West Africanisms in Limonese Creole English

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ABSTRACT: Costa Rican Limonese Creole (LC) is an English-based creole language showing substrate influence from, among other African languages, the Kwa languages of West Africa, in particular from Akan (Ghana). West Africanisms exhibited in LC include: serial verb constructions, reduplication, ideophones, and lexical retentions. The study of West Africanisms in LC contributes to the body of research on substrate influence on West Atlantic Creoles. This is done not from the extreme position that the majority of creole features can be attributed to substrate influence, but, as Mufwene wrote in 1990, that 'creoles owe their formal features variably to both substrate influence and the bioprogram as well as from superstrate influence' (p. 3). Substrate influence will be demonstrated through a comparison of LC and Akan morphophonology, morphosyntax, and lexicon.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Limonese Creole (LC), an English-based creole spoken primarily by residents of Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, is directly descended from Jamaican Creole, which can trace its heritage back to a number of ethnic groups from West Africa, including the Akan of Ghana who speak related languages of the Kwa language group of the Niger-Congo family.[2] Present-day varieties of LC and Akan share a number of interesting morpho-phonological and morphosyntatic features (including the use of reduplication, ideophones, and serial verb constructions), as well as common lexical items.

FROM AFRICA TO LIMON COSTA RICA

A number of researchers including Alleyne (1993), Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), McWhorter (1997a), and Mufwene (1996) have indicated that there was a significant Akan influence on the development of the English-based creoles, especially the creole of Jamaica, from which LC derives. According to Alleyne, 'In Jamaica, one African ethnic group (the Twi) provided political and cultural leadership' on the plantations of the New World (1993: 170). Thus, although they were not numerically dominant throughout the history of the plantation period in Jamaica, the Akan were in a position of influence among the slave population. Alleyne also points out that 'there is evidence among Maroon and among Jamaicans in general of an inter-African syncretism and assimilation taking place within a broader framework of Asante (or Koromanti) dominance' (p. 177). Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) concur – although the Yoruba constituted a numerical majority in the English colonies of the New World, it seems that the Akan left a greater mark on the developing creoles: 'the largest number of Africanisms recorded in DJE [Dictionary of Jamaican English] are from the Akan (Gold Coast) languages, especially from Twi and Ewe' (p. 47). This greater influence may be attributed to the particular demographic

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development of the Jamaican colony. According to Mufwene (1996: 98), the shift to plantation agriculture from homesteading came more quickly in Jamaica than in some of the other slave settlements resulting in the Africans constituting a majority of the population at a much earlier time, thus lessening access to the superstrate language by the slaves. This meant that each new group of slaves would acquire the 'colonial vernacular' in the new world from earlier slave groups which were dominated by Kwa speakers. This colonial vernacular later came to be called Jamaican Creole.

An alternative hypothesis indicating earlier Kwa influence is offered by McWhorter (1997a). West African features found in Jamaican Creole (JC) and other English-lexifier creoles originated in a contact variety spoken by slaves and workers at the Cormantin fort off the coast of Ghana where slaves were held for as long as a year before transport to the New World. He calls this variety *Lower Guinea Coast Pidgin English*. Mufwene (1996) also questions what, if any, contribution came from what he refers to as *Guinea Coast Creole English*. According to McWhorter, this pidgin was transported to the New World; first to Barbados, later to Suriname, and finally Jamaica. 'On plantations, in heavy contact with English, this register was a component in what became today's varieties of Jamaican Creole, subsequently diffused to various other locations such as Belize' (1997a: 61) and later to Limon, Costa Rica. However, strong supporting evidence for McWhorter's intriguing hypothesis has not yet been established. Nevertheless, whether the contact variety that eventually became JC originated in Africa or the New World is not germane to the main argument here – that speakers of West African languages did contribute certain structures and lexicon to the developing creole.

Another debate concerns whether or not substrate languages contributed significantly to the development of existing creole languages. There is a wide range of beliefs as to the depth of the contributions of the superstrate, substrate, or the bioprogram. Each theory has its strong proponents, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into a discussion of the merits and failings of each. The approach to creole genesis taken in this paper follows Mufwene (1996) which encompasses each of these oft competing theories. Mufwene proposes that a majority of the features found in the creole languages largely come from the languages of the 'founder populations', those groups who were present during the development of these vernaculars, and that the bioprogram plays a role in the guidance of feature selection.

It is clear that whether their influence began in Africa or the New World, the Akan people played an important role in the development of Jamaican Creole which in the latter decades of the last century was transported to Costa Rica when thousands of Jamaicans immigrated there as contract laborers for Standard Railroad and remained to work for the United Fruit Company (Bryce Laporte, 1962, 1993; Herzfeld, 1977, 1978; Purcell, 1993).

