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**A description of the copular clause in Trinidadian French Creole based on Higgins (1979)**

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Supervised by Dr. Jo-Anne Ferreira

LING 3099

10 May 2016

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### List of Abbreviations

A — alternation with *sé*-clefts

AP — adjectival phrase

D — deictic

cop — copula

comp — complement

dNP — definite noun phrase

DP — determiner phrase

E — embedding under propositional verbs without a copula

EC — equative clause

I — subject-complement inversion

IC — identificational clause

iNP — indefinite noun phrase

R — *vini*-replacement

SE — Standard English

SLFC — St. Lucian French Creole

TE/C — Trinidadian English/Creole

TFC — Trinidadian French Creole

NP — noun phrase

PC — predicational clause

PN — proper name

PP — prepositional phrase

SC — specificational clause



### Abstract

This study describes the copular clause in the variety of Trinidadian French Creole (TFC) spoken in Paramin using Higgins' (1979) taxonomy of copular clauses. Higgins' taxonomy identifies four classes based on syntactic and semantic criteria. Such documentation is important since TFC is an endangered heritage language with a 146-year-old grammar that does not treat with copular clauses comprehensively and cohesively. The study aimed to determine the distribution of the equative, attributive and locative copulas attested in creole languages and to determine the semantic properties of the clauses studied. This was done with the help of two native speaker consultants and one non-native speaker in a methodology that involved reverse translation elicitation, creation of a novel testing schedule to determine the semantic properties of the clauses under study based on English tests proposed by Higgins (1979), Mikkelsen (2011) and Niimura (2007), and construction and introspection elicitation. The schedule included the following tests: subject-complement inversion, *vini*-replacement, alternation with *sé*-clefts and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula.

The study found four forms occupying the position of the copula, /se/, /sete/,  $\emptyset$  and /te/, but posits two copular forms. /se/ is the equative copula with the variant /sete/ found with NP predicate complements in all of Higgins' classes and  $\emptyset$  the locative and attributive forms found in the predicational class only. /te/ is analysed as the pre-verbal anterior marker, and /sete/ as a bimorphemic combination of /se/ and /te/. Additionally, the study found that predicational, identificational, and specificational clauses can be identified based on their responses to the four tests used in the study. Predicational clauses pass *vini*-replacement and embedding under a

propositional verb without a copula, ICs fail subject-complement inversion and embedding, and SCs pass subject-complement inversion and alternation with *sé*-clefts. The study also raised methodological issues in studying the semantic properties of copular clauses in French Creoles and endangered languages.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This study is concerned with description of the copular clause in Trinidadian French Creole (hereafter TFC) based on Higgins' taxonomy of copular clauses. It is situated in the field of language description, specifically that of the copular clause in Trinidadian French Creole (hereafter TFC). Language description is a necessary part of language documentation and is concerned with making generalisations about the structure of a language based on analysis of primary data (Himmelman 199). Language description and documentation are of particular importance in the current time where the world's languages are disappearing rapidly (Woodbury 4). This entails loss of human linguistic diversity and for communities that have experienced language death, loss of cultural heritage, identity, and community (Woodbury 4).

TFC, along with St. Lucian French Creole (hereafter SLFC), is classed as an Antillean French Creole belonging to the Caribbean French Creoles identified by Goodman's taxonomy (15-16). Haitian French Creole is the other type of Caribbean French Creole (Goodman 15-16). TFC, also known as Patois, is an endangered heritage language of Trinidad and Tobago and is found in select rural communities like Paramin (Ferreira and Holbrook 3). Paramin is the largest community of practice of TFC in Trinidad (Ferreira and Holbrook 6). Paramin is a rural farming community located in the Northern Range about twenty minutes (by car) from the capital, Port of Spain (Scott 13). It is mainly accessed by four-wheel drive jeep taxis (Scott 14). The main economic pursuit in the village is farming, which is done by middle-aged and elderly men (Scott 14). Middle-aged and elderly women are normally housewives and young people tend to work outside of the community (Scott 14). There are no monolingual speakers of TFC in Paramin and

Trinidadian English/Creole (hereafter TE/C) are the main languages spoken there (Ferreira and Holbrook 12). Fluent speakers of TFC are said to be found among the elderly, and no one under twenty has acquired the language as a native tongue (Ferreira and Holbrook 12).

Copular clauses are those of the form *XY COPULA YP*, where *XP* is the subject and *YP* the predicate complement. The *COPULA + YP* is called the predicate. In creole languages, there are four types of copula: equative, attributive, locative, and highlighter (Holm et al. 99). The highlighter is not considered in this study. Equative copulas are associated with NP complements, attributives with AP complements and locatives with PP complements (Winford “AC Syntax” 21). In most French Creoles the equative and locative copulas have different overt forms and it is possible to delete the latter (Holm et al. 98). The attributive copula is null (Holm et al. 98). Higgins’ taxonomy of copular clauses defines four classes: predicational, specificational, identificational and equative based on syntactic and semantic criteria (Higgins 189-258). These classes can be identified by testing for the semantic properties of the subject and predicate. Higgins (1979), Mikkelsen (2011), and den Dikken (2007) have proposed different tests and combinations of tests to identify Higgins’ sub-types. Furthermore, Niimura (2007) has identified a testing schedule based on Higgins’ tests for English copular clauses and applied it successfully to Japanese, a language that is typologically distinct from English.

TFC has not been documented extensively but efforts are currently being made to do so. The only grammar of the language was written 146 years ago by John Jacob Thomas and does not treat with copular clauses in a comprehensive manner that aligns with current thought in creole linguistics, and should be updated. Furthermore, no studies of the copular clause in TFC

has been done using Higgins' framework. Based on these reasons, description of the copular clause is directed by the following research question and sub-questions:

What is a description of the copular clause in the variety of Trinidadian French Creole spoken in Paramin, Trinidad based on Higgins (1979)?

- (i) How are attributive, locative and equative copulas marked in Trinidadian French Creole?
- (ii) To what extent can Higgins' clause types be identified in Trinidadian French Creole using modifications of semantic tests for English copular clauses and grammaticality judgements?
  - a. Is it possible to identify predicational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
  - b. Is it possible to identify specificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
  - c. Is it possible to identify equative clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
  - d. Is it possible to identify identificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?

This study is valuable because it documents the copular clause in TFC as it is spoken currently, and integrates the structure into two existing frameworks — Higgins' taxonomy of copular clauses and creole copulas. It is important that this be done because TFC is under-documented and is therefore not considered in cross-linguistic studies of creole languages and languages in general. In addition to this, the study proposes a methodology for studying copular

clauses in French Creoles using Higgins' taxonomy and provides methodological insights into the study of the semantics of endangered languages by non-native speakers.

In chapter 2, the literature on the copular clause in French Creoles and Higgins' taxonomy is integrated and reviewed. Following this, the methodology, which includes a proposal for a testing schedule to determine the semantic properties of Higgins' clauses in TFC, is described in chapter 3. A description of the copular clause in TFC follows in chapter 4 in addition to a description of the success of the proposed testing schedule. In chapter 5, the results are discussed with reference to existing literature on creole languages, and methodological issues raised in the study are explained. Section 6 summarises the study and provides suggestions for future work.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

TFC is an endangered heritage language of Trinidad. It is an Atlantic French Creole that has been classed, along with St. Lucian French Creole (hereafter SLFC) and Dominican French Creole, as an Antillean French Creole (Goodman 15-16). The other type of Caribbean French Creole is Haitian French Creole (HFC) (Goodman 15-16). TFC is an endangered heritage language of Trinidad and Tobago and is only found in select rural communities like Paramin (Ferreira and Holbrook, 3). The language has been described by Thomas in his 1869 grammar of the language; however, this grammar was written 146 years ago and could benefit from updating.

A copular clause is one with the structure XP COPULA YP, where XP is the subject and YP the predicate complement. The elements following the subject are called the predicate, which can consist of nominal, possessive, adjectival, or locative phrases with or without a copula (Winford “Predication” 156). The copula is a semantically-null element that links subjects to predicates, carries verbal inflection in phrases with lexical nuclei that are not verbs, and licenses predication for lexical items that cannot do so independently (Pustet 3-4). In creole linguistics, the term “copula” is used to refer to words that link subjects to predicates (Holm et al. 98). In TFC, it is used to license predicative complements (Scott 69). The copula also serves as a highlighter (Holm et al. 98). Copulas may be overt or null, and may not appear at all in some languages while in others they may be optional or omitted under certain conditions (Pustet 1-9). In Atlantic creoles, there is a distinction among equative, attributive, and locative copulas (Winford “AC Syntax” 21). The distribution of these forms in Atlantic Creoles is shown below:

- (i) overt copula A before nominal complements

(ii) overt copula B before locative expressions that can be deleted

(iii) no copula before AP complements (Holm et al. 98).

