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Identifying *Kréyòl* and *Criollo* in the Contemporary French Caribbean and Spanish America

1 Introduction

Historically, Spanish *criollo* and French *créole* (in French Creole *kréyòl*) show important trans-regional similarities in their usage as markers of an American origin referring to people and facts of colonial reality. The commonalities in their semantics and extension can be easily explained by ecolinguistic[1] parameters that characterized both linguistic communities in the colonial context. The principal aim of this contribution is to examine whether the current usages of both terms still preserve traces of that shared linguistic past. Addressing this question, I will try to explore paths for a better understanding of how such a historically, culturally, and cognitively loaded concept as CREOLE affects current usages of the term, exemplified by Spanish America and the French Caribbean, and to what extent new socio-cultural settings are able to modify the legacy of historical vocabulary in these linguistic communities. In this endeavour, I rely on Jan Blommaert's view of language as a social and mobile entity which functions across spatial and temporal scales and whose diachronic and synchronic features are deeply intertwined (2010: xiv). The reader will be offered a contrastive survey of modern usages of *criollo* and *kréyòl* based on empirical data, interviews, and field notes collected during my research on Martinique and Guadeloupe in 2012 and during my research stays in Spain and the Dominican Republic, where I interviewed various speakers of American Spanish.[2] Armin Schwegler's (2003) synchronic study of modern Spanish *criollo* highlighted a

1 The ecolinguistics accounts for linguistic forms and linguistic behavior from the perspective of interrelations between language and its complex environment, i.e. cognitive and socio-cultural factors (see Haugen 1972; Fill 1993, 1996; Ludwig/Mühlhäusler/Pagel, 2017).

2 The empirical data on the usages of the creole term *kréyòl* were obtained primarily during my three-month-long field research on the French Antilles in 2012. The main

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considerable complexity in the usage of the term. My own investigation approaches this issue from a broader perspective, first by looking at the historical background of synchronic data and second by contrasting the usages in Spanish America and in the French Caribbean.

2 The Past Meets the Present

The usage as a glossonym may constitute the most noticeable difference between *criollo* and its counterpart in the French Caribbean. Beyond the frame of scientific, academic speech, ordinary Spanish speakers hardly use this word to designate language. Even in the Dominican Republic, speakers prefer the term *kréyòl* to the Spanish version *criollo* in reference to the Creole language of neighboring Haiti. In current everyday parlance, *criollo* and *kréyòl*, especially as personal designations and markers of local origin, continue, however, to demonstrate an interesting match of developmental trajectories.

To highlight the continuity of the historical usage of *criollo* as a conventionalized indication of local origin for people, plants, and animals in Spanish America, it should be noted that speakers have been employing this word in reference to endemic plants since the 16th century. Describing local olives in the province of Lima, the Dominican friar Reginaldo de Lizárraga (1909: 498) wrote between 1590 and 1602: "a las aceitunas llamamos criollas: son las mejores del mundo" ('we call the olives *criollas*: they are the best worldwide').[3] In the beginning of the 17th century at the latest, the use of *criollo* expanded to refer to various facts of colonial reality, for example, to name the biggest ship built in America in 1605, *La Criolla* (Bolland 2004: 168).

In a similar way, the French term *creolle/créol/créole* meaning *originaire* ('original') or *né dans cette Isle* ('born on this isle') was applied to diverse refer-

objective of the conducted interviews with over 100 creole speakers on Martinique and 170 on Guadeloupe (including the islands Désirade and Marie-Galante) was to investigate the currency of the use of the historical vocabulary once common in the entire Caribbean. Along with the lexeme *kréyòl*, the current use of *mawon* ('to disappear; to avoid') and *bosal* ('dirty' on Guadeloupe) were explored, too (Klimenkowa 2012, 2015). The method of semi-structured interviewing was chosen in order to maintain the flexibility and naturalness of the conversation. The interviews took place mostly on local markets and on the streets in various urban and rural communities.
The usages of the Spanish equivalent *criollo* presented here were collected on my research trips to Valencia and Seville where I interviewed various speakers from Mexico, Colombia and Peru. These data were enriched through my observations in the Dominican Republic (the Samaná region).

