

# AFRICAN AGENCY IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE ATLANTIC CREOLES

PIER ANGELI LE COMPTE, LOURDES GONZÁLEZ COTTO, DIANA URSULIN,  
SUSANA C. DEJESÚS, CÁNDIDA GONZÁLEZ-LÓPEZ, BRENDA L. DOMÍNGUEZ-  
ROSADO, MICAH CORUM, AIDA VERGNE, NICHOLAS FARACLAS  
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, RÍO PIEDRAS

## Introduction

The role of the African substrate languages in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles has been the subject of debate among creolists for more than a century. Despite the fact that significant influence from the Niger-Congo (and particularly the Benue-Kwa) languages spoken by the great majority of those most involved in the establishment and propagation of the colonial era Creoles of the Atlantic Basin would have been the null hypothesis in most other contexts, this has not been the case in creole studies. This denial of what should be obvious is due primarily to the pervasive power of the prevailing discourses of class, gender, and race to set the scientific agenda, especially in areas of study that deal with the question of agency on the part of those who have been marginalized by ‘mainstream’ history, politics, economics, and linguistics.

But the failure of arguments for substrate influence on the Atlantic Creoles to gain wider acceptance and currency within creolistics is also due in part to the way in which the case for substrate influence has been advanced by the proponents of such influence themselves. The case for substrate input has been weakened by the following assumptions:

- 1) that the monolingual, monocultural model of society that predominates in capitalist hegemonic society also applied along the western coast of Africa as well as in all of the Caribbean during the colonial period;
- 2) that the languages along the west coast of Africa share less in terms of genetic and typological relationships than they actually do;
- 3) that influence from substrate languages can be and/or must be traced to one specific African language;
- 4) that influence from any other source (superstrates, universals, etc.) can be/must be completely ruled out before a case can be made for substrate influence.

In this chapter, we use the most recent consensus among Africanists as to the classification of the languages spoken along the West African coast as well as other evidence to demonstrate how these assumptions often lead creolists to underestimate or deny agency on the part of African descended peoples in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles.

## ERRONEOUS ASSUMPTIONS

### 1 Eurocentric Notions of Monolingualism, Monoculturalism, Unitary Identity

Many creolists assume the monolingual, monocultural model of society that predominates in capitalist hegemonic society also applied along the western coast of Africa as well as in all of the Caribbean during the colonial period. In fact, West Africa and the indigenous Caribbean are two of the most culturally and linguistically diverse regions on the planet, each with hundreds of distinct but highly interactive ethno-linguistic communities, with each community practicing pluri-lingualism, pluriculturalism, and pluri-identification in its own creative way. Cultural exchange, trade, and intermarriage between ethnic groups have always been the rule rather than the exception in West Africa and the indigenous Caribbean, so that each individual actor in society is expected to strike a dynamic balance between a strong sense of ethnic identity and a fluent command of many different cultural, linguistic, and religious codes.

38

It is an acceptance, even a preference, for cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and adaptability, as well as an openness to cultural exchange and hybridity which defines the cultural, linguistic, and identificational patterns that the African, Indigenous, and Afro-Indigenous working classes created in the Caribbean, be it in maroon villages, on pirate ships, at weekend markets, in slave trading stations, or on plantations. To contextualize this idea, it is helpful to posit four overlapping waves of creolization in the Caribbean, as shown in Figure 1 below.

1st Wave	Pre-Invasion to Present: <b>pre-invasion sociétés de cohabitation</b>
2nd Wave	Invasion to Present: <b>post-invasion sociétés de cohabitation</b>
3rd Wave	Invasion to Sugar Revolution to Present: <b>sociétés d'habitation</b>
4th Wave	Sugar Revolution to Abolition to Present: <b>sociétés de plantation</b>

**Figure 1** Four Waves of Caribbean Creolization

Chaudenson expanded our focus as creolists from *sociétés de plantation* to the *sociétés d'habitation* that preceded them. We propose a further expansion to include

*sociétés de cohabitation* (González-López, 2007) which preceded both plantations and homesteads. Just as homesteads can be seen to coincide with a wave of creolization that preceded the wave of creolization that coincided with plantations, we propose two waves of creolization that preceded *sociétés d'habitation* and which coincide with pre-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation* and post-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation*.

