

Kathrin Klein (University of Cologne) & Dany Adone (University of Cologne)

### **Wh-questions in Louisiana Creole**

This paper deals with the syntax of questions in Louisiana Creole. It is shown that syntactic movement is involved in the formation of wh- questions and that the creole language allows for complex interrogative structures. In addition, influence from English is attested along with a construction that renders strong support to the Copy Theory of Movement.

Evidence for the existence of wh-movement in Louisiana Creole comes from the position wh-expressions occupy with respect to tense markers, as well as their fronting out of embedded clauses. Leaving wh-expressions in situ is limited to echo questions and marginally acceptable for embedded interrogatives. Louisiana Creole speakers tend to strand prepositions, a rather new development (Neumann-Holzschuh 2009) that appears to constitute the more unmarked option in recent data. We attribute this change to the close contact with English. Furthermore, there seems to be much variability with regard to multiple wh-questions and long-distance movements. As a tendency, questions containing more than two distinct wh- expressions are marginal, though generally accepted when the subject wh-word is fronted, more marked for fronted object expressions and rejected with fronted adjunct wh-expressions. Fronting multiple wh-expressions appears to be largely ungrammatical. Wh-words can often be found in intermediate positions in Louisiana Creole. This can be considered partial movement in some instances, though more often appears to be the same phrase spelled out in more than one position. This is considered evidence for the Copy Theory of Movement. Long-distance operations are possible, though not following a clear pattern with regard to which island constraints they obey.