

## Historical and linguistic evidence in favour of the relexification theory in the formation of creoles<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Three different Creoles spoken in Surinam are examined for their Creole origins. Saramaccan (SM) and Sranan (SN) are compared on basic vocabulary and other linguistic features and analyzed in conjunction with historical evidence. It is suggested that SN and SM speakers came to Surinam plantations with a basic knowledge of Portuguese-Creole. SN completely relexified in the direction of English, whereas SM only partly relexified toward English. Evidence suggests that Ndjuka (ND) is not a product of relexification, but developed from an eighteenth-century English pidgin. It is concluded that both 'normal' genetic developments and relexification may have similar results and that comparative evidence alone is not a sufficient basis for historical conclusions (comparative linguistics, creoles, relexification).

### I. INTRODUCTION

Three different Creoles are spoken in Surinam:

- i. Sranan (SN) or coastal Creole, the language of the former slaves, used on the plantations.
- ii. Saramaccan (SM), the language of the Central Bush Negroes (the Matuari tribe along the Saramacca river and the Saramaccan tribe along the Suriname river).
- iii. Ndjuka (ND), the language of the Eastern Bush Negroes (the Paramaccan, Aucan and Boni or Aluku tribes along the Maroni river and affluents).

They have, I believe, an important bearing on the question of the formation of creole languages, in particular on the monogenetic or polygenetic origin of these languages. A monogenetic origin can only be accepted in so far as the relexification theory is acceptable.

No linguist will question the validity of the concept of relexification (or lexical replacement) in language development. Lexical items are often replaced by items borrowed from some other language. The original SM verb *bebé* 'to drink

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(/P beber) has the near synonym *diingi* (/SN drɪŋi/E drink).<sup>2</sup> Schumann's SM dictionary of 1778 (Schuchardt 1914) glosses *diingi* as 'all strong drinks', so we know for sure that the English-based item came into the language with a specialized meaning and only gradually developed into a synonym of the Portuguese-based one. Only careful analysis may sometimes reveal the Portuguese origin of a lexical item. The SN item *tápu* is used as a preposition 'up', 'on top of', but also as two different verbs: (i) 'to stop', and (ii) 'to cover'. The preposition must have had an English origin (/E top), the first verb also (/E stop), but the origin of the second verb 'to cover' is not quite clear. One could imagine a shift of meaning from 'top' to 'putting on top of'. Schumann's SN dictionary of 1783 indicates a formal distinction between the two verbs: *tapu* ('to stop') and *tapa* ('to cover'). Stress is not indicated consistently in this dictionary, but absence of a stress mark generally means pre-ultimate stress. The quality of the final vowel indicates a Portuguese origin (/P tapar). A SN rule which favours a final *u* after stressed *a* and bilabial consonant (Voorhoeve 1970, 68) makes possible a regular change from *tapá* (in 1783) via *tápa* to *tápu* (modern SN) without any influence from outside. The meaning relation might have helped.

In the last example, it is not even necessary to consider relexification. Nobody will deny the fact that the dominant English-based Creole of the coastal area of Surinam (SN) exerts a constant pressure on the two Bush Negro Creoles spoken in the interior (SM and ND), and that relexification does occur under such circumstances. But this is still far from admitting the possibility that this process might take place on so vast a scale and in such a short time as to alter the genetic relationship of a language radically, so that a Portuguese-based Pidgin might develop into an English-based Creole. And this is exactly what the relexification theory claims to have happened in some or many or even all Creole languages.<sup>3</sup> The original Portuguese Pidgin of the African coast was relexified in contact with different European languages into English-based Creoles (SN, SM, ND, Jamaican, Gullah, Krio, etc.), French-based Creoles (Haitian, Lesser Antillean, Louisiana, Mauritian, etc.), Dutch-based Creoles (Negerhollands, and perhaps also Afrikaans), or Spanish-based Creoles (Philippine Creoles, Papiamentu, Palenquero, etc.). This theory should explain some remarkable similarities in Creoles all over the world, Creoles which have never been in direct contact:

[2] The following abbreviations of language names have been adopted: SN (Sranan or coastal Creole), SM (Saramaccan or Central Bush Negro Creole), ND (Ndjuka or Eastern Bush Negro Creole), P (Portuguese), S (Spanish), E (English), D (Dutch), A (African), F (French).