From the time of the first immigration from Jamaica until the middle of the last century, the Afro-Limonese dominated the province, not only numerically, but economically and socially as well. Thus, they were able to maintain the use of their ancestral language in the midst of Spanish-speaking Costa Rica. Recently, however, because of increasing bilingualism in the LC community, LC speakers have begun to import Spanish lexicon and morphosyntax into their LC discourse (Winkler, 1998). Furthermore, renewed access to the acrolect in recent years has stimulated some decreolization including the use of the progressive affix and other grammatical affixes, as will be illustrated in a number of the examples found in this article.

According to Herzfeld (1978), the language that was transplanted to Limon from Jamaica was a 'mesolectal' variety of JC, a claim which she supports by listing basilectal JC features that do not occur in LC, for example the use of *de*, *a*, and *nyem* copular forms in JC which have been, for the most part, replaced by forms of *be* in LC and the use of *a* + the simple form of the verb for progressive aspect: *Shi a go* in JC, *Shi iz gowin* for LC. Present-day varieties of JC and LC still have many structural features and much vocabulary in common. For example, both languages manifest a range of uses of reduplication (Kouwenberg and LaCharité, 2000; Obeng and Winkler, 2000), and serial verb constructions (Holm, 1988).

EXTENT OF AKAN INFLUENCE ON JC

The contributions of West African languages to Atlantic Creoles extends well beyond the vocabulary. According to McWhorter (1997a:83), 'it is not only in the West African lexicon that the influence of Akan, Gbe, Yoruba, and Igbo is disproportionate in ACEs [Atlantic Creole English]. Even in the realm of grammatical structure, comparative, historical, and synchronic analysis has consistently pointed to these languages as the most significant sources.' Alleyne (1993) concurs, but where McWhorter emphasizes substrate impact on the grammatical structures, Alleyne noted parallels in the phonology: 'In the case of Jamaica, it can be demonstrated that not just the pitch, intonation, and timbre, but entire functioning languages were carried to Jamaica, and can still be found there even now' (1993:171).

Although this work is focused on comparing features of Akan with LC, we are not claiming that these same structures are not found in other African languages including those outside of the Kwa language family. For example, serial verb constructions are found in Jukun, a Benue-Congo language, and Vagala, a Gur language, among other languages (Huttar, 1981). These constructions are used much in the same way as serial verb constructions in Akan. Huttar points out that 'it is doubtful whether there ever was such a single-language source, rather than a more general areal source' (p. 300) in creole development, and we do not argue with that contention. We are simply using Akan, one of the more dominant language groups present in the development of Jamaican Creole, for comparison purposes. We also are not arguing that universals and the superstrate languages do not play a role in the presence of some of these structures; in fact, following the Founder Principle (Mufwene, 1996), we contend that universals and both the substrate and superstrate languages all contribute to creole development, in varying degrees depending on the sociohistorical conditions present. For example, Bickerton and Muysken (1988) point out that the creoles which manifest the greatest number of serial verb constructions are those creoles with the heaviest influence of the substrate language groups. Within these parameters, this work will look at both morpho-syntactic, morphophonological, and lexical features through a comparison of LC and Akan uses of reduplication, ideophones, serial verb constructions, and lexical retentions.

REDUPLICATION

Reduplication, that is multiple occurrence of a sound, syllable or a word, is a common feature of African languages including Akan, Yoruba, and Kpelle and is also a productive process in many creole languages including both JC and LC and in the pidgin and creole

Table 1. Reduplication in African substrate languages

Language	Word	Gloss	Reference
Twi	akɛse-akɛse[3]	very big	Obeng
Twi	pɔtɔ-pɔtɔ	very muddy	Dolphyne (1988)
Yoruba	poto-poto	very muddy	Holm (1988)
Limbum	morsir-morsir	one-by-one	Winkler (1989)
Kpelle	tónó-tónó	one-by-one	Winkler (1997)

Table 2. Reduplication in English-based creoles

Language	Word	Gloss	Type	Reference
Cameroon PE	bik-bɪk	very big	calque	Winkler (1989)
Limon Creole	big-big	very big	calque	Winkler (1998)
Limon Creole	poto-poto	muddy	retention	Winkler (1998)
Cameroon PE	one-one	one-by-one	calque	Winkler (1989)
Saramaccan	wa(n)-wan	one-by-one	calque	Bakker (1987)

languages of Africa, such as Cameroon Pidgin English and Krio of Sierra Leone. Reduplications from African languages identified in LC are generally of two types: calques or retentions. Calques consist of the semantic content of the source language and the phonological form of the borrowing language (Haugen, 1956). Retentions are forms which originated in a substrate language and whose phonological forms have been retained in the borrowing language. The examples in Table 1 illustrate reduplications from various West African substrate languages which could have contributed to the developing English-lexifier creoles.

Table 2 provides a variety of reduplicated forms from a number of English-based creoles and pidgins from both Africa and the New World illustrating the similarity of these forms across languages.

One interesting note is that examples of partial reduplication in LC are not attested; whereas they are quite common in Akan. In partial reduplication only part of the stem is repeated; for example, the Akan word *sua* 'small' when reduplicated becomes *su-sua* 'several things being small'. In the reduplicated form, the second vowel of the root is lost. In another example, an entire syllable of the root is not reduplicated: sɔre 'get up' becomes sɔɔ-sɔre[4] 'get up several times' or 'several people getting up'.