*Sociétés de cohabitation* differ from *sociétés d'habitation* and *sociétés de plantation* because in *sociétés de cohabitation*, Europeans were not politically, economically or culturally dominant. *Sociétés de cohabitation* are defined culturally by Indigenous and African pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification, with no single target or norm being imposed. In post-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation*, marginalized peoples of African, Indigenous, and European descent lived in intimate and sustained contact which fostered the sustained and widespread use of a pluri-lingual repertoire of varieties, including pidginized and creolized varieties. This challenges the monolingual, linear models for Creole development that have underpinned our work as creolists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification have been the norm rather than the exception throughout Caribbean history, from before European Invasion to the present. Although any island of the Caribbean could be utilized to illustrate this point, we choose the island of St. Croix in the former Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands) as an example. In the case of St. Croix, we are fortunate to have the careful observations of the sociolinguistic conditions that held on the island made in 1767 by the Moravian missionary CGA Oldendorp. Oldendorp (1777) observed that:

“English, German, Danish, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Creole are spoken in these islands [St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix]. English and High German are the languages with which one can get by everywhere. [English Lexifier] Creole [Crucian] is spoken by the Negroes, as well as...the majority of the white inhabitants of the islands Danes, Dutchmen, and Frenchmen each speak their respective language among themselves. Trade with the Spaniards...makes the learning of their language necessary....The number of languages is the cause of many people mixing one with the others, as well as for speaking many languages, though none well nor with purity. A knowledge of...English...is especially necessary in the towns....The English...do not learn Creole for the most part....There are, therefore, large areas on St. Croix where the Negroes speak...English....As a rule, Negroes have good memories. It is, therefore, not difficult for Bussals [African-born slaves] to learn the Creole language. And the children learn it in an almost unbelievably short time. One of my friends took a Negro boy...back to Germany with him, and the latter learned to speak English, Dutch, and German tolerably well in the course of the trip ...Some Negroes who are already quite old when they arrive from Guinea never manage to learn the Creole language in their life time.... Many Negroes speak this language quite well, though very rapidly. Influenced by their Guinean dialects, they

pronounce the words indistinctly, as if the word remained stuck in their mouths.”  
(p. 154)

In a non-exhaustive survey, Oldendorp identified over 50 African ethno-linguistic groups present in St. Croix in 1767. He recorded samples of speech from over 20 African languages still spoken on the island, with most belonging to the Benue-Kwa Branch of the Niger-Congo Family (Akan, Twi, Ewe, Yoruboid, Nupoid, Igboid, Cross River, Bantoid, Bantu, etc.), others belonging to other branches of Niger-Congo (Atlantic, Mande, Ijoid, Adamawa), and a few belonging to the Afro-Asiatic (Chadic) and the Nilo-Saharan (Kanuri) families. Just as *sociétés de cohabitation* have persisted from before European invasion to the present, so has the pluri-lingualism that typifies *sociétés de cohabitation* persisted until the present day in St. Croix as in the rest of the Caribbean. In St. Croix today, a wide range of lects of both Crucian English Lexifier Creole and Virgin Islands Standard English are *each* spoken by over 50 % of the population. Additionally, a wide range of lects of other English Lexifier Creoles (Jamaican, Kittitian, Antigua, Trinidadian, St. Thomas, etc.), French Lexifier Creoles (St. Lucian, Dominican, Haitian, etc.), Caribbean Spanish (Puerto Rican, Viequense, Dominican, etc.) and United States Standard English are *each* spoken by over 25 % of the population. Other Languages spoken on St. Croix today include: Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Akan, Jamaican Maroon Spirit Language, etc.

