Development of a creole lexicon*

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Abstract

This paper explores the contribution of lexical research, with particular regard to Ndyuka of Suriname, to evaluation of Arends’ gradualist hypothesis of creolization. The number and semantic nature of 195 Ndyuka lexical items from different relevant African groups of languages are compared. The results are evaluated in light of our knowledge, thanks largely to Arends’ work, of when speakers of each group were numerically most dominant among slaves in Suriname. The results show continued growth of the African-derived part of the Ndyuka lexicon over several generations. Although this lexical inventory does not comprise a structural phenomenon to the same degree as creole syntactic and phonological systems, this conclusion provides indirect support for the gradualist hypothesis.

1. Introduction

Ranking high in the legacy left us by Jacques Arends is the impetus he gave, through his own careful research and the stimulation of the work of others, to the diachronic study of contact languages. In particular, both his demographic studies and his linguistic examination of Sranan sources from various periods continue to shape the questions we ask not only about the early stages of creolization, but also about subsequent diachronic change in creoles. The publication of this memorial volume focusing on his gradualist model of creolization is clear testimony to the continuing impact of just one part of his thought and work.
In his careful use of Suriname creole materials spanning three centuries, it was syntactic change in particular that was the focus of Arends’ attention, while the languages of his interest were perforce those with long written documentation: Sranan and Saramaccan. Here I wish to modestly supplement his work by considering another area, the lexicon, in another Suriname creole, Ndyuka, for clues about how creoles may develop over time, especially with reference to Arends’ ‘gradualist’ model of creolization, which sees this process, ‘at least in a number of cases, such as Sranan, Haitian, and Jamaican,...not [as] an instantaneous, but rather a gradual process, extending over a number of generations of speakers’ (Arends & Bruyn 1995:111). (See Bakker, this volume, for a study with parallel interests, looking at European, rather than African, languages contributing to a Suriname creole.) With no known extant sources for Ndyuka from before the twentieth century, I must proceed largely by inference based on the language as spoken in recent decades and on our current understanding of the importation of slaves to Suriname from different parts of Africa at different periods. The results should sharpen that understanding with regard to the geographical areas from which Suriname slaves were drawn during various periods, as well as address the question of the degree of ethnolinguistic homogeneity of the Suriname slave population, to which Arends (1995:248) rightly attributed so much importance.

For Ndyuka lexemes derived from African languages, I have drawn on Huttar (1985, 1986), Parkvall (1999), Smith (1997), Aceto (1999), and Bilby (2000).1 For these 195 Ndyuka lexemes, 294
reasonably possible etyma have been proposed, from a variety of languages and language families (using Gordon’s 2005 classification) or, in the case of Upper Guinea and Delto-Benuic (the latter term taken from Parkvall 2000:10), areal groupings.

The much larger number of plausible etyma than lexemes is due in large part to the widespread occurrence, across many language families of western or western and central Africa, of forms resembling several of the Ndyuka items, evidence of the areal rather than purely genetic nature of many of the apparently substrate features observed in the Suriname creoles. Methodologically, for any lexeme with more than one proposed African etymon, I have treated the etyma as of equal plausibility at first, merely listing and counting each etymon in each of the genetic or areal groups from which it may derive. For example, Ndyuka bàbé ‘butterfly’ has some plausible phonological and semantic resemblance to both Baule (‘other Kwa’) abèbé ‘butterfly’ and Kikongo ki-mbèmba-mbèmba and ki-mbèmbele, so are counted in both categories in Table 1, even though the Baule form is closer than either Kikongo form to Ndyuka (while all three possible etyma are equally close to Ndyuka semantically). In the course of discussion the greater likelihood of one source category—in this case ‘other Kwa’—than another—’Kikongo and other Bantu’—is taken into account in making inferences towards conclusions, whether more tentative or relatively firm. In a case like Ndyuka petepete ‘mud’, where the semantic and phonological resemblance to forms in various Bantu, Delto-Benuic, Gbe, Akan, other Kwa, and Upper Guinea appears equally close, the etyma are included in
all these categories. In an attempt to avoid, or at least minimize, circularity in arguing from linguistic to extralinguistic data and the reverse, I have also maintained these multiple etyma in subsequent discussion, even though extralinguistic evidence, such as slave trade records, would encourage us to prefer one or more of these sources over the others.  

