

WORK PAPERS
OF THE
SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS

Number 2:

**THE STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF
ST. LUCIAN FRENCH CREOLE NARRATIVE TEXTS**

David B. Frank

This paper was presented to the Society for Caribbean Linguistics at their sixth biennial conference in St. Augustine, Trinidad, on Friday, 29th August, 1986.

© 1990
Summer Institute of Linguistics
Box 1030
Castries, Saint Lucia

THE STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF ST. LUCIAN FRENCH CREOLE NARRATIVE TEXTS

David B. Frank
Summer Institute of Linguistics

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis takes as its scope segments of speech greater than a single sentence. Traditionally—at least in the U.S.—linguistics has been limited to the study of the sentence and its internal structure. Leonard Bloomfield was instrumental in imposing this limitation on the scope of American linguistics, writing that “each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form” (1933:170). Noam Chomsky’s transformational-generative theory helped reinforce the notion that there were no linguistic structures more inclusive than the sentence.

There is a growing awareness, however, among certain American and European linguists that more extended stretches of discourse are also organized in a way that can be described by rules. In general it is those linguists who are concerned with function and not just form who have embraced discourse analysis. This includes the originators or followers of such schools of thought as systemics, tagmemics, the ethnography of speaking, and some followers of the generative semantics school. Some who have written about the theory of discourse analysis and its place in general linguistic theory include Malcolm Coulthard, Teun van Dijk, Joseph Grimes, M.A.K. Halliday, Dell Hymes, William Labov, Robert Longacre, and Kenneth Pike.

Among discourse analysts there is some variation as to how a text as a linguistic unit is fit into linguistic theory. Some such as van Dijk, Longacre, and Pike see a text as a grammatical unit. In other words, a text is composed of paragraphs, which in turn are composed of sentences, which are composed of clauses, phrases, and so on. Others such as Halliday and Coulthard see a text as a functional or semantic unit, a unit of meaning and not of form. According to this perspective, a text is not *composed of* sentences but rather *realized as* sentences. Still others do not address the question directly as to whether a text is a grammatical unit, a semantic unit, or something else. The disagreement has its foundation in the way that form and function are related in different theories, but despite the differences there is still much in common.

This paper does not deal with discourse analysis from a highly theoretical perspective and it does not defend the theory. It is an application of a model for discourse analysis to a corpus of six St. Lucian French Creole narrative texts. According to this model there are no ‘units of form’ as opposed to ‘units of meaning’; all units have elements of both form and meaning. A text and its component parts are all seen as grammatical units. The model is basically that of Robert Longacre.

Two levels of focus in this paper are the paragraph level and the discourse (text) level. In section two I will describe the paragraph level and several contrastive paragraph types in French Creole. The paragraph is not seen as an orthographic unit but as a grammatical unit, a patterning of the way that sentences combine. Then in section three I will present a basic pattern for French Creole narrative texts and describe a range of variation for this pattern. Two unique features of St. Lucian Creole discourse structure that I will describe concern the way that verb tenses are distributed in a text and the grammatical marking of the peak of the text.

2. PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Sentences group together in a text in following with certain patterns. These patterned groupings of sentences are grammatical paragraphs. Contrastive paragraph types can be identified on the basis of the pattern exhibited.

In the six narrative texts I am using as a database, I found nine different paragraph types, which I will describe in this section. There were some sentences in these texts that I did not find to function as paragraph constituents. I will say more about this in section 3. On the other hand, there were some paragraphs that were embedded in other paragraphs. The discussion below will include examples of these.

As might be expected, the most common paragraph type in these narrative texts is the narrative paragraph. Twenty-one out of the 53 paragraphs were narrative. The second most common type, of which I found thirteen examples, is the amplification paragraph. The third most common type is the stimulus-response paragraph, which, like the narrative paragraph, has a temporal orientation. Eleven of the paragraphs were stimulus-response. I found one or two examples in the data of each of the other six paragraph types.

The analysis here is based on Longacre's etic schema, fit into the St. Lucian Creole emic mold. The theory is presented in Longacre 1980 and in Peck 1984. I have made some slight modifications to the theory for my purposes here, based on my own investigation into discourse theory (Frank 1983).

2.1 Narrative paragraphs. The narrative paragraph is open-ended. That is, it consists of two or more sentences that describe events in a narrative sequence. The events may be preceded by a setting. These setting or event slots are usually filled by sentences but can be filled by clusters of sentences that function together as embedded paragraphs. I will give three examples, demonstrating three degrees of complexity.

2.1a Minimal narrative paragraph from "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav", sentences 18,19.

EVENT: Papa mwen tchébé mwen. (*My father grabbed me.*)

EVENT: I ban mwen yon volé. (*He gave me a beating.*)

2.1b Narrative paragraph with setting from "Mimin, Soup Labé", sentences 1-3.

SETTING: I sé on vyé madanm jan Chwazèy yo ka kwiyé Mimin. (*There is an old woman of Choiseul they call Mimin.*)

EVENT: I toujou ka alé an pwèzbitè, i kay wè pwèt-la. (*She always goes into the presbytery to see the priest.*)

EVENT: Mé avan i alé wè pwèt-la, i ka antwé an tchwizin pwèt-la, èk i ka bwè soup pwèt-la, épi i ka manjé tout sa pwèt-la ni la. (*But before she goes to see the priest, she enters into the priest's kitchen, and she drinks the priest's soup, and she eats all that the priest has there.*)

2.1c Complex narrative paragraph from "An Chyen Etwanj", sentences 6-12. Note that the fourth and fifth event slots are filled by embedded amplification paragraphs.

EVENT: So an lè papa mwen di i kay sav si i majò pasé'y. (*So one time my father said he is going to find out if it is tougher than he is.*)

EVENT: So i antwé andidan-an. (*So he entered inside.*)

EVENT: Well, m'a fin sav sa papa mwen fè-a, mé mwen ni lidé i fè an ti jès. (*Well, I never knew what my father did, but I have an idea he did a little trick.*)

EVENT: Epi i pwan an ti koutla nou té ni an féto kay-la. Sé la i té ka séwé ti koutla-a. (*And he took a little cutlass we had in the rafters of the house. It is there he used to hide the little cutlass.*)

EVENT: I pwan an ti koutla fin, épi i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, èk menm kon i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, nou wè an chyen. I doubout anpami twa lézòt chyen nou té ni. (*He took a little fine cutlass, and he opened the gallery door, and as he opened the gallery door, we saw a dog. It stood among three other dogs we had.*)

2.2 Stimulus-Response paragraphs. A stimulus-response paragraph has two main parts, the stimulus and the response to it. It is similar to the narrative paragraph in that it has a temporal orientation but different in that it has only these two main constituents rather than being open-ended, with the second constituent having a response relationship to the first. Again, the stimulus can be preceded by a setting. As with any of these paragraph types, any constituent can comprise an embedded paragraph. A stimulus-response paragraph often takes the form of dialogue. (This is a departure I take from Longacre's model. He treats dialogue and stimulus-response paragraphs as distinct.)

