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The Arawak / Lokono word for man

Introduction

In this paper I describe the Arawak/Lokono word **wadili** which currently denotes a male human being and its evolution to a modal verb meaning 'to be able, to have the physical or mental ability'. This evolution is analyzed as a grammaticalization process.

Since a similar evolution of the word **man** is registered in Sranan Tongo (from now on ST), an English lexifier creole spoken in the same area, I discuss a possible correlation of this parallel innovation observed in these two neighboring but genetically unrelated languages.

The Arawak language, also known as « Lokono » (from now on A/L), belongs to an extensive Amerindian language family named « Arawak » following the name of this particular language. It is closely related to Garifuna, spoken in Belize and Honduras and to Goahiro and Parauhano in the West coast of Venezuela. Typologically, A/L is said to be polysynthetic, since strings of suffixes on the verb convey TMA and other grammatical categories such as subordination, quantity or directionality. Another important feature is the morphosyntactic distinction between stative and active verbs, made obvious by different person marking, and different predicative patterns.

ST and A/L are spoken in the lowlands of the Guianas, especially in Suriname, but also in French Guiana. Historical records mention the long standing contacts they have maintained ever since the first English settlements in Suriname¹. The Arawaks are an Amazonian people who lived in the coastal area of Guianas. Great travellers, they dedicated themselves to trade and war. They had contact with the other Amerindian groups, but also with the Europeans and the black populations brought by the white colonizers. These contacts are well documented, for example in the Moravian² writings. It is thus natural to posit a possible interference between ST and A/L.

As for ST **man**, it belongs to a paradigm of TMA preverbs, its emergence as a modal verb has been recorded in various studies due to M. van den Berg and J. Arends (2000, 2004, 2007)³; and its integration in the TMA system of ST has been analyzed by several scholars, among them D. Winford (2000, 2003)⁴.

This article is organized as follows. The first section is dedicated to A/L **wadili**. The second section shows ST **man** as a modal verb through examples taken from creole studies. In concluding remarks, I discuss the possible correlation between these two concomitant grammaticalization processes.

¹ See Jacques Arends, 'The history of the Surinamese creoles' (115-151), in *Atlas of the Languages of Suriname*, E. B. Carlin and J. Arends, 2002, KITLV Press, Leiden. According to this author [...] *it is known that both Amerindians and Africans were used as slaves on the plantations in the early stages of colonization [...] Concerning the Amerindian slaves, it has been found that most of them belonged to the Arawak tribe.* (118)

² The Moravian brothers are a German speaking group of Protestant missionaries.

³ "Mi no sal tron trongo". Early Sranan in court records, 1667-1767." [MA Thesis, Radboud University of Nijmegen] 2000. "Court records as a source of authentic early Sranan". M. van den Berg & J. Arends, in *Creoles, Contact and Language change. Linguistics and social implication*. G. Escure & A. Schwegler (eds), 2004, Amsterdam: J. Benjamins (21-33); *A Grammar of Early Sranan*, M. van den Berg, [PHD dissertation, Radboud University of Nijmegen] 2007.

⁴ D. Winford "Irrealis in Sranan: Mood and modality in a radical creole." *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 15 (63-125) 2000. D. Winford *An introduction to contact linguistics*. 2003, Blackwell.

1. *Arawak wadili*

- in the lexicon

While A/L **hiyaro** 'woman' has clearly cognates in a wide number of Arawakan languages and especially in the closely related Garifuna **hiaru**, Goahiro **hierü** and Parauhano **ñerü**, the word for 'man', **wadili**, is not so easily recognizable. The form **awaili**, given by D. Taylor⁵ for Palicur, another Arawakan language spoken in French Guiana and Brasil, is probably the best candidate as a possible cognate. In the same article, D. Taylor mentions **wadi** 'long'. The Kari'na⁶ form for 'man' **wokĩ :rĩ** (Hoff, 228)⁷ may or may not have influenced the Arawak form. In any case, **wadili** is clearly easily segmentable as **wadi+li** (long+DEM M), and it is sometimes used to refer to 'penis' (Pet, 345)⁸.

