

## **Understanding Creolization through contextualization and DE contextualization of objects found on Reunion Island**

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### **Abstract**

This ethnographic study is looking at objects to understand the Creolization process on Reunion island. Objects evoke memory, emotion, imagination and validation. On Reunion objects from the past have very often disappeared or left little trace of their existence. This void has sometimes been interpreted as a 'veil of silence' around painful parts of the island's history. Some objects, which were intended for use in one context, that have been (and are still being) decontextualized and put to use in totally new contexts. The concepts of contextualization and DE contextualization are linked to the process of Creolization as they show how they provide a meaningful way to interpret the world and adapt to it and at the same time the role creativity plays as contexts change. This process of contextualization and contextualisation can be used in understanding the creation of a recently discovered Kingdom of Marons. In this Kingdom, the original place names derived from old Malgasy, the main language of the slaves, were transposed into similar sounding French words. This recontextualized the meaning and the original context was lost. We can also apply the same recontextualisation process to objects such as the Alambic, originally used for distilling rum and later for essential oils. Sabres on Reunion began their life as suspension metal from old trucks used to transport sugar cane and were decontextualized into sacred ceremonial objects. An examination of these practices and the role contextualization, recontextuatization and decontextualization plays is a means to understand the process of Creolization on Reunion.

**Key words:** Creolization, Contextualization, Objects, Creativity, Reunion Island.