40

An example of the patterns of pluri-lingualism and pluri-identification that typify present-day St. Croix society can be found in the linguistic and identificational repertoires of a typical Crucian family encountered by DeJesús (2009). This researcher found that in this family:

1. the Father/Step-Father, who sometimes says that he is Puerto Rican and at other times says that he is Crucian, speaks Puerto Rican (PR) Spanish, and pidginized English
2. the Mother, who sometimes says that she is Crucian, at other times says that she is Porto-Crucian, and at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, speaks Crucian (English-Lexifier Creole -ELC), PR Spanish (learned from her husband), and Virgin Islands (VI) (Standard) English
3. the Grandfather who sometimes says that he is Crucian, at other times says that he is Viequense, and at other times says that he is Puerto Rican, speaks Viequense Spanish, PR Spanish, Crucian ELC, and VI English
4. the Adult Son who sometimes says that he is Crucian, at other times says that he is a Virgin Islander, and at other times says that he is an American, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, and pidginized Spanish (to his Step-Father)
5. the First Daughter who sometimes says that she is Porto-Crucian, at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, at other times says that she is a Virgin Islander, and at other times says that she is an American, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, US (Standard) English, Kittitian ELC, Jamaican ELC, and some St Lucian French Lexifier Creole
6. the Second Daughter who sometimes says that she is Crucian, at other times says that she is Porto-Crucian, and at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, US (Standard) English, Kittitian ELC, Jamaican ELC, and some St Lucian French Lexifier Creole
7. the Uncle who sometimes says that he is Puerto Rican and at other times says that he is Viequense, speaks PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, and pidginized English
8. the Niece, who sometimes says that she is Puerto Rican, at other times says that she is Viequense, at other times says that she is Crucian, and at other times says that she is a Rastafarian, speaks PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, Crucian ELC, VI English, Jamaican English Lexifier Creole (ELC), and is learning Maroon Spirit Language from her husband
9. the Niece's Husband who sometimes says that he is a Rastafarian, at other times says that he is a Jamaican, at other times says that he is a proud descendant of Jamaican Maroons, and at other times says that he is Crucian, speaks Jamaican ELC, Jamaican Standard English, Crucian ELC, Maroon Spirit Language, pidginized Spanish, and is learning Viequense Spanish from his wife

This evidence indicates that the pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification that characterize the Caribbean today are nothing new. In fact, the *sociétés de cohabitation* that have fostered this pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification typified not only pre-Colonial societies in both the Caribbean and West Africa, but also were the predominant form of society during the initial period of European invasion, when Europeans were not in a dominant position politically, economically, or culturally. In most of the Caribbean, a significant number and variety of these *sociétés de cohabitation* have persisted all the way up until the present day. This means that African and African-descended peoples have always been ‘in the right place’, ‘at the right time’, and ‘in sufficient numbers’ to have had a major impact on the emergence of creole languages in the post-invasion Caribbean.