3 All translations into English are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

ents in the island colonies. The Dominican missionary and a famous travel writer Jean-Baptiste Labat (1722: 124) used, for example, the expression "la graine creolle" with the following explanation of the adjective *creolle*: "c'est-à-dire, née dans le pays" ('it means, grown in the country'). Adjectival *créole* also possessed the meaning 'typical for the creoles,' as demonstrated by the example, again from Labat (1722: 118), *ragoût creolle* referring to a dish usually cooked by creole women on Martinique and Guadeloupe.

The inherited meaning 'local, traditional' can be easily recognized in the current use of both terms *créole* (*kréyòl*) and *criollo*, their extensions, i.e. the sum of potential referents a lexical term can be applied to, underwent, however, significant modifications.

2.1 *Criollo* as a Personal Designation

The results of my research support Schwegler's conclusion (2003: 53) concerning the decrease of the usage of *criollo* as 'a person originally from X' in everyday speech of ordinary speakers in Spanish America. Thus, the meaning of the word which was a primary from a historical perspective can be attested now in less than half of the Spanish-speaking countries of America. As Schwegler (2003: 60) shows, its referential value extends from a general meaning 'a person from a given country' to a narrower one 'a person from a particular place' or 'from a rural area.' The complete absence of this usage in Mexico, according to Schwegler's data, remains astonishing given the fact that some of the oldest attestations of *criollo* in reference to people originate precisely from the former viceroyalty of New Spain that covered the territories of modern Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

There are two factors to be considered in connection with the decrease of this usage. The first is of an axiological, connotative nature. Since the connotation of *criollo* adopted either an elitist or a pejorative referential value over time, the neutral, almost unrestricted usage of the word as an origin marker for people[4] could hardly survive. The second factor can be attributed to the sociopolitical setting marked by independence movements and strong separatist tendencies in America in the 19th century; here, the usage 'born in/originally from X' became too general in order to express one's own Mexican, Peruvian, or

4 Both in Spanish America and the francophone Caribbean, the term was used between the 16th and 18th century irrespective of skin colour and legal status of the referents (see for Spanish America Levilier 1921; Lavallé 1982; Boyd-Bowmann 2003, s.v. *criollo*, for the French Caribbean Du Terte 1667, Labat 1724, Chanvalon 1761 and Moreau de Saint-Méry 1797). The only exception was the indigenous population of America.

Colombian national identity. The decrease or at least the backgrounding of the usage of *criollo* as a neutral marker of origin does not represent, however, a consequence of postcolonial development only. This tendency manifested itself in colonial times.

As soon as colonial society in its attempt of a congruent classification of social categories and groupings moved the focus from a person's place of origin to a place in a social and legal hierarchy, the conceptualization of *criollo* also changed. Following Bennett (2009: 105), the term identified a person across new scales, bearing on his/her cultural background. Historically, *criollo* performed a very decisive function as a social distinction marker. It differentiated, on the one hand, American-born slaves (*criollos*) from newly arrived inexperienced Africans (*bozales*, see Klimenkowa 2012) and, on the other, locally born descendants of Spanish colonists (also *criollos*) from European Spaniards (called *españoles*, *chapetones*, or *gachupines*[5]). The first differentiation disappeared as soon as the slave trade was abolished and new slaves ceased to arrive from Africa. The latter enjoyed a far longer currency, but due to the political rivalry between local elites and the more prestigious social group of European ('pure-bred', non-mixed) Spaniards, the originally widely used designation *criollo* tended to be rather associated with *mestizos*, so that it obtained a clear socio- and ethnocentric connotative touch. Consider, for example, the description of *criollos* given by Juan de Cárdenas, a Spanish physician travelling in the West Indies in 1591 (1988: 110): "me consuelo que […] con ser ellos nacidos y criados en Indias y tener mucho más posible, edad y experiencia que yo, no han sido para otro tanto, estimando en más la pompa y hornato de sus personas […]."[6] Connected to negative moral qualities, such as vanity, laziness, and immorality, *criollo* was seldom accepted as a self-designation by the creole elite who preferred the name *españoles*. At the same time, according to Stephens (1999, s.v. *criollo*), the word was current until the middle of the 20th century as a 'racial' term with an elitist connotation and used to differentiate the offspring of prior Spanish colonists and people of mixed origin (*castas*).

The function of *criollo* as a social distinction marker is outdated for most contemporary speakers. But interestingly enough, a pejorative connotation of the word when applied to people has survived in some regions of Spanish

5 In the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, both terms *chapetón* and *gachupín* served as pejorative designations for European Spaniards who were not familiar with the way of life in the colonies. A contemporary author, de Vargas Machuca (1599: 215), provided the following definition: "Chapetón, o Cachupin, es hombre nuevo en la tierra" ('*Chapetón* or *Cachupin* is one newly arrived on this land').

