

Tone-stress contact in the Afro-Atlantic prosodic area

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The null hypothesis:

Tone is eliminated or simplified when stress and tone languages meet

(8) Distinctive tone tends to be reduced in function or lost altogether (Spencer 1963: 137; Manessy 1964: 81/82; Richardson 1962: 193; Fehderau 1966: 46/47; Samarin 1962: 59/60).

(Heine 1978: 220)

More specifically, tone languages appear to lose distinctive tone and to develop first a pitch accent system, then a stress-based, and eventually a fixed stress accent system in language contact settings.

(Salmons 1992: 56)

Tone therefore seems to be an early casualty of language contact between tonal and non-tonal languages.

(Sebba 1997: 49)

More specifically, languages known as creoles make very little or no use of tone to (a) lexically contrast phonetically identical monosyllables,

(McWhorter 1998: 793)

The loss of tone and the reduction of noun classes and TMA markers are typical candidates for an explanation in terms of contact-induced simplification. However, these changes also occurred in related and unrelated languages

(Kusters 2003: 343)

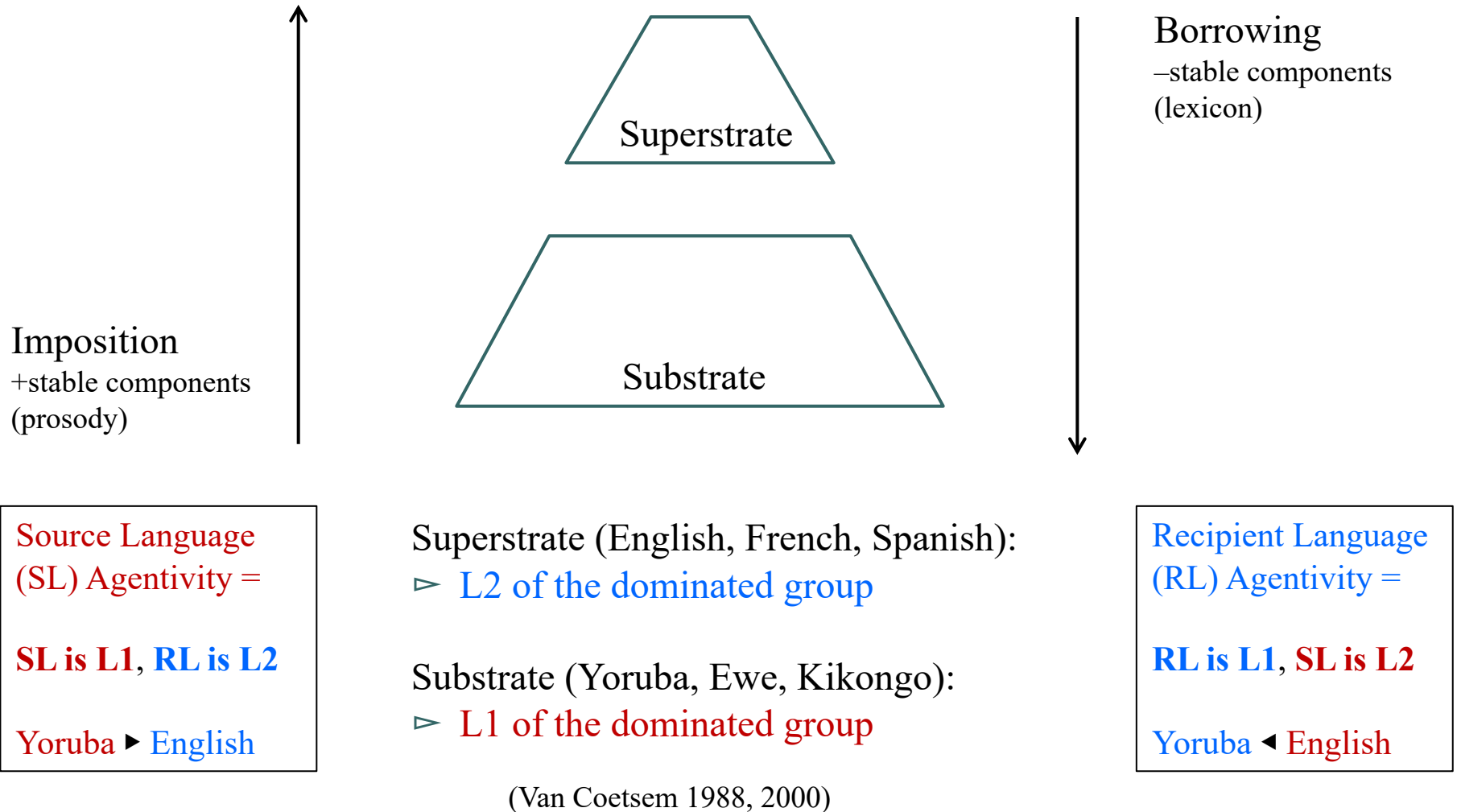
as well as other processes such as loss of tone and reduction in phonotactic possibilities: pidgin languages typically have CVCV structure and relatively small phoneme inventories, and lack contrastive tone.

(Trudgill 2010: 309)

The reason for this is that *grammars are not robustly transmitted during creolization*, since morphology and tones are particularly hard to master during untutored SLA. On the other hand, in the context of mixed languages, which

(Sessarego 2020: 4)

The tone loss hypothesis is conceptually flawed because it doesn't distinguish between the two transfer of **imposition** vs. **borrowing**



Prosodic contact outcomes under Source Language Agentivity

- (i) $IN_{SUP} + TO_{SUB/ADS} = TO_{CON}$
- (ii) $TO_{SUP} + IN_{SUB/ADS} = IN_{CON}$
- (iii) $TO_{SUP} + TO_{SUB/ADS} = TO_{CON}$
- (iv) $IN_{SUP} + IN_{SUB/ADS} = IN_{CON}$

(Bordal Steien & Yakpo 2020)

IN: Intonation-only (stress) language

TO: Tone language

SUP: Superstrate

SUB: Substrate

ADS: Adstrate

The gist of the argument

- ▶ Speakers of African tone languages imposed tone systems on all Afro-Atlantic Creole languages and colonial varieties of English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese spoken in Africa and (probably) the Americas.
- ▶ Genetic affiliation, demography, social stratification, and other social factors in an ecology drive switches from tone to stress systems and vice versa, as well as the emergence of mixed tone-stress systems.
- ▶ The outcome is an areal-typological continuum across the Afro-Atlantic with tone systems clustering in the east (Africa) and stress in the west (Americas). Various types of mixed systems combining features of tone *and* stress converge on the areal buffer zone of the Caribbean.