## **2 Outdated Classification of African Languages**

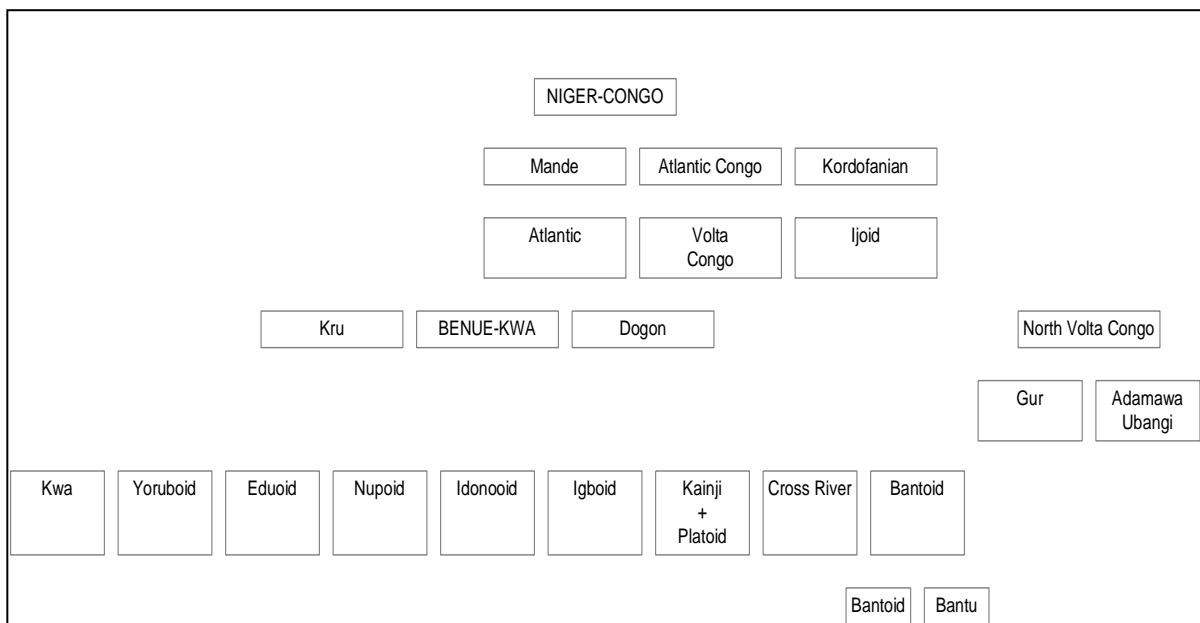
Many creolists assume that West African languages are less genetically and/or typologically related than they actually are. Present day classifications of African languages are based on Greenberg (1963). Greenberg established 5 language families in Africa (Niger-Congo, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Khoisan and Austronesian) and 6 branches within the largest family Niger-Congo (West Atlantic, Mande, Gur, Adamawa-Eastern, Kwa, and Benue-Congo, based on Westermann, 1911).

---

42 There is little controversy concerning 4 of these branches, but the other two branches, Kwa and Benue-Congo are problematic. Greenberg himself questioned the separation of Kwa and Benue-Congo, stating that there was no reliable evidence for the genetic unity of the Kwa branch. Those Africanists most deeply involved in the comparative study of the languages of the Niger-Congo family came to a new consensus in the 1970s concerning the reclassification of the Yoruboid, Edoid and Igboid languages from Kwa to Benue-Congo. Linguistic evidence shows that the languages spoken east of the Benin-Nigeria border which Greenberg classified within Kwa (Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, etc.) are actually closer to the Benue-Congo languages (Efik, the Bantu languages, etc.) than to the rest of the Kwa languages spoken to the west (‘Akan’, Fongbe, etc.) Hence, the New Kwa branch that they proposed is much smaller than Greenberg’s Old Kwa branch.

Furthermore, nearly all of the specialists in the classification of Niger-Congo languages have modified Greenberg’s initial groupings to combine Kwa and Benue-Congo into a single branch, which we will refer to as Benue-Kwa. De Wolf (1971: 180) provided evidence for a higher branch that unites Kwa and Benue-Congo by showing that there are no grounds for the customary separation of Kwa from Benue-Congo due to apparent differences in noun classification. Williamson (1973) demonstrated that there are no solid criteria for regarding Kwa as distinct from Benue-Congo, because no single cognate occurs in Kwa that does not also occur in Benue-Congo and the predominance of CV roots in Kwa is the result of reductions of Benue-Congo forms. Stewart (1973) posited a Volta-Congo branch ancestral to both Kwa and Benue-Congo. Bennet & Sterk (1977) combined Kwa and Benue-Congo into their South Central Niger-Congo group. Hyman (personal communication with Williamson) proposed the name Benue-Kwa for the now merged Kwa and Benue-Congo branches.

