

# DEFINITENESS AND SPECIFICITY IN THE MARTINICAN CREOLE DP: EVIDENCE FROM RELATIVE CLAUSES\*

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## 1 Introduction

Previous work on restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) in Martinican Creole (MC) (Bernabé 1983, 2003; Damoiseau 1999, 2012) describes them as involving two occurrences of the enclitic “definite” determiner *la* (or one of its phonologically conditioned allomorphs — *lan*, *a*, or *an*). This is illustrated in (1), adapted from Bernabé (1983: 1433), where the first occurrence of the determiner appears immediately after the head noun while the second one follows the relative clause. I shall henceforth refer to them respectively as the postnominal and the clause-final determiner.

- (1) Bef **la** ki nwè **a** las<sup>1</sup>  
ox LA COMP black LA tired  
‘The ox that is black is tired.’

The implicit assumption in the literature seems to be that both occurrences of the determiner are obligatory.

However, as the contrast in (2) shows, it turns out that the clause-final determiner is optional.

- (2) a. Man ké ba ’y kado **a** i lé **a**  
1SG IRR give 3SG gift LA 3SG want LA  
i. ‘I will give her the (aforementioned) gift that she wants.’  
ii. ‘I will give her the gift, whatever it is, that she wants.’
- b. Man ké ba ’y kado **a** i lé  
1SG IRR give 3SG gift LA 3SG want  
‘I will give her the gift, whatever it is, that she wants.’

Interestingly, the presence/absence of the clause-final determiner has interpretative effects. When it is present, as in (2a), the DP may be construed as either *de re* or *de dicto*. On the other hand, as shown in (2b), the absence of the clause-final final forces a *de dicto* interpretation.

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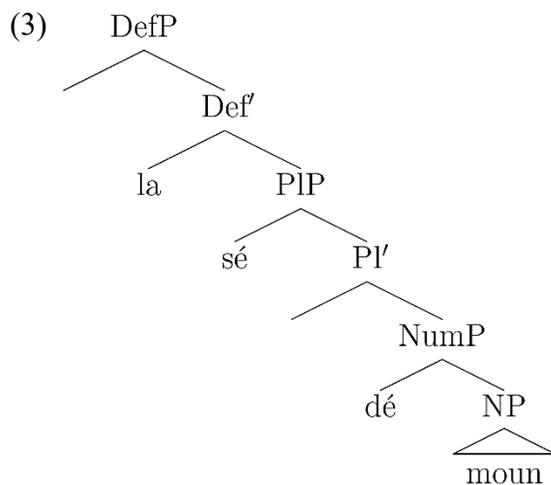
<sup>1</sup> For the sake of exposition, the “definite” determiner will be set in bold type in the examples and represented as LA in the glosses.

To account for the contrast in (2), I propose a split-DP analysis of RRCs in MC — both occurrences of the “definite” determiner are merged outside the RRC but each occupies a distinct position in the nominal left periphery.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 offers some insights on definite DPs in MC. Section 3 argues in favor of a raising analysis of MC RRCs. I show that the head noun is first-merged inside the relative clause. Section 4 addresses determiner doubling in MC RRCs. Section 5 presents a split-DP analysis of MC RRCs to account for the contrast in (2). Section 6 extends this analysis to simplex DPs. Section 7 concludes the paper.

## 2 Some background on definite DPs in MC

Déprez (2007) proposes that MC definite DPs have the basic architecture represented in (3).<sup>2,3</sup>



The definite determiner *la* is merged under  $\text{Def}^0$ .  $\text{Spec,PIP}$  hosts the plural marker *sé*. Numerals, such as *dé* ‘two’, are merged in the  $\text{Spec}$  of  $\text{Num}^0$ , which selects NP as its complement.

As illustrated in (4a), definite DPs surface as *(Pl) (Num) NP la* strings. To account for this word order, Déprez suggests that the derivation of definite DPs proceeds as in (4b). PIP is raised to  $\text{Spec,DefP}$  to check an uninterpretable person feature on  $\text{Def}^0$ .

