Philological perspectives on the Southeastern Nigerian diaspora

**ABSTRACT:** Niger-Congo Comparative Wordlist (Congo & Afroasiatic) (2004; 2007; 2009) reproduced some coastal traders’ casual misplacement of the older of the “Old” Calabars — i.e. the one so designated by locals in the 17th century — by a few hundred miles, to a different slaving depot a few estuaries further along to the east, albeit in a very different linguistic orbit of the 18th century. The Pre-British Árù—Abakuá tradition was brought to Cuba not by Igbo-speakers, but by Abakuá-speakers, and this is independently plausible. Anecdotally, Nigerian historians report that, in the orbit of the 18th century Árù (“Arochukwu”) trading oligarchy, Igbo-speakers earned Árù terminology alongside nonverbal nsibiri (or nsibidi, nchibidi) signs during initiation into the èkpe club—Abakuá’s historic model. Some of the Igbo items in Cabrera’s Abakuá corpus bear hallmarks of Árù dialect; two are emblematic of Árù religion as studied by Nwaogu (1984). The implication is that some differences between the Cuban and Èkpe versions of èkpe preceded the Middle Passage. This can be tested by comparing Abakuá texts with their Árù counterparts. If the conjecture is confirmed, then èkpe/lsibiri joins Lükûnú and Ògbà as regional language acting as media of African-American cultural transmission. Mother tongues, and theories of creolization, have less bearing on the process. In

**LEXICAL ÌGBOISMS** in languages of the Western Hemisphere are few compared to estimated numbers of captive Igbo-speakers who lived here some 200 years ago. This fact, initially mysterious and long buried in philological rubble, may on second thought be informative. In Abakuá-related vocabulary collected by Cabrera from Cubans tracing themselves to the region now called southeastern Nigeria, including two dozen named Igbo subregions, appear thousands of Igbo-derived items but less than ten with Igbo roots. The divergence between language and ethnicity in this case implies that the historical ties of Afrocuban Abakuá culture to the Èkpe-speaking region of southwestern Nigeria are partly indirect. One possibility is that a share of Èkpe-medium Abakuá was brought to Cuba not by Èkpe-speakers, but by Igbo-speakers, and this is independently plausible. Anecdotally, Nigerian historians report that, in the orbit of the 18th century Árù (“Arochukwu”) trading oligarchy, Igbo-speakers earned Èkpe terminology alongside nonverbal nsibiri (or nsibidi, nchibidi) signs during initiation into the èkpe club—Abakuá’s historic model. Some of the Igbo items in Cabrera’s Abakuá corpus bear hallmarks of Árù dialect; two are emblematic of Árù religion as studied by Nwaogu (1984). The implication is that some differences between the Cuban and Èkpe versions of èkpe preceded the Middle Passage. This can be tested by comparing Abakuá texts with their Árù counterparts. If the conjecture is confirmed, then èkpe/lsibiri joins Lükûnú and Ògbà as regional lingue franca acting as media of African-American cultural transmission. Mother tongues, and theories of creolization, have less bearing on the process. In
particular, ëkpënsibiri attests a style of diaspora built on ethnolinguistic aliases, and with an elective affinity to orientalist narratives.

**WESTERN ERRORISM, NEGATIVE ÊGBOISMS AND AFRICANIST-AMERICANIST RESEARCH**

Philology is more than textual critique; to Edward Said it’s

...the most basic and creative of the interpretive arts. ...Rather than alienation and hostility to another time and a different culture, philology as applied to Weltliteratur involved a profound humanistic spirit deployed with generosity and, if I may use the word, hospitality. ...[H]umanism is the only and I would go so far as saying the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history. (Said 2003)

A good example of philological disfigurement is the way European slavers and imperialists transcribed African personal and place names (Yai 1978). Call it “Western error-ism”—the linguistic equivalent of cluster bombs, those indiscriminate modern weapons which

...cause humanitarian harm not only because they are area weapons, but also because a large percentage of their bomblets or grenades do not explode on impact. These explosive duds remain live and dangerous and are frequently set off by civilians after the strikes. (Docherty & Gelasco 2003, 103)

Avoiding spelling shrapnel while defusing “dud” labels in the archives, forensic historians have ascribed plausible linguistic origins to many African captives shipped to the Western Hemisphere in the 17th-19th centuries (Curtin & Vansina 1964; Nwojci & Eltis 2002). The inferred source communities roughly coincide with African cultural traits observed in the Americas.3 But even with the best data, the two sides of the transatlantic equation—ethnic departures and cultural arrivals —don’t necessarily match. Such discrepancies are puzzling at first, but on closer examination they open philological perspectives on the past.

In Cuba, Ortiz (1924) records many Bantuisms (largely Kikoiçong): dozens of vocabulary loans plus a corpus of Palo ritual expressions—opaque poetic phrases like the Homeric ‘formulas’ (Kiparsky 1976). Cuban Yorùbáisms are more numerous and more stereotyped: less plain vocabulary (mostly names of processed foods), but more personal names, and a huge repertoire of Lucumi ritual song. Mandekan languages supply a few dozen words but no performance literature.4 Taking all Afrocuban linguistic heritage together, Yorùbá seems over-represented compared to the historic presence of its speakers.5 Setting aside how such differentials arise, the disproportion calls attention to itself, especially because it’s not isolated.

Another American site where Africains disaggregate, by grammatical type and relative to source, is the Gullah-speaking archipelago of the Georgia/South Carolina coast. Turner (1949) transcribes over 3,000 personal names of probable African origin (lines i-ii below); a few hundred African nouns in daily use (line iii); and a few dozen text-embedded items (line iv). Turner didn’t try to choose among multiple etymologies, but standard cognate criteria yield statistical patterns. Many source languages being closely similar, arbitrariness can be further reduced by merging results into the three large Niger-Congo subgroups represented in the sample:6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Niger-Congo</th>
<th>Mandekan</th>
<th>Betue-Kwa less Bantu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) African personal names</td>
<td>31% (n=632)</td>
<td>42% (858)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) African nouns</td>
<td>25% (909)</td>
<td>41% (1,467)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) African nouns</td>
<td>25% (164)</td>
<td>13% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) African vocabulary items</td>
<td>100% (88)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in Afrocuba, the Gullah percentages show that the mix of sources varies by item type. Of the four types distinguished in Turner’s sample, only (iii) approximates Gullah-speakers’ assumed ancestral profile: between a third and a half Bantu-speaking (Curtin 1969, 157; cf. Wood 1974, 335).7 Some Afroamerican populations diverge from source languages more radically. Êgbo, the main idiom of southeastern Nigeria, has effectively vanished from diaspora communities formed in the 17th-19th centuries. Scant linguistic Êgboisms from that time appear anywhere in Cuba, Haiti or the southeastern U.S.—places otherwise rich in African linguistic heritage and where many Êgbo speakers lived two centuries ago (Ortiz 1924; Debien & Houdaille 1964; W.P.A. 1940).8 In Cuba, among thousands of Abakuá expressions collected by Cabrera (1988) from people identified as “Carabali”
(a category including Igbo speakers), I find less than ten Igbo items; most of the rest seem to have either Efik or Kikongo origin. Relative to populations, Efik words especially are over-represented in American outcomes at Igbo expense.

The anomaly could be fixed mechanically in two ways: count more Igboisms in the outcomes than previously known, and/or fewer Igbo-speakers in the trade than errorist labels suggest. Both have been tried. The first tack is by Chambers (1997) and Gomez (1998) but their evidence has been assessed as wishful (Northrup 2000).9 Moreover, because the rarity of Igboisms recurs across diverse American plantation economies, particularist explanations are inherently liable to overlook a generalization pertaining to the source, hence the initial plausibility of the second option: reducing the estimated number of Igbo-speakers carried away. Comparing sex ratios of captives and modern census figures, Inikori boosts the estimated share of people trafficked from non-Igbo areas in the Nigerian “Middle Belt” (the linguistic fragmentation zone on the savanna fringe) and concludes “...that Igbos could not have contributed more than one-third of the total number of slaves sold in southeastern Nigeria between 1750 and 1830” (1988, 35).10 However, the image of a Middle Belt depopulated by slave raiding—a staple of colonial historiography (Buchanan & Pugh 1955)—remains speculative (Mason 1969), and even if true can’t change enough numbers to explain the lack of American Igboisms entirely.

The matter is thus moot: adjusted tallies of Igbo sources and outcomes leave the general problem untouched. Absent radically new data, new inferences must go beyond censuses and word counts to focus on intervening mechanisms. This has the advantage of being constrained, not just by available direct observations, which are sparse and error-strewn, but also by analogous cases elsewhere. One possible mediating factor is ‘creolization’—unusually abrupt linguistic or cultural shift between generations—but, as reviewed in the next section below, the logic of this term is incurably circular. All cultures change, and no one has ever proved that vertical transmission takes over when horizontal changes accumulate to the point they were confined to the vertical mode, remaining within individual branches (Meillet 1908, 4; 1922, 6; Robins 1967, 181).14 By hypothesis, vertical transmission takes over when horizontal changes accumulate to the point they alter information relevant to the critical period. To define this threshold is the main goal of historical linguistics, as indeed of population genetics (Hull 1978); pretheoretically, certain phenomena tend to fall on one side or the other of the line.

Word order patterns and inflections are either passed along to children within the local community. This ordinary kind of shift did not fail in the transatlantic African diapora, leading to acquisition of colonial languages by American-born African descendants. Even speakers of Trinidad Yoruba who “arrived not as slaves, but with the legal status of immigrant indentured laborers” (Warner-Lewis 1996, 26) had no active knowledge of an African ancestral tongue after a few generations, despite their concerted resistance to “language recession” (Warner-Lewis 1996, 173). As Prof. Mufwene rightly emphasized at the DePaul conference, the Trinidad example shows the irrelevance of slave status to first language shift per se. Indeed, the Cuban Igbo case shows that political differences between various captive populations were potentially more significant for language outcomes, than differences between captive and noncaptive groups. This is so because observed vocabulary survivals belong less to ordinary speaking knowledge and more to cultural esoterics like names and ritual phraseology.

Biologists distinguish two ways in which information moves among individuals: horizontal and vertical (within or between generations, respectively). Darwinian theory restricts genetic transfer to the latter, inherently slower vector (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 180), but since cultural differences aren’t genetically fixed, culture can take either path (Boas 1920, 313).15 Language is a limiting case because of a maturational constraint: first language acquisition has a biologically determined critical period—a window that closes gradually at the end of infancy and early childhood, past which fluency can’t normally occur. Thanks to the window, some kinds of language transmission favor the vertical route. For example, radiocarbon and ecological evidence shows that the Indo-European language stock took between five and ten thousand years to split into its present ten branches. Scholars agree that family-internal changes (isoglosses) first moved horizontally through the Indo-European area, as borrowings between embryonic branches, but the changes eventually increased to the point they were confined to the vertical mode, remaining within individual branches (Meillet 1908, 4; 1922, 6; Robins 1967, 181).14 By hypothesis, vertical transmission takes over when horizontal changes accumulate to the point they alter information relevant to the critical period. To define this threshold is the main goal of historical linguistics, as indeed of population genetics (Hull 1978); pretheoretically, certain phenomena tend to fall on one side or the other of the line.
by a leading creolist as “suspect” and “naïve” (Palmie 1993, 337)—broadly fits the cultural information theory just outlined. After noting that the distribution of African cultures in the western hemisphere is patchy, both within communities of African origin and between them, Herskovits makes a subtler point: the “scale of intensity of New World Africanisms” is more than the scattered grist of history, it’s also food for cognitive science—an interdiscipliary field which the anthropologist invoked before its time. Few would deny that demography’s main cause is economic. Forced labor was deployed in the Western Hemisphere where and where it was, above all because it was the most efficient way available at the time to raise productivity in a “muscle-driven, plant-based, land-constrained agrarian economy” (Alam 2003). But Herskovits observes how the empirical pattern of diaspora also depends on noneconomic factors, including the ontology of culture—a category broadly defined as “something learned” (1945, 57). Understanding why an immigrant language is neither preserved, nor lost, all in one piece, presumes a general theory about how the various parts of a language adhere to humans and to each other:

[T]he underlying structure of the aboriginal tongues persists longest, and is most resistant to change, while vocabulary and pronunciation exhibit the most non-African elements. But it is just the grammatical configurations of any language that lodge deepest in linguistic habit-patterns, and that present the greatest difficulties where a new language is to be learned—far more than either phonetics or vocabulary, though this last is easier learned than pronunciation. (1945, 60)

Herskovits’ cognitive variables are plausible on their face; after 60 years, they can be refined and applied to richer data. The Cuban pattern summarized above suggests that the effect of the mother tongue (which Chomsky calls competence or I-language) is distinct from that of two other phenomena: (i) the lingua franca or regional second language (used with widely varying degrees of fluency); and (ii) textual speech (Chomskyan performance or E-language). Neither (i) nor (ii) is restricted to the vertical mode; there’s independent reason to doubt that vertical transmission underlies many New World Africanisms; most importantly, both of the horizontal variables clearly affect the problem at hand.

