DIAGNOSTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH-LEXIFIED CREOLES: FIRST ATTESTATIONS FROM VIRGIN ISLANDS ENGLISH CREOLE

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Abstract: This paper presents the earliest attestations in Virgin Islands English Creole of the diagnostic features of English-lexified contact languages proposed by Baker and Huber (2001). It compares the distribution of these features in Virgin Islands English Creole and in the seven Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001). Also included is a discussion of a number of selected features.

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

1. Introduction

Virgin Islands English Creole (VIEC) has not figured prominently in comparative work on the Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles. Moreover, previous comparative studies including data from VIEC focus exclusively on synchronic data (Hancock 1987[1], Aceto 2008a and 2008b). Recent comparative work on the diagnostic features of English-lexified pidgins and creoles recorded at any time in their history, e.g. Baker (1999), Baker and Huber (2001), Avram (2004), does not include data from VIEC. On the other hand, reference to VIEC data is made in a comparative study of Negerhollands and the Atlantic English-lexified creoles (den Besten and van der Voort 1999).

For the purposes of this paper I treat the varieties spoken in the US Virgin Islands (St Croix, St John and St Thomas) and in the British Virgin Islands (with the main islands of Anegada, Jost van Dyke, Tortola and Virgin Gorda) as a single entity[2]. I present the first attestations in VIEC of the diagnostic features proposed by Baker and Huber (2001). To qualify as diagnostic features, they must "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)[3]. Such an approach also takes into account features recorded in earlier stages of VIEC, but which are no longer in use.

The corpus consists of both published and unpublished sources. These include early records of VIEC – such as travel accounts (West 1794, Wentworth 1834, Børgesen and Uldall 1900), letters (Anon. 1843), memoirs (Taylor 1888 and 1896), fieldwork notes (Whitehead 1932), collections of folklore (Parsons 1936 and 1943) – and dictionaries

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[1] The VIEC data in Hancock (1987) are exclusively from the variety spoken in St Thomas.

[2] Cf. also Holm (1989: 455-457).

[3] See also Baker (1999: 316).

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(Seaman 1967, Roy 1975, Valls 1981, Allsopp 1996, Sterns 2008, Wiwords the West Indian Dictionary 2008, Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010).

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I present the earliest attestations in VIEC of the diagnostic features proposed by Baker and Huber (2001). Section 3 briefly compares the distribution of diagnostic features in VIEC and in the seven Atlantic English pidgins and creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001). Section 4 discusses a number of selected features. The conclusions are set out in section 5.

For ease of reference, each diagnostic feature is numbered and labeled and/or defined as in Baker and Huber (2001). The entry for each feature includes the date of the first attestation and the relevant reference. 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. The sources are mentioned between brackets. All examples appear in the original orthography or system of transcription. The length of quotations has been kept to a reasonable minimum. Relevant items in quotations are in bold characters. All quotations are accompanied by their translation.

2. First attestations in VIEC

Baker and Huber (2001: 197-201) propose 173 Atlantic features[4]. These features are recorded only in the Atlantic, in at least two varieties (Baker and Huber 2001: 165). Listed below are the first attestations in VIEC of Atlantic features:

4. *akra* (a savoury cake)
   ackra 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 9)
5. *all we* (1PL)
   A we *might as well go wi' he* 1878 (Taylor 1888: 153)
   'We might as well go with him'
   Arvi *Funchi ready* 1900 (Børgesen and Uldall 1900: 48)
   'our funji is ready'
   see ***ah we*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 421)
   'sees us'
   a'-wee *very sad* 1932 (Whitehead 1932: 176)
   'we are very sad'
   all we 1957 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
   all a we 1975 (Roy 1975: 58)
6. *all you* (2PL)
   al'you 1975 (Roy 1975: 58)
   all yoh 1981 (Valls 1981: 1)
   aal y— 1987 (Hancock 1987: 295)
   ayo 2008 (Sterns 2008: 70)
   ahyuh 2010 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)

[4] These features include most of those initially proposed by Baker (1999: 317-336).

