Variation in Preposition Use in the Virgin Islands Dutch Creole (VIDC) Cluster

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing consensus that the varieties of Virgin Islands Dutch Creole (VIDC) - often referred to as Negerhollands - should not be viewed as a single language, but rather as a language cluster of related varieties. However, there has been only limited systematic comparison of the varieties in the cluster as to their structural characteristics. We will try to fill this gap in this chapter by charting a specific construction: the supra-locative prepositional phrases in two varieties of VIDC: the 20th century data recorded by Josselin de Jong and the variety in the 18th century religious texts. A systematic search in the VIDC data is possible because of the data base constructed for this language with the support of Clarin-NL. We will try to contrast the feature studied with those found in 17th century Dutch informal writings and in two relevant West-African languages: Akan and Ewegbe. The theoretical model used here derives from the notion of feature pool.

12.1   Introduction

There is a growing consensus that the varieties of Virgin Islands Dutch Creole (VIDC) - often referred to as Negerhollands - should not be viewed as a single language, but rather as a language cluster of related varieties (Muysken 1995; Van Rossem and Van der Voort 1996; Sabino 2012; see also Van Sluijs et al., 2016), which also show considerable internal variation (Van Sluijs 2016). However, there has been only limited systematic comparison of the varieties in the cluster as to their structural characteristics. Building in part on Bakker (2014), we will try to fill this gap in this chapter by charting a specific construction: the supra-locative prepositional phrase of the type *((n)a)bo(no)* 'on' in two varieties of VIDC: the 20th century data recorded by Josselin de Jong (1926), and the

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variety in the 18th century religious texts. A systematic search in the VIDC data is possible because of the NEHOL data base constructed for this language with the support of Clarin-NL. We will try to contrast the feature studied with those found in 17th century Dutch informal writings and in two relevant West-African languages: Akan and Ewegbe.

The theoretical framework adopted here involves the notion of 'feature pool' (Mufwene 2001). In this framework, creole languages are constructed out of a number of possible features and elements available in the multilingual speech community in which the creole emerged: the so-called feature pool. This framework is interesting for us because the VIDC cluster contains 'layers', corresponding to the various lects in the complex early community and to the various 'authors' of texts. Regarding the variable involved here there exist:

(a) a 'Dutch' layer of simple prepositions, including *op* 'on' and *boven* 'above';

(b) an 'Atlantic creole' layer including the general locative preposition *na*;

(c) West-African substrate patterns which include [NP + LOCATION] and [LOC + NP + LOCATION].

In the extant corpus these layers compete, and have a variable distribution.

In section 12.2 we briefly mention some points in the history of VIDC and briefly discuss the sources. Section 12.3 focuses on the variable: prepositions in VIDC. In section 12.4 Atlantic *na* and possible substrate influence is discussed, and in section 12.5 relevant preposition use in 17th century Dutch. Sections 12.6 and 12.7 present the findings for 18th and 20th century VIDC, followed by some discussion, conclusions and suggestions in section 12.8.

12.2   VIDC: History and Sources

Here we briefly mention some points in the history of VIDC, referring the reader to Van Sluijs (2016) and Van Rossem (2017) for further detail.

12.2.1   History

While St. Thomas was probably inhabited by Arawakan groups since 300 BC, in 1672 the first European settlers arrived at what then became the Danish Antilles. However, many settlers did not come from Denmark, and particularly settlers from Zealand and Flanders were dominant in the new colony, which soon became a plantation colony. In 1673 enslaved Africans started being imported, particularly from Ghana. Around 1700 there must have been a nascent Creole language with Flemish and Zealandic as the main lexifier varieties. Caribbean Dutch functioned as a lingua franca in the colony, and the Moravian missionary community started using the creole. In fact, in 1736 there is the first mention in any Caribbean source of the term *Carriolsche* 'Creole' for the language, as we find the first intentions use VIDC as a missionary language. The language flourished throughout the colony through much of the 18th century, but by 1843 English Creole has largely replaced VIDC.

