

DIAGNOSTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH-LEXIFIER CREOLES: A NEW LOOK AT BAHAMIAN

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Abstract: This paper is a partial replica of a study by Hackert and Huber (2007). It first documents the earliest attestations in Bahamian of the diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles proposed by Baker and Huber (2001). Bahamian is then compared to the seven Atlantic English-lexifier varieties considered by Baker and Huber (2001). As shown by Hackert and Huber (2007), this feature-based approach allows for the quantification of the affinity between Bahamian and Gullah. Finally, a number of selected diagnostic features recorded in Bahamian are discussed in terms of their origin and of their distribution.

Keywords: diagnostic features, Bahamian, Caribbean, Atlantic, world-wide

1. Introduction

Bahamian is a relatively well studied Atlantic English-lexifier variety. Previous work on Bahamian covers issues such as phonology (Childs and Wolfram 2008), morphology and syntax (Shilling 1978, McPhee 2003a, McPhee 2003b, Reaser and Torbert 2008, McPhee 2011, McPhee 2012), its socio-historical status (Lawlor 1983), language variation (Donnelly 1997, Childs et al. 2003, Hackert and Holm 2009), lexicology (Holm 1980, Shilling 1981), and lexicography (Holm and Shilling 1982). On the other hand, Bahamian has not figured prominently in comparative research adopting a feature-based approach on English-lexifier pidgins and creoles, with the notable exception of Hancock (1987) – an investigation of a selected number of syntactic features, on the basis of 50 sentences and phrases in 33 Atlantic English-lexifier creoles – and of Hackert and Huber (2007).

The paper presents the first attestations in Bahamian of the diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles suggested by Baker and Huber (2001). It compares the distribution of these features in Bahamian and other Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles. The genetic relationship between Bahamian and Gullah – which is widely believed to have contributed to the formation of the former – is quantified on the basis of the diagnostic features found in the two varieties. Also included is a discussion of a number of selected features.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the methodology. In section 3, I present the first attestations in Bahamian of the diagnostic features of English-lexified contact languages proposed by Baker and Huber (2001); I show that some features, previously considered as unattested in this creole, do occur, and that others are attested considerably earlier than hitherto assumed. Section 4 focuses on the distribution of these features in Bahamian and in the seven Atlantic English-lexified Pidgins and Creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001). In section 5, the affinity between Bahamian and Gullah is re-examined in light of the diagnostic features taken into account. A number of

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selected diagnostic features recorded in Bahamian are discussed in section 6. The conclusions are presented in section 7.

2. Methodology

The corpus of Bahamian consists of both published and unpublished sources. The former include travel accounts (Schoepf 1788/1911, Anon. 1877, Benjamin 1878, Ives 1880, Dickinson et al. 1888, Lester 1897, Northcroft 1900), memoirs (Bruce 1782, Powles 1888, Michael 1904), collections of folklore (Edwards 1891a, Edwards 1891b, Edwards 1895, Armbrister 1917, Cleare 1917, Parsons 1917, 1918 and 1919, Crowley 1966), and dictionaries (Holm and Shilling 1982, Allsopp 1996). The unpublished sources consist of a collection of folklore (Thompson 2010) and a dictionary (Wiwords the West Indian Dictionary 2008).

Diagnostic features “represent significant phonological, lexical, or grammatical deviations from, or innovations to, varieties of British English – since British English was the major input in the restructuring process” (Baker and Huber 2001: 163). The 302 diagnostic features suggested by Baker and Huber (2001: 165) are divided into three groups: Atlantic (173), world-wide (75), and Pacific (54). Atlantic features are recorded in at least two Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles. World-wide features are attested in at least one Atlantic and one Pacific variety. Pacific features are only found in Pacific varieties. The approach adopted here takes into account features recorded at any time in the history of Bahamian, even though some of these may no longer be used. Consequently, it can shed light on issues such as the provenance and diffusion of features among the various English-lexifier pidgins and creoles.

For ease of reference, each diagnostic feature is numbered and labeled and/or defined as in Baker and Huber (2001: 197-204). The presentation of the first attestations in Bahamian of the diagnostic features differs in several respects from Hackert and Huber (2007), who only list the date when a feature is first recorded and provide no textual evidence. Thus, the entry for each feature includes: (i) the Bahamian form, and, when available, a quotation; (ii) the date of the first attestation; (iii) the indication between brackets of the sources; (iv) all quotations are accompanied by their translation. Variants are also listed, in the following cases: if they date from the same year; if they are suggestive of different pronunciations; if they illustrate different uses/meanings. Moreover, some entries also include later attestations to illustrate the use of particular features. All examples appear in the orthography or system of transcription used in the sources. The length of quotations has been kept to a reasonable minimum. Relevant items in quotations are in bold characters.

3. First attestations in Bahamian

Listed below are the diagnostic features of English-lexifier creoles recorded in Bahamian and their earliest date of attestation on currently available evidence:

3. *aki* (fruit/tree)
ackee 1880 (Ives 1880: 115)
5. *all we* (1PL)
All we is man 1918 (Parsons 1918: 71) ‘We are all men’
4. *akra* (a savoury cake)
accra 1974 (Shilling 1981: 49); *a’cara* 1976 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 1)
7. *Anancy* (folktale character)
a field belonging to one b’o’ Nanza 1917 (Cleare 1917: 229) ‘a field belonging to brother Anancy’; *ber Nancy* 1918 (Parsons 1918: 43) ‘brother Anancy’; *Die man name Annancy* 1918 (Parsons 1918: 59) ‘the man’s name was Anancy’; *b’o’ Nassy* 1918 (Parsons 1918: 89) ‘brother Anancy’
8. *bad mouth* ‘speak ill of, curse’
bad-mouth 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 4)
9. *bakra* ‘European, white person’
buckra 1887 (Powles 1888: 154)
10. *bang* ‘hit (as punishment)’
Do stick ban’ peeg, peeg woul’n’ walk fas’ 1918 (Parsons 1918: 107) ‘Hit the pig, the pig wouldn’t walk fast’
11. *banja* ‘banjo’
banjah 1784 (Schoepf 1788/1911: 261)
13. *bateau* ‘boat’
bateau ‘a small boat’ 1966 (Crowley 1966: 20)
15. *big-eye* ‘greed(y)’
B’ Spider ’e did have such a big eye 1895 (Edwards 1895: 66) ‘Brother Spider had such a greed; ’e was *big-heyed* 1895 (Edwards 1895: 82) ‘He was greedy’
17. *bobo* ‘young boy’
babah 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 140)
22. *bra* ‘brother’
Never min’, bro’, come away 1918 (Parsons 1918: 9) ‘Never mind, brother, come away’; “OK”, say, “*Broh we’ll go up*” 1966 (Crowley 1966: 47) ““OK, he said, “Brother, we’ll go up””; *he say “now Bra”* 1966 (Crowley 1966: 58) ‘he said “now, Brother”’
23. *bubby* ‘woman’s breast’
bubby 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 30)
24. *buddy* (egalitarian address for a male)
“M’Buddy”, he say 1966 (Crowley 1966: 67) ““My friend”, he said’
25. *bumbo* ‘vulva’
bobo 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 23)
27. *calaloo* ‘a rich soup or stew’
calaloo 1971 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 35)
28. *chaw* ‘eat; food’
Chaw-Fine, chaw him up! 1918 (Parsons 1918: 67) ‘Eat-Fine, eat him up!’

29. *chigger* ‘chigoe’
*triggers*¹ 1744 (Bruce 1782: 426); *chigger* 1784 (Schoepf 1788/1911: 304);
jigger 1898 (Northcroft 1900: 151)
30. *copper* ‘money’
Give us a small copper 1877 (Anon. 1877: 13) ‘Give us a small coin’; *Ahsk de lady fah coppah* 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 90) ‘Ask the lady for money’
33. *cuttacoo* ‘basket’
catacoo 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 37)
34. *da, de* (progressive)
va you dere gwine 1918 (Parsons 1918: 114) ‘where are you going’; *dar / da* 1925 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 37); *I de wait on dem.* 1997 (Donnelly 1997: 29) ‘I am waiting for them.’
36. *day clean* ‘daybreak’
*Go back sleep till day clay [clear]*² 1918 (Parsons 1918: 10) ‘He went back and slept until daybreak’; *salute me tomorrow when day clean* 1918 (Parsons 1918: 36) ‘greet me tomorrow, when it is daybreak’
37. *de, da, na, a* (equative copula)
i a ma padnə 1987 (Hancock 1987: 284) ‘he is my partner’
38. *de* (locative copula)
till yer know where clean water dere 1917 (Armbrister 1917: 272) ‘until you know when there is clean water’
39. *dead house* ‘mortuary’
dead house 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 58)
40. *dem* (article, demonstrative)
See dem children 1887 (Powles 1888: 160) ‘See the children’
41. postposed *dem* (nominal plural)
Some of the rat them would not come inside 1918 (Parsons 1918: 88) ‘Some of the rats would not come inside’
42. preposed *dem* (nominal plural)
Dem ladies dere is laffin’ too much. 1895 (Edwards 1895: 18) ‘The ladies over there are laughing a lot’
43. *dem* (3PL POSS)
dem 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 204)
44. *do* (clause-initial entreaty)
Do, B’ Man, spare my life 1895 (Edwards 1895: 66) ‘Brother Man, spare my life’
46. final *done* (completive)
after eat done, put the shell ’pon him finger 2010 (Thompson 2010) ‘after he had eaten, he put the shell on his finger’

¹ The word-initial [tʃ] was most likely misheard or reinterpreted as [tr]. From the description provided by Bruce (1782: 426) it is clear that *trigger* stands for *chigger*: “they get through the soles of people’s feet, and lodge between the skin and the flesh, where they lay their eggs and breed” and “if they are suffered to remain, they cause most intolerable itching pains, and great swelling in the legs”.

² Where *clay* actually stands for *clean*, not for *clear*, contra Parsons (1918: 10).

47. *done* VERB (completive)
*People **done** stole de bucket* 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 145) ‘The people have stolen the bucket’
48. *doormouth* ‘threshold’
*Clean you **door mouth** first* 1919 (Parsons 1919: 441) ‘Clean your doorway first’
49. *dohiti* ‘earth, dirt’
dirty 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 61)
50. *dry eye* ‘boldness’
dry eye 1966 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 67)
51. *duppy* ‘zombie’
*B’o’ Devil came dere dat day, call(ed) one-foot **dup*** 1918 (Parsons 1918: 142) ‘Brother Devil came there that day, and called a one-foot zombie’
52. *eddoe/ede* ‘taro’
eddy 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 35); *eddoe* 1898 (Northcroft 1898: 172)
53. *enty* (negative question particle)
***Ain’ d’** King an’ d’ Kaizer ’is cuzzins* 1936 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 3) ‘Isn’t it the case that the King and the Kaiser are cousins’
55. *eyewater* ‘tear’
eye-water 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 71)
58. *for* PRON NP (genitive)
*he see **fe** him daughter head* 2010 (Thompson 2010) ‘he saw his daughter’s head’
59. *for* VERB (modal)
*you **fe** take out your fat so lef it here* 2010 (Thompson 2010) ‘you must take out your fat and leave it here’
60. *for true* ‘truly’
*That’s true **for true***³ 1966 (Crowley 1966: 66) ‘that’s really true’
61. *fufu* (starch food, boiled and pounded)
foo foo 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 157)
62. *fullup* ‘fill, be-full’
*no all us rice birds cahn’ **full up** dat basket* 1895 (Edwards 1895: 95) ‘not all of us, rice birds, can fill up that basket’
66. *gongosha* ‘deceit, gossip’
Con Jessie 1970 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 48)
67. *gumbay* ‘drum’
gambee 1784 (Schoepf 1788/1911: 261); *goombay* 1978 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 91)
70. *how come* ‘why’, etc.
***how come** you ain’t come yet* 1966 (Crowley 1966: 64) ‘why haven’t you come yet’

³ Bahamian also has *for truth*, which “is prob[ably] a false refinement of Cr [= Caribbean] [fʊtru], blended with IAE [= Internationally Accepted English] *in truth*” (Allsopp 1996: 239): *de sand got heyes **fur truth!*** 1895 (Edwards 1895: 79) ‘the sand has really got eyes’.