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7. *Anancy* (folktale character)
Nancy 1925 (Parsons 1936: 418) / *Anancy* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 422) / *Annancy* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 456)
8. *bad mouth* ‘speak ill of, curse’
bad mouth 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 67)
9. *bakra* ‘European, white person’
look how them ***bockera*** *make ’emselv fool* -1794 (West 1794: 86)
‘see how those whites fool around’
Buckra 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 257)
bocra 1925 (Parsons 1936: 446)
bukra 1932 (Whitehead 1932: 176)
10. *bang* ‘hit (as punishment)’
Do, good stick, ***bang*** *kid!* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 444)
‘Good stick, hit the kid!’
13. *bateau* ‘boat’
bateau 1981 (Valls 1981: 7)
15. *big eye* ‘greed(y)’
big eye ‘greedy’ 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 99)
19. *bonikleba* ‘sour milk’
stir up de milk an’ it turn to ***balaclabber*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 447)
‘stirs up the milk and it turns into sour milk’
22. *bra* ‘brother’
bru/*bro* 1975 (Roy 1975: 61)
23. *buddy* (egalitarian address for a male)
buddy 1843 (Anon. 1843: 188)
27. *calaloo* ‘rich soup or stew’
kallaloo 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
29. *chigger* ‘chigoe’
chigou 1843 (Anon. 1843: 51)
chigo / *jigger* 1888 (Taylor 1888: 189)
chigga 1993 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)
31. *crapaud* ‘frog’
crapo 1975 (Roy 1975: 66)
33. *cutacoo* ‘basket’
cutacoo 1843 (Anon. 1843: 148)
catacou / *cotacoo* 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 184)
34. *da*, *de* (progressive)
*you no-****a*** *hear?* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 455)
‘don’t you hear?’
*me know e bin-****da*** *git late* 1932 (Holm 1989: 456)
‘I knew he was going to be late’
36. *day clean* ‘daybreak’
*It is ‘****day clean****’ when one can see to walk.* 1981 (Valls 1981: 35)
37. *de*, *da*, *na*, *a* (equative copula)
him ***de*** *wrang way?* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 140)
‘is it the wrong way?’

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38. *de* (locative copula)
*I **de** de*. 1975 (Roy 1975: 67)
'I am there.'
40. *dem* (article, demonstrative)
*look how **them** bockera make 'emselv fool* -1794 (West 1794: 86)
'see how those whites fool around'
41. postposed *dem* (nominal plural)
*let the slave **them** pass* 1957 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
'let the slaves pass'
42. preposed *dem* (nominal plural)
***Dem** chil'ren so harden*. 1975 (Roy 1975: 67)
'Children are so stubborn.'
43. *dem* (3PL POSS)
dem 2011 (Smollett 2011)
44. *do* (clause-initial entreaty)
***Do**, good stick, bang kid!* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 444)
'Good stick, hit the kid!'
45. *dokunu*/*dukna* (kind of starchy food)
dukuna 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 206)
ducana 2010 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)
47. *done* VERB (completive)
*Rabbit had **done hear** dat* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 417)
'Rabbit had heard that'
48. *doormouth* 'threshold'
*Me no want this man at me **door mouth*** 1979 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
'I don't want this man at my threshold'
51. *duppy* 'zombie'
duppy 1981 (Valls 1981: 38)
52. *eddoe*/*ede* 'taro'
eddoe 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 276)
55. *eyewater* 'tear'
eyewater[5] 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 221)
59. *for* VERB (modal)
*Me **fa** done*. 2011 (Smollett 2011)
'I must be done.'
60. *for true* 'truly'
*You say so **for true*** 1843 (Anon. 1843: 136)
'You really said so'
*Dat t'ing […] ain' dead **fu true*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 423)
'That thing is not really dead'
62. *fullup* 'fill, be-full'
*Our skyut **full up** a green stain*. 2008 (Sterns 2008: 79)
'Our skirt is full of green stains.'

[5] The VIEC form for 'eye' is *yeye*. See feature 172; see also Valls (1981: 139)

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64. *funji* ‘corn meal’
*Arvi **Funchi** ready* 1900 (Børgesen and Uldall 1900: 48)
‘Our fungi is now ready’[6]
fungi 1975 (Roy 1975: 71)

65. *goatmouth* ‘a Cassandra’
*Don’ come roun’ hea’ to **goat mouth** mi family*. 1975 (Roy 1975: 72)
‘Don’t come around here to bring misfortune upon my family’

75. *jackspaniard* ‘wasp’
Jack Spaniard 1834 (Wentworth 2008: 195)
jack spaniel 2008 (Sterns 2008: 82)

72. *ina, na* (locative preposition)
na 1927 (Emanuel 1970)

73. *Irish potato* ‘potato’
Irish potato 1843 (Anon. 1843: 76)

77. *jook* ‘pierce, stab, etc.’
chook 1967 (Seaman 1967: 6)
jook 2010 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)

79. *jumbee* ‘malevolent spirit, zombie’
jumby 1925 (Parsons 1936: 459) / *joombie* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 468) / *jumbie* 1925 (Parsons 1943: 484)

80. k/g affricated to ch/j
*Ah **ch**an do it*. 2010 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)
‘I can’t do it.’

