resemble English: number-neutral *-sef* (< E *-self*) is suffixed. Adverbs serve a similar function (*so-so*, 102). Reciprocals are formed transparently with *wan aneda* ‘each other’, in any person (archaic *nara/nada*, ‘another’); a preceding (resumptive) pronoun is optional (103).

(101) *misef* ‘myself’  
*yusef* ‘yourself’  
*imsef* ‘himself, herself, itself’  
*arsef* ‘herself’  
*wisef* ‘ourselves’  
*unusef* ‘yourselves’  
*demsef* ‘themselves’

(102) *fi gruo fish widaut-n badi, jos di suo-suo hed*  
INF grow fish without+NEG body just DEF so-so head  
‘to grow fish with no body, just the head by itself’

(103) *dem miit op (dem) wan aneda pan di ruod*  
3p meet up (3p) one another on DEF road  
‘They met each other on the road’

## 17.8 Interrogative pronouns: some bimorphemic

Interrogatives in JC generally occur in clefted, focussed position, preceded by focus *a* (§13.4). The simplex forms in (104), along with *huu-fa*, also serve as relative pronouns; *wara* was “nearly obsolete” in 1868 (Russell 1868: 195). *Wai* ‘why’ (105) occurs in the mesolect, but cannot be focused like the others; *wich* is an interrogative adjective. All forms in (106) are semantically transparent compounds, and all but *homoch* and *wa mek* can serve as relative pronouns; *wichpaat* ‘where(ver)’ (also in Barbadian) has an EModE etymon, *which-part*. The interrogative possessive adjective *huu-fa* ‘whose’ is probably composed of *huu* (stressed, since it is focused) plus an unstressed and reduced *fi*, §16.4, thus < JC *fi-huu* < E *for who*. In (107), interestingly, *huufa* is further extracted and fronted out of the normal cleft construction (*a huufa name...*), for emphasis.

(104) <i>huu</i>	‘who, whose’	
<i>wa(t), we, wara</i>	‘what’	
<i>we</i>	‘where’	
(105) <i>wen</i>	‘when’	
<i>hou</i>	‘how, why’	
<i>wai</i>	‘why’	
<i>wich</i>	‘which’	
(106) <i>homoch</i>	‘how much/many’	
<i>wa mek</i>	‘why’	
<i>wentaim</i>	‘when, whenever’	
<i>wichpaat</i>	‘where, wherever’	
<i>wisaid</i>	‘where’	
<i>huufa</i>	‘whose’	
(107) ‘ <i>Who-fa name a come pon di cheque?</i> ’ ‘ <i>My name, maam</i> ’		(Sistren 1986: 127)
QW-POSS name HL come on DEF cheque POSS name maam		
	‘ <i>Whose name is it that comes on the cheque?</i> ’ ‘ <i>My name, ma’am</i> ’	

## 17.9 Relative pronouns

JC relative pronouns include *we*, *wa(t)* and zero, all ‘what, who(m), which’, as well as mesolectal *wat*, *huu*, and *wich*, modelled on standard English, and basilectal *huufa*. *We* has a distinct meaning ‘where’ from E *where*, but *we/wa* ‘what’ probably both < NW England *wha* (DJE). Non-pronominal relativizers *da(t)*, *a* originated in deictics (< E *that*) as opposed to interrogative pronouns.

- (108) *di wan we go tek it op nat gwain tu taak, an di wan huu did go an dig it [...niida]*  
 DEF one REL go take 3s up NEG go+PROG INF talk and DEF one REL PAST go and dig 3s [neither]  
 ‘The one who took it is not going to talk, and neither the one who went and dug it up’

17	Pronoun case distinctions: summary for JC	
17.1	Personal pronouns: first person singular	0
17.2	Personal pronouns: second person singular	0
17.3	Personal pronouns: third person singular	0
17.4	Personal pronouns: first person plural	0
17.5	Personal pronouns: second person plural	0
17.6	Personal pronouns: third person plural	0
17.7	Reflexive pronoun: distinct form	+

17.8	Interrogative pronouns: some bimorphemic	+
17.9	Relative pronouns	+

## 18 Coordinating conjunctions

### 18.1 'And' joining sentences

### 18.2 'And' joining sentence parts: distinct

JC has a single pattern for conjoining both sentences and smaller constituents, with *an* 'and'.

- (109) *so dat miin mi nuo se a chuu an a no kwiknis af i hai dat*  
 so DEM mean 1s know say COP true and HLNEG quickness of DEF eye DEM  
 'So that means I know that it's true and that was no quickness-of-the-eye' [=illusion]
- (110) *mi spen sevntiin touzin dala, buot gi obiyaman an dakta*  
 1s spend seventeen thousand dollar both give obeahman and doctor  
 'I spent seventeen thousand dollars, both for obeahman and doctor'

<b>18</b>	<b>Coordinating conjunctions: summary for JC</b>	
18.1	'And' joining sentences	+
18.2	'And' joining sentence parts: distinct	0

## 19 Prepositions

### 19.1 General locative preposition (or postposition)

The JC preposition *iina* (unstressed form *ina*) means both 'in, inside' (111) and 'to, into'; by extension of the spatial analogy to time, it can mean 'during' (e.g., *iina die*, 'during the day'). However, it cannot take the meaning of *fran* 'from, out of', as can the general locative prepositions of some other Atlantic Creole languages. Similarly, *a* (older *da*, *de*) can be translated as 'at, in, on, to', referring to either a motion towards (112, the first) or a stable location (the second), but not a motion away from. JC also has prepositions of compound derivation, such as *batamsaid* 'below' < E *bottom* + *side*, (113).