2. Bantu lexical influence on Suriname creoles

If we take the founding of Ndyuka society and creation of a language specific to that society to have started around 1712 (following, e.g., Smith 2002), it is not surprising that etyma from Kikongo and closely related Bantu languages predominate. The slave trade figures presented by Arends (1995:243, based on Postma 1990) show that of Suriname slaves whose African places of departure are known, 52% (7,820 of 15,146) of those transported in the period 1652-1700 were from the ‘Loango’ area, where these languages were dominant. (Even if we assume that none of the 6,809 slaves whose shipping points are not known were from Loango, we still have 36% [7,820 of 21,955] from Loango.) In addition, it is likely that the proportion of people from the Loango region was actually higher among slaves running away from the plantations than among slaves brought into Suriname. Postma (1990:108)
states regarding European planters’ dislike for ‘Loango’ slaves, ‘[t]he main reason was because these slaves were prone to run away into the forest. Of one shipment in 1720, more than half of the slaves had fled into the wilderness within a short time.’ Whatever the slave population of the particular shipment referred to, Postma clearly presents it as representative of overall Loango slave behavior, compared to slaves from elsewhere. The context indicates that slaves from ‘Guinea’ are the basis of comparison: On average, Loango slaves were more likely to escape the plantations than were slaves from Guinea. A given slave imported from Loango was thus more likely to enter the emerging societies of runaways and their descendents in the interior — during the period in question, the Saramaccan and then Ndyuka societies — than was a slave imported from Guinea.

Arends (1995:253) takes the significant Kikongo element in the Ndyuka and Saramaccan lexicons to suggest ‘that lexical substrate influence was at its strongest between 1651 and 1700, i.e. in the initial period of the formation of these languages (assuming that both Saramaccan and Ndyuka branched off from an earlier ‘Proto Surinam Creole’).’ In light of this proposal, and of McWhorter’s (1996:484) alternative interpretation of Kikongo (and Gbe) as making a superficial adstratal contribution to Saramaccan, it is worth looking at the degree of overlap of the Kikongo lexemes in Saramaccan, Ndyuka, and Sranan.3 For this purpose we look at Kikongo items found in any of these three languages, not only those found in Ndyuka.
Daeleman (1972) and to a lesser extent Huttar (1986) give some information on which Kikongo items are found in two or all three of these languages. Expanding on this beginning, again using the sources listed for Ndyuka lexemes above, an examination of 204 possible Kikongo (or other Bantu) etyma in one or more of these languages gives the results shown in Table 2.4

No forms occurring only in Sranan have been identified. Such a result indicates that although slaves from the Loango area continued to constitute a significant proportion of those imported up until 1780 (Arends 1995), their significant lexical impact on Sranan was made only when eventual speakers of Saramaccan and Ndyuka were still on plantations where Sranan, or what was to become Sranan, was being spoken. The 34 items shared by all three creoles can be taken to represent that same period of Kikongo/Bantu lexical influence.5 This number constitutes only 17% (34/204) of Kikongo items attested in one or more of these creoles. Further, fewer of the 204 items are attested in Sranan (51 items—25%) than in Saramaccan (154—75%) or in Ndyuka (118—58%). Both of these facts reduce the importance of the role given to Kikongo in the formation of Arends’ earlier ‘Proto Surinam Creole’, despite the high proportion of Loango slaves among all those imported in the period before and during the main escapes from plantations that underlay the formation of the Saramaccan and Ndyuka societies. It is
possible that the predilection of Kikongo speakers towards marronage, reducing their average time on the plantations, also reduced their lexical impact on the language(s) of the plantations.