This pattern suggests that the form of the copula is related to the properties of the predicate complement.

In Haitian French Creole, Dominican French Creole, SLFC, and TFC, the overt form appearing before nominal complements has been argued to be /se/ (Holm et al. 99; Carrington 139; Thomas 76) (see example 1).

1. TFC *Nou sé moun*

3PL are human beings

“We are human beings”

(Thomas 77)

However, DeGraff disagrees with the analysis of /se/ as a copula in Haitian French Creole (115). /se/ is not the only copula form associated with nominal complements in SLFC.

Carrington also identifies /sete/ and calls it the past perfect copular form, while /se/ is called the present imperfect form (Carrington 139).

2. SLFC *Isi sete yon fò franse*

Here COP INDF fort French

“Here was a French fort”

(Carrington 139)

Alternation in form (before NP complements) associated with tense is not attested in Haitian French Creole, Dominican French Creole, and TFC. In Haitian French Creole /se/ alternates with  $\emptyset$ , which separates it from other Atlantic creoles that always require an overt copula before NP predicate complements (see examples 3 and 4) (Holm et al. 99).

3. HFC *Bouki doktè*



Bouki doctor

“Bouki is a doctor”

(DeGraff ms.)

4. HFC *Aristide sé prezidan Ayiti*

Aristide ? president Haiti (author’s question mark)

“Aristide is the president of Haiti”

(DeGraff ms.)

Before locative and adjectival expressions there is no overt copula in Haitian French Creole, Dominican French Creole, and TFC (Holm et al. 99; Thomas 76). This also occurs in SLFC, but is not mentioned by Carrington; however, it is found in SLFC texts such as the *Kwéyòl* Dictionary compiled by Crosbie et al. (100). Carrington also identifies /te/ as an additional past perfect form that is only used when the subject is a first or second person singular or plural pronoun (138). However, /te/ also marks anterior tense and perfect aspect in both TFC and SLFC (Thomas 54; Carrington 76), so it may not be a copular form as Carrington suggests.

Table 1

Comparison of the distribution of copular forms in TFC, SLFC, DFC and HFC (Thomas 76-77; Carrington 76-139; Holm et al. 99)

DFC = Dominican French Creole, HFC = Haitian French Creole

Language	Present			Anterior		
	_NP	_AP	_PP	_NP	_AP	_PP
TFC	sé	∅	∅	—	—	—
SLFC	sé	∅	∅	sété	té	té
DFC	sé	∅	∅	—	—	—
HFC	sé/∅	∅	∅	—	—	—

A means of classifying and identifying copular clauses is Higgins' (1979) taxonomy. This system was based on introspection about English and distinguishes 4 types of copular clause based on syntactic, semantic and functional criteria. The clauses are predicational clauses (hereafter PCs), specificational clauses (hereafter SCs), identificational clauses (hereafter ICs) and equative clauses (hereafter ECs) (Higgins 189-258). Summaries of their semantic and syntactic properties are shown in tables 2 and 3 respectively. Examples of all the classes follow.

Table 2

Comparison of the syntactic properties of Higgins' clauses proposed by Higgins and Mikkelsen (246; 1807-1812)

D = deictic, PN = proper name, dNP = definite NP, iNP = indefinite NP, AP = adjectival phrase, PP = prepositional phrase, DP = determiner phrase

	Subject		Predicate	
	Higgins	Mikkelsen	Higgins	Mikkelsen
IC	D, PN, dNP	demonstrative D, it	D, PN, dNP, iNP	NP, PN
EC		NP	D, PN, dNP	NP
PC			dNP, iNP, AP	AP, PP, NP, DP
SC	dNP		D, PN, dNP, iNP	—

Regarding syntactic properties, the general consensus is that subjects and complements are NPs, except in the case of predicational clauses where APs and PPs are also acceptable according to Mikkelsen (1809). Higgins notably omits PPs in his discussion of copular clauses, but this study follows Mikkelsen and includes them in the predicative class, since they are the only phrase type

capable of filling the locative role of copular clauses attested in creole languages (Winford “AC Syntax” 21), and other natural languages (Winford “Predication” 156). In addition to this, Mikkelsen includes DPs and NPs, suggesting that there is a distinction between the two; however, for the sake of simplicity this study will consider them the same and use the term NP. Finally, Higgins’ characterisation of the predicate only makes reference to the element following the copula, though he considers the predicate to be the copula + complement.

Table 3

Comparison of the semantic properties of Higgins clauses proposed by Higgins, Mikkelsen, and Niimura (246; 1810; 207)

	Subject			Predicate		
	Higgins	Mikkelsen	Niimura	Higgins	Mikkelsen	Niimura
IC	referential	—		identificational	—	
EC	referential			referential		
PC	referential			predicational	non-referential	
SC	superscriptio nal	non- referential	weakly- referential	specificational	referential	

Table 3 shows that all 3 authors make use of the semantic feature of referentiality; however, Mikkelsen and Niimura distinguish degrees of referentiality while Higgins coins new terms. Mikkelsen and Niimura tend to agree, except in the case of SCs where Mikkelsen characterises the subject of SCs as non-referential while Niimura says it is weakly-referential. Referential phrases are those that obey Burridan’s Law which, according to Geach is: “the reference of an expression E must be specifiable in some way that does not involve first determining whether the

proposition in which E occurs is true” (qtd. in Higgins 195). The new terms proposed by Higgins are superscriptional, identificational, predicational, and specificational; however, his definitions of these terms are not always clear, as indicated by den Dikken of “superscriptional” (4) and Mikkelsen of “identificational” (1812). Higgins describes “superscriptional” as corresponding to the heading of a list (198); “specificational” as corresponding to the items on a list (198) and “identificational” as giving the name of something (233). Despite this, Mikkelsen proposes tests to identify predicationality despite describing the predicate of PCs as non-referential. This suggests that the non-referentiality she is describing is of a predicational nature.

Examples of Higgins classes:

#### **Identificational**

1. That is John Smith (Higgins 220)
2. That is DDT (Mikkelsen 1806)
3. That is Boston (den Dikken 4)

#### **Equative**

4. Sylvia Obernauer is HER (author’s emphasis) (Mikkelsen 1806)
5. Dr. Jekyll is Mr. Hyde (den Dikken 4)

#### **Predicational**

6. The hat is big (Mikkelsen 1806)
7. Sylvia is the architect on that project (Mikkelsen 1809)
8. Sylvia is from Seattle (Mikkelsen 1809)

#### **Specificational**

9. The director of Anatomy of a Murder is Otto Preminger (Mikkelsen 1806)

*Identifying the semantic properties of Higgins' classes*

The semantic properties of Higgins' clauses can be determined using syntactic tests proposed by Higgins, Mikkelsen, and den Dikken, among others. If a test passes it is said to have the relevant semantic property, if it fails it does not. A clause is deemed to have passed a test if it remains grammatical after being transformed by the rules of the test. It fails if it becomes ungrammatical after transformation. In addition to individual tests, Niimura has also proposed a testing scheme, based on Higgins, that identifies classes by their cumulative response to 3 tests (subject-complement inversion, *become*-replacement, paraphrasing with *following*). This is shown in table 4.

Table 4

Testing scheme proposed by Niimura based on Higgins (208)

	<b>subject-complement inversion</b>	<i>become</i> -replacement	<b>paraphrasing with <i>following</i></b>
<b>PC</b>	x	✓	x
<b>SC</b>	✓	x	✓
<b>IC</b>	✓	x	x

Den Dikken has also proposed something resembling a testing schedule based on 2 tests — subject-complement inversion and *it*-clefting (4). This is shown in table 5.