12.2.2   Documentation and Sources

There is a rich array of 18th century sources, which require, however, considerable philological interpretation (Van Rossem 2017). In 1742 the first printed texts appeared on the island with traces of VIDC, and from that year until 1843 there has been a steady stream of missionary translations into VIDC by the Moravian Brethren and the Danish Lutheran Church. There are also letters of enslaved Africans from the early period, partly in Dutch, partly in VIDC. The first printed grammar of any creole language is also about VIDC and dates from 1770, by J.M. Magens. Oldendorp's (1777) manuscript grammar dates from 1770 as well, and was first printed in a shorter version

(the complete version appeared as Oldendorp 2000: 681–724). His dictionary is from 1767/68 (Stein 1996). An anonymous grammar written by Moravian Brethren at the beginning of the 19th century was used by Hesseling (1905). Internationally, VIDC started being studied in 1805 when the historical linguist Rask made a typological comparison of Greenland Inuit and VIDC. In 1871 Van Name compared VIDC to other Caribbean creoles and in 1881/1887 Pontoppidan published his contributions. Hesseling published his anthology of historical sources and 18th century texts in 1905, and in 1922–1923 De Josselin de Jong carried out fieldwork among speakers of whom he thought would be the last ones. However in 1936 Nelson unexpectedly had the opportunity to still compile a word list after interviewing speakers of Dutch Creole, which was used by Reinecke (1937).

In the 1960–80s fragments of the language as remembered by the last speakers were recorded by Sprauve (1976), Adams Graves (1977), and Sabino (1990). The demise of Alice Stevens in 1987 marked the end of the spoken language.

Starting around 1980 and until now 2015, a group initially inspired by the work of Peter Stein and later involving Hans den Besten and Pieter Muysken (who together supervised Hein van der Voort and Cefas van Rossem) started exploring the missionary archives. This led to various book publications (e.g. van der Voort and van Rossem 1996; Stein and van der Voort (1996), and much of the digitalized material was made available electronically via the NEHOL database with the financial and technical support of Clarin-NL through the work of Robbert van Sluijs.

The eighteenth century VIDC texts that were used are given in Table 12.1.

For 17th and 18th century Dutch we used the intercepted letters in Dutch written by seamen and colonists in the 17th and 18th centuries and kept in British National Archives in Kew Gardens

Text	Date	Clarin	Characteristics
Zinzendorf Farewell Letter	1739, 1742	3.1.1	First known text written in VIDC, translation of
Gebeden en Liederen voor die swart Broeder-Gemeenten na S. Thomas, S. Croix en S. Jan.	1765	HERRN65A	First printed hymnbook in VIDC by the Moravian Brethren
Gospel Harmony 321	Around 1773, before 1780	3.2.1_1_35	First 35 sections of translation of S. Lieberkühn's Gospel Harmony by Moravian missionary J. Böhner
Gospel Harmony 322	Around 1780	3.2.1_1_35	First 35 sections of second translation of Gospel Harmony by J. Böhner
Gospel Harmony 3231	Around 1790	3231_1_35	First 35 sections of Gospel Harmony, edited and written by J.C. Auerbach
Gospel Harmony 3232	Around 1795	3232_1_35	First 35 sections of Gospel Harmony, Unfinished manuscript, probably used for printed Gospel Harmony (1833)
Old Testament	Between 1780 and 1785	325	Translation of the Old Testament into VIDC

Table 12.1: 18th century sources used for VIDC.

(Rutten and Van der Wal 2014). For 20th century VIDC we used the recorded fieldwork stories of Jossselin de Jong (1926)

12.3　Prepositions in VIDC

Since this chapter focuses on locative prepositions, we provide some general remarks on locative prepositions and some background information on prepositions in VIDC.

12.3.1　Prepositions in Creoles: Analytical Framework

Following Vandeloise (1991, 1994) and Zribi-Hertz (1984), Zribi-Hertz and Loïc (2015) distinguish +/- configurational locatives to distinguish *à la maison* 'at home' from *dans la maison* 'in the house' in French. Both imply location, but only the second implies configurational location.

A further distinction is between +/- functional locatives (a slightly different distinction is made by Zwarts 1997): I can go to the bank functionally, for typical banking things (e.g. to cash a check) or purely physically, to get nearer a specific building. Functional locatives are typically not configurational. Consider 'I am going home' versus 'I am going to my house'

In this chapter we focus on both configurational, and non-configurational non-functional locative prepositions in VIDC.

12.3.2　Non-locative Prepositions

There are a number of prepositions in VIDC, of which most have Dutch etyma (sometimes homophonous with an English source), with the exception of *te:*, most likely from Portuguese, listed in Table 12.2.