The latest classification of Niger-Congo languages by the Niger-Congo Working Group is shown in Figure 2. Here you see that the Yoruboid, Edoid, and Igbooid languages have been removed from Kwa, and Kwa itself has become just one sub-branch of Benue-Kwa, which now includes all of the languages spoken on the Atlantic coast of Africa from Ghana to Angola, except for the Ijoid languages in the Niger Delta:



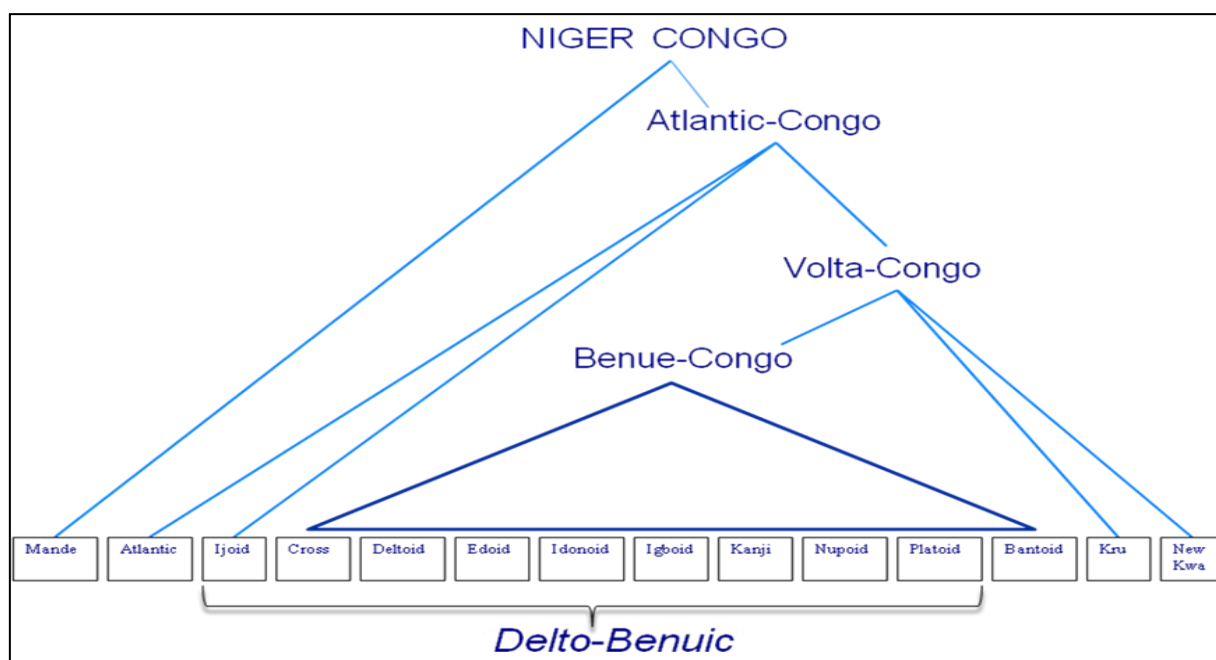
**Figure 2** The Latest Classification of the Languages of the Niger-Congo Family

There are three major implications for creolists that stem from the latest classification of Niger-Congo languages:

1. Creolists have relied too heavily on distinctions between African languages that are no longer accepted by Africanists themselves.
2. Most of the slaves brought to the Americas spoke languages that not only belong to the same family (Niger-Congo) but also to the same branch of this family (Benue-Kwa), which includes ‘Akan’, Fongbe, Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, and Efik, plus Kikongo, Kimbundu and all other Bantu languages.
3. Creolists tend to ignore both the multilingualism of enslaved Africans and their descendants as well as the genetic and typological similarities among the many non-creolized, creolized, and pidginized varieties of African languages that the slaves brought with them to the Americas.

An example of how creolists have still not realized the implications that the reclassification of Niger-Congo has for our work is found in Parkvall, 2000. Despite the fact that Parkvall accepts elements of the new classification of Niger-Congo, he manages to distort the new classification to avoid its insights and to accommodate and resurrect the prejudices of the old one, especially the mythical divisions between Kwa, non-Bantu Benue-Congo, and Bantu. Parkvall (pp. 10-11) nominally accepts the transfer of Yoruboid, Edoid, and Igboid from Old Kwa to Benue-Congo, but he largely ignores the merger of New Kwa with Benue-Congo. Parkvall then proceeds to set up an ad hoc grouping which he calls ‘Delto-Benuic’ that not only re-establishes the artificial division between New Kwa and New Benue-Congo, but also separates Bantu from the rest of Benue-Congo, as shown in Figure 3:





**Figure 3** Parkvall's (2000) working classification of Niger-Congo

### 3 The 'One and Only Substrate'

Creolists who allow for substrate influence on Atlantic Creoles often try to trace this influence back to a single substrate language. These same researchers admit that most of the similarities between the Creole and the particular substrate language that they focus on could also be found in many other African languages.