In looking at reduplication, we examine the function of reduplication in LC and Akan and detail similarities in usage and form.[5]

Intensification

One of the most common uses of reduplication in both LC and Akan is for the purpose of intensification. In LC, the full segmental components of the stem are reduplicated; in Akan, however, there may be partial reduplication. There are a great number of instances in which only part of the phonemes of a syllable of the stem are repeated in the

reduplicated segment. The number of times the stem is repeated depends on several factors: the degree of intensity, the extent of quality possessed by that being qualified, or the nature of quantity being shown.

(1) LC
Wi av a líkl-líkl braada . . .[6]
Akan
Yewɔ nua barima kété-kété bi . . .
we-have sibling male little-little a
'We have a very little brother . . .'

(2) LC
Mi granimaada waz pléntí-pléntí wayt.
Akan
Na me nana baa yɛ fíté-fítá.
emp. my grandparent woman be white-white.
'My grandmother was very white.'

(3) LC
Mi sista dem bíg-bíg.
Akan
Me nua maanom sò-sò.
my sibling women big-big
'My sisters are very big.'

In example 1, reduplication is used to show the degree of smallness or how young the referent is when compared to the speaker. In example 2, the reduplicated adjectives show the degree of intensity of the skin color of the referents. It must be noted that in both of these examples, the degree of whiteness is still relative. The light-skinned person being referred to is still a Black person. In Akan, there are two main categories of race – Black and Red. Indians, Asians, Caucasians, and mixed race people are all described as 'Red'. A Black person with a fair skin color is classified as Red. Therefore, in the Akan example, the referent, although Black, is light-skinned but not snow white. Through semantic transfer from Akan, the word 'Red' to refer to lighter-skinned Blacks is also used in Jamaica (Albert Valdman, personal communication, 1999).

In example 3, the quality of bigness, which is a positive attribute denoting prosperity in both Akan and Limonese society, is considerable in the referent. The reduplication in this example, in addition to indicating quality, also indicates quantity because there is number agreement between the plural (reduplicated) noun and the plural (reduplicated) adjective. Had the referent been one person, the sentence would have been *Me nua baa sò* 'my sister is big' in which the singular noun *nua baa* 'sister' is matched with the unreduplicated adjective *sò* 'big'.

Table 3 provides examples of both reduplicated calques and retentions from Akan.

The Akan phonetic form *tuku-tuku* 'small but well-built' has been completely retained in present-day LC. However, the consonants of Akan *kyaka-kyaka* seem to have become voiced, resulting in LC *djaga-djaga*. It should be noted here that the stem forms of some of these reduplications do not exist as separate forms in LC; for example, *djaga* and *tuku*. It is unknown whether or not these lexemes were borrowed in their reduplicated state or if the root forms were lost subsequent to borrowing them.

Table 3. Reduplicated adjectives in LC and Akan

LC Stem	Reduplication	Akan Stem	Reduplication	Gloss
roko	roko-roko	poso	poso-poso	very old
tuku	tuku-tuku	tuku	tuku-tuku	small, but well built
good	good-good	pa	pa-pa	very good
djaga	djaga-djaga	basa	basa-basa	very untidy
finke	finke-finke	lenge	lenge-lenge	very skinny[7]

Derivation

In LC, and more frequently in Akan, the reduplication of nouns is used to facilitate a shift in the class of a word. LC manifests a type of reduplication which, referring to Jamaican Creole, Kouwenberg and LaCharité (2000) refer to as *X-like reduplication,* in which an adjective meaning 'with x-like quality' is derived from a root noun, verb, or adjective. The phoneme /i/ is added to the root if the stem is monosyllabic. The addition of this /i/ is significant because the root forms of these reduplications do not exist.[8]

(4)   jogi-jogi/joki-joki man   a man characterized by jokes, a clown

(5)   im nyami-nyami   'He's a glutton.'[9]

In Akan, this process is quite productive; though represented phonetically in a different way; for example, the word for 'tree' *dua,* when reduplicated is *nnue-nnua,* an adjective meaning 'woody'. The Akan word *pia* a verb meaning 'to push' when reduplicated becomes a noun translating 'a struggle' as manifested by the following example:

(6)   Ammamuo yɛ apie-pıa.

      'Politics/governance is a struggle.'

Plurality

In both LC and Akan, one way to create the plural of a word is to duplicate the root morpheme. In the LC corpus, this use of reduplication was only noted a few times, whereas it is a very common productive process in Akan. For example, in Akan, *mmoawa* 'germs' when reduplicated becomes *mmoawa-mmoa* 'many germs'.

(7)   LC
      Wata ıpa <u>faya-faya</u> outsayd de.
      what-a heap fire-fire outside there
      'What a great number of fires there are outside.'