2.2a Minimal stimulus-response paragraph from "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé", sentences 20-21.

STIMULUS: Mwen mandé'y ankò, "Ki jou i yé?" (*I asked him again, "What day is it?"*)

RESPONSE: I wéponn. (*He responded.*)

2.2B Stimulus-response paragraph from the same story, sentences 15-17. In this example the second sentence is both a response to the first and a stimulus to the third. That is, if sentence 17 were absent, sentences 15 and 16 would form one stimulus-response paragraph, and if 15 were absent, sentence 16 and 17 would form another stimulus-response paragraph. Together, sentences 15-17 form a complex stimulus-response paragraph where sentence 16 has a double function, both as response to 15 and stimulus to 17.

STIMULUS: Lè mwen lévé mwen mandé'y ki moun mwen yé. (*When I got up I asked him who I am.*)

RESP/STIM: I di mwen non mwen. (*He told me my name.*)

RESPONSE: Mwen pa kwè'y. (*I don't believe him.*)

2.2c Complex stimulus-response paragraph from "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav", sentences 4-9. Both constituent slots of this paragraph are filled by embedded paragraphs.

STIMULUS: Papa mwen toujou ka vèti nou pou pyé gwiyav sala. I di nou, jou nou tonbé anlè'y nou ka pwan kou. I pa mélé sa ki fèt. Nou kay pwan kou. (*My father always warns us about that guava tree. He told us, the day we fall out of it we are taking licks. He doesn't care what happens. We will take licks.*)

RESPONSE: Mé nou pa mélé. Sé swing nou ka pwan. (*But we don't care. It is swings we are taking.*)

2.3 Amplification paragraphs. The amplification paragraph type has an open-ended structure. It consists of a text and one or more amplifications of the sentence or embedded paragraph that constitute the text. This sort of construction, with a text or ‘theme sentence’ that is amplified in the following sentences, is common in expository texts, but it is also used in narrative texts as a means for the author to add extra explanatory information about the characters or events. The sentences that constitute the amplification parts of an amplification paragraph do not advance the events that make up the story line, but rather add information that is intended to help the listener understand the story line. The story line is the foreground of a narrative text, and the amplifications are part of the background.

2.3a Minimal amplification paragraph from “An Chyen Etwanj”, sentences 11,12.

TEXT: I pwan an ti koutla fin, épi i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, èk menm kon i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, nou wè an chyen. (*He took a little fine cutlass, and he opened the gallery door, and as he opened the gallery door, we saw a dog.*)

AMPLIF: I doubout anpami twa lézòt chyen nou té ni. (*It stood among three other dogs we had.*)

2.3b Slightly more expanded amplification paragraph from the same text, sentences 3-5. Each amplification restates part of the text but also adds more information.

TEXT: An jou bonmaten bò senkè papa mwen tann an chyen, an bagay ka goumen èk sé chyen nou-an dòwò-a, épi chak lè i lèvé ay gadé bagay-la ka ni tan kouwi. (*One morning at about five o'clock my father heard a dog, a thing fighting with our dogs outside, and each time he got up to look, the thing is having time to run away.*)

AMPLIF: La té ni jaden owon-an èk bagay-la ka ni tan ay séwé anba jaden-an. (*There was a garden around the house and the thing is having time to go hide under the garden.*)

AMPLIF: Chak lè i vivé antwé andidan, an bagay la ka bat sé chyen-an ankò, goumen ka alé. (*Each time he returned inside, a thing there is beating the dogs again, a fight going on.*)

2.3c Complex amplification paragraph from “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiav”, sentences 4-7. An embedded cyclical debate paragraph constitutes the amplification of the text. The text says that the father warned the children, and the amplification adds more information by reporting what he said.

TEXT: Papa mwen toujou ka vèti nou pou pyé gwiav sala. (*My father always warns us about that guava tree.*)

AMPLIF: I di nou, jou nou tonbé anlè'y nou ka pwan kou. I pa mélé sa ki fèt. Nou kay pwan kou. (*He told us, the day we fall out of it we are taking licks. He doesn't care what happens. We will take licks.*)

2.4 Minor paragraph types. Like the amplification paragraph, the **comment** paragraph does not advance the story line of a narrative. This paragraph type involves a text and a comment. The comment is parenthetical, ‘aside’ information. The comment does not provide more information about the text, but rather uses the text as a point of departure. The author makes this comment to inject a personal observation into the story. The relationship between amplification and comment paragraphs is close, and since I only found

one example in the six texts of what appears to be a comment paragraph, I consider this category to be tentative.

2.4a Comment paragraph from “An Chyen Etwanj”, sentences 1,2.

TEXT: Well, listwa-a mwen kay di la-a sé about an jan gajé papa mwen dégajé, tchèk tan ki pasé. (*Well, the story I am going to tell is about a witch my father rendered powerless some time ago.*)

COMMENT: Ou pa sa jenmen fin sav ki moun ki ka gajé tout tan ou pa really dégajé yo. (*You can never know who is doing witchcraft until you really render them powerless.*)

Coordinate and **contrast** paragraphs are analogous to coordinate and antithetical sentences. The main difference is that the two (or more) parts are made up of separate sentences rather than separate clauses.

A coordinate paragraph involves two or more text sentences or embedded paragraphs that are parallel. The text constituents are often joined by a coordinating sentence conjunction such as ‘and’ (*èk, èvèk, or épi* in French Creole) or ‘also’ (*osi* in French Creole). The sentence conjunction is optional, but if the coordinating relationship is not overtly expressed in a coordinate paragraph by means of a sentence conjunction, then it is implied.

2.4b Coordinate paragraph from “Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé”, sentences 2,3.

TEXT: Jou apwémidi sala, lè mwen wivé lakay, mwen touvé fwè mwen té ja la. (*That afternoon, when I arrived home, I found my brother was already there.*)

TEXT: Osi, gwanmanman mwen épi gwanpapa mwen té ja la. (*Also, my grandmother and my grandfather were already there.*)

A contrast paragraph has two parts, the text and the contrast, joined by the sentence conjunction *mé*, ‘but’. In the data used for this study, there was only one example of a coordinate paragraph and two contrast paragraphs.

2.4c Contrast paragraph from “Mimin, Soup Labé”, sentences 7,8.

