

Audience Design and eighteenth century Virgin Islands Dutch Creole

Philological aspects of Virgin Islands Dutch Creole texts

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A brief sketch of Virgin Islands Dutch Creole

- Dutch related Creole
- Danish Antilles, from 1917 on: US Virgin Islands
- First mention 1736 – last speaker 1987
- Early texts: printed from 1742 onward
- Early grammar: printed in 1770
- Replaced by English (Creole): first half 19th century
- Spoken language studied in 1920s, 1936 and 1970-80s
- New sources found in Herrnhut (Germany): 1980s

- Dutch lexicon: Flemish/Zeelandic
- Atlantic Creole characteristics
- Elements from several European languages
- Several aspects are clearly West-African/Ghana related

Early stages – written sources – artificial? It looks ok...

- What did VIDC look like in early stages?
 - manuscripts: close to period of emergence (1737 – 1833)



- 1985: Am a rup sji butji fo ko help am fo mata di kui
- (He called his brother to come and help him to kill the cow.)
- 1936 buchi mata kui
- 1923 butji mata kui
- 1768 boedje mattaaan koei
- 1773(?) Em a roep si Jünger vor kom na Em
‘He called his disciples to come to him.’

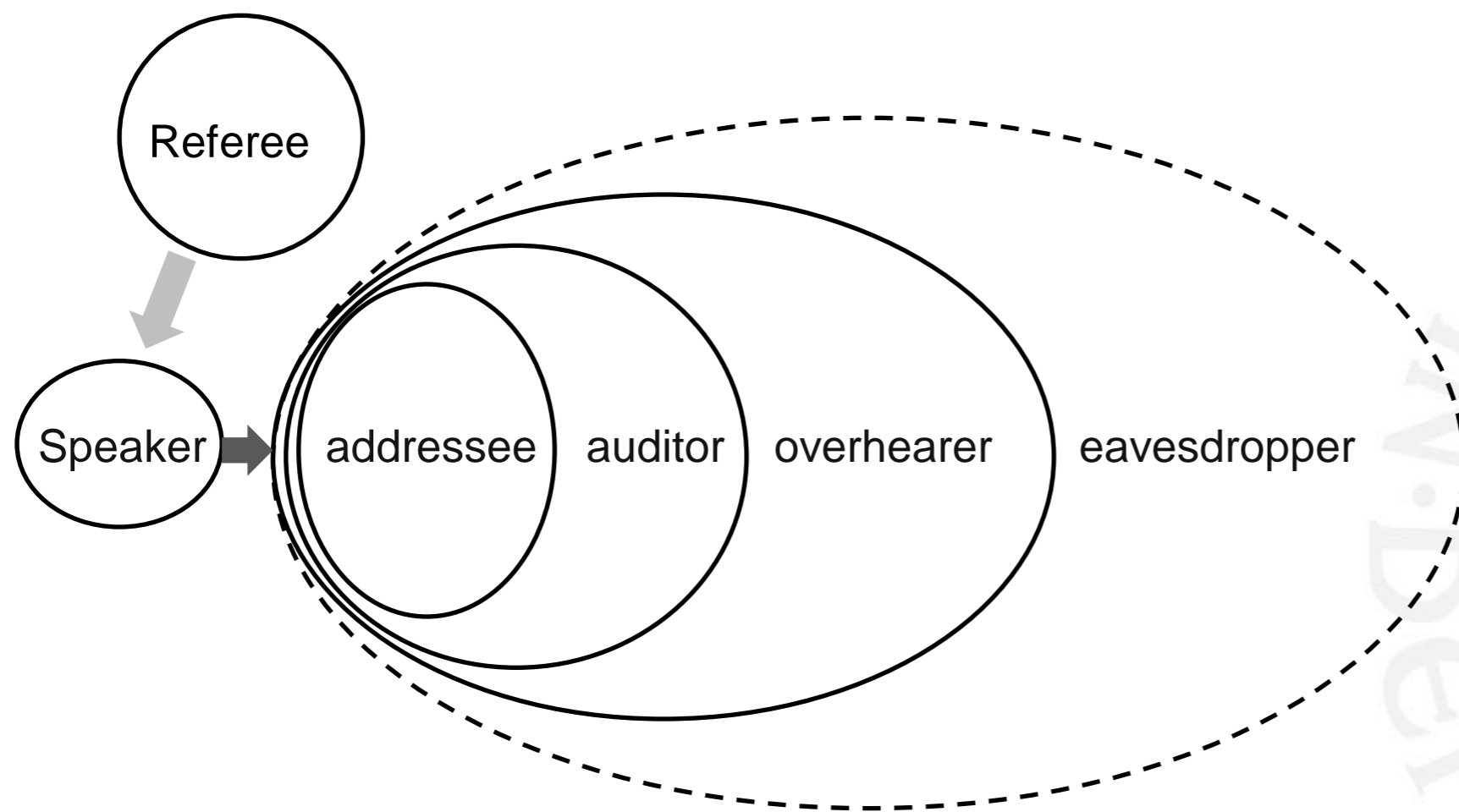
Early stages – written sources – artificial? Longer texts

- Longer texts from early stages look artificial compared to 20th century spoken Dutch Creole
 - Blurred by European orthography
 - Texts seem too Dutch or German
 - Language of missionaries is German, Dutch is used for missionary activities
- Creole?
 - Written language created by missionaries or a display of every day vernacular?
- Dutch seems to be very influential
 - Dutch as koinè/lingua franca
 - Société d'habitation → Dutch as target language
 - Dutch was used by government etc. until second half 18th century

Which language does the translator want to use?

- 1732: Dutch New Testament, Dutch ABC-booklets
- 1736: first mention of plan to translate into Creole
- 1739: Creole to address the audience of Christianized slaves
- From 1749 onward: large Creole texts in use in missionary settings
- For missionary reasons: Connect to the language of the audience
- Changes are made to improve text for the audience, so...
- Use of textual changes/philological aspects in texts to find authentic Creole

Audience Design model (Bell 1984, 1997)



- What does the audience look alike?