As to factor (i), a Yorùbá variety called “Licomín” (Lükùmì) had by the early 17th century been explicitly compared to medieval Latin as the administrative vehicle of the western Niger delta. Earlier still, the lingua franca of the lower Congo river basin was probably a variety of Kiküngi similar to what’s now called Kituba (Swartenbroeckx 1952; van Bulck 1953, 107; Vellut 1989, 306). If so, then large numbers of mother tongue speakers need not be the main reason that varieties of Yorùbá and Kiküngi are the major sources of linguistic Africanisms in the Americas. Although Igbo was a medium of trans-ethnic trade (Northrup 2000, 15), there’s no evidence it played a cultic or political role. Indeed, phonetic and morphological differences among Igbo dialects (some of which, some speakers still publicly portray as mutually unintelligible languages) continue to hinder the emergence of a regional standard spoken variety, despite the nationalist impulse of the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-70). Today the mother tongue remains disfavored in literate pan-Igbo meetings, whether outside Nigeria or within.

The next question is what, if not Igbo, was the lingua franca in the southeast edge of the Igbo-speaking area. Here factor (ii) comes in: egóe texts were symbolic capital for long-distance trade in the region (Latham 1973; Northrup 1978). A big share of the egóe network, which supplied European slavers through Bight of Biafra ports, was administered (mainly between the Ìmò, Òboyní and “Cross” rivers) by oracular agents of the Òrù village group.

...was close to the leading trade emporiums of eastern Nigeria: about six hours by canoe from Calabar, two days from Bonny and Kalabari. In other words [Árù] commanded the geographical point in the hinterland through which flowed the hinterland products—men and commodities—through the Cross River as well as through the Eastern Delta ports to the sea. (Díkè & Èkèjìubá 1990, 44)

Èkèjìubá (1986) “estimated that about 70% of the slaves carried from [the Bight of Biafra] probably passed through Árù hands” (Ijeoma & Njokú 1992, 300). Attesting the scale of Árù influence in the region are “over one hundred and fifty Árù colonies... founded between 1700 and 1900” (Díkè & Èkèjìubá 1990, 1). It is observed that “[m]ost Árù till this day are bilingual and speak both Igbo and Èfik” (Díkè & Èkèjìubá 1990, 158 fn. 32) and that Árù egóe meetings comprise “secret” performances, learned by adults, comprising Èfik texts as well as nsibiri, an ideographic script cum gestural code (Daryell 1910, 1911; Talbot 1912; Àbáíngù 1978, 92-94; Ijeoma 1994, 1996). Not being phonologically based, nsibiri can be learned with equal ease by adult speakers of any I-language including Igbo and Èfik even though it’s generally accepted to be of non-Igbo, non-Èfik origin.

It’s accordingly possible that the non-Igbo E-language of Abakú cabidlos, though etymologically Èfik to a large extent, was not transmitted to Cuba directly by Èfik-speakers alone, or at all. This conjecture still needs to be cross-checked by comparative philology on both Atlantic shores, but meanwhile it has an interesting consequence: missing diasporan Igboisms would no longer count as a mysterious deficit, but would be understandable as resulting from a mechanism which can be
called “negative” transmission: transfer of E-language material by speakers of a distinct language. Some Afro-Cuban texts which are etymologically non-Igbo could be Árụisms—referring to their immediate source—and also negative Igboisms—since non-Igbo material was transmitted by Igbo speakers.

The revised picture is independently plausible for two reasons. (i) In Árụ as in other so-called stateless polities, a key technique of power has exploited the non-correspondence between I-languages (mother tongues) and E-languages (the codes of ritual texts).29 (ii) Òkìpẹ́ codes were known by at least some captive Igbo-speakers; in Árụ, “[c]onsider the seven-tiered stages of full membership was open to any adult male no matter their class or status” (Díkê & Ékèjùbá 1990, 77).30 It follows that Òfik-medium Òkìpẹ́ performance texts were available to some transatlantic Árụ captives as a basis for neo-ethnic associations like the Afro-Cuban Abaká cabildos. Despite the paucity of Igbo lexical material, these have been labeled with the Igbo subgroup name “(I)suama” (Cabrera 1958, 69), literally Isú aná “the Isú of dispersion” (Átìgbọ́ 1986, 11; 1992a, 41), a term covering a large share of the Árụ sector of influence in the southern Igbo-speaking area.

A testable prediction of the foregoing is that Cuban Òkìpẹ́ texts, despite predominance of Òfik lexical material, should display ‘transfer’ effects from Igbo-speaking intermediaries, as whenever a second language is learned outside the critical period. In principle the phenomena could be phonetic (altering Òfik pronunciation in stereotypically Igbo ways) or morphosyntactic (use of non-Ófik word order; leveling of Òfik person, number and aspect inflections). The differences may be subtle, since Igbo and Òfik are closely related (prosodically identical, in fact, cf. Green 1949), and may be further masked by secondary transfers from Cuban Spanish, but some should in principle be observed. Controlling for all these, the hypothesis of negative Igboisms implies that Igbo-based departures from normal Òfik will be found in Afro-Cuban Abaká no less than in the ritual speech of Òkìpẹ́ associations in bilingual communities like Árụ.

Aspects of this scenario can be made more precise. Recognizing that comparison of Cuban Abaká texts with Árụ versions of Òkìpẹ́ will need the help of culture-bearing communities in southeastern Nigeria, the paper concludes with issues of “secondary explanations” in consciousness (Boas 1911). Abaká, as the hegemonic ideology of an 18th-century diaspora, contrasts with orientalist beliefs in Middle Eastern origins favored by literate 19th- and 20th-century Igbo and Òfik-speakers, now reinforced by North American Afrocentrist discourse. Before all that, I should explain why creolization adds nothing to the Abaká story.

**IS ANYTHING NOT A CREOLE?**

The trouble with creolization as a theory is that it’s either unfalsifiable or already falsified. Usually the notion is not presented explicitly enough to exclude any known or possible cultural change, and even when it is, the facts don’t oblige. In Americanist anthropology, the classic creolist broadside brims with earnest programatics which, apart from being observationally vague, are multiply-hedged:

Within the strict limits set by the conditions of slavery, African-Americans learned to put a premium on innovation and individual creativity. …From the first, then, the commitment to a new culture by African-Americans in a given place included an expectation of continued dynamism, change, elaboration and creativity.[FN] Some beliefs and rites have always served as a focus of conservatism, a badge of fidelity to the African past. …Moreover, we recognize that many aspects of African-American adaptiveness may themselves be in some important sense African in origin. (Mintz & Price 1976, 51, 95)

Similar thoughts appear in the Amsterdam creole handbook:

> [C]reole languages… exhibit an abrupt break in the course of their historical development. …[T]hey develop as a result of ‘linguistic violence’ (and, as we shall see, frequently social violence too). In other words, we have to reckon with a break in the natural development of the language, the natural transmission of a language from generation to generation. (Muysken & Smith 1995, 4)

The task, in both cases, is to distinguish “creativity” or “abruptness” from “natural” historical scenarios in a non-circular way.

A reasonable way to define “Universal Creole Grammar” (Thompson 1961, 113) is to list features that all and only creole languages possess, then derive them from some characteristics of disrupted language transmission. Easier said than done: as the theoretical stakes have increased, the alleged defining properties of creoles have declined, from an unordered set of 12 constructions (Taylor 1971, 294), to 5 “key areas of grammar” and 7 secondary ones (Bickerton 1981, 51, 72), to mere “simplicity” itself defined as the absence of 3 morphological properties (McWhorter 1998, 809).31 The arbitrariness of these attempts is underlined by the fact that they
presumptive ‘non-creole’ languages like Yoruba (Oyéćáráin 1982). Conversely, stereotypic ‘creoles’ like Haitian elude McWhorter’s criteria (DeGraff 2001b). At a descriptive level, to admit the impasse, the same page of the Amsterdam handbook continues:

What is clear is that creole languages are not in the slightest qualitatively distinguishable from other spoken languages. …This means that before we can claim a language to be a creole, we need to know something about its history, either linguistic or social, and preferably both. (Muysken & Smith 1995, 4f.)

How to square the circle: if creoles are sociohistorically unusual, why aren’t they grammatically unique? From distinct premises, DeGraff and Mufwene both argue that this state of affairs is not contradictory, nor does it escape ordinary paths of language change. In short, the facts don’t require any special theory of creolization. DeGraff (1999b) holds that if creole language refers to anything, it’s E-language: “externalized” or “extensional” language (Chomsky 1986, 20), an open corpus of texts (utterances) including the kind of unsystematic primary data normally available to infants during the critical period for language. This fits the first handbook quote above. In line with the second quote, DeGraff finds that creole-ness does not name any property of I-language; the hypothetical, “internalized” or “intensional” mental representations that cause someone to speak a language fluently. The mixed result is coherent: although E-language input is a necessary condition for language development in infants (no particular human language is transmitted genetically), it’s not a sufficient condition (major aspects of a fluent speaker’s competence can’t be induced from E-language material).

The preceding sentence may be intelligible to linguists, even those who reject the I-language/E-language distinction, but others might like a little background. Contra behaviorist psychology (Skinner 1957), naturalistic studies since Brown & Hanlon (1970, 48) don’t find that infants’ ungrammatical utterances are corrected in a systematic way, but even so, children reliably abandon large classes of sentences which they once freely produced. The best known case is zero causative expressions like Don’t giggle me (intended to mean ‘Don’t make me giggle’): these are much used by English-speaking three-year olds (Bowerman 1982; 1988, 79), but occur in no adult variety of English or indeed any known language. The question is why they get filtered out in a few years if no one penalizes their use. Moreover, analogous phrases like I broke the cup aren’t affected, at least not in English (Hale 1996). Conceivably, children might infer a distinction between giggle and break from lived experience (only animates giggle; breaking can’t be spontaneous), but the distinction by itself can’t make causative giggle unspeakable while sparing causative break: both predicates are thinkable, so the change in performance depends in part on something remote from the external world. Chomsky calls such structures, among others, “Universal Grammar” (UG). The example shows that UG is a brain state which constrains the use of individual vocabulary items and their morphological quirks, as the latter are gradually picked up by a maturing mind (Borer 2003). DeGraff’s point is that there’s no evidence UG treats ‘creole’ E-language specially. The mix of contact jargons, varieties of French and Niger-Congo languages in the colonial sugar economy of 17th-18th century Saint-Domingue conferred no unique I-language properties on the subsequent Haitian language—called by its speakers Ayisyen or Kreyol—in Chomskyan terms, the notion of “I-creole” is undefined: “creoles are no more and no less than the result of extraordinary external factors coupled with ordinary internal factors…” (DeGraff 1999b, 477). While McWhorter (2001b) regards creoles as “young languages” compared to all the rest, Chomskyan consider all human languages as, by definition, equally ‘young’: each one is recreated, every generation, in infant brains.