Roadmap

1. Characteristics of Afro-Atlantic contact prosodic systems
2. Mechanisms in the emergence of contact prosodic systems
3. Typology of prosodic contact outcomes
4. Areal-geographic distribution of outcomes across the Afro-Atlantic

Tone in Afro-Atlantic Creoles: Pichi (Equatorial Guinea)

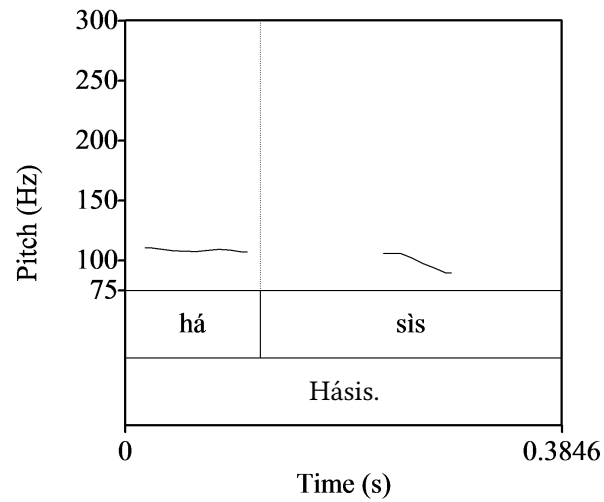


Figure 3.5 H.L pattern

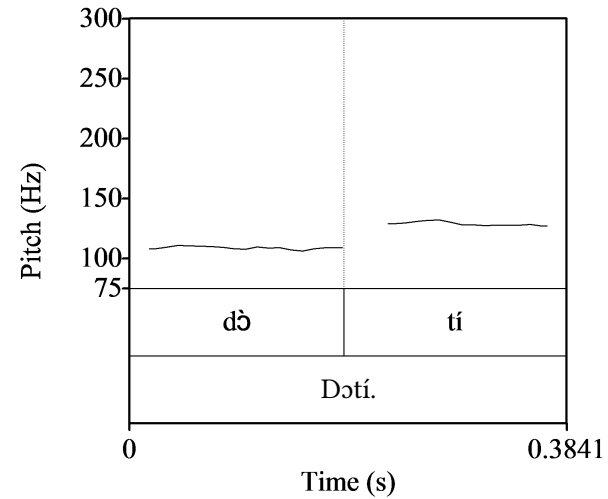


Figure 3.6 L.H pattern

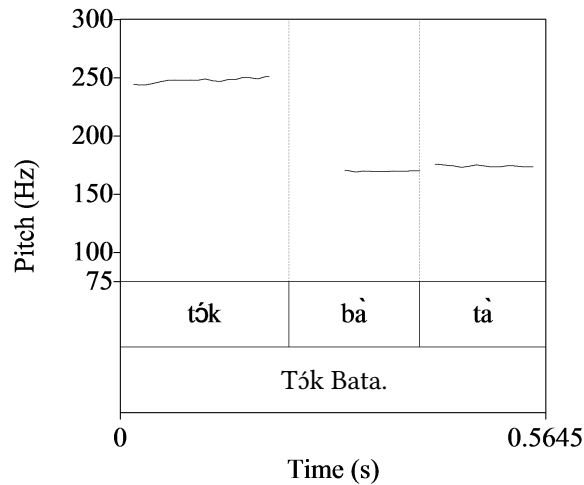


Figure 3.8 L.L pattern (Yakpo 2019)

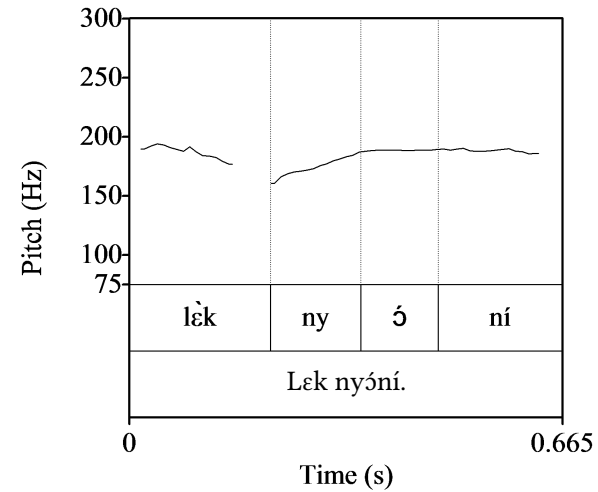


Figure 3.7 H.H pattern

Lexical tone in Pichi (Equatorial Guinea)

(1) Monosyllabic minimal pairs

L tone

dè ‘IPFV’
dì ‘DEF’
lèk ‘like’
wèt ‘with’

H tone

dé ‘day; there’
dí ‘this’
lék ‘(to) like’
wét ‘wait’

(2)(a) Disyllabic minimal pairs

kàtá /LH/ ‘catarrh’ *kátà* /HL/ ‘scatter’
pàpá /LH/ ‘father’ *pápà* /HL/ ‘potato’

(b) Maximal number of tone patterns

fibà /HL/ ‘fever’ *nyóní* /HH/ ‘ant’
wàtá /LH/ ‘water’ *bàtá* /LL/ ‘buttocks’