The basic meaning of **wadili** is 'man, male human being'. It is also used to denote a male animal : **karhina wadili** 'cock', 'rooster' (**karhina**, 'poultry' < Spanish *gallina*), **pêro wadili** 'male dog' (**pêro** 'dog' < Spanish *perro*). In the noun phrase, **wadili** acts as masculine marker and triggers the masculine in the determiners and modifiers.

Another entry in the lexicon of modern A/L is 'to be able', or 'to be possible', a stative verb generally associated with the negation to express 'not to be able to', 'to be unable to'.

- The modal verb **wadili**

A/L verbal roots divide between active or stative and this parameter entails two different predicative patterns. The nominal predicates follow the stative predicative pattern. It must be added that items of other categories, like adpositions, numerals or interrogative words can follow the stative pattern, when in a predicative position.

Stative verbs

A stative verb is usually the predicative nucleus of the sentence. It has the first position, it receives the TMA markers and it is followed by its core argument, the subject.

In the example given below, the stative verb **methe** is aspectually marked with perfect (PERF) **-ka** and the 3rd PP M **i** encodes the subject (1):

- (1) **methe-ka i**
tired-PERF 3M
'He is tired.'

TMA verbs

In its modal use, **wadili** belongs to a limited series of TMA verbs such as **hibi** 'nearly, not yet / hardly already achieved' or **barhi** 'in vane'.

The following examples (2-5) are taken from a traditional tale where the cultural hero is challenged by his mother-in-law. She asks him to go and draw some water for

⁵ "A note on some Arawakan Words for Man", IJAL XXIII (46-48), Chicago, 1957.

⁶ Kari'na or Carib: an Amerindian language spoken in the same area than Arawak/Lokono but genetically unrelated to it.

⁷ B.J. Hoff, *The Carib Language*, 's Gravenhage, 1968, 440p.

⁸ W. J. Pet, *Lokono Dian, the Arawak language of Suriname*, PHD thesis 1987, 383p.

her, and in order to do so, she gives him a basket. After having tried in vain, he gets extra-natural help and succeeds to accomplish this impossible task.

As in (1), the predicate - here the stative verb **barhi** 'in vain' - exhibits the perfect marker **-ka**. Typically, it occupies the first position and it is followed by its argument, which in this case is a complement clause, marked as dependent with the subordinating marker **-n**, as shown in the dependent verbal form **lukusatin** (2):

- (2) **barhi-ka** **lu-kusa-ti-n**
 in vain-PERF 3M-draw-DES-SUB
 in vain results his wish to draw (water)

On the other hand, **barhi** can also be marked as dependent when dominated by a main verb. In the following sentence, the predicative nucleus is **lukusa** and **barhin**, its complement, exhibits the subordination marker **-n** (3):

- (3) **lu-kusa** **barhi-n** **no**
 3M-draw (water) in vain-SUB 3NM
 he draws in vain it
 'Although he wants to draw water, he draws it in vain.'

In the predicative position, **wadili** is aspectually marked by **-ka**. It follows here the absolute negation **hamâkenkho**, 'absolutely not', 'not at all', derived from the simple particle negation **kho ~ khoro**, the resulting sequence meaning 'totally impossible'. The complement clause **dakusun** exhibits the subordination marker **-n** and the 1st person prefix **da-** (4):

- (4) **hamâkenkho** **wadili-ka** **da-kusu-n**
 not at all man-PERF my drawing (water)
 'It has been totally impossible that I draw water.'

Potential (POT) -ma

The Arawak language has also a paradigm of mood markers in the verb, among them the potential **-ma** expressing ability or possibility. Potential **-ma** follows the veritative marker (VERIT) **ya** in the verbal form **da-kusa-ya-ma** (5):

- (5) **da-kusa-ya-ma** **tho-mun** **to** **oniabo**
 1-draw-VERIT-POT 3NM-DAT DEM water
 I really can draw for her this water
 'I can indeed draw this water for her.'

Privative (PRIV) ma-

In (4), we have seen **wadili** in association with the absolute negation **hamâkenkho**, in a negative sentence. Apart from **kho** and its derivatives, A/L exhibits a privative morpheme which associates with lexical items and conveys also a negative meaning. From **wadili** is built **ma-wadili** 'impossible'.