6 'I am consoled that although they were born and grew up in the West Indies and are possibly older and more experienced than me, they did not go beyond estimating above all the glory and decoration of their own person.'

America. According to my informants from Peru, the expression *¡Qué criollo eres!* (lit. 'What a creole!') denotes the qualities 'vulgar' and 'audacious.' In the Andes-region, the term also refers to devious persons who try to make use of others.

2.2 For Whom Does *Créole* Stand in the French Caribbean?

My interviews conducted on Martinique and Guadeloupe revealed a similar developmental trajectory in the use of *créole* (*kréyòl*). Neither the nominal nor the adjectival usage of the term as a personal designation is current today, but the interpretation of this usage is quite polemical within the political discourse of the French Antilles.

The perception of *créole* as a designation used exclusively for American-born children of French colonists had begun to take hold in the 18th century. An ecolinguistic motivation of this trend is identical to the development of *criollo*. Due to the decrease of slave influx at the end of the 18th century, the fundamental prerequisite for the usage of *créole* to differentiate American-born slaves also vanished. In contrast, the distinction between *créole* elites of European origin and the French coming from Europe was further maintained. Historical illustrations, post cards, as well as census data from Martinique and Guadeloupe from the beginning of the 20th century (see Ludwig 2008: 71–72) show that the group of *créoles* did not comprise only whites but also (and first of all) mulattoes (*métis*), a fact that displays another interesting parallel with *criollo*. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the use of the word on the islands and its definitions in European lexica from the 18th until the 20th century is more than baffling. Under the lemma *créole*, the 4th and 5th edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise* (1762, 1798) provided the following entry: "CRÉOLE. s. m. & f. Nom qu'on donne à un Européen d'origine qui est né en Amérique. Un créole, une créole."[7] Consider now the advice in Dupré's *Encyclopédie du bon français* (1972, s.v.): "le 'bon usage' a imposé de n'employer créole que pour les Blancs."[8] Since the 19th century, the term has produced its own political 'discourse-on-*créole*,' contributing to more public consciousness about the historical use of the word on the Antilles. The debate was ignited upon the statement of the white minority on Martinique who – as the supposedly 'real' autochthonous population of the island – claimed the designation *créole* exclusively for themselves (Confiant 2009: 115).

7 'Name given to an original European born in America. A creole man. A creole woman.'

8 'the usage prescribes to apply *créole* only to whites.'

As my own experience on the francophone Antilles shows, the use of *créole* when applied to persons of African origin is very unusual. The same can be claimed for the use of the term as a designation for people in general. The only context where adjectival *créole*/*kréyòl* may be met (and where we can recognize some historical traces) is in the contrast between local whites, called *blan kréyòl* (lit. 'creole whites'), and the French, called *blan fwans* (lit. 'French whites').[9]

When compared with the use of *criollo*, the social and lexical demarcation line runs, therefore, across different parameters in Spanish-speaking America and the French Caribbean. In both linguistic communities, speakers appeal to the historical reference of *criollo*/*kréyòl* to the offspring of European colonists. By this means, Spanish *criollos* differentiate themselves from the mixed population, whereas French *créoles* set themselves apart from European whites. Again, the deviation of these trajectories can be understood when viewed from an ecolinguistic perspective. It is useful to remember the traditional and everlasting Iberian code of honor *limpieza de sangre* (lit. 'blood purity'), according to which any 'mixture of blood' was condemned.

Both *criollo* and *kréyòl* are much more widespread when used adjectivally in combination with names of local dishes, animals, plants, and customs. The following sections address these usages in more detail.

3 *Criollo* & *Kréyòl*: Adjectival Usages

Criollo and *créole* (*kréyòl*) are very often used in characteristic compounds where both appear as modifiers restricting the meaning of a correspondent head noun. Typical motives for denotation are local origin and reference to autochthonous traditions and authenticity. For example, in the Dominican Republic, the expressions *cacao criollo* or *gallina criolla* refer to 'home made cacao' (sold in nuggets on local markets, Fig. 1) and 'a locally bred hen' (opposed to its bigger and white counterpart, imported from America or Europe [*de gringos*]) respectively. Examples from Schwegler (2003: 49–50, 53), such as *caballo criollo*, *pan criollo*, and *fiesta criolla* highlight first of all the quality 'vernacular', 'local', 'traditional', or 'typical for a given place/region.' There is, however, an interesting detail that differentiates this usage of *criollo* from that of *kréyòl*.