Audience Design

- Audience Design (Bell 1984, 1997), focus on oral communication
- “The primary engine of style shifting is the speaker’s urge to gain the audience’s approval.” (Patrick)
 - changes in written texts may be signs of improvement towards the audience.
- Style shifts are mainly responses to features of context/audience
- “Improvements can become sustainable in following texts and can be recognized as ‘flavour’ of these groups.” (Patrick)
 - the translator learns step by step to connect best to audience.
 - Emergence of new variety?
- “Not all groups in the audience are equally important.”
 - Indeed: language of enslaved people differs from all other groups.
 - Texts to be used in services of Moravian Brethren

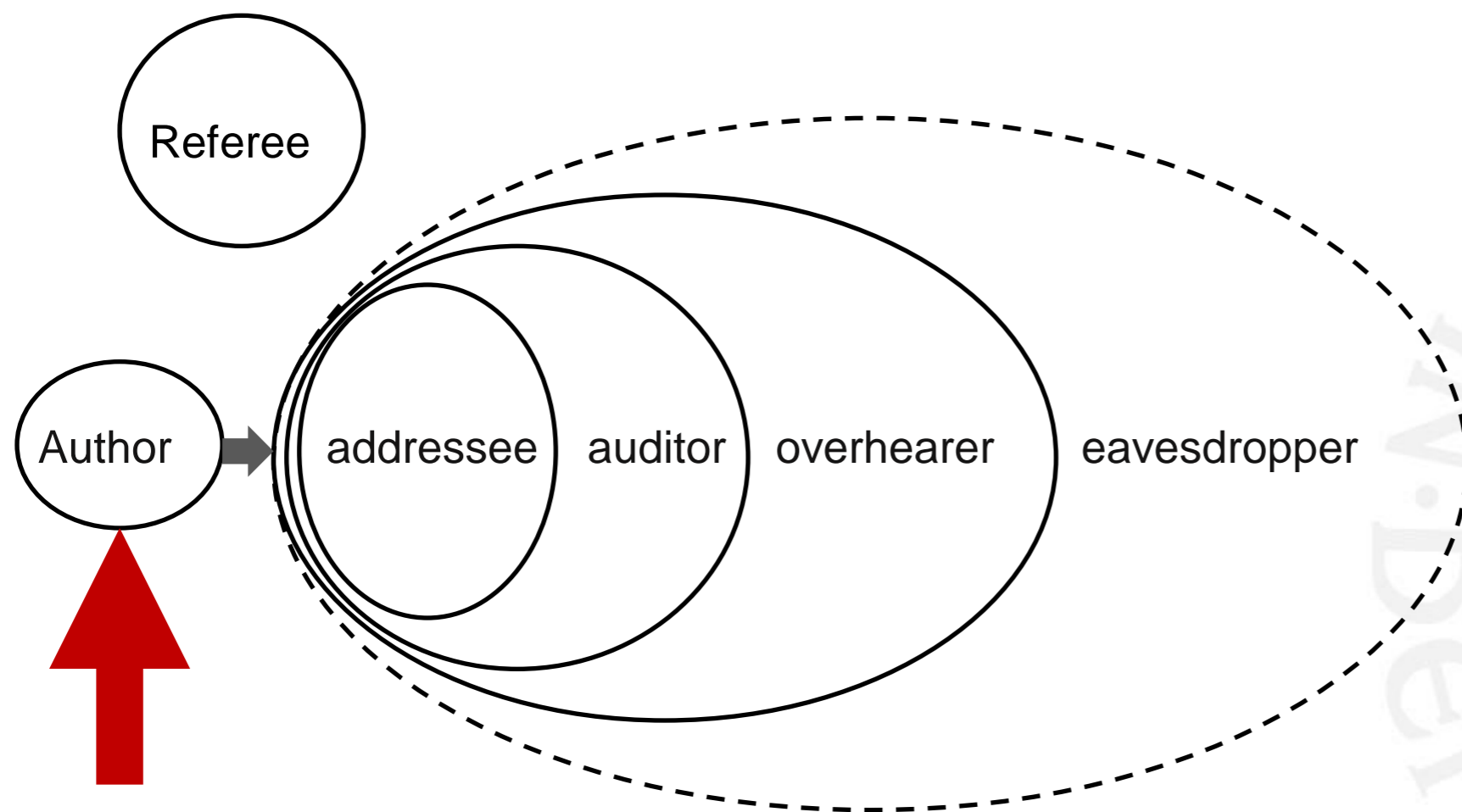
Audience Design: also useful for written discourse

- See Thieme (2010) about Suffragists' texts in newspapers (1909-1912)
- But... More or less polemic and so reactions may be expected
- In my case: not polemic, so no discussion, but only self correction to improve the texts

Some remarks and relation to corpus

- Which features of audience does the author respond to?
- See for instance change of word order
- Changing prepositions.
- Simplification of complex items
- Focused on audience attributes rather than linguistic features.
- Metalinguistic comments help to sketch language of audience
- It tends to assume a consensus model of the speech community (agreement on the social value of varieties.)
- Written texts are written for a more or less large audience.
- It is possible to see all style shifting as initiative rather than responsive.
- Need for style shifting to be comprehensible and the fact of translating also emphasizes the responsive character.

Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



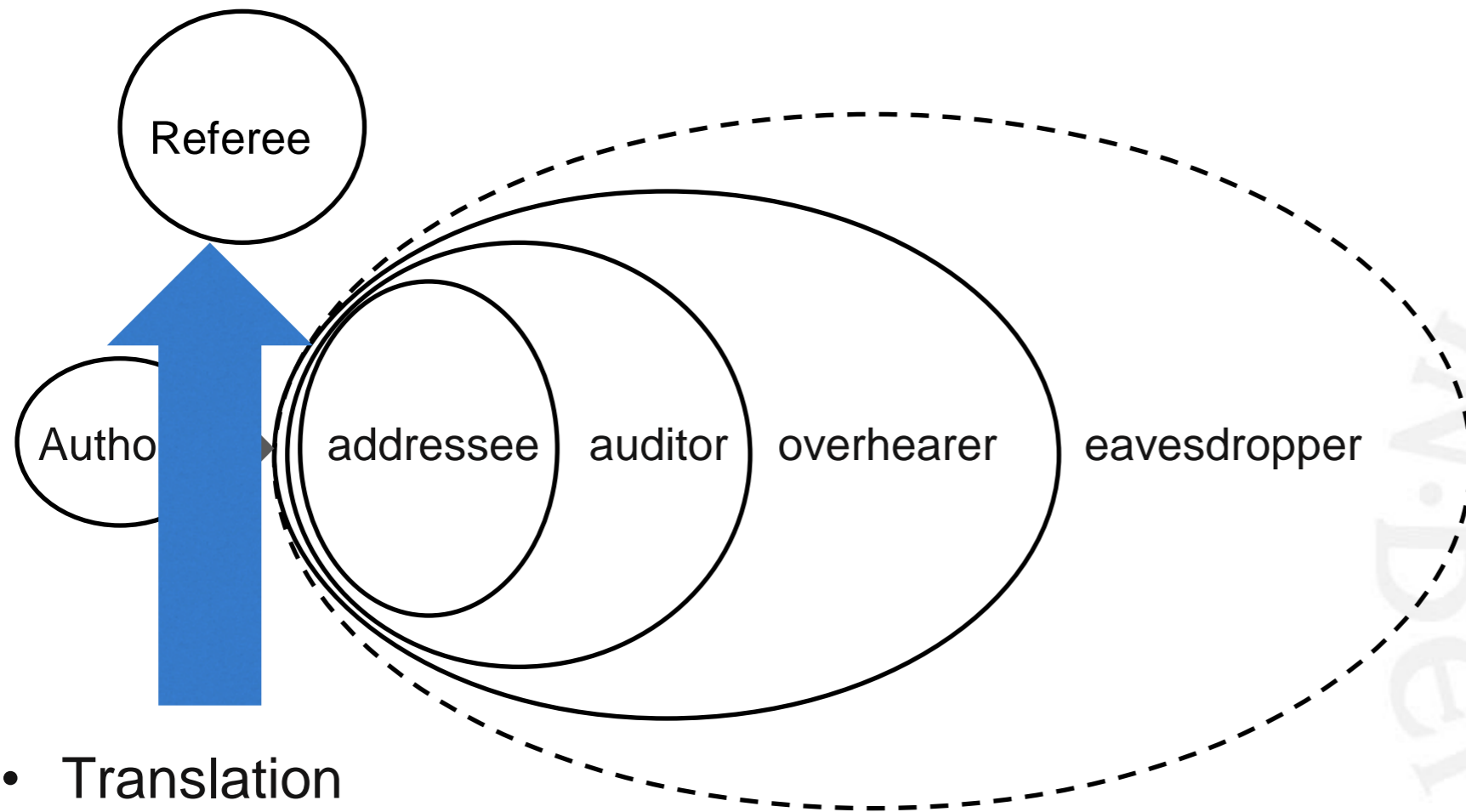
L1: German, English

L2: Dutch, Creole

Metalinguistic comments about his experience and knowledge of Creole

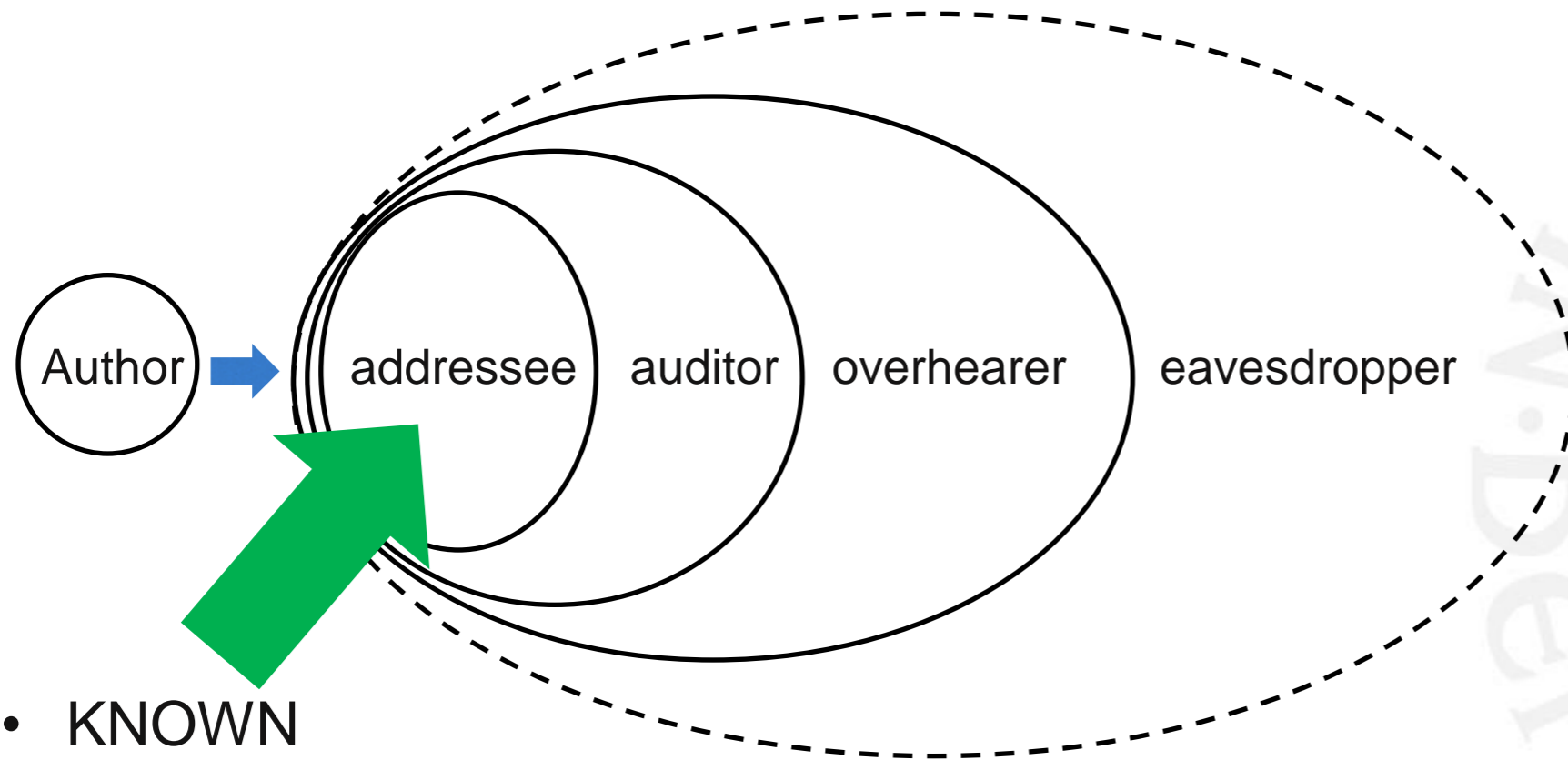
Known by name

Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



- Translation
- Tradition/selection of texts
- Church Jargon, metalinguistic comments
- German/Danish
- Not present, but author still wants to identify while writing for audience.

Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



- KNOWN
- RATIFIED
- ADRESSED
- AWARE

Christianized enslaved people, helpers
Creole/Dutch/African language speaking?

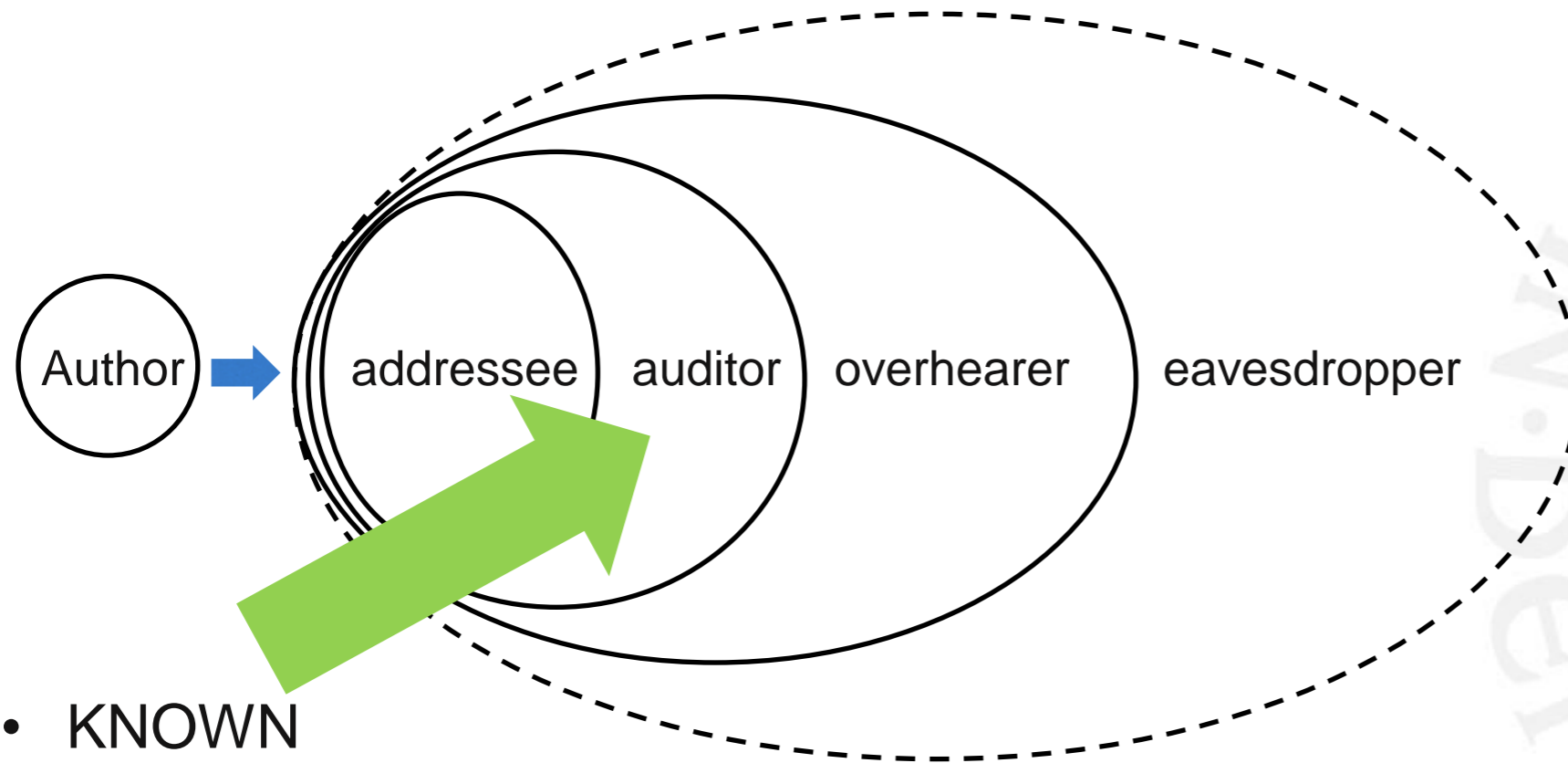
- Use of Creole and Dutch

Addressees? Helpers?

- Example:
 - (1730s-40s)
 - Pieter, Domingo Gesoe, Abraham
 - (1750s-1780s)
 - Cornelius
- Several letters
- in Dutch and in Creole
- Metalinguistic comment via letter
- “Cornelius gefällt es auch gar nicht, und er wünscht dass von uns zum wenigsten das Neue Testament in ihrer Sprache möchte gedruckt werden, weil ihnen meine übersetzung deutlich u. ihrer Mund Art zu reden an gemessen ist,” (Böhner, August 2, 1781)



Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



- KNOWN
- RATIFIED
- ADRESSED
- AWARE

Community of enslaved people and missionaries?
Church jargon, widely understood Creole, English?

