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## On *an(n)*- and Anne

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Locative encoding in Martinican Creole (MQ) is a subject of a class of papers by Anne Zribi-Hertz and Loïc Jean-Louis (2013, 2017, 2018). I will address a subset of the data discussed in these papers and suggest a DM-style analysis of the various classes of common nouns and toponyms that can be used as locative adjuncts or arguments without a lexical preposition.

### 1. Non-configurational locative encoding

Besides overt spatial prepositions occurring as free morphemes and combining with full NPs (e.g., *adan* ‘inside’), toponyms and some nouns denoting institutionalized places in MQ can be used as locatives with the particles *a-*, *an(n)-*, and *o(z)-*, which I will henceforth unify under the term AN-particle. The AN-particle gives rise to a non-configurational interpretation (Vandeloise 1986): the spatial relation obtaining between the Figure and the Ground is not specified. In addition, the AN-particle may undergo liaison with its host and is selectionally constrained in that it only attaches to toponyms and to bare nouns:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Pòl ø a- Wòm. ZH&JL 2018  
Paul COP LOC Rome  
*Paul is in Rome.*
- b. Mari ø an- Sisil. ZH&JL 2013  
Mary COP LOC- Sicily  
*Mary is in Sicily.*

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I am very grateful to the reviewers for their comments, corrections and additional judgments provided. And many thanks to Patricia Cabredo Hofherr for suggesting to me the papers that served as the basis for this work, as well as for multiple pointers and references.

<sup>1</sup> Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2018 show that in MQ static locations are not distinguished morphologically from dynamic paths, so places, goals and sources are encoded by the same prepositions interpreted contextually. I will therefore henceforth speak of locatives as an indiscriminate category.

- c. Pòl ø **ann-** Espan. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC Spain  
*Paul is in Spain.*
- d. Pòl ø **o-** biro/Maròk. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC office/Morocco  
*Paul is at the office/in Morocco.*
- e. Pòl ø **oz-** Etazini. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC USA  
*Paul is in the USA.*

The form of the AN-particle is lexically conditioned: unlike French, which served as the basis for these distinctions, MQ has no gender and so there is no syntactic or phonological feature motivating the choice of a given locative allomorph (except for liaison phenomena arising for some of these allomorphs).

I will argue that the description provided by Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013, 2017, 2018 of the locative and non-locative syntax of the toponyms and common nouns appearing with the AN-particle permits us to conclude that the AN-particle is a locative case-marker appearing on locus-denoting nouns and alternating with two non-locative cases. I will show that the surface realization of these case-markers allows us to establish several declensional classes in MQ, to hypothesize the existence of a morphologically marked plural and to sketch a hypothesis linking cases and prepositions by assuming identical realization of the same morphological features on different functional heads.

## 2. The three nominal cases in MQ

Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 identify seven types of toponyms in MQ in function of how they behave in predicative, argument, and locative positions. To illustrate this distinction, the toponym *Sisil* ‘Sicily’ is encoded differently in all three positions:<sup>2</sup>

### (2) predicative: bare toponym

- a. Wo! Sisil! Tè lègzil! vocative  
 oh Sicily land exile  
*Oh, Sicily, the land of exile!*
- b. Ni dé Sisil... sortal  
 there.is two Sicilies  
*There exist two Sicilies...*

### (3) argument: LA-particle

- a. La-Sisil sé an bèl péyi. subject  
 LA-Sicily it.is INDEF beautiful country  
*Sicily is a beautiful country.*
- b. Man enmen la-Sisil. direct object  
 1SG like LA-Sicily  
*I like Sicily.*

<sup>2</sup> I also note the subject position is subject to some unclarity: while Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013:ex.41 claim that both subjects and vocatives require *Sicily* to be bare, Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:ex.10c indicate that subjects pattern with direct objects and both appear with the LA-particle. Whether this discrepancy might reflect language change or some other factor is irrelevant, as long as the three-way distinction in (2)-(4) is accounted for.

- c. Espion-an ka travay ba la-Sisil. PP-internal  
 spy-DET IPFV work for LA-Sicily  
*The spy works for Sicily.*
- (4) locative: AN-particle
- a. I ø an-Sisil. locative (static)  
 3SG COP LOC-Sicily  
*(S)he is in Sicily.*
- b. I alé an-Sisil. locative (goal)  
 3SG go LOC-Sicily  
*(S)he went to Sicily.*
- c. I sòti an-Sisil. locative (source)  
 3SG leave LOC-Sicily  
*(S)he's come (back) from Sicily.*

As discussed in great detail in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 and will be discussed below, other toponyms use different exponents for these markers or may fail to distinguish all three environments. It is the lexical identity of each toponym that determines how it is used in these three broad contexts. While Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 distinguish seven classes of toponyms in function of the particular allomorphs of the AN- and LA-particles used, I will argue that four categories of syncretism should be distinguished in function of the number and nature of affixes used for each class (section 2.1) and then four declension classes within one of these categories (section 2.2). Number specification (2.3) and semantic and phonological factors (section 2.4) simplify the system further.