(8)   LC
      Der av blak man duon nuo nutin, <u>nutin-nutin-nutin-nutin</u> av Inglish.
      Akan
      Abibifoɔ bi wɔ hɔ a wɔnnim <u>hwe-hwe-hwe</u> wɔ Brɔfo mu.
      Blacks some be there who they-not-know nothing-nothing-nothing in English
      'There are Black men who don't know anything at all of English.'

In LC, plurality is more frequently expressed by either pre- or postposing the plural marker *dem*. The following example is particularly interesting because it incorporates both strategies: an overt plural marker (dem) and the use of reduplication:

(9) Pak op dem buk-buk yu av ol aron.
     'Pack up the books you have [lying] all around.'

Iteration and duration

The reduplication of verbs generally 'signals a repetitive or intensive aspect' (Marantz, 1994: 3486). In LC, the reduplication of verb roots is unconstrained in terms of its phonetic structure; however, in Akan in the reduplication of verbs, the vowel of the prefix or counter segment is high; whereas the vowel of the root remains unchanged (Dolphyne, 1965; Obeng, 1989). For example, /kɔ/ 'to go' when reduplicated becomes /kʊkɔ/ 'go several times', and /ka/ 'to bite' becomes /kɪka/[10] 'to bite repeatedly'. No such pattern emerges in the LC data.

In the following example, reduplication is used to indicate a repetitive, continuous action, repeated over a period of time. Note how productive the use of reduplication is in the following Akan examples. Not only is the verb *go out* repeated, but the adverb *slowly* modifying the verb must also be repeated to agree with the verb. In addition, the word for Rasta contains a reduplication. This incorporates the plural nature of the many braids worn which typify a Rasta.

(10) LC
      Da Rasta dem dodgin-dodgin-dodgin-dodgin owt tu da duor, wan tu da nex duor waa sii if dem kud pik op somting.
      Akan
      Na mpɛsɛ-mpɛsɛfoɔno pue-pue nwaa-nwaa-nwaa rehwe-hwɛ sɛ wɔn nsa bɛka bi a.
      Rastas the go-out-go-out slowly-slowly-slowly look-look that they will get some
      'The Rasta guys were continuously dodging out of the door, one after another to see if they could pick up something.'

In examples 11 and 12, reduplication is used to emphasize the duration of an activity; thus, it could be viewed as reduplication for both intensification and duration.

(11) LC
      Its jus evalastin taakin-taakin-taakin-taakin an yu duon get da rithm, yer nat intrested to hier da werds av da song?
      Akan
      Wɔn kasa-kasa-kasa-kasa bi a ɛntɔ asom; woani ngye ho, te sɛ emu nsɛm no?
      but if you listen they talk-talk-talk-talk some which it not make sense you're not interested self like it's in word the
      'It's just everlasting continous talking and you don't get the rhythm, you're not interested to hear, the words of the song?'

(12) LC
      Y que colera![11] De uno we yu av to wieting-weiting, cho![12]
      Akan
      Ɛyɛ abufu! Ɛno deɛ agye sɛ wotwɛn-twɛn ho!
      it-be irritating that as for except neg.-you-can-wait ho
      'How irritating! For that one, you always have to wait.'

Prosody and reduplication

In both Limonese Creole and Akan, the tonal pattern of the root of the unreduplicated form is repeated in the reduplicated form. For example, in Akan, the L-L-H tonal pattern of àkèsé 'big things or persons', is repeated in the reduplicated form àkèsé-àkèsé 'several big things or persons'. In LC, the H-H tonal pattern is repeated in the word pótó-pótó 'muddy'.

There are, however, variations in the pitch which are common to both languages. For instance, in example 2 above, a certain amount of downstepping in the pitch pattern is noticeable in both languages. In downstepping, the pitch height of a high tone is lowered. Thus, in LC, the high tone of *plénti* in the expression 'plénti wayt' (very white) is realized as H!H (a high tone followed by a downstepped high tone) in the reduplicated form *plénti-plénti* 'very very white'. In the Akan example, *fìtà* 'white' is reduplicated as *fité-fìtà* 'very very white.' In both the LC and Akan examples, phonologically there are high tones throughout the reduplicated form. Phonetically, however, the pitch of the second through forth high tones are perceptively lower than that of the initial high tone.

In example 11, the tonal structure for the LC excerpt taakìn-táakìn-táakìn-táakìn 'continuous talking' is HL-HL-HL-HL; that of the Akan excerpt kàsá-kàsá-kàsá-kàsá (continuous talking) is LH-LH-LH-LH. In both cases, each high tone is lower in pitch than the preceding high tone because of an intervening low tone. The lowering of the pitches of high tones that are interspersed with low tones is known as downdrifting. In both LC and Akan, because reduplicated forms repeat the tonal structure of unreduplicated forms (except in some unusual cases) both high tone and low tone placement can be predicted.