Table 5

Testing scheme proposed by den Dikken (4)

	<b>subject-complement inversion</b>	<b>alternation with <i>it</i>-clefts</b>
<b>PC</b>	x	x
<b>SC</b>	✓	✓
<b>IC</b>	x	✓
<b>EC</b>	✓	x

Comparison of tables 4 and 5 indicate that Niimura and den Dikken disagree on the behaviour of identificational clauses that undergo the subject-complement inversion test. The former proposes that they pass while the latter proposes the opposite; however, Higgins indicates that identificational clauses cannot be in reverse translation elicitation (223) so den Dikken's proposal is favoured. Den Dikken and Niimura agree on the behaviour of predicational and specificational clauses that undergo subject-complement inversion. Testing schedules like those proposed by Niimura and den Dikken indirectly test the semantic properties of subjects and predicates since if a clause can be identified as one of Higgins' classes, it can be assumed that its subject and predicate have the semantic properties of that class. More direct tests of semantic properties are proposed by Mikkelsen who suggests pronominalisation in tag questions to determine if a subject is [+/- referential] and VP ellipsis and embedding under a propositional verb without *to be* for predicationality (1808). All tests are described below. The explanations are based on the clause

structure XP COPULA YP. A summary of the behaviour of all of these tests with the different clause types is shown in table 6.

**subject-complement inversion**

XP COPULA YP → YP COPULA XP

[The bank robber]<sub>XP</sub> is [John Smith]<sub>YP</sub> → [John Smith]<sub>YP</sub> is [the bank robber]<sub>XP</sub> (Niimura 207)

***become-replacement***

XP COPULA YP → XP BECOME YP

“[John]<sub>XP</sub> is [tall]<sub>YP</sub>” → [John]<sub>XP</sub> became [tall]<sub>YP</sub> (Niimura 208)

**paraphrasing with *following***

XP COPULA YP → The following person is XP: YP

[The bank robber]<sub>XP</sub> is [John Smith]<sub>YP</sub> →

The following person is [the bank robber]<sub>XP</sub>: [John Smith]<sub>YP</sub> (Niimura 207)

***it-clefting***

XP COPULA YP → It is XP that is YP

[The Morning Star]<sub>XP</sub> is [the Evening Star]<sub>YP</sub> →

\*It is [the Morning Star]<sub>XP</sub> that is [the Evening Star]<sub>YP</sub> (den Dikken 4)

**pronominalisation in tag questions**

XP COPULA YP → XP COPULA YP wasn't s/he/it?

[The guest of honour]<sub>XP</sub> was [happy]<sub>YP</sub> →

[The guest of honour]<sub>XP</sub> was [happy]<sub>YP</sub>, wasn't s/he/\*it? (Mikkelsen 1809)

According to Mikkelsen, this test determines [+/-] referentiality. If the subject pronominalises grammatically with “s/he” it is referential and if it pronominalises grammatically with “it”, it is

non-referential. This implies that [+referential] is associated with [+human] since only [+human] subjects can pronominalise with gendered pronouns; however, this is problematic since [-human] elements such as animals or objects can be referential.

**VP ellipsis**

XP COPULA YP → XP COPULA YP but I wish s/he wasn't

[Sylvia]<sub>XP</sub> is [the architect on that project]<sub>YP</sub> →

[Sylvia]<sub>XP</sub> is [the architect on that project]<sub>YP</sub> but I wish she wasn't (Mikkelsen 1809)

**embedding under a propositional verb without *to be***

XP COPULA YP → I believe XP YP

[Sylvia]<sub>XP</sub> is [my best friend]<sub>YP</sub> →

I believe [Sylvia]<sub>XP</sub> [my best friend]<sub>YP</sub> (Mikkelsen 1809)

Table 6

Responses of Higgins clauses to tests 1 to 7 (den Dikken 4; Mikkelsen 1808-1809; Niimura 208)

	subject-complement inversion	become-replacement	alternation with <i>it</i> -clefts	paraphrasing with <i>that person/thing/beast</i>	pronominalisation in tag questions (for subjects)	VP ellipsis	embedding under a propositional verb without <i>to be</i>
PC	x	✓	x	x	[+referential]	✓	✓
SC	✓	x	✓	✓	[-referential]	x	x
IC	x	x	x	x	[+referential]	x	x
EC	✓	x	x	x	[+referential]	x	x



*Significance of the study and research questions*

This study is valuable because it contributes to documenting TFC as it is spoken now. It is important that this be done because the language has cultural and historical value to Trinidad that is close to being lost because it is moribund and the majority of fluent speakers are elderly.

Additionally, its only grammar is 146 years old and cannot represent modern TFC. The study's focus on the copular clause is important because the existing grammar does not deal with this structure in a comprehensive and cohesive manner that aligns with current thought in creole studies. The copula in Haitian French Creole has received considerable analysis, and it is important that an Antillean French Creole like TFC be added to the discussion of Caribbean French Creoles. Furthermore, use of Higgins (1979) taxonomy to characterise the semantic properties of copular clauses is significant in its novelty since Higgins' taxonomy has never been applied to a French Creole. Its use will identify methodological issues in applying Higgins' taxonomy to TFC and creoles and endangered languages in general. Finally, the study's use of Higgins (1979) will also inevitably test the taxonomy's application to French creoles and creoles in general. The following are the main research question and associated sub-questions:

What is a description of the copular clause in the variety of Trinidadian French Creole spoken in Paramin, Trinidad based on Higgins (1979)?

- (i) How are attributive, locative and equative copulas marked in Trinidadian French Creole?
- (ii) To what extent can Higgins' clause types be identified in Trinidadian French Creole using modifications of semantic tests for English copular clauses and grammaticality judgements?

- a. Is it possible to identify predicational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
- b. Is it possible to identify specificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
- c. Is it possible to identify equative clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?
- d. Is it possible to identify identificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This study aims to describe copular clauses in TFC using Higgins' taxonomy of copular clauses. In order to do that, the presence of these clauses in TFC must be confirmed. Higgins' taxonomy distinguishes 4 classes based on a combination of syntactic and semantic criteria. It was used as a means of easily capturing all the different types of copular clause, since relatively little time was available for data collection and analysis. Ideally, copular clauses would have been collected by analysing natural speech, but because of time constraints a two-part elicitation process involving reverse translation elicitation, the construction of a test to determine the semantic properties of the clauses, and construction and introspection elicitation. In reverse translation elicitation, the consultant "is asked to translate sentences from the contact language into the target language" (Kidwai 3). In construction and introspection elicitation, sentences are prepared in the target language by the researcher, and consultants are asked if they are grammatical or not (Kidwai 3). Pre-existing examples of each clause type were used as the entry point to the elicitation process and were assumed to match the syntactic criteria for each category. Confirmation of these sentences as belonging to Higgins' classes was done by testing the TFC translations of these sentences for the semantic criteria described by Higgins. This testing was done using construction and introspection elicitation. This was necessary because Higgins' clause types are defined by syntactic and semantic criteria.

#### *The researcher*

I studied French Creole under a native speaker of SLFC for 3 months and then under a non-native speaker of TFC for 3 months while I conducted this study. I have a basic knowledge of the

pronominal and TMA systems, negation, question formation, and use of the copula. This gave me insights into the syntax of TFC that were used to inform stimuli design for this study.

### *Language consultants*

The main informants in this study were two native speakers from Paramin, Trinidad. One non-native speaker, Mr. Nnamdi Hodge, was also consulted with periodically. The first native speaker informant was Mr. Errol “Clyde” Felix. Snowball sampling was used, with Mr. Felix as the gatekeeper, to find the second informant, Mr. Cecil “Molloy” St. Hilaire. Mr. Felix is a 68-year-old male who grew up in Paramin speaking TFC with his grandparents and parents. He said that he started using the language around the age of five. He went to secondary school up to form four, and while there he studied Latin, Spanish and French. He has never been taught TFC formally. Mr. St. Hilaire is a 70-year-old male who has lived in Paramin for his entire life. He is bilingual in TFC and TEC. His parents spoke to him in TFC while he was growing up, but he was expected to respond to them in TEC. At the time, TFC was viewed as a language for adults, and children were chastised for using it. When asked when he started using the language, Mr. St. Hilaire said that it was when he was between eighteen and twenty years old. Mr. St. Hilaire left school when he was in Standard Four, and while in school he was not taught to read or write TFC. Some teachers used it at times in the classroom but it was never officially taught. Mr. Hodge is a non-native speaker of TFC who learned the language from native speakers in Paramin. He has compiled a book of TFC songs and has taught the language at the Centre for Language Learning at the UWI, St. Augustine campus and at the Alliance Française. He studied linguistics at the undergraduate level, and currently teaches Spanish at the secondary school level.