- (4) a. sé dé liv la  
 PL two book LA  
 ‘The two books’

- b. [ $\text{DefP}$  [ $\text{PIP}$  sé [ $\text{PI}'$  [ $\text{NumP}$  dé [ $\text{NP}$  liv]]]]] [ $\text{Def}'$  la  $\text{t}_{\text{PIP}}$ ]]

<sup>2</sup> Irrelevant projections are omitted.

<sup>3</sup> Minimally different proposals are found in Gadelii (1997, 2007) and Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis (2014).

In fact, Déprez argues convincingly that the Specs of MC nominal functional heads must be filled with overt material checking the person feature on the functional heads.<sup>4</sup>

On the semantic plane, some authors have proposed that MC definite DPs are necessarily referential (Bernabé 1983, 2003; Damoiseau 1999, 2012). Their referent, these authors claim, typically either belongs to the domain of discourse or is anchored to the context. The first of these two possibilities is illustrated in (5), where the referent of *tifi a* ‘the girl’ is first introduced in the domain of discourse as the indefinite DP *an tifi* ‘a girl’.

- (5) Jan ka sòti épi an tifi, mé man po ko wè tifi a  
 John IMPF go.out with a girl but 1SG NEG yet see girl LA  
 ‘John is going out with a girl, but I haven’t seen the (aforementioned) girl yet.’

In contrast with this anaphoric use, the referent of the definite DP in (6) does not belong to the common ground, but it is uniquely identifiable in the context.

- (6) Ba mwen sel la  
 give 1SG salt LA  
 ‘Give me the salt.’

The above data further suggest that MC definite DPs satisfy both the Familiarity Condition (Heim 1982) and the Uniqueness Condition (Hawkins 1978).

However, as noted by Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis (2014) (henceforth, Z&J), MC definite DPs are not necessarily referential; they may also receive type readings, for example. This is illustrated in (7), where the definite DP *lyon-an* ‘the lion’ is ambiguous between a token and a type construal. Accordingly, it may refer either to a situationally anchored lion or to lions as a species.

- (7) Lyon an ka gwondé lè ’y pran lodè manjé  
 lion LA IMPF growl when 3SG take smell food  
 ‘The lion grows when it smells food.’  
 (The aforementioned lion OR the lion species of our world)  
 (Adapted from Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2014: 276)

In light of these facts, it cannot be maintained that MC definite DPs are obligatorily referential.

Z&J propose instead that *la* carries a locative feature; the referent of DPs headed by *la* must be spatially anchored. In the most straightforward cases, spatial anchoring is provided either by discourse or context, as in (5) and (6) respectively. In more complex cases like (7), Z&J argue that the DP is spatially anchored to the world of reference. On this view, a unified analysis of MC definite DPs is thus possible thanks to the posited

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<sup>4</sup> Déprez (2007) notes that MC shares this property with other French-based creoles. Her comparative study of those creoles also provides empirical and theoretical motivation for the head-initial structure represented in (3).

locative feature. Structurally, they suggest that *la* heads DefP, whether the nominal expression is referential or not.

However, a different course can be pursued: the (non-)referentiality of DPs headed by *la* may be reflected in the structure. For instance, it may be the case that *la* can occupy distinct positions in the extended nominal projection. This view finds support in some dialects of closely related Haitian Creole (HC) where two occurrences of the so-called definite determiner can be found in a single DP, as shown in (8). Fattier (2000) takes this as an indication that there may in fact be two distinct (but underlyingly homophonous) determiners in HC — a deictic marker and a definite article. The DP in (8) is thus unambiguously referential.

- (8) Chat **la**    **a**  
       cat    LA    LA  
       ‘The (aforementioned) cat’  
       (Fattier 2000: 45)

On the assumption that each determiner heads a distinct functional projection, we are led to surmise that (non-)referentiality may then reduce to the absence/presence of the relevant projection. Based on Fattier’s observations, I propose that this projection, headed by the string-final determiner, encodes deixis and scopes over a lower projection, headed by the NP-adjacent determiner, which marks definiteness. We shall return to this later and see whether this proposal can be extended to MC (and other HC dialects) where *NP la la* strings are ungrammatical. For the time being, note that Z&J’s analysis cannot account for (8), since it allows for a unique first-merge position for the definite determiner.

