

# Two types of language contact involving English Creoles

Why Krio (Sierra Leone) has evolved more towards English than its relative Pichi (Equatorial Guinea) towards Spanish

Kofi Yakpo

University of Hong Kong

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The two African English-lexifier Creole languages Krio (Sierra Leone) and Pichi (Equatorial Guinea) are closely related. A close look at specific aspects of their grammar, however, shows divergence due to differing contact ecologies since their split in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Krio has been spoken alongside its *lexifier* (the main lexicon-providing language) and *superstrate* (the socially dominant colonial language) English since its beginnings and Pichi alongside its superstrate Spanish for almost two centuries, but not alongside English. Resulting differences in contact outcomes transpire in the expression of tense, aspect, and mood, and the use of prepositions for the marking of participants. In these two areas, Krio has converged more with English than Pichi with Spanish because existing overlaps between Creole and lexifier forms have facilitated transfer from English. There is therefore evidence for different contact outcomes in Creoles depending on whether they continue to be in contact with a superstrate that is simultaneously the lexifier (in this case English), or not. No previous work has compared Krio and Pichi nor looked at these two Creole languages from the viewpoint of their differing linguistic ecologies and their resulting differentiation.

The central role of (Early) Krio as a proto-language, or a major contributing language to all other Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles (henceforth AECs) has been pointed out (Hancock, 1987: 273–274; Huber, 1999: ch. 4), and the ethno-genesis and dispersal of the Krio people along the West African coast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is well documented (see Fyfe, 1962; Lynn, 1992). The study of

differences between Krio and its earliest offshoot Pichi can therefore shed light on the differentiation of the African English-lexifier Creoles and the family of Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles as a whole.

One important insight in this regard is the realization that in Africa too, as already shown for the Caribbean (e.g. Mufwene, 1996), contact languages have emerged and evolved through regular processes of language change. Populations carried proto-languages with them which then speciated further in their specific ecologies in series of

KOFI YAKPO is Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Hong Kong. His research addresses the complex interaction of genealogical, areal, typological, social, cultural, and ideological forces in the evolution of contact languages. For the past few years, he has been working on the English-lexifier creoles of Africa and the Americas, and the Asian diaspora languages of the Caribbean. His publications include *A Grammar of Pichi* (2019), the first description of the English-lexifier Creole of Equatorial Guinea, and *Boundaries and Bridges: Language Contact in Multilingual Ecologies* (2017, with Pieter Muysken), which covers the fascinating multilingual society of Suriname. He has taught students in African, Asian and European universities, aiming at equipping them with the methods, concepts and critical perspectives for describing and documenting linguistic diversity around the world. Email: [kofi@hku.hk](mailto:kofi@hku.hk)

founder events. There is thus no convincing structural evidence for the pidginization and creolization of languages like Pichi and Cameroon Pidgin in their respective location *ab initio* (pace e.g. Schröder, 2013). Instead, the interplay of genealogy (descent from Krio) and contact in differing linguistic ecologies have driven the outcomes of differentiation.

Further, Pichi is the only African AEC to have been cut off from the influence of its lexifier English (in the Caribbean, the Creoles of Suriname are in the same position; see Yakpo & Muysken, 2017). Pichi has since then been in contact with the *non-lexifier superstrate* Spanish. A comparison of Krio and Pichi is interesting because it offers the opportunity to study a lesser known form of Creole-superstrate contact than the more familiar type of contact with the lexifier (see Bickerton, 1973). I conclude that contact within each specific ecology, and the presence or absence of contact with English in particular has made a significant contribution to the divergences between Krio and Pichi in the realm of TAM marking and in the strategies of participant marking.

The Pichi data presented in this article is based on a corpus of around fifty thousand words of naturalistic and elicited data collected during field work in Equatorial Guinea between 2003 and 2007. The Krio data is based on a smaller corpus of about 6,000 words collected with Krio speakers outside Sierra Leone in West Africa. Secondary data on Krio was extracted from the Umeå University Krio Corpus (Krio Corpus Project, 2003) and other sources. Sources of secondary data are provided where this applies.

## 2. Contact between a Creole and its lexifier vs. contact with a non-lexifier

Linguists have suggested for a while that the transfer of linguistic matter and patterns between languages is easier when they are related (e.g. Weinreich, 1953: 31–36). A growing body of psycholinguistic research shows that the associative mechanism of priming is important in multilingual interactions because languages remain co-activated, i.e. are not ‘turned off’ when they are not spoken (see Kootstra, 2015: 41, and the literature cited there). The formal-semantic similarity between related languages continually provides an opportunistic cognitive basis for the interlingual identification of words and structures. Priming can therefore trigger and drive phonological change of etymologically related words in the recipient language (the Creole) towards etymons of the donor

(English) in more significant and systematic ways than when the recipient and donor are not related (see e.g. Yakpo & Smith, 2020: 189–191). Formal similarities may, in turn, accelerate the development of shared polysemy and idiomatics beyond what is usual in cases of contact between unrelated languages (see Dawson, 2003; Yakubovich, 2010; Law, 2013). In this, Creole-lexifier contact seems akin to dialect contact and convergence (see Gaetano, 2005).

Segmental similarity and parallels between the grammar of the Creole and the lexifier can therefore lead to more transfer from the lexifier of segmental material, semantics, combinatorial and frequential patterns (Johanson, 2002) than during contact with an unrelated language. Given that these processes of change are cross-linguistically attested, there is therefore no need to appeal to an exclusive concept like ‘decreolization’ in characterizing the kind of contact that Creoles undergo with their lexifier (see Mayeux, 2019).