TEXT: Sa i ni, sa i fwapé nou. (*Whatever she has, she hits us with.*)

CONTRAST: Mé pou i jwenn nou byen, sé lè nou alé anba mango’y, piskè i sé yon moun ki ni an chay pyé mango. (*But for her to get us good, that is when we go under her mango tree, because she is a person who has a lot of mango trees.*)

Result, **execution**, and **debate** paragraphs are all somewhat similar to the stimulus-response paragraph type. Instances of these paragraph types are rare in the data used for this study, so these categories should all be considered tentative.

A result paragraph involves two parts, a text and a result. The text-result relationship differs from the stimulus-response relationship in that the first part (text) is not an action, and the second part (result) may not be.

2.4d Result paragraph from “Mimin, Soup Labé”, sentences 6-8. Note that the nucleus of the first sentence, the text, involves a state, not an action. The subordinate clause is a back-

reference to the previous sentence. The result part of this result paragraph consists of an embedded contrast paragraph.

TEXT: Lè nou kwiyé'y "soup labé", i pa kontan non sala. (*When we call her "priest's soup", she doesn't like that name.*)

RESULT: Sa i ni, sa i fwapé nou. Mé pou i jwenn nou byen, sé lè nou alé anba mango'y, piskè i sé yon moun ki ni an chay pyé mango. (*Whatever she has, she hits us with. But for her to get us good, that is when we go under her mango tree, because she is a person who has a lot of mango trees.*)

Like many stimulus-response paragraphs, an execution paragraph involves an utterance (quoted directly or indirectly) followed by an action. However, in this case the action is not a response to the utterance. In this case the utterance and the action are performed by the same person. The first part of an execution paragraph is the plan, where a character states his intentions, and the second part is the execution, where he carries out his plan.

2.4e Execution paragraph from "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé", sentences 9-14. The plan and execution here are realized as embedded narrative paragraphs.

PLAN: Nou lité, nou maté, nou kouwi. Lè nou té kontanté mwen di'y, "Annou bò laplas bò gwanmanman mwen pou on tchè bouden," pas skwè-a té fenmé. (*We wrestled, we tumbled, we ran. When we were contented, I told him, "Let's go by the market to my grandmother for a piece of pudding," because the square was closed.*)

EXECUTION: Nou té ni pou janbé yon bayè. Lè mwen mouté, bayè-a alé douvan. Mwen tonbé pa tèt mwen. Annèk, "klak" toubannman. (*We had to jump over a gate. When I went up, the gate went forward. I fell on my head. Just like that, "klunk" all of a sudden.*)

A debate paragraph is similar to dialogue except that the dialogue involves just one person arguing with himself. The person doing the arguing may be the author of the text, as in an expository text, or may be a character in a narrative text whose argumentation is reported as a direct or indirect quotation.

There is only one example of a debate paragraph in the data used for this study, and it is irregular, so this category is quite tentative. A debate paragraph ideally comprises three main parts, a counter-argument, an argument, and a conclusion, but in this example the counter-argument is missing but implied. In addition, this paragraph has the form of a cyclical paragraph, which means that the first and third constituents are identical. In the case of this cyclical debate paragraph, the structure is conclusion-argument-conclusion.

2.4f Cyclical debate paragraph from "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiav", sentences 5-7. The counter-argument is missing but implied, and if present would take the form of something like "We might be hurt. But...", and would come before the argument.

CONCL: I di nou, jou nou tonbé anlè'y nou ka pwan kou. (*He told us, the day we fall out of it we are taking licks.*)

ARGUMENT: I pa mélé sa ki fèt. (*He doesn't care what happens.*)

CONCL: Nou kay pwan kou. (*We will take licks.*)

Figure one summarizes the frequency and distribution of the nine paragraph types in the six stories. Note that the major three paragraph types constitute 85% of the total number of paragraphs, and the minor six types make up the remaining 15%. The minor paragraph types—especially the comment, result, execution, and debate paragraph types—are all tentative pending the analysis of additional texts.

PARAGRAPH TYPE	TEXT NUMBER						TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
comment	1						1
amplification	4		2	3		4	13
narrative	3	2	4	5	3	4	21
coordinate		1					1
stimulus-response			2	3	5	1	11
result			1				1
contrast		1	1				2
execution				2			2
debate						1	1
total number of paragraphs	8	4	10	13	8	10	53

key to text numbers: 1. "An Chyen Etwanj"
 2. "Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé"
 3. "Mimin, Soup Labé"
 4. "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé"
 5. "Ti Manmay-la Yo Vòlè"
 6. "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav"

Figure 1. Frequency of paragraph types in six texts.

3. DISCOURSE STRUCTURE

The St. Lucian French Creole narrative text, as a structural unit, has several parts. First may come one or more paragraphs or sentences that precede the action part of the narrative. This I call the **opening**, and it is an optional part of a text. Next come the **episodes**, which make up the nuclear part of the text. A narrative text by definition has at least one episode, and is likely to have several. Finally, the episodes may be followed by a closing, which is optional. Thus a formula for the structure of a narrative text is as follows¹:

¹The parentheses indicate that that part of the construction is optional. A superscript n indicates that one or more instances occur.

narrative text = (openingⁿ) episodeⁿ (closing)

In this segment of the paper I will go into more detail as to what constitutes these structural parts of a text.

3.1 Openings. Although the nuclear part of a narrative text is the episodes, the text does not usually start off with an episode at the very first sentence. Rather, there is usually some introduction to the story, and this is what I call the ‘opening’. (Others may use a different term here, but I find that in the context of the patterns in French Creole texts this term is appropriate.) An opening can have different functions and different manifestations. The two functions that I found for openings are as **preview** and as **stage**. Below I will explain these functions.

At the beginning of a narrative text there are sometimes one or more sentences that serve to introduce the characters and the setting. This is what is called the ‘stage’. This part of the text may also introduce certain actions that would be considered background to the action of the story. In the six texts I studied, four had openings with the function of stage, and each of these described actions using the progressive aspect marker, which denotes that the action is on-going. The following is an example of an opening-as-stage, coming at the beginning of “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav”, sentences 1-3:

(1) Adan lakou dèyè kay nou té ni an pyé gwiyav. (2) Toulé apwémidi tout sé manmay oliwon-an té ka vini, épi nou ka mouté anlè pyé gwiyav-la. (3) Nou ka pwen swing anlè’y kon chouval. (*In the yard behind our house we had a guava tree. Every afternoon all the children around would come, and we are climbing on the guava tree. We are swinging on it like a horse.*)

In this segment of the text some of the characters and props are introduced: the neighbor children, the author herself as a child, and a guava tree. The location is presented: in the yard behind her house. And an on-going action is presented that sets the stage for the first episode of the text: they used to swing in the guava tree.

The following is another example of an opening-as-stage from “An Chyen Etwanj”, sentences 3-5. This part of the text comes before the first episode but after an opening-as-preview, which I will describe below.