81. k/g palatalized before /a/
***cy**arry* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 416)
‘carry’
gyuard 1925 (Parsons 1936: 420)
‘guard’

82. *kaanki* (corn dish)
kanki 1981 (Valls 1981: 66)
canky / *conkie* 2010 (Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary 2010)

84. *kaka* ‘shit, excrement’
kaka / *kuka* 1981 (Valls 1981: 65)

86. *kasada* ‘cassava’
***Casada**brod* ‘cassava bread’ -1794 (West 1794: 53)

87. *kata* ‘head-pad’
catta / *cotta* / *cotto* 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 143)

88. *ki!* (exclamation)
ki! 1843 (Anon. 1843: 189)

90. *kill devil* ‘rum’
kill devil 1971 (Allsopp 1996: 330)

[6] Cf. the translation into Danish: ‘Nu er vor Funchi (kogt eller stegt Majsmel) færdig’ (Børgesen and Uldall 1900: 48).

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91. *kokobe* ‘leper, leprosy’
cocoboy 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
cocobay 1981 (Valls 1981: 19)
94. *kunumunu* ‘stupid person’
kunu-munu 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
98. *maga* ‘thin’
*yo look so **maaga*** 1975 (Roy 1975: 77)
‘you look so thin’
mager 1981 (Valls 1981: 74)
magga 2008 (Sterns 2008: 60)
mawga 2008 (Wiwords the West Indian Dictionary 2008)
99. *magass* ‘crushed cane’
magoss[7]-1794 (West 1794: 45)
bagasse 1896 (Taylor 1896: 12)
magasse 1900 (Børgesen and Uldall 1900: 40)
megasse 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 379)
100. *married* ‘marry’
*I buy one frock for **married*** 1980 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
‘I’ll buy one dress to marry’
102. *mauby* ‘drink made from potatoes, etc.’
maubi 1981 (Valls 1981: 78)
108. *mumu* ‘dumb’
mumu 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
112. NP1 *for* NP2 (possessive N2’s N1)
De giel foh he gone New York 1981 (Valls 1981: 42)
‘His girl went to New York”
115. *nyam* ‘eat; food’
ngam-nyam ‘food’ 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
*deer **nyam** pease* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 445)
‘the deer eats peas’
116. *(n)yampi* ‘dirt in the eyes’
nyampe 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
*meh sleepy, **nampy eyes*** 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 398)
‘my sleepy eyes with dirt [in them]’
yampi/yampie/yampee 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 617)
*I wake up wid **nyampi** in meh eye.* 2008 (Sterns 2008: 87)
‘I woke up with dirt in my eyes.’
120. *obeah* ‘kind of magic’
Obeah 1843 (Anon. 1843: 148)
127. *pikni* ‘small; child, offspring’
*bring ma **pickny** back to me* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 440)[8]
‘bring my child back to me’

[7] Explained as ‘mit den trocknen ausgepreßten Zuckerröhren, magoss genannt’ (West 1794: 45).
[8] In *Ay, ma deah **pigny*** 1925 (Parsons 1943: 483) there is presumably an error of transcription.

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128. *pinda* ‘peanut’
pindars -1794 (West 1794: 226)
pinda 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 440)
133. *rata* ‘rat’
de res’ ***ratta*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 422)
‘the rest of the rats’
134. *rockstone* ‘stone’
rackstone 1981 (Valls 1981: 102)
135. *(for) sake (of)* ‘because’
mashed him – ***for sake of*** *canes* 1843 (Anon. 1843: 153)
‘beat him because of the canes’
137. *santapi* ‘centipede’
centapie -1794 (West 1794: 248)
138. *sapata* ‘footwear’
sapata ‘shoes’ 1981 (Valls 1981: 109)
140. *self* ‘even; (emphasis)’
He ***self*** *must be ga the pig shut in the yard* 1975 (Allsopp 1996: 497)
‘Even he must keep the pig shut in the yard’
She ain seh marnin’ ***self***. 1981 (Valls 1981: 111)
‘She didn’t even say good morning.’
141. *s(h)all* ‘future’
He ***shall*** *be our king* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 423)
‘He will be our king’
sa n.d. (Hancock 1987: 301)
148. *sweetmouth* ‘flattery’
sweet mout’ 1981 (Valls 1981: 122)
149. *Takoma* ‘Anansi’s son’
Tacoma 1925 (Parsons 1936: 455) / *Tukerma* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 425) / *Tucomah* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 433) / *Tuckcomah* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 436)
Tucuma 1927 (Emanuel 1970)
151. *tata* ‘father’
tata 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 549)
152. *tief* ‘steal’
He ***t’ief*** *de bag* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 419)
‘he stole the bag’
156. *tother, tara* ‘other’
Tara tell ***tara***[9] 1925 (Parsons 1936: 446)
‘One told the other’
158. *ugly* ‘evil’
God don’ like ***ugly***. 1981 (Valls 1981: 131)
‘God does not like evil.’
161. *vex* ‘be angry’
An’ lion get ringin’ ***vex*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 425)