## 3. Socio-historical background and linguistic ecologies

From its origins in the capital Freetown, Krio is today used as a native and vernacular language in all of Sierra Leone. It is spoken by the vast majority of the country’s population of 7 million (Finney, 2013). Krio has continuously cohabited with its *lexifier superstrate* English, as well as Atlantic and Mande *adstrates* (languages used alongside the Creole by its multilingual speakers) spoken in Sierra Leone, and Temne, Mende, and Maninka in particular (for the historical background, see Wyse, 1989). Sources attribute an important foun-der role in the emergence of Krio (the extent of which varies according to the source) to the Western Maroon variety of Jamaican Creole, which arrived in Freetown with its speakers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Hancock, 1969; Smith, 2017). Equally important is the later role of the Nigerian language Yoruba as a *substrate* (an obsolete language that has left traces in the grammar of the Creole) to Early Krio. Most Yoruba speakers then present in Freetown gradually shifted to Krio in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for details and the historical background, see Fyle, 2004).

Pichi is spoken by the majority of the population of Bioko island (Equatorial Guinea), hence up to 150,000 people (Yakpo, 2013a). Pichi is an offshoot of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Krio, which arrived in Bioko (then called Fernando Po by the Europeans) with African settlers from Sierra Leone in 1827 and

thereafter (de Granda, 1985). This means that Pichi branched off from a young variety of Early Krio.

Pichi was cut off from the direct influence of English after colonization by Spain after 1857, and Spanish has remained the official language of Equatorial Guinea until today. In contrast, Sierra Leone was a British colony until 1961, and has retained English as its official language. Pichi has therefore co-evolved with its *non-lexifier superstrate* Spanish (the lexifier remains English, of course) and the Narrow Bantu adstrate Bube, the language of the autochthonous population of Bioko. Pichi also shows some traces of contact and koineization with Cameroon Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin (Yakpo, 2013b: 290–294). Plantation laborers from Cameroon and Nigeria by far outnumbered the Bube and Krio-speaking populations of Bioko during the cocoa boom of the late 19th to mid 20th century (for the historical background, see Sundiata, 1990; Martino, 2012).

In spite of their common genealogy and a common lexifier, Krio and Pichi have therefore been subjected to very different stratal-areal forces in the last two centuries. Their contact trajectories involve a lexifier superstrate English (in the case of Krio) and a non-lexifier superstrate Spanish (in the case of Pichi), which are related but typologically and lexically distinct. Krio and Pichi have also been in contact with respective adstrates from genealogically and typologically distant groupings (i.e. Atlantic and Mande vs. Narrow Bantu). These differing areal profiles are at the root of much of the differentiation of Krio and Pichi. In this article, I focus on the divergence of the two Creoles due to the presence (Krio) and absence (Pichi) of contact with English. Table 1 summarizes some specificities of the contact ecologies in which the two languages partake.

## 4. Comparison of Krio and Pichi

There is compelling linguistic evidence for a close linguistic relationship between Krio and Pichi. However, a look at specific domains of the grammar shows that Pichi has diverged considerably from its Krio forebear. In the following, I compare the two languages with respect to tense-aspect-mood marking and the marking of participants.

### 4.1. Tense-aspect-mood marking

There is a high degree of correspondence between the forms and functions of the core Pichi and Krio tense, aspect and mood markers (see Table 2). Underlined forms in Table 2 are only found in Krio, the other forms are common to Krio and Pichi.

**Table 1: Contact ecologies**

	Krio	Pichi
Country	Sierra Leone	Equatorial Guinea (Bioko)
Lexifier	English	English
Superstrate	English	Spanish
Major substrate	Yoruba	Bube, Yoruba (via Early Krio)
Major adstrates	Temne, Mende, Mandinka	Bube; Cameroon Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin

Table 2 shows an overlap in the form inventory of Krio and Pichi with respect to the categories of PST, PFV, IPFV, PRF, FUT/POT, and SBJV. The parallels therefore extend well beyond the four core TAM categories that constitute the backbone of the aspect- and mood-prominent systems of all African AECs: the perfective-imperfective opposition expressed by Ø ‘FACT’ (i.e. factative TAM, see Yakpo, 2019a: 141–145) vs. *dè* ‘IPFV’, the potential mood and future marker *gò* ‘POT/FUT’, and the left-peripheral (hence preceding the personal pronoun) subjunctive complementizer *mék* ‘SBJV’. The differences between Krio and Pichi are found in more peripheral categories but they are nonetheless of interest. I focus on two them in the following.

Both Krio and Pichi have a dedicated habitual marker, namely *kìn* ‘HAB’ (< ‘can’), see (1). In a handful of instances, two speakers above 60 years in the Pichi corpus use *kìn* as a marker of abilitive mood (2). In this example and following ones, a high tone is indicated with an acute accent, a low tone with a grave accent over the vowel.