McWhorter accuses DeGraff of “a veiled claim that no statement about human language is valid unless couched in the Chomskyan paradigm” (2001b, 398), but equally negative conclusions are reached by non-Chomskyan Mufwene:

[What is called creolization in the linguistics literature does not correspond to any particular structural process or combination thereof. …] Creoles are far from being a general structural type of language, although they form a special sociohistorically defined group of vernaculars and share several features on the family resemblance model. To be sure, similar social and linguistic developments took place elsewhere and at other times, however the term creole was not used for their outcomes there and then. Thus, what we have everywhere seems to be simple evolution of languages from one state to another under different ecological conditions. (2001, 138).]

Despite adopting I-language/E-language terminology, Mufwene reinterprets this distinction to hold between “idiolects” and “communal languages” respectively, where the latter are defined as “ensembles of I-languages” and as presupposing the existence of a “collective mind” (Mufwene 2001, 2). Chomskyan ontology, by contrast, locates the grammar of any particular human language in an individual, mature brain state. This discrepancy isn’t new: it recalls de Saussure’s successive
interpretations of langue and parole (Godel 1957; Hiersche 1972). Chomsky recalls the de Saussure of 1906/07, who describes the systematic side of language (langue) as individual, and the accidental side (parole) as social:

Tout ce qui est amené sur les lèvres par les besoins du discours, et par une opération particulière, c’est la parole. Tout ce qui est contenu dans le cerveau de l’individu, le dépôt des formes entendues et pratiquées et de leur sens, c’est la langue. (Godel 1957, 145). [Everything brought to the lips by the needs of discourse, and by a particular activity, is parole. Everything contained in the brain of the individual, the store of understood and used forms plus their meaning, is langue.]

Mufwene’s communal language is closer to how de Saussure defines langue in his course of 1908/09:41

La langue est un ensemble de conventions adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l’usage de la faculté du langage chez les individus. La parole est l’acte de l’individu réalisant sa faculté au moyen de la convention social qui est la langue. (Godel 1957, 66). [Langue is a set of conventions adopted by the social group permitting the use of the language faculty by individual speakers. Parole is the act by an individual realising his/her faculty via the social convention which is langue.]

Mufwene’s denial of a creole grammar type thus surpasses DeGraff’s, because it even extends to E-language. This leads to a second difference: Mufwene’s analogy of “communal language” with “biological species” (2001, 14), rather than with an individual organism, causes him to reject the family tree (Stammbaum) model of language transmission, allowing instead that a language may have “multiple parents” (2001, 211 fn. 14). In sum, Mufwene’s model has no room either for abruptness in language change, or for “hybridity” in linguistic inheritance. DeGraff by contrast is “Stammbaumtheorie-friendly” (2003, 398) with the catch that what is inherited in family trees is strictly an E-language base to which normal, discontinuous acquisition processes apply. If for Chomskyans like DeGraff all human languages are equally ‘young’ (re-created in infant ontogeny), for Mufwene they’re all equally ‘old’ (inherited in group phylogeny). Both Bickerton and McWhorler, by contrast, divide human languages with respect to ‘age’; that’s the only way to make the creole label stick. But where is the evidence that allegedly ‘younger’ languages are special?42 If a list of creole languages can’t be compiled without peeking at speakers’ ethnic backgrounds, then creolization is not just circular theory, it’s racial ideology (Manfredi 1993, 43). The first two quotes in this section convey the creolist obsession with ancestry: the belief that (cultural or linguistic) change is necessarily more abrupt in situations of contact between distinct populations, than in demographic tranquility. If this belief is simply wrong and its theoretical expression a dead end, its persistence is still instructive. Literate elites worry about rapid grassroots cultural change, especially when it’s not masked by the stability of ‘high’, written forms of public memory. Such anxieties abounded in the mid-19th century—when creole studies were born—because the engine of European nationalism was the extension of literacy from clerics to a skilled industrial labor force (Gellner 1967).43 The last section returns to issues in the sociology of (self-)knowledge, but first I should review available documentary evidence of E-language transmission.

CALL ME CARABALÍ: CUBAN ÌGBOISMS AS RITUAL-POLITICAL ALIAS

Summarizing so far: unless census tallies are radically revised to diminish Igbo presence, there’s no I-language explanation for the scarcity of Igbo words in American communities stemming from the Middle Passage. Unless the gap reduces to a coincidence of particular mislabelings on both sides of the ocean, an alternative account is needed, and one is available which relies on political and literary dynamics of E-language. The task is to develop, and eventually to test, such a story.

As Turner showed, good evidence for ethnic origins of transatlantic populations is found in personal names. One source of such data comprises rosters of captives rescued at sea at the end of legal slave trade, a time coinciding with the peak of the Bight of Biafra sector (Elits 2001, 45) as well as with “the most intense period of Aṣụ commercial expansion” (Ijćoma & Njjojiku 1992, 300). Of 213 named individuals found on the ship Amélie, loaded at Ibanj (“Bonny”) and intercepted in Martinique in 1822 (Thésée 1986, 137), most are unmistakably Igbo even in French errorist transcription.44 Similarly,

...[o]f the slaves on four ships from Bonny captured by the British patrol in 1821, fully 74 per cent were registered in Sierra Leone as ‘Ebo’ or ‘Heboo’ (Igbo) and 20 per cent as Calabar (Efik-speaking). As in the case of the captured ships from Old Calabar, the method by which the registrars established who was an Igbo [speaker] would have inflated the percentage somewhat by including individuals of smaller groups who also understood Igbo. (Northrup 2000, 14 citing 1978, 60-62, 231)
Reviewing a larger set of such archives, Nwókéjí concludes that

...[w]hile the estimates of eighty percent and seventy-five percent for the Igbo proportion of Biafra’s export captives given respectively by Chambers and Òròjó are too high, Northrup’s sixty percent estimate seems too low. (2000, 641)

Ethnic labels are referentially more ambiguous than personal names, but for reconstructed identification their redundancy (signal-to-noise ratio) is potentially greater because the set of named political units is smaller than the set of named individuals. In Cuba, Cabrera (1988, 7) lists two dozen autonyms of Igbo subgroups, using Spanish spelling of Cuban pronunciations. These are given below in italics. By inspection, all but two unambiguously match precolonial Igbo-speaking ‘clans’ (lineage federations) and ethnic subregions (cf. Ànọ́kà 1979; Òròjó 1999). The identifications follow, with two unknown cases left blank:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abaya</th>
<th>Ògbajaajà 45</th>
<th>Ika</th>
<th>Îkà</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aro</td>
<td>Àrij (“Aro”)</td>
<td>Ikweri</td>
<td>Ikvére (“Ikwerri”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyọṣiṣi</td>
<td>Òhaàjéyà (“Ohaàffìa”)</td>
<td>Isu</td>
<td>Ìsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Òyọṣaara</td>
<td>Òhájọzọara</td>
<td>Isuàchi</td>
<td>Ìṣùchì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Òtànṣa</td>
<td>Òtànčha</td>
<td>Ndokì</td>
<td>Ìdòkì (“Ndokì”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Òdu</td>
<td>Èdhà (“Addà”)</td>
<td>Ñku</td>
<td>Nkùnìè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ìṣìbu</td>
<td>Ìṣìélù</td>
<td>Koba</td>
<td>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Èchì</td>
<td>Èchìe (“Ètché”)</td>
<td>Onìchà</td>
<td>Ònjìchà (“Onìtshà”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Òṣìàna</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oka</td>
<td>Ôka (“Awka”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Èìyè</td>
<td>Èìhè</td>
<td>Òtùtù</td>
<td>Ìtùtù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Èìyèsa</td>
<td>Èìhìnààsa</td>
<td>Òròta</td>
<td>Òrèàà (“Òròttà”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Èkù</td>
<td>Èkùwọ</td>
<td>Èkù</td>
<td>Èrù</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the most inclusive level of nomenclature, the Igbo category itself figures but marginally in Cuban trade records (Bergad & al. 1995), most Igbo speakers having been submerged in other designations, especially Carabali:

Ibó es un importante pueblo casi en la desembocadura del Niger. Suenan poco en Cuba sus nativos, seguramente por confundirse algunos con los lucamis y con los yorabas, y otros con los carabalíes. En la Habana hubo un cabildo carabali Ibó….[L]os ibós entrasen en Cuba como carabalíes. (Ortíz 1924, 252, 2) [Ígbo is a big population almost at the mouth of the River Niger. In Cuba one hears little about its natives, certainly because some were mixed in with Lucamis and Yorubas, and others with Carabalíes. In Havana there was a cabildo called Carabali Ibó. …The Ígbos entered Cuba as Carabalíes.]

In Africa the reverse distortion occurred, with Igbo overlapping its neighbors:47

Its use by Europeans in the form Heebó or Ibo appears early in the slave trade to refer to any Igbo-speaking groups. It was also applied at first to the Ibibio who were later distinguished as “Kwa Ìbò” after the principal river of their country. (Forde & Jones 1950, 9)

This asymmetry between the two ends of the trade makes Igbo under-labeling on the output side even more significant. As argued by Northrup (2000), it can be interpreted in two ways. It may, on the one hand, simply show that older, literal denotations of Igbo differed from its modern reference as an ethnonym (a proper name).48 But other remarks by Afrocubans are more consistent with a second possibility: that submersion of Igbo in “Carabali” was not intrinsic but errorist, since at least some culture bearers possessed a good understanding of the ethnic picture:

Carabali isuàma, —o suàma. De estos vinieron muchos. …Mi abuelo decía que saltando una tierra los ibó estaban en el Calabar; son y no son carabalíes (Cabrera 1958, 69, 71). [Isuama, or Suama, Calabarians. Many of these came. …My grandfather said that the Ígbos were separated from Calabar by one intervening territory: they are, and aren’t, Carabalíes.]

The ambivalence of the preceding sentence also applies to the Igbo-speaking community of Àrrò, supporting the idea that the latter was involved in the American transmission of “Carabali” (as in Efik) cultural material such as ekpì. Quite apart from its (mis)use with respect to Igbo speakers, use of the name Old Calabar to refer to the slaving port at the mouth of the “Cross” river is a masterpiece of errorism all by itself:49

The words Calabar or Old Calabar are not applied to the Cross River till the Dutch maps of the seventeenth century. The town of Calabar is known to the natives as Efik (Efik), and they regard the word Calabar as of European origin. What in all probability actually happened was that the word was taken from the (New...
The ambiguity of Cuban Carabali may thus have been compounded when several African ports fell within Western errorist usage of "Calabar", "New" or "Old".

Calabar River which was so named from the town of the Kalabari who lived on it... Through some error this name was applied to the Cross River estuary which was finally called "old" Calabar to distinguish it... (Talbot 1926, 183f.)

The name Calabar... is not shown on fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese maps, but first appears on Dutch maps of the seventeenth century. ...The word Calabar is not of Efik origin; it is believed to have been first applied to the New Calabar River, farther to the west, so-called from the villages of the Kalabari Ijaw who lived along its banks. Through error the name came to be used for the Cross River estuary area, which in turn was later called 'Old' Calabar to distinguish it from 'New' Calabar, a town situated on the Niger River near Bonny, and now known as Degema. (Simmons 1956a, 4)

Beyond simple ignorance, the notion may have been suggested by oral traditions in the eastern delta, which Europeans had reached long before:

When the Dutch and English became interested in slaves from these rivers they distinguished three principal trading states each on its own river of the same name. These were Calbaria or New Calabar (Kalabari), Bonny and Old Calabar. The last referred to the Efik state and one can only guess how this name came to be applied to it. The Efik people have always dissociated themselves from the name, which they say they received from the Europeans, and have acknowledged no connections with the Kalabari. Kalabari traditions are complicated by the fact that Koroye, the founder of one of the Kalabari wards, is said to have come "from old Calabar". This is probably a modern emendation. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the Efiks came into contact with the Eastern Delta states. (1963, 20f., cf. 1989, 26)

The present "authorised tradition" of the Kalabari attributes the establishment of the overseas slave trade to [king] Amakiri, and the contemporary traditions of the former Korome ward of Kalabari associate it with their founder Opu-Koro-ye... who came 'from Efik'... [T]hough we can never prove it, we may suggest that the European attribution of the name Old Calabar to the Efik people could be a reflection of the Korome myth of origin. It was the place which the Opukoroye line of Kalabari kings claimed as their original home. (1965, 155f, 159)

The neighboring village, Big Qua Town, whose inhabitants are culturally related to the Ejagham Ekoi... are called abakpa by the Efik. (Simmons 1956b, 66).