The most striking absent Dutch prepositions, at least in the 20th century materials, are *aan*, which is dative ('to') and sometimes locative ('near') in Dutch, and Dutch *te* 'at'/*tot* 'until'. There are sporadic uses of *aan* in the 18th century missionary texts:

(01)　zoo als　Hem ha　　dot　voor yoe　**aan** het　　　Kruis (311)
　　　　like　　3SG PST　die　for　2SG　at　DET.N　cross
　　　　'Like He dies for you at the cross.'

(02)　En　as　　JESus a　　wande　na <↑die> Galile　**aan** Zeekant (321: 23)[1]
　　　　and　when Jesus　PST　walk　　LOC DET　Galilea　at　　sea.side
　　　　'and when Jesus walked near Galilea at the sea side'

However, it is clear in (01) from the use of a non-VIDC neuter determiner that this is a fixed Dutch expression. For (02) the other translations of the same sentence do not have *aan*.[2]

astər/-u	after	< Du achter, E after
fa(n)	of	< Du van
fo	for	< Du voor
gliek, liek	like	< Du gelijk, E like
mi/me:/met	with	< Du met
sondər/-du	without	< Du zonder
te:	until	< Po até

Table 12.2: Non-locative prepositions in 20th century VIDC.

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[1]　For the notational conventions in the examples, see Van Rossem and Van der Voort (1996: XII–XIII).
[2]　[322: 23: En as Jesus a wandel **na kant van** die Galilean Zee], [3231: 23: Toen noe Jesus a wandel **bij** die See van Galilea].

12.3.3   Locative Prepositions Without *na*

A number of locative prepositions, all with Dutch etyma, are formed without *na* in the 20th materials, as listed in Table 12.3.

Some of them, *kan* and *mel/midəl*, correspond to a noun in Dutch. In the 18th century materials, these are combined with *na* and take the preposition *van* 'of', which is a clear indication of their nominal status at the time:

(03)   En   as   Jesus a   wandel **na**   **kant van** die Ga=lilean Zee (322: 23)
  and when Jesus PST walk   LOC side   of   DET Galilean   sea
  'and when Jesus walked at the side of the Galilean sea'

(04)   Em   set nabin die   Tempel **na**   **mid=del van** die   Leerar-s   (322: 9)[3]
  3SG sit inside DET Temple LOC midst   of   DET   teacher-PL
  'He sits inside the temple in the middle of the teachers.'

12.3.4   Locative Prepositions with *na*

Finally, there is a class of prepositions that involve the non-configurational locative *na*, which is often claimed to have a Portuguese etymon, the pro-clitic combination *em+a* 'in+DET.F'. Configurational locatives are formed combining this *na* (which can be reduced to *a* or omitted altogether) with a Dutch-etymon preposition, which is generally bisyllabic. See Table 12.4.

In this chapter we will focus exclusively on all forms related to *((n)a)bo(no)* 'on', from this list.

bi	near	< Du bij
de:	through	< Du door
ini	in	< Du in
it (fa)	out of	< Du uit (van)
kan	near, next to	< Du kant 'side'
mel/midəl	in the middle of	< Du middle 'middle'
ron	around	< Du rond

Table 12.3: Locative prepositions without *na*.

na	locative	< ? Po na 'in.DET.F'
((n)a)astə/-u	behind	< Du achter, E after
((n)a)bini	into, inside	< Du binnen
((n)a)biti	outside	< Du buiten
((n)a)bo(no)	on	< Du boven
afo (fa(n))	in front of	< na + Du voor
((n)a) molee	below	< Du omlaag (dialectal)
((n)a)obu	onto, over	< Du over
((n)a)ondə/-u	under	< Du onder

Table 12.4: Locative prepositions with *na*.

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3   See also [3231: 28 a gooi em **na Meddel** onder sender], where the locative noun is followed by the preposition *onder*, resulting in 'in the midst among them'.

12.4   Atlantic *na* and Possible Substrate Influence

12.4.1   Atlantic na

As shown in (Boretzky 1983: 195) and further argued in detail in Corum (2015), there was a widely used Atlantic creole general locative preposition *na* in use. We find it in Portuguese lexifier creoles such as Principe and Guinée-Bissau, in Papiamentu, in the Surinamese creole cluster, as well as in VIDC. In Haitian, there is a form *nã*, but this may be derived from French *dans* [dã] 'in'. Very likely, the form was part of a number of the pidgins that were used in the Atlantic slave trade.