- (1) *Dóg kìn bét.*  
dog HAB bite.  
‘Dogs bite.’ (Krio/Pichi)
- (2) *Bífó à kìn grab, à dè sí bíg*  
before 1SG.SBJ ABIL get.up 1SG.SBJ IPFV see big  
*bíg fáyà.*  
REP fire  
‘Before I could get up, I was seeing a huge fire.’ (Pichi)

Contrary to Pichi, abilitive uses of *kìn* like (2) are widespread in Krio and found across all age groups

**Table 2: Tense, aspect and mood markers in Krio and Pichi**

Mood	Tense	Mood	Aspect		Verb	Aspect
<i>mék, lé</i> SBJV	<i>bìn</i> PST	<i>gò</i> POT/FUT	<i>dè</i> IPFV	Ø	<i>gó</i> 'go'	<i>dón</i> COMPL
		<i>fɔ̃</i> MOD/OBL	<i>dé pàn</i> PROG	<i>kán</i> PFV		
		<i>mòs</i> OBL	<i>kìn</i> HAB; ABIL	<i>dón</i> PRF		
			<i>blàn</i> HAB	<i>néà,</i> <i>nóbà</i> PRF.NEG		

Underlined: only Krio; other forms: Krio and Pichi.

((2) is also a possible utterance in Krio). The conventional way of expressing ability in Pichi is by way of the modal auxiliary *fit* 'can' (< 'fit') (Yakpo, 2019b: 166–168).

Further, Pichi has calqued a continuative aspect auxiliary construction featuring the 3SG present tense verb *sigue* 'continue' (< Span. *seguir* 'follow, continue'), see (3), which is followed by a lexical verb without an intervening complementizer, as in Spanish. Krio has an equivalent structure with the English-sourced verb *kàntínyù* 'continue' (4). The presence of the preposition (and non-finite complementizer) *fɔ̃* may actually point to borrowing and calquing from English 'continue to' as well; the absence of *kàntínyù* in Pichi seems to support this. Krio and Pichi therefore probably both developed these kinds of continuative constructions through contact with their respective superstrates.

- (3) *Dèn sigue plé ból sóté ivìn tén.*  
3PL continue play ball until evening time  
'I continued to play ball until the evening.' (Pichi)
- (4) *Á kàntínyù fɔ̃ ríd sóté mónìn tén.*  
1SG.SBJ continue PREP read until morning time  
'I continued to read until the morning.' (Krio)

In sum, the major aspect and mood oppositions in Krio and Pichi have remained the same. Outside the core system we see differences, however. Krio speakers continue to use an abilitive marker (*kìn* 'ABIL') that has fallen out of use in Pichi. In turn, Pichi has innovated a continuative auxiliary construction through borrowing from Spanish (*sigue* 'continue'), while Krio has done the same through borrowing from English (*kàntínyù fɔ̃* 'continue to')

### 1.1 The expression of participant roles

The core syntactic case relations of subject and object and the prototypical participant roles of Agent and Patient are marked via word order with full nouns in both Pichi and Krio (Yakpo, 2019a: 307–311), and additionally by suppletion and tonal inflection with person forms (Bordal Steien & Yakpo, 2020: 27–28). Substantial differences between the two languages are, however, found in the marking of additional (non-locative) participant roles. Pichi makes use of fewer specialized prepositions than Krio, instead relying on multipurpose forms to mark non-Agent roles. Table 3 shows the most relevant prepositions marking participant roles other than those expressed by absence of marking and word order alone in Pichi and Krio. Forms in parentheses are only attested in Krio. Table 3 includes animate (ANIM) Goal (*she flung the stick to us; she shouted at us*) and Source (*she hid from me*), which straddle the boundary of non-locative roles like Recipient and Stimulus.

Table 3 shows that both languages have an identical form inventory save those in the last three columns, which are exclusive to Krio. Most significantly, the multifunctional prepositions *fɔ̃* 'PREP' and *wìt/wèt* 'with' (/wìt/ in Krio and /wèt/ in Pichi) and *lèk* (*lèk~lèkè~làyk~làk*) can mark all roles save Negative Comitative, which is exclusively expressed by *bìtáwt* 'without'. The prepositions *fɔ̃*, *wèt*, and *lèk* therefore constitute the core system of participant marking in Krio and Pichi. Krio and Pichi differ quite fundamentally in the distribution and frequency of all other prepositions, however. A cross in parentheses indicates that the function is only found in Krio, others are common to Krio and Pichi.

Turning to Krio, the prepositions *fɔ̃* 'PREP' and *wìt* 'with' mark the broadest range of roles. The

**Table 3: Marking of participant roles through prepositions in Krio and Pichi**

Preposition / Participant role	<i>fɔ̃</i> 'PREP'	<i>wit/wèt</i> 'with'	<i>lɛk</i> 'like'	<i>bikòs;</i> <i>fɔ̃ séka</i> 'due to'	<i>bítáwt</i> 'without'	<i>bòt</i> 'about'	<i>tò</i> 'to'	<i>pàn</i> 'on'
Recipient							(x)	
Beneficiary	x						(x)	
Experiencer							(x)	(x)
Stimulus	x	x				(x)	(x)	
Goal (ANIM)	x						(x)	
Source (ANIM)	x							(x)
Instrument	x	x						
Cause	x	x		x				
Circumstance	x	x				(x)		(x)
Comitative		x						
Negative comitative					x			
Purpose	x							
Manner		x						
Equative/similative			x					
Possessor	x							

In parentheses: only in Krio; others: Krio and Pichi.

overlapping continuum of Instrument and Comitative roles is most frequently expressed by *wit* ‘with’ (5)-(6). It also includes Manner roles like (7).