Cook (1969, 168; 1985, 3 fn.4) cites this potential source as low throughout (Abakpa in the orthography used here), which could easily emerge in Cuban Spanish as final stress, in contrast to the initial stress of Cuban ecue continuing the high-low prosody of Efik ekpe. All the vowels match; as for consonants, Cuban [kw] (spelled ku or cu) is the regular treatment of African [kp], as in Cuban ecue continuing original ekpe. Semantically, the correspondence is less clear. Why should the Efik cult name ekpe be replaced in Cuba with the name of Efik's ethnic neighbor, even if the latter is considered to be ekpe's original source? The question gains force from the fact that ekpe itself persisted in Cuba (as ecue). There are two general possibilities. (i) The Cuban usage of Abakua began in Africa but either subsequently died out there without appearing in documents, or else was veiled from outsiders by errorism or secrecy. (ii) It's a Cuban innovation, perhaps based on the view reported by Jones:

The Egbo [ekpe] society of Old Calabar [Efik] was derived from the neighbouring Qua who said they brought it with them from their Ekoi homeland" (1956, 136).

This quote yields four errorist hits, two of which (emended by me in square brackets) were discussed above. The other two need comment. "Big Qua Town" is known in Efik as Akwá Obyọ Abakpa (literally 'the big town of the Abakpas') and in its own language as "Akin Aen" (Imona 1996, 26). "Big Qua Town" is the neighboring village, and now known as Degema. (Simmons 1956b, 66).50

Cook also corrects the spelling "Qua" (sometimes "Aqua", cf. Akak 1983, 380, or "Akwa", cf. Aye 1994, 16), transcribing it as [kuo] (1985, 3). Akak independently confirms this by referring to "Qua, Kwa or Kwo" (1995, 12).53

At the limit of uncertainty is the Cuban term Abakúa. Thompson (1983, 298 fn.8) finds an etymology in an ethnic term known to Efik speakers:

[T]he neighboring village, Big Qua Town, whose inhabitants are culturally related to the Ejagham Ekoi... are called abakpa by the Efik. (Simmons 1956b, 66).

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Even though the names written Qua (= kuọ) and Akpa (= akpa) are linguistically distinct (Akak 1983, 378), they can be co-referent, as when Akak speaks of “Akpas alias Quas” (1995, 28), echoing a 1668 description quoted by Kingsley:54

The original inhabitants of the district now occupied by the Old Calabar people are the Akpas whom the Calabarase drove out and to a large extent afterwards absorbed. This immigration of the Calabarase is said to have taken place a little over a hundred and fifty years ago. (1899, 553)

The equivalence between Akpa and Abakpa could be literal, if the -ba- can be separated as a plural, human nounclass marker in Benue-Kwa languages (B. Connell pers. comm.). The synonymy also fits Talbot’s take on Efik origins:

c. 1670. Some of the Ibibio chiefs from Creek Town [Obio Oko], finding themselves cut off from the European traders by their kin at Obutong [Old Town], moved to the site now called Duke Town (Calabar), some two miles to the south… They procured the land from the Kwa (Ekoi) who owned the country, and their town was at first called Akwa Akpa [Big Qua,] or sometimes New Town, to distinguish it from Obutong. (1926, 185)

I suggest that “Qua” [= Kúọ], “Akin” [= êKiịn] and “Ekoi” are all cognate. “Ekoi” is an old spelling of a term for “the Ejagham of Cameroun” (Crabb 1965, 11), apparently borrowed by Europeans from Efik speakers and canonised in the literature in adjectival form “Ekoid” (Mansfield 1908; Talbot 1912). Crabb (1965, 69) reports variants of the lexical item for ‘forest’ in the “Ekoid” language group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kokoi]</td>
<td>Ekparabong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kúÊ]</td>
<td>Bendeghe-Northern Etung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kúi]</td>
<td>Northern Etung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kua]</td>
<td>Southern Etung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kụ́m…]</td>
<td>Efutop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ê-kíN…]</td>
<td>Nde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this list, it jumps off the page that the first variant is phonetically similar to “Ekoi”, the fourth to [Kúọ] and the last to [êKiịn]. (Independently, “Qua” belongs to the same subgroup as Etung.) It wouldn’t be the first time that the word for ‘bush’ provided the basis for ethnic nomenclature.56

Akpa and Abakpa were also used outside “Calabar”; they named a group who intervened during the 17th century invasion of Ibibio-speaking Arù by Ijaw Igbó-speakers. That the item “Akankpa” is connected, is suggested in this retelling:

The raids for slaves were linked to powerful merchant princes such as Akuma Nnubi of Akankpa, belonging to the Eko (Okonyong) ethnic group. …[A] rival of yet another ethnic group, the Akpa or the Ekoi, whose interests were mercantilist …coincided with the …conflict referred to in tradition as the Ibibio war. …[D]ecisive battles were fought after the intervention of the Akpa, a completely different set of migrants from the Akpa area. …The Akpa of course retained their connection with their homeland. This was ensured by the sacred symbols of ancestral authority given to them by their chief at Akankpa, their home base. …In Arochukwu, these sacred relics were known as otusi and consisted of various elaborately carved ivory figures of the leopard, hunting dogs and elephant tusks. …[T]he relatively peaceful period following the imposition of Akpa ascendancy saw an influx of new migrants: specialists of various descriptions, craftsmen, refugees from neighboring settlements and slaves. …The well developed social and political system brought in by them and built around the otusi, the evolving system of patron/client relationship with its associated system of surplus extraction and accumulation through tributes and homage as well as the Ekpe club, enabled Akuma the Akpa king to organize the old and new settlements in Arochukwu into a unified state. …The people east of the Cross River are said to have called themselves Akpa and the name ‘Ekoi’ was originally applied to them by the Efiks. There are a few villages on the middle section of the Cross River called Akpa and all ‘foreign’ settlements in Ogoja province on the River banks are known as Abakpa. The port of Calabar was locally known as Atakpa. …The Abakwango-Hausa speaking [people] who lived and intermingled with the Jukuns for several centuries are known to the Efiks as Kwa. There are a few villages on the middle section of the Cross River called Akpa and all ‘foreign’ settlements in Ogoja province on the River banks are known as Abakpa. The port of Calabar was locally known as Atakpa. …The people east of the Cross River, who lived in the vicinity of the coast before the Efiks arrived from the interior and with whom they intermarried were called Kwa, Aka and Akpa. (Díkê & Êckijeüba 1990, 47-49)

A specific link between the ekpe institution and the term “Abakpa” at Arù can be inferred from one more detail:

The introduction of the Ekpe club in Arochukwu is attributed to one of Akuma’s followers, Otu Ono, whom he commissioned to bring in the secrets from his natal home in Akankpa, east of the Cross River. (Díkê & Êckijeüba 1990, 77)
Absent any example of “Abakpa” applied to the Òkpè institution by Èzik-speakers in “Calabar”, and with the only known such usage restricted to Ârù, this particular usage of Abakuá in Cuba is closer to the latter.57

If the foregoing is true, Abakuá È-language should show other Ârù features. Scanning through the largest Abakuá anthology (Cabrera 1988), I found Igbo lexical content in nine entries, seven of which are easily matched in the Êgbo dictionary. Five simple lexical items occur:

Lebé. Mirar (p. 325). lébé ‘begin to look, continue looking’ (cf. Ìgwé 1999, 365)
Nene. Mujer (p. 429). øvéene ‘woman’ (Ìgwé 1999, 611)38
Okoko ibana ụmen. Gallina (p. 455). økóko ‘domestic fowl, hen’ (Ìgwé 1999, 662), plus Èzik umên ‘chicken’
Umun. Tríbu (p. 507). ụmú ‘children, descendants’ (Ìgwé 1999, 812)
Yeó. Dinero (p. 527). ĝó ‘money, cowrie’ (Ìgwé 1999, 145)

Cabrera also gives two formulaically repeated sentences, whose presence in the corpus is obviously due to ritual use:

Anamábo, anamábo. Se dice al purificar al cofrade con un mazo de hierbas (p. 52). [Said while cleaning a ritual brother with a sprig of herbs]
Ânà m abu, ânà m abu. ‘I am spattering [liquid]’. (cf. Ìgwé 1999, 102, 826)
Anameró, anameró. Arrancando (las plumas de un ave) (p. 53). [Plucking out the feathers of a bird]
Ânà m eró, ânà m eró. ‘I am plucking out [feathers]’. (cf. Ìgwé 1999, 175, 729)

The remaining two lexical Êgbo-isms contain variants of a famous proper name, followed by various epithets which I conjecturally identify in the Êgbo dictionary:

Choko guanabia. Voz misteriosa que suena en el rincón del Butame [santuario]. El sonido de Ekue (p. 135). [Mysterious voice that sounds in the corner of the sanctuary. The sound of Ekue.]
Chóku ngbó ì nà-abiá ‘Chókwu the visitor’ (cf. “Chókwu the great deity of the strangers”, Nwàọga 1984, 60, 72)
Chukwuba ɛrèlu. Santísimo, en el cielo y en la tierra (p. 135). [Holiest in heaven and earth]
Chóku abjáámá ní ëlí ‘God the stranger who is in the sky’59

Both citations are significant because, before the term Chók(w)u was neologistically borrowed by catechists into the written language in a monotheistic sense (Achée 1975; Èchêrú 1979; Nwàọga 1984, 28), it named the Ârù oracle (among others perhaps) giving rise to expressions like Ìmú Chókwu for “Arochukwu” citizens. Clarke’s name for the Ârù oracle includes the epithet “Obama” (1848, 73), precisely as in the Cuban source. Nwàọga’s summary is definitive:

The biggest oracle which pervaded Êgboland from the 17th century was the Ibini Ñụgbú of the Ârù. Ibini Ñụgbú was not the god of the Ârù. When the Ârù speak of god they speak of Chì and Òbasí. It is important to make this distinction. When however the Ârù went into the rest of Êgboland to trade in slaves, they took with them, both for protection and as an additional business, the reputation of their Chì-Ükwu (big Chì) thereby elevating Ibini Ñụgbú to the status of the last arbiter, the god beyond which there could be no surer answer to problems. Ârù agents all over Êgboland and beyond advised individuals and groups among whom they lived to go to “to consult Chókwu” whenever a case went beyond local solution. A strong chain of information gathering was created, mysteries were invented around the shrine, death and slavery were visited on guilty persons, and generally going “to consult Chókwu” in Ârùchukwu became the highest act of the judicial process and of other problems and situations that required ultimate and drastic solution. (1984, 36)60

A related, potential Ârù-ism, also suggested by Nwàọga’s philology, is monotheistic use of the Èzik name Abasi, sans epithet (e.g. Cabrera 1988, 18):