In what follows I will hypothesize that the three environments in (2)-(4) correspond to three syntactic cases, which I will call locative, predicative and argument,<sup>3</sup> with the latter used as a shorthand for what is actually two cases, distinguished only in pronouns.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.1. Syncretism-based declension classes: realization of non-locative cases

As Table 1 shows, MQ toponyms fall into three categories with respect to case-marking. One category (e.g., *Panama* in row (a) of the table) uses the bare stem form of the toponym in all three environments in (2)-(4). Conversely, the category in row (d) uses a separate form for each of the three types of positions (e.g., *Sisil* ‘Sicily’ in (2)-(4)). The remaining two categories oppose locative contexts, where they use an AN-particle, to all others. Toponyms in row (b), e.g., *LaFrans* ‘France’, in non-locative contexts use the LA-form and those in row (c), e.g., *Mawòk* ‘Morocco’, use the bare stem:

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<sup>3</sup> There are good reasons to believe that the vocative and the NP-internal uses of a proper name do not have the same syntax: the former is definite while the latter is not. Furthermore, the appellative use of toponyms, which I argue (Matushansky 2008) to be an instance of predication, apparently requires the use of the LA-particle in MQ (Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013). I will not draw these distinctions here since my goal at this point is merely to formalize the exponence of what I believe to be the portmanteau morpheme encoding the definiteness, number and case features on a lexical noun or toponym; the syntactic environments that result in these three morphological specifications should be addressed separately.

<sup>4</sup> Like most creoles, MQ does not mark structural case on nouns, but the 1SG pronoun is realized differently in the subject position (*man*) vs. all others (*mwen*) (Pinalie and Bernabé 1999:23). It might be that the subject-object difference noted in fn. 2 stems from the same source, but I will proceed assuming the later description.

**Table 1: The three-case system of Martinican Creole**

		predicative	argument	locative
a.	<b>Panama</b> , Haiti, Cuba, Israel...	Panama	Panama	Panama
b.	China, <b>France</b> , <b>India</b> ...	Lafrans Lend	Lafrans Lend	<b>an-Frans</b> <b>ann-End</b>
c.	Chad, <b>Morocco</b> , Congo...	Mawòk	Mawòk	<b>o-Mawòk</b>
d.	<b>Sicily</b> , Bolivia, <b>Hungary</b> ...	Sisil Ongri	<b>La-Sisil</b> <b>La-Ongri</b>	<b>an-Sisil</b> <b>an-Ongri</b>

As is easy to see, the three semantic cases of MQ can be subject to three types of syncretism: in total syncretism all forms lose case-marking, and otherwise the non-locative forms can be collapsed and become realized either as the bare stem (which could be the zero allomorph) or with the LA-particle (i.e., as the argument form).

If the three cases were encoded in morphology by three unary features, there would be no way of dealing with this systematic syncretism. I therefore assume that the relevant features are binary: the feature [ $\alpha$ LOC] distinguishes locative and non-locative cases and the feature [ $\alpha$ DEF] distinguishes arguments and predicates. These two features yield four potential cases, one of which is not realized due to a semantic conflict: no toponym can be predicative and locative at once (since being locative is a property of the referent):

**Table 2: Martinican Creole case system encoded**

	[+DEF]	[-DEF]
[-LOC]	argument	predicative
[+LOC]	locative	–

Vocabulary Insertion for the three encoding options is specified as in (5): the bare stem is the elsewhere option, the AN-form is locative, and the LA-form is referential. As a result, the pattern in row (d) of Table 1 is captured:

**(5) Vocabulary Insertion rules**

- a. [+DEF][+LOC]  $\leftrightarrow$  AN *Sicily*: locative  
 b. [+DEF]  $\leftrightarrow$  LA *Sicily*: argument  
 c. otherwise  $\emptyset$  *Sicily*: predicative

In order to derive the bare-N syncretism for *Morocco*-type toponyms, an impoverishment rule is needed that is provisionally formalized in (6a): the removal of the [DEF]-feature in the context of the feature [-LOC]. Toponyms of the *Panama*-type, showing no case-marking, should either be unspecified for the morphological [DEF]-feature or undergo the more radical impoverishment rule in (6b):

- (6) a. [+DEF]  $\rightarrow \emptyset / \underline{\quad} [-LOC]$  for  $N_{\text{MOROCCO}}$  *Morocco*: non-locative syncretism  
 b. [ $\alpha$ DEF]  $\rightarrow \emptyset / \underline{\quad}$  for  $N_{\text{PANAMA}}$  *Panama*: zero marking

One could object that (5a) is unnecessarily complicated: just the feature value [+LOC] would be enough since neither of the other two environments is specified as [+LOC] (and (6a) can then also be simplified by removing the [-LOC] from the context of application). The reason to have both features in (5a) comes from the need to avoid ambiguity: a [+DEF][+LOC] toponym (like

*Sicily* in a locative environment) should be unambiguously preceded by *an* (though see section 4.2).

Finally, to deal with the syncretism between argument and predicative environments exhibited by toponyms like *France*, I propose that this class of toponyms is inherently *morphologically* specified as [+DEF]. Since this feature value will have to also be present when they are used predicatively (irrespective of their syntax), (5b) will also be applicable to predicative uses.<sup>5</sup>

I will now show that *Sicily*-type toponyms are subdivided into further declension classes by the realization of AN- and LA-particles (section 2.2), that number plays a crucial role (section 2.3), that the system might be amenable to further simplification (section 2.4) and that the *Morocco*-type syncretism also characterizes locative encoding of nouns (section 3).