In the Surinam creole cluster and in VIDC this *na* may be combined with a locative element, as noted above, to mark a configurational locative. This possibility is absent in Papiamentu and in Haitian. However, the location of the locative element varies. It can be post-noun phrase, resulting in [na + NP + X], in Saramaccan and optionally in early Sranan, and pre-noun phrase, resulting in [na + X + NP] both in earlier and later Sranan and in all varieties of VIDC.

12.4.2   Gbe

Gbe adpositional phrases are head-initial, with prepositions preceding their complement (Aboh 2010: 227; see also Ameka 2003)). Aboh assumes a simple structure as in (05b):

(05)   a. *Kòfi   zé   kwìé   xlán Àsíb*
           Kofi take-PERF money to   Asib

           'Kofi sent money to Asiba'

       b. [PP [P **xlán**] [DP Àsíbá]]

While prepositions have a verbal origin, the class of locative postpositions has a nominal origin. In inland dialects the possessive marker *fé* is required with them, but in coastal dialects this is absent. Thus the overall pattern is illustrated in (06):

(06)   Akaɖí le   kpl∼ɔ-a   (fé)   ta.me
       lamp   be_at.PRES   table-DEF   (POSS)   above

       'The lamp is above the table.' (Ameka and Essegbey, 2006: 363).

12.4.3   Akan

In Akan the locative preposition (07b) also functions as a locative verb (07a):

(07)   a. ɔ-wɔ   Eugene
           3sg-be.at Eugene

           'He is in Eugene.'

       b. o   hun no   wɔ   Eugene
           ipl see 3pl   in   Eugene

           'We saw them in Eugene.' (Payne 1997: 87)

As a preposition, it cannot receive person marking.
In addition, there are postpositions to mark a specific configurational location:

(08)   Ntoma   no   sɛn   ahoma no   **so**
       Cloth   DET   hang   rope   DET   TOP

       'The cloth is/hangs on the clothes line.' (Ofori 2006: 156)

(09) ɛdua no   si asoredan   no   ho
      tree DET sit church.house DET SIDE

'The tree is planted by the chapel.' (Owusu et al. 2015: 181)

12.5   Dutch (17/18th c): Letters

We will briefly mention a few aspects of locative preposition usage in Dutch, drawing on the corpus of captured letters.

12.5.1   The Dutch System

The Dutch adpositional system is far too complicated to describe here in any detail. There are at least three categories of elements involved:

- pre- or postpositions (where the latter are often directional in modern Dutch)
- adverbs, which are often morphologically complex (at least diachronically) and contain a *be-* prefix and an *–en* suffix.
- particles of the verb, which can be separated from it as the verb appears in second position

Some examples are given in Table 12.5.

   Particles will not be discussed further here (but see Muysken, van der Sluijs and Los, 2017). The adverbs may also be used prepositionally in modern Dutch, as well as functioning as free standing elements.

12.5.2   Naar Boven in 18th Century Dutch

One possibility is that *naar boven* in 18th century Dutch was a model for *na bobo*. It is often used directionally, as in (10) or translocationally, as in (11).

(10) zo dat wij (…) genootzaakt waaren **na boven** te gaan.
      so that we   forced   were   to go

      'so that we (…) were forced to go upstairs. (to the deck)
                         (Cape of Good Hope, May 31, 1781) NAAR + BOVEN: 'upstairs'

(11) ons leger met   den Prins van orangie (…)   is **naer boven** int
      our army with the Prince of Orange   is to above   in.the

      Lant van keulen om de   france   daer te doen *ver*huijsen
      Land of   Cologne for the French   there to make move

      'Our army with the Prince of Orange (…) is up in the country of Cologne to make the French move there.' (Hoorn, November 30, 1672)

Pre/postposition	adverb	particle
op/over 'on'	boven 'above'	op-bellen 'phone'
uit 'out'	buiten 'outside'	uit-steken 'stick out'
in 'in'	binnen 'inside'	in-kopen 'to shop'
	beneden 'beneath'	ne(d)er 'down'

Table 12.5: Simplified schematic overview of the Dutch adposition system.

12.5.3   The Preposition *op* in 18th Century Dutch

The preposition *op* 'on' is frequently used, and may be a very general locative, as in the following two examples:

(12) Sr. Pieter Cnoll Coopman   woonende in het
      Sr. P.   C.   merchant   residing   in   the

      Fort **op**   Batavia.
      Fort   on   Batavia (Hoorn, 1672)

      'Mr. Pieter Cnoll merchant residing in the Fort in Batavia.'