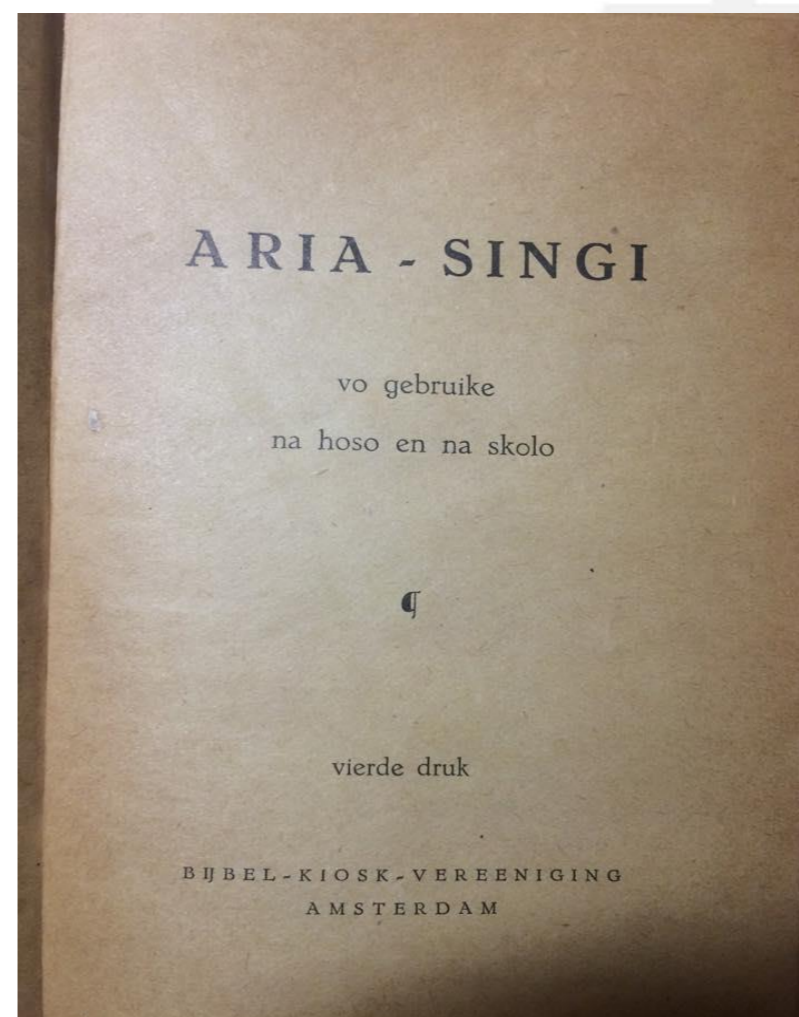
Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century): Widely understood Creole?

Creole (L1)

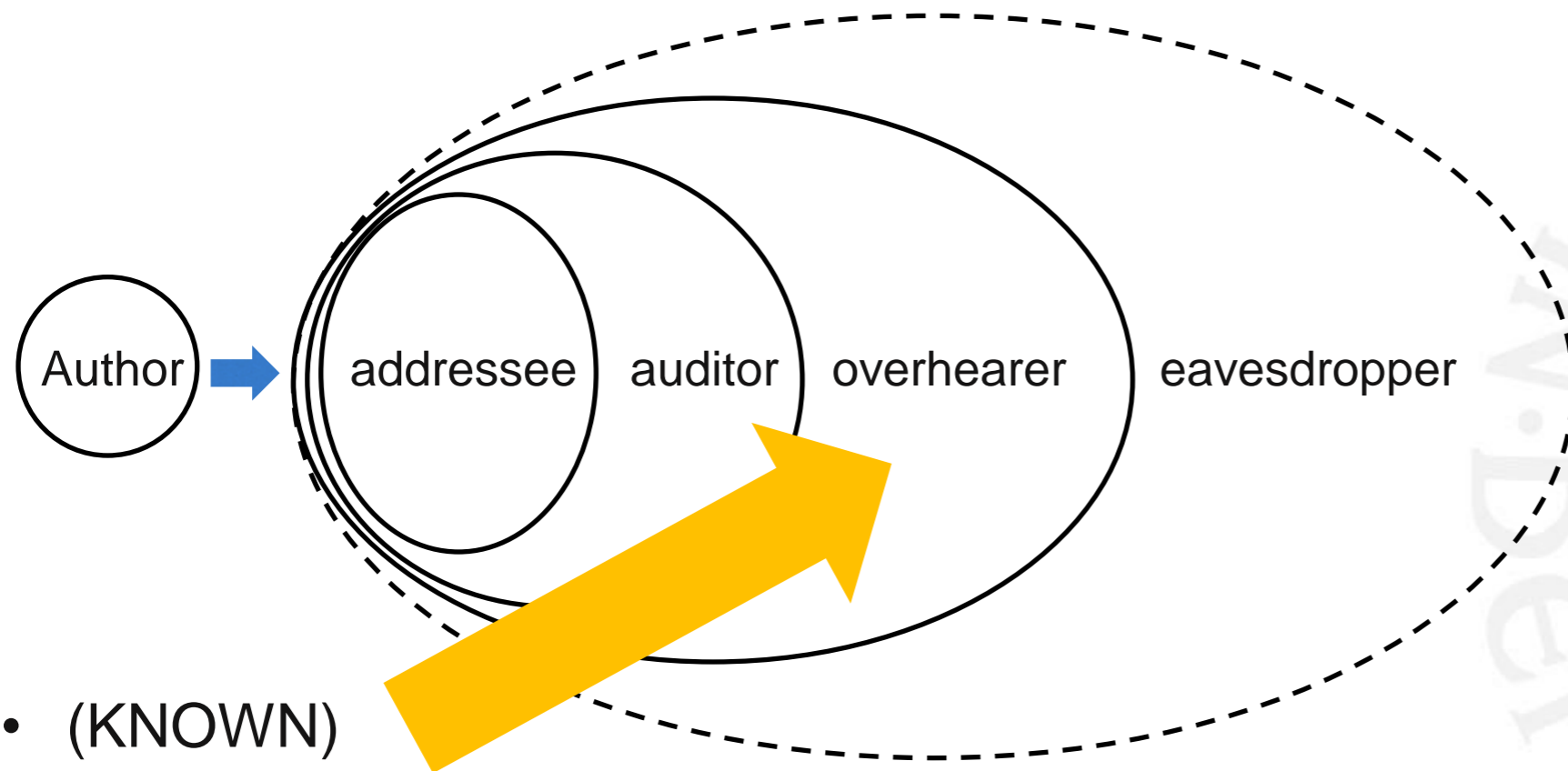
Also comprehensible for (European)
L2 learners, missionaries

Comparable: Church Sranan (Suriname)

- Church Jargon
- Etymological/European orthography
- Creole with missionary characteristics