Thus, the main issue to arise out of this brief survey of MC definite DPs is their potential ambiguity between a referential and a non-referential interpretation<sup>5</sup>. Z&J argue that this follows from the semantics of the definite determiner *la*. The locative feature which *la* carries can be satisfied by spatially anchoring the DP either to the context or to the world of reference. However, a structural account of this ambiguity is also possible. It may be that the definite determiner occupies different positions depending on the interpretation it is given. We shall now consider the case of MC RRCs to discriminate among those two analyses.

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<sup>5</sup> Note, however, that there is a significant tendency toward a referential interpretation of MC definite DPs.

### 3 A raising analysis of MC RRCs

There have been various analyses of RRCs<sup>6</sup>, but I shall adopt a Raising Analysis<sup>7</sup> given the abundance of reconstruction effects which suggest that the head noun is first-merged in a position internal to the relative clause.

Kayne (1994) is responsible for reviving the Raising Analysis initially formulated by Schachter (1973) and Vergnaud (1974). This analysis relies on two main ingredients: (i) the determiner which heads the relativized DP is external to the RRC; and (ii) the head noun is base-generated within the relative clause. For now, let us focus on the last of these two ingredients.

There is ample and robust evidence that the head of RRCs must be reconstructed in an internal position. This includes the case of predicate nominals. Bianchi (1999: 52-53) adopts Vergnaud's (1974: 63-68) argument that these nominals can only be relativized if their feature set is compatible with the subjects of both the matrix clause and the RRC. As attested by the contrast in (9), this argument carries over to MC.

- (9) a. Mari pa chantez **la** ki manman 'y té yé  
 Mary NEG singer LA COMP mother 3SG ANT COP  
 'Mary isn't the singer that her mother was.'
- b. \*Mari pa chantez **la** ki papa 'y té yé  
 Mary NEG singer LA COMP father 3SG ANT COP  
 'Mary isn't the singer that her father was.'

Although MC lacks grammatical gender, morphological reflexes of semantic gender may be found in the language. For instance, *chantè* 'singer' denotes male singers, while *chantèz* 'singer' denotes female singers. Thus, (9a) is grammatical, since the subjects of the matrix and the embedded clause are both semantically feminine and, by consequence, compatible with the predicate nominal *chantez* 'singer'. In contrast, (9b) is ill-formed, because the subject of the relative clause is semantically masculine and thus incompatible with the semantically feminine predicate.

This contrast finds a straightforward explanation if we assume that the predicate nominal is first-merged inside the relative clause before it undergoes movement to the left periphery. This hypothesis is actually supported by the morphological realization of the

<sup>6</sup> These include the Adjunct Analysis, the Matching Analysis, the Promotion Analysis, and the Raising Analysis. The interested reader may turn to de Vries (2002) and Bianchi (2002a, 2002b) for a careful review and appraisal of the various analyses.

<sup>7</sup> Some studies have suggested that both the raising and the matching analyses must be maintained (Afarli 1994, Sauerland 2000, Bhatt 2002). However, various attempts have been made to demonstrate that the raising analysis can adequately account for all RRCs (see, a.o, Henderson 2007, Donati Cecchetto 2011, Sportiche 2017). Conversely, some authors have proposed that the matching analysis can cover all cases (for recent proposals, see Pankau 2018, Salzman 2018). It is beyond the scope of this paper to settle the debate. Nevertheless, I will adopt a raising analysis, since it provides the most straightforward account for reconstruction effects in RRCs. Note, however, that this does not exclude the eventuality that some RRCs may require a matching analysis.

copula in (9). As shown in (10a), the copula is not overtly realized when its complement remains in situ. In contrast, when its complement is the target of movement, e.g. wh-movement as in (10b), it is realized as *yé*.

- (10) a. Mari (\*yé) chantez  
 Mary COP singer  
 ‘Mary is a singer.’
- b. Ki koté Mari \*(yé)?  
 Which place Mary COP  
 ‘Where is Mary?’

Thus, the form of the copula in (9) suggests that its complement has been moved, which is, of course, compatible with the raising analysis I have adopted. However, this does not tell us much about the category of the moved constituent. As rightly noted by Bianchi (1999), it could be a null operator or some nominal expression coreferential (or identical) with the head of the relative clause, as envisaged by the Adjunct and the Matching analyses. Stronger evidence is then required to justify the posited base-generation of the head noun inside the relative clause.