[9] Glossed ‘One tell the other’ by Parsons (1936: 446, f.n. 1).

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'And the lion got really upset'
*He was werry, werry **wex*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 433)
'He was very, very upset'

162. *wari* (African board game)
warri 1927 (Emanuel 1970)

164. *we* (1PL POSS)
*that **we** bornin' land* 1957 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
'that is our native land'

165. *we* (1PL OBL)
*They bring **we** ya from Africa* 1957 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
'They brought us here from Africa'

166. WH make 'why'
***Wa mek** you no carry she Jamaica* 1975 (Allsopp 1996: 598)
'Why don't you take her to Jamaica'

169. *woodslave* (lizard sp.)
wood-slave -1794 (West 1794: 244)

171. *yabba* (kind of pot)
yab(b)a 1996 (Allsopp 1996: 616)

172. *yai* 'eye'
*'e **yeye** way he tek see ah we* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 421)
'his eye with which he sees us'

Baker and Huber (2001: 201-203) also consider 75 world-wide features. These features are recorded in at least one Atlantic and one Pacific variety respectively (Baker and Huber 2001: 165). The following is the list of first attestations in VIEC of world-wide features:

178. *been* (past/anterior)
*he **been** study* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 422)
'he had analyzed [the situation]'

181. *bruck* 'break'
*he cyan' **bruck** as much hook* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 429)
'he can't break as many hooks'

182. *byandby* (adv) 'soon'
bambai 1967 (Seaman 1967: 4)

185. *come out* 'go out, detach' (reanalysis)
***come out** o' my shop* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 432)
'get out of my shop'

186. *da(t)* (definite article)
***Da** fuss ting dat a hear* 1996 (Allsopp 1996:186)
'The first thing that I heard'

187. *dead* 'die'
*Her fadda had **dead**.* 2008 (Sterns 2008: 77)
'Her father had died.'

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188. *dem* (3PL)
dem *keep de feas'* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 422)
'they went on celebrating'

190. *fashion* 'manner, way'
No eberybody ride him jackass one ***fashion***. 2005 (Virgin Islands Proverbs 2011)
'Not everybody rides a jackass in the same way.'

192. *for* (infinitive)
we glad ***for*** *see you* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 164)
'We are glad to see you.'
how you like de hot water, ***fu*** *boil you?* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 298)
'how would you like the hot water to boil you?'

193. *go* (future)
dey ***go*** *fo' burn her* 1896 (Taylor 1896: 55)
'they are going to burn her'

194. *got* 'have'
I ***got*** *something for tell you* 1957 (Soule and Lieth-Philip 1993)
'I have something to tell you'
I ***ga*** *all de trouble I need*. 1975 (Roy 1975: 71)
'I have all the troubles I need'

196. *he* (resumptive)
ol' king ***he*** *had a big cane fiel'* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 457)
'the old king had a big cane field'

197. *he* (3SG OBL)
you know ***he*** *from old time* 1878 (Taylor 1888: 153)
'you know him from the old times'

198. *he* (3SG POSS)
soon top ***he*** *mout* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 299)
'[I] will soon shut his mouth'
*De debbil know '****e*** *own*. 1983 (Valls 1983, proverb 181)
lit. 'The devil knows his own.' [= 'Birds of a feather flock together.']