- (5) *Dèm kám sí=àm wit dèm yón yáy.*  
3PL PFV see=3SG.OBJ with 3PL own eye  
‘They saw it with their own eyes.’ (Krio)

- (6) *À drim dís nèt sé à it*  
1SG.SBJ dream this night QUOT 1SG.SBJ eat  
*wit yú.*  
with 2SG.OBJ  
‘I dreamt this night that I ate with you.’ (Krio)

- (7) *Ól in pikín fibà=àm wit fěs.*  
all 3SG.POSS child resemble=3SG.OBJ with face  
‘All her children resemble her by their faces.’ (Krio)

The general associative preposition *fɔ̃* is found across an even greater range, marking roles as diverse as Beneficiary (8), Cause (9) and Purpose (10) among others.

- (8) *Mi brɔ̃dà báy wán tín Milo fɔ̃ mí.*  
1SG.POSS brother buy one tin NAME PREP 1SG.OBJ  
‘My brother bought me a tin of Milo.’ (Krio)

- (9) *Dèn kɔ̃s=àm fɔ̃ dá tín wé*  
3PL insult=3SG.OBJ PREP that thing SUB  
*i dú.*  
3SG.SBJ do  
‘They insulted him because of that that thing he did.’ (Krio)

- (10) *À nó gò ték in mán fɔ̃ wítɛ̃s.*  
1SG.SBJ NEG POT take 3SG.POSS man PREP witness  
‘I won’t take her man for a witness.’ (Krio; Taylor-Pearce 1989: 6)

Krio however also employs all other prepositions in Table 3 besides *fɔ̃* ‘PREP’, *wit* ‘with’ and *lɛ̃k* ‘like’ in addition and often preferably, to mark very specific participant roles. For example, the low transitivity verb *láy* ‘lie’ is followed by a prepositional phrase (PP) introduced by *pàn* ‘on’ or *tò* ‘to’ to mark Circumstance and Recipient roles respectively (11). The use of either preposition therefore entails a significant difference in meaning. The same holds for *mém̃bà* ‘remember, think, remind’, where the preposition *bɔ̃t* ‘about’ marks a Stimulus (12) while a direct complement (i.e. word order alone) instantiates a Patient (13). Such verb-PP collocations appear to have been part of the Krio repertoire since earliest times (see further below), suggesting that Pichi has lost them.

- (11) *Yù láy pàn/tò mí.*  
2SG lie on/to 1SG.OBJ  
‘You lied about/to me.’ (Krio)

- (12) *À kìn mém̃bà bɔ̃t yú.*  
1SG.SBJ HAB think about 2SG.OBJ  
‘I always think about you.’ (Krio)

- (13) *À gò mém̃bà yú.*  
1SG.SBJ POT remind 2SG.OBJ  
‘I will remind you.’ (Krio)

The Recipient/animate Goal of a speech transfer verb like *tók* ‘talk’ is often marked by the preposition *tò* ‘to’ (14). Krio speakers also occasionally mark a Recipient indirect object of *gí* ‘give’ by way of *tò*, particularly in more acrolectal registers (15).

- (14) *Ì tók tò wí lɛ̃k nà in*  
3SG.SBJ talk to 1PL.OBJ like FOC 3SG.INDP  
*bón wí.*  
procreate 1PL.OBJ  
‘She talked to us as if it was her who gave birth to us [i.e. as if talking to a child].’  
(Krio; Krio Corpus Project 2003: BM1:S2:PW25:4)

- (15) *Ì gí ól in m̀nì tò chóch.*  
3SG.SBJ give all 3SG.POSS money to church  
‘She gave all her money to (her) church.’ (Krio)

The difference between marking by direct complement and various prepositions are therefore lexical, very much like in English. Obsolete English uses of prepositions for marking a range of participant roles have, in fact, been retained in numerous Krio collocations, including the uses of *pàn* ‘on’ in the following ones: *ì véks pàn mí* ‘he’s angry with me’, *à lúk pàn àm* ‘I looked at her’, *ì tók pàn mí* ‘he scolded me’, *ì tók pàn Krió* ‘he spoke in Krio’, *ì áyd pàn mí* ‘she hid from me’ (examples from Hancock, 2017: 162). Similar verb-preposition collocations are also found in contemporary Jamaican Creole, with the expected amount of micro-variation, i.e. *no shout pan mi* ‘don’t shout at me!’, *mi baal afta im* ‘I cried at him’ (field data).

In Krio, a large range of participant roles, including core ones like Beneficiary and Recipient can therefore be expressed as PPs, very much like in English. Additionally, specific prepositions with narrower functions are often used rather than the multipurpose ones *fɔ̃* and *wit*. All these constructions look very English from the perspective of Pichi, and are very unlikely to be heard in any register of contemporary Pichi.

In Pichi, prepositions other than *fɔ̃*, *wèt* and *lɛ̃k* are so seldom heard that they are best characterized as peripheral. In fact, the peripheral prepositions of Pichi either uniquely occur in idiomatic phrases (e.g. *bày gód in páwa*, lit. ‘by the power of God’, i.e. ‘God willing’), or are exceedingly rare in



my corpus, e.g. *ɔf* ‘of’ (1 occurrence), *tò* ‘to’ (4 occurrences, all of which with a locative sense), *bɔt* ‘about’ (1 occurrence), *bɪtáwt* ‘without’ (1 occurrence).