## 2.2. Realizational declension classes: from the French gender to MQ declension class

While Table 3 is taken from Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017, Table 4 summarizes their (2013, 2018) description of city names in locative contexts: monosyllabic city names appear with the particle *a* (7a), while polysyllabic city names are used unchanged (7b):<sup>6</sup>

- (7) a. Pòl ø a- Wòm. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC Rome  
*Paul is in Rome.*
- b. Pòl ø ø Fòdfrans.  
 Paul COP LOC Fort-de-France  
*Paul is in Fort-de-France.*

The realization of locative vs. non-locative cases of city names turns out to match the country name patterns:<sup>7, 8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> There would seem to be a simpler solution available: the LA-particle could be [-LOC] and *Sicily*-type toponyms would be impoverished of this feature in the context of [-DEF]. The entire system would then look like this:

- (i) Vocabulary Insertion rules
- a. [+LOC] ↔ AN *France*: locative  
 b. [-LOC] ↔ LA *France*: argument and predicative  
 c. otherwise Ø
- (ii) Impoverishment rules
- a. [-LOC] → Ø / \_\_[-DEF] for N<sub>SICILY</sub> *Sicily*: predicative zero marking  
 b. [-LOC] → Ø for N<sub>MOROCCO</sub> *Morocco*: non-locative syncretism  
 c. [αLOC] → Ø for N<sub>PANAMA</sub> *Panama*: zero marking

I have rejected this approach because the LA-particle is also used with nouns and there it cannot be regarded as an exponent of [-LOC] (see sections 3 and 4.1).

<sup>6</sup> Following Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2018, I use a null locative morpheme in (7b), yet as will become clear in section 4, I am not committed to this assumption.

<sup>7</sup> While Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013 do not talk about the predicative encoding of *Wòm* ‘Rome’, a reviewer confirms that is identical to its argument use.

<sup>8</sup> The source of this allomorphy is obviously French (see Cornulier 1972, Zwicky 1987, and Miller, Pullum and Zwicky 1997 for details). Toponyms that are feminine in French take *la* in MQ, vowel-initial ones mostly take *l-*, and plural ones take *léz-* if they begin with a vowel and *lé-* otherwise. As almost all city names in French take *à*, this is the source of the *a*-allomorph in row (c’). The bare city names will be accounted for by the impoverishment rules in (6): (6a) for row (a’) and (6b) for row (c’).

**Table 3: Country name allomorphy (the three-way pattern)**

		predicative	argument	locative
d.	<b>Sicily</b> , Bolivia, Hungary...	Sisil Ongri	<b>La-Sisil</b> <b>La-Ongri</b>	<b>an-Sisil</b> <b>an-Ongri</b>
e.	<b>Spain</b> , <b>Iran</b> , Afghanistan...	Espàn Iran	<b>L-espàn</b> <b>L-iran</b>	<b>ann-Espàn</b> <b>ann-Iran</b>
f.	<b>Seychelles</b> , Comoros...	Séchèl	<b>Lé-Séchèl</b>	<b>o-Séchèl</b>
g.	<b>USA</b> , UAE...	Etazini	<b>Léz-Etazini</b>	<b>oz-Etazini</b>

**Table 4: City name allomorphy (two syncretism patterns)**

		predicative	argument	locative
a.	<b>Panama</b> , Haiti, Cuba, Israel...	Panama	Panama	Panama
a'.	polysyllabic city names ( <b>F-d-F</b> )	Fòdfrans	Fòdfrans	Fòdfrans
c.	Chad, <b>Morocco</b> , Congo...	Mawòk	Mawòk	<b>o-Mawòk</b>
c'.	monosyllabic city names ( <b>Rome</b> )	Wòm	Wòm	<b>a-Wòm</b>

Unlike in French, where city names follow their own pattern, in MQ they fall into two classes matching two sub-classes of country name syncretism.<sup>9</sup>

An ordered set of stem-conditioned allomorphy rules for the abstract LA- and AN-morphemes can now be formulated:

(8) LA-allomorphy : LA ↔

- a. *léz* / \_\_ Etazini...
- b. *lé* / \_\_ Séchèl...
- c. *l* / \_\_ Espàn, Iran...
- d. *la* otherwise

(9) AN-allomorphy: AN ↔

- a. *oz* / \_\_ Etazini...
- b. *o* / \_\_ Séchèl...
- b'. *o* / \_\_ Mawòk...
- c. *ann* / \_\_ Espàn, Iran...
- d. *a* / \_\_ monosyllabic city names
- e. *an* otherwise

These rules can be further simplified, both on phonological and on morphological grounds. For this, the MQ collective definite determiner *lé* needs to be examined in more detail, which will provide evidence for treating the toponyms in rows (f) and (g) of Table 3 ((8/9a-b)) as *pluralia tantum*.

<sup>9</sup> There is a lot of variation in the behavior of MQ country names derived from French feminine trisyllables, and the quadrisyllabic vowel-initial *Endonézi* is assigned to class (a) (bare stem throughout) in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013, and to class (e) in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017. As Anne Zribi-Hertz (p.c.) points out, it does not seem possible to describe *the* grammar of MQ, only some individual grammars, and what is important is the systematic correlation between the AN-allomorph and the LA-allomorph.