(c) Phrasal minimal pair

òpìn yáy ‘open (an) eye’ *òpìn-yáy* ‘cultivated’
/HL H/ /LL-H/

(Yakpo 2013, 2019a)

Lexical tone in Pichi:

Ideophones - more diverse tone patterns

Ideophones, ideophonic verbs and nouns

Example	Pitch class	Translation
<i>gbin</i>	H	'sound of a hard, sudden blow'
<i>pring</i>	H	'sound of ringing'
<i>tik</i>	H	'cracking sound'
<i>kwaráng</i>	H.H	'sound of round and hard object(s) falling into a receptacle'
<i>wewé; wowó</i>	H.H	'sound of crying and wailing'
<i>kóngkòngkóng</i>	H.H.H	'seek permission to enter'
<i>súkútúpàmpa</i>	H.H.H.L.L.L	'in a cheap and mean fashion'
<i>bwà</i>	L	'sound of water gushing'
<i>kìp</i>	L	'sound of a dull thud'
<i>kamúkàmú</i>	L.H.L.H	'sight of buttocks moving'
<i>katakata</i>	L.L.H.H	'be active, hectic'
<i>menyemenyé</i>	L.L.H.H	'whine, nag in a childlike fashion'
<i>kakàra</i>	L.L.L	'be restless'
<i>kutùku</i>	L.L.L	'sound of heart beating'

Tone in two colonial contact varieties

Central African French & Equatorial Guinean Spanish

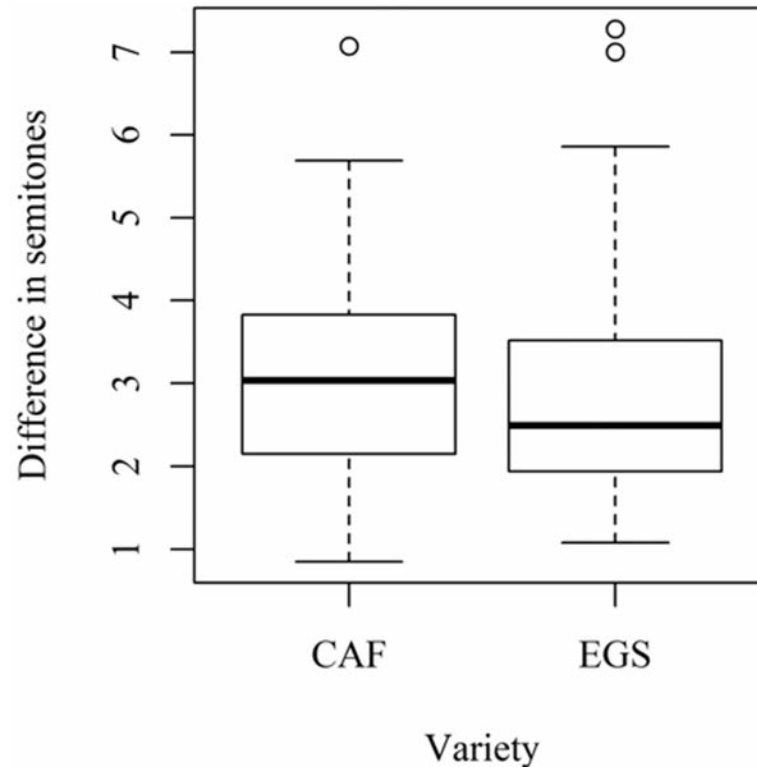
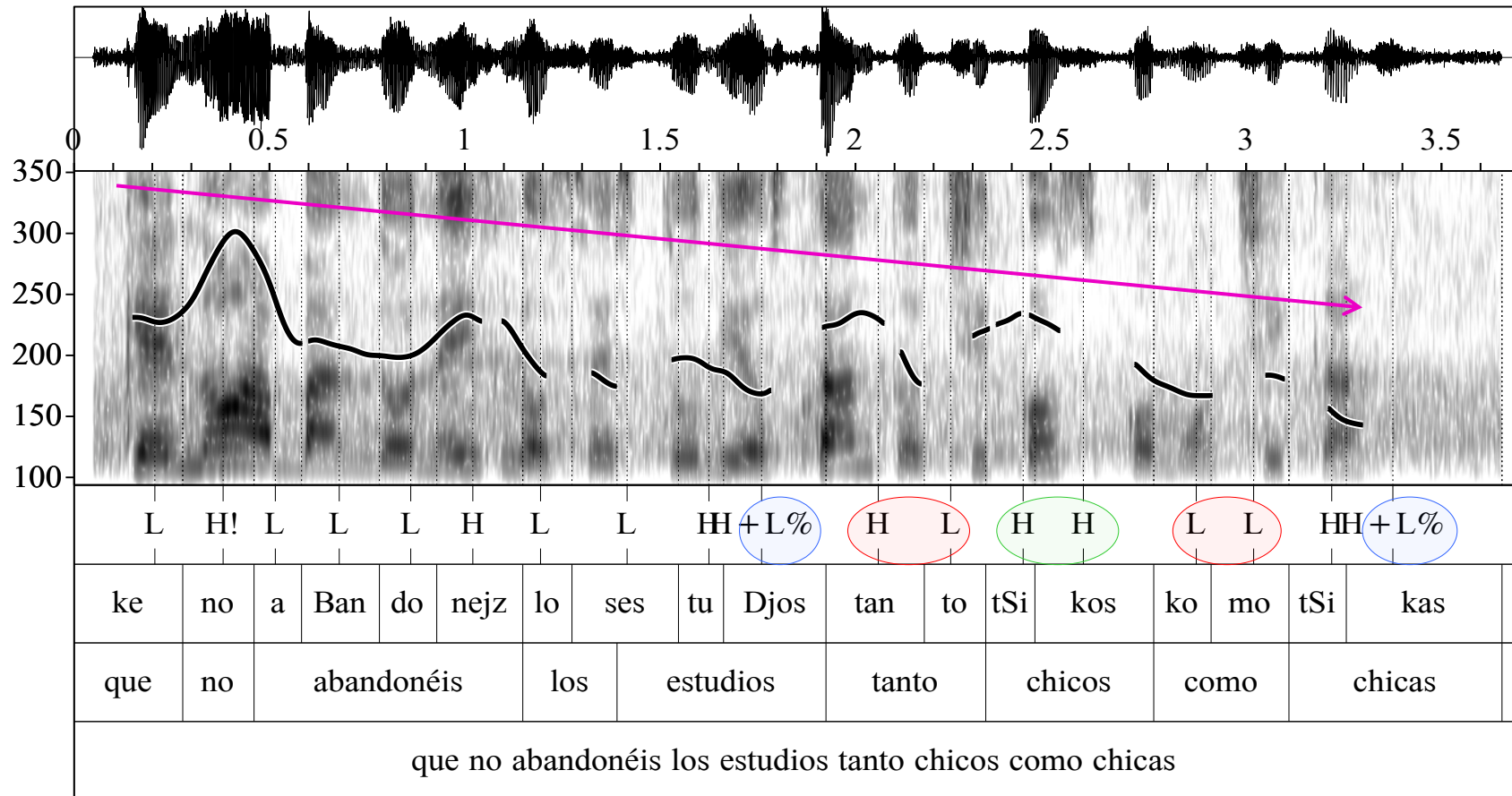