To this end, let us consider Condition A effects. In (11)<sup>8</sup>, the head of the RRC *an foto pwop ko ’y* ‘a picture of himself’ contains an anaphor which has no potential binder outside the relative clause. It can only be licensed if it is reconstructed in the object position of the RRC, where it is then bound by the c-commanding coreferential subject, *Jan*.

- (11) Man ped an foto pwop kò ’y<sub>i</sub> Jan<sub>i</sub> té ni an chanm li  
 1SG lose a picture own body 3SG John ANT have in room 3SG  
 ‘I lost a picture of himself that John had in his room.’

Under the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1993), we must reach the conclusion that the head noun and its modifiers are first-merged inside the RRC before they are raised to a position in its left periphery.

Idiomatic expressions offer additional support for this analysis. Given the idiomatic expression *fé éfò* ‘make an effort’, consider (12), where *éfò* ‘effort’ is relativized.

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<sup>8</sup> Example (11) features an indefinite relativized DP. For independent reasons, anaphors cannot cooccur with the definite determiner, as attested by (i).

- (i) Foto kò ’y (\*lan)  
 picture body 3SG LA  
 ‘The picture of himself’

- (12) Man fiè di éfò a Mari fè a  
 1SG proud of effort LA Mary make LA  
 ‘I am proud of the effort that Mary made.’

That *éfò* ‘effort’ is first-merged inside the relative clause is attested by the degraded status of (13).

- (13) ?Man fiè di éfò a  
 1SG proud of effort LA  
 ‘I am proud of the effort.’

Example (13) provides evidence that *éfò* ‘effort’ cannot be base-generated in the matrix clause in (12). Instead, it is licensed inside the relative clause, viz. in the complement position of *fè* ‘make’.

In summary, the various reconstruction effects I have presented in this section (predicate nominals, Condition A effects, and idiomatic expressions) justify a raising analysis of MC RRCs. The head of the RRC is a nominal expression raised from an internal position. Let us now attend to the phenomenon of determiner doubling found in MC RRCs.

#### 4 Determiner doubling in restrictive relative clauses in MC

As exemplified in (14), MC RRCs are *NP la RC (la)*.

- (14) Liv la Mari matjé a  
 book LA Mary write LA  
 ‘The book that Mary wrote’

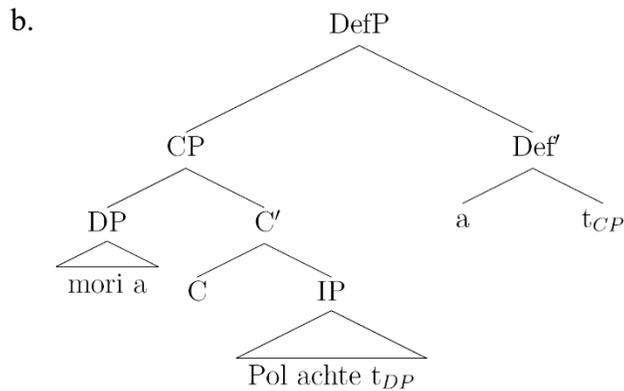
Any adequate analysis of RRCs in MC must then account for the peculiar word order attested in (14).

Interestingly, the *NP la RC la* strings typical of MC RRCs are also found in HC<sup>9</sup>. Given the similarity between these two French-based creoles, I propose that we look at Zribi-Hertz & Glaude’s (2007) (henceforth Z&G) analysis of this word order in HC. Their study is all the more relevant as they too adopt a raising analysis of HC RRCs. They assume that the relative clause is the complement of the externally merged clause-final determiner. They argue, therefore, that the postnominal determiner forms a DP with the head of the RRC and that this constituent is merged inside the RRC before it is raised to Spec,CP. The relativized DP in (15a) is thus associated with the structure represented in (15b).

- (15) a. Mori a Pol achte a  
 codfish LA Paul buy LA  
 ‘The codifsh that Paul bought’

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<sup>9</sup> Note, however, that HC differs from MC insofar as this is not the only word order found in relative constructions. See Zribi-Hertz and Glaude (2007) for an overview of HC RRCs.