The items shared by only two languages (or even attested now in only one) could of course have been at one time in all three languages, or the proto-language preceding them, and then have become obsolete in one language (or in two). This could readily happen, for example, with terms for cultural items no longer salient in one of the societies, such as that of slaves who remained on the plantations. Some items, however, do not have such obvious cultural specificity: Ndyuka bwingi, Saramaccan bungi, bundyi ‘mist; dust’ (cf. Kikongo mbungi ‘fog, darkness’) or Ndyuka bansa, Saramaccan bandya ‘rib, side’ (cf. Kikongo mbuansa, Kimbundu m-bandyi ‘ribs, side’) for example. At any rate, another explanation seems more likely as we consider the other results in Table 2. For the large number of items found only in Saramaccan (78), we have to posit major Kikongo lexical influence on Saramaccan after its speakers had left the plantations. Smith (2002) sets the early marronage period of the Saramaccans between 1690 and 1710. Given that during 1680-1699 slaves from the Loango area were imported in larger numbers than at any other time until the mid-eighteenth century, and constituted a higher proportion of the slaves of known place of departure than at any other time at all (Arends 1995), the large number of Kikongo items found only in Saramaccan is not surprising.
The 41 Kikongo items found in Ndyuka alone suggest significant Kikongo input in the development of Ndyuka after its creators left the plantations. Yet during 1700-1719, immediately before and after the 1712 date marking the beginning of significant Ndyuka marronage, only 20% (2,736 of 14,000) of slaves of known place of departure were from Loango. Noting also the 34 items found in Saramaccan and Ndyuka but not in Sranan, we could attribute this Kikongo input to independent development in the two languages, given the common African sources from which their speakers were coming; or to post-plantation contact between escapees from the plantations joining both the Saramaccan and the Ndyuka societies, whether soon after escape or some years later. The likelihood of such later contact is increased by the fact that some parts of the eventual Ndyuka and Saramaccan areas were fairly close to one another, in particular the Ndyuka settlements on Sara Kreek and the Saramaccan ones on the lower Suriname River (see, e.g., Smith 2002:143).

With regard to significant overlap between the Saramaccan and Ndyuka marronage periods, and hence contact between these two groups of escapees of a sort that could account for the same Kikongo items being incorporated into both of their languages, both Price (1976:30) and Smith (2002) write of the Saramaccan marronage as having essentially ended by 1710, which if true would make such a suggestion unlikely. If indeed there were no new escapees joining the Saramaccans after Ndyuka marronage started, then the 34 items common to only Saramaccan and Ndyuka must be accounted for some other way, such as contact after the
period of escape itself. Yet Dragtenstein (2002) suggests that not only the Ndyukas but also the Saramaccans continued to grow in numbers through marronage later than their respective periods of initial escape.\footnote{7}

But let us assume that there was no significant overlap between Saramaccan and Ndyuka marronage. In that case, what other explanations could account for the presence of 34 items in the two languages but not in Sranan? One possibility is that Kikongo-speaking (or, more generally, Bantu-speaking) slaves arriving in Suriname and then escaping to the interior during the later part of the Saramaccan marronage and the earlier part of the Ndyuka marronage contributed independently to the lexicon of the two languages. To evaluate that possibility would require careful comparison of the pairs of parallel forms in the two languages, since the members of many of these pairs differ phonologically.\footnote{8} Some of these differences could be due to different subsequent diachronic sound change. But some could be due to differences among the Bantu varieties spoken by slaves imported at different times throughout the period concerned. Whatever the outcome of a comparison of Kikongo forms in the two Maroon creoles, we must still recognize the possibility that significant lexical input into the developing Saramaccan and Ndyuka lexicons was effected by Kikongo-speaking former slaves after leaving the plantations, whether in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries or some decades later. If we were faced only with the 34 items found in Saramaccan and Ndyuka but not in Sranan, we would be hesitant to rule out the possibility adumbrated above that this Kikongo input had occurred before significant marronage
began, with the Kikongo forms eventually dropping out of Sranan, whether through replacement by forms from other languages or by the concepts referred to by the Kikongo forms becoming culturally less salient. Such a result would bolster the position espoused by Arends for the importance of Kikongo during the formative period of Proto Surinam Creole. But the likelihood of such a conclusion is lessened by the 41 (20%) Kikongo items in Ndyuka only, since they would then have to have dropped out from both Sranan and Saramaccan—a process somewhat more difficult to explain, given the generally great cultural similarity between the Saramaccan and Ndyuka societies, compared to that between them and the plantation societies of speakers of what became Sranan.