[3] Schuchardt and Hesseling stressed the importance of Portuguese Pidgin in the formation of individual Creoles (Schuchardt 1909, Hesseling 1905 and 1923). Keith Whinnom and T. Navarro Tomás did the same for apparently Spanish-based Creoles (Whinnom 1956, Navarro Tomás 1951). R. W. Thompson generalized the theory (Thompson 1961), and Whinnom traced the possible origin back to the Mediterranean Sabir (Whinnom 1965). Douglas Taylor developed the main arguments (Taylor 1960).

- (a) A similarity in the verb inflection of different Creoles (cf. section 2).
- (b) Some persistent grammatical morphemes such as the locative particle *na*.
- (c) Some persistent lexical items in the basic vocabulary, such as the verb *sabi* ('to know').

There is a fast-growing literature on the subject with Robert A. Hall, Jr. and Mervyn C. Alleyne as the main opponents (cf. Hall 1966, Alleyne 1971). Hall's objections are based on a strict adherence to the main principles of comparative linguistics and cannot be easily refuted. Lexical items which resemble each other both in form and in meaning (morpho-semantic comparison) warrant conclusions about the history of a language. Typological resemblances, as mentioned under (a) above, just do not count. The bulk of a Creole vocabulary being clearly related to the European language it is based on, there is no other possibility than to regard the African or other 'retentions' as borrowings. This seems contrary to 'common sense' as Alleyne points out, but it is a common sense based on biology. There is no valid linguistic reason why 'black' people should not inherit 'white' language. Or as Hall phrased it: 'This says nothing concerning the means of transmission from one generation to another or from one speech community to another' (Hall 1966, 101). Alleyne takes rather the opposite view and wants to apply anthropological concepts such as deculturation, acculturation, restructuring and reinterpretation to linguistic phenomena. He stresses the possibility of parallel developments and retentions. He does not substantiate his theoretical statements with clear-cut examples. His main argument seems to be rather on the emotional side: a reluctance to accept a 'white' origin for a 'black' language. His concern with 'process' above 'terminology' seems valuable. We want to find out what really happened in the past. The classification of Creole languages is a relatively unimportant terminological question.

Alleyne

The relexification theory has gained wide acceptance lately. However, since the first formulation in Thompson 1961, no essentially new arguments have been added. It seems to me remarkable that the many adherents did not succeed in digging up new evidence. In this paper I can only repeat the evidence presented by Thompson and Taylor, concentrating on the most revealing piece of evidence, the similarity in the Creole verb system. In the subsequent sections I will study the linguistic and historical evidence in relation to the three Creole languages of Surinam.

## 2. THE CREOLE VERB INFLECTION

Thompson 1961 already noted that the verbal inflection in Creole seemed everywhere carried out by the use of three different particles (denoting continuative, perfective and future), preceding the unchanged verb stem. He presents a

list of these particles in 10 creole languages of the Old and New World. Taylor 1960 elaborated this piece of evidence and demonstrated that not only the simple tenses resembled each other, but also the more complex ones formed by combinations of these three particles (in so far as we have complete descriptions of the Creoles). The verbal system of SN can be systematized as follows (Voorhoeve 1957):

	past	non-past	
realis	ben- $\phi$ - $\phi$ -	$\phi$ - $\phi$ - $\phi$ -	completive
	ben-sa- $\phi$ -	$\phi$ -sa- $\phi$ -	
	ben- $\phi$ -e-	$\phi$ - $\phi$ -e-	non-completive
non-realis	ben-sa-e-	$\phi$ -sa-e-	

It might be possible to find better-suited labels, but I do not think this is essential for an understanding of the system, which is based on different particles for tense, mood and aspect in this order. The system seems quite intricate and not easily explainable by parallel development. A close resemblance might therefore constitute a valuable argument in favour of the monogenesis of Creoles. The argument is not a classical example of historical linguistic evidence, because there is often no formal resemblance between the verbal particles. SN *ben* (/E been) matches Dominican Creole *te* (/F *été, était*), SN *sa* (/E shall or P *sabe*) matches Dominican Creole *ke*, SN *(d)e* matches Dominican Creole *ka*. There is a resemblance in function (or meaning) without a formal resemblance, and therefore the evidence is not valid from the point of view of historical linguistics. But the existence of three particles with identical functions forming the same eight verbal tenses cannot be completely disregarded as evidence for a possible monogenesis of Creoles.