199. *him* (3SG POSS)
him *shirt* 1843 (Anon. 1843: 363)
'his shirt'

200. *him* (3SG)
him *look fresh* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 189)
'it looks fresh'

201. *lick* 'flog'
dey goin' ter ***lick*** *me* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 418)
'they are going to flog me'

202. *lili* 'little'
lilly 'little, insignificant' 1981 (Valls 1981: 72)

206. *make haste* 'hurry'
de king ***make haste*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 416)
'the king hurried'

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207. *-man* (agentive suffix)
t'ief ***man*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 418)
'thief'
208. *me* (1SG)
me *no can* -1794 (West 1794: 86)
'I cannot'
209. *me* (1SG POSS)
me *massa* 1896 (Taylor 1896: 55)
'my master'
212. *most* 'almost'
Most *all the neighbours* 1975 (Allsopp 1996: 388)
'almost all the neighbours'
213. NP1NP2 (possessive N1'SN2)
Man o' war buckra 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 257)
'a European from the man of war'
215. *no* (negator)
me ***no*** *can* -1794 (West 1794: 86)
'I cannot'
218. *one* (indefinite article)
one *Obeah woman* 1896 (Taylor 1896: 55)
'a witch'
219. *one time* '(at) once'
One time *ol' king* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 457)
'Once the old king'
220. paragogic vowels
flogga 'flog' 1843 (Anon. 1843: 189)
221. *piccaninny* 'small; child'
piccaninny 1843 (Anon. 1843: 53)
222. *plenty* NOUN 'a lot of'
you goin' get ***plenty*** *hat (hot) water soup* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 417)
'you're going to get plenty of hot water soup'
225. *sabby* 'know'
him ***savey*** *too much* 1843 (Anon. 1843: 126)
'he knows a lot'
226. *-side* (locative suffix)
she was to de gut ***side*** 1925 (Parsons 1936: 440)
'she went to the gut'
230. *stop* (locative verb)
you cum fu ***stop****?* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 164)
'have you come to stay?'
231. *suppose* 'if'
Suppose *dey goin' ter lick me* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 418)
'If they are going to flog me'
236. ADJ/VERB *too muc*h 'a lot'
me lub you ***too much*** 1843 (Anon. 1843: 188)
'I love you a lot'

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240. *we* (relativizer)
*'e yeye **way** he tek see ah we* 1925 (Parsons 1936: 421)
'his eye with which he sees us'
241. WH *for* 'why'
***warra fu** you mek dat noise* 1834 (Wentworth 1834: 298)
'why are you making that noise'
248. ZERO (predicative copula)
I hope you well -1794 (West 1794: 39)
'I hope you're well'

The total number of diagnostic features recorded in VIEC thus amounts to **121**A brief comment is in order with respect to the attestations that predate 1900. According to Baker and Huber (2001: 159), the discovery of such attestations "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, although the first records of VIEC date from as early as 1794, only **40** (33.0%) out of the 121 diagnostic features found in VIEC are first attested **before 1900**. This can be attributed to the scarcity of currently known pre-1900 data sources – the corpus includes only six such entries – and of textual evidence.

It is interesting to note that, in spite of the scarcity of early records, in particular of those predating 1900, two Atlantic features are, on currently available evidence, first attested in VIEC: 99. *magass* 'crushed cane' and 137. *santapi* 'centipede', both in 1794. This is considerably earlier than the dates in Baker and Huber (2001: 199 and 200 respectively): 1955 for the former, and 1952 for the latter.

Obviously, many of the diagnostic features recorded in VIEC must have occurred considerably earlier than the date of their first, post-1900 attestation suggests. The most likely candidates are the features which can be traced back to the African substrate languages: 4. *akra* (a savoury cake); 7. *Anancy* (folktale character); 27. *calalooo* 'rich soup or stew'; 45. *dokuna*/*dukna* (kind of starchy food); 51. *duppy* 'zombie'; 64. *funji* 'corn meal'; 77. *jook* 'pierce, stab, etc.'; 79. *jumbee* 'malevolent spirit, zombie'; 82. *kaanki* (corn dish); 87. *kata* 'head-pad'; 91. *kokobe* 'leper, leprosy'; 94. *kunumunu* 'stupid person'; 108. *mumu* 'dumb'; 115. *(n)yam* 'eat; food'; 116. *(n)yampi* 'dirt in the eyes'; 149. *Takoma* 'Anancy's son'; 151. *tata* 'father'; 162. *wari* (African board game); 171. *yabba* (kind of pot) as well as calques such as 48. *doormouth* 'threshold'. For the earlier occurrence of some of these items there is circumstantial evidence provided by Negerhollands, the now extinct Dutch-lexified creole, once spoken in the US Virgin Islands. Consider the first attestations of the Negerhollands forms corresponding to 64. *funji* 'corn meal', 79. *jumbee* 'malevolent spirit, zombie' and 151. *tata* 'father' respectively: *funje* in 1770, *ziumbi* in 1777, and *tatta* in 1767-1768 (den Besten and van der Voort 1999: 395, f.n. 28).