The remaining results in Table 2 concern a small number of items shared by Sranan and only one of the Maroon creoles. The nine (4%) items shared by Sranan and Ndyuka can be attributed to Kikongo input on the plantations after the early maroonage period of the Saramaccans and before that of the Ndyukas. The eight (4%) shared by Sranan and Saramaccan are more difficult to explain in terms of chronology, however. If these items were acquired by Saramaccans while still in contact with Sranan or its predecessor, it is not clear why they are not attested in Ndyuka (if we posit that they were in the parent language and then for some reason dropped out of Ndyuka, then we are faced with the question of why this loss would have occurred). It seems more likely that the difference between Saramaccan and Ndyuka in this respect—and for that matter, also in regard to the large number of items found in only one
of these two languages—may be due to different Kikongo input on the
different plantations from which the two groups of Maroons fled. Such
an explanation could also be invoked for the items shared only by Sranan
and Ndyuka, instead of the chronological explanation just proposed. Such
alternatives would likely be illuminated by study of lexemes of Kikongo
(and other African) languages in Matawai, Kwinti, Paramaccan, and
Aluku, something we do not attempt here.

3. Kwa lexical influence on Ndyuka

3.1 Gbe

The next largest group of plausible etyma shown in Table 1, with 39
items, is from Gbe languages. Arends (1995:243) shows that of Suriname
slaves whose African place of departure is known, during 1652-1699
46% came from the Slave Coast, where Ewe, Fon, and other Gbe
languages were dominant, and 76% during 1700-1719 (and 32% during
1720-1739). Thus it is to be expected that there would be many lexemes
with Gbe sources. What is less expected, perhaps especially in light of
the generally agreed Gbe grammatical input into Ndyuka and other
Suriname creoles, is that their number is only a third that of Kikongo
items. But again, just as speakers of Kikongo were probably
overrepresented among those escaping to eventually form the Ndyuka
society, speakers of other languages, including Gbe, would have been
correspondingly underrepresented. In order to get an idea of the extent to which the Gbe items in Ndyuka were already in the parent Proto Surinam Creole or entered the language later, we look at which of these items are also attested for Saramaccan and for Sranan. Of the 39 items, 15 (38%) are reported for all three languages, six (15%) for Ndyuka and Sranan only, four (10%) for Ndyuka and Saramaccan only, and 14 (36%) for Ndyuka only. Even assuming that these numbers are not exact, the 15 items common to all three languages point to an important Gbe element in the parent language — whether that element was present in an English-based contact language brought from Africa (e.g., McWhorter 1997), or in one brought from the English Caribbean (e.g., Smith 1997, 2002), or only in Suriname. On the other hand, the items found in only one or two of these three creoles point to subsequent lexical influence by Gbe-speaking slaves imported later and eventually fleeing the plantations and joining the Saramaccans and the Ndyukas at various times in the interior, as in the case of Kikongo items. Unless the four items now shared only by Saramaccan and Ndyuka had been in the parent creole but subsequently dropped out of Sranan, they may indicate some post-plantation contact between members of the two societies, or may have been independently introduced by Gbe-speaking slaves joining the two societies after their first members had left the plantations.

3.2 Akan
The numbers of Ndyuka lexemes and plausible etyma we are working with can only be approximate, given the partial nature of our lexicons of the current languages and our temporal distance from the state of these languages three centuries ago. So we cannot assume the numerical difference between 39 Gbe etyma and 33 Akan ones to be significant. Yet the number of speakers of Akan languages among slaves sent to Suriname was not significant until the third decade of the eighteenth century. Arends (1995:243) shows only 3% of slaves imported by the Dutch during 1652 - 1719 being from the Gold Coast, but then 68% for 1720-1729 and 58% for 1730-1739 (61% for 1720-1739 together). Thus if the Akan element in the Ndyuka lexicon arose in Suriname, then it was brought in almost certainly by slaves who did not even arrive on the Suriname plantations until a decade or two after the beginnings of a separate Ndyuka society. On the other hand, McWhorter (1996:484) explains the Akan element (lexical and grammatical) in the Suriname creoles on the basis of a pidgin arising at Cormantin in the presence of Akan-speaking slaves working at the slave-holding fort. To decide between these two possibilities, which are not entirely mutually exclusive, again we consider which of the Akan items in Ndyuka are also attested in Saramaccan and Sranan. Of the 33 items, 12 (36%) are reported for all three languages, eight (24%) for Ndyuka and Sranan only, one (3%) for Ndyuka and Saramaccan only, and 12 (36%) for Ndyuka only. Thus while some of these items (essentially the same proportion as the 38% noted for Gbe items) may date from the proto-language plantation period or even earlier, clearly many came into
Ndyuka, or what eventually became Ndyuka, later. That Ndyuka shares eight items with Sranan, but only one with Saramaccan, suggests that a number of items were brought in by Akan-speaking slaves imported to the plantations after most of those who became the Saramaccans had fled (or to plantations from whose populations few if any Saramaccans were drawn), but before the end of the period in which future Ndyukas were escaping. This result is entirely compatible with the dominance of Gold Coast imports being in 1720-1739.