(3) An jou bonmaten bò senkè papa mwen tann an chyen, an bagay ka goumen èk sé chyen nou-an dòwò-a, épi chak lè i lévé ay gadé bagay-la ka ni tan kouwi. (4) La té ni jaden owon-an èk bagay-la ka ni tan ay séwé anba jaden-an. (5) Chak lè i viwé antwé andidan, an bagay la ka bat sé chyen-an ankò, goumen ka alé. (*One morning at about five o’clock my father heard a dog, a thing fighting with our dogs outside, and each time he got up to look the thing is having time to run away. There was a garden around the house and the thing is having time to go hide under the garden. Each time he returned inside, a thing there is beating the dogs again, a fight going on.*)

Here the time of day is introduced: five o’clock in the morning. The major participants in the plot are presented: the teller’s father (actually, he was first referred to in sentence one), the family’s dogs, and something else that is alternately called “a dog” and “a thing”. The setting is described: the teller and his family are inside (their house), the dogs and the “thing” are outside, and there is a garden all around. And an on-going action is described

that serves as background to the plot: goumen ka alé (*a fight is going on*), bagay-la ka ni tan kouwi (*the thing is having time to run away*).

Other examples of opening-as-stage can be seen in “Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé” (sentence 1) and “Mimin, Soup Labé” (sentences 1-3).

There is another type of opening that can be used either in place of an opening-as-stage or in addition to it. While it is common in languages around the world for a ‘stage’ segment to come at the beginning of a narrative text, some French Creole texts have an uncommon paragraph near the beginning that I call a ‘preview’, which I will now describe. An opening-as-preview is similar to an opening-as-stage in that it precedes the first episode and it may introduce characters. However it is not specific about when or where the story is going to be set and it does not present on-going background events that lead up to the beginning of the plot. Rather it describes how something is *usually* done, as a preview of what to expect in the plot. Three of the six stories have an opening-as-preview in addition to an opening-as-stage, and a fourth has an opening-as-preview in place of an opening-as-stage.

One story that has an opening-as-preview coming after an opening-as-stage is “Mimin, Soup Labé”. In this story sentences 1-3, a narrative paragraph, set the stage and then sentences 4-8 serve as a preview to the plot:

(4) So nou kònèt sa i ka fè-a. (5) Nou ka kwiyé’y “soup labé”. (6) Lè nou kwiyé’y “soup labé”, i pa kontan non sala. (7) Sa i ni, sa i fwapé nou. (8) Mé pou i jwenn nou byen, sé lè nou alé anba mango’y, piskè i sé yon moun ki ni an chay pyé mango. (*So we know what she is doing. We call her “priest’s soup”. When we call her “priest’s soup”, she doesn’t like that name. Whatever she has, she hits us with. But for her to get us good, that is when we go under her mango tree, because she is a person who has a lot of mango trees.*)

This paragraph has the form of a stimulus-response paragraph. It is in the response part of this paragraph that the preview appears. The stimulus part of the paragraph describes an on-going activity (nou ka kwiyé’y “soup labé”, “*we are calling her ‘priest’s soup’*”) that is both the stimulus for the activities that come in the next three sentences and for the first episode. Then the response part of this opening-as-preview presents an image that is reflected in the first episode. The preview describes a usual pattern of behavior, a ‘script’, to use Schank’s term (Schank and Abelson 1977), and then the first episode describes a specific manifestation of this script. “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav” is very similar to “Mimin, Soup Labé” in how first the stage is presented (sentences 1-3) and then a preview to the plot is presented (sentences 4-9).

“An Chyen Etwanj” has an opening-as-preview coming before the opening-as-stage. The stage segment (sentences 3-5) was described above, and the preview (sentences 1-2) is as follows:

(1) Well, listwa-a mwen kay di la-a sé about an jan gajé papa mwen dégajé, tchèk tan ki pasé. (2) Ou pa sa jenmen fin sav ki moun ki ka gajé tout tan ou pa really dégajé yo. (*Well, the story I am going to tell is about a witch my father rendered powerless some time ago. You can never know who is doing witchcraft until you really render them powerless.*)

Sentence one is a summary of the plot. Coming at the very beginning of the story, it does include some stage-type information. We learn that the story involves a jan gajé and the teller’s father, and that it happened “some time ago”. But what makes this a preview is

sentence two, the comment part of this initial comment paragraph. This second sentence describes how, in general, one can find out if someone else is a witch. And then the rest of the story gives a specific example.

The opening-as-preview in “Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé” (sentences 1-4) occurs without an accompanying opening-as-stage. In this text the introduction to the participants and the spatial and temporal setting are all but left out, but the usual routine, the script, is described:

(1) Toulé sanmdi, nou ka lévé bonnè pou koupé pen, pliché ti lonyon, koupé'y, lavé boyo kochon, mélé san kochon épi ti lonyon èk pen twanpé, mété'y adan boyo kochon, pou fè bouden. (2) Mwen twavay wèd, ka mélé san èk koupé ti lonyon. (3) Jou bonmaten sala, zyé mwen koulé dlo, mé toulé jou apwé bouden-an tchwit, gwanmanman mwen ka désann bò laplas épi yon bonm bouden épi yon twé. (4) Pli ta mwen ka pòté yon lòt bonm bouden ba li. *(Every Saturday, we get up early to cut bread, peel green onions, cut them, wash pig's intestines, mix pig's blood with green onion and soaked bread, put it inside the pig's intestines, to make black pudding. I worked hard, mixing blood and cutting green onion. That morning, my eyes are running with water, but every day after the pudding is cooked, my grandmother goes down by the market with a bucket of pudding and a tray. Later I carry another bucket of pudding to her.)*

The interesting thing about this example is that in the rest of the story, the teller goes on to describe not one specific instance of the usual routine, but a time when he rebelled from following usual routine. In a story such as this, the opening-as-preview is even more essential.

The above examples of opening-as-preview illustrate one distinctive style of story telling in St. Lucian French Creole. Not every story has this element, but these four texts that do have an opening-as-preview, told by four different authors, demonstrate that one style of story telling in French Creole involves the inclusion of a paragraph at or near the beginning of the story that describes a script, a usual pattern of behavior.

Now there is a remarkable feature of St. Lucian French Creole texts involving the way that verb tenses are distributed. In some Creole narrative texts there is a mixture of present and past tense where I would have expected just the past tense. Before analyzing these texts I guessed that the present tense is used to mark old information, background information, subordinate clauses, action by out-of-focus participants, or non-peak events. It turns out that the use of present vs. past tense is related to the distinction between the opening of a text and the episodes. The basic rule is this: paragraphs that function as opening (stage or preview) use the present tense, and then the past tense is used for the remainder of the text, beginning with the first episode. There are a few exceptions to be explained, but this seems to be the basic rule.