71. *hungry* ‘hunger, starvation’
He couldn’ bear no hongree no more 1918 (Parsons 1918: 27) ‘He couldn’t bear the hunger any more’
72. *ina, na* (locative preposition)
in a time of my foreparents 1966 (Crowley 1966: 46) ‘at the time of my ancestors’
73. *Irish potato* ‘potato’
Irish potato 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 126)
76. *John Crow* (bird sp.)
John Crow 1880 (Cory 1890: 135)
77. *jook* ‘pierce, stab’, etc.
jook 1909 (Holm and Shilling, 1982: 115)
78. *juju* ‘magic’
The Obeah man gave the robbed man some “juju” 1918 (Parsons 1918: 13) ‘The sorcerer gave some magic to the man who had been robbed’
79. *jumbee* ‘malevolent spirit, zombie’
too much jumbies 1880 (Ives 1880: 92) ‘too many zombies’
81. k/g palatalized before /a/
kyan ‘can’ 1917 (Parsons 1917: 276); *gyal* ‘girl’ 1918 (Parsons 1918: 137)
84. *kaka* ‘shit, excrement’
caca 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 34)
86. *kasada* ‘cassava’
cassada 1966 (Crowley 1966: 27)
89. *kiba* ‘cover’
kiver 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 119)
96. *look* ‘see, find’
The king put man to the gate to look when Jack coming in 1918 (Parsons 1918: 12) ‘The king placed a guard at the gate to see when Jack came in’
100. *married* ‘marry’
Ah goin’ married ter-night 1918 (Parsons 1918: 60) ‘I’m going to get married tonight’
104. *me one* ‘just me’
mɪwɪn wɪz ɪn dɪ bowt 1989 (Holm 1989: 491) ‘it was just me in the boat’
110. *no more* ‘merely’
no-more 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 143)
111. *nose hole* ‘nostril’
nose-hole 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 144)
115. *(n)yam* ‘eat; food’
nyam 1977 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 144); *yam* ‘eat’ 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 144); *Yesterday this time me a nyam Tiger fat* 2010 (Thompson 2010) ‘At this time, yesterday, I was eating Tiger’s fat’
120. *obeah* ‘kind of magic’
Obeah-men 1878 (Benjamin 1878: 16)
125. *pikin* ‘small; child, offspring’
pickin 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 154)

127. *pikni* ‘small; child, offspring’
pickny 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 154)
134. *rockstone* ‘stone’
rockstone 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 171)
135. *(for) sake (of)*
for sake of 1977 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 81)
137. *santapi* ‘centipede’
centipee 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 39)
138. *sapata* ‘footwear’
saplatters 1940 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 175)
139. *say* (complementizer)
he [...] tell he wife, say, “Going in the woods” 1966 (Crowley 1966: 106) ‘he [...] told his wife that he was going to the wood’
140. *self* ‘even; (emphasis)’
I won’t give you the spit self 1918 (Parsons 1918: 70) ‘I won’t give you the spit’
144. *so te(l)* ‘until; a long time’
Gal, you love me so till 1918 (Parsons 1918: 14) ‘Girl, you love me so’
145. *stick* ‘tree’
A stick named pine 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 194) ‘a tree called pine’
147. *sweet* ‘tasty; please (v.)’
This meat is sweet 1918 (Parsons 1918: 130) ‘This meat is tasty’; *sweet* ‘please (v.)’ 1936 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 199)
148. *sweetmouth* ‘flattery’
sweet-mouth 1981 (Shilling 1981: 50)
152. *tief* ‘steal’
My people don’t tieve no mo’ 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 147) ‘My people don’t steal any more’
153. *titty* ‘little girl, sister’
titty / titta 1966 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 208)
154. *too* (preverbal) ‘very, exceedingly’
too 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 209)
155. *tote* ‘carry’
I could if you tote me 1918 (Parsons 1918: 30) ‘I could if you carried me’
156. *tother, tara* ‘other’
one’s more like a song dan t’oder 1887 (Powles 1888: 67) ‘one’s more like a song than the other’
158. *ugly* ‘evil’
God do’ like ugly. 1917 (Armbrister 1917: 274) ‘God doesn’t like evil.’
159. *una* (2 PL)
ona 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 147)
161. *vex* ‘be-angry’
B’ Little Clod get waxed 1891 (Edwards 1891b: 250) ‘Brother Little Clod got angry; e’ was so vex’ 1891 (Edwards 1891b: 250) ‘he was so angry’
162. *wari* (African board game)
warri 1898 (Northcroft 1900: 46)

164. *we* (1PL POSS)
we mother 1918 (Parsons 1918: 116) ‘our mother’
165. *we* (1PL OBL)
den take we Inagua 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 143) ‘then they took us to Inagua’
166. WH *make* ‘why’
what make you do so? 1895 (Edwards 1895: 93) ‘why did you do so?’
172. *yai* ‘eye’
Two-Yeye 1918 (Parsons 1918: 28) ‘Two-Eyes’
173. *yerri* ‘hear’
No eberyting you yerri (hear) good fe talk 1887 (Powles 1888: 166) ‘Not everything that you hear is worth repeating’
177. *be* (predicative copula)
I be so good to you 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 222) ‘I was so good to you’
178. *been* (past/anterior)
You siste’ bin married a year ago 1895 (Edwards 1895: 94) ‘Your sister got married a year ago’
179. *before time* ‘formerly’
Beforetime didn’t had no creatures around here 1978 (Shilling 1978: 117) ‘Formerly, there were no creatures around here’
180. *born* ‘give birth’
I’s the oldest child Mama born 1978 (Shilling 1978: 51) ‘I’m Mama’s eldest child’
181. *bruck* ‘break’
She can “broke a coconut” 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 140) ‘She can “break a coconut”’
182. *byandby* (adv.) ‘soon’
We’ll git home by an’ by 1895 (Edwards 1895: 60) ‘We’ll soon get home’
183. *capsize* ‘spill, pour (out)’
capsize 1978 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 36)
184. *catch* ‘get, obtain, reach’
I ketchd⁴ it down the road 1887 (Powles 1888: 153) ‘I got it down the road’
187. *dead* ‘die’
Some mans does dead befo’ dem time 1917 (Armbrister 1917: 274) ‘Some men die before their time’
188. *dem* (3PL)
dem 1980 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 204)
190. *fashion* ‘manner, way’
Follow fashion break monkey neck 1897 (Lester 1897: 8) ‘it’s not good to follow people’
192. *for* (infinitive)
you slice potatoes foh fry 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 208) ‘you slice potatoes to fry them’

⁴ Powles (1888: 153) writes that “the verb “to catch” [is] used where we should use the verb “to get””.