While this proposal has the obvious benefit of accounting for the attested word order, it runs into important problems when applied to MC RRCs.

As first noted by Schachter (1973) w.r.t. English RRCs, idiomatic expressions militate against the view that the postnominal determiner forms a constituent with the head noun. Consider the idiom chunk *ba gaz* ‘drive nuts’ (lit. ‘give gas’). As illustrated in (16a), the idiomatic object must appear in bare form. However, in (16b), where it is relativized, the object is obligatorily followed by the definite determiner.

- (16) a. I ka ba mwen gaz (\***la**)  
 3SG IMPF give 1SG gas LA  
 ‘He’s driving me nuts.’ (lit. ‘He’s giving me gas.’)
- b. Gaz **\*(la)** i ka ba mwen **an**  
 gas LA 3SG IMPF give 1SG LA  
 (lit.) ‘The gas he’s giving me’

This contrast leads us to the conclusion that the postnominal determiner cannot be merged in the object position of the idiom chunk.

This view is reinforced by the definiteness effects observed in RRCs (Browning 1987: 129-130). See the contrast in (17). Example (17a) shows that definite DPs cannot appear in existential constructions. Therefore, it is implausible that the trace position in (17b) is occupied by a definite DP.

- (17) a. \*Té ni lapli **a**  
 ANT have rain LA  
 ‘It was raining.’ (lit. ‘There was rain.’)

- b. Lapli a ki té ni t a  
 rain LA COMP ANT have LA  
 ‘The rain there was.’

These facts militate against the application to MC RRCs of Z&G’s conjecture that the constituent raised to Spec,CP is a definite DP headed by the postnominal determiner. This in turn leads to the conclusion that the latter is merged outside the relative clause.

In fact, I would like to go one step further and argue that the postnominal determiner selects the relative clause as its complement. This proposal receives support from the fact that, unlike its clause-final counterpart, the postnominal determiner is obligatory. Consider the data in (18). Example (18b) shows that the clause-final determiner is optional, while examples (18c-d) demonstrate the obligatoriness of the postnominal determiner.

- (18) a. Tifi a man wè a  
 girl LA 1SG see LA  
 ‘The girl I saw’
- b. Tifi a man wè  
 c. \*Tifi man wè a  
 d. \*Tifi man wè

These facts favor the view that the RRC is in fact selected by the postnominal determiner.

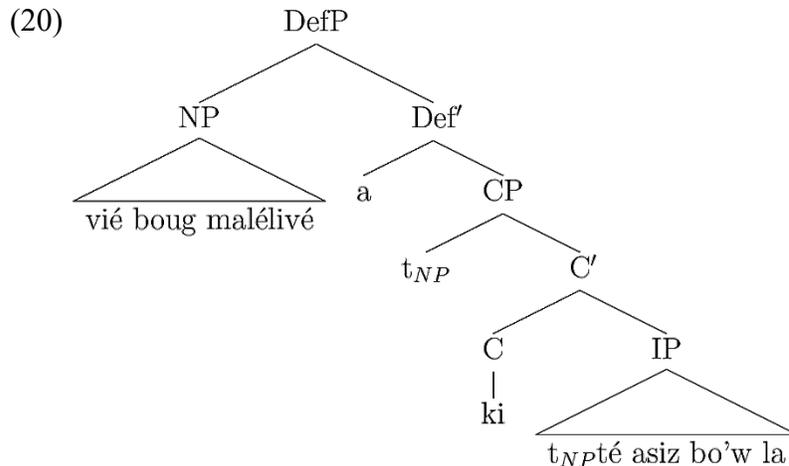
However, as it stands, this proposal cannot account for the linear order of MC RRCs. Additional steps are required. As a matter of fact, if the head noun were simply to remain in Spec,CP, the prediction would then be that the determiner should either precede or follow the string formed by the head noun and the relative clause. It should not intervene between them, as is in fact the case. This apparent difficulty, however, is easily overcome if we allow the head noun to move outside the relative clause<sup>10</sup>. Let us then suppose that the head noun and its modifiers undergo phrasal movement from Spec,CP to the Spec of DefP, the projection headed by the postnominal determiner. We can then straightforwardly accommodate data such as (19), where the head noun and its adjectival modifiers precede both the determiner and the RRC.