The assignment of a particular lexeme to one Kwa language rather than another is often the somewhat arbitrary result of what information we happen to have about the lexicon of each of the languages involved. That fact not only reduces further any significance of the difference between the Gbe and Akan figures. It also means there is little point in considering the 28 ‘other Kwa’ lexemes in any detail. (The languages given in Huttar 1985 for these 28 etyma are almost all from the Gold Coast region, though in some cases farther north than what is usually thought of as the slave recruitment area for the trans-Atlantic trade — see discussion on Gur etyma below.)

4. Lexical influence on Ndyuka from other African languages

4.1 Gur
Similar considerations hold for the possible etyma from Gur languages, such that I treat them here as a group, rather than assuming that the identification of a possible etymon in any one of them precludes there being one in another, closely related, Gur language.

The possible Gur etyma pose a difficult question: Few though these forms be, why should there be any Gur-derived lexemes in Ndyuka at all, given that the Gur languages were spoken by peoples living some hundreds of kilometers from the coastal slaving centers and generally outside what are thought of as the common slave recruitment areas for Suriname?\(^{10}\) Hair (1967:260) states that ‘none of the languages behind Akan in the interior appears to have been known on the coast before 1700, with the exception of Mandingo’. Arends (1995:249) cites Manning (1990) to the effect that slaves from the Gold Coast were recruited up to a maximum of 300 kilometers from the coast, which scarcely reaches the Gur area of today, or, accepting Hair’s (1967:247) assertion that the ethnolinguistic units of the Guinea coast have changed little since they were documented in 1440-1700, of the eighteenth century. Benedict Der, as summarized in Dumett (2000:452), supports this conclusion for up till the early 1730’s: ‘It was only after the Asante invasion of Dagmoba in 1732...that the exodus of slaves from the northern territories and its linkage to the large slave markets at places like Salaga, Kintampo, Yagaba, and Kete Krachi became important’.

On the other hand, Lovejoy (1983:55) states concerning the seventeenth-century slave trade through the Bight of Benin (i.e., the Slave Coast), an area whose interior includes some of the Gur languages
included in Huttar (1985), ‘Muslim traders provided links between slave-exporting states and the far interior, so that some slaves and other goods were acquired through a network of inter-regional trade’. Dickson (1966:423) speaks of internal slave selling southwards within the Gold Coast, and it is possible that the coastal owners of some slaves from the north eventually sold them to agents involved in the Atlantic trade. In addition, both Lovejoy (1983:56) and Dickson (1966:427) describe the early eighteenth century as a time when warfare was frequent in much of the Gold Coast (including what is now eastern Côte d’Ivoire), achieving what Lovejoy calls ‘a steady stream of slaves ready for export’. The presence of even a few Ndyuka lexemes of Gur origin would lend some support to these possible sources of slaves for the Atlantic trade from deeper in the interior than a few hundred kilometers. Yet the evidence is not strong, for in each of the eight cases of one or more possible Gur etyma, alternative etyma from Bantu and/or Kwa languages are also present. The one item where a Gur etymon seems more likely than an alternative (Bantu) etymon on semantic and phonological grounds is Ndyuka vongovongo ‘biting fly’ — cf. Mooré (Gur) vunuvugu ‘black mud wasp’ vs. Kikongo fungununu ‘bumblebee’.

4.2 Delto-Benuic

I turn now to the two areal groupings, Delto-Benuic to the east of the Gold Coast and Upper Guinea to the west. The Delto-Benuic grouping of languages provides 35 possible etyma. The languages involved—Yoruba,
Igbo, Ijo, Efik, Edo, Nupe, Idoma, and Kambari — are now spoken from the eastern coast of today’s Benin eastward to southwest Nigeria, thus within the ‘Slave Coast’ as defined by Arends (1995:245), and also from farther north and east in Nigeria (Efik even extending into Cameroon). These etyma raise a question similar to that for Gur, for slave records indicate that very few Suriname slaves were shipped from Bight of Biafra ports (see Arends 1995:270-271), as the Dutch, unlike the English, French, and Portuguese, were not significantly active in slaving there.\textsuperscript{11}  