In some utterances, there is a very clear instance of key lowering in both the LC and Akan utterances. Key lowering involves lowering the pitches of successive low tones to the bottom of a speaker's pitch range in long utterances. In example 10, the pitch patterns on both the LC and Akan examples fall consistently till it reaches the bottom of the pitch octave. Schematically, the key lowering could be represented as:

dodgın-dodgin-dodgin-dodgin 'continuously dodging out'
_ _ _ _ _\

pue-pue nwaa-nwaa-nwaa 'continuously dodging out'
-/ _ _ _ _\

A close observation of the above discussion suggests that tone is important in reduplication in both LC and Akan. Because tone is both lexically and syntactically significant in Akan, there is no doubt that tone is more important in Akan than LC in which tone plays a limited role lexically and no role syntactically (Herzfeld, 1978; Portilla, 1995). However, the fact that LC has maintained some aspects of tone, such as those mentioned above, significantly supports the contention that Akan and other West African languages had an influence on the development of JC the progenitor of LC.

IDEOPHONES

Cole (1955), cited in Newman (1968: 3370), defines ideophones as 'descriptive of sound, colour, smell, manner, appearance, state, action, or intensity . . . [that is] vivid vocal images or representations of visual, auditory, and other sensory or mental experiences'. In both their phonetic form and suprasegmental aspects, LC ideophones are quite similar to their

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Akan counterparts, with the exceptions for which the Akan system is more complex, as will be illustrated below.

The range of ideophonic structures is more limited in LC than in Akan, where they are quite commonplace. In addition, Akan ideophones are phonetically peculiar because depending on the syntactic and semantic functions they perform, certain phonetic features may be associated with them.

In the following three examples, ideophones are used to illustrate distinctive sounds resulting from some action. In addition to these generally repetitive sound segments, accompanying each of the three LC utterances were gestures simulating some aspect of the action. Obeng reports that this is also true of Akan discourse.

(13) LC
Yu kal dat tu finga taipa. <u>Pla-pla-pla-pla-pla-pla!</u>

'You call that two finger typing. Pla-pla-pla-pla-pla-pla!'
Akan
'<u>pra-pra-pra-pra-pra-pra</u>' or '<u>pla-pla-pla-pla-pla-pla</u>'
'<u>prɛ-prɛ-prɛ-prɛ-prɛ-prɛ</u>' or '<u>plɛ-plɛ-plɛ-plɛ-plɛ-plɛ-plɛ</u>'

The consonants /l/ and /r/ are normally in free variation in Akan. In addition, in example 13 above, one also sees /a/ and /ɛ/ in free variation resulting in no change in meaning; however, these vowels do contrast elsewhere in Akan (Obeng, 1988, 1989; Dolphyne, 1988). Therefore, there are a number of phonetic variations for the Akan ideophones as illustrated by some of the examples offered in this section.

(14) LC
Wen da eart gwain to shiek al yu sii iz dis <u>kraka-kraka-kraka- kraka!</u>

'When the earth is shaking all you see is this kraka-kraka- kraka-kraka!'
Akan
'<u>kra-kra-kra-kra</u>' or '<u>kyɛ-kyɛ-kyɛ-kyɛ-kyɛ-kyɛ</u>'

(15) LC
In da nait yu gota waak fas, yu go an kownt, <u>bùp-bùp-bùp-bùp</u>, you get by.

'At night you've got to walk fast, you go along and count, bup-bup-bup-bup, you get by.'
Akan
'<u>wàm-wàm-wàm-wàm-wàm</u>' or '<u>sìm-sìm-sìm-sim-sìm</u>'

In examples 13 and 14 above, both LC and Akan use the same syllable structure for the ideophone: CCV. In example 15, however, although both ideophones have CVC structure, the ideophones have different phonetic realizations. Many of the LC and the Akan examples are very similar in phonetic form and overlying prosodic patterns. Unlike simple reduplication in LC and Akan for which downdrift is common, ideophones commonly display upstep, which involves the raising of the pitch in successive repetitions. However, in example 15, there is some contrast between LC and Akan features. In Akan, ideophones are produced with specific phonetic features which depend on the function they perform within the overall discourse. The form of the ideophone may also be dependent on the weight of the object that is moving or being moved. In Akan, for instance, *sìm-sìm* refers to a heavy object moving quickly, and like the LC ideophone, *bùp-bùp*, *wàm-wàm* and *sìm-sìm* exhibit low pitch with downdrift. In Akan, if the person or object moving is thin, the form would be: *sɔ́-sɔ́-sɔ́*. When the object is moving in a fast and careless manner, obstruents

and mid or low short vowels are used: *gɛ́dɛ́-gɛ́dɛ́* or *wràkà-wràkà*. The ideophone *fáà* may be used to describe a slow movement in the air (i.e. of a bird). If the movement is slow and continuous, then the root *fàã* is repeated *fàã-fàã-fàã*. This ideophone may be used to describe the manner in which a drunkard walks.

As far as we can determine from the available data, LC ideophones do not systematically make prosodic distinctions as such. LC does not make a contrast relating to the size of the object which is moving. For example, in the following example from LC, the vowel length is doubled; in addition, it is one of the few ideophones in LC for which the pitch is low and falling with breathy phonation and slow tempo.