FIGURE 1. Box-and-whiskers diagram of pitch differences between syllables annotated L and H in utterance-internal disyllabic content words with the pattern LH (sixty CAF and forty EGS words).

(Bordal Steien & Yakpo 2020; CAF = Central African French, EGS = Equatorial Guinean Spanish)

Tone in colonial contact varieties: Equatorial Guinean Spanish)

lexical H & L, boundary tones, tone spreading, downstep



(Bordal Steien & Yakpo 2020)



Lexical tone in colonial contact varieties

Equatorial Guinean Spanish minimal pairs

WORD	TONES	GLOSS	WORD	TONES	GLOSS
qué	H	‘what?’	que	L	‘that’ (SUB)
cómo	HL	‘how?’	como	LL	‘like’; ‘how’ (REL)
esta	HL	‘this’	está	LH	‘COP.LOC.3SG.PRS’
él	H	‘he’ (3SG.SBJ.M)	el (que)	L	‘he (who)’ (3SG.SBJ.REL.M)
tú	H	‘you’ (2SG.SBJ)	tu	L	‘your’ (2SG.POSS)

TABLE 8. Tonal minimal pairs in the EGS corpus.

Examples:

- (1) **Que**^L no abandonéis los estudios!
- (2) **Que**^H es esto, una radio?

(Bordal Steien & Yakpo 2020)

Other colonial varieties with (suspected) tone systems

Nigerian English (Gussenhoven & Udofot 2010, Gussenhoven 2017)

Cameroonian English (Udofot 2020)

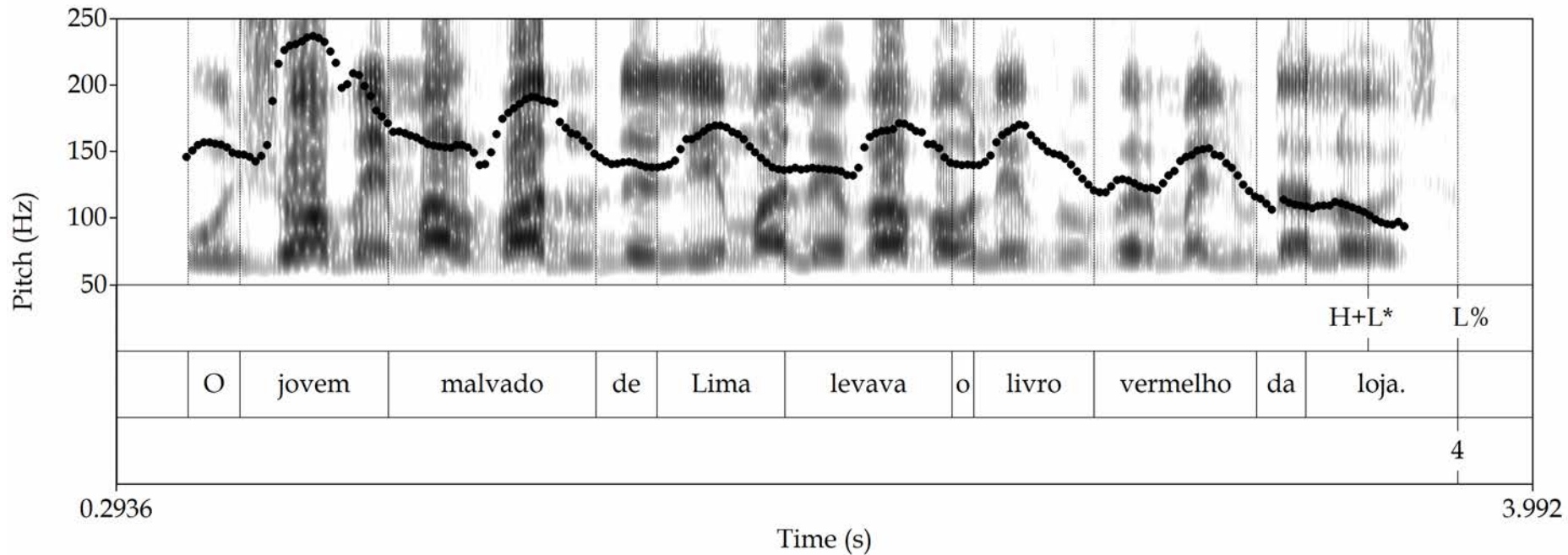
Ghanaian English (Criper 1971, Criper- Friedman 1990)

Rwandan French (Avanzi et al. 2014)

Côte d'Ivoire French (Boutin & Turscan 2009)

Angolan Portuguese? (Svartman Fernandes & Santos 2023)

Lexical tone in Angolan Portuguese?