In contrast to Krio, Pichi therefore expresses almost all participant roles either by way of a direct complement, or via the polyfunctional prepositions *fɔ* ‘PREP’ and *wèt* ‘with’. Hence, the conventional way of coding the Experiencer of the verb *láy* ‘lie’ in Pichi is via a direct complement, compare (11) with (16). Equally, the Experiencer and the Stimulus of the verb *mém̩bà* ‘remember, think (about), remind’ are both only expressed as direct complements. The resulting ambiguity between ‘remember/think about’ on the one hand, and ‘remind’ on the other is resolved by context (17).

- (16) *Dán mán dɔn láy yú bád ó.*  
that man PRF lie 2SG.OBJ bad SP  
‘That man has really lied to you.’ (Pichi)

- (17) *Á kìn mém̩bà yú bɔkú.*  
1SG.SBJ HAB remember 2SG.OBJ much  
‘I remember/think about/remind you a lot.’ (Pichi)

The vast majority of Pichi verbs, including those characterized by low transitivity can take direct complements like *mém̩bà* in (17), even when some of the more specialized participant roles in Table 3 are expressed. This includes Recipients of transfer verbs like *tók* ‘talk, tell’, *báy* ‘buy’, *gí* ‘give’, and *dás* ‘give as present’. These verbs never take PPs introduced by *tò* ‘to’ in Pichi. Transfer verbs invariably appear in double object constructions if a Theme is additionally present (18).

- (18) *Á nó gò tók ùnà nó wán wɔd sɛf.*  
1SG.SBJ NEG POT talk 2PL NEG one word EMP  
‘I’m not going to tell you people a single word.’ (Pichi)

Direct complements or PPs introduced by the multipurpose preposition *fɔ* are also the only options in the Pichi equivalents of the Krio examples cited above from Hancock (2017), i.e. *à lúk àm* ‘I looked at her’, *è tók mí* ‘she talked to me’, *è háyd fɔ mí* ‘she hid from me’, *è véks fɔ mí* ‘she’s annoyed with me’, and *è hálà mí* ‘she shouted at me’. The use of direct complements also extends to so-called associative objects. These are lexicalized verb-noun collocations in which direct complements fulfil a diverse range of participant roles including less common ones like Content (*fúlɔp wátà* ‘filled with water’) and Price (*sél dos mil* ‘sell for two thousand’) (see Yakpo, 2019a: 339–343).

Where direct complements are not common, the multipurpose prepositions *fɔ* and *wèt* cover the remaining options in Pichi. This includes the expression of Instrument (19), Manner (20) and Cause (21). A multipurpose preposition is usually preferred even where a more specific one may be used, compare (21) and (22). Also note that *wèt* and *fɔ* are often interchangeable. The examples involving *wèt* are also possible in Krio, but unlike Krio, the range of *fɔ* seems to be even broader in Pichi.

- (19) *Á wákà wèt/fɔ fút.*  
1SG.SBJ walk with/PREP foot  
‘I walked by foot.’ (Pichi)

- (20) *Yù géfɔ tók=àn wèt páwà.*  
2SG have.to talk=3SG.OBJ with power  
‘You have to say it forcefully.’ (Pichi)

- (21) *Èf wì nó dring nàw, wì gò dáy wèt/fɔ tɔstì.*  
if 1PL NEG drink now 1PL POT die with/PREP thirst  
‘If we don’t drink now, we’ll die of thirst.’ (Pichi)

- (22) *Èf wì nó dring nàw, wì gò dáy fɔsékà/bikòs tɔstì.*  
if 1PL NEG drink now 1PL POT die due.to/because.of thirst  
‘If we don’t drink now, we’ll die because of/due to thirst.’ (Pichi)

In sum, Pichi makes use of the two multipurpose prepositions *fɔ* ‘PREP’ and *wèt* ‘with’ to mark almost the entire range of participant roles expressed by PPs. Beyond that, an equally large range of participant roles is expressed by direct complements without the use of any preposition. This differs markedly from Krio with its larger range of prepositional marking of participants and a dispreference, it seems, for direct complements. Given that similar uses of prepositions are still attested in contemporary Jamaican Creole, the presence of English in Sierra Leone therefore helped Krio *maintain* inherited grammatical features. In other cases, like the abilitive/habitual marker covered in 4.1, contact with English made Krio *evolve* in the direction of English.

## 4.2. Summary

Table 4 provides a summary of the phenomena that I have looked at in the preceding sections in the same order of occurrence. Reference to the corresponding examples is given in the rightmost column.

The differences between Krio and Pichi summarized in Table 4 are quite substantial, and I am

**Table 4: Differences between Krio and Pichi**

Category	Krio	Pichi	Ex. no.
<b>(1) Tense, aspect, and mood</b>			
HAB aspect	<i>kìn</i> ‘HAB’ and <i>blàn</i> ‘HAB’	<i>blàn</i> not attested; only <i>kìn</i>	(1)
ABIL mood	<i>kìn</i> ‘ABIL’	obsolete	(2)
Continuative	<i>kòntinyù fɔ̃</i> ‘continue to’	<i>sigue</i> ‘continue’ (<Span.)	(3), (4)
<b>(2) Marking of participant roles</b>			
Direct complements	rare	common	(13), (16), (17)
<i>fɔ̃</i>	common	common, larger range than in Krio	(8), (9), (10), (19), (21)
<i>wit/wèt</i>	common	common, similar range as in Krio	(5)-(7), (19)-(21),
<i>pàn</i>	common	not attested	(11), §4.2
<i>bɔ̃t</i>	common	not attested	(12)
<i>tò</i>	common	not attested	(11), (14), (15)

quite certain that there are similar divergences in other sub-systems of the two languages (see Yakpo, 2013b for some phonological and lexical differences; also Yakpo, 2019b). In section 5, I attempt to explain the differentiation that Krio and Pichi have undergone.