193. *go* (future)
I go ask him 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 185) ‘I will ask him’; *guh* 1978 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 89)
194. *got* ‘have’
no motter w’a kin’ o’ boat you is got 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 55) ‘no matter what kind of boat you have’
196. *he* (resumptive)
de shark he down in water 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 63) ‘the shark was in the water’
197. *he* (3SG OBL)
he kicked he 1966 (Crowley 1966: 66) ‘he kicked him’
198. *he* (3SG POSS)
He wife and ’e children 1891 (Edwards 1891a: 48) ‘His wife and his children’
199. *him* (3SG POSS)
Hog run for him life 1887 (Powles 1888: 166) ‘Hog ran for his life’
200. *him* (3SG)
him too much proboking 1887 (Powles 1888: 166) ‘he is quite annoying’
201. *lick* ‘flog’
Get up may man an’ lick-ee 1891 (Edwards 1891a: 53) ‘Get up, my man, and flog him’
202. *lilly* ‘little’
Go lilly mo’ faddah 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 94) ‘Go a little more, father’
203. *little bit* ‘slightly’
you is little bit too fool 1966 (Crowley 1966: 49) ‘you are slightly foolish’
205. *make* (causative/imperative)
Make I see. 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 129) ‘Let me see’
206. *make haste* ‘hurry’
Make haste! Come here 1891 (Edwards 1891b: 250) ‘Hurry! Come here’; *Make has’, come back!* 1918 (Parsons 1918: 136) ‘Hurry up, come back!’
207. *-man* (agentive suffix)
So de hunterman tol’ him ’bout a nine-tail monkey. 1918 (Parsons 1918: 91) ‘So, the hunter told him about a nine-tail monkey’
208. *me* (1SG)
Me no tiger 1918 (Parsons 1918: 36) ‘I’m not a tiger’
209. *me* (1SG POSS)
Me hoss drink 1891 (Edwards 1891b: 252) ‘My horse drank’
211. *more better* ‘better’
Dis is much more better. 1997 (Donnelly 1997: 10) ‘This is much better’
212. *most* ‘almost’
’Roun mos’ anywheah you see 1904 (Michael 1904: 7) ‘Around almost anywhere you see’
213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1’SN2)
de Gubner home 1887 (Powles 1888: 154) ‘the Governor’s home’
214. *never* (negative-completive)

- he nevah come back till Fourf 'n' July* 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 140) 'he hasn't come back until the Fourth of July'
215. *no* (negator)
When eye no see 1887 (Powles 1888: 167) 'When the eye can't see'
216. *nogood* 'bad'
you no eat no good grub 1918 (Parsons 1918: 70) 'you didn't eat the bad grub'
218. *one* (indefinite article)
B'Big-head come to one well 1891 (Edwards 1891a: 52) 'Brother Big-head came to a well'
219. *one time* '(at) once'
The tiger killed two thousand men dead one time 1918 (Parsons 1918: 3) 'The tiger killed two thousand men once'
220. paragogic vowels
man drinky water 1887 (Powles 1888: 167) 'the man drank water'
221. *piccaninny* 'small; child'
Parson him christen him pickaninny first 1887 (Powles 1888: 166) 'The parson christened his child first'
222. *plenty* NOUN 'a lot of'
him hab plenty company 1887 (Powles 1888: 167) 'he has a lot of company'
223. *plenty* (postverbal) 'a lot'
plenty 1936; *He does walk plenty-plenty.* 2011 (McPhee 2011) 'He walks quite a lot'
224. *plenty* 'very; many'
him hab plenty 1897 (Lester 1897: 8) 'he has many'
226. *-side* (locative suffix) *
her broder come down to de water side 1918 (Parsons 1918: 61) 'her brother came down to the water'
228. word derived from *something* 'thing'
an' he see dis somept'in' in de bed 1918 (Parsons 1918: 61) 'and he saw this thing on the bed'
235. *too much* ADJ/VERB 'a lot'
him too much proboking 1887 (Powles 1888: 166) 'he is quite annoying'
236. ADJ/VERB *too much* 'a lot'
I likes dem both too much 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 208) 'I like them both a lot'
238. *too much* NOUN 'many, a lot of'
too much jumbies 1880 (Ives 1880: 92) 'too many zombies'
239. *walkabout* 'wander'
You children like walk about 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 218) 'Your children like to wander aimlessly'
240. *we* (relativizer)
way 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 218)
244. WH *side* 'where'
what side 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 218); *which side* 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 219)

247. ZERO (equative copula)
De gubner say we slaves 1887 (Powles 1888: 100) ‘The governor says we are slaves’
248. ZERO (predicative copula)
you not lucky 1886 (Dickinson et al. 1888: 37) ‘you are not lucky’
268. *first time* ‘ahead, formerly’
first-time ‘long ago’ 1982 (Holm and Shilling 1982: 77)
287. *saltwater* ‘sea; coastal’
*Ay now, fo da sohl wota*⁵ *did bin kom dis hoyt* 2012 (McPhee 2012) ‘Aye, now, the sea was this high’
288. *sing out* ‘shout’
e’ sing out, e’ say 1895 (Edwards 1895: 67) ‘he shouted, he said’; *B’ Rabby sing hout*, “*Now John Fire, go out!*” 1895 (Edwards 1895: 74) ‘Brother Rabbit shouted, “Now, John Fire, go out!”’
300. *yet* ‘still’
she said, “Longer yet” 1918 (Parsons 1918: 94) ‘she said, “Longer still”’

A total of 145 diagnostic features are recorded in Bahamian. Several remarks are in order here.