Rev. Ìudo Odiong… explains that “Abasi is a general name for all gods in Êhibioland.” When the Êhibíbíbíbí want to refer to the Great God they use a qualifier: “Thus Abasi Êbom is the God whose greatness, ability etc. are beyond human knowledge.” …It would appear that terminologically the same relationship exists between Abasi Êbom and Chókwu, both being made up of the real original concept (Abasi and Chì) plus a descriptive epithet indicating immensity. …It would also appear that the Ârù Òbasí dí n’èlí represents an incomplete and therefore faulty transfer of concept. (Nwàọga 1984, 57)

One more possible Ârù-influence in Abakuá, suggested by C. Ìchêchùkwu (pers. comm.), is not lexical but phonetic: the distribution of r and l in Cuban Carabali compared to Ìzôn Kalabari. The change is usually described as metathesis, but a more plausible alternative is at hand:
A rolled r occurs in the [Árù] language, but this sound is replaced in certain words by another consonant which is a mixture of r and l. This sound, common in many African languages, is difficult to acquire; our native did not like it if it resembled l too much. It occurs to the exclusion of r in the neighborhood of [i] and [j], and occasionally with [e] and [i]; with other vowels [e.g. with a], r is used.” (Adams & Ward 1929, 66)

Applied to a loanword of the form [...la...ri...], the rule automatically returns the output [...ra...li...], precisely as in the Cuban pronunciation. On the far side of the ocean, 18th century Oldendorp (cited by Hair 1967, 72 fn 14) transcribed the term “Karabari” (1777/2000, 458), possibly illustrating the abovementioned difficulty to acquire a “consonant which is a mixture of r and l”[46]

**CALL ME HEBREW: NARCISSISM VERSUS NOSTALGIA**

The preceding section culled secondary support for the neo-Herskovits idea that some of the ‘missing’ linguistic heritage of Igbo speakers in the Americas survives ‘negatively’ in Cuban Abakúa texts which are etymologically Èfik. To test this with primary data means comparing èkpè texts from Cuba and Árù, with Èfik counterparts as a control. In such an experiment, a potential methodological pitfall on the Nigerian side emerged at the 2003 African diaspora conference in Chicago, when Igbo-speaking migrants intervened in the discussion of Africanisms to present a claim of non-African, specifically Hebrew or Jewish, origin for themselves.

Orientalism is epidemic in Nigeria and there’s no cheap vaccine. Yorùbá churchmen claim “Northern Egyptian” ancestry (Lucas 1948, 353; cf. Oldúíyòýòc 1971; Wescott 1964), Èfik historians recall “migration from Palestine through Sudan” (QCCA 2003, 26; cf. Hart 1964; Aye 1967) and the Chicago Igbo spokesman glossed the Igbo phrase aka ṣọhà (“hand of the people’) as the Hebrew word for priest, repriming Hyman Kaplan’s Yiddification of the 16th U.S. President as “Abram Lincohen” (Ross 1937, 5). Dismiss these tales as blowback, agitprop or malaprop, but they still matter, for two reasons. (i) Feeding back from historiography into oral tradition, they add noise to texts collected from living Nigerians. (ii) They’re grist for an information-theoretic analysis of actual migrations and ideological change.

Factor (i) is well known. Echoing abolitionists like Equiano (1789), missionaries styled the Igbo as a “lost tribe of Israel” (Basdèn 1938, 411-23; Ògbálu 1981, 7; Ókkèèchì 1972). *Theological subtext: these troublesome pagans are monotheists under the skin (in the genes), but along the way from the Upper Nile to the Lower Niger, skydaddy Chùkúwù Jehovah was rudely “elbowed into the background by the cult of the spirits and ancestors” (Àõìjìzé 1970, 11).6 Colonial officials jumped on the Hamitic bandwagon after Êgbọ- and Ògbóó-speaking women deposed British-appointed chiefs in 1929 (Gailey 1970; Àfiìjìbo 1972). Political agenda: if Chùkúwù can be rehabilitated as Osiris’ longlost cousin, we can repair hasty regime changes in Níri and Árù and groom southeastern proxies to match Frederick Lugard’s beloved Fulani emir’s (Jeffreys 1935; cf. Seligman 1930, Àfiìjìbo 1975, 1981a). Braiding both strands into a civil creed, Republic of Biafra publicists compared the Igbo to “the Jews of old” (Olújìwù 1969, 221) complete with their own bearded, military Moses; described anti-Igbo riots as an antisemitic Cossack pogrom (locally pronounced prógram); and called the attritional Civil War a case of genocide.

The orientalist fancy that the word Êgbọ is a “corruption of the word Hebrew” (Àfiìjìbo 1981c, 6; cf. Òilogu 1957, 116; Òríjì 1994, 26) resonates with Igbo-speaking literates because

...most educated Igbo have seen their historical vicissitudes in this century as paralleling only those of the Jews since the days of the exodus. …[T]his widespread, though probably unhistorical, ideological feeling of oneness with the Jews, which as we have seen goes back to the ex-slave boy Equiano in the eighteenth century, provides some clue to understanding of Igbo psychology, motivation and drive. (Àfiìjìbo 1981b: 182)

In other words, the exodus motif lives in Êgbọ consciousness because it echoes real displacement (dimension ii). 19th century European nationalists embraced the technical role of standard languages (Gellner 1967). In West Africa by contrast, where the economic game was not industry but trade, indigenous standardization deployed not secular literacy but decentralized, cultic texts. Local differences became entrenched. The Bight of Benin wove threads of “double nationality” in multilingual communities joining òrìṣà and vodun (Yál 2001). The Bight of Biafra had the “èkpè polity” (Ruel 1969, 253) with its nonverbal ìsìbìrì passport, multilingual ritual speech and multi-ethnic lineage federations (Àfiìjìbo 1981a, 189f.). By the early 20th century, industrial Europe had toppled all the autonomous West African regional exchange systems, and oral, polytheistic lineages were subdue, if not entirely replaced, by Sunday-Sunday monotheism and centralized states run by local literates.

West Africans received these revolutions in diverse ways, broadly following the respective cognitive styles formed in the régimes of indigenous political economy. As a first approximation of aggregate cultural response, one can distinguish Êgbọ...
narcissism from Yorùbá nostalgia. Peel fluently evokes the nationalist nostalgia of 19th century texts like Samuel Johnson’s *History of the Yorùbá*. Accompanying his parents (rescued slaves and first generation churchgoers) in 1858, Johnson returned from Sierra Leone to Nigeria where, in Peel’s sympathetic prose, he

...realized that his homeland needed to be re-imagined and re-configured for him to be truly at home there. The memory of Abiójú’s vanished Ēlụọ had to be connected to the new, extended category of “Yorùbá” introduced by the C[hurch] M[issionary] S[ociety], and Christianity needed somehow to be integrated into its history. (2000, 305)

Peel goes on to identify Johnson’s *History* with the mid-19th century’s ruling literary genre, Romance: a blend of christian emotions reprising the New Testament narrative of pathos, described by White (1973) as a “drama of self-identification” with a plot of “redemption” (2000, 305). Johnson’s *History* never had an Igbo counterpart, and in the absence of an antiquarian written rivalry, the Igbo have been described as “receptive to change.” In the classic statement of this culture-and-personality conundrum, Herskovits’ student Ottenberg wonders

...whether the emphasis on individual achievement, alternative choices and other features which facilitate culture change developed out of the slave trade or not. (1959, 142)

As if in answer, a Haitian proverb declares *Ibo pann kòr a yo’lgbos hang themselves*’ (in captivity) and the “Ebo Landing” story recalls collective suicidal rebellion. Meanwhile back in Nigeria, the Yorùbá have possessed the only stable ethnic political party: the Awoist movement called at different times Action Group, Unity Party of Nigeria or Alliance for Democracy. The Igbo by contrast, having lost a secession war, are reduced to the status of first-among-minorities (Coleman 1958, 350f.; Dudley 1978, Ēmọrụyì 2001, 287). The leading historian of Nigerian elites trace this difference to the relative involvement of the diaspora of emancipated Sàrò (Sierraleonean) ‘reaptives’ from the two ethnolinguistic communities:

> [O]nly a part of one ethnic group, the Yorùbá, in the territory that was to be called Nigeria countenanced the return of the Sàrò in the nineteenth century. …Why did Sàrò from other ethnic groups in Nigeria, who were in large numbers in [the] Sierra Leone colony, not imitate the Yorùbá? First the evidence is strong that nostalgia was strongest among the Akú (as the Yorùbá were known in Sierra Leone)... In contrast were the Igbo, the next largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone... The Pratts and Hortons (prominent Igbo) led no return-to-the-fatherland movement, J.A.B. Horton making only a defective mental excursion to Igboland. …Second, the Yorùbá had the advantage of the British occupation of Lagos which non-Igbo Sàrò seized to intrude into Lagos. There by far the majority of them stayed permanently under British protection because they feared that if they returned to their places of birth in the interior, they would be reconvered to slavery for export. …In no other part of Nigeria was there a British enclave like Lagos where the Sàrò could move near to their ethnic groups. Hence the failure of the reconnoitering visit to Old Calabar by some Igbo who dare[d] not move into Igboland. It was only to Old Calabar and Fernando Po that many of them returned, but only in a very tiny number. Igboland was entirely sealed to outsiders, including the Sàrò Igbo. On the Niger where mission stations and commercial stations were manned mainly by non-Igbo Sàrò, the few Igbo mission agents lacked the temerity to venture into the interior. …The early emergence of the educated elite among the Yorùbá gave the latter more than an ordinary lead in the matter of Western-style education over other ethnic groups in the country, a fact destined to inflame inter-ethnic rivalry in the twentieth century along directions not always healthy. (Āyándě́lè 1974, 11-13)

The contrast deepens in the post-independence diaspora, where the Igbo community defines itself genetically, while a corresponding Yorùbá membership statement is entirely cultural in orientation:

Any persons or groups of persons or people who have Igbo blood and genes in them in any part of the world, no matter under what circumstances they left Igboland/Biafraland, is Igbo and is therefore part and parcel of the Igbo race, Igbo heritage, and Igbo Nation. <http://www.biafraland.com/Ibo%20Landings.htm>

A Yorùbá is anyone that subscribes to the Yorùbá culture traditions and way of life. Anybody that has hereditary links to that Old Yorùbá kingdoms. You could live anywhere in the world or identify with any Nationality, but if you have a Yorùbá name, practice Yorùbá customs or even naturalize by adopting the Yorùbá way of Life then you are Yorùbá and can contribute to this forum. <http://www.nubercom.com/21CenturyYoruba/21stCenturyYoruba.html>

Ābùníbòjú & Miller (1997) observe the boost which Yorùbá nationalism has drawn, since the 1970’s, from Yorùbá cultural survivals in the diaspora of the 18th
and 19th centuries—a point repeated at the Chicago conference by the Yorùbá community representatives. By contrast, I’ve never heard Abakáu mentioned in an Ìgbo ethnic forum. Why not? In my observation at the conference, the Nigerian Yorùbá couldn’t parse the Cuban Lukumi texts beyond a few readily intelligible proper names (Ṣàngò, Ṭógun…). More plausibly the two styles of diaspora differ, not in literal linguistic knowledge, but on the level of political metarepresentations of language, taking off from the very different codifications of Lukumi and Abakáu—both as collections of texts and as political *lingue francə* at the time of dispersion. By now, this old contrast has produced, and been reinforced by, distinct investments in literate intellectual capital and in literary styles through which these investments are respectively consumed. The greatest “Igbo novel” (in the phrase of Œmînènyì (1978) is written in English, is entitled *Things Fall Apart* (Àchìbè 1958) and has been translated not into Igbo but into Yorùbá (Ọgùnyìncọ 2000).66

Thus there are many independent reasons to say that existing patterns of linguistic Africanisms in the Americas—as well as of diaspora consciousness—depend, as a historical matter, less on raw demography than widely believed, and more on pre-existing political institutions. This paper has made a preliminary case that a share of historical matter, less on raw demography than widely believed, and more on pre-africanisms in the Americas—as well as of diaspora consciousness—depend, as a

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**NOTES**

Based on talks at the Conference on Recreating Africa in the Americas through Rhythms and Rituals, Center for the Black Diaspora, DePaul University, Chicago, 5 April 2003, and at the Walter Rodney African Studies Seminar, Boston University, 22 March 2004. Correspondence to manfredi@bu.edu. Thanks to Prof. S. Mufwene for his remarks in Chicago; to the Afro cuban ensemble Omì Ṣẹ̀ṣẹ́le led by R. Díaz for their performances there; to students in my Spring 2003 class “Language & Ethnicity” at Boston College; and to Dr. I. Miller for keeping me in his research community since the 1996 African diaspora conference at SUNY Binghamton. The present writup draws on discussions over the years with P. Muyiwa, ‘S. Oyçälərən, M. Werner-Lewis and the late D. Nwanga , and on recent exchanges with B. Connell, M. DeGraff, E. Ezé, U. Nwokoji, O. Onyile, U. Röschenthaler, A. Schwęgler and J. Thornton, J. Cutler and I. Miller helped edit the first draft. Some of my conclusions converge with those reached by Northrup (2000) from partly different premises. My paradigm is Prof. M. Œnwaṣẹjẹgọwọ’s 1980 analysis of the Nri diaspora, integrating archaeology, ecology, economics, demography, linguistics, oral and written history with political and symbolic anthropology. This paper is dedicated to my revered sponsor and teacher the late Òmíkọ́sara Nkanà Oọkpọ, Èzi Ukwu, Kpìoghìhkọ́pìk, Èluhọ̀gbọ (1911-2004), Jùlọ̀pọ̀ Pàpà, i hù mài?