## 5. Outcomes of contact with English (or not)

The stratal-areal contact model proposed in earlier work (Yakpo, 2017) is a heuristic tool for explaining long-term contact outcomes in the AECs spoken in the multilingual linguistic ecologies of the Caribbean and West Africa. Table 5 singles out the areal contact scenarios of Pichi and Krio (for all constellations, see Yakpo 2017: 68–69). ‘Areal contact constellation’ indicates the presence (+) or absence (–) of contact with the relevant strata of lexifier, superstrate(s), substrate(s), and adstrate(s). Hypotheses on ‘areal contact outcomes’ are provided in the rightmost column and itemized (a)–(d).

In areal contact constellation 1 in Table 5, represented by Krio, the AEC has been in unbroken contact with the lexifier English since its emergence. The AEC is also spoken alongside one or several African adstrates. The areal contact

outcomes of this stratal constellation are: (a) features are transferred to Krio from the superstrate English and features inherited from the English lexifier are strengthened; (b) features from the adstrates are transferred into Krio. Overall, Krio appears more English-like than Pichi and at the same time exhibits features of its specific Atlantic and Mande African adstrates.

In constellation 2, represented by Pichi, the AEC is no longer in contact with the lexifier English but instead with the non-lexifier superstrate Spanish. The AEC is also spoken alongside one or several African adstrates, in this case the Bantu language Bube. The areal contact outcomes of this stratal constellation are: (a) there is no transfer from the lexifier English and a concomitant weakening of inherited English lexifier features; (b) features of the major adstrate Bube and the temporary adstrates Nigerian Pidgin and Cameroon Pidgin are/were transferred into Pichi; (c) features of the non-lexifier superstrate Spanish are transferred to Pichi. On the whole, Pichi appears less English-like, and more Bantu-like than Krio. I briefly detail these two contact constellations where they contrast, namely with respect to outcomes of contact with the lexifier vs. contact with a non-lexifier, listed under (a) and (c) in Table 5 and contact with differing adstrates, listed under (b).



**Table 5: Areal contact scenarios**

		Contact constellation	Contact outcomes
1	<b>Krio</b>	+contact with English –contact with non-lexifier superstrate +contact with African adstrates	(a) Transfer from English superstrate and strengthening of English lexifier features  (b) Transfer from adstrates Temne, Mende, Mandinka
2	<b>Pichi</b>	–contact with English +contact with non-lexifier superstrate +contact with African adstrates	(a) No transfer from English and weakening of English lexifier features  (b) Transfer from the adstrate Bube, Nigerian Pidgin, and Cameroon Pidgin (c) Transfer from non-lexifier superstrate Spanish

**Contact with the lexifier superstrate (a) vs. contact with a non-lexifier superstrate (c)**

An example of the differential outcomes of lexifier vs. non-lexifier contact is the fate of the habitual marker *kìn* ‘HAB’ in Krio and Pichi, listed under category (1) in Table 4, section 4.3. In Pichi, the use of *kìn* as an abilitive modal is obsolete. By contrast, continuous reinforcement by the English source etymon *can* in the course of Krio-English contact in Sierra Leone has ensured the vitality of the abilitive function of *kìn* in Krio, which constituted the lexical source of the habitual function in the first place. This reinforcement is (i) segmental-formal (the pronunciation of *kìn* and *can* is very similar), (ii) lexical (both express ability), (iii) combinatorial (in English and Krio, preverbal auxiliaries co-occur with morphologically invariant lexical verbs in a right adjacent position), and (iv) frequential (in English and Krio, *can* and *kìn* are high frequency items compared to other words with overlapping meanings, e.g. *able* and *ébùl* in English/Krio).

In contrast, there is no formal overlap between Pichi *kìn* and the Spanish auxiliary *poder* ‘can’, in spite of a semantic overlap. The alternative habitual marker *blàn* (see [1] in Table 4) may have evolved in Krio because the abilitive and habitual senses of *kìn* are now difficult to disambiguate.

Beyond that, the expression of the entire range of participant roles via English-like verb-PP collocations in Krio (see [2] in Table 4) has been maintained from the founder varieties of Krio (among them Jamaican Creole) and expanded or evolved through form priming during contact

with English as well. Since there are no such formal and semantic overlaps between the forms and meanings of Pichi and Spanish verbs, Spanish matter and patterns have not been transferred to Pichi in a similar fashion. The presence of the Spanish-origin continuative auxiliary *sigue* ‘continue’ in Pichi nevertheless shows that the phonological shapes, their meanings, and combinatorics can also be borrowed from their respective superstrates without formal correspondences, albeit on a smaller scale than from the lexifier.