Fernandes, Flaviane R & Vinícius G Santos. 2023.
Fraseamento prosódico no português do Libolo.

Three cognitive-typological mechanisms during prosodic contact

(1) Stress-to-tone mapping: Emergence of tone system in the contact language or variety by building on perceptual analogies between the phonetic realizations of stress and tone. Stressed position in lexifier = H tone in contact variety.

(2) Paradigmatization: Tonal patterning of the lexicon following phonological, morphological, and semantic principles. Occurred by default when stress word prosodic patterns based on stress were replicated as tone classes. Also regularizes functional paradigms.

(3) Idiosyncratization: Emergence of arbitrary word-tone patterns, paradigms and constructions, incl. ‘grammatical tone’, through language-specific constructionalization and grammaticalization.

(Bordal Steien & Yakpo, 2020)

Mechanism (1): Stress-to-tone mapping

- ▶ Stress vs. nonstress contrast in the superstrate or lexifier is interpreted as a tonal **H** vs. **L** contrast in the contact variety or language.

English	Pichi, Krio, Naijá	Output tone pattern
<i>go</i>	<i>gó</i>	H
<i>enter, forget</i>	<i>éntà, fògét</i>	H-L, L-H
<hr/>		
Portuguese	Fa d'Ambô	
<i>falar</i>	<i>fàlá</i>	L-H
<i>moça</i>	<i>mósà</i>	H-L

Syllable with primary stress/H tone in red

Stress-to-tone mapping: A general prosodic contact mechanism

In **Ewe** (Kwa) European loanwords have cumulative H on the stress-bearing syllable in the source language, other syllables are L-toned (Yakpo 2021):

- (1) *àbòlò* /L-**H**-L/ ‘bread’ < Port. *bolo* ‘cake’, incl. nominal prefix *à-*
- (2) *dúkù* /**H**-L/ ‘scarf’ < Dutch *doek* ‘scarf’, incl. paragogic vowel /ù/

In **Yoruba** (Benue-Congo), the stressed syllable bears H, pre-tonic bears M, and final L. Epenthetic vowels copy tone from adjacent ones (Kenstowicz 2006):

- (3) *rikòdà* /M-**H**-L/ ‘recorder’
- (4) *álúbòmù* /**H**-H-L-L/ ‘album’, incl. epenthetic vowel /ú/

But also metrical constraints, e.g., trisyllabic output of disyllabic Arabic loanwords in **Bambara** (Mande): L in L-H melody is marked and limited to ‘prominent’ (foot-initial) positions, hence (L)(L-H) (Green & Boutz 2013):

- (5) *kitàbú* /L-L-**H**/ ‘book’ < Arabic *kitaab* ‘book’, incl. paragogic vowel /ú/

Mechanism 2: Paradigmatization

Tonal case paradigms in African Caribbean English Creoles

African AECs

Person & Number	Dependent pronouns			Independent pronouns
	Subject	Possessive	Object	Object & emphatic
1SG	<i>a</i>	<i>mi</i>		<i>mí</i>
2SG	<i>yu</i>			<i>yú</i>
3SG	<i>e</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>=an</i>	<i>ín</i>
1PL	<i>wi</i>			<i>wí</i>
2PL	<i>una, unu</i>			<i>una, unu</i>
3PL	<i>dɛn</i>			<i>dén</i>

(Yakpo 2019: 128)

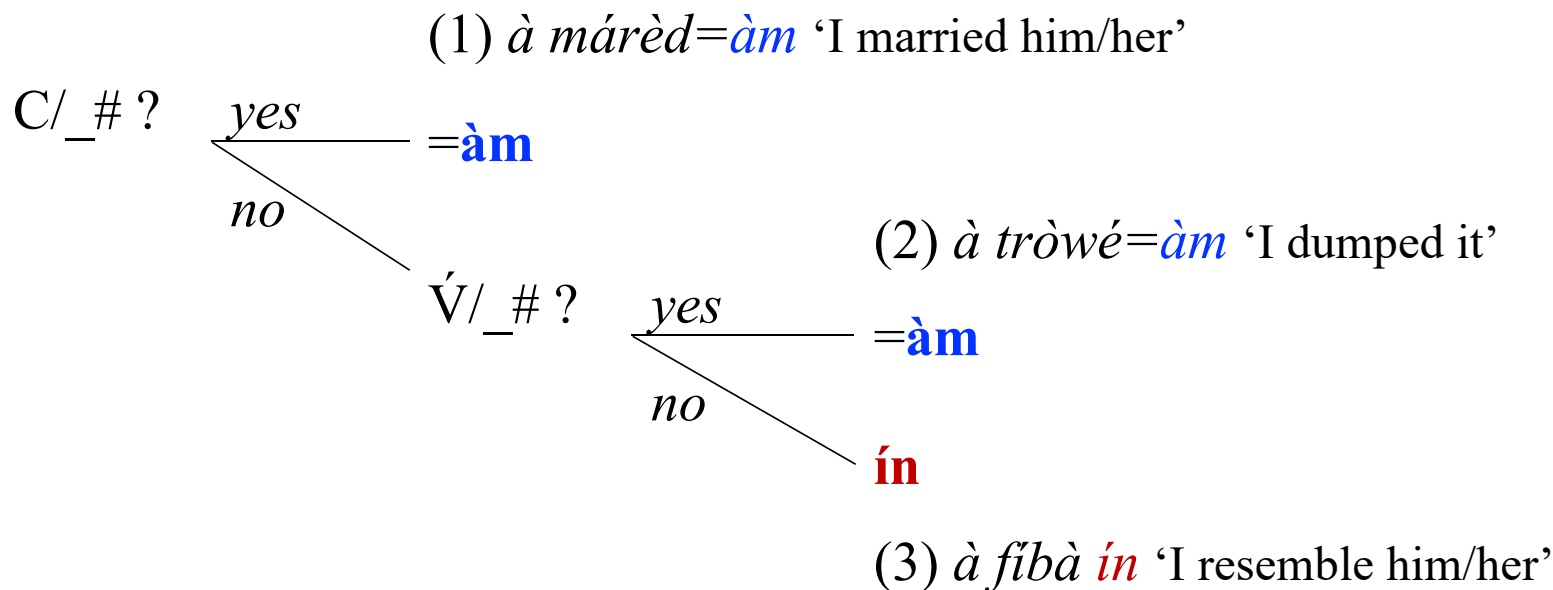
Surinamese Maroon AECs (Saramaccan, Ndyuka)