### 2.3. Morphological plural in MQ

The collective plural determiner *lé* forms the subject of a separate section in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013. Postponing its detailed discussion till section 4.1, I will focus here on the two highly relevant instances that demonstrate that *lé* is plural and also can be regarded as the same LA-particle as in *Lé-Séché* ‘the Seychelles’ and *Léz-Etazini* ‘the USA’: plural names of bands (e.g., *lé Léopard* ‘the Leopards’, a music band from Martinique) and surnames (10):

- (10) a. Sé Lakwa-a jadinya dépèranfis. ZH&JL 2013  
 SÉ Lacroix-DET gardener for generations  
*These Lacroix have been gardeners for generations.*
- b. Lé Lakwa jadinya dépèranfis.  
 LÉ Lacroix gardener for generations  
*The Lacroix have been gardeners for generations.*

Unlike the plural marker *sé* (10a), which requires a definite NP (recognizable by the enclitic definite article *la*) and yields a specific definite interpretation (“these Lacroix” or “our local Lacroix”), the collective plural determiner *lé* (10b) combines with a bare surname to yield the family “unambiguously identified by the *Lakwa* patronym independently of the discourse context” (Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013). Since toponyms like *Lé-Séché* ‘the Seychelles’ and *Léz-Etazini* ‘the USA’ denote entities that can also be regarded as collective (or as *pluralia tantum*) and that are pronominalized by the third-person plural pronoun *yo* (Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:81), it seems reasonable to analyze *lé* as a plural instance of the LA-particle.<sup>10</sup>

By incorporating the number feature into the stem-conditioned allomorphy rules in (8) and (9), a more structured representation is obtained with less allomorphy than originally hypothesized and with no need to list specific vocabulary items for *lé* (*léz*) and *o* (*oz*):

- (11) LA-allomorphy : LA ↔
- a. *léz* / \_\_ [+PL] (*léz* / \_\_ V, *lé* otherwise)
- b. *l* / \_\_ Èspàn, Iran...
- c. *la* otherwise
- (12) AN-allomorphy: AN ↔
- a. *oz* / \_\_ [+PL] (*oz* / \_\_ V, *o* otherwise)
- b. *o* / \_\_ Mawòk...
- c. *a* / \_\_ monosyllabic city names
- d. *an* otherwise (*ann* / \_\_ V)

In addition to morphological simplification, some phonologically conditioned allomorphy is taken into consideration: *léz* is an allomorph of *lé* before a vowel-initial stem, and *an* is realized as *ann* before a vowel. Moreover, as all toponyms combining with *l-* are vowel-initial, *l-* can be viewed as a phonologically conditioned allomorph of *la*: the only mentioned exception is *La-Ongri* ‘Hungary’, which can be treated along the same lines as its French source containing the so-called *h-aspiré* (see Nyman 2021 for the most recent discussion and references).

### 2.4. Phonological and semantic bases of MQ declension classes

While gender is known to be sometimes semantic (e.g., Latin tree names are predominantly feminine, cf. Bennett 1918:10), declension classes (which are morphological in that they only

<sup>10</sup> Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013 argue that the collective plural determiner *lé* is a functional head rather than an affix. As the discussion in section 4.1 will make clear, even if *lé* in plural surnames and band names is not the same as the AN/LA-particle, this will not affect the validity of the analysis presented in this section.



determine the choice of the affixes in the nominal paradigm) are not expected to be linked to semantics. Nonetheless the pattern in (12c) characterizes only monosyllabic city names, which means that this declension class is determined by semantics and phonology at once and might be a reason to not treat *a* as an allomorph of AN.

Yet phonological sensitivity is rampant in the grammar of MQ toponyms. As Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 note, there are no toponyms with more than two syllables in the classes (c) of Table 1 and (f) of Table 3. While their shared locative exponent (*o* with a floating *z* added in the plural) is obviously the lightest syllabic case exponent from the point of view of syllable structure, why it disallows longer toponyms remains a mystery.

In addition, as Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 also point out, MQ has a general (violable) constraint against monosyllabic nominals. In toponyms this is reflected in two ways: all toponyms in [1] class (b) of Table 1 (requiring LA in the predicative case, too) and [2] class (c') of Table 4 (requiring *o* in the locative case, though bare in other cases) are monosyllabic. Since monosyllabic city names can be used without the LA-particle (though monosyllabic country names aren't), the constraint is either violable or linked to some difference in their syntax, which is not obvious to me. The fact that common nouns combining with *o* (section 3) are not restricted to monosyllables further complicates the issue.

I conclude this minor section with the observation that these distinctions between city names and country names, while stemming from the lexifier language, may have a different status in MQ as shown by their sensitivity to the size of the stem.

### 3. Nominal declension classes: locative nouns

Neither the LA-particle nor the AN-particle are limited to toponyms. While the latter is also used in various oblique contexts to indicate an instrument, means of transportation, language, time, or matter, *inter alia* (see Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:83-85) and can therefore be regarded as a general oblique case marker, the LA-particle can function with some nouns as an allomorph of the AN-particle giving rise to syncretism patterns not attested for toponyms.

Specifically, Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2018 note that some nouns denoting institutionalized places (*biro* 'office', *maché* 'market', *doktè* 'doctor's', etc.) pattern with *Morocco* (row (c) in Table 1) and take the *o*-allomorph (13), while others (14) pattern with *Panama* (row (a) in Table 1) and polysyllabic city names (row (a') in Table 4) in that they denote locations without an AN-particle or preposition:

- (13) Pòl ø ø- biro. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC office  
*Paul is at the office.*
- (14) a. Pòl ø ø légliz. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC church  
*Paul is at the movies/in church.*
- b. Mari alé \*(la-) plaj. ZH&JL 2013  
 Mary go LOC beach.  
*Mary has gone to beach.*
- c. Pòl ø ø sinéma. ZH&JL 2018  
 Paul COP LOC movies  
*Paul is at the movies/in church.*