Ma-wadili is aspectually inflected with the perfect **-ka** and governs the subsequent verbal form **lukusun** marked with the subordination marker **-n** (6):

- (6) **ma-wadili-ka** **lu-kusu-n** **to** **oniabo**

PRIV-man-PERF 3M-draw-SUB DEM water
 results impossible his drawing this water
 'It results impossible for him to draw this water.'

The following sentence shows the stative pattern again. In the first position, the predicate associates the complex verbal form **wadili-sabo-ka** exhibiting the quantifier **sabo** 'more' and the aspect marker **-ka** and the negative particle **khoro**; the 3rd PP M **i** encodes the subject and occupies the end-position of the sentence. The position of the asseverative **da** is canonical (7):

(7) **wadili-sabo-ka** **khoro** **da** **i**
 man-more-PERF NEG ASS 3M
 results more able no indeed he
 'He indeed cannot anymore.' (he is worn out, he cannot take it any longer)

In his comprehensive work *The Arawak Language of Guiana*, C. H. de Goeje⁹ gives us the main body of the Arawak language as it has been recorded in the missionary works since about 1755. In the Alphabetical Index, which according to the author, "contains all words in Arawak in the texts of Brett and Schultz¹⁰", the modal use of **wadili** is not attested, whereas 'impossible' is expressed by another item, **mamarhi**. On the contrary, the traditional literature collected by de Goeje in Suriname in 1928 shows various examples of it.

In the following sentence, taken from C. H. de Goeje¹¹, we find a familiar structure: the head **wadilika** together with the negation **khoro** form the predicative nucleus. The directional **-the** 'towards here' in the main verb **wadilikathe** is repeated in the dependent verbal form **danukun-the** (9):

(8) **wadili-ka-the** **khoro** **da-nuku-n-the** **to hime**
 man-PERF-DIR NEG 1-pull-SUB-DIR DEM fish
 results possible towards here no my pulling towards here this fish
 'I am unable to pull this fish (towards) here.'

In contemporary A/L, the question below is a standard utterance. It can be addressed to a man or a woman as well. Notice that **wadili** cooccurs with potential **-ma** (9):

(9) **wadili-ko-ma** **b-ani-n** **to** **da-mun ?**
 man-PERF-POT PP2-do-SUB DEM PP1-DAT
 results possible+pot you do this for me
 'Can you possibly do this for me?'

It receives the positive answer (10):

(10) **wadili-ka dei**
 man-PERF PP1
 I can [do it].

⁹ C. H. de Goeje *The Arawak Language of Guiana* 1928, Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam)

¹⁰ The missionary W. H. Brett (1818-1886) and Theodor Schultz (1770-1850) wrote biblical texts.

¹¹ C. H. de Goeje, *De inwijding tot medicijn man bij de Arawakken (Guyana) in tekst en mythe* (259), in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- & Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indie 101*, s'Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, vol 101, (211-276) 1942, in M-F Patte Contes arawak des Guyanes (96), Karthala:Paris, 2012.

Or the negative one (11):

- (11) ***dei kho wadiliyama.***
PP1 NEG man-VERIT-POT
I really can't [do it]

Over the years, **wadili** has undergone a functional change: this lexical item acquired a grammatical function. As a rule, this process known as grammaticalization goes with a shift in meaning, with the bleaching of the basic semantic core of the word, and an extension of the use. A/L **wadili** has found extension of use, and as a result of its diffusion its semantic value has evolved, with a loss of some features, actually the basic meaning of the noun it originated in, and the parallel adoption of other ones which were initially latent or virtually conveyed by the basic one.

It is to be noticed that the TMA verb **wadili** coexists with the intraverbal potential morpheme *-ma*. Furthermore, both markers can cooccur in the same sentence, as seen in (9). What's more, A/L has another verb, **mamarhi** 'impossible', similar to the negative **ma-wadili**. The major factor behind this case of grammaticalization may be "the tendency for speakers to be expressive and creative in their language use"¹². It is thus not surprising to find the modal **wadili** in spontaneous oral speech, while no occurrence can be found in ancient documents, such as the lexicons and grammars based on the missionary texts.