First I will describe several exceptions and then I will go on to provide examples supporting this rule. One obvious exception is that direct quotations in the text do not necessarily follow this rule. They have their own orientation for tense and deixis. Certain descriptive information does not seem to follow this rule, e.g. in the opening of “An Chyen Etwanj”, sentence four La té ni jaden owon-an “*there was garden all around*”. And any main verb coming after an jou “*one day*”, an lè “*one time*”, jou apwémidi sala “*that afternoon*” or other phrases that name a particular time in the past are sure to be in the past tense, even if the rest of that paragraph switches back to the present. The main verb after toulé apwémidi “*every afternoon*” in “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav” is marked for past progressive. Sentence two of “Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé” and sentence five of “Jou-a

Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav” each contain a verb that is an exception, and both of these cases have in common the fact that a present tense verb in the previous sentence is being paraphrased in the context of an amplification paragraph.

For evidence to support the rule I will begin with a simple example. In “Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé”, the opening-as-stage consists of the first sentence, which is oriented in the present. The first episode begins with sentence two, and one form or another of the past tense is used from that point on.

(1) Mwen toujou ka èspéyé lè klòch lékòl kay sonnè, épi nou kay pwédyé, pou nou sa alé lakay nou, pou nou sa manjé. (2) Jou apwémidi sala, lè mwen wivé lakay, mwen touvé fwè mwen té ja la. (*I am always waiting for the school bell to sound, and we will pray, so we can go home so we can eat. That afternoon, when I arrived home, I found my brother was already there.*)

A more extended and interesting example is the opening of “An Chyen Etwanj”. Sentences 3-5 describe actions that take place on the same morning as the rest of the plot to follow, but these actions are setting the stage for the plot and so they are distinguished, by the tense used to describe them, from the episodes that begin at sentence six.

(3) An jou bonmaten bò senkè papa mwen tann an chyen, an bagay ka goumen èk sé chyen nou-an dòwò-a, épi chak lè i lévé ay gadé bagay-la ka ni tan kouwi. (4) La té ni jaden owon-an èk bagay-la ka ni tan ay séwé anba jaden-an. (5) Chak lè i wivé antwé andidan, an bagay la ka bat sé chyen-an ankò, goumen ka alé. (6) So an lè papa mwen di i kay sav si i majò pasé’y. (7) So i antwé andidan-an. (*One morning at about five o’clock my father heard a dog, a thing fighting with our dogs outside, and each time he got up to look, the thing is having time to run away. There was a garden around the house and the thing is having time to go hide under the garden. Each time he returned inside, a thing there is beating the dogs again, a fight going on. So one time my father said he is going to find out if it is tougher than he is. So he entered inside.*)

The verbs ka ni, ka bat, and ka alé in sentences 3-5 are present tense, and the verbs di and antwé in six and seven are simple past tense, and the remainder of the story continues using the past.

The above two examples show the transition from an opening-as-stage to the first episode of a story. In “Mimin, Soup Labé”, “Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé”, and “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav” an opening-as-preview comes just before the first episode and in these cases the same tense shift can be seen. I will give one last example of this phenomenon, this one from “Mimin, Soup Labé”:

(1) I sé on vyé madanm jan Chwazèy yo ka kwiyé Mimin. (2) I toujou ka alé an pwèzbitè, i kay wè pwèt-la. (3) Mé avan i alé wè pwèt-la, i ka antwé an tchwizin pwèt-la, èk i ka bwè soup pwèt-la, épi i ka manjé tout sa pwèt-la ni la. (4) So nou kònèt sa i ka fè-a. (5) Nou ka kwiyé’y “soup labé”. (6) Lè nou kwiyé’y “soup labé”, i pa kontan non sala. (7) Sa i ni, sa i fwapé nou. (8) Mé pou i jwenn nou byen, sé lè nou alé anba mango’y, piskè i sé yon moun ki ni an chay pyé mango. (9) Yon jou, mwen désann anba pyé mango-a. (10) Mwen té ka anmasé mango. (*There is an old woman of Choiseul they call Mimin. She always goes into the presbytery to see the priest. But before she goes to see the priest, she enters into the priest’s*

kitchen, and she drinks the priest's soup, and she eats all that the priest has there. So we know what she is doing. We call her "priest's soup". When we call her "priest's soup", she doesn't like that name. Whatever she has, she hits us with. But for her to get us good, that is when we go under her mango tree, because she is a person who has a lot of mango trees. One day I went down under the mango tree. I was gathering mangoes.)

When I first heard this story I was confused. I thought it sounded like Mimin was still alive and doing these things. But then I was told she had been dead for a long time. Despite the fact that the events all took place in the past, the opening of this story is told in the present tense, and then there is an obvious shift to the past beginning with the words yon jou in sentence nine.

I will not extract any more examples, but "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé" and "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav" exhibit the same pattern of tense shift. In "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé", the shift to past tense is made at the beginning of sentence 15, and in "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav" the shift begins at sentence 10.

3.2 Episodes. The episodes form the nucleus of a narrative text. This means that they come in the middle, possibly preceded by an opening and followed by a closing, and that they are the most important part of the narrative. The openings and closings are optional parts of a narrative text, but the text must have one or more episodes or it would not be a narrative. The six texts I have analyzed have two to four episodes each.

An 'episode' could be defined as a paragraph—usually an extended paragraph containing embedded paragraphs—that functions as part of the plot of a narrative. Normally only a temporally-oriented paragraph can function as an episode. This includes narrative paragraphs, stimulus-response paragraphs, and execution paragraphs. The one exception to this rule in the six stories I have studied is the second peak episode of "An Chyen Etwanj", which takes the form of an amplification paragraph. This exception is made possible by the fact that this amplification paragraph has a narrative paragraph embedded in it.

The episodes in the texts I have studied each have one of three different functions: build-up, peak, or post-peak. In this section I will survey these three functions.

Of the six stories, one has no build-up episodes, one has a single build-up episode, three have two, and one story has three build-up episodes. Two of the stories have build-up episodes only—no peak or post-peak episodes. This information is summarized in figure two.

	build-up	peak	post-peak
“An Chyen Etwanj”	1	1	1
“Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé”	2		
“Mimin, Soup Labé”		1	1
“Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé”	2	1	1
“Ti Manmay-la Yo Vòlè”	3		
“Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav”	2	1	

Figure 2. Frequency of episode functions in six texts.