First we should note that of the 30 lexemes corresponding to the 35 Delto-Benuic etyma, 20 of them have proposed etyma from outside the Delto-Benuic group, in most cases etyma that are an equally good or better fit, semantically and phonologically, with the Ndyuka lexeme. We also note that some of the items, such as \textit{bakaa} ‘outsider, white person’ constitute part of Smith’s (1997) ‘Ingredient X’, which is made up mostly of lexical items from a wide range of West and Central African languages that occur in all or almost all of the English-based Atlantic creoles and which Smith sees as part of a macaronic jargon brought to Barbados that eventually formed a basis for these creoles.\textsuperscript{12}  

Finally, comparison with the other Suriname creoles shows 12 items (40\%) reported for all three languages, three (10\%) for Ndyuka and Sranan only, and 15 (50\%) for Ndyuka only (for eight of these 15, no possible etyma other than Delto-Benuic have been found). None is shared only by Ndyuka and Saramaccan. These figures suggest that Yoruba, Igbo, or other Delto-Benuic input into the Ndyuka lexicon came partly during the plantation and pre-plantation (whether Caribbean or Africa) periods, and
partly later, from Delto-Benuic speakers joining the Ndyukas after the latter had begun their lives in the interior.

4.3 Upper Guinea

Because of their near-contiguous location and their all being significant in the slave trade to Suriname during the same general period, I treat the 32 Atlantic (14), Mande (13), and Kru (5) etyma together as another areal grouping, ‘Upper Guinea’. Arends (1995:243) reports very few slaves entering Suriname from his ‘Windward Coast’ area (the eastern part of Upper Guinea, today’s Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, the only part he finds significant for Suriname) up through 1739, but then 47% of slaves whose place of departure is known during 1740-1759, 42% in the following decade, and 46% in the decade after that: 45% for the entire period 1740-1779. But even by the beginning of this period, the Ndyuka society had been already forming for nearly 30 years, its language taking a different shape from what its members had been speaking when still in contact with the language(s) of the plantations.

The Upper Guinea picture is in some respects similar to the Delto-Benuic one. In the first place, of the 27 Ndyuka lexemes represented by the 32 Upper Guinea proposed etyma, 20 have semantically and phonologically plausible non-Upper Guinea alternative etyma. Second, items from Smith’s Ingredient X are included, most notably nyam ‘eat’. While the stem nyam is exceedingly widespread through West, Central, and East Africa, it is only in Atlantic languages,
such as Wolof and Serer, that it is a verb stem ‘eat’, rather than a noun stem ‘meat’ or ‘animal’. On the other hand, comparison with the other Suriname creoles shows a somewhat smaller proportion attested for all three languages than in the Delto-Benuic case: 8/27, or 30%, compared with the Delto-Benuic 12/29, or 41%. In all, besides the eight attested in all three creoles, five are found in Ndyuka and Sranan only (19%--cf. 10% for Delto-Benuic), one (4%) in Ndyuka and Saramaccan only, and 13 (48%) in Ndyuka only. But in terms of items shared by Ndyuka and Sranan (whether or not also in Saramaccan), the two areal groupings are almost identical: 13/27, or 48%, for Upper Guinea, and 15/29, or 52%, for Delto-Benuic.

Given the late arrival of Upper Guinea speakers in Suriname, it is not surprising that fewer of the Ndyuka lexemes with possible Upper Guinea etyma have parallels in Sranan, compared to etyma from other languages (except Delto-Benuic). More surprising is that when we look at the specific languages contributing most of the Upper Guinea etyma, we find the greater number of possible etyma are from languages too far north and west to figure in the part of Upper Guinea Arends pinpoints as relevant to the Suriname slave trade: Atlantic languages Wolof, Temne, and Diola; Mande languages Mende, Bambara, and Bisa. (The main Kru contributor, Aizi, spoken in the eastern coastal area of Côte d’Ivoire, is well within the slaving area.) Mende may just fall within the slaving area given by Manning (1990, cited in Arends 1995:249), but not the other Mande languages.
If Eastern Suriname creoles that formed later than did Ndyuka—Aluku, Paramaccan, Kwinti—had a number of lexemes deriving from this Upper Guinea group, we could take that as evidence of such items being brought into these languages by slaves arriving in Suriname in the latter half of the eighteenth century, in spite of the lack of extralinguistic evidence for such. But the database in Parkvall (1999) gives no indication that this is the case, though the data on these languages there is sparse, so we cannot base strong conclusions on this silence. The argument that any such words are in the Suriname creoles not because of slaves brought directly to Suriname from Upper Guinea, but because of Upper Guinea input earlier—whether in Barbados (Smith 1997), Cormantin (McWhorter 1997), or elsewhere—is strengthened.