The nouns that are used as locatives without an AN-particle or a preposition (14) fall into three categories: historically *l*-initial nouns, such as *légliz* 'church', *lékòl* 'school', *lajòl* 'prison', etc., (14a), which cannot be used without the initial *l*- (or *la*-), cf. (15a); those that, like *plaj* 'beach',

*pisin* ‘swimming pool’ or *fak* ‘college’, use the LA-particle instead of the AN-particle (14b) but are also used bare (15b); and those, like *sinéma* ‘cinema’, that are only used bare (14c).<sup>11</sup>

- (15) a. Ni an (nouvo) \*(la)jòl adan vil ta'a. ZH&JL 2013  
 have a new jail in town DEM-DET  
*There is a (new) jail in this town.*
- b. Ni dé ti plaj adan vil ta'a.  
 have two small beach in town DEM-DET  
*There are two small beaches in this town.*

While not all historical *l*-initial nouns are locative (e.g., *lous* ‘bear’, *laj* ‘age’), many of them are Löbner’s (1985) semantic definites functioning as concepts and do not need a separate LA-particle (nor, by extension, a separate AN-particle). It is difficult not to note that they resemble in this respect toponyms of the *Panama*-type.

Finally, the number distinction discussed in section 2.3 for toponyms is also present in locative common nouns, which, from the discussion in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:86, seem to be *pluralia tantum*:

- (16) a. I ka travay oz-Antikité. ZH&JL2013  
 3SG IMPV work LOC-Antiquities  
*S/he works in Antiquities (museum section).*
- b. Siparis té oz-oubliyèt an 1902.  
 Cyparis was LOC-prison LOC 1902  
*Cyparis was in prison in 1902.*

The fact that they appear without an overt particle in predicative environments (17) leaves open the question if in their argument use they are bare like *Morocco* (row (c) in Table 1) or preceded by the LA-particle like *Sicily* (row (d) in Table 1), which is why I leave the question open if the relevant morphological rules (6) and (12) should be adjusted.

- (17) Ni dé {Antikité/\*Zantikité} adan mizé ta-a. adapted from ZH&JL 2017:86  
 there.is two Antiquities in museum DEM-DET  
*There are two Antiquities sections in this museum.*

Returning to singular non-prepositional locatives, Table 5 shows that two of their declension patterns coincide with those of toponyms and two are new:<sup>12</sup>

**Table 5: Common noun locative allomorphy**

		predicative	argument	locative
a''.	<i>Panama</i> -pattern: cinema...	<i>sinéma</i>	<i>sinéma</i>	<i>sinéma</i>
b.	[–PRED] syncretism: beach...	<i>plaj</i>	<i>la-plaj</i>	<i>la-plaj</i>
c''.	<i>Morocco</i> -pattern: office...	<i>biro</i>	<i>biro</i>	<b><i>o-biro</i></b>
d.	L-form throughout: church...	<i>légliz</i>	<i>légliz</i>	<i>légliz</i>

<sup>11</sup> Moreton 2001:93 mentions similar integration facts for the initial *z* in MQ (as in *zel* ‘wing’, from the original French plural) and Vaillant 2016, for the French partitive *de* in *dlo* ‘water’ (*de l’eau*) and *difé* ‘fire’ (*du feu*).

<sup>12</sup> Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:83-85 discuss further cases where common nouns are introduced by the AN-particle (recognizable by liaison): material (*an(n)-arjan* ‘of silver’), languages (*an(n)-arabe* ‘in Arabic’), months (*ann-avril* ‘in April’), and seasons (*ann-ivè* ‘in winter’, *o-prentan* ‘in spring’). Only the last one clearly shows a division into declension classes (*an(n)* vs. *o*). There does not seem to be any intersection between these nouns and those introduced by the locative and instrumental particle *o* (see section 4.2 for some discussion).

The patterns in (a'') and (c'') are the easiest, as they perfectly match the patterns in (a) and (c) in Table 1 and can be accounted for by treating the nouns in these categories as subject to the same impoverishment rules and Vocabulary Insertion rules:

(6') **Locative impoverishment rules (with adjusted lists)**

- a.  $[+DEF] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [-LOC]$  for  $N_{\text{MOROCCO, OFFICE}}$  *Morocco: non-locative syncretism*  
 b.  $[\alpha DEF] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_$  for  $N_{\text{PANAMA, CINEMA}}$  *Panama: zero marking*

- (12') b.  $AN \leftrightarrow o_1 / \_$  for  $N_{\text{MOROCCO, OFFICE}}$  *Morocco: adjusted VI rule*

In other words, these two patterns are accounted for by expanding the list of lexical items to which the independently motivated impoverishment and Vocabulary Insertion rules apply.

The pattern (b) of Table 5 seems to be based on the feature value [+DEF] shared between the two *la*-cells. This pattern is precisely the reason why I have avoided linking the LA-particle to the feature [-LOC] (see fn. 5). To account for the pattern (b) of Table 5 it is sufficient to get rid of the feature [+LOC]:

- (6) c.  $[+LOC] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_$  for  $N_{\text{BEACH}}$  *beach: referential syncretism*

If the feature [+LOC] is removed, the locative and argument uses of a toponym will be subject to the Vocabulary Insertion rule for the LA-particle.