	TONIC	SUBJECT
1S	<i>mí</i>	<i>mi, m</i>
2S	<i>í</i>	<i>i</i>
3S	<i>hě</i>	<i>a</i>
1P	<i>ú</i>	<i>u</i>
2P	<i>ú, únu</i>	<i>ũ, únu</i>
3P	<i>dé</i>	<i>de</i>

(McWhorter & Good 2012: 94)

Mechanism 3: Idiosyncratization

Tone-conditioned suppletive allomorphy in Pichi



Tonal polarity requirement *LL; *V̂V̂ >> V̂V̂, V̂CV̂:

- ▷ L-toned clitic = **àm** ‘3SG.OBJ’ can only follow V in (1) V̂CV̂ and (2) V̂V̂.
- ▷ In illicit context (3), the phonologically independent pronoun **ín** ‘3SG.INDP’ is recruited (Yakpo 2019b).

Idiosyncratization:

The emergence of STAMP morphemes in West African Pidgin

In subjunctive clauses introduced by the modal complementizer *mék* (< ‘make’), optional deletion & tone floating → emergence of portmanteau STAMP morphemes:

(1) *mék* /H/ + *à* /L/ ‘1SG.SBJ’ →

*dèn wón **mâ** gó* {3PL.SBJ want SBJV.1SG.SBJ go} ‘they want that I go’

(2) *mék* /H/ + *è* /L/ ‘3SG.SBJ’ →

*dèn wón **mê** gó* {3PL.SBJ want sbjv.3SG.SBJ go} ‘they want that s/he go’

(3) *mék* /H/ + *wì* /L/ ‘1PL.SBJ’ →

*dèn wón **mòù** gó* {3PL.SBJ want SBJV.1PL.SBJ go} ‘they want that we go’

(4) *mék* /H/ + *è* /L/ ‘3SG.SBJ’ →

*dèn wón **mòùnà** gó* {3PL.SBJ want SBJV.2PL.SBJ go} ‘they want that y’all go’
(Yakpo, forthcoming)

Outcomes of prosodic contact in the Afro-Atlantic

1. Tone systems with some structural features of ‘European’ stress systems
2. Mixed tone-stress systems
3. Stress systems with ‘residual tone’
4. Stress systems with some structural and intonational features of ‘African’ tone systems

Outcome (1):

Tone systems with structural features of ‘European’ stress

	EGS	Pichi	SES
1. Tones	+	+	–
2. Tonal minimal pairs	+	+	–
3. Obligatoriness of word-level H or stress in content words	+	+/–	+
4. Culminativity of word-level H or stress in content words	+	+/–	+
5. H-tone spreading	+	+	–
6. Downstep	+	+	–
7. Intonational pitch accents	–	–	+
8. Boundary tones	+	+	+

(Bordal Steien & Yakpo 2020; EGS = Equatorial Guinean Spanish, SES = Standard European Spanish)

Outcome (2): Stress systems with residual tone

Haitian:

- ▶ Word-level, not phrase-level stress: *fanmi* ‘family’, *kouto* ‘knife’ (Brousseau 2003)
- ▶ Lexical tone in reduplications, e.g., *píké-píké* /H-H-H-H/ ‘very pricking’ vs. *pikè-pikè* /L-L-L-L/ ‘slightly pricking’ (Sylvain 1936)

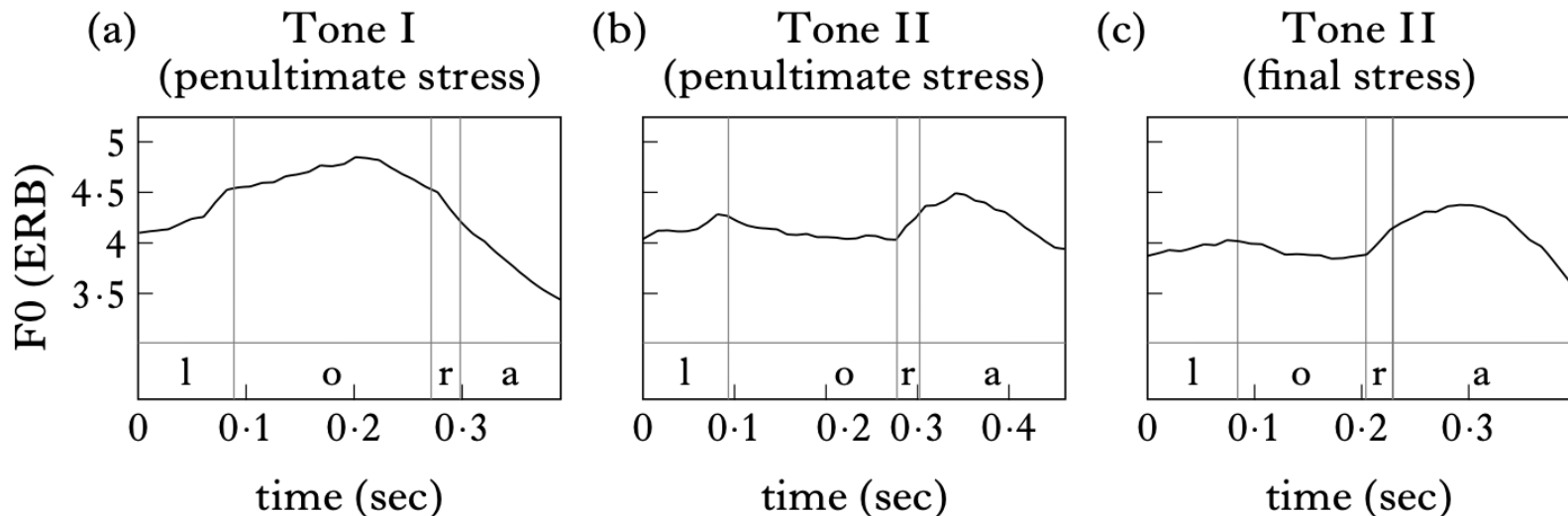
Sranan (Suriname):