This search for the 'one and only substrate' is often in response to demands that we avoid Dillard's (1970) Cafeteria Principle (the *ad hoc* assignment of substrate influences to randomly selected African languages) and that our work be 'empirically verifiable' and conform to the bias in linguistics toward simplistic mono-causal scenarios for complex human behaviors. By acknowledging the genetic and typological similarities among the languages spoken on the Atlantic coast of Africa, however, a *Sprachbund* approach to substrate influence not only accounts for the presence of individual substrate features in creole languages but also provides insight into the workings of entire creole grammatical systems.

The following comments by Parkvall demonstrate how tenacious the notion of the 'one and only substrate' language has proved to be among creolists. In some instances, Parkvall rightly criticizes those whose analyses rely on only one substrate language, such as when he states that:

“substrate studies of Atlantic Creoles suffer from two main problems...Some...have had recourse to the so-called ‘Cafeteria Principle’...others appear to have decided in advance which African language they want their Creole to resemble, and the entire Creole is described in terms of the chosen substrate.” (Parkvall, 2000: 4)

But this does not prevent him from advocating what amounts to a search for the ‘one and only substrate’ as a way to avoid the Cafeteria Principle:

“[To avoid the] Cafeteria Principle...what Smith (1999: 252) has called Bickerton’s Edict should be carefully observed, and any [*single*] language variety which is invoked as the source of a given feature must have had speakers present at the right place in the right time (Bickerton, 1981)... In addition to this, my claim is that ...universals...should by definition be considered as omnipresent in any place at any time.” (pp. 18-19)

Parkvall (p. 155) admits that most of the substrate features that meet his restrictive criteria for influence on the Atlantic Creoles can be traced to what he calls the ‘Lower Guinea languages’ (Benue-Kwa plus Kru plus Ijoid, plus perhaps Bantoid, but minus Bantu). He attributes this to a number of factors, including:“...the existence of a Lower Guinean *Sprachbund* in which many features of Kwa (sic) are shared with Delto-Benuic and Kru, and...even the peripheral Bantu languages.... Kwa (sic) speakers would thus have been supported, ...in establishing features of their own languages in the emerging Creoles, by slaves from other areas of Lower Guinea....Someone familiar with Atlantic Creoles will immediately feel at ‘home’ when browsing through a grammar of Twi, Ewe, or Yoruba...” (p. 155)

The demographic data meticulously assembled by Parkvall therefore broadly confirm that speakers of Lower Guinea *Sprachbund* languages were in the right places in the Caribbean at the right time to leave their linguistic imprint on Antillean Creoles. But despite the overwhelming evidence he himself has marshaled, which indicates a *Sprachbund* approach handles the linguistic evidence in a much more satisfactory way, Parkvall remains tied to the notion of ‘the one and only substrate’. For example, while he states that the existence of both distinctive lexical and grammatical tone, as well as ideophones in the colonial Creoles of the Atlantic basin are without doubt due to influence from West African languages, he excludes them from his analysis of possible substrate influences on the Atlantic Creoles precisely because they are unequivocally the result of *Sprachbund* influence, rather than traceable to a single substrate language. This contradiction is shockingly illustrated in the following passages:

“The use of ideophones in Atlantic Creoles could be seen as...substrate influence....while there could be an African influence behind the very presence of this lexical category virtually alien to...European languages, it is...not possible to relate this to any specific West African language.” (p. 140)

“The presence of phonetic tones ...in...Atlantic Creoles is a feature that is without a doubt an Africanism. Tones are not investigated in this study; however, because virtually all potential substrates are tone languages....Tones would thus be of limited use in determining the precise African connections of Atlantic Creoles.” (p. 155)

Therefore some of the most certain and salient African influences are excluded by Parkvall on the following grounds: 1) They cannot be attributed to a ‘one and only substrate’ language; and 2) They are attributable to influence from an African Atlantic Coast areal/typological *Sprachbund*.

