

Re: Are "semi-creoles" widespread?

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- *From:* Nathan Sanders <nsanders@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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In article <fb6mn9\$1eg6\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, naddy@xxxxxxxxxxxxx (Christian Weisgerber) wrote:

Nathan Sanders <nsanders@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Perhaps once you consult such a grammar textbook (not that anyone expects you to actually do so), you'll discover that progressive and continuous are aspects, not tenses.

It used to be called "continuous form <of such and such tense>" when I learned English in school. I don't think I ever heard "aspect" as a grammatical term before encountering Russian.

The way English grammar is traditionally taught is filled with errors, such as lumping "very", "not", and "happily" all together as adverbs, so it doesn't surprise me that the progressive isn't labeled an aspect by English teachers.

So we have a grand total of around *seven million* hits for the progressive of "wanting",

Er, we all understand that the numbers Google shows are "estimates" and are frequently overestimated by an order of magnitude or two—right?

Of course, but seven million raw hits is a significant number ("Saddam Hussein" only gets 4 million), more than sufficient to show that a particular construction is probably alive and well.

Also, some of these hits are bound to refer to the adjective "wanting".

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True, but it's hard to filter them out with Google's search. However, the adjectival use of "BE+wanting" is relatively rare; I counted approximately 1 out of every 30 hits in "is wanting" to be adjectival. It is even more rare for first- and second-person subjects; I couldn't find any adjectival uses in the first couple hundred hits for "I am wanting" and "you are wanting". I wouldn't be surprised if the proportion of adjectival "wanting" in the seven million hits is within the expected noise level of Google search results.

But, yes, I'm stunned at what "I am wanting" turns up. I would have considered usages such as "I am wanting to register a domain name" to be ungrammatical. Normally my intuitions about English grammar aren't that far off. What's going on here?

It's perfectly fine English. I'm not really sure I can adequately explain the difference between "I am wanting" and "I want". Using the progressive seems to add some immediacy or importance to the act of wanting, but I'm not sure this holds in every case.

Nathan

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