- (19) Vié boug malélivé a ki té asiz bò ’w la  
 old man impolite LA COMP ANT sit next 2SG LA  
 ‘The old impolite man who was sitting next to you’

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<sup>10</sup> This is actually proposed by Kayne (1994) in his analysis of Romanian relative clauses. He argues that the head noun leaves Spec,CP and cliticizes to the external determiner.

The underlying structure of (19) is represented in (20)<sup>11</sup>, where the nominal expression containing the head noun and its modifiers first moves to Spec,CP, before landing in Spec,DefP.<sup>12</sup>



Following Déprez (2007), I assume that the movement of this nominal expression to Spec,DefP is required to check the person feature on Def<sup>0</sup>.

In summary, in this section I have proposed that the postnominal determiner selects the RRC as its complement and that it attracts the head NP to its Spec. So far, however, I have not said anything about the clause-final determiner. In the next section I shall thus recruit the Split-DP hypothesis to account for the syntax and the semantics of this determiner.

## 5 A Split-DP account of RRCs in MC

Ihsane and Puskás (2001) (henceforth, I&P) extend Rizzi's (1997) Split-CP hypothesis to the nominal domain. This is meant to account for the ambiguity of the definite determiner exemplified in (21) (their (1a)).

<sup>11</sup> Note, however, that (20) is misleading w.r.t. the position of the clause-final determiner. I show below that it is actually merged outside the RRC.

<sup>12</sup> Nothing crucial in my proposal hinges on the exact nature of the constituent that moves to Spec,CP. For instance, as suggested by Bianchi (1999: 79), it may be a DP headed by a null determiner. Similarly, the nature of the constituent in Spec,DefP bears no consequence on my analysis. Finally, I also leave aside the question of whether the head noun moves directly from Spec,CP to Spec,DefP, or whether it first goes through the Spec of some functional projection intervening between DefP and CP, as proposed by Bhatt (2002), since this has no impact on the present proposal. I will then simply assume direct movement from Spec,CP to Spec,DefP.

- (21) J' ai pris le train  
 I have taken the train  
 'I took the train.'

I&P claim that (21) is ambiguous between a specific or a non-specific reading. When interpreted as specific, the DP *le train* 'the train' refers to some particular train which belongs to the common ground. On the other hand, on its non-specific interpretation, the DP does not refer to any particular entity and the sentence denotes the event of taking a train. This leads I&P to construe definiteness and specificity as two distinct notions for which they propose the definitions in (22) (their (3)).

- (22) a. *Definiteness*: selects one object in the class of possible objects  
 b. *Specificity*: relates to pre-established elements in the discourse

This distinction, they argue, is reflected structurally. They claim that DP is split into two distinct projections — Def(initeness)P and Top(ic)P. The first of these two encodes definiteness, while the second marks specificity. As to their relative ordering, it is proposed that TopP dominates DefP.

On this view, the ambiguity of (23) is only apparent. On its non-specific reading, (23) is associated with the structure represented in (23a), where the nominal expression projects no further than DefP. In contrast, on its specific reading, TopP is projected above DefP and the definite determiner is head-moved from Def<sup>0</sup> to Top<sup>0</sup>, as illustrated in (23b).