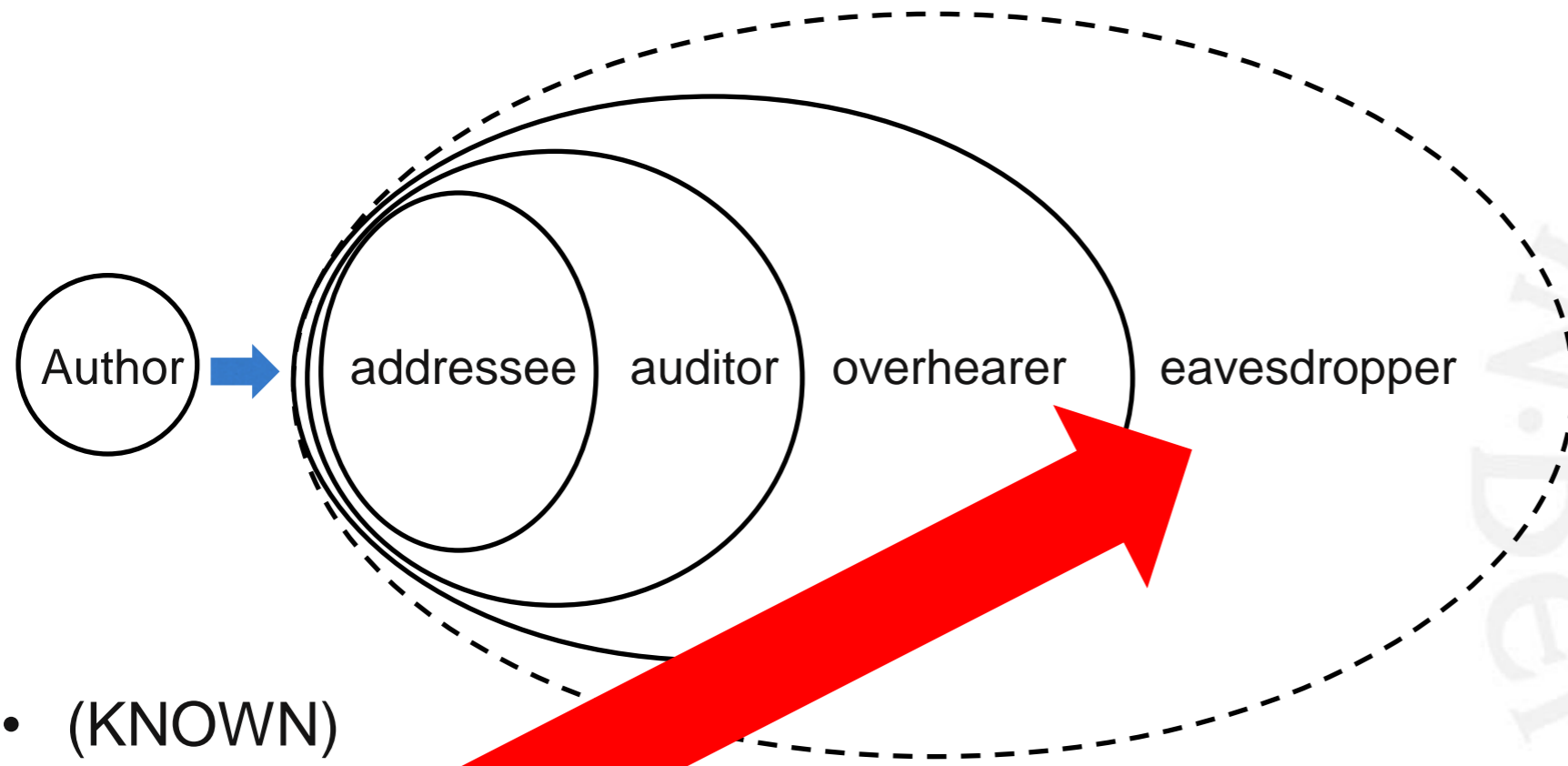


Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



- (KNOWN)
 - RATIFIED
 - ADRESSED
 - AWARE
 - Use of explanatory items/jargon/politeness-marked pronouns/bilingual language shift (Bell)
- Planters? Non-christianized enslaved people?
Creole/Dutch/Danish, other languages?

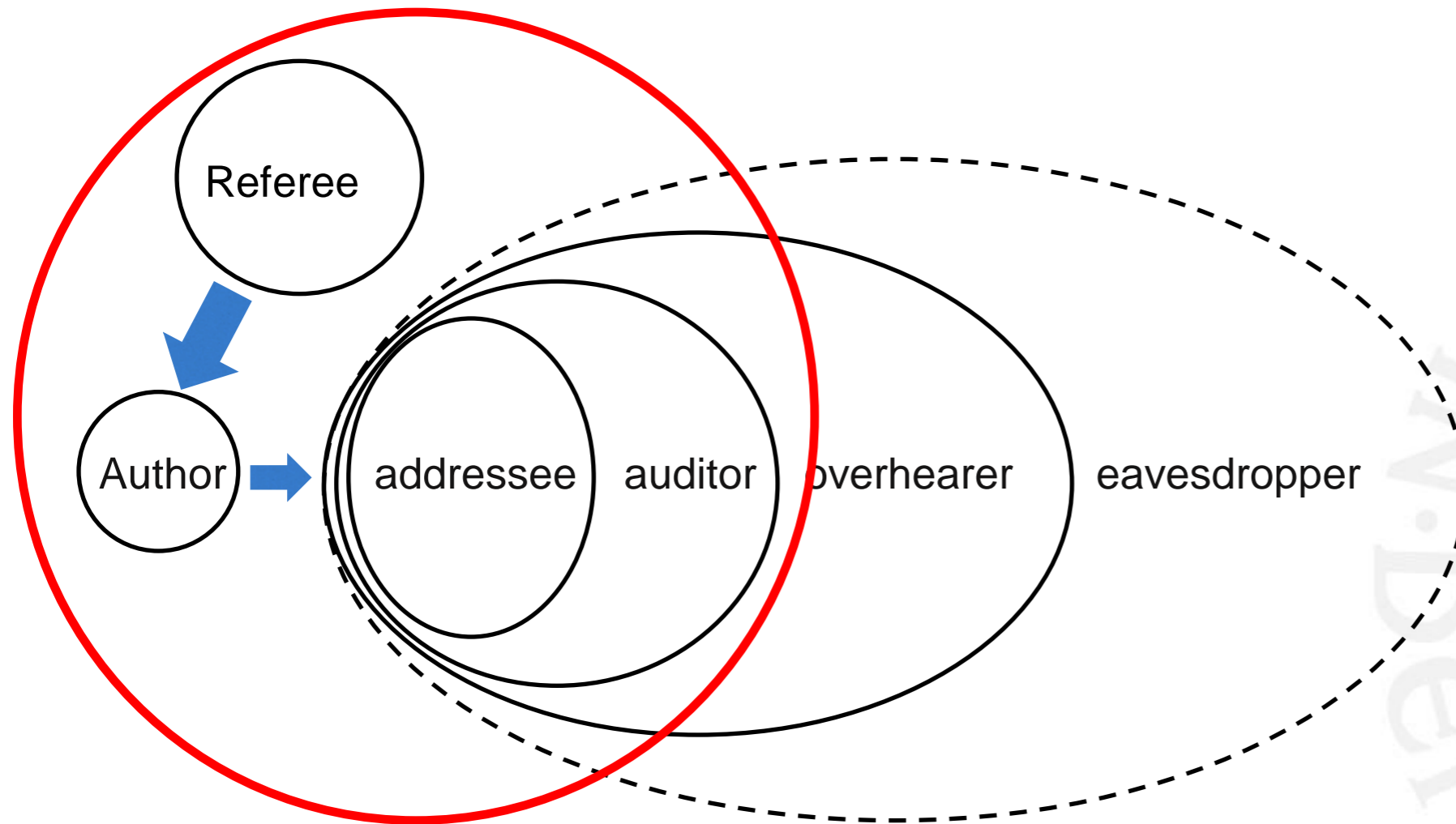
Audience design Danish Antilles (18th century)