Mr. St. Hillaire is described as a very fluent speaker by Mr. Hodge, and from the interviews he appeared to be more competent in TFC than Mr. Felix since he produced responses with fewer discrepancies. Mr. Felix's responses showed more variation and he frequently deferred to Mr. St. Hillaire's judgments, suggesting that he thought. When asked about Mr. Hodge's competence, both of the native speakers indicated that he did not speak TFC in the way they did. Despite this, I have observed Mr. Hodge communicate spontaneously with native speakers on several occasions with apparent ease.

#### *Data collection*

Data collection took place under a shed on the grounds of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Paramin. Audio was recorded using Quicktime Player version 10.4 on a MacBook Pro laptop running version 10.11.3 of OS X El Capitan. The audio was transcribed orthographically using a writing system created for SLFC found in Crosbie et al.'s Kwéyòl Dictionary (x-xi) (see Appendix A). It was chosen because no orthography exists for TFC yet.

Data collection took place in 5 interviews lasting approximately 2 hours each on Saturday 27th February 2016, Saturday 5th March 2016, Saturday 12th March 2016, Saturday 9th April 2016, and Saturday 23rd April 2016. Both native speaker consultants were present in the interview sessions. The stimuli were presented to them at the same time, which allowed them to combine their knowledge of TFC and negotiate a response together. This was done to resolve any discrepancies that could have occurred in their answers immediately.

In the first interview, on the 27th of February, reverse translation elicitation was used to collect copular clauses. The data was transcribed, and possible copular forms identified by making reference to Thomas' and Carrington's grammars. In the second interview, on the 5th of

March, clarification of the data collected in the first session was done and construction and introspection elicitation was performed to determine the usage restrictions of different copular forms. Additionally, reverse translation elicitation was used once again to determine if and how the tests outlined in the literature review could be applied to TFC. Mr. Hodge was also consulted since grammatical structures and subtleties are likely to be more salient to him because of his experiences learning about language and teaching foreign languages. Using this information, a testing schedule was created and stimuli developed for the construction and introspection elicitation portion of the study. The constructed sentences were presented to the native speakers for grammaticality judgements over two sessions conducted on the 12th of March and the 9th of April. In a final session on the 23rd of April clarifications were made.

### *Stimulus design*

#### **Reverse Translation Elicitation**

In reverse translation elicitation, the stimuli were based on examples 1 to 9 shown in the literature review. These examples were chosen because they had already been identified as characteristic of Higgins classes; therefore, sentences did not have to be created anew. However, some modifications were needed to make the stimuli culturally relevant to the native speaker consultants, and to simplify them. It was necessary to simplify the sentences because they had to be read to native speakers and complicated structures would have been distracting and taxed the consultants' auditory memory. A summary of these modifications and the rationale behind them is shown in table 7.

Table 7

Rationale for modifications made to examples 1 through 9

<b>Original sentence (English)</b>	<b>Modified sentence (TEC)</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>IC</b>		
1. That is John Smith	1. That is John	“Smith” was removed to make the clause as simple as possible and to reduce stress on their auditory memory since stimuli was read to them.
2. That is DDT	2. That is DDT	—
3. That is Boston	3. That is Paramin	Boston was changed to Paramin to make it culturally relevant
<b>EC</b>		
4. Sylvia Obernauer is her	4. Sylvia is her	“Obernauer” was removed because it as a complicated unfamiliar last name that could have distracted the consultants
5. Dr. Jekyll is Mr. Hyde	5. Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay	The subject and predicate were changed because it was unlikely that the consultants would have been familiar with literary characters since they have limited literacy. The change was made to make the sentence more relevant to them.
<b>PC</b>		

6. The hat is big	6. The cat big/angry	<p>“Angry” was included as another option since some adjectives in the same group as “big” in TFC are preposed to the noun, while those like “angry” are postposed (Scott 75). This was important to consider since subject-complement inversion would work differently depending on adjective type.</p> <p>The subject was changed to “cat” because one of the semantic tests would have required the subject to become big/angry. It would have been less pragmatically plausible for an inanimate subject to do those things.</p>
7. Sylvia is the architect on that project	7. Sylvia is the devil	The NP was shortened to reduce stress on the consultants’ auditory memory.
8. Sylvia is from Seattle	8. Sylvia from Paramin	Seattle was changed to Paramin to make the sentence culturally relevant.
<b>SC</b>		
9. The director of <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> is Otto Preminger	9. The owner of NRK is Nigel	The subject NP was shortened to reduce stress on auditory memory. The complement NP was changed since the name “Otto Preminger” might have been distracting in its novelty.

TE/C was used because it was the language most familiar to the interviewer and the informants.

It was also particularly appropriate since the consultants had limited educational backgrounds and would not have had much exposure to English. The use of TEC also makes it possible to make casual comparisons between TEC and TFC. All stimuli were presented in the present and past tense to elicit forms that varied with tense attested by Carrington if they existed.

### **Construction and Introspection Elicitation**



In order to determine the usage restrictions of the copular forms, every sentence produced in reverse translation elicitation was presented to the native speaker informants with four different copular variants between the subject and complement. The four variants were /se/, /sete/, /te/ and  $\emptyset$ . So, for example, the translation of “The cat is big” was “Chat-la gwo”. In this translation, the variant between the subject and complement was  $\emptyset$ . Therefore, the informants were presented with “\*Chat-la sé gwo”, “\*Chat-la sété gwo” and “\*Chat-la té gwo” and asked if each of those alternatives could also mean “The cat big.” (The cat is big) It was necessary to associate meanings with grammaticality judgements since some of the alternatives were grammatical sentences, but had to be considered ungrammatical since they did not match the intended meaning. For instance, “Chat-la té gwo” is a grammatical sentence meaning “The cat was big”, but it is ungrammatical since the intended sense is the present, “The cat is big.”

To confirm that the sentences collected in reverse translation elicitation had the same semantic properties as those of Higgins’ clauses shown in table 3 a testing schedule specific to TFC had to be created. Schedules proposed by Niimura and den Dikken and individual tests proposed by Mikkelsen were used to do this. A schedule had to be created to inform the creation of stimuli required for construction and introspection elicitation. This was done based on the tests and schedules identified by Mikkelsen, Niimura, and den Dikken, and the informants’ intuitions about TFC. Each test does not necessarily target a semantic property of the predicate or complement described by Higgins. However, it is assumed that if a test can identify a clause as predicational, specificational, identificational, or equative then the semantic properties of the predicate and complement of these clauses align with the properties assigned by Higgins. For example, if a test identifies a clause as predicational, its subject must be referential and its

predicate predicational as per table 3. Some tests were not possible, some required modification and some did not.

Mikkelsen's test for referentiality could not be applied to TFC because it requires tag-questions to be formed using pronouns and the existence of gendered third person subject pronouns. Tag-questions are formed in TFC by postposing the tag /ent/ to the declarative without a pronoun. Therefore, the tag-question form of "Mary/John ni yon chat" (Mary/John has a cat) is:

5. *Mary/John ni yon chat ent?*

Mary/John have DEF cat Q

Mary/John has a cat, doesn't s/he?

Furthermore, there is only one third person pronoun in TFC used in the nominative and objective cases, /li/, that does not distinguish gender; therefore, this test is doubly inapplicable in TFC.

*become*-replacement was changed to *vini*-replacement since the word for "become" in TFC would be the same one for "come", /vini/. Additionally, when the native speaker consultants were presented with the word "become" in a sentence, they tended to produce the future tense which indicated that their understanding of "become" was not the same as mine.

The closest modification available for the paraphrasing with *following* test was to paraphrase with "that thing/person/beast" since there is no direct translation of "following" in TFC. The choice of person/thing/beast depends on the combination of [+/-human] and [+/-animate] features of the subject shown in table 8.

Table 8

Semantic properties of “person”, “thing” and “beast”

<b>Person</b>	[+human][+animate]
<b>Thing</b>	[-human][-animate]
<b>Beast</b>	[-human][+animate]

Subject-complement inversion, alternation with *it*-clefts, and embedding under a propositional verb without *to be* were left as is. However, the names of the last two tests were changed to reflect how they would be manifested in TFC. Therefore, alternation with *it*-clefts was changed to alternation with *sé*-clefts, and embedding under a propositional verb without *to be* to embedding under a propositional verb without a copula. The propositional verb used was /kwɛ/, meaning “to think”. VP ellipsis was omitted, since there was disagreement between the native speakers and non-native speaker over its construction. It was possible to do this because VP ellipsis is a test of predicationality and it is possible to characterise PCs without it. The responses of the clauses to the remaining tests are summarised in the proposed testing schedule shown in table 9. Because of the problems with the modification of paraphrasing with *following*, it was thought best to eliminate it from the testing scheme since SCs could be characterised without it.