(13) Wiens vader predicant is   in   den   classis van
      whose father preacher is   in   the   classis from

      Alckmaer tot   Egmont **op** zee
      Alkmaar   to   Egmont on   see   (Hoorn, 1672)

      'whose father is a preacher in the church region from Alkmaar to Egmont aan Zee.'

12.6   VIDC (18th c)

12.6.1   The Earliest Sources

In the materials of Von Zinzendorf (1739) we find standard Dutch examples such as (14), where *boven* is nominal:

(14) God zegen all met segen van **boven**
      'God bless all   with blessing from above.'

However, there are also some much more creole-like data. In the following *na* co-occurs with *op* in the same sentence, recalling the generalized *op* in the 18th century letters:

(15) Die tyd mi a   wes **na** Poppo **op** Africa
      then   1SG PST be   LOC Poppo on   Africa

      'Then I was in Poppo in Africa.'

In the first printed translation of the VIDC hymns (1765) we find the complex preposition that later became common. Notice this does not mean 'above of' here, but 'on'.

(16) Mee joe Sabbath **na bovo**   die Stoel van joe Vader,
      with 2SG Sabbath LOC-ABOVE DET chair of   2SG Father

      'With/and your Sabbath on the Chair of your Father'

However, we also find the simplex preposition *boven*:

(17) Noe Joe God **bove** allemaal, geloofd **na** Eewigheid!
      now 2SG God above all   praised LOC eternity

      'Now you(r) God above all, praised in eternity!'

12.6.2   VIDC: First Translation of Gospel Harmony (Before 1780)

In the first translation of the Gospel Harmony (around 1773, before 1780) we find productive use of the complex preposition, sometimes used adverbially as a directional, as in (18), sometimes as a true preposition, as in (19) and (20).

(18) Sender a   loop **na-boven** **na**   Jerusalem
     3PL   PST go   LOC-above   naar/LOC Jerusalem
     'They went up to Jerusalem.'   German source: *hinauf*

(19) Ons Tata   sender a   ka bed.aan **na-boven** deese Berg
     1PL father 3PL   PST PRF worship LOC-above this   mountain
     'Our fathers had worshipped on this mountain.'   German source: *auf*

(20) maar a   wees alltid Dag en Nacht **na-bovo**   die Ber=g-en
     but PST be   always day and night LOC-above DET mountain-PL
     'but ... was always day and night on the mountains.'

12.6.3   VIDC 18th: *op*

However, the translations also contain cases of the more Dutch-like preposition *op*. In (21) and
(22) it could be part of a fixed Dutch expression:

(21) Vor set ons Voet[-*t*] sender **op** die Pad van Vrede (321: 5)
     for put 1PL foot   3PL   on DET path of   peace
     'to put our feet on the path of peace'

(22) eer   die Mensch Soon sal sitt **op** die Troon (322: 81)
     before DET man   son FUT sit on DET throne
     'before the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne'

   However, in (23) there is an apparent contrast between *op*, which is supra-locative, and the more
general locative *na*:

(23) die a   see: **Op** die Berg-en   (na Rama)
     DET PST say   on DET mountain-s LOC Rama
     'He said: in the mountains at Rama.'

   In some cases, there appears to be use of *op* as a calque on the German original *auf* in a
translation:

(24) die a   wees duis=ter **op** die Afgrond. (325a: 1)
     3SG PST COP dark   on DET abyss
     'There was darkness above/in the abyss.'   (Finster auf der Tiefe, Luther 1912)

12.6.4   *Variation in* 18th *Century Use of Naboven*

There appears to be variation in the use of *naboven* in the 18th century materials. The manuscript
for the translation of the Old Testament (325, Job 20: 11), presented alternatives:

(25) En leei met em   {op|naboven} die Stof.
     and lay with 3sg   on|LOC.above DET dust
     'and lay with him on the dust.'

   The variation is of two kinds: variation in the forms encountered, and variation in the meaning
of the expression. In the Gospel Harmony manuscripts 321 and 322 we find *naboven, na boven,
nabovo, na bovo*, and in 3231 and 3232 *naboven* with the alternatives *boven, boven op*.