(16)   Wen yu hier da ruod mudi, wen da muel an <u>chaa-chaa-chaa</u> yu av to yuz laik a plastik
      tu kova yu, bekaas da muel dem <u>chaa-chaa-chaa</u>.

     'When you heard the road was muddy, when the mule and chaa-chaa-chaa
      (sound of mule hooves), you had to use like some plastic to cover you, because the mules
      chaa-chaa-chaa.'

In Akan, ideophones are also used to describe states or conditions. Ideophones of this type were not attested in the LC corpus.

SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS

McWhorter (1997b) notes that the serial verb constructions (SVC) in Sranan and Saramaccan are an inheritance from West Kwa languages (e.g., Akan and Gbe, etc.). Thus, like for other English-based creoles including Jamaican Creole (Holm, 1988) serial verbs are a feature of LC. A SVC is a combination of 'juxtaposed' independent verbs which share the same subject without the benefit of conjunctions (Trask, 1993). The combination of these verbs results in what seems to be a single clause semantically. Holm sees serial verbs as a 'series of two (or more) verbs having the same subject and are not joined by a conjunction or a complementizer as they would be in European languages' (1988: 183). McWhorter (1997b: 22) specifies a detailed group of characteristics for SVCs, including: only one overt subject and no overt conjunctions, one intonational contour, and a limit on verbal marking to only one of the verbs.

There are as many classifications of serial verb constructions as there are linguists who work on them. Adenike (1989), Schiller (1990), and Trask (1993) divide them into coordinating and subordinating/modifying. A coordinating SVC has the following characteristics: the second clause is dependent on the first clause in that the subject of the first clause is also the subject of the second clause. A subordinating SVC, which Adenike refers to as a modifying SVC, is one in which the function of the first verb specifies the manner in which the second verb is performed. Adenike's (1989) analysis of SVCs includes a third classification of SVCs: complex. Complex SVCs involve the decomposition of a concept into serial components which, in non-serializing languages, is usually rendered by a single lexical item. Examples of each of these types follow.

The range of serial verbs in Akan and LC are quite adequately described by these three categories. Thus, this work will follow Adenike's classification (1989) because it is most suitable for describing the data and combines both the morphosyntatic and semantic characteristics of the utterances.

Coordinate serial verb constructions

In coordinate SVCs, each of the verbs retains its full lexical meaning; the meaning of the complex expression is the sum of the meanings of each verb. The entire structure has one tense: Shiller (1990) refers to this as 'the tense-aspect simultaneity condition'. An example from LC is offered here:

(17) It yus tu rein plenti, den it <u>run come</u> an it flo on di pieza.

'It used to rain a lot, then it [water] came running, and it flowed on the porch.'

A coordinating SVC in Akan may have a null conjunction although a conjunction could be inserted if the speaker so desires. Thus, in Akan, it is possible to eliminate the conjunction *na* as exemplified by the following example:

(18) Kofi <u>nomm</u> nsa (na) <u>ɔboroeɛ</u>

Kofi drink-past wine he-drunk-past

'Kofi was drunk.'

In the following example from Akan, the words *wuraa* 'entered' and *dae* 'slept' retain their full lexical meanings; the meaning of the sentence is the sum of the meanings of each verb.

(19) Kofi <u>wuraa</u> dan mu <u>dae</u>

Kofi entered room in slept

'Kofi entered the room (and) slept.'

In the following example from LC, 2 of the 3 verbs, *wana* and *leev*, both retain their full lexical content.

(20) LC
Wai yu <u>wana go leev</u>?
'Why do you want to go and leave?'

Modifying or subordinating serial verb constructions

With this type of SVC, one of the verbs in the construction modifies the meaning of the other, usually losing part of its verbal status in the process. For example, the first verb may lose some of its semantic content and become more adverbial in nature. For instance, in example 21 from Akan, *Amma* is the object of the underlying first clause – *Kofi saa Amma* – and also the subject of the second clause – *Amma kɔɔ dwam*. Kofi gets to the market *by following* Amma.

(21) Kofi <u>saa</u> Amma <u>kɔɔ</u> dwam.

Kofi followed Amma went market

'Kofi followed Amma to the market.'

A majority of the SVCs identified in the LC data are modifying. In example 22, the modifying verbs *staat* and *fi ase* serve to indicate the commencement of an action expressed by the main verbs *go* and *kɔ*.

(22) LC
Dis gerl supos to <u>staat go</u> tu Spanish skuul.
Akan

Saa abaayewa f̲i̲ as̲e̲ k̲ɔ̲ Spanehye sukuu.
that girl start go Spanish school

'This girl is supposed to start going to Spanish school.'

(23) LC
I jus fiil wii ar r̲u̲n̲i̲n̲ g̲o̲w̲i̲n̲ an wii ar r̲u̲n̲i̲n̲ d̲o̲i̲n̲.
Akan
Ɛyɛ me sɛ yaretutu m̲m̲r̲i̲k̲a̲ yɔ bribi

it be me that we-run-run-race do something

'I just feel like we are going and doing things (hurriedly)'.