Table 9

Testing scheme to identify Higgins' clauses

	<b>subject-complement inversion</b>	<i>vini</i> -replacement	alternation with <i>sé</i> -clefts	embedding under a propositional verb without a copula
<b>PC</b>	x	✓	x	✓
<b>SC</b>	✓	x	✓	x
<b>IC</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>EC</b>	✓	x	x	x

✓ = grammatically correct/passed test, x = grammatically incorrect/failed test

In order to produce the stimuli for construction and introspection elicitation, the copular clauses collected in the reverse translation elicitation portion of the study were transformed according to the rules of the tests shown in table 9. The full listing of stimuli is found in Appendix B.

#### *Data analysis*

To determine the distribution of the attributive, locative and equative copulas within Higgins' classes, the sentences collected in reverse translation elicitation were divided according to the phrasal category of the predicate complement and considered with their associated grammaticality judgements. Attributive copular forms are associated with APs, locatives with PPs, and equatives with NPs. Possible candidates for these types of copula were identified as those forms appearing with the relevant phrasal categories. The responses of the associated sentences with different copulas was used to determine the distributional limits of the identified forms.

To confirm that the translations had the same semantic properties as Higgins' clauses, the responses of each sentence to all four tests was compared with the prediction for its class. For example, sentence 6 shown in table 7 belongs to the predicational class. The response of sentence 6 to the four tests was compared with the expected response of predicational clauses shown in table 9. If a sentence responded in the way predicted for a certain class, then it is said to belong to that class. An example of this is shown in table 10.

Table 10

Example of data analysis process

I = subject-complement inversion, R = *vini*-replacement, A = alternation with *sé*-clefts, E = embedding under a propositional verb without a copula, E = English

✓ = grammatically correct/passed test, x = grammatically incorrect/failed test

	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>PC prediction</b>	x	✓	x	✓
<b>6. Chat-la gwo/faché (TFC)</b>	x <b>Gwo/faché chat-la</b>	✓ <b>Chat-la vini gwo/faché</b>	✓ <b>Sé gwo/faché chat-la</b>	✓ <b>Mwen kwè chat-la gwo/faché</b>
The cat big/angry (TE/C)	Big/angry the cat	The cat come big/angry	It is big/angry the cat	I think the cat big/angry
<i>The cat is big/angry (E)</i>	<i>Big/angry is the cat</i>	<i>The cat became big/angry</i>	<i>It is big/angry the cat</i>	<i>I think the cat is big/angry</i>

## Chapter 4: Results

*RQ 1: How are the attributive, locative and equative copulas marked in Trinidadian French Creole?*

Four forms in complementary distribution occupying the position of the copula were identified in TFC. They were /se/, /sete/, /te/ and  $\emptyset$ , and their distribution depended on the nature of the predicate complement and tense. In creoles, the equative copula is associated with NP complements, the attributive with AP complements, and the locative with PP complements.

/se/ and /sete/ appeared with NP complements in the present and anterior tense respectively, which implies that they are forms of the creole equative copula. Evidence for the distribution of /se/ and /sete/ is shown in tables 11 and 12. In table 11, the only grammatical copula option for clauses in the present tense with NP complements is /se/, while in table 12 the only grammatical option in the anterior tense is /sete/. This is found consistently and with definite and indefinite NPs. Both /se/ and /sete/ also appeared in all of Higgins' classes which suggests that creole equative copula performs specificational, identificational, predicational, and equative roles.

$\emptyset$  and /te/ are found with AP and PP complements in the present and anterior tenses respectively. AP and PP complements are only permitted in the predicational class which implies that the creole locative and attributive copulas are situated in this class only. Evidence for the distribution of  $\emptyset$  and /te/ is shown in tables 11 and 12 where the only grammatical options for clauses with AP and PP complements in the present and anterior tense are  $\emptyset$  and /te/ respectively — neither /se/ nor /sete/ can be used in place of  $\emptyset$  and /te/ with AP and PP complements. /te/ has

been treated as a copular form up to this point since Carrington analysed it as such in SLFC and because it occupies the position of the copula in the anterior tense with AP and PP complements. However, /te/ is also the anterior marker in TFC and SLFC (Thomas 55; Carrington 76), and is not thought to be a separate copular form for reasons discussed in chapter 5.

Table 11

Evidence for the distribution of copular forms in the present tense

Cop = copula, Comp = complement

	Structure of the copular clause		Evidence	
	Subject	Predicate		
		Cop Position		Comp Position
PC	NP	∅	AP	<u>Intended meaning: The cat is fat/angry</u> a. Chat-la ∅ gwo/faché b. *Chat-la sé gwo/faché c. *Chat-la sété gwo/faché d. *Chat-la té gwo/faché
		∅	PP	<u>Intended meaning: The cat is on the table</u> a. Chat-la asou tab-la b. *Chat-la sé asou tab-la c. *Chat-la sété asou tab-la d. *Chat-la té asou tab-la
		/se/	NP	<u>Intended meaning: The cat is the devil</u> a. Chat-la sé diyab-la b. *Chat-la ∅ diyab-la c. *Chat-la sété diyab-la d. *Chat-la té diyab-la
SC	NP	/se/	NP	<u>Intended meaning: The owner of NRK is Nigel</u> a. Mèt-la NRK sé Nigel b. *Mèt-la NRK ∅ Nigel c. *Mèt-la NRK sété Nigel d. *Mèt-la NRK té Nigel

<b>IC</b>	NP	/se	NP	<u>Intended meaning: That is mango</u> a. Sa sé mango b. *Sa ø mango c. *Sa sété mango d. *Sa té mango
<b>EC</b>	NP	/se/	NP	<u>Intended meaning: Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay</u> a. Muhammad Ali sé Cassius Clay b. *Muhammad Ali ø Cassius Clay c. *Muhammad Ali sété Cassius Clay d. *Muhammad Ali té Cassius Clay



Table 12

Evidence for the distribution of copular forms in the anterior tense

Cop = copula, Comp = complement

	Structure of the copular clause		Evidence
	Subject	Predicate	
		Cop Position	
PC	NP	/te/	AP <u>Intended meaning: The cat was fat/angry</u> a. Chat-la té gwo/faché b. *Chat-la ø gwo/faché c. *Chat-la sé gwo/faché d. *Chat-la sété gwo/faché
		/te/	PP <u>Intended meaning: The cat was on the table</u> a. Chat-la té asou tab-la b. *Chat-la ø asou tab-la c. *Chat-la sé asou tab-la d. *Chat-la sété asou tab-la
		/sete/	NP <u>Intended meaning: The cat was the devil</u> a. Chat-la sété diyab-la b. *Chat-la sé diyab-la c. *Chat-la té diyab-la d. *Chat-la ø diyab-la
SC	NP	/sete/	NP <u>Intended meaning: The owner of NRK was Nigel</u> a. Mèt-la NRK sété Nigel b. *Mèt-la NRK ø Nigel c. *Mèt-la NRK sé Nigel d. *Mèt-la NRK té Nigel
IC	NP	/sete/	NP <u>Intended meaning: That was mango</u> a. Sa sété mango b. *Sa sé mango c. *Sa ø mango d. *Sa té mango

EC	NP	/sete/	NP	<p><u>Intended meaning: Muhammad Ali was Cassius Clay</u></p> <p>a. Muhammad Ali sété Cassius Clay</p> <p>b. *Muhammad Ali ø Cassius Clay</p> <p>c. *Muhammad Ali sé Cassius Clay</p> <p>d. *Muhammad Ali té Cassius Clay</p>
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*RQ2: To what extent can Higgins' clause types be identified in Trinidadian French Creole using modifications of semantic tests for English copular clauses and grammaticality judgements?*

None of the clauses could be identified based on the cumulative response predicted for each class; however, some could be identified in a limited manner by their response to different combinations of the four tests. This is explained below and exemplified in table 13.

