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Title: Archetypal areal features in the African English-lexifier Creoles

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It seems natural that the languages belonging to the African branch of the family of Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles and extended Pidgins (AECs) should form part of the convergence movement that typifies the greater West African linguistic area. In this paper, I will focus on several features to show that adstrate transfer from African languages due to widespread multilingualism as well as substrate transfer through language shift to creoles and extended pidgins has indeed been leaving traces in the linguistic systems of the creoles and pidgins. I argue that the AECs, despite them being largely neglected in the discussion, are of great value in the quest to identify cross-cutting areal features in West Africa. The heterogenous origins of these languages from genetically disparate African source languages means that in many areas of their grammar, the creoles and pidgins show the effects of selection and levelling typical of linguistic convergence. We therefore find the most salient, most generalized, and most frequent areal features being replicated in the African AECs, often in more regularized paradigms, and often but not always, stripped down to fewer, more essential distinctions. I employ the term "archetypal areal feature" as a label for such features that have been selected and have been maintained in the African AECs throughout their creation and continuing development under language contact in multilingual contexts.

Some of these archetypal features are, for example:

- Tone systems with two-tone contrasts - high versus no tone (realized as low), rather than three-tone systems or two-tone systems with full specification (Rivera Castillo & Faraclas 2006; Yakpo 2012).
- Scarcity of path-incorporating prepositions, general locative prepostions, the use of relator nouns and the use of directional serial verb constructions (Yakpo & Bruyn 2015; Yakpo 2016a).
- Prominence of aspect and mood, often involving a basic distinction between perfective and imperfective, with often fewer aspectual sub-categories than typical for West African languages.
- Split copular systems with a distinction between locative-existential and equative functions
- Asymmetric negation strategies (e.g. Jungraithmayr 1988) involving the use of special negators and/or negation patterns for specific TMA categories and suppletive negative copulas (Yakpo 2016b), as in many West African languages (Cyffer, Ebermann & Ziegelmeyer 2009).
- Scarcity of dedicated negative indefinite pronouns (Cyffer, Ebermann & Ziegelmeyer 2009; Van Alsenoy 2014).
- Modal systems characterized by the use of modal complementizers, marking one core modal category, namely deontic force (Yakpo 2012b).

In my talk, I will correlate findings on selected areal features from primary data gathered in West Africa from Krio (Sierra Leone), Ghanaian Pidgin English, Nigerian Pidgin, Cameroon Pidgin and Pichi (Equatorial Guinea), with control data from Caribbean AECs, as well as genealogically diverse languages of West Africa and adjoining regions. The objective is to show the far-reaching areal affinities of the AECs with their

linguistic area. A second objective is to explore the concept of "archetypal areal feature" as a tool for uncovering broad areal relationships in northern sub-saharan Africa that include the creole languages of the region.

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