12.6.5   The Adverb/Preposition Boven in Later Texts

In later texts we also find the use of bare *boven*, possibly under English influence:

(26)   Wat   ben   **boven**   die,   dat   ben   van   die   Quaat
       what   COP   above   that,   that   COP   from/of   DET   Evil   (321: 25)

'What is above of it, is from the Evil' (English Gospel Harmony, Lieberkühn 1771: 'cometh of Evil')

(27)   Die   Jünger   no\ben   **boven**   si   Baas
       DET   disciple   NEG\COP   above   3.POSS   master (321: 25)

'The disciple is not above his master' (English Gospel Harmony 1771)

(28)   en   a   staan   **boven   over**   die   Plaats
       and   PST   stand   above   over   DET   place

'and stood above of the place'   (3231: 7)
(English Gospel Harmony 1771: 'stood over where (…)')

12.6.6   Distribution in Texts in the 18th Century Materials

The distribution of the locative prepositions is presented in Table 12.6.

It is striking that in these materials the most frequent locative marker, by far, is *op*, both locational and directional. The combination *na-boven* and its variants is relatively infrequent, though more frequent in the earlier than in the later translations. Bare *boven* is not frequent, and is sometimes used adverbially. *Bovenop* always has a clear supra-locative interpretation in these materials.

It should be borne in mind that the general locative creole preposition *na* is much more frequent than these alternatives, as shown in Table 12.7:

	locational	*directional*	*adverbial*	*locational*	*directional*	*adverbial*
Before 1780		321			322	
boven	4	-	2	1	-	2
op	21	12	-	23	5	-
bovenop	1	2	-	0	1	-
na bovo, naboven	3	3	-	7	4	-
1790–95		3231			3232	
boven	2	-	2	3	-	4
op	26	9	-	27	10	-
bovenop	2	-	-	2	1	-
na bovo, naboven	1	2	-	2	3	-

Table 12.6: The distribution of the locative prepositions in the 18th century materials.

	All *na*	**#na#**[4]	**#*na*# LOC**	**#*na*# DIR**
321 (before 1780)	940	511	109	79
3232 (about 1795)	972	558	34	68

Table 12.7: The occurrence of locative *na* in some of the 18th century materials.

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4   The # mark spaces is the original manuscript.

The preposition *na* can be both locational and directional. In 3232 locative *na* is often replaced by *in* 'in' or *op* 'on'. The use of *na* should be studied separately because of its multifunctional use and high frequency.

12.6.7   Alternatives in the Texts Used

As pointed out in Van Rossem (2017), an interesting perspective on preposition choice in the 18th century texts is gained from the practice of providing several alternatives, reflecting the struggle of the translators in choosing between different varieties, vernacular creole or more standard, and remaining faithful to the original text. An example is the following:

(29)   mi   Tegenparteyder   fonk   met   s*i*   Oogo   {na|op}   mi. (325c: Job 16)
    1SG   opponent   sparkle   with   3SG.POS   eye   LOC   1SG

'My adversary sparkles with his eyes upon me.'
(Luther 1912: funkelt mit seinen Augen **auf** mich)

Here the German original has *auf* and the translator is choosing between *op* and *na*[5]
    Alternatives found are listed below. All appear only once in the entire Clarin-NEHOL Corpus, unless otherwise indicated.

op|met	op|na
na|op [6]	op|naboven
over|boven	tot|op
op|over	van|op
op|voor [2]	op|van

The preposition *op* is often replaced by *na*, but also by many other prepositions, suggesting its wide spread as an all purpose oblique in at least some varieties of 18th century VIDC.

12.7   The 20th Century VIDC Materials

12.7.1   General Overview

The main form in the texts collected by de Josselin de Jong (1926) (although there is considerable variation in the form) is supra-locative preposition(s) *((n)a)bo(no)*, besides the extremely frequent general locative and directional *na*, of course. An example:

(30)   mi   ki   ju   sit   **abo**   də   stul   nou
    1SG   see   2SG   sit   on   DET   chair   now

'I see you sitting on the chair now.'   (dJdJ 1926:67, Roberts)

Thus we find the following forms, as listed in Table 12.8
In Nelson (1936) only *bo* is found.[6]
    There does not appear to be any functional specialization of any of these prepositional form variants. The main contrast with forms with or without preceding *(n)a* (*a* has developed out of *na*)

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[5]   Other examples are 321: 45: JESus a wees alleenig op die Land, en no a ka kom tot sender (na|op die Bood.)] [321: h.3: En Petrus a kik sterk op em met Johannes, en a see: Kik /op|na/ ons.] [325c: 67: En si Gebeenden moet betaal si verborgen S*....* en leei met em {op|naboven} die Stof, where Luther has: und sie werden sich mit ihm **in** die Erde legen.