5. Conclusion

What we see from this broad survey of Ndyuka lexemes of various African origins may be summarized as follows:

1. Kikongo, or broader Bantu, lexical influence on Ndyuka is proportionately much greater than the proportion of slaves from the Bantu-speaking region imported into Suriname in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.
2. Kikongo lexical influence on Proto Surinam Creole was less significant than that on the Maroon creoles, Saramaccan and Ndyuka, a
conclusion giving some support to part of McWhorter’s (1996) argument for a less significant role for Kikongo in the formation of Proto Surinam Creole than suggested by Arends (1995).

3. Lexical influence on Ndyuka from Gbe languages is only slightly greater than that from Akan languages. In both cases, some of this input can be ascribed to the period during which Proto Surinam Creole was formed, and some of it to later times, after future Saramaccans and then Ndyukas had started leaving the plantations in significant numbers.

4. There is slight evidence from possibly Gur-derived items that a few slaves from regions farther north than the main slave ‘recruitment’ area found their way farther south and eventually to Suriname. Little weight can be given to this evidence, however, without more detailed examination of the lexicons of a number of Gur languages of northern Ghana and environs, and careful phonological comparison of possible Gur etyma and their possible Ndyuka reflexes.

5. Lexical influence on Ndyuka from both Delto-Benuic and Upper Guinea languages can be ascribed partly to the Proto Surinam Creole period before significant marronage, and partly to the later period after Ndyuka marronage had begun.

What does all this tell us about Jacques Arends’ gradualist hypothesis? By its nature, lexical research can bear only indirectly on this hypothesis, since ‘creolization’ is generally understood to refer to the development and stabilization of structures — grammatical, phonological, possibly semantic — of a creole, as opposed to the possible simultaneous and
subsequent acquisition and loss of individual lexical items. To the extent that the latter entails some structural changes, such change has been considered to represent general language change rather than anything specific to creoles. Nevertheless, the picture of the development of the Ndyuka lexicon that has emerged from the above study lends indirect support to the notion that a creole, or at least some creoles, develops over a period of several generations. Specifically, we have seen the Ndyuka lexicon developing beyond its Proto Surinam Creole stage by the incorporation of items from various African sources during the decades after its speakers left the Suriname plantations for the interior.

In addition, I have indicated some points where the above conclusions bear on current hypotheses about the roles of various languages—Kikongo and Gbe in particular—in the development of all the Suriname creoles, hypotheses which Arends has also had an important role in developing and discussing. But evaluating the relative claims of these hypotheses can be advanced by looking at the above data in light of at least six other kinds of data: (1) lexemes from English, Dutch, Portuguese, and French; (2) lexemes from Amerindian languages of Suriname and neighboring parts of Brazil; (3) the distribution of each of these sets across and within semantic domains; (4) their distribution across grammatical classes; (5) negative evidence of the sort Bakker (this volume) has used with regard to Portuguese and English items in Saramaccan: what frequent Bantu, Gbe, etc. items are not attested in Suriname creoles, even though less frequent ones are; (6) again following Bakker’s work in this volume, Ndyuka doublets of which both members
appear to both be of African origin, such as nongo ‘proverb’, odo
‘proverb’; (7) concepts for which different Suriname creoles have
lexemes from different African origins. While we cannot pursue these
necessary areas within this paper, (1)-(3) are dealt with to some extent in
Huttar (1994) (also (1) for Portuguese in Huttar 1989, and (2) in van
Donselaar 1994), while (3) and (4) receive attention in Huttar (2003) and
Huttar et al. (to appear). Finally, with specific reference to Bantu
languages such as Kikongo, careful comparison of the differences in
semantics and phonological shapes between similar forms in
Saramaccan, Ndyuka, Sranan and these Bantu varieties would also offer
more precise data for evaluating various historical hypotheses.