Firstly, unlike in Hackert and Huber (2007: 321), 91. *kokobe* ‘leper, leprosy’ has not been included among the diagnostic features found in Bahamian. A form *cocobey* occurs in Bahamian, but it designates a plant, *Varronia bahamensis* (Holm and Shilling 1982: 44). *Cocobey* also occurs in three compounds, all designating plants: *black cocobey* ‘a kind of very large pumpkin’ (Holm and Shilling 1982: 20); *hard-skin cocobey* ‘a plant, *Varronia bahamensis*’ (Holm and Shilling 1982: 100); *rough cocobey* ‘a plant, *Cordia bahamensis*’ (Holm and Shilling 1982: 171). For *cocobey* “the connection may be the rough surface of the pod” (Holm and Shilling 1982: 44), for *rough cocobey* “its rough surface”, whereas for *black cocobey* “cf. COCOBEY, but connection uncertain” (Holm and Shilling 1982: 20). This suggests that feature 91. *kokobe* ‘leper, leprosy’ may have existed in earlier stages of Bahamian. However, as Hackert and Huber (2007: 301) themselves write, “a feature needs to have both identical (or at least closely related) forms and functions”. Therefore, feature 91. *kokobe* ‘leper, leprosy’ is considered as unattested in Bahamian, on currently available evidence.

Secondly, 28 features not listed in Hackert and Huber (2007) are actually attested in Bahamian: 10. *bang* ‘hit (as punishment)’; 17. *bobo* ‘young boy’; 24. *buddy* (egalitarian address for a male); 25. *bumbo* ‘vulva’; 29. *chigger* ‘chigoe’; 33. *cutacoo* ‘basket’; 37. *de, da, na, a* (equative copula); 46. final *done* (completive); 58. *for* PRON NP (genitive); 59. *for* VERB (modal); 66. *gongosha* ‘deceit, gossip’; 70. *how come* ‘why’, etc.; 158. *ugly* ‘evil’; 166. WH *make* ‘why’; 177. *be* (predicative copula); 190. *fashion* ‘manner, way’; 196. *he* (resumptive); 203. *little bit* ‘slightly’; 211. *more better* ‘better’; 213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1’s N2); 220. paragogic vowels; 222. *plenty* NOUN ‘a lot of’; 224. *plenty* ‘very; many’; 236. ADJ/VERB *too much* ‘a lot; 238. *too much* NOUN ‘many, a lot of’; 240. *we* (relativizer); 287. *saltwater* ‘sea; coastal’; 288. *sing out* ‘shout’.

⁵ Helean McPhee (p.c., April 2012) confirms that it also means ‘sea’.

Thirdly, 54 diagnostic features are recorded in Bahamian earlier than indicated by Hackert and Huber (2007):

Table 1. First attestations in Bahamian of 54 diagnostic features

Feature	First attestation	Hackert and Huber (2007)
3. <i>aki</i> (fruit/tree)	1880	1889
4. <i>akra</i> (a savoury cake)	1974	1976
5. <i>all we</i> (1PL)	1918	1966
7. <i>Anancy</i> (folktale character)	1917	1918
9. <i>bakra</i> ‘European, white person’	1887	1888
11. <i>banja</i> ‘banjo’	1784	1788
13. <i>bateau</i> ‘boat’	1966	1982
22. <i>bra</i> ‘brother’	1891	1982
30. <i>copper</i> ‘money’	1877	1940
40. <i>dem</i> (article, demonstrative)	1887	1918
42. preposed <i>dem</i> (nominal plural)	1895	1918
47. <i>done</i> VERB	1886	1966
48. <i>doormouth</i> ‘threshold’	1919	1982
52. <i>eddo/ede</i> ‘taro’	1886	1889
61. <i>fufu</i> (starch food, boiled and pounded)	1886	1934
62. <i>fullup</i> ‘fill, be-full’	1895	1966
67. <i>gumbay</i> ‘drum’	1784	1788
73. <i>Irish potato</i> ‘potato’	1886	1978
76. <i>john crow</i> (bird sp.)	1880	1888
81. k/g palatalized before /a/	1917	1918
100. <i>married</i> ‘marry’	1918	1966
120. <i>obeah</i> ‘kind of magic’	1878	1918
115. <i>(n)yam</i> ‘eat; food’	1977	1978
148. <i>sweetmouth</i> ‘flattery’	1981	1982
152. <i>tief</i> ‘steal’	1886	1918
156. <i>tother, tara</i> ‘other’	1887	1918
161. <i>vex</i> ‘be-angry’	1891	1982
162. <i>wari</i> (African board game)	1898	1998
165. <i>we</i> (1PL OBL)	1886	1918
181. <i>bruck</i> ‘break’	1886	1918
182. <i>byandby</i> (adv.) ‘soon’	1895	1917
184. <i>catch</i> ‘get, obtain, reach’	1887	1988
187. <i>dead</i> ‘die’	1917	1918
192. <i>for</i> (infinitive)	1886	1888
193. <i>go</i> (future)	1886	1978
194. <i>got</i> ‘have’	1886	1936
198. <i>he</i> (3SG POSS)	1891	1966
199. <i>him</i> (3SG POSS)	1887	1966
200. <i>him</i> (3SG)	1887	1888
201. <i>lick</i> ‘flog’	1891	1966