(24) LC
I hier yu was hier, I had tu r̲u̲n̲ k̲o̲m̲ sii yu.
Akan
Metee sɛ wowɔ ha enti na ɛsɛ sɛ met̲u̲ m̲m̲i̲r̲i̲k̲a̲ bɛhwɛ wo

I-heard you-be here so had must I-run race come-see you

'I heard you were here so I had to hurry here to see you.'

In the previous examples, the main verbs are modified by another verb. Syntactically, the modifying verb acts as an adverbial, thus losing its lexical status as a verb. In examples 23 and 24 above, the verb *run* in LC, and its Akan counterpart *tu mmirika,* modify the verbs *come* and *see* (*bɛhwɛ* in Akan). In fact, *run* loses some of its lexical meaning because it basically functions as an adverb. Thus, the main actions were *to come* and *see*; the act of running shows the way the coming was done.

Complex serial verb constructions

The use of multiple verbs to express one action is classified as a complex SVC by Adenike (1989). In example 25, the main concept carried in the verbs is that of 'hearing'. In LC and Akan, this concept decomposes into two sub-concepts, 'coming' and 'listening/ hearing'. The following example comes from the Limon corpus:

(25) I k̲o̲m̲ h̲i̲e̲r̲ dat niem Puita, but now its Barrio Roosevelt.

By way of illustration, in the example below from Akan, the combination of *somaa* and *kɔɔ* are rendered by the single verb *sent* in English.

(26) ɔben s̲o̲m̲a̲a̲ Kofi k̲ɔ̲ɔ̲ dwam.

Obeng sent Kofi went market

'Obeng sent Kofi to the market.'

It must be noted that the above categorizations are not mutually exclusive of each other – one category can very easily 'bleed' into the other. One could, for example, argue that the example below is both a modifying as well as a complex serial verb construction.

(27) LC
G̲o̲ b̲r̲i̲n̲ dat glas de fa gi me.
Akan
Kɔfa saa kɔnkɔ no brɛ me.
go-take that glass the come me

'Bring me that glass.'

In the LC sentence, the verb *go* modifies *bring*. In the Akan example, one would also be right in arguing that *kɔ* 'go' and *fa* 'take' modify *brɛ* 'come'.[13] Therefore, it may be argued that in both examples the main concept, the act of bringing, decomposes into sub-concepts. In LC, *bring* decomposes into 'going' and 'bringing', and in Akan, it involves 'going', 'taking', and 'coming'. It is clear that the use of serial verb constructions is generally directional, either moving towards or away from the speaker, in both of these languages.

LEXICAL RETENTIONS

According to Alleyne (1993), lexical items from Akan 'predominate among African-derived words in the Jamaican language' (p. 179), the language from which Limonese Creole is derived. Close examination of the lexical items found in the LC corpus indicates that many Akan lexical items have been retained in the inventory of LC vocabulary.[14] All the retentions in JC which have been passed on to LC come from the open classes of words, no prepositions, conjunctions, particles, or derivational or inflectional bound morphemes from Akan have been identified in LC. The majority of the words that have been retained are nouns; however, there are also a number of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs.

Nouns

The nouns that have been retained are generally human nouns, nouns relating to food items (for example, tubers), animals, games, and household items. It is quite interesting how phonetically similar some of the retentions in LC are to their current lexical counterparts in Akan. This is especially noteworthy considering that these words have not only survived the original creolization process during the development of Jamaican Creole, but also the transplantation of a mesolectal variety of JC to Costa Rica. Table 4 provides a sample of some of the retentions from Akan in LC.

Table 4. Akan nouns retained in LC

Akan nouns	LC nouns	Meaning
Aba	Abba	female born on Thursday
adiho	aduo	out of doors
afuw	afu yam	a type of yam
Akosua	Quashiba	female born on Sunday
Ananse[15]	Anancy/Nancy	spider
atena	anana	net
atumpan	tumba	big drum
bayerɛ	yeri yam	yam
bɛdɛ	bede	straw fiber basket
bɔɔbɔɔ	bobo	fool, idiot
bokyire[16]	bochile yam	type of yam
kuku	kuku	corn dumpling
nkamfoɔ	kyamfya yam	yellow yam
Ntikuma	Takuma	son of Ananse
ɔware	wari	board game with small balls moved into holes
prako	bracha pig	pig

Table 5. Akan adjectives retained in LC

Akan adjective	LC adjective	Meaning
be-bree	brey-brey	plentiful, many, much
bɔfoo-bɔfo	bofo-bofo	broad, thick, swollen
kra-kra	kra-kra	restless, excited
nyaka-nyaka	nyaka-nyaka	pale, pieces
pɔtɔ-pɔtɔ	poto-poto	muddy
werɛ-werɛ	wiri-wiri	careless

Most of the nouns have retained their full segmental components; however, a few have lost their prefixes. For example, ɔware /ɔwarɪ/ 'a game played with small balls' in Akan has become *wari* /warɪ/ in LC losing the prefix ɔ-. *Ntikuma* [ntikuma] 'Ananse's son' has lost its prefix /n-/ changed the /i/ vowel following the /t/ to /a/, and thus, becomes Takuma in LC.