9 Beyond this contrastive context, Antilles-born whites are mostly called *béké*, from Igbo word 'white; European.' (Bollée 2012: 221) For their continental counterparts, the name *métro*, from *métropolitain* 'continental French' is more common.

Figures 1 (left) and 2 (right). *Left:* Cacao criollo; the Dominican Republic (© Alla Klimenkowa). *Right:* White criollo yautia (left, in a blue box on the table) and purple Puerto Rican yautia (right) at the central market in Samaná, the Dominican Republic (© Alla Klimenkowa).

3.1 Deictic Gradation vs. Referential Vagueness

Viewed from a diachronic comparative perspective, the lexeme-inherent reference to a person's spatial location enabled the speaker communities in Spanish America and the French Caribbean (but also in Brazil and on Cape Verde) to construct the concept of *criollo*, *créole*, or *crioulo* according to correspondent local communicative settings that were not universally identical. The repetition of this trend is still observable, though on a smaller scale, in Spanish-speaking America. Depending on the communicative context, *criollo* can denote the meaning 'local,' 'regional,' or even 'national.' Because of such reference flexibility, we can conclude with Schwegler (2003: 53) that the term hardly qualifies as a pan-Latin-Americanism. The same collocation used in different regions, for example *fiesta criolla*, may express different things and imply different referential values. In Chile and Ecuador, it refers to a 'national (i.e. a Chilean or Ecuadorean) *fiesta*.'(Schwegler 2003: 49–50) Speakers in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico would use the term in a similar way, as synonymous with the expression 'from this country'. In Panama, it means, in contrast, a festivity 'typical for a certain place.' In Peru, adjectival *criollo* seems to be associated with coastal areas of the country, as confirmed by my informants. In this deictic continuum, Mexico and Paraguay can be placed at one of its extremes. According to Schwegler (2003: 53), this usage is unknown here.

By comparison, speakers on Martinique and Guadeloupe prefer explicit specifications to the implicit (i.e. lexically unspecified) deixis of *créole* (*kréyòl*). Otherwise, this term appears to be too vague to express the Aristotelian cate-

Figures 3 (left) and 4 (right). *Left:* Christophine Martinique; Fort-de-France (© Alla Klimenkowa). *Right:* Igname St. Martin 'yams from St. Martin'; Fort-de-France (© Alla Klimenkowa).

gory of *differentia specifica*. The participants of my interviews compared it with the adjective *carayibeyen* 'from the Caribbean' in a sense that *kréyòl* can also refer to any Caribbean island. This explains the preference for more precise expressions better suited to convey the meaning 'local,' 'from here.' We may mention French expressions here, such as *de chez nous* or *local* as well as their Creole equivalents *a/an nou*, *bòkay*/*bokaz*, *bòkay nou*, *icidan* (on Guadeloupe) and *iciya* (on Martinique). In order to make the reference even more explicit, local market vendors use compounds with a correspondent toponym as a modifier, such as *fri a Gwadloup* ('fruits from Guadeloupe'), *biten Marigalant* ('a thing from Marie-Galante'), *christophine Martinique* ('christophine from Martinique') (Fig. 3), *igname Saint Martin* ('yam from St. Martin') (Fig. 4), etc. Two informants from Guadeloupe commented that the designations *Gwadloup* or *péyi* ('from this country') when applied to local products are much more definite than the adjective *kréyòl* which may equally imply Martinican or Cuban origins. The Creole expression *tikaz kréyòl an-nou*, attested also in Guadeloupe, is especially illustrative in this respect. The head noun *tikaz* ('small house') is specified by two modifiers: *kréyòl* refers to the general Antillean tradition of house construction and the prepositional phrase *an-nou* ('our') points to the origin from Guadeloupe.[10]

The linguistic choice on both Lesser Antilles islands is indeed justified, for the term is used as a synonym with 'local' on other Caribbean islands. For example, the Dominican *criollo* bears unequivocally on the original products of this country und serves synonymously with 'Dominican.' Thus, *criollo* yautia

10 On the French Antilles, local goods of simple quality are often unspecified, whereas imported and grafted plants carry a correspondent marker. For example, *citron greffé* refers to a grafted variety, whereas *citron* points to the indigenous, naturally grown lime.