Feature	First attestation	Hackert and Huber (2007)
202. <i>lilly</i> ‘little’	1886	1925
206. <i>make haste</i> ‘hurry’	1891	1895
207. <i>-man</i> (agentive suffix)	1918	1982
209. <i>me</i> (1SG POSS)	1891	1966
212. <i>most</i> ‘almost’	1904	1918
214. <i>never</i> (negative-completive)	1886	1918
215. <i>no</i> (negator)	1887	1888
216. <i>nogood</i> ‘bad’	1918	1977
218. <i>one</i> (indefinite article)	1891	1918
221. <i>piccaninny</i> ‘small; child’	1887	1888
226. <i>-side</i> (locative suffix)	1918	1978
235. <i>too much</i> ADJ/VERB ‘a lot’	1887	1888
247. ZERO (equative copula)	1887	1997
248. ZERO (locative copula)	1886	1997

As can be seen, many of these features are attested considerably earlier than indicated by Hackert and Huber (2007). The existence of pre-1900 first attestations, in particular, is important, since, according to Baker and Huber (2001: 159), their discovery “minimizes the effect of later, non-diffusionist cross-influences” between the Atlantic English Creoles “e.g. through the media, modern communication or increased mobility in the 20th century”. Unfortunately, the first attestations of only 55 (i.e. 37.9%) out of the 145 diagnostic features predate 1900. This is a consequence of the scarcity of early records of Bahamian (just two 18th century sources and 10 others dating from the second half of the 19th century).

Finally, some diagnostic features certainly occurred considerably earlier than the date of their first attestation on currently available evidence. These include lexical items and calques from African languages, which must date back to the earliest stages in the development of Bahamian. Another candidate is feature 81. *k/g* palatalized before /a/, first recorded in 1982. However, palatalized [k^j] and [g^j] are attested in 17th and 18th century English (Baker 1999: 318), and “the rarity with which palatalized velars are represented in earlier records should not be taken as representative of the facts of spoken usage at the time” (Rickford 1986: 162). Consequently, the occurrence of palatalization in early Bahamian can be assumed by virtue of what Rickford (1986: 162) calls “feedback from current usage”. Also, as with other Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles, feature 84. *kaka* ‘shit, excrement’ must have occurred earlier, since, as put by Baker (1999: 330), “many authors and publishers would formerly have considered this word too vulgar to print”.

4. Bahamian and other English-lexifier pidgins and creoles

This section compares Bahamian to the seven Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles discussed by Baker and Huber (2001): Suriname⁶, Bajan, Kittitian, Jamaican, Gullah, Krio and West African Pidgin English.

⁶ The creoles of Suriname are treated as a single entity by Baker and Huber (2001: 161).

Baker and Huber (2001: 171, Figure 5) show the absolute number of diagnostic features in the Atlantic varieties considered. With a total of 145 features, Bahamian ranks lower than Jamaican, Krio and West African Pidgin English, but higher than Kittitian, Suriname, Gullah and Bajan. According to Baker and Huber (2001: 171), “a fundamental difference between the Atlantic and Pacific varieties “is that “the absolute number of features in the latter is generally lower, with the average in the Atlantic being more than twice as high than that in the Pacific”. The average in Atlantic varieties is 145.4, but only 63.3 in the Pacific ones (Baker and Huber 2001: 171). With an absolute number of 145 diagnostic features, Bahamian is therefore situated just below the average for the Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001), more than twice as high as the average in the Pacific.

The absolute number of world-wide features attested in Bahamian is 46. Table 2 compares the distribution of world-wide features in the varieties⁷ considered by Baker and Huber (2001: 172) and in Bahamian:

Table 2. World-wide features in Atlantic varieties

SRN	44.5
BJN	36.0
SKI	38.0
JAM	52.5
GUL	42.0
KRI	63.0
WAF	63.0
BAH	46.0

Bahamian would thus fall within the range of Atlantic varieties (from 36 to 63). The proportion of world-wide features in the Atlantic varieties considered by Baker and Huber (2001: 172) and Bahamian is compared in Table 3:

Table 3. Percentage of world-wide features in Atlantic varieties

SRN	33.2
BJN	30.9
SKI	28.4
JAM	28.8
GUL	34.6
KRI	35.4
WAF	41.6
BAH	31.7

⁷ Abbreviations used in Tables 2 and 3: BAH = Bahamian; BJN = Bajan; GUL = Gullah; JAM = Jamaican; KRI = Krio; SKI = Kittitian; SRN = Suriname; WAF = West African Pidgin English.

Bahamian would again be situated within the Atlantic varieties range (from 28.4% to 41.6%). According to Baker and Huber (2001: 172-173), a relatively low percentage of world-wide features is generally indicative of varieties spoken in territories in which there were population movements. Bahamian is one such variety. Bahamian also confirms Baker and Huber's (2001: 174) generalization that "the New World Creoles have a considerably lower percentage of WW [= world-wide] features" than the Pacific varieties⁸. To sum up, Bahamian exhibits characteristics similar to other Atlantic English-lexifier pidgins and creoles.

5. The affinity between Bahamian and Gullah

The emergence and development of Bahamian is believed to have been significantly influenced by Gullah (e.g. Holm 1983, Hackert and Huber 2007, Hackert and Holm 2009, Childs and Wolfram 2008: 239, Bartens and Farquharson 2012: 190). As is well known, the Bahamas and Carolina were settled as a single colony (1670-1720) and, after the American revolution, many loyalists and their slaves settled in the Bahamas. Bahamian and Gullah share, for instance, phonological features not found in the Caribbean creoles, e.g., [ʌI] in *first*, the merger of /v/ and /w/ as [β]⁹, or lexical items with a limited distribution, such as 78. *juju* 'magic' and 153. *titty* 'little girl, sister'.

The affinity between Bahamian and Gullah can be quantified by means of the following statistical method¹⁰. Firstly, the number of diagnostic features a pair of varieties would share if the distribution of these were random is calculated, according to the formula: $N_i \times N_j / N_t$ (where N_i = number of features in variety_i, N_j = number of features in variety_j, N_t = total number of features considered). Secondly, the result is deducted from the actual number of features shared; this shows whether the number of the shared features is more/less than predicted by a random distribution. A high positive value of the difference between the actual and the predicted number indicates relatedness.

The total number of features considered (i.e. N_t) consists of the 173 Atlantic features and 83 world-wide features (including 8 additional ones, see Avram 2004 and 2005), i.e. 256. The number of diagnostic features attested in Gullah includes additions from my own corpus¹¹ and amounts to 129.5. Recall that 145 diagnostic features are recorded in Bahamian.