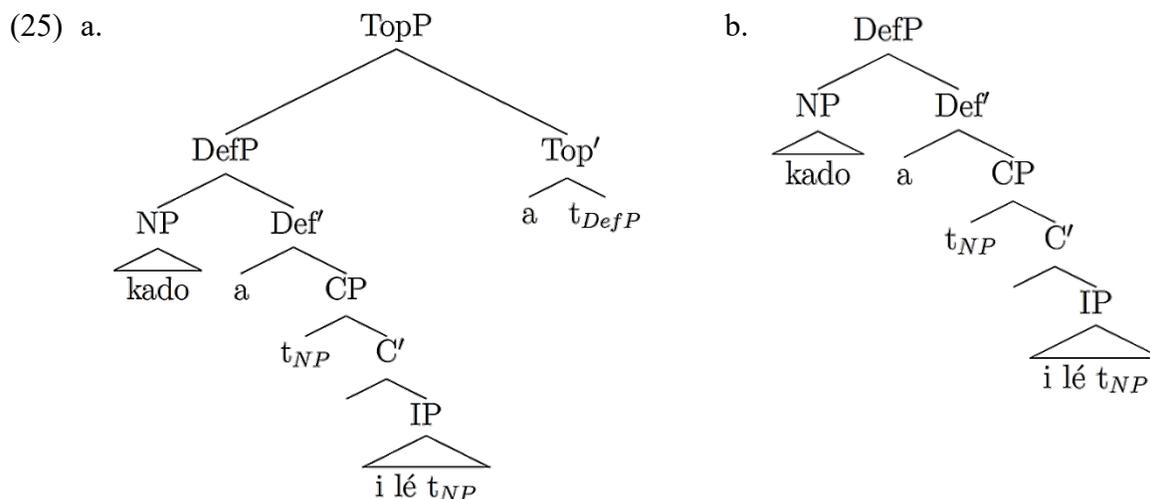
- (23) a. [DefP [Def' le [NP train]]]  
 b. [TopP [Top' le<sub>i</sub> [DefP [Def' t<sub>i</sub> [NP train]]]]]

I now propose that we apply these insights to the contrast between (2a) and (2b), repeated here respectively as (24a) and (24b).

- (24) a. Man ké ba 'y kado a i lé a  
 1SG IRR give 3SG gift LA 3SG want LA  
 i. 'I will give her the (aforementioned) gift that she wants.'  
 ii. 'I will give her the gift, whatever it is, that she wants.'
- b. Man ké ba 'y kado a i lé  
 1SG IRR give 3SG gift LA 3SG want  
 'I will give her the gift, whatever it is, that she wants.'

I argue that the postnominal determiner is merged under I&P's Def<sup>0</sup> while the clause-final determiner heads TopP. This is meant to reflect the interpretive difference between (24a) and (24b). The presence of Top<sup>0</sup>, along with the [specific] feature it carries, allows for the specific construal of (24a). As regards the derivation of these two RRCs, I build on my earlier proposal that the head noun moves from Spec,CP to Spec,DefP in both (24a) and (24b). The derivation of (24a), however, features an extra step as DefP moves to

Spec,TopP. Therefore, (24a) and (24b) are derived according the tree diagrams in (25a) and (25b), respectively.



The application of I&P's version of the Split-DP hypothesis thus provides a straightforward account for the properties of determiner doubling in MC RRCs. The optionality of the clause-final determiner stems from the fact that TopP is projected only when required. In contrast, the obligatoriness of the postnominal determiner follows from the fact that it necessarily selects the RRC as its complement. The interpretive difference between (24a) and (24b) then reduces to the presence or absence of TopP<sup>13</sup>. In the next section, I extend this analysis to simplex DPs.

## 6 Extending the Split-DP analysis to MC simplex DPs

In section 2, I mentioned that MC definite DPs are not necessarily specific. Z&J claim that the potential ambiguity of those DPs lies in a [locative] feature borne by *la*. As a consequence, the DP must be anchored either to the context or to the world of reference. However, based on varieties of HC which allow the cooccurrence of two definite determiners, I entertained the hypothesis that definite DPs may differ in their structural makeup depending on their interpretation. In this section, I would like to build on this idea.

<sup>13</sup> This is apparently contradicted by the possible *de dicto* reading of (24a). However, I would like to argue that this results from the temporal-aspectual interpretation of the RRC. Let us suppose, following Stowell (2007), that the position of RRCs at LF dictates their temporal interpretation. Let us further assume with I&P and Aboh (2004) that the feature [specific] borne by nominal TopP licenses the movement, overt or covert, of a specific definite DP to the Spec of clausal TopP. On these assumptions, I posit that the presence of the clause-final determiner allows the RRC to be interpreted either in situ or in the left periphery of the matrix clause. When interpreted in situ, temporal anchoring is relative to the matrix clause. When interpreted in a left peripheral position, temporal anchoring is relative to utterance time. The presence of the irrealis marker *ké* in (29a) would then be responsible for the apparent *de dicto* reading. For lack of space, I cannot investigate the consequences of this proposal here.