- ▶ *a blaka píí* /H/ *a weti fánfán* /H-H/
3SG.SBJ be.black IDEO 3SG.SBJ be.white IDEO
‘It is pitch black.’ ‘It is snow white.’ (Smith & Adamson 2006)
- ▶ *papa* ‘father’ → [ppa:], *wowoyo* ‘market’ → [wwo:yo]
(van der Hilst 1988)

Outcome (3): Mixed tone-stress systems

Papiamentu (Curaçao) (Rivera-Castillo 1998; Remijsen & van Heuven 2005)

Tone: (1) *lôra* /**HL**-Ø/ ‘parrot’; (2) *lorâ* /Ø-**HL**/ ‘to turn’ (verb), (3) *lorâ* /Ø-**HL**/ ‘turned’ (participle), **Stressed** syllables are longer and louder than unstressed ones, unstressed syllables more centralized (i.e., more schwa-like) than stressed ones.



(Remijsen & van Heuven 2005)

Outcome (4):

Stress systems with ‘African’ structural and intonational features

- ▶ **Jamaican:** Compounding involves morphological stress placement on the rightmost morpheme: $\underset{\cdot}{d}ʒʊki' \overset{\cdot}{d}ʒʊki$ ‘very prickly’ (Gooden, 2003)
- ▶ **Jamaican and Tobagonian:** Prosodic rhythm is syllable, not stress, timed (Bloomquist et al., 2015; Yakpo, in prep)
- ▶ **Bajan, Trinidadian and Guyanese Creole:** Utterance-final fall in wh-questions, pronounced utterance-level downtrend, register raising (Sutcliffe, 2003)

Outcome (4):

Stress systems with ‘African’ structural and intonational features

- ▶ **Afro-Bolivian Spanish:** An obligatory and fixed LH pitch contour or H level pitch over stressed syllables (Rao and Sessarego, 2016).
- ▶ **Caribbean French:** Stress on individual words, like Haitian, not on accentual phrases, like European French (Pustka, 2007).
- ▶ **Popular Brazilian Portuguese:** More utterance-internal pitch accents than European Portuguese with a frequent alternation between H* and L*, and “tonal events not linked to stressed syllables” (Frota and Vigário, 2000).

Areal alignment

Diachronic switches in prosodic systems

STRESS

TONE

Sranan (Suriname)



Early Sranan

Western Maroon
Creole (Jamaica)



Krio (Sierra Leone)

Modern Caribbean
varieties, except
Maroon varieties

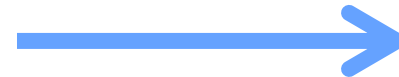


Proto-African
Caribbean English
Creole?

(Proto-)Papiamentu



Or?