A build-up episode is one that precedes a peak episode, or in the case of narratives that have no peak, all of the episodes are build-up episodes. Build-up and post-peak episodes are not necessarily marked in any special way and are distinguished by the fact that the former comes before the peak (if there is one) and the latter comes after. However, the paragraph that serves as a build-up episode *may* incorporate pre-peak marking if it comes immediately before a peak episode. Pre-peak marking takes the form of repetition of clauses from one sentence to the next or within a sentence, and sometimes the embedding of amplification paragraphs in the events of the narrative. The repetition and amplification serve to slow down the rate at which new information is presented. An example of this sort of marking can be seen in “An Chyen Etwanj” in sentences 6-12, which together constitute a build-up episode:

(6) So an lè papa mwen di i kay sav si i majò pasé’y. (7) So i antwé andidan-an. (8) Well, m’a fin sav sa papa mwen fè-a, mé mwen ni lidé i fè an ti jès. (9) Epi i pwan an ti koutla nou té ni an féto kay-la. (10) Sé la i té ka séwé ti koutla-a. (11) I pwan an ti koutla fin, épi i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, èk menm kon i ouvè lapòt galwi-a, nou wè an chyen. (12) I doubout anpami twa lézòt chyen nou té ni. (*So one time my father said he is going to find out if it is tougher than he is. So he entered inside. Well, I never knew what my father did, but I have an idea he did a little trick. And he took a little cutlass we had in the rafters of the house. It is there he used to hide the little cutlass. He took a little fine cutlass, and he opened the gallery door, and as he opened the gallery door, we saw a dog. It stood among three other dogs we had.*)

In this example, sentences nine and ten constitute an amplification paragraph, and eleven and twelve constitute another. In other words, sentences ten and twelve do not advance the plot, but rather embellish it and slow down the pace. Furthermore, in sentence eleven the clause *i pwan an ti koutla* “*he took a little cutlass*” is repeated from sentence nine, and the clause *i ouvè lapòt galwi-a* “*he opened the gallery door*” is used twice within this sentence. I will say more about pre-peak marking later in this section.

The next type of episode I will discuss is the episode in a narrative that is marked grammatically for peak. Not all narratives have a peak episode. I could identify grammatical marking for peak in four of the six texts I analyzed. According to the analytical model I am using, a peak episode by definition has marking for peak (which I will explain

below), and since the other two texts had no marking for peak, all of their episodes are considered build-up episodes. A narrative text with no marking for peak is called an 'episodic' narrative (Longacre 1976:217).

The peak of narratives can be marked in various ways in different languages.² Generally speaking, the marking of peak involves some kind of change in the grammatical patterns that serves to draw attention to and emphasize the climax of the story. Pre-peak and post-peak can be marked in various languages. There was no discernable post-peak marking in the six texts, but three of the texts did exhibit pre-peak marking.

Markings for pre-peak and for peak in French Creole narrative texts work together to emphasize the climax.³ While pre-peak marking involves the slowing down of the information rate through repetition and embellishment, at the peak of a narrative the pace speeds up and the complexity of the grammatical structures is minimized. The slowing of the pace at the pre-peak serves to emphasize the shift to a fast pace at the peak. The peak episode of "Mimin, Soup Labé" (sentences 9-16) exemplifies pre-peak and peak marking within the same episode.

(9) Yon jou, mwen désann anba pyé mango-a. (10) Mwen té ka anmasé mango. (11) An anmasé mango, mwen santi an wòch tonbé dèyè mwen, "boup!" (12) Lè mwen tounen, mwen gadé, mwen wè Mimin ja douvan mwen èk an koutla. (13) Tout sa mwen té sa fè, sé kouwi désann an wòch wavin-lan. (14) Mwen kouwi, Mimin kouwi, mwen kouwi, Mimin kouwi. (15) Mwen bay Mimin yon détou, èk Mimin pa wè koté mwen ay séwé. (16) Epi sa fini pasé, mwen vini mouté isi. (*One day I went down under the mango tree. I was gathering mangoes. While gathering mangoes, I felt a rock fall behind me, "boop!" When I turned, I looked, I saw Mimin already in front of me with a cutlass. All I could do was run down among the rocks in the ravine. I ran, Mimin ran, I ran, Mimin ran. I gave Mimin a turn, and Mimin didn't see where I hid. And that ended, I came up here.*)

In this example, sentences ten and eleven exhibit pre-peak marking. The content of sentence ten is repeated as a pre-posed adverbial clause in eleven. Longacre calls this pattern 'back-reference' (1980:5). Back-reference can also be observed just before the peak of "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav" (sentences 14 and 15), and in "An Chyen Etwanj" (sentences 9 and 11) simple repetition is used. As I mentioned before, this sort of restatement of the same information slows down the pace of the story. Then at the peak—in this case sentence 14—the pace is speeded up. I represented sentence 14 as a single sentence but it might just as well be seen as four sentences. It consists of four clauses juxtaposed without the aid of any kind of conjunction. Sentence 14 could be seen as a single phonological sentence but four grammatical sentences. This sentence involves repetition also, but it is of a different kind than can be seen in the pre-peak. The repetition in pre-peak involves the same information being presented twice for the sake of maximum cohesion and slowness of pace. At the peak, however, there is a minimum of cohesion and the repetition does not present the same information twice. Rather, it is used to denote a continual or repeated action.

²Longacre (1976:217-28) lists the following patterns he has observed in various languages for the marking of peak: 1) rhetorical underlining—the inclusion of parallelism, paraphrase, and tautologies to slow down the pace; 2) concentration of participants; 3) heightened vividness, such as through a verb tense shift or shift to dialogue; 4) change of pace—variation in the size of constructions (clauses, sentences, paragraphs) and in the amount of cohesive devices; and 5) change in vantage point and/or orientation.

³According to Longacre's 1976 model, which I am not following exactly, peak is a feature of the surface structure and climax a feature of the deep structure. Most of my attention in this paper is on what Longacre would call 'surface structure'.

A very similar pattern of pre-peak marking being followed by peak marking can be seen in “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav”, sentences 13-19:

(13) Lè mwen touné dèyè, mwen gadé papa mwen ka vini. (14) Mwen soté atè. (15) Lè mwen soté atè bwanch gwiyav ban mwen “fling”. (16) Jounou mwen koupé. (17) San dèwò. (18) Papa mwen tchébé mwen. (19) I ban mwen yon volé. (20) Dépi jou sala ng’a pòté an pyé gwiyav wèspé. (*When I turned around, I saw my father coming. I jumped to the ground. When I jumped to the ground a guava branch gave me a fling. My knee is cut. Blood is coming out. My father grabbed me. He gave me a beating. Since that day I give a guava tree respect.*)

Here again sentence 15 begins with a back-reference to sentence 14. Immediately after that, in sentences 16-19, the peak is marked by the use of minimalistic constructions. First of all, the paragraph structure is minimal. Sentences 16 and 17 constitute a two-sentence paragraph and sentences 18 and 19 constitute another two sentence paragraph. In addition, the sentences that make up these paragraphs are minimal, one-clause constructions: Jounou mwen koupé. San dèwò. Papa mwen tchébé mwen. I ban mwen yon volé. (*“My knee [is] cut. I am bleeding [lit.: blood outside]. My father grabbed me. He gave me a beating.”*)

In “Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé” there is no pre-peak marking, but the peak is again marked by the use of minimalistic paragraphs and sentences.

