The Arawak Lokono word for "man"

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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 Suriname. 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 Moravian 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); and its integration in the TMA system of ST has been analyzed by several scholars, among them D. Winford (2000, 2003).

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.

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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.


1. Arawak wadili

- in the lexicon

While A/L hiaro 'woman' has clearly cognates in a wide number of Arawakan languages and especially in the closely related Garifuna hierü, Goahiro hierü and Parauhano ſerü, the word for 'man', wadili, is not so easily recognizable. The form awaili, given by D. Taylor 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’na \(^5\) form for 'man' wokïrï (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

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\(^6\) Kari’na or Carib: an Amerindian language spoken in the same area than Arawak/Lokono but genetically unrelated to it.
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 dakusu 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
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)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wadili-sabo-ka</th>
<th>khoro</th>
<th>da</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man-more-PERF</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results more able</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>indeed</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'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 Goeje\(^9\) 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 Schultz\(^{10}\), 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 Goeje\(^{11}\), 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)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wadili-ka-the</th>
<th>khoro</th>
<th>da-nuku-n-the</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>hime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man-PERF-DIR</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>1-pull-SUB-DIR</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results possible towards here</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>my pulling towards here</td>
<td>this fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'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)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wadili-ko-ma</th>
<th>b-ani-n</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>da-mun ?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man-PERF-POT</td>
<td>PP2-do-SUB</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>PP1-DAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results possible+pot you do this for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Can you possibly do this for me?'

It receives the positive answer (10):

(10)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wadili-ka dei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man-PERF PP1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can [do it].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) 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.

Or the negative one (11):

(11)  
\[ \text{dei kho wadiliyama.} \]  
PPl 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". 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' studies.

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

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

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

(2)  
\[ \text{Mi no man va hoppo dati.} \]  
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's XIXth dictionary can be compared to the (7) A/L example, similar in meaning, given above (3):

(3)  
\[ \text{Mi no man moro.} \]  

13 See note 3.
14 C. L. Schumann 1783. *Neger-Englisches Wörterbuch*. MS [transcription A. Bruyn]
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 2000 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.

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17 D. Winford 2000.
ABBREVIATIONS

ASS ASSEVERATIVE
DAT DATIVE
DEM DEMONSTRATIVE
DES DESIDERATIVE
M MASCULINE
NEG NEGATION
NOPROX NO-PROXIMITY
DIR DIRECTIONAL

PERF PERFECT
PL PLURAL
POT POTENTIAL
PP PERSONAL PRONOUN
PRIV PRIVATIVE
SUB SUBORDINATION
VERIT VERITATIVE

REFERENCES


Schumann, C. L. (1783) Neger-Englisches Wörterbuch. MS [transcription A. Bruyn]