**Contact with adstrates (b)**

Besides the absence of lexifier contact, large-scale language shift to Pichi by Bube speakers has also contributed to the demise of lexically more restricted prepositions like *b̀̀t* ‘about’ and *p̀̀n* ‘on’ and the expansion of the multipurpose forms *f̀̀* ‘PREP’ and *ẁ̀t* ‘with’. Contact with the Bantu language Bube has, in turn converged with influence from and transfer to Pichi from Cameroon Pidgin and Nigerian Pidgin. In the basilectal registers of the latter two Creoles, the preposition *f̀̀* may fulfil all of the functions listed under (2) in Table 4 (Faraclas, 1996: 63–64, 223–224; Nkengasong, 2016: 86–88). This brings Pichi in line with an areal tendency towards few multipurpose prepositions (Creissels, 2006) and ‘hypertransitivity’ (Essegbey, 2015), i.e. the reliance on verb semantics and the use of direct complements to encode non-prototypical undergoers in a multiplicity of semantic functions (for a Bantu language of the region, see van de Velde, 2008: 292–299).

Finally, this study also shows that the Creole-specific concept of decreolization is unnecessary. Regular differences in language contact between related and unrelated languages can explain the changes that Krio and Pichi have undergone in their respective ecologies.

## 6. Conclusion

The comparison of Krio and Pichi in the preceding sections has shown that they are closely related. The correspondences in their TAM systems go well beyond the core markers shared by all African English-lexifier Creoles. They do, however, also show some significant divergences.

The difference between contact with the lexifier superstrate (Krio and English) and a non-lexifier superstrate (Pichi and Spanish) have been crucial with respect to contact outcomes in the TAM domain, and even more so in the realm of participation. When an English-lexifier Creole like Krio is spoken alongside its lexifier, parallels in form and meaning provide cognitive links for transfer from English that initiate and accelerate the lexical and functional convergence of Creole forms and structures with those of the superstrate. By comparison, contact with a non-lexifier superstrate like Spanish has not led to the same degree of convergence in the case of Pichi. Instead, contact and convergence with the Bantu adstrate and Nigerian and Cameroonian Pidgin have played a role. The processes behind the divergence of Krio and Pichi are therefore instructive for understanding the differentiation of the entire family of Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles on both sides of the Atlantic.

## Note

1 Research for this study was conducted with the support of grant no. 17608819 of the Research Grants Council of the Government of Hong Kong. The write-up was made possible through a Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers (2020–21) at the Institute for Asian and African Studies of the Humboldt University of Berlin.

## References

- Bickerton, D. 1973. 'On the nature of a Creole continuum.' *Language*, 49(3), 640–669.
- Bordal Steien, G. & Yakpo, K. 2020. 'Romancing with tone: On the outcomes of prosodic contact.' *Language*, 96(1), 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2020.0000>.
- Creissels, D. 2006. 'Encoding the distinction between location, source, and destination A typological study.' In M. Hickmann & S. Robert (eds.), *Space in Languages: Linguistic Systems and Cognitive Categories (Typological Studies in Language*, 66). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 19–28. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.66.03cre>.
- Dawson, H. 2003. 'Defining the outcome of language contact: Old English and Old Norse.' *Ohio State University Working Papers in Linguistics*, 57, 40–57.
- De Granda, G. 1985. *Estudios de Lingüística Afro-Románica*. Valladolid, España: Universidad de Valladolid.
- Essegbey, J. 2015. 'Verb semantics and argument structure in Gbe and Sranan.' In P. Muysken & N. Smith (eds.), *Surviving the Middle Passage: The West Africa–Surinam Sprachbund (Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs [TiLSM]*, 275). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 175–206.
- Faraclas, N. G. 1996. *Nigerian Pidgin*. London: Routledge.
- Finney, M. A. 2013. 'Krio.' In S. Michaelis, P. Maurer, M. Haspelmath & M. Huber (eds.), *The Survey of Pidgin and Creole Languages: English-based and Dutch-based Languages* (Vol. 1). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 157–166. <https://apics-online.info/surveys/15>
- Fyfe, C. 1962. *A History of Sierra Leone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fyle, C. M. 2004. 'The Yoruba diaspora in Sierra Leone's Krio society.' In T. Falola & M. D. Childs (eds.), *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 366–382.
- Gaetano, B. 2005. 'Dialect/standard convergence, mixing, and models of language contact: the case of Italy.' In P. Auer, F. Hinskens & P. Kerswill (eds.), *Dialect Change: Convergence and Divergence in European Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 81–95.
- Hancock, I. F. 1969. 'A provisional comparison of the English-based Atlantic creoles.' *African Language Review*, 8, 7–72.
- Hancock, I. F. 1987. 'A preliminary classification of Anglophone Atlantic creoles, with syntactic data from thirty-three representative dialects.' In G. G. Gilbert (ed.), *Pidgin and Creole Languages: Essays in Memory of John Reinecke*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, pp. 264–333.
- Hancock, I. F. 2017. 'A pan-Creole innovation?' *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 32(1), 159–169. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jpcl.32.1.06han>
- Huber, M. 1999. *Ghanaian Pidgin English in its West African Context: a Sociohistorical and Structural Analysis (Varieties of English Around the World*, G24). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Johanson, L. 2002. 'Contact-induced change in a code-copying framework.' In M. C. Jones & E. Esch (eds.), *Language Change: The Interplay of Internal, External, and Extra-linguistic Factors* (Vol. 86). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 285–314.
- Kootstra, G. J. 2015. 'A psycholinguistic perspective on code-switching: Lexical, structural and socio-interactive processes.' In G. Stell & K. Yakpo (eds.), *Codeswitching between Structural and Sociolinguistic Perspectives (Linguae et Litterae*, 43). Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 39–69.
- Krio Corpus Project. 2003. *The Krio Corpus Project*. Umeå University, Krio Corpus Project. <https://www.umu.se/en/research/projects/the-krio-corpus-project/> (Accessed December 6, 2020).
- Law, D. 2013. 'Inherited similarity and contact-induced change in Mayan Languages.' *Journal of Language*