(i.e. edible tubers similar to potatoes or yams) means here yautia original from the Dominican Republic. Due to its white colour, it can be easily distinguished from its purple Puerto Rican equivalent (Fig. 2).

3.2 Metonymy at Work

Among expressions that denote foreign origin of goods, plants, or animals and thus differentiate them from those produced on Martinique or Guadeloupe, we can find *lòtbò (péyi)* (lit. 'from a country on the other shore [of the ocean]'), *ondòt koté* (lit. 'from the other side'), *déwò* (lit. 'from outdoors'), *vini* (lit. 'incoming'), as well as the proper name *fwans* ('France/French'). However, in current collocations, such as *farin fwans*, *ponm fwans*, *patat fwans*, or *zongnon fwans*, the modifier *fwans* does not convey the meaning 'coming from France' but rather denotes European, often imported products in general. The aforementioned examples refer to the contrast between wheat flour and manioc flour; between European/North-American apples and autochthonous fruits named *ponm* (*ponm-dlo*, *ponm-sité*, *ponm kannèl*, etc.); between round potatoes and sweet potatoes; and between European onions and the local variety respectively. An interesting example of semantic change can be observed here.

Due to metonymy, the modifier 'French' was perceived as the prototype of the conceptual category EUROPEAN/FOREIGN. In addition, this adjective underwent a meaning shift from a geographical name to a marker for a high quality. This semantic evolution can be explained from an ecolinguistic perspective very well. If *fwans* served as a distinction marker in colonial times already, it must have implied an evaluation nuance from the very beginning. As Figueroa Lorza (1984: 372) argues, imported commodities were usually considered to be of better quality than the local ones, not least because they represented traditions, taste, and expectations of the socially dominant group. Over time, this led to the formation of a more general meaning 'European/imported,' which can be attested in the use of *fwans* in Antillean French and Creole. As a marker of origin, this adjective is hardly motivated in current use. Due to a metonymic meaning shift, it rather refers to positive characteristics, still mostly associated with France or Europe as cultural models. Thus, the Creole expression (recorded on Martinique) 'made like in France' is understood as a compliment for a job well done. When applied to vegetables, fruits, or pastry, adjectival *fwans* conveys the meaning 'good-looking, big, fine, or tasty.' The interviewed speakers commented that this label, though highly subjective, is used as a marketing strategy ensuring good selling.

In reference to quality, *kréyòl*, in contrast, indicates poor value. In this respect, the word is used synonymously with the adjective *gwosomodo* ('coarse,

simple'). Applying this marker, speakers seem to imply some kind of contrast, be it in reference to quality, appearance, or origin. This tendency can be easily observed in the usages of adjectival *kréyòl* when applied to animals.

Expressions, such as *bèf kréyòl*, *kabrit kréyòl*, *kochon kréyòl*, *chyen kréyòl*, or *kòk kréyòl* clearly refer to local origin of the respective animals, but by means of this modifier, speakers simultaneously indicate further qualities typical for these varieties. When compared with a European breed, creole animals are smaller in size but much more robust and do not require special care. The interviewed speakers commented that these animals do not represent a particular breed and grow in their own yard on simple food. The expression *chyen korosòl* often used for creole dogs (*chyen kréyòl*) is very representative in this respect. *Corossol* as the name of a wild tree very common on the Antilles often denotes something simple (see Ludwig/Montbrand/Poullet/Telchid 2013, s.v. *korosol*). One of my informants on Guadeloupe described 'creole cattle' as follows: "*bef à nou* est *bef* créole, adapté au climat, au soleil, à quantité de manger, à peu nourriture pendant la carême; souvent croisé avec les autres races moins résistantes"[11] (Fig. 5).

If we consider *kréyòl* und *fwans* as a contrasting pair, Spanish may provide with *criollo* and *de Castilla* ('from Castile') a remarkable counterpart, a fact that shows another parallel in the usage of *criollo* and *kréyòl*. Similarly to the modifier *fwans*, the prepositional phrase *de Castilla* originates from the colonial context and performs a clear evaluative function. Figueroa Lorza (1984: 372–373) and Alvar (1969: n.p.) attest its usage in various regions of Spanish America in reference to particularly smart animals, tasteful and extraordinary beautiful fruits, as well as to very valuable objects. *De Castilla* also differentiates cultivated plants from wild ones and conveys the meaning of superiority in one or another respect. But again, this modifier, similarly to *fwans*, displays a metonymically motivated meaning shift. Nowadays, the expression is much more general and does not necessarily refer to Castilian origin but can be equally applied to an American context.