If the impoverishment rule in (6c) is applied to nouns lexically specified as [+DEF], it yields an unexpected, but welcome result, producing the pattern observed with nouns that are *l*-initial in all three positions (*légliz* 'church', *lékòl* 'school', *lajòl* 'prison', etc.). As they are [+DEF] they will appear with the LA-particle in the predicative use, while the impoverishment of the feature [+LOC] yields the LA-particle in the locative use as well. The impoverishment rule in (6c) should therefore be specified as also applying to obligatorily *l*-initial nouns:

- (6) c'.  $[+LOC] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_$  for  $N_{\text{BEACH, CHURCH}}$  *beach, church: referential syncretism*

Summarizing, the two impoverishment rules motivated by the syncretism patterns of toponyms also account for two sub-classes of common nouns. The third one, motivated by one subclass of common nouns, also accounts for the other: extending to this last subclass of common nouns the stipulation that the uninterpretable feature [+DEF] can be inherently valued on some lexical items produces the remaining pattern of *l*-nouns: those that appear with the LA-particle in all three cases.

Putting together the list of impoverishment and Vocabulary Insertion rules, I replace the pre-theoretical notion of the LA-particle and the AN-particle with the sets of features realized by individual lexical items and indicate liaison phenomena:<sup>13</sup>

(18) **Locative impoverishment rules (final version)**

- a.  $[+DEF] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [-LOC]$  for  $N_{\text{MOROCCO, ROME, OFFICE}}$  *Morocco: non-locative syncretism*  
 b.  $[\alpha DEF] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_$  for  $N_{\text{PANAMA, FORT-DE-FRANCE, CINEMA}}$  *Panama: zero marking*  
 c.  $[+LOC] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_$  for  $N_{\text{BEACH}}$  *beach: referential syncretism*

(19) **Vocabulary Insertion rules**

- a.  $[+DEF][+LOC][+PL] \leftrightarrow o^z (oz / \_ V, o \text{ otherwise})$

<sup>13</sup> While Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017 explicitly indicate that *ann* is the prevocalic allomorph of *an*, and *oz/léz* surface as *o/lé* before consonants, the hypothesis that *la* surfaces as *l* before vowels is my own and based on the lack of counterexamples (with the exception of *La-Ongri* 'Hungary'). Following the usual treatment of liaison in French, I assume that the final consonant of the plural AN/LA-particle is underlying and floating.

- b. [+DEF][+LOC] ↔
  - i. *o* / \_\_\_ Mawòk..., biro...
  - ii. *a* / \_\_\_ monosyllabic city names
  - iii. *an* otherwise (*ann* / \_\_\_ V)
- c. [+DEF][+PL] ↔ *lé* (*léz* / \_\_\_ V, *lé* otherwise)
- d. [+DEF] ↔ *la* (*l* / \_\_\_ V)
- e. otherwise Ø

If the AN/LA-particle realizes specific sets of features that are morphological (i.e., can be purely formal but based in syntax and semantics), where are these features located?

#### 4. The AN-particle in the context of associated morphemes

The fact that the AN/LA-particle appears in the predicative use of monosyllabic country names like *La-Frans* ‘France’ (as well as of historically *l*-initial nouns) suggests that it cannot itself be D. This does not entail that D is not present when such a toponym or common noun is used as an argument (in fact, I cannot assume that D is absent, given that I have argued for a predicate-based approach to proper names (Matushansky 2008)), yet the AN/LA-particle cannot be D.

I suggest instead that the AN/LA-particle is a portmanteau agreement morpheme on N: it consists of the features [ $\alpha$ DEF], [ $\alpha$ PL] and [ $\alpha$ LOC], valued by agreement with the weak (non-anaphoric) definite D.<sup>14</sup> As I proposed in Matushansky 2008 for argument proper names, this D m-merges with a non-branching N. The lack of such a D (as in predicative uses) entails agreement failure and the default specification of these features as [–DEF] and [–LOC] (modulo fn. 14).

I have argued in Matushansky 2015, 2019, 2021 that some toponyms and common nouns can denote locations (*loci*) rather than objects and as such can function as locatives without the need for a preposition. The behavior of MQ toponyms and nouns discussed in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013, 2017, 2018 puts them squarely into this category. I propose that the very semantic property (locus denotation) that allows them to be used as locatives is also responsible for the fact that they are specified for the [ $\alpha$  LOC] feature, yet the connection is sufficiently indirect to permit the morphological feature so far called [ $\alpha$  LOC] to actually correspond to the broader oblique case (see fn. 12 and section 4.2).

Viewing the AN/LA-particle as a portmanteau of a definiteness (or rigidity) feature, a number feature and a case feature on N has two important consequences. Firstly, it places the AN/LA-affix into a sufficient local relation with the host noun for the latter to control impoverishment and allomorphy. Secondly, it sets the AN/LA-particle syntactically and morphologically apart from the suffixal definite article in MQ.

A potential problem for this view is that the *lé* allomorph of the AN/LA-particle (section 2.3) is homophonous with the collective determiner *lé*, and its *an* allomorph, with the general locative preposition *an* ‘at/to/in/on’. While neither of these morphemes is affixal in nature, I will argue now that this cannot be regarded as evidence against my proposal, and in fact, may be taken as evidence for it.