Here follows the list of verbal particles in different Creoles:

	Tense	Mode	Aspect
Dominica, etc.	te	ke	ka
Guiane française	te	ke/wa	ka
Haiti	te	ava	ape
Jamaica	ben	wi	(d)a
SN	ben	sa/(g)o	(d)e
SM	bì	sà/ò	tá
Krio	bìn	gò	dè
Negerhollands	ha	lo	le
Papiamentu	taba	lo	ta
Philippine	ya	de/ay	ta
Indo-Portuguese	ja	di	ta
Cape Verde	ja	lo	ta
Malacca, etc.	ja	lo(go)	ta

If coincidence is excluded and thus parallel development, the only possible explanation is a parallel retention. A parallel retention of general West African grammar in Asian Creoles seems not easily plausible without the existence of an intermediate Portuguese Pidgin stage. The only possible source is thus the old Portuguese Pidgin, which 'during the sixteenth century replaced Arabic and Malay as the trade language of the Far East. It was used by traders of all nationalities, from India to Indonesia and as far north as Japan' (Deçamp 1971: 22).<sup>4</sup> There is no convincing evidence that an English, Dutch or French Pidgin was used in Africa before 1700. The only source before that date (from 1594) says that Africans went to England to learn the language (Hancock 1969). The training of African interpreters hardly suggests the existence of an English-based Pidgin. The earliest mention of the existence of a local African English dates from 1734.

Better evidence now!

The linguistic evidence cited may not be conclusive, but it does say something about the history of Creole languages. If one wants to adhere to a rigid method of comparative linguistics, as Hall wants to do, one evidently gives up historical reality. I think that historical reality is more valuable than method. The only valid conclusion to arrive at is, it seems to me, that two different linguistic developments may have almost the same result, so that the comparison of the present-day results may not always reveal the history of the languages involved (but see also Southworth 1971).

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### 3. A COMPARISON OF SM AND SN BASIC VOCABULARY

Alleyne tried to define a Creole in such a way as to exclude SN, SM, and Papiamentu. He defines Creoles as languages functioning in an acculturative process. When the original model language is withdrawn and replaced by another, the language cannot any more be regarded as a Creole language. This redefinition of Creoles does not change the history of these languages. The languages which ceased to be Creoles become even the most important witnesses of earlier stages in the creolization process, because the acculturation has been stopped or its direction changed halfway. I do think that the Surinam Creoles remain valid examples.

good!

The high degree of Portuguese-based items in SM has brought Douglas

[4] Deçamp cites also a private communication by Whinnom that according to an eighteenth-century account the earliest Pidgin English in use in China was a 'broken and mixed dialect of Portuguese and English'. Swellengrebel 1972 states that 'Portuguese was the *lingua franca* of many parts of India and Southeast Asia. It was used in the congregations of the Reformed Church of the Indies by the many members who were Eurasians or Asians by birth, and Protestant Christians by conversion (often from Roman Catholicism). In course of time the number of these Portuguese speaking Christians increased in Malacca and Batavia, and sometimes even outnumbered the Dutch-speaking Christians.' The Portuguese translation of the New Testament was printed in Batavia in 1693. The Old Testament in 1748 and 1753.

Taylor to state that 'nobody has so far ventured to label Sramaccan as either an English Creole (or Afro-English) or a Portuguese Creole (or Afro-Portuguese)' (Taylor 1960). The fact that later authors (like Hancock) decided to regard SM as basically an English Creole does not annihilate the value of this statement.