Returning to the aforementioned example *gallina criolla* from the Dominican Republic, another semantic parallel with *kréyòl* is of note. Apart from the reference to the Dominican origin, *criolla* also highlights the quality of this specific hen variety to lay eggs (*ponedora*), whereas imported hens are rather appreciated for their flesh. One of my informants commented that "la gente casi no la quiere comer" ('people seldom wish to eat it [the creole hen]'). When describing the manner of cooking, the expression *a lo criollo*/*a la criolla* means, on the one hand, 'prepared with local products' but, on the other hand, 'cooked

11 'our cattle is creole cattle, adapted to the climate, to the sun, to food amount, to scarce food during a fasting period; often cross-bred with other, less robust races.'

Fig. 5. Bèf kréyòl 'Creole cattle'; Guadeloupe (© Alla Klimenkowa).

in a simple way.' (Schwegler 2003: 51) In this usage, the word rather transmits a pejorative note. Consider examples with adjectival *criollo* or diminutive *criollito* obtained from my informants from Bogotá (Colombia) and Toluca (Mexico), such as *maís criollo* (lit. 'corn of poor quality,' 'corn with small grains') and *pasto criollo* ('pasture of bad quality'). At the same time, the term may underline also positive qualities. The expressions *papa criolla* and *manzanas criollas* (used in Colombia) refer to the good flavour of the mentioned plants, potatoes and apples. This usage could be attributed to the current trend to esteem naturally grown traditional plants because they grow without fertilizers (also Schwegler 2003: 51). An informant from Bogotá described 'creole apples' as follows: "manzanas criollas son de la tierra, pequeñas, pero muy buenas, sin fermentales, chiquitas."[12]

Like the already discussed flexibility of spatial reference of today's *criollo*, its usage as a quality marker is all but clearly-cut. Whether it is used in a positive or a negative sense depends very much on the given region, the communicative context, and the referent itself. Schwegler's study (2003: 50, 60) also men-

12 'creole apples are grown in this country, they are small but taste very good, without fertilizers, little ones.'

tions this astonishing semantic ambiguity of the word, often resulting in quite contradictory interpretations given by speakers. For instance, when using the adjective *criollo* in reference to a dog, speakers usually mean a common stray dog. At the same time, my informants from Mexico and Colombia described *caballo criollo* as a big and beautiful horse breed with a characteristic trotting. For Schwegler's informants from Nicaragua (2003: 50), 'creole horse' means a foreign, pure-bred variety. Considering this kaleidoscopic diversity of regional usages, connotations, and referential values of *criollo*, Schwegler's criticism (2003: 61) of lexicographic works (for example *Nuevo diccionario de americanismos* by Haensch/Reinhold 1993) is well-deserved as they generalize and simplify the term's meaning.

3.3 Proper Name vs. Generic Term

Apart from their function as modifiers, *créole*/*kréyòl* and *criollo* also serve as proper names of particular dishes, plants, or animal varieties. Nevertheless, their usage as generic terms clearly dominates. Thus, the collocation *comida criolla* (lit. 'creole food') usually refers to a number of traditional dishes typical for a certain region or even for some particular place. In the Dominican Republic, speakers exemplified this expression naming *habichuelas con dulce*, *guisado*, and *sancocho*. In contrast, in Limón (the coastal province of Costa Rica with a high percentage of Afro-American population), *comida criolla* is restricted, according to Schwegler's study (2003: 50), to rice and beans. Figueroa Lorza (1983: 365) gives further examples in Colombia that illustrate the usage of *criollo*/*-a* as a proper name of particular varieties of sugar cane, potato (papa), beans, cotton, and yam. When applied to animals, it can designate both a particular local breed of sheep, horses, cattle, and fowl as well as cross-bred varieties. The main designation motif is definitely local origin of given animals. Figueroa Lorza (1983: 375) does not exclude, however, a possible reference to quality inherent in the term.

