

Time and Space in Linguistics:
Interdisciplinary Computational Approaches
& Cross-Creole Comparisons

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***Suriname versus the rest of the world:
a comparison of functional elements
based on the APiCS***

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- background
- the creole languages of Suriname
- some more or less unique features – parallels in APiCS?
- concluding remarks

Background

Comparing creole languages with same lexical base and/or similar substrate may shed light on aspects of creolization with regard to

- reconstruction of developments of individual creole languages, establishing shared histories, affiliations, groups
- interplay between universal processes and substrate influence
- the retention vs loss of lexifier forms, the destiny of the morpho-syntactic properties of retained forms, the innovations following the loss of certain forms or properties (cf. “loss and reconstitution” Bickerton 1988; “Bottleneck” Bakker 2013)

Release of APiCS - nice occasion to look again at some properties of the Surinamese creoles

- interested in individual and shared histories rather than in typological generalizations
- bottom-up approach rather than starting with APiCs features

The creole languages of Suriname – a “sub-bi-clan”?

- Suriname (‘Dutch Guyana’), English colony 1651-1667, Dutch 1668-1975
- **Sranan**, English lexifier, developed on plantations
- related maroon languages:
 - **Nengee: Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka**
 - **Saramaccan & Matawai**: larger Portuguese component
- shared component going back to “**Proto-Sranan**” (Smith 1987)
- substrate: West African **Gbe (Fon, Ewe), KiKongo**
- possibly affiliations with West African PCs, notably Krio, through shared input of West African Pidgin English

Some features appear to be typical for Suriname

- here: morpho-syntactic features,
which forms take on which functions

Comparisons based on APiCs

- languages with same primary **lexifier**, i.e. English
- languages with similar **substrate**: Gbe (Fon, Ewe)
 - in particular: Haitian French Creole

Typically Surinamese 1: complex adpositional phrases (PPs)

general P optionally accompanied by 'locative item'

a) **na** *a* *oso*
P DEF.SG house
'at/in/to/... the house'

b) **na baka** *a* *oso*
P behind DEF.SG house

c) **na** *a* *oso* **baka**
P DEF.SG house behind/back
'behind the house'

- various 'locative items', incl. *ini* < E *in*
- Saramaccan: some Portuguese forms, same pattern
- general P obligatory
- changes going on - earlier: occasionally *fu* b') **na baka fu** *a* *oso*
- now: type (c) disappearing
- without P: **tapu** *a* *tafra* 'on the table'
- absence of internal grammaticalization; pattern in place in 18th century & similarity with Ewe, Fon
> substrate account (Bruyn 1995)

Typically Surinamese 1: complex PPs cont.

- Similar pattern in **Haitian** FC? No
 - Lefebvre 2013: Haitian vs. Saramaccan explained by different choices in relabelling (ex 2)
 - Smith 2001: differences in proportions of speakers of particular substrate

(2) a. FONGBE	b. FRENCH	c. HAITIAN
...jɪ 'on'	sur... 'on'	sou... 'on'
dò...jɪ 'be at ... on'	sur... 'on'	sou... 'be at on'

- **APiCS:**
 - **no parallels to Surinamese pattern** of complex PPs
 - interesting: [Kikongo-Kituba](#) has counterpart to secondary 18th c. Sranan pattern:
 - b') *na baka fu a oso*

Typically Surinamese 2: various functions of *di(si)* < E *this*

2a: *di(si)* as relative clause marker

di muje di mi lobi

SAR, APiCS 3-123

DEF.SG woman REL 1SG love

'the woman whom I love'

2b: as a conjunction with temporal, causal, concessive meaning:

'when', 'since', 'because', 'while'

di ju brokko mi nefi, ju musse gi mi wan so srefiwan SR, Sch1783

CONJ 2SG break 1SG knife 2SG must give 1SG INDEF.SG so same-one

'since you've broken my knife, you must give me a similar one'

- proximate demonstratives and related forms function as relativizers and as conjunctions in Ewe, Fon
 - independent universal development implausible & no similar patterns in other creoles in APiCS
- substrate account strengthened

Typically Surinamese 3: demonstrative *disi* & *dati* post-nominal

Canonical position after N In present-day Sranan & Nengee:

a)	<i>a</i>	<i>buku</i>	<i>disi</i>	b)	<i>den</i>	<i>buku</i>	<i>dati</i>
	DEF.SG	book	DEM		DEF.PL	book	DEM
	'this book'				'those books'		

- always co-occurring with pre-nominal article
- 18th century Sranan: *dati* always post-nominal
disi both pre- en post-nominal
- Saramaccan: *akí* 'here', *alá* 'there', *dé* 'there'
Sranan also : *(d)ya* and also *dis(i)-ya*
- APiCS 31 "Co-occurrence of demonstrative and definite article" 21/88
(issues of DEM vs. adverb and DEM vs. DEF article)
but different forms and/or different patterns
- Suriname still unique in the way the reflexes of English *this* & *that* behave

Typically Surinamese continued

- Dependent 3SG subject pronoun **a**
not attested elsewhere in APiCS except for Lingala
- Complementizer **taki** or **taa** < E *talk*
vs. forms like **se** in many other English lexifier creoles
no reflex of E *say* in Suriname

APiCS: whether or not complementizer is identical to / related to bare 'say',
Suriname not differentiated from other languages

- Such 'accidental' features can be important for establishing affliations and timings of developments.

Concluding remarks

- Features discussed are indeed typical for Surinamese creoles, “unique” until proven otherwise
- Find out about “uniqueness” by using APiCS without previous ideas? no
 - interested in individual and shared histories rather than in typological generalizations
 - bottom-up approach rather than starting with APiCs features
- in using APiCS it should be kept in mind that present-day features not necessarily reflect earlier stages of a language
- features not shared by Haitian FC, nor Krio > Suriname a “sub-bi-clan” ?
 - needed: more properties, incl. phonological, lexical