George Huttar published 'A comparative word list for Djuka' which contains all the items in the Swadesh 200-item list in the three main Creoles of Surinam.<sup>5</sup> If we compare the origin of the different items, exclude items of doubtful origin or unknown origin, exclude also synonyms with different origins, and do not count the same item twice, we arrive at the following result:<sup>6</sup>

Origin =	English	Portuguese	Dutch	African	Total
SN	118 - 76.62%	7	25	4	154
ND	116 - 80.55%	5	20	3	144
SM	72 - 53.73%	50	6	6	134

[5] George L. Huttar, 'A comparative word list for Djuka'. In Joseph E. Grimes (ed.) *Languages of the Guianas* (Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1972) 12-21. To facilitate comparison I mimeographed Huttar's 200-item list with some minor changes and the addition of notes on the origin of the different items. Copies of this list may be obtained from the editor.

[6] Total SN items of E origin 118 (3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 57, 60, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 127, 130, 131, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 167, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176, 178, 180, 181, 185, 187, 189, 190, 196).

Total SN items of P origin 7 (20, 61, 64, 83, 97, 110, 165).

Total SN items of D origin 25 (1, 21, 50, 51, 53, 59, 63, 79, 98, 101, 125, 126, 128, 132, 143, 156, 164, 166, 174, 175, 183, 191, 197, 199, 200).

Total SN items of A origin 4 (5, 37, 67, 198).

Total ND items of E origin 116 (3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 127, 130, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 141, 142, 144, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 163, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176, 178, 180, 181, 182, 185, 187, 189, 190, 193, 196).

Total ND items of P origin 5 (20, 40, 61, 83, 110).

Total ND items of D origin 20 (1, 21, 50, 53, 63, 98, 125, 126, 128, 132, 143, 164, 166, 174, 175, 177, 179, 183, 191, 199).

Total ND items of A origin 4 (5, 34, 37, 67).

Total SM items of E origin 72 (3, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36, 42, 44, 47, 49, 56, 57, 62, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 85, 90, 92, 100, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, 117, 120, 121, 122, 125, 126, 130, 131, 134, 141, 142, 144, 149, 154, 157, 158, 159, 163, 166, 167, 170, 172, 176, 178, 180, 181, 187, 189).

Total SM items of P origin 50 (2, 4, 8, 19, 20, 24, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 52, 53, 54, 59, 60, 64, 66, 72, 81, 83, 87, 89, 94, 97, 99, 101, 102, 103, 110, 119, 124, 135, 138, 139, 140, 143, 150, 152, 153, 156, 160, 165, 175, 183, 190, 191, 192, 196, 197).

Total SM items of D origin 6 (26, 50, 128, 132, 173, 199).

Total SM items of A origin 21 (5, 7, 43, 67, 116, 147, 198).

The relative proportion of English and Portuguese-based items is:<sup>7</sup>

Origin =	English	Portuguese
SN	94	6
ND	96	4
SM	59	41

90's

If it could be proved that SM and SN had the same origin (which I try to do in the next section), the case for relexification is made, and SN can be considered as more relexified than SM.

A careful study of synonyms points in the same direction. There are hardly any synonyms of different origin in the basic vocabulary of SN,<sup>8</sup> while there is a significant number of SM synonyms with different English and Portuguese origins:

10.	SM béε	:	SN bére	/E belly
	SM baíka	:	-	/P barriga
15.	SM buúu	:	SN brúdu	/E blood
	SM sangá	:	-	/P sangrar, sangue
31.	SM díngi	:	SN dríni	/E drink
	SM bebé	:	-	/P beber
74.	SM hói	:	SN óri	/E hold
	SM panjá	:	-	/P apanhar
93.	SM lóso	:	SN lóso	/E louse
	SM piójo	:	-	/P piolho
123.	SM pói	:	SN póri	/E spoil (and /P podri?)
	SM lóto	:	-	/E rotten (see also in ND)
	SM pōndi	:	-	/P podri
148.	SM pifti	:	SN príti	/E split
	SM latjá	:	-	/P rachar
151.	SM taámpu	:	SN tanápu	/E stand up
	SM tánapé	:	-	/P esta a pe
162.	SM dé	:	SN de	/E there
	SM a(l)á	:	-	/P lá, S allá
	-	:	SN jánda	/E yonder

The fact that in most cases the English-based member of the pair of synonyms in SM is shared with SN indicates that the English-based item did not succeed in replacing the Portuguese-based one completely. Item 136 SM *sindɔ* (to sit)

[7] The absolute proportion of Portuguese based items is in SN 5 per cent, in ND 3 per cent, and in SM 37 per cent.