- (KNOWN)
- RATIFIED
- ADRESSED
- AWARE

- Use of proper language/content

Focus of translators



- Philological aspects
 - Changes towards correct language use
 - Annotations to clarify texts
 - Presentation of synonyms/alternatives

Danish Antilles (18th century): Referee Design

- Explanation for choice of texts:
 - <Den saz von Fasten will ich übergehen; weil es eine Sache ist die unter dem Neger Volk nich üblich ist, als wie bey den Copten in Egypten.>
- References:
 - <Evang. am 3ⁿ Sonnt nach Epipha> (German)
 - <Evang. **op die** 24 Sonnt. p. Trinit.> (Creole)
- Missionary jargon: addition, NO replacement
 - tien Stadt sender, <Decapolis>
 - skriev sender op <vor lat taxeer sender.>
- Change of words into jargon?
 - a <ver>wonder
- No information about vernacular, but about reference
- Changes to connect to tradition and colleagues

Danish Antilles (18th century): Auditor Design

- Replacements: Creole word in favour of European one

- **moeschi** [-meer] bee=ter

- more.more better

- [-wannee]<**as**>

- when.when

-

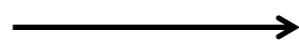
- [-voedt] <**gie** **doch** **Jeet** **na**> dieselvde

- feed give anyway food to the.one

- Variant of texts

- *Spreek tot* (Dutch-like)

- *Speak to*



see na (Creole-like)

say NA

- Change of Word Order

One example: change of word order by numbers

maat Sender no a verstaan, wat die a
wees, wat Em a see na Sender. Dan a
See Jesus weeraan na Sender: Voor
Waar; waar; mi le see jender. Mi ben
die Dhür tot die Skaaßen; allmal, sooveel
asika kom voor mi; die ben Diefen en Moor

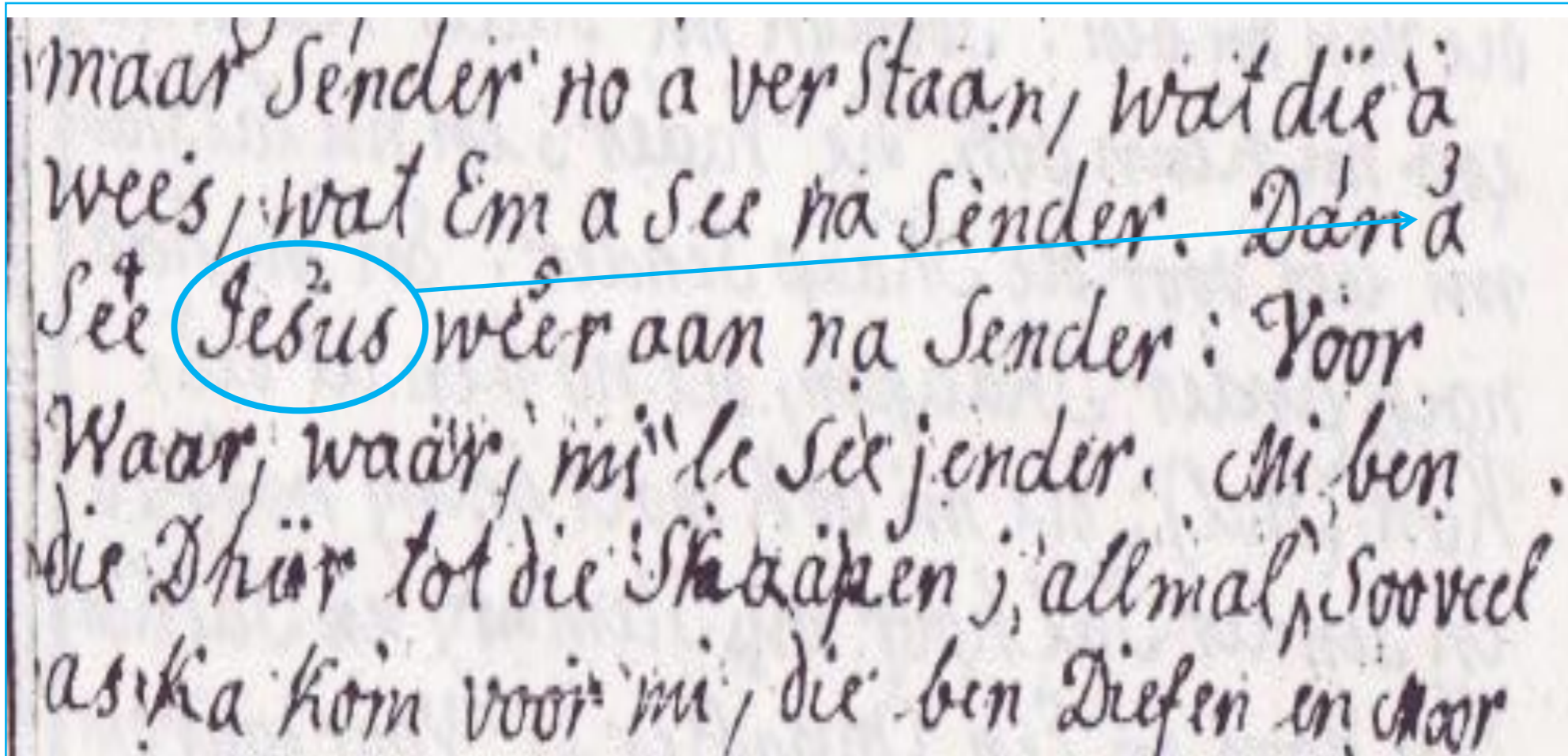
Dan	a	see	Jesus	weeraan	na	sender
Then	PST	say	Jesus	again	to	them