**(i) Is it possible to identify identificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?**

It is possible to identify ICs in TFC based on their response to subject-complement inversion and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula since they are the only class that fail both tests. ECs are expected to fail both tests, PCs to fail subject-complement inversion and pass embedding and SCs to pass subject-complement inversion and fail embedding. *vini*-replacement did not produce a consistent response among the ICs tested. Alternation with *sé*-clefts consistently produced the opposite response to what was predicted, suggesting that ICs in TFC react in the opposite way to those in English and are characterised by a positive response to this test.

**(ii) Is it possible to identify equative clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?**

ECs cannot be identified using the proposed testing scheme. The tested sentences only responded consistently and accurately to subject-complement inversion; however, ECs are not the only class expected to pass this test. SCs should also pass, and were found to do so. Additionally, two out of three PCs passed the test though they were not expected to.

**(iii) Is it possible to identify predicational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?**

PCs can be identified based on their response to *vini*-replacement and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula since they are the only class expected to respond positively to both tests. ICs and ECs are expected to fail *vini*-replacement and embedding, while SCs are expected to pass both tests. PCs did not consistently fail subject-complement inversion and consistently passed alternation with *sé*-clefts. The latter suggests that PCs in TFC react in the opposite way to this test compared to those in English and the group could possibly be characterised by this response.

**(iv) Is it possible to identify specificational clauses in TFC using an adapted version of English tests?**

SCs can be identified based on their response to subject-complement inversion and alternation with *sé*-clefts since they are the only class expected to pass these tests. ICs and PCs are expected to fail both of these tests while ECs are expected to pass inversion and fail alternation.

Table 13

Results of grammaticality judgements and comparison with predictions for Higgins' clauses

I = subject-complement inversion, R = *vini*-replacement, A = alternation with *sé*-clefts, E = embedding under a propositional verb without a copula, E = English

✓ = grammatically correct/passed test, x = grammatically incorrect/failed test

	I	R	A	E
<b>IC prediction</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>1. Sa sé Djonn (TFC)</b>	x <b>Djonn sé sa</b>	x <b>Sa vini Djonn</b>	✓ <b>Sé sa sé Djonn</b>	x <b>Mwen kwè sa Djonn</b>
That is John (TE/C)	John is that	That come John	It is that is John	I think that John
<i>That is John (E)</i>	<i>John is that</i>	<i>That became John</i>	<i>It is that that is John</i>	<i>I think that John</i>
<b>2. Sa sé DDT (TFC)</b>	x <b>DDT sé sa</b>	✓ <b>Sa vini DDT</b>	✓ <b>Sé sa sé DDT</b>	x <b>Mwen kwè sa DDT</b>
That is DDT (TE/C)	DDT is that	That come DDT	It is that is DDT	I think that DDT
<i>That is DDT (E)</i>	<i>DDT is that</i>	<i>That became DDT</i>	<i>It is that that is DDT</i>	<i>I think that DDT</i>
<b>3. Sa sé Paramin (TFC)</b>	x <b>Paramin sé sa</b>	✓ <b>Sa vini Paramin</b>	✓ <b>Sé sa sé Paramin</b>	x <b>Mwen kwè sa Paramin</b>
That is Paramin (TE/C)	Paramin is that	That come Paramin	It is that is Paramin	I think that Paramin
<i>That is Paramin (E)</i>	<i>Paramin is that</i>	<i>That became Paramin</i>	<i>It is that that is Paramin</i>	<i>I think that Paramin</i>

EC prediction	✓	×	×	×
<p><b>4. Sylvia sé li (TFC)</b></p> <p>Sylvia is she (TE/C)</p> <p><i>Sylvia is her (E)</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Li sé Sylvia</b></p> <p>She is Sylvia</p> <p><i>Her is Sylvia</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sylvia vini li</b></p> <p>Sylvia come she</p> <p><i>Sylvia became her</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé Sylvia sé li</b></p> <p>It is Sylvia is she</p> <p><i>It is Sylvia that is her</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè Sylvia sé li</b></p> <p>I think Sylvia is she</p> <p><i>I think Sylvia is her</i></p>
<p><b>5. Muhammad Ali sé Cassius Clay (TFC)</b></p> <p>Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay (TE/C)</p> <p><i>Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay (E)</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Cassius Clay sé Muhammad Ali</b></p> <p>Cassius Clay is Muhammad Ali</p> <p><i>Cassius Clay is Muhammad Ali</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Muhammad Ali vini Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>Muhammad Ali come Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>Muhammad Ali became Cassius Clay</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé Muhammad Ali sé Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>It is Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>It is Muhammad Ali that is Cassius Clay</i></p>	<p>×</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>I think Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>I think Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</i></p>
PC prediction	×	✓	×	✓
<p><b>6. Chat-la gwo/faché (TFC)</b></p> <p>The cat big/angry (TE/C)</p> <p><i>The cat is big/angry (E)</i></p>	<p>×</p> <p><b>Gwo/faché chat-la</b></p> <p>Big/angry the cat</p> <p><i>Big/angry is the cat</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Chat-la vini gwo/faché</b></p> <p>The cat come big/angry</p> <p><i>The cat became big/angry</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé gwo/faché chat-la</b></p> <p>It is big/angry the cat</p> <p><i>It is big/angry the cat</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè chat-la gwo/faché</b></p> <p>I think the cat big/angry</p> <p><i>I think the cat is big/angry</i></p>

<p><b>7. Sylvia sé diyab-la (TFC)</b></p> <p>Sylvia is the devil (TE/C)</p> <p><i>Sylvia is the devil (E)</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Diyab-la sé Sylvia</b></p> <p>The devil is Sylvia</p> <p><i>The devil is Sylvia</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sylvia vini diyab-la</b></p> <p>Sylvia come the devil</p> <p><i>Sylvia became the devil</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé Sylvia sé diyab-la</b></p> <p>It is Sylvia is the devil</p> <p><i>It is Sylvia that is the devil</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè Sylvia sé diyab-la</b></p> <p>I think Sylvia is the devil</p> <p><i>I think that Sylvia is the devil</i></p>
<p><b>8. Sylvia asou tab-la (TFC)</b></p> <p>Sylvia on the table (TE/C)</p> <p><i>Sylvia is on the table (E)</i></p>	<p>x</p> <p><b>Asou tab-la Sylvia</b></p> <p>On the table Sylvia</p> <p><i>On the table is Sylvia</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sylvia vini asou tab-la</b></p> <p>Sylvia come on the table</p> <p><i>Sylvia became on the table</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé Sylvia asou tab-la</b></p> <p>It is Sylvia on the table</p> <p><i>It is Sylvia that is on the table</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè Sylvia asou tab-la</b></p> <p>I think Sylvia on the table</p> <p><i>I think that Sylvia is on the table</i></p>
<b>SC prediction</b>	✓	x	✓	x
<p><b>9. Mèt-la NRK sé Nigel (TFC)</b></p> <p>The owner of NRK is Nigel (TE/C)</p> <p><i>The owner of NRK is Nigel (E)</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Nigel sé mèt-la NRK</b></p> <p>Nigel is the owner of NRK</p> <p><i>Nigel is the owner of NRK</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mèt-la NRK vini Nigel</b></p> <p>The owner of NRK come Nigel</p> <p><i>The owner of NRK became Nigel</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Sé mèt-la NRK sé Nigel</b></p> <p>It is the owner of NRK is Nigel</p> <p><i>It is the owner of NRK that is Nigel</i></p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Mwen kwè mèt-la NRK sé Nigel</b></p> <p>I think the owner of NRK is Nigel</p> <p><i>I think that the owner of NRK is Nigel</i></p>

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### *Distribution of the attributive, locative and equative copulas*

The distribution of /se/, /sete/, /te/ and  $\emptyset$  align with that described for SLFC by Carrington. /se/ and /sete/ appear with NP complements and  $\emptyset$  and /te/ with AP and PP complements as they do in SLFC (Carrington 131). /se/ and /sete/ appear in the position of the equative copula in all of Higgins' classes while  $\emptyset$  and /te/ appear in that of the locative and attributive copulas in predicational clause only. The use of /se/ with NP complements and  $\emptyset$  with AP and PP complements aligns with the pattern found in French Creoles in general since it is attested in Haitian and Dominican French Creole (Holm et al. 99). /se/ alternates with  $\emptyset$  in Haitian, which is not attested in SLFC, TFC or Dominican French Creole; however, the pattern is not disrupted too drastically since /se/ remains associated with NP predicate complements.