Evidence from Negerhollands also suggests that a number of other diagnostic features of VIEC must have been used (much) earlier than the date of their first attestation indicated in section 2. Consider first items of Cariban, French and Spanish origin respectively. Feature 102. *mauby* 'drink made from potatoes, etc.': *maby* is recorded in Negerhollands as early as 1777 (den Besten and van der Voort 1999: 393). Feature

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3. *bateau* 'boat': according to den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 393), "NH [= Negerhollands] *bato:* may be a late loan from VIEC", and is first attested in 1936. Feature 138. *sapata* 'footwear': Valls (1981: 109) mentions that *sapata* 'shoes' is borrowed from Dutch and is also obsolete. Items of English origin must also have occurred much earlier. One such word is 182. *byandby* (adv.) 'soon': den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 388) list *be en be* / *bambei* 'soon, gradually', recorded in Negerhollands as early as 1767-1768, among the "everyday words […] that could be borrowed from English (Creole) into Negerhollands at such an early stage".

Another feature worth mentioning is 19. *bonikleba* 'sour milk', which must date from a much earlier period than its first attestation. As shown by Baker and Huber (1999: 178), "the Gaelic word for 'sour milk' […] must surely go back to the very start of colonization when Irish indentured servants formed the bulk of the labour force". Note, incidentally, that it is recorded in VIEC earlier than in the other English-lexified creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001: 197) in which it is also found.

Consider next feature 81. k/g palatalized before /a/. Firstly, as shown by Baker (1999: 318), palatalized [k^j] and [g^j] are attested in 17th and 18th century English. Secondly, "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). It follows that the occurrence of palatalization in the earlier stages of VIEC can be assumed by virtue of what Richford (1986: 162) calls "feedback from current usage".

As with other Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles, feature 84. *kaka* 'shit, excrement' must have occurred earlier than the date of its first attestation on currently available evidence. Indeed, as noted by Baker (1999: 330), "many authors and publishers would formerly have considered this word too vulgar to print".

3. VIEC vs. other Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles

In what follows I briefly compare VIEC to seven other Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles, in light of some of the figures reported by Baker and Huber (2001).

Consider first the absolute number of attested features. Figure 5 in Baker and Huber (2001: 171) shows the absolute number of diagnostic features in the following Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles: Suriname[10], Bajan, Kittitian, Jamaican, Gullah, Krio and West African Pidgin English. With a total of 121 features, VIEC ranks lower than Jamaican, Krio, West African Pidgin English, Kittitian, Suriname and Gullah, but slightly higher than Bajan.

Baker and Huber (2001: 171) state that "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". Thus, while the average in Pacific varieties is 63.3, the average in the Atlantic ones amounts to 145.4 (Baker and Huber 2001: 171). The absolute number of

[10] The creoles of Suriname are treated as a single entity by Baker and Huber (2001: 161). Cf. also Baker (1999: 316).

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diagnostic features recorded in VIEC is thus below the average for the Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles considered by Baker and Huber (2001). Still, the absolute number of features attested in VIEC is almost twice as high than the average in the Pacific.

The absolute number of world-wide features attested in VIEC amounts to **38**. Table 1 compares the distribution of world-wide features in the Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles[11] considered by Baker and Huber (2001) and in VIEC:

Table 1: World-wide features

Baker and Huber (2001: 171)								
SRN	BJN	SKI	JAM	GUL	KRI	WAF	Average	VIEC
44.5	36.0	38.0	52.5	42.0	63.0	63.0	**44.2**	**38.0**

VIEC thus would fall within the range of Atlantic varieties (from 36.0 to 6.30), at its lower end, below the average.

Consider next the proportion of world-wide features:

Table 2: Percentage of world-wide features

Baker and Huber (2001: 172)								
SRN	BJN	SKI	JAM	GUL	KRI	WAF	Average	VIEC
33.2	30.9	28.4	28.8	34.6	35.4	41.6	**33.3**	**31.4**

VIEC would be again situated within the range of Atlantic varieties (from 28.4 to 41.6).

In terms of the distribution of diagnostic features, then, VIEC generally displays the characteristics typical of the Atlantic English-lexified creoles.