References

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Notes

* I would like to thank Mary L. Huttar and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and questions on a previous version of this paper.

1 Shanks et al. (2000) lists a few other lemmas as of African origin, but without proposing specific African source languages. The 195 lexemes include some referring to presumably culturally universal concepts like EAT (nyan) and RIB (bansa). They represent several semantic domains (e.g., flora, fauna, other natural phenomena, food,
body parts and actions, music, and social categories); see Huttar (1985, 1986) for details for most of the lexemes, and Huttar (1994) for distribution of African- vs. European-derived lexemes within some domains. While no correlation has been discerned so far between semantic domains on the one hand and African source on the other, this question deserves detailed attention, as suggested in the Conclusion below.

2 In Table 1, ‘Gbe’ includes specific varieties reported in my sources (for which see Huttar 1985) as Fon or Ewe, and ‘Akan’ includes those reported as Twi or Abron.

3 Cf. Parkvall’s (2000:111) proposed ‘diachronic layering’ method for determining relative ages of various substrate languages’ input into a group of related creoles.

4 I have omitted items that could easily come from some other source, or from a convergence of an African and another source, such as lompu, glossed by Daeleman (1972:11) as ‘a fish’, which could easily—and phonologically more plausibly—be from Dutch lomp rather than from Kikongo ñłùmbu. I have also treated as single items sets of phonologically and semantically very close forms that Daeleman treats separately, such as taatá ‘father and father’s brother (term of address)’ and tatá ‘father and father’s brother (term of address)’.

5 Henceforth I use Kikongo as a convenient shorthand for ‘Kikongo or similar Bantu language(s)’.
It is worth noting that this difference between Ndyuka-only and Saramaccan-only items, 41 and 78 respectively, fairly closely follows the difference in proportions of Loango slaves arriving during the most relevant periods for the two groups: during 1700-1719, only 20% (2,736 of 14,000) of slaves of known place of departure were from Loango, while during the crucial Saramaccan period, 1680-1709, 39% (8,707 of 22,277) were (Arends 1995:243).

I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this information about Dragtenstein’s work, which I have not yet seen.

In some cases they also display differences in meaning.

We would expect, then, that non-Loango slaves, such as Gbe speakers in particular, would have been overrepresented among those remaining on the plantations. Such a situation could well mean that there would be a large number of Gbe items found in Sranan that are not also found in Saramaccan or Ndyuka. The present study, using Ndyuka as a point of departure, does not check this hypothesis, as it does not attempt to determine how many Gbe items are found in Sranan only (or in Saramaccan only).

Note that the case is different for Jamaica, regarding which Patterson (1967:120) states that ‘it was the tribes of the interior who supplied the great majority of the slaves from the Gold Coast’, going on to include some major Gur languages in his illustrative list.

On some unpublished research indicating that for a brief period in the early 1670’s Calabar (Nigeria) was an important supplier of slaves to Suriname, see Arends (2002:121). Importation of slaves from Nigeria...
into Suriname at that time could account for Delto-Benuic items found in all the Suriname creoles, but not so easily for those found only in Ndyuka, however.

12 McWhorter (1997) emphasizes the Igbo element among these and other proposed African etyma of Atlantic creoles as part of his argument for an English-based contact language on the Gold Coast underlying Sranan and ultimately the other Suriname creoles. The argument is weakened slightly by the fact that for two of the five items with possible Igbo etyma that he takes from Smith’s Ingredient X, he gives possible non-Delto-Benuic etyma as well (McWhorter 1997:80). Of the three remaining, a Portuguese source, só, cannot be entirely ruled out for soso ‘only’, for which Igbo and Yoruba etyma are possible (Huttar 1989:272).

Table 1. Numbers of possible etyma of Ndyuka lexemes from various African genetic and areal groupings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikongo and other Bantu:</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>Hausa:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa:</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>‘Delto-Benuic’</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbe:</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Yoruba:</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akan:</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Igbo:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Kwa:</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ijo:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gur:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Efik:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Upper Guinea’</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Edo:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nupe:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mande:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Idoma</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kru:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kambari</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Distribution of possible Bantu-origin items found in Saramaccan, Sranan, and Ndyuka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan, Sranan, and Ndyuka</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Saramaccan only</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan and Sranan only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sranan only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saramaccan and Ndyuka only</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ndyuka only</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sranan and Ndyuka only</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>204</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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