In a number of instances, LC has retained the Akan form and suffixed the English equivalent to it. Examples include: *prako* which has become *bracha pig*, *nkamfo*, which is *kyamfya yam* in LC, and *bayerɛ*, which is called *yeri yam* in LC. This doubling behavior is also noted in non-borrowed terms in LC like *rokstuon* and *ratbat*.

It is interesting to note that it is only Akan and its related languages that have these names. The Gbe languages have different names for these items. Due to the strong Akan influence on its neighboring languages, there have been some borrowings of Akan lexicon into these languages. For example, it is widely known that the Ewe-Gbe and the Ga-Dangme borrowed political terminologies from the Akan due to the influence of the old Asante empire (Dakabu, 1988).

Adjectives

A sizeable number of Akan adjectives have been retained in LC, most of which are adjectives of quality; only a few are adjectives relating to quantity. Table 5 provides examples of adjectives retained from Akan in present-day LC.

Akan adjectives retained in LC have virtually maintained their phonological form; only a few vowels have been changed. For example, Akan [ɔ and ʊ] have been replaced by [o] in LC.

Adverbs

The only Akan adverb retained in LC found in the corpus is one adverb of manner – describing the way and manner in which an action is done by an agent: the Akan word *buru* becomes *brubru* in LC. In both languages the meaning is the same: 'disorderly, sluttish, badly done' (e.g. food that is badly cooked).

Verbs

Only two Akan verb retentions were identified in the LC corpus: *fe* 'to vomit' which has become *fene* in LC and *nyam* 'to eat' from Akan *nyam*, 'to eat' or 'to grind'. The possibility of there being numerous verbal retentions should, however, not be ruled out.

Calques

The LC phrases *strong eye* (strong willed or dominant) and *eye water* (tears) are calques of Akan phrases – *ani* 'eye', *yɛ* 'be' and *den* 'strong'- *aniɛden*, becomes 'strong eye', and *ani* plus *nsuo* 'tears' – *aninsuo*. Ghanaian Pidgin English borrowed the same forms from Akan as did JC, forms which were later maintained in LC.

CONCLUSION

Studies of creole languages often focus on the most 'radical' creoles, those that are structurally most distant from the acrolect to which they are related. What is interesting about the case of Limonese Creole is that even among speakers of a transplanted mesolectal creole variety, we find a rich selection of Africanisms still maintained in their normal discourse.

The morphosyntactic structures discussed throughout this paper are not limited to Akan and may be found in other African languages whose speakers may have contributed to the development of the pidgins and creole languages that eventually became English-based Atlantic creole languages. However, the Akan lexical retentions in LC as well as the near maintenance of the prosodic features associated with such lexical items lends a measure of support to the contention that West African languages influenced the development of Jamaican Creole, an influence which was passed on to Limonese Creole.

NOTES

1. Our gratitude goes to Professors Albert Valdman (Indiana University), Mai Kuha (Ball State University) and two anonymous external evaluators for careful reading and constructive criticism on earlier versions of this paper.
2. The name Akan will be used to refer to a group of related language varieties including Twi, Akuapem, and Fante.
3. Akan uses the letters ɛ and ɔ as a part of its regular orthographic system; therefore, these letters should not be confused with the corresponding IPA phonetic symbols.
4. In general, when a syllable is lost in Akan, there is compensatory vowel lengthening of the final vowel of the previous syllable.
5. The data for this study is naturalistic the LC data comes from recordings made in Costa Rica (Winkler, 1998). No attempt was made to solicit West Africanisms; therefore, their range in LC may be broader that what is represented here. The Akan examples come from native-speaker co-author Obeng and from Dolphyne (1988).
6. Pitch is marked on the examples. Prosodic features will be discussed in detail later on in the paper.
7. This term is derogatory.
8. *Joke* and *nyam* exist in LC, **joki* and **nyami* do not.
9. From Wright-Murray (1974)
10. A general rule of Akan reduplication is that the vowel of the prefix is always high; therefore we see the shift from /ka/ to /kIka/.
11. 'Y que colera!' A Spanish expression. Although few of the examples provided in this article show it, LC has borrowed both lexicon and morphosyntax from Spanish.
12 *Cho* is a retention from Yoruba denoting surprise or frustration
13. *Ba* is 'come' and *brɛ* is dative and semantically involves coming with something to give to a waiting recipient.
14. We are not claiming that the contributions of other African languages is a non-existent influence in the lexicon; only that Akan played a greater role. For instance, lexical items also have been maintained from a Bantu language Kikongo (*pinda* 'peanut') and Yoruba, another Kwa language (*cho*, an exclamation of surprise).
15. Character often personified in folk tales in both West African and the Caribbean.
16. ky- is pronounced [tʃ] in Akan, therefore, the LC lexeme is quite similar.

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