As a generic term, adjectival *créole*/*kréyòl* is usually applied to diverse cultural referents, such as jewelry (*chenn kréyòl*), songs (*chansons créoles*), dress (*wòb kréyòl*) (Fig. 6), and cuisine (*manjé kréyòl*), associated both with long-standing traditions on the French Antilles as well as with colonial history. Thus, on Martinique and Guadeloupe, generic *bijou créole* designates various examples of traditional golden jewelry with very specific patterns that are also reflected in their conjuring names. Among them are *zanno ponm-kannèl* (earrings formed as the local fruit *ponm kannèl*), *may konkonm* (chain whose oval links remind of cucumber seeds), or *tèt kréyòl* (jewelry with a female head) (Fig.

Fig. 6. Chenn & wòb kréyòl 'Creole jewelry & dress'; the carnival in Forte-de-France (© Alla Klimenkowa).

7). The probably best-known pattern *zanno kréyòl* refers to characteristic golden round earrings.

Creole expressions *manjé kréyòl* and *kuizin kréyòl*, the counterparts of Spanish *comida criolla* and *cocina criolla*, further imply that given dishes are prepared with locally grown products. By means of these labels, the islanders differentiate between traditional and French or European cuisine in general and use them as another marketing strategy to attract tourists. Just to name some of the typical creole dishes, we can mention *kalalou*, *féwos*, *matoutou*/*matété*, *zakra*, and *soup zabitan* (also called *soup-a-kongo* on Guadeloupe) (see also Jourdain 1956: 94–95). During my research, I attested only two instances of the usage of *kréyòl* as a proper name. On Martinique, speakers still use the expressions *bannann kréyòl* (also called *bannann jòn*) for 'plantain' and *kann kréyòl*

Fig. 7. Pendant Tèt kréyòl; Guadeloupe (© Alla Klimenkowa).

(also called *kann kongo*) as a designation for a local variety of very sweet but less resistant sugar cane.

4 Summary and Conclusion

Apart from a common decrease of their usage as personal designations, two further central tendencies can be observed in the use of modern *criollo* and *kréyòl* that are still current in everyday parlance. First, their new developmental trajectories are less centripetal when compared with historical usages; the use of the terms is rather context-driven and determined by different communicative settings. Second, their semantics shows a noticeable ambiguity that again derives from the first mentioned aspect. This sociolinguistic picture does not allow for the perception of *criollo* and *kréyòl* as a pan-Latin-Americanism or a pan-creolism. They do not have an identical referent in the Latin-American context or even in the Caribbean. Blommaert's observation (2010: 1) seems to be confirmed that despite globalization and an intense mobility of linguistic resources, the world has not become a village sharing the same language. Both terms in question adapted to varying local communicative habits. Consequently, their meanings are not universally identical even within the space of the same country, as examples from Spanish-speaking America demonstrate. And still, the following trans-contextual features, typical for both *criollo* and *kréyòl* are noticeable.

Adjectival usages referring to cuisine, animals, plants, and cultural customs are widespread in both linguistic communities but simultaneously demonstrate their peculiarities. Spanish *criollo* meaning 'local/indigenous' allows varying interpretations from a deictic point of view and can signify 'typical for

a specific place,' 'regional,' or 'national.' Its counterpart *kréyòl* conveys a more general reference to the traditional background and, therefore, implies the particularity of the Antillean reality as opposed to French or European innovations. In concrete communicative situations and in reference to concrete subjects, speakers on Martinique and Guadeloupe prefer more explicit designations.

These linguistic preferences provide evidence for the extremely disperse cultural content both terms are imbued with; such content may indeed be called *glocal*, i.e. representing a synthesis of general and specific, inherited and newly adopted features. A kaleidoscopic diversity of concepts and expressions, their trans-regional mobility, the asymmetry of their distribution, and a perpetual re-interpretation are intrinsic to language use. In the context of global communication, these properties seem to have obtained a new dimension of intensity and complexity (Blommaert 2010: 1–2). And maybe it is globalization processes that help us grasp an extremely strong link between language and social life. As this contribution demonstrates, many peculiarities of the current use of lexical terms can be explained from an ecolinguistic perspective, i.e. by looking at the diachronic and synchronic socio-cultural contexts. An evident currency of use of *criollo* and *kréyòl* prove the entrenchment of these historical cultural key concepts in the collective memory of respective communities. At the same time, we see how the contemporary communicative contexts affect and (re-)shape this historical legacy through its ongoing re-interpretation.

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