**Transcription.** So far as knowledge permits, and excepting some items in quotes or brackets, non-English forms are cited in standard orthography, marking lexically contrastive pitch. In Yorùbá (MLH), a ‘3 tone’ language with minor accentual effects (Bàìjìbòsì 1966), each syllable is individually marked except that M is marked only on nasals. Ìgbo (IL) and Èfík (LL), as trochaic, ‘2-tone plus downstep’ languages, are better suited to an accentual notation used by Christaller, Swift, Welmers and Nwàchìkọ, marking just the first of each sequence of syllables sharing a pitch level. Thus, in those languages, every unmarked syllable has the level of the preceding mark; every high (acute) mark is interpreted as downstepped with respect to the preceding one; and downstep is automatic if a low (grave) mark intervenes. Some Igbo and Èfík linguists use an Èbàçàm–style, syllable-by-syllable approach, leaving high always unmarked and marking every low, but the presence of systematic downstep in these languages then demands a special symbol. All known options—macron, vertical line, raised exclamation point, full stop—being impractical, downstep is most often ignored or mismatched.

1. The precise phonetics of the word *nsibidi*/*nsibidi*/*nsibiri* are unknown to me. Some actual variation, as opposed to pure errorism, is likely with respect to the consonants, though probably not for the tone pattern, whatever it is.

   a cluster bomb that contains 1800 one-pound bomblets, each containing 0.7 pounds of TNT with 700 razor-sharp steel shards imbedded in it, lethal up to 40 feet. These are scattered over an area equivalent to 157 football fields; presumably nothing—military, civilian, old, young, male, female—survives within this space. Many of the bomblets fail to go off and become landmines, the perfect random killer. (Lummis et al. 2003)
3. Even if not easily traceable as to origin, African archaisms in this hemisphere are rightly called survivals—facts whose impressive endurance underlines the brutality of genocide. This is surely why, as the Boston percussionist Nurudafina Pili Aβena has often said, Afroamerican musicians reveal expressions of pain during the highest moments of artistic performance.
4. The scarcity of Mandekan texts in the African diaspora, as compared to general loanwords, can presumably be blamed on the decline of the Malian state after the 16th century (Ly-Tall 1984). The few Mandekan texts collected by Turner (1949, 256-59) are Mende or Vai.

5. For the period 1790 to 1880… the quantitative analysis in the work of Bergad et al (1995, 72; Barcia 1985, 50) provide a breakdown of slaves by classification as follows: Out of a sample of 6,871 African slaves, 27 percent were Calabari, 28 percent were Congo, 16 percent were Gangà, 9 percent were Mandinga and 10 percent others; these classifications were broad and included many ethnic groups. The Calabari classification embraced the Bopa, Ibibio, Ibo, Efut, Qua, and all other ethnic groups who were transported through Old Calabar and the Right of Biafra. (Ishembo 2002, 280, references corrected)

I assume that Bergad’s “Ganga” refers to Central Africans as Ortiz (1924) supposed:

Aguirre Beltrán (1946, 120) señala que los Ganga formaban parte del grupo Mandinga, porque los árabes llamaron Gangara a los Mandé. (Pollak Eltz 1972, 30, reference corrected)

6. The numbers are calculated by Manfredi (1995). As to the labels, Bantu is technically a subset of Bantu-Kwa, which is the union of Greenberg’s (1963) Kwa and Bantu-Congo (Givón 1975, 66; Williamson & Blench 2000, 17f, 27), but Bantu stands apart geographically and on typological grounds. Besides cognition, Turner considered syntactic and phonetic features; see also Mufwene (1985). Prof. Thornton (pers. comm.) rightly notes that some Arabic names of Islamic captives, mainly in the Mandekan and Bantu columns, may have been masked in the typological grounds. The few Mandekan texts collected by Turner (1949, 256-59) are Mende or Vai.

7. A similar pattern occurs in Haiti, where vodun ritual terminology is mainly Fon/Gbé, but general vocabulary is more evenly shared with Mandekan and Bantu (Comhaire-Sylvain 1955; Baker 1993).

8. A stray, undocumented reference to Cuban Abakáu “narratives in the Ibo language” (<http://www.africana.com/research/enartheta_563.asp>) is probably just a naive inference from erroror labels. It’s equally hard to evaluate Thornton’s claim that “[n]o fewer than 60 percent of the Africans who formed the core of the surge of population in Virginia in the early 18th century were speakers of one or another dialect of the Igbo language” (1998, 322, citing Kulikoff 1986 and re-cited in turn by Berlin 1998, 111). In Haiti too the record is mainly silent. McDaniel (1998, 51-59) reports a handful of Igbo-identified songs in the Caribbean island of Carriacou, totaling less than 20 distinct lines in all, with one possibly Igbo item: the phrase ìbo lele (also known as the name of a dance in Haiti). An expression Le le ‘is glossed by Igbo (1999, 368) as an irregular imperative “Look!” In Grenada, McDaniel (1998, 52f) quotes a song from Paul & Smith (1963, 7) in two forms. An untranslated stanza, transcribed “E-o, Ibo, Lélé-lélé / Ba ya mmu ka-kí-tí / Ba yo / Ba ya mmmu sa fa mè / Ibo” has the comment that the singer’s grandmother “... is Igbo family and she won’t live for the other nations, she will trample them—that’s Ba kakite Ibo.” I see no way to derive this interpretation from the text on the assumption that it was originally in Igbo.

9. Both Gomez and Chambers raise the estimates of Igbo speakers, thereby making the dearth of American Igboisms even more mysterious.

10. The late 18th/early 19th century saw the vast majority of human exports from that region (Örji 1987). On the revived Middle Belt theory cf. also Áfígbo (1977 and pers. comm. cited by Inikori 1988, 35 fn 33; Obichere 1988, 30; Inikori 1992, 106 fn 68). Other authorities are studied and ambiguous, referring simply to “slaves… from the Igbo hinterland” (Alagbaso 1992, 450). Many Igbo-speaking captives remained in coerced labor in southeastern Nigerian horticulture (Dike 1956; Jones 1961; Thomas-Emáçagwáï 1984), and it may also matter that exported Igbo-speaking captives were disproportionately young (I. Thornton, pers. comm.).

11. Lacking any deductive content, the creole ‘answer’ begs the noncorrespondence question. Like other ideologies, creoleness exists mainly in the eye of the beholder, even if that beholder is looking in a mirror, as when Asante’s quest for a “composite African… identification” (1990, 9) entails “a creative quest for interpretation which ‘looks good’” (1990, 39).

12. E.g. “on average, one in four British African Caribbean men have a Y chromosome that traces back to Europe rather than Africa” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/afrika/2757525.stm>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/gene/dna_detectives/african_roots/results.shtml>); and there is “an average of 30 per cent of White admixture in the Black population” of North America (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 74).

13. In terms popularized by Boas, the comparative method has to consider if transmission of a given cultural similarity is better explained as ‘evolution’ or ‘diffusion’. In genetics, transmissible traits are generated by the basic mechanisms of mutation, selection, migration and drift. Here migration is of prime importance. Lamarckian genetics underplays mutation by assuming that characteristics acquired in one lifetime are heritable, but even for Darwinians the issue is blurred by gene-environment interactions (Levins & Lewontin 1985; Depew & Weber 1995). Selection tends to be exaggerated by sociobiologists like Pinker (2002), cf. Roberts (2002). Implicitly in all comparisons, two other possibilities—chance resemblance and universals—need to be excluded before considering a causal inference, though this step is often skipped in folk theorising (some pertinent examples are given in the last section of this paper).

14. To take an example associated with Meillet, “Italo-Celtic” was a subgroup in the early history of the family, but not thereafter (Watkins 1966). The shift to vertical transmission is akin to Darwinian speciation, assumed to have a demographic cause (Mayr 1963, cited by Levins & Lewontin 1985, 294). For a sceptical view in linguistics, see Anttila (1972, 309).

15. See also Hale (1986). Mufwene (2001) challenges the limit on horizontal language transmission, in part with Afroamerican evidence relevant to the Cuban Igbo case. From a more philosophical angle, Koster (1988, 1992, 1994) questions which aspects of language pass between individuals (like genes), and which between groups (like intellectual property). Collective intellectual property is obviously a key concept for initiation societies like Abakuá: the notion, recently added to Western legal codes, that such property pertains to individuals, has less scientific plausibility. For “copyright-holder”, read “cultural expropriator”.

16. Endorsement of Herkovits doesn’t mean uncritical acceptance of current African Studies in North America. While European Africanists draw on longstanding philological expertise, and on painfully acquired reservoirs of political sophistication about nation states, their U.S. counterparts by and large lack these resources, and tend to carry the short-run interests of their Cold War sponsors, especially in the U.S. Higher Education Title VI Area Studies funding stream (Wallenstein 1997). Thus Múkoma wa Ngugi is clearly right to insist that “…Western scholarship on Africa needs to reinvent itself. Perhaps refusing to wear the boy-scout badge of the Africanist is a beginning” (2003, 14), but progressives are not the only ones thinking about reinvention. U.S. Title VI is now on the verge of official enlistment in the War on Terrorism (see <http://internationalstudies.uchicago.edu/titleVI.htm> updated December 5, 2003).

17. Alam cites Wrigley who attributes English industrial takeoff, ahead of commercial leadership, to “the move from an advanced organic to a mineral-based energy economy” (1988, 104). Before then, African labor power was the main kinetic resource. The calculation changed when England began industrial use of fossil fuels circa 1800. The importance of plantation slavery in the transition of Euro-Atlantic feudal and mercantilist empires into liberal and capitalist nation states is at least a corrolary of Williams’ thesis that “[i]t was the capital accumulated from the West Indian trade that financed James Watt and the steam engine” (1944, 102), cf. Wolf (1982, 200), Wallerstein (1989, 144f), Inikori (1992, 97), Bergquist (1996, 24-32) and Blackburn (1997, 572). English priority in abandoning muscle for fossil
power bears on another dimension of Williams’ famous study: the relative weight of pecuniary versus moralistic motives behind Britain’s 1807 anti-slavetrading law.