2. *Sranan man*

This presentation of ST **man** and its evolution draws heavily from M. van den Berg and M. van den Berg & J. Arends' studies¹³.

In the first documents written in ST, *man* is a noun, denoting a male human being (1):

- (1) ***Mingo jou no man.***
Mingo 2P NEG *man*
'Mingo, you are not man [enough].' (archives 1707, in van den Berg 2000:14)

The C. L. Schumann's¹⁴ dictionary gives the first occurrence of a modal use. Note the complementizer **va** (2):

- (2) ***Mi no man va hoppo dati.***
1 NEG man to lift that
'I am not man [enough] to lift that.' 'I am not able to lift that.' (C. Schumann 1783:185; original translation '*ich bin nicht stark genug um das aufzuheben*', in M. van den Berg & J. Arends 2004).

This example found in Focke's¹⁵ XIXth dictionary can be compared to the (7) A/L example, similar in meaning, given above (3):

- (3) ***Mi no man moro.***

¹² J. Arends and A. Bruyn (118) in *Pidgins and Creoles*, J. Arends, P. Muysken, N. Smith eds, Creole Language Library vol 15, 1995. Amsterdam/Philadelphia. J. Benjamins

¹³ See note 3.

¹⁴ C. L. Schumann 1783. *Neger-Englisches Wörterbuch*. MS [transcription A. Bruyn]

¹⁵ H. C. Focke 1855. *Neger-Engelsch Woordenboek*. Leiden: P. H. van den Heuvel

I NEG man more

'I cannot anymore.' (H. C. Focke 1855:76; original translation '*ik kan niet meer*' in M. van den Berg & J. Arends 2004).

In another example, taken also from Focke's dictionary, the translation reflects the double interpretation. As in (2) here again a complementizer (**foe**) is to be noticed (4):

(4) ***Mi no man foe doe datti.***

I NEG man/able to do that

'I am not man [enough] / able to do that. (H. C. Focke 1855:185; original translation '*ik ben niet mans genoeg om dat te doen; ik kan dat niet doen*' in M. van den Berg & J. Arends 2004)

The following example given and analyzed by D. Winford shows the present-day use. A woman complains about the price of the donuts (5):

(5) ***A diri k'falek, yu no man bai en. Mi no man.***

it expensive terrible, you not can buy it. I not can.

'It's terribly expensive. You can't buy it. I can't.' (D. Winford 2000¹⁶ in M. van den Berg & J. Arends 2004)

In modern ST, as seen in (5), **man** is used to express ability "involving physical conditions internal to the agent or imposed on the agent by forces beyond his or her control"¹⁷. According to van den Berg (2007:216), "the first record of auxiliary **man** with a bare lexical complement instead of a reduced sentential complement headed by [variants of] the complementizer **foe** dates from the 20th century." The grammaticalization process is achieved since the lexical item **man** has become part of the grammar as a functional morpheme, with the correlative extension of use and semantic change.

Concluding remarks

In view of these two cases of grammaticalization, it seems licit to posit some interference between ST and A/L, two languages that have been in contact since the first times of colonization. I assume that a special type of convergence must have taken place: an "internal convergence" that can be defined as an internally driven process, possibly reinforced by a parallel evolution in a context of bilingualism of the speakers of one of the languages in contact. In Suriname and in French Guiana, many Lokono speakers are commonly interacting in ST with non-Lokono speakers, inside and outside their community.

¹⁶ D. Winford 2000. "Irrealis in Sranan: Mood and modality in a radical creole." *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 15: 63-125

¹⁷ D. Winford 2000.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASS	ASSEVERATIVE	PERF	PERFECT
DAT	DATIVE	PL	PLURAL
DEM	DEMONSTRATIVE	POT	POTENTIAL
DES	DESIDERATIVE	PP	PERSONAL PRONOUN
M	MASCULINE	PRIV	PRIVATIVE
NEG	NEGATION	SUB	SUBORDINATION
NOPROX	NO-PROXIMITY	VERIT	VERITATIVE
DIR	DIRECTIONAL		

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