#### **4 Universals before Substrates**

Parkvall and many other creolists assume that influence from universals and superstrates must be completely ruled out before any case can be made for substrate influence. Parkvall and many other creolists who claim to acknowledge substrate influences on Atlantic Creoles are prevented from seriously recognizing, appreciating, and exploring such influences, due to the widespread biases in linguistics in general and in creolistics in particular toward universals and European (superstrate) languages.

Parkvall leaves absolutely no room for doubt concerning his bias toward mono-causal scenarios for the emergence of Creole languages in which universals play the predominant role when he admits that:

“Since carrying out the research here, my focus has shifted from substrate influence to the reduction associated with pidginization.....the traces of broken transmission [pidginization] which can still be seen in...Creoles, are what sets Creoles apart from non-Creoles.” (p. 3)

“Creoles derive from Pidgins....only the period between the start of language contact and the emergence of a group of native speakers (preferably with limited competence in ancestral languages)...can properly be considered the formative period of a Creole.....Creoles can be synchronically defined on language internal grounds alone.” (p. 9)

“What is characteristic of Creoles... is the reduction associated with pidginization.” (p. 154)

Parkvall’s bias toward universals and his insistence on mono-causality leads him to set criteria for substrate influence that systematically rule out any meaningful role for African languages and their speakers in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles, except in an extremely limited number of cases. Parkvall first largely dismisses convergence among universals, superstrate influences, and/or substrate influences as a significant element in Creole emergence, thereby generally insisting on attributing the emergence of Creole structures to the operation of no more than one of these factors at a time.

Once mono-causality is established as a premise, Parkvall then insists that all cases where universals could have operated together with substrate influences be automatically assumed to be attributable completely to universals. All of this is made abundantly evident when Parkvall says that:

“I am trying to use the term [substrate influence] more restrictively than many of my predecessors.” (p. 3)

“Features which are cross-linguistically common should be put aside in creolistic discussions [of substrate influence] assuming that they represent universals.” (p. 18)

“... in order to demonstrate the influence of one language on another... features adduced as proof need to display some degree of idiosyncraticity ....Most of the features discussed by Holm [(1992)]...tend to be cross-linguistically common to the point of being trivial.” (p. 22)

Figure 4 represents a summary of the very restrictive criteria that Parkvall formulates for substrate influence on Atlantic Creoles. In Figure 4, the first column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in its superstrate (European lexifier) language(s); the second column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in its substrate languages; the third column lists the widespread presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in other Creoles; and the fourth column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in languages universally. Parkvall’s bias toward universals is obvious (lines 3, 7, and 9-16) but another less obvious bias toward superstrates is also suggested by his differential treatment of line 2 vs. line 7.

## PARKVALL'S CRITERIA FOR SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE

lexifier	substrate	other creoles	universals	PARKVALL'S CONCLUSIONS
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	1 CONVERGENCE L + S
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	2 LEXIFIER 'LIKELY'
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	3 'BIAS' OF RESEARCHERS
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	4 LEXIFIER
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	5 SUBSTRATE
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	6 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	7 'POSSIBLE CONVERGENCE'
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	8 EXTREMELY RARE
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	9 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	10 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	11 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	12 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	13 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	14 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	15 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	16 UNIVERSALS

**Figure 4** Parkvall's Criteria for Substrate Influences on Atlantic Creoles

Parkvall's criteria for identifying possible substrate influence in Figure 4 above contrast sharply with the less limited and biased set of criteria that allow for convergence between universals, superstrate, and substrate factors shown in Figure 5 below. Because of his nearly categorical insistence on mono-causality and because of his admitted bias toward universals, which lead him to presume that any features found in many Creoles (column 3) automatically be assumed to be the result of the operation of universals, Parkvall only allows for substrate influence in 2 of the 16 possible configurations of evidence that he considers (rows 1 and 5 in Figure 4). When these artificial constraints and biases are eliminated, however, it emerges that substrate influence is in fact probable in 8 of these same 16 configurations (rows 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 in Figure 5).