(15) Lè mwen lévé mwen mandé’y ki moun mwen yé. (16) I di mwen non mwen. (17) Mwen pa kwè’y. (18) Mwen viwé mandé’y kouman non mwen. (19) I wéponn. (20) Mwen mandé’y ankò, “Ki jou i yé?” (21) I wéponn. (*When I got up I asked him who I am. He told me my name. I don’t believe him. I again asked him my name. He responded. I asked him again, “What day is it?” He responded.*)

This episode comprises three stimulus-response paragraphs. The first (15-17) is a little more complex, but the second (18-19) and third (20-21) are minimal and almost identical. Sentences 19 and 21 are identical two-word sentences.

The final sample of peak marking is in the peak episode of “An Chyen Etwanj”:

(13) Papa mwen di fwè mwen, “Annou ay dèyè’y,” épi yo pwan an chal èk yo pati kouwi dèyè bèt-la. (14) I kouwi, yo dèyè’y, i kouwi, yo dèyè’y, jik an tan i antwé andidan lafowé-a. (15) Lè i antwé la, sé chyen-an vini yo tchébé’y anpami ti bwen zèbakouto, épi yo ba’y kou, mé yo pitché’y èk koutla-a, yo pitché’y, yo pitché’y konmen kou, èk then yo viyé vin lakay. (*My father told my brother, “Let’s go behind it,” and they took a torch and they left running after the beast. It ran, they are behind it, it ran, they are behind it, until it entered inside the forest. When it entered there, the dogs came and caught it among a lot of razor grass, and they gave it blows, but they stabbed it with the cutlass, they stabbed it, they stabbed it so many times, and then they returned home.*)

Earlier in this section I described how the pre-peak is marked in this story. In the above selection, sentences 14 and 15, the peak is marked. In this case it is not the sentences themselves but the internal structure of the sentences that show the same patterns of minimalism and repetition already mentioned. Specifically, the peak is marked beginning in sentence 14, where it says I kouwi, yo dèyè’y, i kouwi, yo dèyè’y “*He ran, they are behind*

him, he ran, they are behind him." Note the similarity to the marked peaks in "Mimin, Soup Labé" and "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé".

It is noteworthy that the clause *yo dèyè'y* is not properly marked for tense. On non-stative verbs in French Creole the unmarked form of the verb is used to denote the simple past tense (e.g. *i kouwi*, "*he ran*"), but for stative clause the past tense is normally expressed through the use of the particle *té* (e.g. *yo té dèyè'y*, "*they were behind him*"). Normally an unmarked stative clause (*yo dèyè'y*) denotes present tense, but in the peak of this text the marking is left off. Rather than saying the teller is confusing his tenses, another explanation is that at the peak of a story tense marking gets left off, "falls by the wayside". The lack of tense marking is not noteworthy in non-stative verb phrases since their simple past form lacks marking anyway, but on stative clauses the lack of marking is noticeable.

This same pattern can be seen at the peaks of "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav" and "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé". At the peak of "Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiyav"—*Jounou mwen koupé. San dèwò. Papa mwen tchébé mwen...*—none of the verbs are marked for tense. The third sentence in this segment ("*My father grabbed me*") uses a non-stative verb, so the lack of tense marking is expected. The first sentence is ambiguous; it could either be non-stative ("*My knee was cut*"—a passive construction) or stative ("*My knee is cut*"). But the second sentence is clearly a stative construction, and out of context one would expect "*I was bleeding*" to be expressed as *San té dèwò*. But in the context of the peak of a narrative, tense marking is omitted in stative clauses. Similarly, in "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé", sentences 16 and 17, where it says *I di mwen non mwen. Mwen pa kwè'y* "*He told me my name. I don't believe him*" the stative verb *kwè* is not marked for past tense.

The peak of "An Chyen Etwanj" continues in sentence 15: *yo pitché'y èk koutla-a, yo pitché'y, yo pitché'y konmen kou*, "*they stabbed him with the cutlass, they stabbed him, they stabbed him so many times*". Here again the peak is marked by the juxtaposed repetition of a short clause without the aid of a conjunction or any other cohesive device.

The two stories "Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé" and "Mimin, Soup Labé" lack a marking for peak and thus lack peak episodes. They could be considered 'episodic' narratives. This is not to say that these stories lack a plot structure, just that there is no grammatically marked peak.⁴

One further type of episode, in addition to build-up and peak episodes, is the post-peak episode. It is not marked in any special way and comes after the peak episode. A post-peak episode often corresponds to the dénouement in the plot structure. An example is the last two sentences of "Pa Di Moun Sa Ki Wivé":

(22) *On ti mouman tèt-la vivé an plas.* (23) *Lè i di mwen sa ki pasé, mwen di'y, "Gason, pa di moun sa wivé mwen."* (*A second later my head returned to normal. When he told me what happened, I told him, "Boy, don't tell anybody what happened to me."*)

Three of the six texts have post-peak episodes. In "Mimin, Soup Labé" the post-peak episode is sentences 17-21. In "An Chyen Etwanj" sentences 16-18 constitute a short post-peak episode, but this episode is used to express a crucial part of the story:

⁴It is quite conceivable that one style of story-telling in French Creole involves the expression of a plot through an episodic narrative text. Longacre has observed this in English literature and notes, "We must be prepared, therefore, to find not only in folk tales from the various parts of the world, but in Western European literature, well-told stories with well-defined plots which use no special device to mark a surface structure peak. Such a novel is probably *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens" (1976:218).

(16) Li denmen bonmaten nou tann di an nonm pa sa mouté kouch li. (17) Yo jwenn li atè-a. (18) Well, non nonm-lan sété Noko. (*The next morning we heard a man cannot make it to bed. They found him on the ground. Well, the man's name is Noko.*)

One might say that the previous episode of this text, with peak marked, expresses the action climax to the story, but that the emotional climax to the story is expressed subtly through the short post-peak episode having no special marking to draw attention to itself. The significance of the post-peak episode may be lost to someone who does not understand the local culture, but an insider to the culture could connect the facts well enough to give a response something like “Hey, that thing that was killed must have been a witch!”

In summary, some texts are marked for peak and some are episodic. An episode that contains the marking for peak is called a peak episode. An episode that comes after the peak is called a post-peak episode, and any other episode is a build-up episode. Peak is marked by the use of minimalistic constructions, by a lack of cohesive devices, by a lack of tense marking, and by the repetition of clauses to express continual or repeated actions.