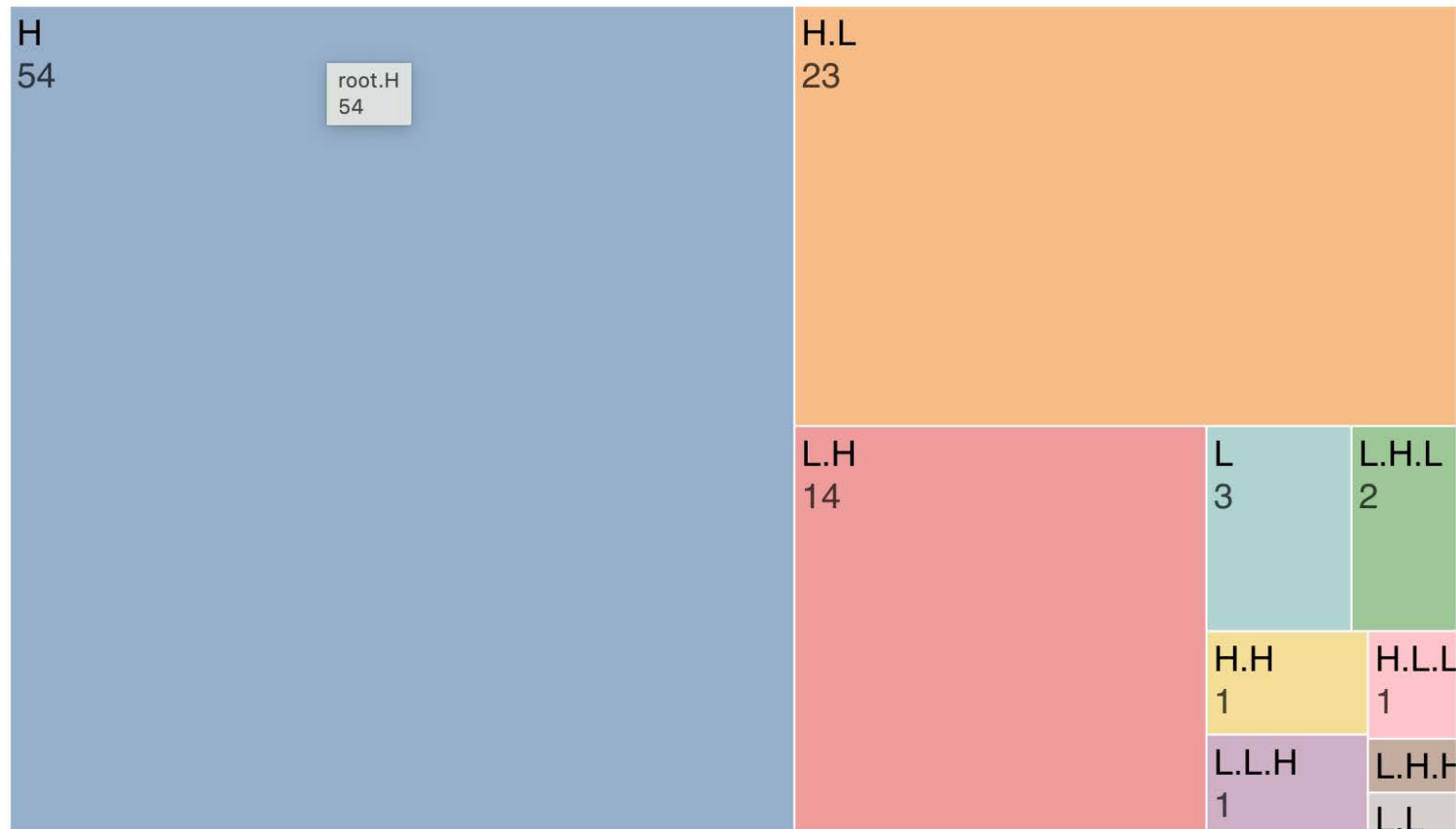


(Proto-)Papiamentu

- ▶ Social factors: demography, social stratification (Yakpo 2020)

Areal alignment

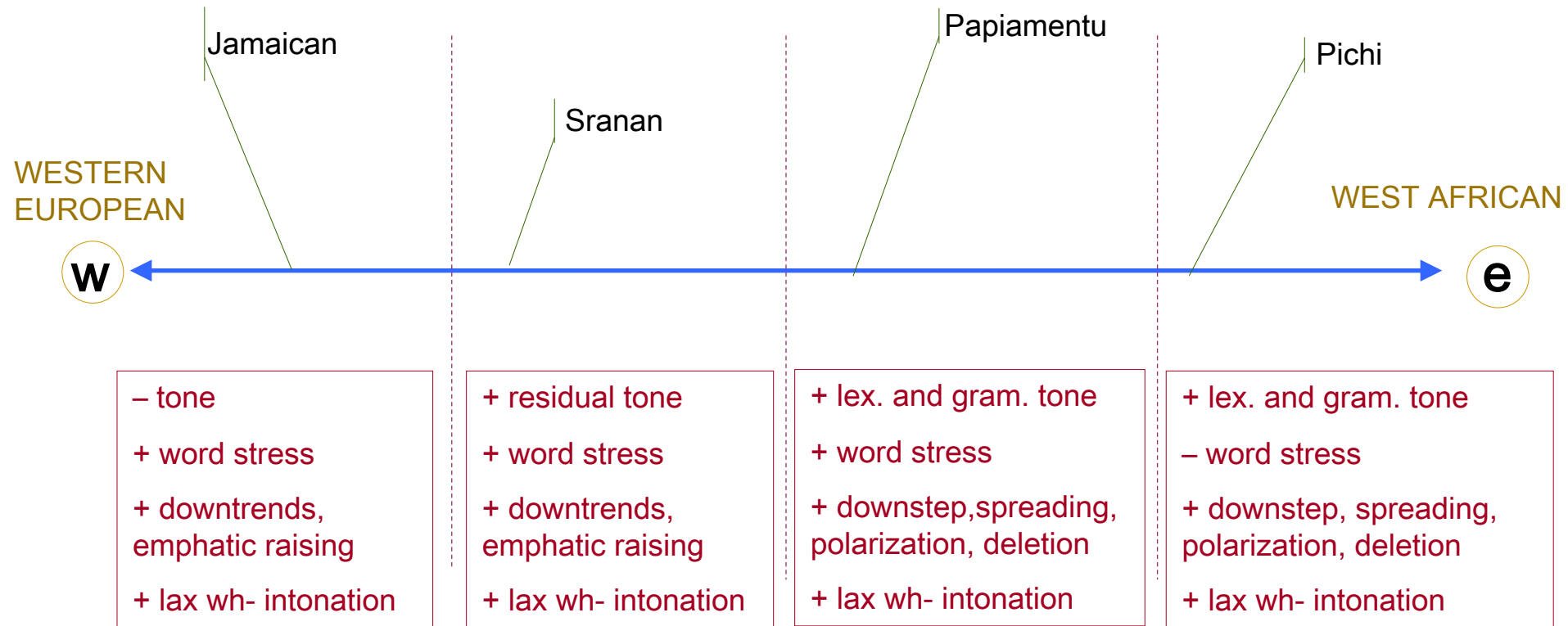
Typological ‘mismatches’ in the distribution of word tone patterns



- ▷ 90% of 1000 roots in Pichi (Equatorial Guinea) have culminative and obligatory H. Similar with other West African Pidgin varieties.
- ▷ < 10% of roots in African adstrates (Akan, Ewe, Yoruba, etc.) spoken alongside African English Creoles with culminative and obligatory H.

Conclusion

Typological gradience across the Afro-Atlantic prosodic area



Areal-geographic distribution of contact outcomes across the Afro-Atlantic

■ Tone ■ Mixed Tone-Stress ■ Stress + Residual Tone ■ Stress



Future work

- ▶ More data needed on the nature and distribution of contact prosodic systems of the Afro-Atlantic.
- ▶ Better understanding needed of the social factors that engender specific prosodic contact outcomes.
- ▶ More cross-fertilization needed between researchers working on prosodic contact and areality in the Afro-Atlantic and elsewhere.

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