[6]   Den Besten and Van Rossem (2013): 15: *on - bo*, 909: Put something on the table[.+]< /> - Du *th'got bo th' tafl.*, 1127: Wipe your feet on the mat. – *Fek yo fot bo di mat.*, 1129: The fowl (hen) is there on the roof of the house. – *Di hundu bin da bo di hus.*, 1130: It has flown upon the house. –*Ka flik bo di hus*

bo/bu	142	*bono*	1
abo	8	*nabono*	5
nabo	2		

Table 12.8: Morpho-phonological variants of *na bono* in the 20th century materials.

is with **na > a*. The preposition [a] marks location in a broad sense, and goal in a broad sense, [bo] marks supralocation.[7] A further indication that there is no functional specialization of individual form variants is the finding that they alternate in a wide variety of contexts, including cases where they co-occur idiomatically with specific predicates, such as *wak* 'wait':

(31) bli   da   staan werán lo   wak **bo** Bru   Hon
      stay there stand again IPFV wait on brother dog

'[he] stopped there again, waiting for Brother Dog'

(dJdJ 1926:51, Roberts) (cf. Du wachten <u>op</u>)

(32) ju   kaa listáá mi   lo   wak **nabono** ju
      2SG PRF let   1SG IPFV wait on   2SG

'You have kept me waiting for you.'

(dJdJ 1926:25, Prince)

Rather, there is individual variation, since Prince is the only one of De Josselin de Jong's nine informants to use *nabono* and uses it wherever others use *(a)bo*

The items *op* (< Du op) and *abobo* (< Du boven) occur as adverbs as well. Furthermore, *op* can occur as a particle, so that we can double *op*:

(33) Di   kabái a   lep **op op** a himúl.   *Motion*
      DET horse PST leap up up LOC sky

'The horse leapt up towards the sky.'   (dJdJ 1926:15, Joshua)

(34) jaa, ju   kaa ho,   wa   də here **abobo** kaa see: *Motion/location*
      yes 2SG PRF hear what DET lord above   PRF say

'Yes, you heard, what the Lord above said'   (dJdJ 1926:52, Roberts)

Note that the two are different in meaning *Op* is always upwards motion/direction; *abobo* can be used for both.

As noted, *op* often occurs as a verb particle, in the case of *dink op* 'remember', 'think of', *op* has fused with the verb and phonologically eroded; but also newly replaced by *bo* 'on':[8]

(35) Ham see, am nə   kam **dingkóó**.
      3SG   say 3SG NEG can remember

'He said, he could not remember.'   (dJdJ 1926:18)

(36) di   frou   parat a   fraa di   man as am nu kan
      DET woman parrot PST ask DET man if 3SG NEG can

      ding bo weni
      think on when

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7   Den Besten (letter den Besten, 2 November 1993, see also Den Besten and Van Rossem 2013): "Isabella Sylvester's *bo* in the sense of 'on (the roof of)' and 'upon' in two sentences said by her, however , most probably does not reflect Danish *paa* (*på*). It derives from Dutch *boven* via Creole Dutch *abo/abobo/nabobo*, which consists of the all-purpose locative preposition *na* and *bobo* (from Du. *boven*)."

8   In the 18th century materials *we find dink op na* or *dink op*: [321: 5: en vor dink na si heilig Verbond], [322: 5: en dink op na si heilig Verbond], [3232: 5: en a dink op na Si heilig Verbond].

'The female parrot asked the male one if he could not think of/remember when... '
(dJdJ 1926:41)

12.7.2   Expression of Source:

While the element *na* has many locative uses, it cannot be used as an expression of source by itself.
By contrast *fa(n)* can:

(37) Ju   fo   bli   een jaa mi ons fo   ju   nee amfa ons
      2sG mod stay one year with 1PL before 2sG take 3sG of 1PL

      You must stay with us for one year before you take her from us.'
      (dJdJ 1926:14, Joshua)

The combination *fa bo* can mark supralocational source:

(38) Aⁿ   no   kan kri di   jung fa boo shi   rigí.
      3sG NEG mod getDET boy of on   3s.poss back

      'It [a horse] couldn't get the boy from his back.' (dJdJ 1926:15, Joshua)

Finally, there also be an elative meaning added in *(it) fa bo*:

(39) Fo   ma   se paséé di   wurum kri teki   sinpiwiri,
      COMPL make say pass DET worm   get piece aloe.vera

      shini di   hopo a   twee, krou alma di   grun slim it fa bo di.
      cut 3.INAN open LOC two scratch all   DET green slime out of on 3.INAN
      'To make the worms go away, get a piece of aloe vera, cut it open in two, scratch all the
      green slime out of it.'   (dJdJ 1926:66)

12.7.3   Distribution in Texts in the 20th Century Materials

Table 12.9 gives an overview of the distribution in the materials of De Josselin de Jong (1926):
   It is clear that the form *op*, which is so common in the 18th century materials, is no longer used
as a preposition. Variants of *na bono* are now just about the only forms used. It is clear that the
wide variety of morpho-phonological variants of *na bono* is also reflected at the individual level
   Table 12.10 presents use of the supra-locative prepositions in dJdJ 1926 per speaker, showing that
there was considerable variation (Van Sluijs 2016).

12.8   Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

The general use of reduced variants of *na bono* in the 20th century materials, to the detriment
of *op* and *boven*, which were used with some frequency in the 18th century texts, attests to the
strong influence that the Atlantic pidgin and the West African languages had in the genesis of
VIDC in its vernacular form used by the descendants of the enslaved Africans. The Atlantic
pidgin contributed the general use of *na*, which is pervasive in VIDC, while the West African
languages contributed the combination of *na* with a specific location marker to indicate configura-
tional supra-location. The Dutch strong form *boven* and the generalized vernacular Dutch location
marker *op* all but disappeared in the 20th century materials, and only survived as adverbs or verb
particles

	locational		directional	adverbial	particle
	+ config	− config			
Op	-	-	(2)[9]	1[10]	30[11]
((n)a)bo(no)	35	6	104	-	-
Bobu	-	-	2	-	-
Abobo	-	-	-	9	-

Table 12.9: Distribution of supra-locative prepositions in the 20th century materials.

	bo			*(it) fa bo*	*	*(n)abo*	**		*(na)bono*		*bobu*
	+dir	−dir	−dir	−dir	−dir	+dir	−dir	−dir	+dir	−dir	+dir
		+con	-con	+con	-con		+con	-con		-con	
Joshua	41	8	1	4	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Prince***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
Testamark	5	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
T'mark/X	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-
Joseph	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Christian	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Roberts	51	20		1	-	2	2	-	-	-	1

*Joshua uses *fa bo*, Testamark/X and Roberts *it fa bo*

**Testamark and Roberts each use *nabo* once

***Joshua uses *bono*, Prince *nabono*

Table 12.10: Use of the supra-locative prepositions in the 20th century materials per speaker.

Thus, from the available forms in the original feature pool, only a few elements survived as prepositions. It requires detailed analysis to see whether all these forms were really part of the creole in the first place, or simply impositions from European languages by the missionaries, and whether the vernacular Dutch of the Virgin Islands was clearly separate from the creole (Van Rossem 2017).

Even the article length discussion of a singular construction, supra-locative prepositions, barely does justice to the data. Much more needs to be said about the specific meanings conveyed, and the philological interpretation of the material. It would also be useful to consider the other configurational prepositions involving *na* + location. Do they show the same patterns of adaptation and selection as *nabono*?

Casting the net even wider, it would be very interesting to compare the data in VIDC with partly similar, partly different developments in other creole languages, including Berbice Dutch Creole, the Surinam Creole cluster, and Papiamentu.

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9   There are two cases where *op* is indeterminate/ambiguous between being a directional preposition, or a verb particle.

10 Here, *op* is followed by/co-occurs with a directional AP headed by preposition *a*, and as a whole follows *op* as a verb particle expressing upwards motion. As an adverb, *op* could be said to be some kind of reduplication.

11 In six of the thirty occurrences of *op* as a verb particle, it expresses upwards motion, just as English 'up' (as in 'he jumped up'). In the other twenty-four occurrences *op* occurs in more or less idiomatic expressions, such as *hou op* 'stop' (< Dutch *hou op* 'stop', lit. hold up), *tu op* 'put away, store' (lit., 'close up'; *tu* 'close' < Dutch *toe* 'closed'), *fin op mi* 'encounter' (lit. 'find up with'), and cases where *op* has a destructive meaning, as in *ru op* "wreck up", *skee op* "tear up", *sni op* "cut up", *trample op* "trample up".

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