- Contact*, 6(2), 271–299. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19552629-00602004>
- Lynn, M. 1992. ‘Technology, trade and “a race of native capitalists”’: The Krio diaspora of West Africa and the steamship, 1852–95.’ *The Journal of African History*, 33(3), 421–440.
- Martino, E. 2012. ‘Clandestine recruitment networks in the Bight of Biafra: Fernando Pó’s answer to the labour question, 1926–1945.’ *International Review of Social History*, 57(S20), 39–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859012000417>
- Mayeux, O. 2019. *Rethinking Decreolization: Language Contact and Change in Louisiana Creole*. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge. <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/294526> (Accessed February 13, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.41629>
- Mufwene, S. 1996. ‘The founder principle in Creole genesis.’ *Diachronica*, 13, 83–134.
- Nkengasong, N. 2016. *A Grammar of Cameroonian Pidgin*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Schröder, A. 2013. ‘Cameroon Pidgin.’ In S. Michaelis, P. Maurer, M. Haspelmath & M. Huber (eds.), *The Survey of Pidgin and Creole Languages: English-based and Dutch-based Languages* (Vol. 1). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 185–193. <https://apics-online.info/surveys/18> (Accessed June 13, 2020).
- Smith, N. 2017. ‘Krio as the Western Maroon Creole language of Jamaica, and the /na/ isogloss.’ In C. Cutler, Z. Vrzic & P. Angermeyer (eds.), *Creole Language Library* (53). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 251–274. <https://doi.org/10.1075/cill.53.11smi>
- Sundiata, I. K. 1990. *Equatorial Guinea: Colonialism, State Terror, and the Search for Stability*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Taylor-Pearce, E. 1989. *Bad Man Bete Pas emti Os (Krio Publications, Series 6)*. Umeå: Umeå University.
- Van de Velde, M. L. O. 2008. *A Grammar of Eton*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Weinreich, U. 1953. *Languages in Contact*. New York: Linguistic Circle of New York.
- Wyse, A. 1989. *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Yakpo, K. 2013a. ‘Pichi.’ In S. Michaelis, P. Maurer, M. Haspelmath & M. Huber (eds.), *The Survey of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures: English-based and Dutch-based Languages* (Vol. 1). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 194–205. <https://apics-online.info/surveys/19> (Accessed June 9, 2020).
- Yakpo, K. 2013b. ‘Wayward daughter: Language contact in the emergence of Pichi (Equatorial Guinea).’ *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics*, 34(2), 275–299. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jall-2013-0009>
- Yakpo, K. 2017. ‘Towards a model of language contact and change in the English-lexifier creoles of Africa and the Caribbean.’ *English World-Wide*, 38(1), 50–76. <https://doi.org/10.1075/eww.38.1.04yak>
- Yakpo, K. 2019a. *A Grammar of Pichi (Studies in Diversity Linguistics, 23)*. Berlin: Language Science Press. <http://langsci-press.org/catalog/book/85> (Accessed March 27, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2546450>
- Yakpo, K. 2019b. ‘Inheritance, contact, convergence: Pronominal allomorphy in the African English-lexifier Creoles.’ *English World-Wide*, 40(2), 201–225. <https://doi.org/10.1075/eww.00028.yak>
- Yakpo, K. & Muysken, P. (eds.) 2017. *Boundaries and Bridges: Language Contact in Multilingual Ecologies (Language Contact and Bilingualism [LCB], 14)*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614514886>
- Yakpo, K. & Smith, N. 2020. ‘The Atlantic.’ In U. Ansaldi & M. Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Languages (Routledge Handbooks in Linguistics, 25)* (1<sup>st</sup> edn.) London: Routledge, pp. 179–198. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003107224-11>
- Yakubovich, I. 2010. *Sociolinguistics of the Luvian language*. Leiden: Brill.

### Conventions for interlinear glosses and abbreviations

-	Morpheme boundary	NEG	Negative
=	Clitic morpheme boundary	OBJ	Object case
1	First person	OBL	Obligative mood
2	Second person	PFV	(Narrative) perfective aspect
3	Third person	PL	Plural number
ABIL	Abilitive mood	PLACE	Place name
ANIM	Animate	POSS	Possessive case
COND	Completive aspect	POT	Potential mood
COP	Copula	PREP	General associative preposition
DEF	Definite article	PRF	Perfect aspect
EMP	Emphatic	PROG	Progressive aspect
FOC	Focus	PST	Past tense
FUT	Future tense	QUOT	Quotative
HAB	Habitual aspect	REP	Repetition
INDP	Independent person form	SBJ	Subject case
INTJ	Interjection	SBJV	Subjunctive mood
IPFV	Imperfective aspect	SG	Singular number
LOC	Locative	SP	Sentence (pragmatic) particle
MOD	Modal marker	SUB	Subordinator
NAME	Proper name	TAM	Tense-aspect-mood