18 Generalizing from language to music, Herskovits goes on to propose that

in situations involving change, cultural imponderables are more resistant than are those elements of which persons are more conscious. It is important to stress in this connection, however, the distinction between this assumption and the hypothesis which holds that material culture is more acceptable under contact than non-material culture. (1945, 60)

He then tries to reconcile the two conflicting principles by restricting the first to “process” and the second to “form”, but the attempt seems strained: both of them involve form as well as process, and the category of “material culture” assumes mind-body dualism, which is inconsistent with basic tenets of cognitive science like the computational theory of mental representation to which Jordan & Russell (1999)

19 “...lingua eorum est facilis, vocatur lingua Locomin et est universalis in sitis partibus, sicut latinum in partibus Europa” (Brásio 1960, 465, cf. Thornton 1988, 362 fn. 34). The locations included the Ijebu (“Jabou”), Wari (“Ouairai”) and Òdo (“Benin”) kingdoms. A language of similar name—Olukwumi—survives today not far east of Òdo in a few enclaves in the western Igbo-speaking area now called Anajina (Thomas 1914; Orowujejogwu & Okoli[1981;1991], 1999, 66). Recently salvaged copies of 700 distinct wax cylinders of 2.5 minutes’ duration, recorded by Thomas and presumably including Olukwumi, are being digitized in the British Library (http://www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive). It will help to check Thomas’ sample for any similarities between the southern Nigerian variety and Cuban Lucumi which exclude Yoruba dialects sensu stricto—confirming a horizontal transmission model. Lucumi would be expected to show more similarities to the language presently called Ibe (Shibekei), As a possible case in point, I’m anecdotally informed that the expression olu-ke (colloquially, ‘my tight friend’) is current an Ibelekiri greeting. The may have been true, later, of closely-related Lôbângi (“Bobangi”), the precursor of Lingala (Harms 1981, 126; de Rop 1960, 17 cited by Harms 1981, 93). A difference with Lukumi in southern Nigeria is that, until direct colonization in the late 19th century, the greater linguistic cohesion of the west-central Bantu area (roughly Guthrie’s B and C zones) may have confered less advantage on a Central African lingua franca as opposed to reliance on high mutual intelligibility among first languages (Harms 1981, 74, 92). Kil:3:nys elements in Afro-Cababan Abakuk awaits expert attention.

20 See Schweger (1996), Motinno & Schweger (2002) on Kil:3:nys in Colombion Palenque. The impression of 17th century missionaries that Atlantic Africa contained between 13 and 30 ethnolinguistic “nations” (Thornton 1992, 184 fn. 6, 185) may register no more than regional lingue frances in a “transnational community phenomenon” (Yôi 2001, 248). Attribution of national status to ethnic labels may be another case of Western errorism—a ‘blowback’ of European ideology (cf. Chatterjee 1986, Simpson 1988). Thornton skits a sociological definition of nation à la Gellner (1967), or an economic one à la Wallerstein (1980, 144), relying instead on assumed cultural identity manifested in “mutual intelligibility” between individual languages (Thornton 1992, 87 fn. 14). However, overlap with a single lingua franca is not known to be a better indicator of intelligibility than any arbitrary lexicostatistic score.

22 Confusion between the two functions may be responsible for certain European ideas cited approvingly by Áfígho:

Baikie expressed the view that all the dialects spoken between Aro Chukwu and Old Calabar were directly or indirectly connected with Igbo. Major A.G. Leonard [1906, 43,…] opined…”that the languages spoken by the Ibibio, Efik, Andoni and others have all been derived from Ibo at some ancient period and that there is a distinct dialectal affinity between the Ibo dialects of Oru, Brass, Ibeni and New Calabar, and the Isuama dialect of Bo” (1992c, 49).

Áfígho goes on to suggest that there was a time when a vague ideology of ‘pan-Igboess’ floated generally between the Niger and the Cross River” (1992c, 50) and to blame scepticism by non-Igbo speaking historians like Noah (1980) on emotion from the Nigerian Civil War. Even at face value, this ‘pan-Igbo’ ideology begs the question of whether it was based on shared language, or—as seems likelier—on “[t]he part played by the Árij in making inter-dependence and peaceful co-existence possible through their trade routes, and the pan established through the widespread dread engendered in this whole area by the Long Juju” (1992c, 57).

23 E.g. at the business meeting of the Igbo Studies Association in Boston on 1 November 2003, Igbo was used fitfully, mainly to score points against members of Nigeria’s current ruling party in attendance. A resolution to adopt Igbo as an official medium for Association meetings was withdrawn after sharp debate. It’s a truism that such controversies could scarcely occur in an analogous gathering of Yorùbá-speaking scholars abroad, despite the fact that mother tongue speaking fluency may not be significantly greater in the latter setting.

24 This sentence is a philological minefield. (i) Colonial rendering of Ári as “Arockchakwu” is honored by most historians, e.g. Dike & Ekéjìbùjì; Achebe reinforced it with the bilingual pun “arrow” in the title of his 1967 novel. Now there’s also the neologism “Arockchakwu” (Okoro 1998, 46) with a hypercorrect “dotted o” in the second syllable replacing etymological “dotted u”. Given the town’s oracular industry, there’s no reasons to not derive the name from the root “mi” (propitiate a deity with sacrifice”) (Williamson 1972, 457; Isogu 1999, 735). Remarkably, the first written source for the name (Clarke 1848, 73) renders it better than subsequent literature; see also Ilogu (1957, 100). (ii) The river which Europeans called “Niger” has essentially one single indigenous name (Olumù, Òlùmì, Òrìnilẹ̀, Oṣòṣà, etc.) as it flows past towns speaking dozens of Benue-Kwa languages. By contrast, indigenous nomenclature for the river baptized as the “Cross” (Río da cruz) is diverse. At its mouth it’s called either iNyàg or akpa, both meaning generic “river” (B. Connell, O. Oyáké pers. comm.). It is marked as “ArEk” by Petermann (1863, 63) “kåji¥bÄ (Akpa)” it’s called Ònyím Òkwù “Big Ònyím” an expression which may reflect the downstream origin of some Ònyím Òkwù names in Árí, bordering a lower tributary of the “Cross” whose name is spelled “Enyong” (tones unknown) by colonial sources like Jones (1886). Like its Efik counterpart and possible namesake, the Ònyím Òkwù word Ònyím by itself generically refers to “river” as in the idiom Ònyím Òkwù “swim” (literally, “splash in river”), which in Standard Igbo is either Ònyím Òkwù “splash in water” or Ònyím Òkwù “splead in stream”.

25 Details of Ári hegemony remain controversial. Òjèjìna observes that “Àrí settlements… were not always motivated by commercial opportunities” (1994, 42), and Áfígho suggests that… an overall picture of trade and life trading in south-central and south-eastern Nigeria built up from competently prosecuted micro-studies is unlikely to uphold the idea, propagated by [Dike’s] Trade & Politics, that the Árí enjoyed in Ògbomó a monopoly of commerce so complete as to be generally accepted as divinely appointed (1992c, 83).

Ári had difficulty encroaching on the much older Nírí kingdom and its Òlìhìgípí title system (Orowujejogwu 1880, 26-30, 59-61; M. Ànikòî pers. comm.; Òjèjìna & Ànjie 1992, 198). The British overrode Árí and Nírí in 1901 and 1911 respectively. Áfígho allows that most of the southern Igbo-speaking area was culturally integrated under the “dominant influence” of Ári and “the growth in commerce which came to be associated with the trans-Atlantic system from about the tail end of the 17th century” (1992b, 157). He gives this area the name “Ìgbò Àhàmà (àhàmà meaning secret societies)” (1992b, 154).

26 “Of the 150, about 45 were located in Òbjìbo, 38 in Ekò and 67 in Ògbó territory” (Ekejìbùjì 1992, 332 fn. 17) citing Òmo (nd.), see also http://www.aro-ògbò.com/trikes.html and http://www.aro-ògbò.org/headsresettlements.html
27. “In Ekpe ceremonies at Arîchîkówu, many songs are sung in Cross River languages, although most members do not understand them” (Benton 2002, 30). Also, Obuh 1984 on nearby settlements. As to nabiiri/nabilité/nchibidi, the name of the script, an Ejaham etymology has been proposed “from nchibi meaning ‘to turn’—a symbolic reference to... esoteric, organized and functional complexity...” (Onor 1994, 22). Leib & Romano cite the name of the gestural code as “egbe” (1984, 50), probably intending ekpe (see next footnote).

28. Onor (1994, 22, 101) claims origins in the Ejaham-speaking area both for nbiir—The Ejaham name for what Efik calls ekpe—and for nabitiri. Similarly “[t]he most important men's society in the Cross River area, Ekpe, had been sold by the Eko to the Efik at Old Calabar, who sold it to the Enyong, who sold it to others including the Aro, who in turn sold it to many other communities” (Northrup 1978, 173). Some say that ekpe also had an Ibibio component: “The slave trade was partly responsible for the reshaping of the Ibibio Ekpe society and the Eko Mgbè into the Ekpe at Calabar” (Aлагу 1992, 451), but this could be a feedback from errotics who changed ekpe to “Egbọ” (Jones 1956, pâmùn), wrongly equated with egbe, the Ibibio word for 'ancestor' which also names a masked ancestral dance. (Ekpe in this sense, apparently.) Both Efik and Ibibio lack the gb phoneme (Simmons 1956b, 66; Essien 1985, 66), which is easier for Europeans than its voiceless counterpart kp. According to Nicklin & Salmon, the complementary distribution of ekpe and kp institutions in the region is both longstanding and continuing, with the exception of ‘Oron” where ‘kpẹ’ seems to have been the major male cult at the advent of the colonial era” (1984, 33). See also:

The greatest difference between the mainland Ibibio and the Efik is the absence of Ekpe Owonjo by the Efik. When they finally settled at their present site, they may have taken the Ekpe and the Qua whose instrument of government was the Ekpe secret society. The Ekik adapted the Ekpe secret society in preference to Ekpo Owonjo which was in their opinion less powerful than ekpe in the control of the large slave population among the Ekpe. (Udo 1976, 169).

29. 1- and E-language need not be distinct in this function. In the Igbo-speaking area, the argot of kpẹ initiation of the Nri Kingdom makes do with Igbo ingredients (Ọmụma 1980; Manfredi 1991, 265-73), and the same is presumably true for the ‘secret codes’ of the Òkà (“Awka”) ironsmith guild (Dikike 1974 cited by Ezzian 2002, 7). Similarly, Akuete’s finds non-Igbo material in the speech of Ye’egbe vodon initiates, despite an explicit “no Igbo-speaking rule” (1998/99, 83). Further afield, the Italian Vallone dell’Adda supplies another case of divergence, where shoemakers’ jargon draws heavily on German lexical items (Bracchi 1987).

30. They continue on the same page: “In many wards, however, the highest grade was open only to the Amaádi [‘freeborn’]. Mobility may have been even greater in 19th century ‘Old Calabar’ where ‘portion of slaves actually purchased entry to the governing council of Ekpe’ (Latham 1971, 601). Uya (1987, 39) endorses Latham’s view that the Ndem “tutelary deity” (1973, 146) was gradually supplanted by ekpe in the 17th and 18th centuries as Ekik economy turned from local estuary fishing to long distance middleman-ism. McWhorter’s alleged non-creole symptoms comprise lexical tone, overt inflection and semantically-opaque derivational morphology. Bickerton’s five primary characteristics at least share something empirical: they all appeared together in his paradigm example, the abrupt pidgin-to-creole transition of Hawaiian English (1981, 17). Of course this clustering doesn’t mean the five are necessarily limited to creoles (They aren’t) and Bickerton is aware of the alternative explanation:

Orthodox generativists... could predict no more of a creole than that it should not violate any universal constraint. However, if all creoles could be shown to exhibit an identity beyond the scope of chance, this would constitute strong evidence that some genetic program common to all members of the species was decisively shaping the result. (1981, 42) The “it” not having panned out, Bickerton is now an “orthodox generativist” in the above terms when he defines creoles as possessing five properties “of natural language” tout court (1990, 171). Calvin & Bickerton (2000, 250) blandly declare that “creoles have the features of universal grammar”. But Bickerton still thinks that “acquisition of Haitian Creole would reach the level of mature native competence on the order of (at least) three or four years sooner than acquisition of English” (1999, 67)—still assuming, therefore, that Haitian is a “default” or “unmarked” instantiation of the human faculté du langage. But the link is not necessary: Mulwene (1999, 99-110) gives a consensus list of 7 “creole” features, all of which can plausibly be regarded as unmarked, not in a Ug sense, just relative to “the ecology consisting of the linguistic materials (homogeneous or heterogeneous) the learner encounters” (1999, 121 fn. 3).