⁸ Since most of these varieties developed to a large extent independently, the percentage of world-wide features is significantly higher. Thus, the average is 66.6% for the six Pacific varieties considered by Baker and Huber (2001: 173).

⁹ The merger is reflected in records of early Bahamian by transcriptions such as *wexed* 'vexed' (Edwards 1891b: 250), *silwer* 'silver' (Parsons 1918: 26).

¹⁰ The method was first used by Baker (1999). Other works using this statistical method include Baker and Huber (2001), Hackert and Huber (2007), Avram (2012a, 2012b and forthcoming).

¹¹ These are: 15. *big eye* 'greed(y)'; 104. *me one* 'just me'; 179. *before time* 'formerly'; 184. *catch* 'get, obtain, reach'; 189. *falldown* 'fall' (reanalysis); 211. *more better* 'better'; 234. *throwaway* 'throw' (reanalysis); 259. *calico* 'cloth(es)'.

Table 4. Affinity of Bahamian and Gullah

	Actual number of shared features	Predicted number of shared features	Difference
Bahamian and Gullah	101.0	73.3	27.7

The high positive value of the difference between the actual and the predicted number of shared features thus confirms the significant influence of Gullah on Bahamian.

The affinity between Gullah and Bahamian appears to be stronger than reported by Hackert and Huber (2007: 301). Their statistical analysis differs in all respects: (i) the total number of features considered is 253; (ii) Bahamian has only 124; (iii) Gullah has only 122.5; (iv) the two varieties are said to share only 82 diagnostic features. Consequently, the score quantifying the affinity between Bahamian and Gullah is lower, of only 22.

6. Discussion of selected diagnostic features

Several of Baker and Huber's (2011) diagnostic features found in Bahamian have been traced back to non-standard and/or dialectal sources by Holm (1980: 7-9): 22. *bra* 'brother'; 23. *bubby* 'woman's breast'; 40. *dem* (article, demonstrative); 111. *nose hole* 'nostril'; 53. *titty* 'little girl, sister'; 172. *yai* 'eye'; 181. *bruck* 'break'; 188. *dem* (3PL); 201. *lick* 'flog'; 240. *we* (relativizer). Two remarks are in order here. Firstly, as shown by Baker (1999: 326), feature 172. *yai* 'eye' "may owe more to the reanalysis of English sequences such as [...] *my eye* [maj aj] [...] than to dialectal forms". Secondly, the list of diagnostic features of dialectal origin recorded in Bahamian should be supplemented with 300. *yet* 'still': Wright (1905: 579) provides attestations of *yet* 'still' from Cumberland, Northern Yorkshire and Western Yorkshire.

With respect to feature 207. *-man* (agentive suffix), it should be noted that, as in other English-lexifier creoles, e.g. in Trinidad and Tobago¹², the suffix can be attached even to a base containing the English-derived agentive suffix *-er*, as in *hunterman* 'hunter'.

A number of items of African origin¹³ are included among the diagnostic features recorded in Bahamian: 3. *aki* (fruit/tree), 7. *Anancy* (folktale character), 33. *cutacoo* 'basket', 51. *duppy* 'zombie', 61. *fufu* (starch food, boiled and pounded), 66. *gongosha* 'deceit, gossip', and 162. *wari* (African board game), from Akan; 9. *bakra* 'European, white person', from Efik; 120. *obeah* 'kind of magic', from Efik and/or Igbo;

¹² Cf. Winer (2009: 563): "This suffix is used with words considered in SE [= Standard English] to include this already", and the examples listed there, such as *butcher-man*, *preacherman*, *teacherman*.

¹³ For their etyma see Turner (1949), Holm and Shilling (1982), Allsopp (1996), Baker (1999), Cassidy and Le Page (2003), Bartens and Farquharson (2012). For an overview of Africanisms in Bahamian see Shilling (1981).

52. *eddoe/ede* ‘taro’, from Igbo and/or Nupe; 159. *una* (2PL) from Igbo; 77. *jook* ‘pierce, stab, etc.’ from Fula; 11. *banja* ‘banjo’, 25. *bumbo* ‘vulva’, 79. *jumbee* ‘malevolent spirit, zombie’, and 155. *tote* ‘carry’, from Bantu languages. Their occurrence confirms the important lexical contribution of the Gold Coast, of the languages contiguous or geographically proximate to the Gold Coast, as well as of the Bantu languages to the Atlantic English-lexifier creoles¹⁴. The same substratal input is also reflected in several calques¹⁵: 8. *bad mouth* ‘speak ill of, curse’, from Malinke and/or Vai; 15. *big eye* ‘greed(y), from Akan and/or Igbo; 36. *day clean* ‘daybreak’, from languages such as Ciluba, Malinke, Wolof, Yoruba; 48. *doormouth* ‘threshold’, from Mandinka, Mende, Yoruba. Some of these Africanisms may have entered Bahamian indirectly. Thus, Bartens and Farquharson (2012: 190) note that “the largest source of people of ultimate African origin in the Bahamas is the cotton-growing of south-eastern USA where the English-based Creole known as Gullah is spoken”. Since “settlement of that area [...] included significant immigration from Jamaica, St Kitts-Nevis, and Barbados”, this may have been conducive to “diffusion, albeit by a different, indirect route” (Bartens and Farquharson 2012: 190).