[8] I found 4 synonyms with an African-based member (items 43, 73, 168, 182) and 4 with Dutch and English origin (items 29, 177, 179, 193). Only one item (item 11) with English and Portuguese origin, but here the Portuguese member of the synonym has only been preserved in complex words like *granmasra* (big master), *granman* (governor), *granwe* (long ago), etc.

is also instructive. In 1778 Schumann notes *sindá* which is clearly derived from P (as)entar. Under influence of SN *sidón* (/E sit down) the final vowel was changed.

Important is also the number of 31 items<sup>9</sup> with English origin for SN and Portuguese origin for SM. To these may be added 11 items<sup>10</sup> with Dutch origin for SN and Portuguese origin for SM. Items 125, 126 and 166 show a Dutch origin for SN and an English one for SM. Items 26 and 173 show the opposite. One counter example has been noted outside the material studied here:

SM <i>bía</i>	:	-	/E beard
-	:	SN <i>bárba</i>	/P barba

#### 4. THE ORIGIN OF SARACCAN

Did SM and SN have the same origin or not? That seems to be the main problem. All earlier authors adhered to the theory that SM originated on the plantations of the Portuguese Jewish planters in Surinam. This theory was first formulated in Wullschlaegel 1855. Slaves of different linguistic backgrounds arrived in Surinam without a common language. They learned (imperfectly) the language of their masters: Portuguese from the Jewish masters, English from the English masters. When the Dutch took over, the Creole languages were already firmly established. (See for later adherents Rens 1953 and Alleyne 1971.) The main source of this theory might be found in the name the slaves themselves used for SM, to wit *Djutongo* (Jews' language). The first dictionary of SN contains several items with the note 'Dju-tongo' added to it. Then under *Dju* it is said: 'Djutongo nennen die Neger hier die met dem Portugiesischen vermengte Negersprache [*sic.*]. Saramakka-Ningre habi Djutongo.' The last sentence (lit. Saramaccans have Jews' language) makes clear that Saramaccan Creole was indicated by this term. The use of this name *Djutongo* indicates that the slaves were well aware of the similarity between SM and the language of the Portuguese Jews.

If SM really originated on the Jewish plantations in Surinam, we must accept the existence of two different Creoles around 1700: a Portuguese one used on the plantations of the Portuguese Jews, and an English one used on the other plantations (hardly any English masters were left in Surinam around 1700). I cannot find historical evidence to support this theory. A Dutch traveller reported in 1693 that the slaves spoke English. He did not even mention the deviating variety of English (Alphen 1963).<sup>11</sup> The earliest text in Surinam Creole from 1718 was written in the English-based Creole and the writer does not mention the

[9] Items 4, 19, 24, 38, 39, 40, 41, 52, 54, 60, 66, 81, 87, 89, 94, 99, 102, 103, 115, 119, 124, 135, 138, 139, 150, 152, 153, 160, 190, 192, 196 (total 31 items).

[10] Items 1, 53, 59, 101, 143, 156, 174, 175, 183, 191, 197 (total 11 items).

[11] The relevant citation is 'De Engelse hebben hier een colonie gemaect en wort die taal daer nog meest bij de slaven gesproken'. (The English made here a colony, and that language is generally (or: mostly) spoken by the slaves).

existence of a different kind of Creole in Surinam. This text was criticized and corrected by Nepveu in 1765, but again no word about the existence of another kind of Creole.<sup>12</sup> From 1779 onwards SM and SN were both studied by the same missionary, Christian Ludwig Schumann, who wrote a SM dictionary in 1779 (published in Schuchardt 1914), and a SN dictionary in 1783 (still unpublished). The latter is a remarkable piece of work, in which Schumann sometimes cites at length (and in Creole) remarks of his informant, who must have been keenly aware of dialectal differences. In speaking about the now obsolete item *bringi* (to bear) he says that this word is seldom used in town, that it is used in SM and on many of the plantations, but that he had heard a town Negro say: *mi kau bringi wan mann-pikin* (my cow got a male child).<sup>13</sup> I do not suppose that such a well-informed man would have been unaware of the existence of an established variety of Creole on Jewish plantations. \*