## OUR CRITERIA FOR SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE

lexifier	substrate	other creoles	universals	OUR CONCLUSIONS
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	1 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	2 LEXIFIER (+U?)
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	3 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S (+U?)</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	4 LEXIFIER
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	5 <u>SUBSTRATE</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	6 INNOVATION + (U?)
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	7 <u>SUBSTRATE (+U?)</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	8 INNOVATION
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	9 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S + U</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	10 CONVERGENCE L + U
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	11 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S + U</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	12 CONVERGENCE L + U
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	13 <u>CONVERGENCE S + U</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	14 CONVERGENCE I + U
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	15 <u>CONVERGENCE S + U</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	16 UNIVERSALS

**Figure 5** Our Criteria for Substrate Influences on Atlantic Creoles

### Conclusion

Unless the erroneous assumptions that we have discussed in this presentation are problematized and discarded, the historical agency of Africans and African-descended peoples in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles will never be given the acknowledgment, recognition, significance, and importance that it deserves.

### REFERENCES

- Bennett, Patrick R. & Jan P. Sterk (1977). South Central Niger-Congo: A reclassification. *Studies in African Linguistics*, 8, 241–273.
- Bickerton, Derek (1981). *Roots of language*. Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers.
- Chaudenson, Robert (2001). *Creolization of language and culture*. London: Routledge.
- DeJesús, Susana C. (2009). *St. Croix: A Pluri-Lingual and Pluri-Cultural Island*. Paper presented at 12th Annual Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conferene “The Island in Between” Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the Eastern Caribbean, 5-7 November, Roseau, Dominica.
- De Wolf, Paul P. (1971). *The Noun Class System of Proto-Benue-Congo*. PhD dissertation, Leiden University. The Hague: Mouton.
- Dillard, Joey L. (1970). Principles in the history of American English: Paradox, virginity, and cafeteria. *Florida Foreign Language Reporter*, 8, (1-2), 32–33.

- González-López, Cándida (2007). *Creoles as languages of resistance: The role of cultural resistance in the genesis and development of Creoles*. Amsterdam: Paper presented to the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. (1963). The languages of Africa. *International journal of American linguistics*, 29, (1, part 2).
- Oldendorp, Christian G.A. (1987, [1777]). *C.G.A. Oldendorp's history of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John*. English edition and translation by Arnold R. Highfield and Vladimir Barac. Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers. First published in 1777 by Johann J. Bossart as *C.G.A. Oldendorps Geschichte der Mission der Evangelischen Brüder auf den Caraibischen Inseln S. Tomas, S. Croix und S. Jan*.
- Parkvall, Mikael (2000). *Out of Africa: African influences in Atlantic Creoles*. London: Battlebridge Publications.
- Smith, Norval V. (1999). Pernambuco to Suriname 1654-1665? The Jewish slave controversy. In Magnus Huber & Mikael Parkvall (Eds.), *Spreading the word: The issue of diffusion among Atlantic Creoles* (pp. 251-298). London: Westminster University Press.
- Stewart, John M. (1973). The lenis stops of the Potou Lagoon languages and their significance for pre-Bantu reconstruction. In Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, (Ed.), *Papers in Ghanaian linguistics (Transactions of the Linguistic Circle of Accra, II)* (pp. 1-49). Legon : Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- Westermann, Diedrich H. (1911). *Die Sudansprachen: eine sprachvergleichende Studie*. Hamburg: Friederichsen.
- Williamson, Kay (Ed.) (1973). *Benue-Congo comparative wordlist: Volume II*. Ibadan: West African Linguistic Society.