4. Discussion of selected diagnostic features

The list of diagnostic features attested in VIEC includes a number of items of African origin[12]. The important lexical contribution of Twi to the Atlantic English-lexified creoles[13] is confirmed by the VIEC data. The following diagnostic features attested in VIEC are reflexes of Twi etyma: 7. *Anancy* (folktale character); 33. *cutacoo* 'basket'; 45. *dokuna*/*dukna* (kind of starchy food); 52. *eddoe/ede* 'taro'; 82. *kaanki* (corn dish); 87. *kata* 'head-pad'; 91. *kokobe* 'leper, leprosy'; 108. *mumu* 'dumb'; 149. *Takoma* 'Anansi's son'; 162. *wari* (African board game); 171. *yabba* (kind of pot). Also recorded in VIEC are diagnostic features that can be traced back to languages contiguous or geographically proximate to the Gold Coast: 9. *bakra* 'European, white person', and 120. *obeah* 'kind of magic' from Efik; 116.*(n)yampi* 'dirt in the eyes' from Igbo; 4. *akra* (a

[11] Abbreviations used in Tables 1 and 2: BJN = Bajan; GUL = Gullah; JAM = Jamaican; KRI = Krio; SKI = Kittitian; SRN = Suriname; WAF = West African Pidgin English.
[12] For their etymologies see Emanuel (1970), Allsopp (1996), Aceto (1999: 73-74), and Baker (1999). Lexical items which can be traced back to several African languages are not listed.
[13] See e.g. Aceto (1999) and Parkvall (2000: 109-112).

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savoury cake), and 88. *ki!* (exclamation) from Yoruba. The Bantu contribution is represented by: 64. *funji* 'corn meal'; 79. *jumbee* 'malevolent spirit, zombie'; 128. *pinda* 'peanut'. Finally, Mande languages have contributed: 27. *calaloo* 'rich soup or stew'; 77. *jook* 'pierce, stab, etc.'. In addition to lexical items, the contribution of the African substrate languages includes calques, e.g. 15. *big eye* 'greed(y) and 48. *doormouth* 'threshold'.

Not surprisingly, a number of lexical items of African origin included in Baker and Huber's (2001) diagnostic features are shared by VIEC with Negerhollands[14]: 7. *Anancy* (folktale character); 9. *bakra* 'European, white person'; 64. *funji* 'corn meal'; 79. *jumbee* 'malevolent spirit, zombie'; 87. *kata* 'head-pad'; 88. *ki!* (exclamation); 108. *mumu* 'dumb'; 128. *pinda* 'peanut'; 149. *Takoma* 'Anancy's son'; 151. *tata* 'father'.

Two world-wide features of Portuguese origin are found in VIEC: 221. *piccaninny* 'small; child', and 225. *sabby* 'know'.

Two of the lexical items of French origin among Baker and Huber's (2001) diagnostic features are attested in VIEC: 13. *bateau* 'boat' and, not surprisingly, 31. *crapaud* 'frog'[15].

Similarly, the only two Spanish-derived lexical items in Baker and Huber's (2001) list of diagnostic features are both attested in VIEC: 133. *rata* 'rat' and 138. *sapata* 'footwear'. Note that Baker (1999: 334) indicates Portuguese *sapato* as the etymon of *sapata*. However, the most likely etymon appears to be Caribbean Spanish *zapata*[16], since [sapata] is phonetically closer to the VIEC form than the Portuguese one [səpatu].

The only lexical item of Irish Gaelic origin in the list, 19. *bonikleba* 'sour milk' < *bainne clabair*[17], is also found in VIEC.

Two variants of feature 141. *s(h)all* 'future' are recorded in VIEC: *sa* and *shall*. It would be tempting to relate the earlier St Thomas form *sa* to Dutch *zal* and/or Negerhollands *sa*/*sal*, given the coexistence of Negerhollands and VIEC in the Virgin Islands. In his brief discussion of the etymology of the future marker *sa* Hancock (1987: 301) writes "compare Dutch zal". Den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 413, f.n. 80) claim that "there is a correspondence between NH *sa(l)* 'FUT' and similar elements in Surinam and Guyana" and that "this is a regional feature that is due to the presence of the Dutch in the Guyanas". Indeed, the occurrence in earlier VIEC of both *sa* and *shall* parallels the coexistence of *sall* and *shall/sha* in earlier Guyanese (see Baker 1999: 333). However, several remarks are in order here. Firstly, contra den Besten and van der Voort (1999), this future marker is not restricted to the creoles of Suriname and to Guyanese: *sa* is also attested in Jamaican (Baker 1999: 333), where Dutch and/or Negerhollands influence cannot be invoked. Secondly, a possible etymon of *sa* suggested by Hancock (1987: 301) is Scots *sall*. To conclude, the VIEC variants of feature 141. *s(h)all* 'future' – *sa* and *shall* – may well be traced back to Scots *sall* and English *shall* respectively.