A remarkable way to change word order!

maat Sender no a verstaan, wat die a
wees, wat Em a see na Sender. Dan a
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asika kom voor mi; die ben Diefen en Moor

Dan	a	see	Jesus	weeraan	na	sender
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maat Sender no a verstaan, wat die a
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Waar; waar; mi le see jender. Mi ben
die Dhür tot die Staapen; allmal, sooveel
asika kom voor mi, die ben Diefen en Moor

Dan	Jesus	a	see	weeraan	na	sender
Then	Jesus	PST	say	again	to	them

From SOV into SVO

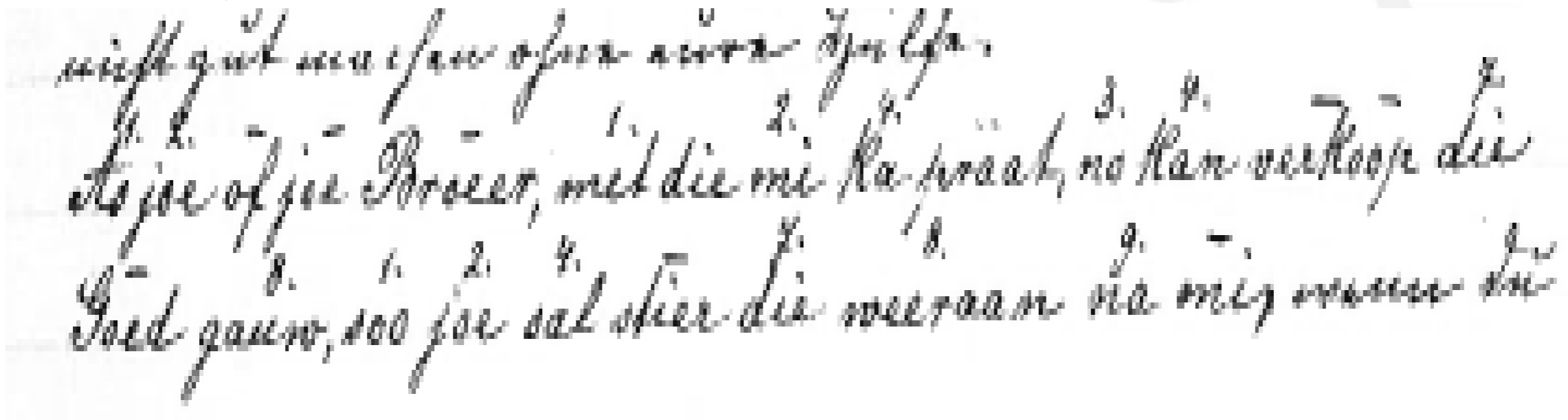
- Only 46 Dutch Creole occurrences in corpus of about 3500 A4-pages!
- (Two German)
 - **26** **position of verb, verb related elements (tma/negation)**
 - 8 adverb
 - 5 position of object
 - 4 source-related
 - 2 plural markers
 - 2 orthography
 - 1 reflexive pronoun

Hesseling (1905) about Word Order

- Hesseling's (1905) interpretation of Herrnhutter Grammar (after 1802)
- Subject before Verb
- Other objects only topicalized before Subject
- Never inversion, not even in questions
- Questions can be started with DA or with DAN behind verb
- TMA-particles just before the verb
- Negation just before the TMA-particles
- Non-verbal parts of compound verbs just behind the verb, even when this is not as in Dutch

Herrnhutter Grammar: descriptive, but for next translations

1. Conjunction, interrogative pronoun, relative pronoun
2. Nominative (including relative and adjectival clauses)/Subject
3. Negation NO
4. Verb (including TMA-particles)
5. Adverb DAN or negation NIET
6. Dative, often with multipurpose preposition NA
7. Accusative
8. Adverb or preposition, related to Verb
9. Preposition (with NA) (prepositional phrase)
10. Infinitive, related to Verb



Handwritten German text with grammatical annotations. The text is written in cursive and includes numbers 1 through 10 above various words, corresponding to the list of grammatical categories. The text is: *mit gutt man ofen ainn spilfa. die je of je Boer, mit die mi ka praach, no kan verhoop die soed gann, so je sal stier die weeraan na mig wasser die*

Auditor Design?

- Translator changes word order to connect to speakers of Creole
- Original Germanic word order of source text was changed into Creole word order
- Artificial looking text was changed towards the Creole of the audience
- Change was maintained in next texts

- However:
 - Not all sentences were checked
 - Only one aspect
 - Grammar is younger than texts and could therefore not have been used as normative grammar by translators

Discussion/concluding remarks

- The author accommodates to the language of the addressee/auditor
 - Grammatical items, vocabulary
 - Changes towards (widely understood) Dutch Creole
 - Word order like in twentieth century spoken Dutch Creole?
- Use of Church Jargon to educate the enslaved people?
- The author is bound to the language of the referees
 - Jargon
 - Tradition
 - Changes towards original source texts
 - Metalinguistic comment: no Creole word available? Use the Dutch equivalent
 - Word order like in source texts (German, Dutch, English)?
- Audience Design model is helpful
 - Separate emendations from correcting obvious mistakes
 - Use of metalinguistic comments to focus on groups in audience

Contact

- c.vanrossem@let.ru.nl
- www.diecreoltaal.wordpress.com
- Clarin-NEHOL digital database:
• http://corpus1.mpi.nl/ds/imdi_browser/
- Thank you!
 - Pieter Muysken & Robbert van Sluijs