As noted above, the presence/absence of TopP above DefP may be responsible for the fact that relativized DPs can be interpreted as either specific or non-specific. Now, I would like to argue that this analysis can be extended to simplex DPs, but this proposal immediately runs into an apparent challenge as it predicts that specific definite NPs should surface as *NP la la* strings. As shown in (26), such strings are in fact considered ungrammatical in MC.

- (26) Man jwenn direktè a (\*a)  
 1SG meet director LA LA  
 ‘I met the director.’

The descriptive generalization is that there can be no more than one occurrence of the definite determiner in MC definite DPs, whether they are specific or not. This restriction, however, is not necessarily syntactic. In fact, it appears that a PF rule prevents the overt realization of string-adjacent underlyingly homophonous determiners in MC.

This view receives support from possessive constructions. Consider (27), where the possessum precedes the possessor.

- (27) Papa mwen  
 father 1SG  
 ‘My father’

Now, examine (28) which illustrates the incompatibility of the definite determiner with proper names.

- (28) \*Jan an  
 John LA  
 (lit.) ‘The John’

The possessive construction in (29) involves a proper name as possessor. Interestingly, the possessor is followed by *la*. Based on (28), this determiner is obviously not part of the possessor DP. Therefore, it must relate to the entire DP, as reflected in the bracketing.

- (29) [[Loto Jan] an]  
 car John LA]  
 ‘John’s car’

Now, observe (30) where the possessor is the definite DP *met la* ‘the teacher’. The prediction is that (30) should surface as a *NP NP la la* string. Unexpectedly, only a single occurrence of the determiner is allowed.

- (30) Loto [met **la**] (**\*la**)  
 car teacher LA LA  
 ‘The teacher’s car’

I take the above data as an indication that both determiners are actually syntactically present, but the application of the hypothesized PF rule causes the deletion of one of the determiners.

Additional support for this analysis comes from RRCs. Let us consider the configuration where both the relativized subject and the object are interpreted as specific and definite. The prediction is that there should be two occurrences of the determiner in clause-final position — one pertaining to the object, the other to the RRC as a whole. However, as evidenced by (31), there can only be a single determiner in clause-final position.

- (31) Fanm **lan** ki matjé [liv **la**] (**\*la**)  
 woman LA COMP write book LA LA  
 ‘The woman who wrote the book’

This provides robust evidence for the PF rule I posit. In fact, such a rule has already been proposed for both HC (Lefebvre 1982, 1998; Lefebvre and Massam 1988; Glaude 2012) and MC (Bernabé 1983). See (32) for an informal formulation of this constraint.

- (32) *Determiner deletion rule*

In a string of *n* adjacent underlyingly homophonous determiners, delete *n-1* determiners.

Given this PF rule, I draw the conclusion that the Split-DP analysis can be extended to MC simplex DPs as well. On this view, a specific definite DP contains two occurrences of *la*, one of which is unpronounced. In contrast, non-specific definite DPs involve a single occurrence of the determiner, as they lack the TopP projection which encodes specificity.

To sum up, in this section I have demonstrated that the Split-DP analysis can also account for the properties of MC simplex DPs. The apparently impossible cooccurrence of two determiners is simply a phonological phenomenon. Therefore, the only difference between simplex and relativized DPs is the presence, in the latter case, of material intervening between the two determiners which licenses the overt realization of both determiners.

## 7 Conclusion

MC RRCs are characterized by (optional) determiner doubling. I have argued that a Split-DP analysis can best account for this peculiar property. I claim that both determiners are merged outside the relative clause. The postnominal determiner is base-generated under Def<sup>0</sup> and marks definiteness. The second determiner appears in clause-final position and encodes specificity. It heads the TopP projection which sits above DefP. The *NP la RC (la)* word order typical of MC RRCs is the result of the movement of the head noun from a

position internal to the RRC to Spec,DefP and the subsequent movement of DefP to Spec,TopP.

I have also demonstrated that the Split-DP hypothesis can also be applied to MC simplex DPs. Although a PF rule prevents the overt realization of both determiners, they are in fact present in the structure when the DP is interpreted as specific. The Split-DP hypothesis thus allows for a unified account of simplex and complex definite DPs in MC.

This study suggests that the nominal left periphery of relativized DPs may be just as rich as that of simplex DPs. It remains to be determined whether this can be verified crosslinguistically.

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