[14] See also den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 395-396).
[15] According to Allsopp (1996: 175), *crapaud* "is the term in widest folk use in CE [= Caribbean English]" for 'frog'.
[16] Cf. Cassidy (1961: 114) for Jamaican.
[17] From *bainne* 'milk' + *clabbair*, genitive of *clabar* 'sour thick milk' (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 1993: 130).

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In the Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary (2010) it is stated that *dem* "indicates plural" and "may come before the noun […] or more often after"[18]. However, feature 42. preposed *dem* (nominal plural) is not mentioned by Sabino et al. (2003) in their analysis of plural marking in VIEC.

A rather curious variant of 75. *jackspaniard* 'wasp' is *jack spaniel* (Sterns 2008: 82). Interestingly, a form transcribed *jack spaniel* is also recorded in Nevis in 1925 (Parsons 1943: 428).

According to the Virgin Islands Creole Dictionary (2010), feature 80. k/g affricated to ch/j appears to be found only in the variety spoken on St Thomas.

The provenance of feature 84. *kaka* 'shit, excrement' is less clear than assumed by some researchers. According to den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 394), Negerhollands *kaka* / *koka* "has been borrowed into VIEC as *kaka* / *kuka*". Den Besten and van der Voort (1999: 394) argue that "the NH [= Negerhollands] phonology of *kaka* / *kuka* in VIEC shows that *kaka* / *kuka* may belong to the original lexical stock of Negerhollands". However, evidence from other Atlantic English-lexified *creoles* weakens the case for Negerhollands influence. Thus, *kuka* also occurs in Antigua[19] and in Montserrat (Allsopp 1996: 335), and there is no evidence showing that the varieties spoken in these territories have ever borrowed from Negerhollands. Therefore, the vowel [u] in the VIEC variant *kuka* does not necessarily point to a Negerhollands origin.

Feature 172. *yai* 'eye' < English *eye* exhibits a word-initial palatal glide. The only other form illustrating the same phenomenon included in Baker and Huber's (2001) list of diagnostic features is 172. *yerri* 'hear', which appears not to be recorded in VIEC. Baker (1999: 326) writes that "the only AEC [= Atlantic English Creole] example directly comparable to *yerry* is SKi [= Kittitian] *yeat* 'eat'". This claim is disconfirmed by a 1900 attestation of a form *yeat* in VIEC Børgesen and Uldall (1900: 48): *nobod' ay to* ***yeat****ham* 'there is no one to eat it'[20]. As for the modern varieties, note the form *yet* 'eat' listed in Allsopp (1996: 619), with the specification that it is found in St Kitts and in the US Virgin Islands.

Several diagnostic features recorded in VIEC are relevant to the distinction sometimes made in the literature between the Western Caribbean and the Eastern Caribbean English-lexified 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 in section 2, both 51. *duppy* 'zombie' and 79. *jumbee* 'malevolent spirit, zombie' occur in VIEC. This accords with Allsopp's (1996: 208) observation that "the term ***duppy*** is widely known in the CarA [= Caribbean Area] even where ***jumbie*** is the normal term". According to Aceto (2008b: 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 VIEC. Aceto (2008b: 652-653) also mentions "*(h)im* (as both subject and object pronoun) in Western varieties", which is

[18] See also Sterns (2008: 77).
[19] Including in compounds, e.g. *kuka hole* 'anus' (Bernadette Farquhar, p.c.).
[20] Cf. the Danish translation: 'der er ingen at spise den' (Børgesen and Uldall 1900: 48).

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"nearly always *(h)i* (as a subject pronoun) […] in Eastern Caribbean varieties". However, both 199. *him* (3SG) and *he* are attested in VIEC.

5. Conclusions

It is hoped that the present paper will contribute to a better understanding of the history of VIEC, which, like most other Eastern Caribbean English-lexified creoles, is underresearched (Aceto 2008a: 290, Aceto 2008b: 644).

The list of the earliest attestations in VIEC is an addition to the data base reflecting the distribution of diagnostic features in English-lexified pidgins and creoles. Since Allsopp (1996) does not always name individual territories, the findings contribute to a better knowledge of the distribution of diagnostic features across the Caribbean English-lexified creoles.

Last, but not least, the first attestations in VIEC should prove relevant to the issue of the historical relationships among Atlantic English-lexified pidgins and creoles. Identifying the diagnostic features found in VIEC is a first step in this direction, while the quantification of the affinities[21] between VIEC and other Atlantic English-lexified varieties remains a topic for further research.

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[21] Using e.g. the statistical method devised by Baker and Huber (2001: 181).

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