

## ABSTRACT

### Relative Clause Formation in Jamaican Creole

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This study presents a discussion of Jamaican relative clause formation, as well as an investigation into the categorial status of relative clause introducers. The first aim of the study is to provide a structural description of relative clause formation in Jamaican. Based on arguments put forward by Chomsky (1977), constructions such as interrogative and relative clauses possess certain diagnostics. These diagnostics include the presence of a *wh*-phrase in clause-initial position, a gap in the clause that cannot be filled by another element, unbounded movement that is restricted across certain domains. Chomsky accounts for these diagnostics by positing a theory of *wh*-movement.

In this study, it is argued that these diagnostics are present in Jamaican interrogative and relative clauses; hence the same theoretical analysis of *wh*-movement can be applied. This analysis is done using the Minimalist Framework posited by Chomsky (1995). In the Minimalist Framework, movement is seen as a last resort operation, occurring only when activated by feature checking. It is posited that in Jamaican, *wh*-movement occurs to check and eliminate features to enable relative and interrogative clauses to converge; movement takes place overtly in some Jamaican relative clause constructions, but covertly in others. It is

argued that both overt and covert movement, in Jamaican, are subjected to economy conditions such as “procrastination” and “shortest move”.

The second aim of the research is to explore the possibility that there are relative introducers in Jamaican that should not be analyzed as relative pronouns, but instead as complementizers. In examining the data collected, it can be seen that some relative clause introducers possess semantic information and genitive case forms, can accommodate pied-piped prepositions and are sensitive to animacy. These can be analyzed as being relative pronouns; Jamaican relative clause introducers *(h)uu* and *(h)uufa* are in this category. This behaviour is not seen in all relative clause introducers. Relative introducers such as *we*, *wat* and *dat*, following the analyses by Radford (1988) and Den Besten (1981) of similar phenomena in English and Afrikaans respectively, can be shown to have the properties of complementizers instead of relative pronouns.

**Keywords:** Jamaican Creole; Relative Clause; Minimalism; Wh-movement.