##### 4.1. The collective determiner *lé*

The plural *lé* allomorph of the MQ AN/LA-particle is explicitly compared to the collective plural determiner *lé* in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013:fn.21. While the semantic conditions on the use of the two morphemes can be argued to be the same, namely, the rigidity of reference (see

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<sup>14</sup> Except for monosyllabic country names and historically *l*-initial nouns, which are lexically marked as [+DEF].

section 2.3), the collective plural determiner *lé* is clearly a functional head rather than an affix. Firstly, as Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013 demonstrate, it combines with NPs, including those containing modifiers (20a) or lacking an overt head noun (20b):

- (20) a. Sinéma, lé dézyèm wòl ka genyen mwens lajan ki lé prèmyé wòl.  
 movies LÉ minor role IPFV earn less money than LÉ leading role  
*In the movies, the Minor Roles earn less money than the Leading Roles.*
- b. An pwensip, lé gran mwen rapid ki lé piti.  
 in principle LÉ big less fast than LÉ small  
*As a rule, big ones are slower than small ones.*

Secondly, unlike the *lé* allomorph of the AN/LA-particle, the collective plural determiner *lé* does not change to *léz* before a vowel:<sup>15</sup>

- (21) *lé* étidyan \*→ \**létidyan*/\**lézétidyan* ZH&JL 2013  
 LÉ student  
*the Students*

Nonetheless, the DM-style approach adopted here makes it possible for us to account for the same surface realization of two structurally distinct morphemes with no further assumptions.

Indeed, the relevant Vocabulary Insertion rule (19c), repeated here for the sake of convenience, specifies the values of the features [DEF] and [PL] for the insertion of *lé*, but not the category of the lexical item on which these features can be present:

- (19) c. [+DEF][+PL] ↔ *léz* (*léz* / \_\_ V, *lé* otherwise)

Assuming that the collective plural determiner *lé* corresponds to the functional head D, which is specified for number (by agreement) and for definiteness (most likely semantically, by virtue of its denotation), these features would naturally receive the same realization on D as they do on N (just like the case and number portmanteau receives the same realization on nouns and adjectives in Latin). The impossibility of *léz* (or *l*) in (21) can be explained by the different morpho-syntactic status: some phonological rules only apply word-internally, and this type of liaison in MQ would seem to be one of them.

The same surface realization of D and of the AN/LA-particle should not therefore be taken as evidence against distinguishing between the two, and the proper status of *lé* in plural surnames and band names is, as promised, of no import for the analysis. The question, however, arises of whether *lé* in D and the AN/LA-particle *lé* can be regarded as involving the same definiteness feature, especially given that the latter (surfacing, when overt, as *o* in locative and other oblique positions of some nouns and as *la* otherwise, section 3) is also used with common nouns.

Without an additional in-depth investigation two options can be considered. Firstly, common nouns introduced with the AN/LA-particle can themselves be rigid, and such a view would be fully compatible with their analysis as concepts. Secondly, if, as hinted at above, the nominal feature [DEF] receives the positive value when the definite determiner is weak in the sense of Ebert 1971a, b and Schwarz 2009, 2013 (i.e., when definiteness stems from uniqueness rather than familiarity), then common noun concepts, toponyms and anti-specific NPs as described by Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2013 would all entail weak definiteness.

<sup>15</sup> Most likely, the collective plural determiner *lé* also does not take the form *o/oz*. Firstly, this possibility is not mentioned anywhere, secondly, the collective plural determiner *lé* may combine with NPs of the wrong semantic type. Conversely, weak definite plural locatives, exemplified in (16), might not have the concept interpretation in the object domain compatible with an argument use that would allow the LA-particle. In other words, if there are nouns that permit both, this would confirm the unified analysis, and if there aren't, it should not disprove it. Further research is needed to determine if this conjecture is correct.

I conclude that the unified morphological analysis of *lé* is possible despite the difference in its syntactic status as D with NPs or as the AN/LA-particle in toponyms.

#### 4.2. The preposition *an*

Another case where two different morpho-syntactic objects may receive the same realization are the AN/LA-particle in the locative case and the general locative preposition *an* ‘at/to/in/on’. The empirical boundary between the two is not always obvious: while the distinction between the AN/LA-particle and the collective plural determiner *lé* is reflected in the lack of liaison for the latter (section 4.1), the distinction between the preposition *an* and the non-locative AN-particle is not: for common nouns the realization of the non-locative AN-particle as *ann* rather than *an* before vowels is apparently primarily determined by frequency and is never obligatory (Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:83-85):

- (22) a. I enmen tjüiyè *an(n)*- arjan. material AN: optional liaison  
 3SG likes spoon AN silver  
*S/he likes silver spoons.*
- b. I enmen kolié *an(\*n)*-ivwa/agat. material AN: no liaison  
 3SG likes necklace AN ivory/agate  
*S/he likes ivory/agate necklaces.*

Yet in cases like (23a), due to an anonymous reviewer, or (23b), with an article and a modifier, *an* is clearly prepositional, which means that we are dealing here with another case of the same surface form corresponding to two structures: a head and an agreement marker.

- (23) a. I mété sak li *an* gran chamm lan.  
 3SG put bag 3SG in big room DET  
*S/he put her bag in the big room.*
- b. I kay souvan *an* téat-la (ou konnèt -la). ZH&JL 2017:87  
 3SG go.IMPV often AN theater-DET 2SG know DET  
*S/he often goes to the theater (that you know).*

I propose, like for *lé* in the previous section, that the same surface realization may correspond to the same featural specification associated with two different categories. However, since I have suggested (19b) that the surface *an* is the exponent of the features [+DEF][+LOC] and the feature [DEF] is not expected to appear on a preposition, some non-trivial changes will have to be made in the Locative impoverishment rules (18) and the Vocabulary Insertion rules (19) to deal properly with the preposition *an*. Specifically, the AN-particle will have to correspond only to [+LOC] and the feature [+DEF] will have to be impoverished in the context of [+LOC] to ensure non-ambiguity in Vocabulary Insertion (cf. section 2.1).