Carrington's proposal of variation in the form of the copula based on tense is not attested in other Atlantic French Creoles. Additionally, this proposition does not align with the verb system in creoles, which does not alter the form of the main verb to indicate grammatical meaning (Winford "Atlantic Creole Syntax" 22). Instead, preverbal markers are preposed to the main verb to indicate tense, mood and aspect (Winford "Atlantic Creole Syntax" 22). /sete/ and /te/ are said to be past perfect forms appearing with NP, and AP and PP complements respectively (Carrington 131). However, /te/ is also the past perfect marker in TFC, appearing preposed to stative verbs both alone and combined with other preverbal markers (Thomas 54-60). Since /te/ and /sete/ only appear in the past tense it seems plausible to suspect that /te/ is not a copular form but the anterior marker appearing in conjunction with  $\emptyset$ , and that the morpheme /sete/ is a

bimorphemic combination of the equative copula /se/ and the anterior marker /te/. In the case of the former, /te/ appears where the copula is expected to in the surface form since there is no overt manifestation of the attributive and locative copulas. Furthermore, /te/ appears with AP predicate complements which are known to have verbal or predicative properties in creoles since they can accept preverbal markers and undergo predicate clefting that is only possible with verbs (Holm et al. 109). Scott also indicates that adjectives are used predicatively in TFC (76) and that only the copula can license predicative complements (79). This provides support for /te/ being the anterior marker rather than a copula since if APs have predicative properties they would not require a copula to license predication for them, thereby explaining the existence of a  $\emptyset$  form, and they would be expected to appear with pre-verbal markers in the way that stative verbs in creoles do.

This situation is confounded by the lack of an overt locative copula with prepositional predicate complements since it is unknown what is licensing predication for those complements. However, this pattern is not unheard of in French creoles and is found in Haitian French Creole, Dominican French Creole, and Seychelles French Creole (Holm et al. 99). The lack of an overt locative copula in French Creoles is unusual since in both Atlantic and non-Atlantic creoles with lexifiers other French locative copulas that can be deleted exist (Holm et al. 105-108). See examples 6 and 7 quoted in Holm et al.

6. Guyanese English Creole (Atlantic) *Mieri don de a skuul*

Mary COMP LOC at school

“Mary is already at school” (Hancock 282)

7. Nagamese (Non-Atlantic) *moti yate ase*

Moti here COP



“Moti is here”

(Bhattacharjya ms.)

It may be that locative expressions have verbal qualities like APs or that a copula form licenses predication and is then deleted. However, this study can provide any insights into this matter.

Regarding /sete/, positing a bimorphemic form helps to align the pattern found in TFC with existing data on French Creoles. It makes it possible to say that only one form of the copula is used with NP complements, as attested in Dominican French Creole, and that the form /sete/ may be a combination of /se/ and /te/ and not a completely novel form. However, if /te/ is a preverbal marker it would be expected to be found preposed to the verbal elements and not postposed as it is in /sete/. Regardless, this study cannot provide more than speculation on this issue.

#### *Methodological issues*

This study was unable to definitively identify all of Higgins' clauses in TFC using the proposed testing schedule. However, it was able to identify PCs, ICs, and SCs in a limited manner based on their unique responses to certain combinations of tests. No single sentence produced the expected response for any sub-type and there was variation in the response sentences that were thought to belong to the same class. This variation could have been caused by several factors.

Firstly, the tests used were modifications of English tests and were not designed with the semantics of TFC in mind; they were essentially translations of English tests. This approach had some validity since TFC shares SVO word order with English and tests like subject-complement inversion would be expected to function similarly in the two languages. Additionally, it was used successfully by Niimura in Japanese, a language distinct from English. This approach may not have worked as well in TFC because of too great a difference in the semantics of TFC and

English causing tests that work in English to be problematic in TFC even with modification. However, this was inescapable since little study on the semantics of copular clauses has been done. Additionally, I am not a native speaker of TFC and I do not have native speaker intuitions about meaning in the language to inform the creation of novel tests. This raises issues of conducting semantic studies in endangered languages since such languages by their nature do not have many speakers and would be expected to have even fewer who are linguistics researchers.

The methodology also highlighted issues with using grammaticality judgements as a source of data. The native speakers disagreed with each other at times, and also contradicted themselves over the course of the study, which accounted for the wide inconsistencies in their responses. This is not unusual since grammaticality judgements are affected by factors like conflicting knowledge, attitude, and performance variables according to Chaudron (qtd. in Altenberg and Vago 107). Issues of conflicting knowledge arose in this study since the native speakers were consulted with together, and one was more fluent and sensitive to grammatical subtleties than the other. Additionally, performance variables such as memory, attention and affect would have been relevant since the study was conducted over several sessions, and involved the researcher taking the consultants through a battery of sentences that were at times nonsensical. Furthermore, the native speakers do not use TFC on a regular basis so inconsistencies in their responses might have been caused by language loss.

Despite its problems the methodology uncovered useful insights in studies of this nature. Firstly, PCs can be identified by their positive response to *vini*-replacement and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula, ICs can be identified by their negative response to subject-complement inversion and embedding, and SCs can be identified by their positive response to

subject-complement inversion and alternation with *sé*-clefts. From this, the following schedule to identify these classes can be proposed (see table 14).

Table 14

New testing schedule to identify predicational, identificational and specificational clauses

I = subject-complement inversion, R = *vini*-replacement, A = alternation with *sé*-clefts, E = embedding under a propositional verb without a copula, E = English

✓ = grammatically correct/passed test, x = grammatically incorrect/failed test

	I	R	E	A
IC	x		x	
PC		✓	✓	
SC	✓			✓

Additionally, some tests were more successful than others. Subject-complement inversion worked as expected in all the classes except the PCs. *vini*-replacement only worked consistently well in the PCs. Alternation with *sé*-clefts only worked in SCs and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula only worked properly with ICs and PCs. This indicates that the testing schedule worked best for PCs and worst for ECs.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study aimed to provide a description of the copular clause in TFC using Higgins' taxonomy of copular clauses. It is valuable because it documents the copular clause in TFC as it is spoken currently, and integrates the structure into two existing frameworks — Higgins' taxonomy of copular clauses and creole copulas. This should be done because TFC is under-documented and is not considered in cross-linguistic studies of creole languages and languages in general. Furthermore, the study proposes a methodology for studying copular clauses in French Creoles using Higgins' taxonomy and provides methodological insights into the study of the semantics of endangered languages by non-native speakers.

Description proceeded by determining the distribution of the creole attributive, locative and equative copulas within Higgins' classes and by determining the semantic properties of these classes. Two forms of the copula were identified: /se/, the equative copula, with the variant /sete/ that occurs in all of Higgins' classes and  $\emptyset$  the locative and attributive copula occurring in the predicational class only. /te/ was found occupying the position of the copula in predicational clauses with AP and PP complements in the anterior tense, but was analysed as the pre-verbal anterior marker. Under this assumption, the morpheme /sete/ was analysed as a bimorphemic combination of /se/ and /te/. This deviates from Carrington's description of copular clauses in SLFC, an Antillean French Creole like TFC, but aligns TFC with other studies on the copula in French Creoles and Atlantic Creoles in general.

Additionally, a testing schedule including *vini*-replacement, subject-complement inversion, alternation with *sé*-clefts and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula

was initially proposed to determine the semantic properties of Higgins' classes (see table 9). All of the tests included in this schedule did not identify Higgins' sub-types equally well, but it was possible to identify predicational, identificational and specificational clauses based to an extent. Equative clauses could not be identified. Predicational clauses pass *vini*-replacement and embedding under a propositional verb without a copula, ICs fail subject-complement inversion and embedding, and SCs pass subject-complement inversion and alternation with *sé*-clefts. Based on these results, a new testing schedule to identify PCs, ICs and SCs was proposed and is shown in table 14.

The inconsistencies associated with the testing schedule identified methodological issues in performing semantic studies on endangered languages. Firstly, the tests used in this study were essentially modifications of English tests, and were not based on the semantics of TFC; therefore, deviations from the expected results could have occurred because of a disjoint between TFC and English semantics. Secondly, the use of grammaticality judgement tasks with two speakers at the same time was conflicting at times because of differences in competence between the two. Additionally, grammaticality judgements are subject to interference from performance variables associated with individual informants. It is possible for the researcher to reduce the impact of these variables to an extent, but not completely.