Herskovits 1930/31 formulated some valid arguments against the Surinam origin of the Portuguese elements in SM. He points out that some Jewish words in SN like *tréfu* (food taboo) and *kaséri* (ritually clean, kosher) are not found in SM. If SM originated on the Jewish plantations, one would rather expect to find Jewish words in that language. He also states that a Surinam origin forces us to accept that the slaves of Jewish masters showed a greater tendency to escape to the bush than slaves of other masters. He formulated for the first time another hypothesis, that the newly arrived slaves, the so-called *sowtwater nengre* (litt. salt water Negroes), were more apt to run away. If the Portuguese items were acquired in Africa, the higher proportion in SM (the language of the former runaways) would be explained in a very straightforward way. This hypothesis is supported by the higher proportion of African items in SM (not in the basic vocabulary, but rather in the peripheries of the lexicon). Daeleman 1971<sup>14</sup> has found 149 items, possibly derived from Kongo, 97 of which seem to be incontestable. The nouns 'belong to the following semantic fields: kinship, community life, magic; flora; fauna; household; utensils, provisioning; body parts; diseases; atmosphere; place'. The fact that SM is a tone language and that stress contrasts of European-based items are reinterpreted as tonal contrasts (see Voorhoeve 1961) also points to a stronger African background. Herskovits' conclusion that the Portuguese items in SM were imported from Africa seems valid. Herkovits

Saramoan slaves learned their Pq in Africa (P&P).

[12] These texts will be reproduced and discussed in Jan Voorhoeve, Ursy M. Lichtveld and Vernie February, *Krioro dron: An anthology of Sranan literature* (to be published by Yale University Press).

[13] The relevant citation is: 'Na Fotto dem no habi da mufte so menni; da Dju tongo: ma nuffe Plantasi habe hem. Tog wan reti Fotto-kriolo ben takki: isredek mi kau bringi wan mann-pikin, gestern had meine Kuh ein Junges, ein Oechsgen geworfen' (in town one does not use this word so much; it is Jews language (= SM): but many plantations use it. A real Creole from town said: yesterday did my cow get a male child).

[14] Daeleman 1971 was abstracted from a lengthy study, which will be published in the *Journal of African Languages*.

himself rather thought of early Portuguese borrowings in the African mother-tongues of the slaves. There certainly are to be found Portuguese borrowings in many African languages, but their number has always been restricted. The high percentage of Portuguese items in SM certainly cannot be explained in this way. We therefore assume that the slaves arrived in Surinam with a certain knowledge of Portuguese Pidgin, besides their African mother-tongues.

Could it be possible that at the same time the ancestors of the coastal Negroes arrived in Surinam with some basic knowledge of an English Pidgin, as Hancock and others suppose? This could only be possible if we could prove that the slaves came from different areas where different Pidgins were used, and that speakers of Portuguese Pidgin showed a significantly greater tendency to escape to the bush. I do not think that such a theory could find serious supporters. We are thus forced to accept a common origin for both Creoles, SN and SM. Relexification in the direction of Portuguese is excluded, because of the small number of Portuguese items in SN, so we must assume relexification in the direction of English. SM represents the oldest phase of the common language.

This means that the ancestors of both SN and SM speaking Negroes came to Surinam with a basic knowledge of Portuguese Pidgin (maybe already with some English influence). This Pidgin was relexified on the Surinam plantations in the direction of English. The ancestors of the SM-speaking Negroes fled to the bush before the relexification process was completed. Therefore SM is a sort of mixed language with almost equal parts of English-based and Portuguese-based items in the basic vocabulary. The acculturation of the newly imported slaves to the language and culture of the plantations (which had the linguistic effect of relexification) was stopped halfway when they fled to the bush and lived there in a relatively complete isolation afterwards. SM can be considered as an originally Portuguese Pidgin halfway relexified in the direction of the already completely relexified and now English-based Creole of the plantations.

##### 5. THE ORIGIN OF NDJUKA

Of the three Creole languages of Surinam, SN and ND seem more or less mutually intelligible. Even if this is not true, a cursory look at the ND items in the comparative word list will show that there are only a few Portuguese-based items in the vocabulary.