Two diagnostic features recorded in Bahamian are believed by some authors to be calques from African languages. Thus, Allsopp (1980: 91), Allsopp (1996: 221), Parkvall and Baker (2012: 237) trace feature 55. *eyewater* ‘tear’ to sources such as Akan, Igbo, Malinke, Mandinka and Yoruba. Alleyne (1980: 114) writes that “there are many lexemes in Afro-American dialects which reveal a labeling pattern whereby objects are named in terms of an association between two primary objects”. On the other hand, compounds which are structurally similar to *eyewater* are also found in other pidgins and creoles – e.g. Arabic-lexified ones (Holm 2000: 104) – with different substrate languages. According to Holm (2000: 104), “such compounds may have resulted from a universal strategy for expanding a Pidgin vocabulary to fill lexical gaps”. Parkvall (2000: 113) explicitly mentions *eyewater* as a word “that could predictably be invented on the spot by anybody not knowing any other word”, and notes that this is typically done by lexicalizing semantically transparent compounds. Parkvall (2000: 113) therefore recommends caution since “much of what may be look African in Creole semantics may therefore well be but an indirect manifestation of former Pidginhood”. For 148. *sweetmouth* ‘flattery’ the sources suggested by Alleyne (1980: 116), Holm (1992: 191), Allsopp (1996: 542), Parkvall and Baker (2012: 244) include Akan, Gã, Igbo, Vai and Yoruba. However, feature 148. *sweetmouth* ‘flattery’ may conceivably be an illustration of the fact that “some metaphors [...] are so obvious that they may be expected to turn up by coincidence or ‘reinvention’” (Cassidy 1971: 215). In fact, the situation may be an even more complex one, in which “what would have been a calque for some participants [in the multilingual contact situation] would have been a lexical innovation for others” (Parkvall and Baker 2012: 232).

The items of Portuguese origin are 125. *pikin* ‘small; child, offspring’, 127. *pikni* ‘small; child, offspring’, and 221. *piccaninny* ‘small; child’.

¹⁴ See e.g. Aceto (1999) and Parkvall (2000: 109-112).

¹⁵ For their possible sources see Parkvall and Baker (2012).

The only French-derived feature is 13. *bateau* ‘boat’. It is listed by Crowley (1966: 20) among the “possibly French and Portuguese words [which] occur in old-stories”.

Similarly, just one lexical item of Spanish origin is found in Bahamian: 138. *sapata* ‘footwear’. Although Baker (1999: 334) indicates Portuguese *sapato* as the etymon of *sapata*, the most likely etymon appears to be Caribbean Spanish *zapata*¹⁶, since [sapata] is phonetically closer to the Bahamian form than the Portuguese one [səpatu]. Also, what appears at first sight to be an epenthetic [l] in forms such as *saplatters*, *saplata*, *saplatta* (Holm and Shilling 1982: 175) is most probably the effect of folk etymology. Similar forms have been reported to occur in other English-lexifier creoles, e.g. Jamaican¹⁷.

The affiliation of Bahamian to the various subgroups of Atlantic English-lexifier creoles is a matter of some dispute in the literature. Thus, for Hancock (1987: 324) Bahamian is a member of the Eastern Caribbean branch, while Bartens and Farquharson (2012) include it among the Western Caribbean creoles¹⁸. Whatever the affiliation of Bahamian may be, several diagnostic features found in it constitute further confirmation of the fact that their distribution cuts across the divide between Western and Eastern Caribbean creoles. Holm (1989: 445), for example, writes that “the normal word for the spirit of a dead person is usually *jumby* in the Eastern group and *duppy* in the Western group”. As shown above, both 51. *duppy* ‘zombie’ and 79. *jumbee* ‘malevolent spirit, zombie’ occur in Bahamian. Further, according to Aceto (2008: 653), “*wi* is often the first person plural pronoun (as both subject and object pronouns) in Western varieties, and the corresponding form is *aawi* in the Eastern Caribbean”. Again, both 5. *all we* (1PL) and 165. *we* (1PL OBL) are recorded in Bahamian. Aceto (2008: 652-653) also mentions “(h)im (as both subject and object pronoun) in Western varieties”, which is “nearly always (h)i (as a subject pronoun) [...] in Eastern Caribbean varieties”. However, 199. *him* (3SG) and *he* are both found in Bahamian.

Last but not least, attestations from Bahamian are also relevant to the classification of four diagnostic features. Baker and Huber (2001: 203-204) list 268. *first time* ‘ahead, formerly’, 287. *salt water* ‘sea; coastal’, 288. *sing out* ‘shout’, and 300. *yet* ‘still’ among the Pacific features. However, these features are recorded in Bahamian. Moreover, they are found in several other Atlantic varieties¹⁹. Thus, 268. *first time* ‘ahead, formerly’ is attested in Jamaican 1885, Suriname 1952, Krio, Liberia (Avram 2004 and 2005) and Tobagonian 2003 (Avram 2012a: 37). Feature 287. *salt water* ‘sea; coastal’ is recorded in Suriname 1765 (Avram 2004 and 2005), Jamaican 1774 (Avram 2004 and 2005), Vincentian 1834 (Avram forthcoming), Trinidadian 1850 (Winer 2009: 781), Guyanese 1916 (Cruikshank 1916: 17). Feature 288. *sing out* ‘shout’ is found in Vincentian 1925 (Avram forthcoming) and Antiguan 1925 (Avram 2012b). Finally, feature 300. *yet* ‘still’ occurs in Suriname 1765 (Avram 2004 and 2005) and Kittitian 1925 (Parsons 1936: 368)²⁰. To conclude, evidence from Bahamian – and from other English-lexifier pidgins

¹⁶ Cf. Cassidy (1961: 114) for Jamaican.

¹⁷ Cf. Cassidy and Le Page (2002: 392) who write that “Folk etym has [...] produced [...] numerous variants”, which include *samplata*, *sanplatta*.

¹⁸ Moreover for Holm (1989: 487-488) Bahamian belongs to the group of North American varieties.

¹⁹ I indicate the date of their first attestation known to me.

²⁰ See also Baker (in preparation): *yet*² Still.

and creoles – demonstrates that the four features at issue are found not only in the Pacific, but also in the Atlantic, i.e. they have a world-wide distribution.

7. Conclusions

The first attestations in Bahamian of diagnostic features of English-lexifier pidgins and creoles presented in this paper contribute to a better understanding of the history of this variety.

The feature-based approach adopted has reconfirmed the role of Gullah in the genesis and development of Bahamian; the affinity between the two creoles appears to be stronger than hitherto assumed.

The findings also shed light on the distribution of diagnostic features in the Caribbean English-lexifier creoles and, more generally, across English-lexifier contact languages.

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