Future studies of this nature would benefit from contextualising the stimuli used in grammaticality judgement tasks, or by using a more naturalistic data collection process. Additionally, more time should be spent on data collection with more breaks during grammaticality judgement tasks. The combination of these efforts could reduce interference from performance variables and possibly produce more consistent responses where testing schedules

are used. Furthermore, the study sample should be increased to gain insights from more speakers. This is an important consideration when studying endangered languages since speakers may be experiencing language loss and may not have full grasp of structures. If more judgements were collected, it would be possible to make more plausible generalisations about structures.

## Appendix A

Phonetic Quality	Orthographic Representation
<b>Consonants</b>	
[p] voiceless bilabial stop	p
[t] voiceless alveolar stop	t
[k] voiceless velar stop	k
[b] voiced bilabial stop	b
[d] voiced alveolar stop	d
[g] voiced velar stop	g
[f] voiceless dental fricative	f
[s] voiceless alveolar fricative	s
[ʃ] voiceless post-alveolar grooved fricative	ch
[v] voiced dental fricative	v
[z] voiced alveolar fricative	z
[ʒ] voiced post-alveolar grooved fricative	j
[tʃ] voiceless alveo-palatal affricate	tj
[dʒ] voiced alveo-palatal affricate	dj
[l] voiced alveolar lateral	l
[m] voiced bilabial nasal	m
[n] voiced alveolar nasal	n
[ŋ] voiced velar nasal	ŋ
<b>Semi-vowels</b>	
[w] voiced labial-velar approximant	w
[j] voiced palatal approximant	y
[h] voiceless glottal fricative	h

[ɾ] voiced alveolar trill	r
<b>Vowels</b>	
[i] close front unrounded monophthong	i
[e] close-mid front unrounded monophthong	é
[ɛ] open-mid front unrounded monophthong	è
[a] open front unrounded monophthong	a
[u] close back rounded monophthong	ou
[o] close-mid back rounded monophthong	o
[ɔ] open-mid back rounded monophthong	ò
[ɛ̃] close-mid front unrounded nasalised monophthong	en
[õ] close-mid back rounded nasalised monophthong	on
[ã] open front unrounded nasalised monophthong	an

(Crosbie et al., x-xi)



### Appendix B

List of Stimuli for construction and introspection elicitation to confirm the semantic properties of Higgins' clauses

I = subject-complement inversion, R = *vini*-replacement, A = alternation with *sé*-clefts, E = embedding with a propositional verb without a copula

	I	R	A	E
<p><b>1. Sa sé (TFC)</b></p> <p>That is John (TEC)</p> <p><i>That is John (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Djonn sé sa</b></p> <p>John is that</p> <p><i>John is that</i></p>	<p><b>Sa vini Djonn</b></p> <p>That come John</p> <p><i>That became John</i></p>	<p><b>Sé sa ki Djonn</b></p> <p>It is that that is John</p> <p><i>It is that that is John</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè sa Djonn</b></p> <p>I think that is John</p> <p><i>I think that is John</i></p>
<p><b>2. Sa sé DDT (TFC)</b></p> <p>That is DDT (TEC)</p> <p><i>That is DDT (E)</i></p>	<p><b>DDT sé sa</b></p> <p>DDT is that</p> <p><i>DDT is that</i></p>	<p><b>Sa vini DDT</b></p> <p>That come DDT</p> <p><i>That became DDT</i></p>	<p><b>Sé sa ki DDT</b></p> <p>It is that that is DDT</p> <p><i>It is that that is DDT</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè sa DDT</b></p> <p>I think that DDT</p> <p><i>I think that DDT</i></p>
<p><b>3. Sa sé Paramin (TFC)</b></p> <p>That is Paramin (TEC)</p> <p><i>That is Paramin (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Paramin sé sa</b></p> <p>Paramin is that</p> <p><i>Paramin is that</i></p>	<p><b>Sa vini Paramin</b></p> <p>That come Paramin</p> <p><i>That became Paramin</i></p>	<p><b>Sé sa ki Paramin</b></p> <p>It is that that is Paramin</p> <p><i>It is that that is Paramin</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè sa Paramin</b></p> <p>I think that Paramin</p> <p><i>I think that Paramin</i></p>

<p><b>4. Sylvia sé li (TFC)</b></p> <p>Sylvia is she (TEC)</p> <p><i>Sylvia is her (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Li sé Sylvia</b></p> <p>She is Sylvia</p> <p><i>Her is Sylvia</i></p>	<p><b>Sylvia vini li</b></p> <p>Sylvia come she</p> <p><i>Sylvia became her</i></p>	<p><b>Sé sa ki li</b></p> <p>It is that she</p> <p><i>It is that that is her</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè Slyvia li</b></p> <p>I think Sylvia she</p> <p><i>I think Sylvia her</i></p>
<p><b>5. Muhammad Ali sé Cassius Clay (TFC)</b></p> <p>Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay (TEC)</p> <p><i>Muhammad Ali is Cassius Clay (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Cassius Clay sé Muhammad Ali</b></p> <p>Cassius Clay is Muhammad Ali</p> <p><i>Cassius Clay is Muhammad Ali</i></p>	<p><b>Muhammad Ali vini Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>Muhammad Ali come Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>Muhammad Ali became Cassius Clay</i></p>	<p><b>Sé Muhammad Ali ki Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>It is Muhammad Ali that Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>It is Muhammad Ali that Cassius Clay</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</b></p> <p>I think Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</p> <p><i>I think Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay</i></p>
<p><b>6. Chat-la gwo/faché (TFC)</b></p> <p>The cat big/angry (TEC)</p> <p><i>The cat is big/angry (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Gwo/Faché sé chat-la</b></p> <p>Big/Angry is the cat</p> <p><i>Big/Angry is the cat</i></p>	<p><b>Chat-la vini gwo/faché</b></p> <p>The cat come big/angry</p> <p><i>The cat became big/angry</i></p>	<p><b>Sé chat-la ki gwo/faché</b></p> <p>It is the cat that fat/angry</p> <p><i>It is the cat that is fat/angry</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè chat-la gwo/faché</b></p> <p>I think the cat big/angry</p> <p><i>I think the cat big/angry</i></p>
<p><b>7. Sylvia sé diyab-la (TFC)</b></p> <p>Sylvia is the devil (TEC)</p> <p><i>Sylvia is the devil (E)</i></p>	<p><b>Diyab-la sé Sylvia</b></p> <p>The devil is Sylvia</p> <p><i>The devil is Sylvia</i></p>	<p><b>Sylvia vini diyab-la</b></p> <p>Sylvia come the devil</p> <p><i>Sylvia became the devil</i></p>	<p><b>Sé Sylvia ki diyab-la</b></p> <p>It is Sylvia who the devil</p> <p><i>It is Sylvia who the devil</i></p>	<p><b>Mwen kwè Sylvia diyab-la</b></p> <p>I think Sylvia the devil</p> <p><i>I think Sylvia the devil</i></p>

<b>8. Sylvia asou tab-la (TFC)</b>	<b>Asou tab-la Sylvia</b>	<b>Sylvia vini asou tab-la</b>	<b>Sé Sylvia ki asou tab-la</b>	<b>Mwen kwè Sylvia asou tab-la</b>
Sylvia on the table (TEC)	On the table Sylvia	Sylvia come on the table	It is Sylvia who on the table	I think Sylvia on the table
<i>Sylvia is on the table (E)</i>	<i>On the table is Sylvia</i>	<i>Sylvia became on the table</i>	<i>It is Sylvia who is on the table</i>	<i>I think Sylvia is on the table</i>
<b>9. Mèt-la NRK sé Nigel (TFC)</b>	<b>Nigel sé mèt-la NRK</b>	<b>Mèt-la NRK vini Nigel</b>	<b>Sé mèt-la NRK ki Nigel</b>	<b>Mwen kwè mèt- la NRK Nigel</b>
The owner of NRK is Nigel (TEC)	Nigel is the owner of NRK	The owner of NRK come Nigel	It is the owner of NRK who Nigel	I think the owner NRK Nigel
<i>The owner of NRK is Nigel (E)</i>	<i>Nigel is the owner of NRK</i>	<i>The owner of NRK became Nigel</i>	<i>It is the owner of NRK who is Nigel</i>	<i>I think the owner NRK Nigel</i>

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