- (111) *som a dem, dee jos gyada somwe ina mi brien yeso stil*  
 some of 3p 3p just gather somewhere in POSS brain here-so still  
 'Some of them, they're still just gathered somewhere here in my brain'
- (112) *so ef yu don sensibl, yu go a tong [an] yu don kom bak a yar livin* (DeCamp, Nov 1958)  
 so if 2s NEG sensible 2s go into town [and] 2s NEG come back in yard live+PROG  
 'So if you're not sensible, you go into town [and] you don't come back home alive'
- (113) *a yuustu waak kom dong a dis aiskriim plees, likl bit batamsaid di hoos*  
 1s PAST+HAB walk come down to DEM icecream place little bit below DEF house  
 'I used to walk down to this ice-cream place, a little bit below the house' [on the hillside]

### 19.2 Zero preposition with motion verb plus place

As in other Atlantic Creoles, it is possible to omit the prepositions *a* or (*i*)*ina* after a verb of motion and before a destination which is well-known, already mentioned, or presupposed in the discourse.

- (114) *Everybody deh pon, 'Me da like go England'* (Sistren 1986: 42)  
 everybody LOC upon 1s MOD like go \_\_ E

‘Everybody was [*saying*], “I would like to go to England”’

19	Prepositions: summary for JC	
19.1	General locative preposition (or postposition)	+
19.2	Zero preposition after motion verb + place	+

## 20 Miscellaneous

### 20.1 Word order: questions SVO

Word-order is SVO, except in cases of predicate clefting, §12.4-5, and other kinds of fronting, §13.4-5. Within questions and embedded sentences SVO order is maintained: there is no Aux, hence no Aux-inversion, §7.3. It is possible to ask apparently non-finite indirect questions (115), perhaps parallel to the imperative, e.g. *Please to give me...* ‘Please give me...’ (also an EModE form, Niles 1980: 128). (115), reported in English but collected in JC, is unlikely to have had an overt copula in the original.

- (115) *‘Yes Bredda Anancy, if you are even to give me a ride on you back?’* (Dance 1985: 28)  
 yes brother A if 2s even INF give 1s IND ride on POSS back  
 ‘Yes Brother Anancy, would you even give me a ride on your back?’

### 20.2 Sentence-final -o

This element does not occur in modern JC outside of songs. (116) was collected 1920-21 at Prospect, “a new song composed since the late war broke out”. Other paralinguistic elements found in JC (some more widely) include the summons *Hi!* – also an expression of surprise alongside high-falling, glottalized *eh-eh!* – assent-seeking discourse markers *yaa?* (< E *you hear?*) and Rastafarian-derived *seen?* and interjectional interrogative marker *ee?*, the more dubious *een-heen*, both nasalized and glottalized, and *a-wo-a* to indicate understanding just received. *Kiss-teeth* (also known in JC and beyond as *suck-teeth* or *chups*, and related to the exclamation *cho!*, Patrick & Figueroa 2002) is a widespread feature in the African diaspora.

- (116) *fare you well-oh, me goin across seas a-wah* (Beckwith 1928: 42)  
 fare 2s well -o 1s go+PROG across seas away ‘Fare you well, I’m going across seas away’

20	Miscellaneous: summary for JC	
20.1	Word order: questions SVO	+
20.2	Sentence-final -o	R

## Conclusion

Though JC is one of the earliest- and best-described Atlantic Creoles, much remains to be done and many misapprehensions persist among its speakers, English speakers generally, and scholars, whose descriptive and theoretical models are responsible for some of the confusion. Current methodology in language variation and change has rarely been applied to the history of JC, though important work by Jean D’Costa and Barbara Lalla shows clearly that many structures long considered core or basilectal elements of Caribbean Creoles are only attested a century or longer after the genesis of JC must have occurred. Past marking with *ben* is not clearly attested before 1790, but variation between *-ed* and zero marking precedes it, §1-§2; progressive meaning for (*d*)*a*, §3, emerges after habitual (§4, which may derive from dialects of SW England, Niles 1980); plural *-s* and zero occur in texts before

plural *-dem*, §15.4; purposive *fi* (§8.2, also perhaps < SW E) before possessive *fi*, §16.4; while serial verbs, §14, and the African-derived pronoun *unu*, §17.5, also appear late (Baker & Huber 2001).

Thus it appears that forms generally called mesolectal, and put down to interference from English, preceded basilectal forms; when the latter appear in the record, they do not supplant the former, but become integrated into a variable yet systematic grammar. The occurrence of English forms and constraints in JC is partial but not random, conventionalized rather than improvised. Linguists can no longer speculate without evidence that JC variation and the mesolect are grammarless, the spontaneous result of contemporary code-switching or fossilized learning of English, though these undoubtedly played a role earlier. The basilect as we know it may be a late creation, but JC is not.

Synchronically, analysis of variation in past-reference forces a shift from syntactic or lexical to discourse-based principles, and the reframing or abandonment of categorical constraints on stativity and anteriority, supported by later work on other Atlantic CEs (§2; Blake 1997, Hackert 2004). Research on plurals reveals the importance of definiteness and animacy constraints on number-marking (§15.4, Patrick 1994), as in Gullah (Rickford 1986) and Liberian varieties (Singler 1991). Both bare verbs and nouns are shown separately to have complex interpretations, *contra* earlier work, and indeed a complex relationship (§15.2). All these insights proceed from analysis which recognizes the historical and contemporary primacy of the mesolect, interrogates rather than presupposes the lectal boundaries within the continuum, and examines the nature of constraints (e.g., categorical vs. variable) as an open question, resolvable using quantitative, corpus-based, variationist methods.

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