3.3 Closings. A closing is a sentence or paragraph that comes after the last episode of a narrative text. The closing does not advance the plot, but rather comments on the significance of the previous events and functions as a conclusion. Only two of the six texts I analyzed had closings. The first example of a closing is in “Lè Gwanpapa Mwen Pléwé”, sentences ten and eleven, which constitute a contrast paragraph:

(10) Mé lontan apwé sa fèt mwen vini apwann ki wézon ki té fè li té pléwé, épi wézon-an sé sa, sé Martin Luther King, djid pou dwa sivil, yo té asasiné, épi lè i tann nouvèl-la di Martin Luther King té mò, sa fè i pléwé. (11) Mé magwé mwen menm pa té sav diwèktiman pou ki wézon li té ka pléwé jou sala, mwen pléwé épi'y, épi apwézan mwen sav ki wézon, mwen pa hont di papa mwen té pléwé pou ka sala, èvèk mwen byen kontan pou sav magwé m'a té sav ki wézon i té ka pléwé jou sala mé mwen pléwé épi'y. (*But a long time after that happened I came to know what had made him cry, and the reason is that it is Martin Luther King, civil rights leader, that they assassinated, and when he heard the news say that Martin Luther King was dead, that made him cry. But although I myself didn't know exactly why he was crying that day, I cried with him, and now that I know why, I am not ashamed to say my Papa had cried for that reason, and I am very happy to know that although I didn't know why he was crying that day but I cried with him.*)

This closing paragraph summarizes the story and adds explanation for what occurred and an evaluation.

In “Jou-a Mwen Tonbé Anlè Pyé Gwiav” the closing is just a single sentence:

(20) Dépi jou sala ng'a pòté an pyé gwiav wèspé. (*Since that day I give a guava tree respect.*)

This last sentence of the text tells what the author learned from the experience related through the episodes. It is something like a moral to the story.

Figure three is a tree diagram showing the relationship between text, paragraphs, embedded paragraphs, and sentences in “An Chyen Etwanj”.

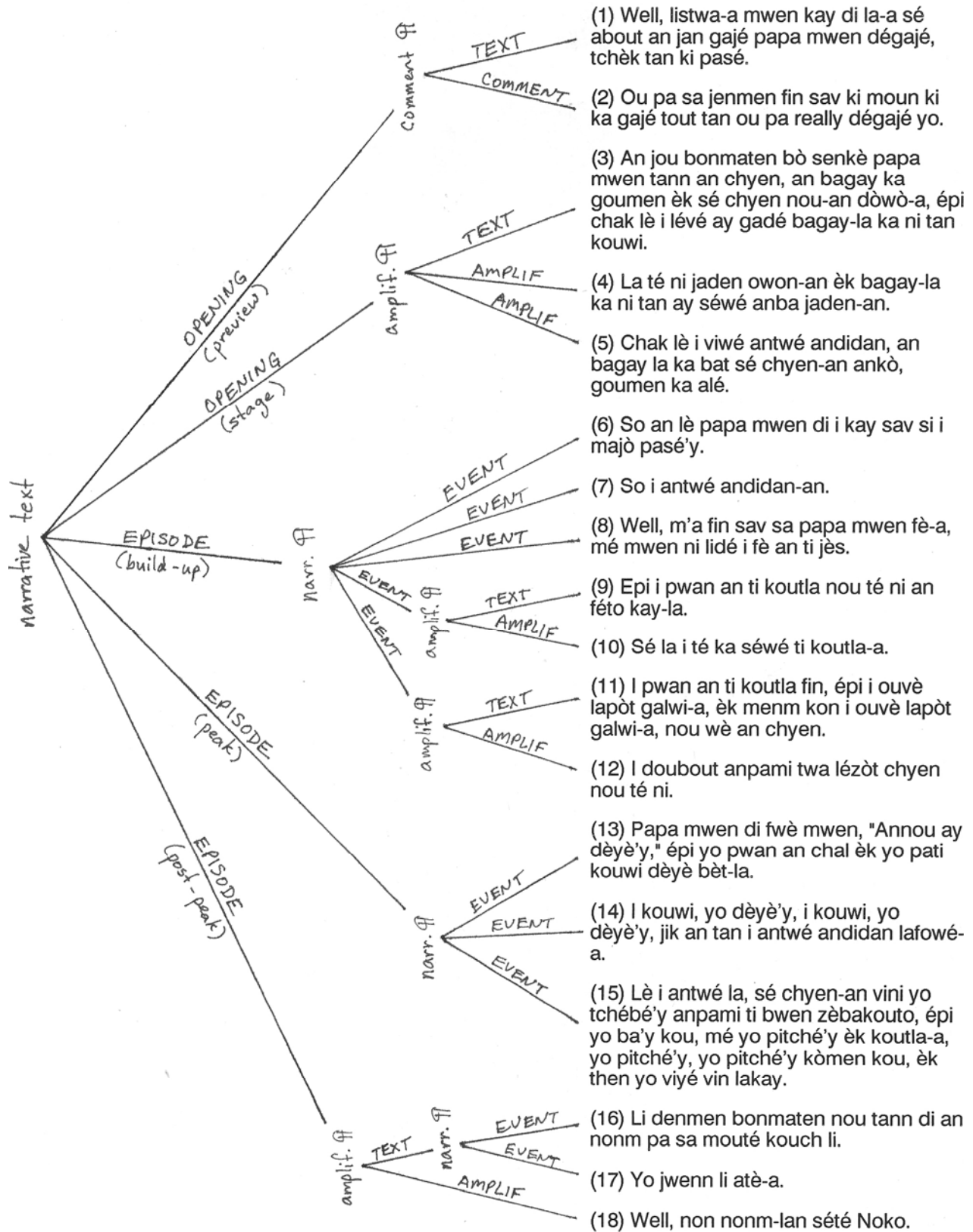


Figure 3. Tree diagram of the discourse structure of "An Chyen Etwanj"

4. CONCLUSIONS.

In this paper I have described the structure of six St. Lucian French Creole narrative texts. Three major paragraph types and six minor paragraph types were posited to explain the patterning of sentences. The paragraphs serve as constituents of the text. Three main parts of the text are the opening, the episodes, and the conclusion. The opening-as-preview is a somewhat unique feature of some St. Lucian texts. The episode functions include build-up, peak, and post-peak. Verb tenses are used in a peculiar way explainable by discourse function. Peak is marked grammatically.

REFERENCES

- Bloomfield, Leonard. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt.
- Frank, David B. 1983. *Conversation and the speech situation: a tagmemic analysis*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Arlington.
- Longacre, Robert E. 1976. *An anatomy of speech notions*. (PdR publications in tagmemics, 3.) Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press.
- _____. 1980. An apparatus for the identification of paragraph types. *Notes on linguistics* 15:5-22.
- Peck, Charles. 1984. *A survey of grammatical structures*. Dallas: SIL.
- Schank, Roger C., and Robert P. Abelson. 1977. *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding: An inquiry into human knowledge structures*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.