The history of the Bush Negro tribes is not well known. I may cite here the main historical facts from an earlier publication (Voorhoeve 1971: 306):

In the English period (before 1667), there had already been mention of a group of several hundreds of runaways under a headman Jermes. In 1684 a peace treaty was concluded with this group. Another active group under a headman Ganimet attacked the plantations during the Amerindian revolt. This group was defeated in 1681. In 1690 a complete plantation force fled into the bush.

PgP ✓  
 What about the similarities of Surinam with JC? These do imply an underlying Eng. creole; the relexification began in Africa & continuing in Surinam. Also, would there have been time for PgP to have been exl. in Surinam - did English dominance last long enough?

The invasion of Jacques Cassard in 1712 has often been mentioned as the foundation of the first Bush Negro tribes. The total number of runaways was estimated in 1738 at 6000. In 1761 peace treaties were concluded with the Djuka, Saramacca and Matuari. After these treaties the slave masters became engaged in a new war against the troops of Boni, operating in the coastal areas. They were chased to French Guyana, and finally defeated in 1791. There is reason to believe that the Boni Negroes consisted of slaves that had run away after 1761.

After their defeat the Boni settled in the most Eastern part of the Bush Negro territory.

I would like to venture the hypothesis that the Bush Negro territory was occupied from west to east. Earlier waves of maroons occupied the central part of the country (which was at that time the most western part).<sup>15</sup> Later waves occupied the more Eastern parts of the territory. The actual geographical position of the Bush Negro tribes may thus reflect the chronology of the occupation of the territory. This hypothesis might also explain the linguistic differences between the Bush Negro tribes, if we can prove that earlier slaves arrived in the colony with some knowledge of Portuguese Pidgin, while later slaves (those whose descendants are now in the East) arrived with some knowledge of English Pidgin.

If we know anything about the linguistic contact situation on the West African coast from which slaves came, it is that Portuguese Pidgin preceded English Pidgin and was the common trade language in the sixteenth century. The English Pidgin became increasingly important during the eighteenth century. But what about the seventeenth century? Spencer 1971 does not accept the hypothesis of Christophersen, according to which a pidginized form of Portuguese was used for contact between Englishmen and Africans on the Guinea coast from the earliest times until well into the eighteenth century. However, he does not succeed in digging up conclusive historical evidence for the existence of an English Pidgin in the seventeenth century. The training or existence of African interpreters is mentioned 'from the seventeenth century onwards', but this rather supports the Christopherson hypothesis. Pidgin is a contact language which is acquired in the contact situation. The use of interpreters rather discourages the emergence of a Pidgin. So it seems likely that the rise of an English Pidgin was indeed notably later, and that ND developed out of an English Pidgin of the eighteenth century, not by relexification from a Portuguese Pidgin.

Spencer

good point.

## 6. CONCLUSION

I think we may safely assume the reality of an extensive relexification process for SM (a relexification in the direction of the slaves' language which was then

[15] Coronie and Nickerie (now the most Western parts of Surinam) were only cultivated around 1800. The Saramacca river thus formed practically the most western border of the colony before 1800.

English-based). We may assume that SN and SM had the same origin, so that for SN we must accept the complete relexification of a Portuguese Pidgin into an English-based Creole. If the relexification theory is valid for one of the Creole languages and can indeed change the linguistic relationship completely, it can no longer be excluded as a possible explanation for other Creoles (Spanish-based, Dutch-based, English-based or French-based). It has been accepted already for Spanish-based Creoles (Papiamentu and Philippine Creoles) and for Dutch-based Creoles (Negerhollands and Afrikaans). In this paper it is accepted for two English-based Creoles (SM and SN). At the same time, however, it is rejected (for another English-based Creole. ND must rather have developed out of an English Pidgin in the eighteenth century.

Djuka

This means that two different linguistic developments (relexification and 'normal' genetical development) may have the same result, so that the effects of pidginization and creolization may disappear in the course of time. This will certainly make us less sure about historical conclusions based on comparative research only, without accompanying socio-historical evidence as to locations, dates, and relations between the speech-communities involved.

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