Another major change would concern the correspondence between morphology and semantics. As examples (22) and (24) show, the morpheme *an* may have non-locative semantics:

- (24) a. I vini *an(\*n)* avion/élikoptè. means of transportation AN  
 3SG came AN plane/helicopter  
*S/he came by plane/helicopter.*
- b. I penn atè-a *an(\*n)* owanj/ akajou/endigo. result AN  
 3SG painted floor-DET AN orange acajou indigo  
*S/he painted the floor orange/acajou/indigo.*

While examples (24) could be argued to have a metaphorical locative interpretation, this is far more difficult for examples (22). To account for them I propose that the morphological feature [αLOC] corresponds not only to the interpretable [locative] or its uninterpretable counterpart,

but also to those of material, result, duration and several others (see Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:83-85 for the full list). Whether all these uses are metaphoric extensions of the locative or involve a null preposition that assigns [+LOC] is immaterial for an analysis that hypothesizes the same surface realization for the two, but if the semantics of location is not always involved, the feature [ $\alpha$ LOC] would be better renamed as an oblique case feature, [ $\alpha$ OBL].

If this approach proves to be on the right track, the distinction between case (here merged with definiteness and number) and prepositions would truly be minimal: the same feature ([ $\alpha$ OBL]) would be uninterpretable for the former and interpretable for the latter but would be realized the same in two structurally different locations.

### 4.3. The non-locative *o*

Further support for [ $\alpha$ OBL] comes from the instrumental *o* with common nouns (e.g., *o-kréyon* ‘by pencil’). As this use of an item surface-identical to the AN-particle is also non-locative, the question arises if it is also a case-marker or represents a different lexical item. In the latter case it is expected that some nouns would be able to appear with both *o* and *an* in function of the desired interpretation, while in the former one might expect that the use of *an* with some nouns would denote instruments (as is the case for season names, see fn. 12) and also to encounter the allomorph *oz*.

Neither theory is easy to verify. On the one hand, a noun might not be found that can be used both as an instrument and as material, color, clothing or any other use of *an* provided in Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis 2017:83-85. On the other hand, the lack of instrument nouns that take *an* or *oz* allomorphs of the AN-particle does not disprove the concept itself. Having sketched an analysis of *an* that relies upon a clear distinction between the interpretable preposition and the uninterpretable particle for the locative uses of *o* and *an*, I leave the non-locative uses of *o* for future research.

## 5. Conclusion

I have argued that the AN/LA-particle of MQ corresponds to an agreement marker on the noun or toponym realizing the features [DEF], [PL] and [LOC]. I have also proposed that the surface realization of the AN/LA-particle can be attributed to nouns-specific impoverishment rules, the number specification and declension classes. The full picture of AN/LA-realization for locative nouns and toponyms in MQ is summarized below:

**Table 6: The case system of locative nouns in Martinican Creole**

		predicative	argument	locative
a.	<b>Panama</b> , Haiti, Cuba, Israel...	Panama	Panama	Panama
a'.	polysyllabic city names	Fòdfrans	Fòdfrans	Fòdfrans
a''.	movie-type common nouns	sinéma	sinéma	sinéma
b.	China, <b>France</b> , <b>India</b> ...	Lafrans Lend	Lafrans Lend	<b>an</b> -Frans <b>ann</b> -End
c.	Chad, <b>Morocco</b> , Congo...	Mawòk	Mawòk	<b>o</b> -Mawòk
c'.	monosyllabic city names	Wòm	Wòm	<b>a</b> -Wòm
c''.	office-type common nouns	biro	biro	<b>o</b> -biro
d.	<b>Sicily</b> , Bolivia, <b>Hungary</b> ...	Sisil Ongri	<b>La</b> -Sisil <b>La</b> -Ongri	<b>an</b> -Sisil <b>an</b> -Ongri
e.	vowel-initial toponyms: <b>Spain</b> , <b>Iran</b> , Afghanistan...	Espàn Iran	<b>L</b> -espàn <b>L</b> -iran	<b>ann</b> -Espàn <b>ann</b> -Iran
f.	plural toponyms: <b>Seychelles</b> , Comoros...	Séchèl	<b>Lé</b> -Séchèl	<b>o</b> -Séchèl
g.	vowel-initial plural toponyms: <b>USA</b> , UAE...	Etazini	<b>Léz</b> -Etazini	<b>oz</b> -Etazini
g'.	vowel-initial plural nouns: prison, Antiquities...	Antikité	?	<b>oz</b> -Antikité <b>oz</b> -oubliyèt
h.	[–PRED] syncretism: beach...	plaj	<b>la</b> -plaj	<b>la</b> -plaj
i.	L-initial common nouns	légliz	légliz	légliz

While the proposed system of Vocabulary Insertion rules (18) and impoverishment (19) rules handles all observed patterns, it overgenerates slightly. Firstly, only two patterns from the full spectrum of toponym declension classes in Table 1 are attested for common nouns (Table 5, modulo fn. 12). Secondly, the impoverishment pattern (19c) is not attested for toponyms. Only further investigation can determine whether these gaps are accidental.

I have furthermore suggested that the surface identity between the plural form of the LA-particle and the plural collective determiner *lé*, as well as the same realization of the AN-particle and the preposition *an* can be attributed to categorial underspecification of the Vocabulary Insertion rules (18). The hypothesis that the same features may have the same surface realization on two different heads paves the way to better understanding of how prepositions develop into cases and determiners, into definiteness markers.

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