33. A fallback position, consistent with intuitions presumably shared by Bickerton and McWhorter, would be that creoles exclude certain morphosyntactic types, e.g. polysynthesis (Baker 1996). This would be reasonable, except that traditional, macro-typological classes like polysynthetic languages have proved no easier to delimit than creoles, in other words adding a second circularity does not offer an escape route from the first one.

34. Chomsky’s E-language recalls Kiparsky’s “external evidence (including both behavioral and historical evidence)” (1973, 87), but the two linguists invest this type of data with respectively low and high relevance in the task of evaluating competing theories.

35. Genetic transmission of ancestral languages, though false, is part of folk belief as shown by immigrant surprise that children don’t automatically inherit their parents linguistic abilities. A remnant of this belief survives at the core of Bickerton’s creole theory, which holds that specific grammatical pattern is transmitted genetically, in the absence of consistent E-language cues to the child. In his words, “all, or at least a substantial part, of the grammar of a language can be produced in the absence of the generation-to-generation transmission of particular languages that is a normal characteristic of our species” (1988, 174). He calls this pattern a “bioprogram”; related ideas in language acquisition theory include the subset principle (Berwick 1985) and default parameter setting (Hyams 1987). Maysken points out that all these approaches rely on the subsequently-abandoned idea of syntactic markedness:

Perhaps the whole original notion that creoles are unmarked systems was misguided, but so far it remains as the most substantial contribution of Bickerton to the field. Now there is no base for it. (1988, 306)

36. Hale’s generalization—that zero-causative unergatives are excluded from adult languages—is based on a sample comprising English, Miskitu, Navajo and Basque. With familiar caveats (Fodor 1970), a logical equivalent can always be expressed periphrastically, either by so-called analytic causatives (make/let/have me giggle) or by multi-clause expressions (cause me to giggle, bring it about that I giggle). In Modern Hebrew, zero-causatives are claimed to be overapplied in adult speech to include unergatives (Borer & Wexler 1987, 159), which would counterexampleify Hale (1996) assuming (i) that binyan 5 (schematized as hitCIG) is inherently causative and (ii) that the causative-inchoative relationship is syntactic. However, both of these assumptions are questioned by Arad, who claims that there is no [+causative] binyan (2003, 182) and that “the non-causative and the causative verb are both [independently] derived from the root and not from one another” (2003, 333). Borer’s (2003) analysis of Hebrew lexical alternations is also consistent with Hale (1996), but without Arad’s appeal to Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993)—a phonological theory of affixation.

37. Adult Igbo filters out zero-causatives, even those translating English unaccusatives like break (Nwachukwu 1987). Instead, alternating causatives in Igbo take the form of so-called biniwaxial verbs (or V-V compounds, cf. Lord 1975). This gap does not threaten Hale’s (1996) generalization, but it remains puzzling. Hale et al. (1996) sketch a solution in terms of lexical
redundancy, pending study of the development of causatives in Igbo-speaking children, as well as reconsideration of the unaccusative/unergative distinction (cf. Žemansky 1984). 38. On logical grounds, UG is further idealized as the "initial state S 0" of the language faculty (Chomsky 1986, 25), however this begs the question of maturation (Borer & Xweler 1987) as well as the markedness assumption discussed above. 39. A possible response is that Haitian or whichever other language lacks the prototypical creole structures had to that extent "decreolized" (Bickerton 1974, 1981, 46f.), but this insulates the claim of a creole type from disproof, pending discovery of some way to know that any given data is not decreolized. The circularity is blatant in the following quotation: The more we strip creoles of these more recent developments, the more we factor out superficial and accidental features, the greater are the similarities that reveal themselves. (Bickerton 1981, 132) Another response is that the alleged status of "creoles" as "the world's simplest grammars" is not a matter of "synchronic theory" at all but is purely "historical" (McWhorter 2001a; 2001b, 398, 411). An appeal to history as the unique testing ground for creole uniqueness concedes DeGraff's point that the relevance of creole is limited to to E-language, at which point any mention of "synchrony" (McWhorter 2000) is surprising. The same objections can't logically apply to Mufwene's critique, which McWhorter has not addressed so far as I know. 40. Also Mufwene (1996, 107; 1998, 324) quoted by DeGraff (2001a, 285); Mufwene (2000). 41. According to Doroszewski (1933), cited by Hiersche (1972, 13), de Saussure's shift between 1907 and '08 was influenced by Durkheim's views on "collective consciousness". Remar-kably within mainstream generative grammar, something close to Durkheim's "ideation collective" (1898, 301 fr. 1) has been rehabilitated by Koster (1988, 1992, 1994). Accepting UG as an innate constraint on natural language grammars passing through the acquisition filter, Koster nevertheless endorses Wittgenstein's objection to the view that knowledge of any particular language fully coincides with individual psychology; on the contrary, it also has a supra-individual dimension because the mind, unlike the brain, "cannot be sharply distinguished from the external memory" (Koster 1992, 5), and external memory necessarily has a "public" or cultural context—for Durkheim, "collective"; for Mufwene, "communal". 42. Both Mufwene and DeGraff endorse the views of Chaudenson (1992), in ways beyond the scope of my discussion here. 43. Paternity of creole linguistics conventionally belongs to Schuchardt (1882). 44. Thesée (1986) gives etymologies for seven personal names, e.g. "Houanizei" could be "Nwaanyeze" (orthographic Nwaanyaize) or "Nwanyeze" (Nwaanyaize). Unambiguous cases are Nvoki ("Ousqué") and Ndiubiu ("Ouobuchiti"). 45. Áti-Igbo evokes, without elaborating, an ethnic distinction "between Aghaza and Isi at the pan-Igbo level" (1992b, 147). 46. A near neighbor of Árů, mentioned by Ilogo (1957, 107), Ekok伊e (1992, 316) and Òyìjì (1990, 136). Nair (1975, 8) cites hilarious testimony, collected from Etubom Ededom Ekpenyong Oku by Commissioner A.K. Hart: The Ëfìks were an oriental tribe whose home was in Palestine. …When the Ëfìks reached Eastern Nigeria settled at Ututu in the Igbo country. The people of Ututu called the Ëfìk immigrants Eburutu, a corruption of the words "Hebrew and Ututu" the former word being a reference to the Ëfìk oriental origin. (1964, 29) A few pages later, Hart flips Etubom's submission to interpret the appellation Eburutu as having been made "presumably in derision of the Ëfìk claim of Hebrew descent" (1964, 37). More trenched, but equally improbable. 47. Also in this hemisphere, non-Igbo speakers were lumped into the Igbo category: [W]ithites in the British Caribbean and mainland colonies used 'Ebo' or 'Ibo' to include the 'Ibo, Ibibio and Efik and Cross River peoples' and rarely used and little understood the meaning behind names such as 'Calabar' and 'Moko'. (Northrup 2000, 14) Something similar happens in modern Nigeria: Òṣọọṣọ (2004) recalls stereotyping the late Kenule Saro-Wiwa as "Igbo" in 1962 when they met as new students in University of Ibadan catteria queue, based on Ken's preference for rice instead of amalá (yam porridge). Saro called Òṣọọ "Yorùbà" for making the opposite dietary selection. They soon discovered a shared political identity as Nigerian "minorities", respectively Òdó– and Ògóni–speaking, and both found a political home during the 1964 federal election campaign in the Northern People's Congress, not in the South’s dominant Yorùbà and Igbo regional parties, AC and NCNC. 48. Òdzé & Manfredi (2001) cite non-ethnic glosses of the term Igbo, including 'community' and ' inland dwellers', which remain salient in personal names and other fixed phrases. 49. Ardener (1968, 117 fr. 41) adds a further Dutchinkle. As if to prove the following this errorist "dud" to cause civilian havoc, witness the continued controversy over government recognition of the Ëfìk chiefancy title formerly known as the Òbọng of Old Calabar. The real meaning of the word 'Calabar' remains uncertain even now. It is not indigenous but is an imposition. [M]uch of the records that were relied on for what has so far passed for her history, were shrouded in constant mix-ups, mis-information and deliberate distortion of facts. …When the epithet 'Old' was dropped in 1904, and 'Old Calabar' was renamed 'Calabar', it did not by implication extend the jurisdiction of the Ëfìk chieftain to include the Quas and the Efutos. …Never has any Qua man called Calabar 'Ohio Efik' ('Efik Town')… (QCDA 2003, 5, 23, 32) On p. 35, the same memo portentously alludes to an analogous renaming in the early 1960's when the western delta was in the Western Region (under Yorùbà-speaking administration) and the paramount title "Olu of ìbìsìrìkì" (an ethnic category) was inflated to "Olu of Warri" (a geographical one). The change inflamed local rivalry that continues today as one of several low-intensity wars which span the impoverished, oil-producing Niger delta. Compensating somehow for the heavy political load carried by the term Calabar, is the light linguistic weight of folk etymologies like the following: The early Portuguese explorers of the period saw the left bank of the Calabar River close to the estuary settled; and it was they, who gathered, who gave the name "Calabaros" to the early inhabitants of the Bight of Biafra. The name "Calabar" is sometimes interpreted by some as signifying "calm bar", because the bar of the river is often naturally calm and as a whole not much ruffled by the wind. (Aye 1967, 4) 50. Simmon's report is corroborated a century earlier by Petermann (1863, plate 6 facing p. 290); see also Nair (1975, 190), "Abakpa" has also been cited as the name of an apparently non-êpê mask "in the Ogoja area" (Nicklin & Salmons 1984, 36) and occurs as a place name in some northeast Igbo-speaking settlements with slave-trade connections, e.g. Abakpa Nîcè. 51. Cuban [ku] is the outcome of Òṣọọjì before a front unrounded vowel; before a back rounded vowel the result is [p], e.g. Yorùbà [otúrùkùn] (a chapter of Òfà, spelled Òtúnpùn because Yorùbà lacks a [p], cf. Ájawì 1960) becomes in Cuba [otúnpùn] not [otúruknùn]). Either treatment is possible before [a]: the Yorùbà exclamation [skekpa] —spelled Hépá in Nigeria—comes out in Cuban Lucumi as either [epu] or [aku]. 52. Not the same as "Annang, the Qua (Kwa) of early colonial records" (Northrup 1974, 71). 53. It seems that Calabar inhabitants avoid orthographic confusion with another group called Kwa by resorting to the gh digraph which is otherwise unused.
Calabar was not the only name to worry nineteenth century ethnographers. There were also the Kwa (or Qua). One group of Kwa was a subtribe of the Ejaghkm Ekoii which, with another tribal fragment of the Efut, were the original inhabitants of Old Calabar. There were also a few villages on the Camerons River, unrelated to the Ekoii, who also called themselves Kwa, and finally there was the Western or Anang division of the Ibibio whose European name was the Kwa and later the Qua Ibo, presumably to distinguish them from the other Kwa. (Jones 1963, 21)

Folk etymology derives the place name from personal names rather than the reverse:

It is said that the Qua got their name from the Portuguese traders who called them thus after one of the chief's Qua. . . . Okwu is still a common name among the people of Qua Town. In Efik, Qua Town is called Akwa Ibom (Big Town). (Nair 1972, 30f, fn3).

The modern opacity of Efik personal names, even to fluent speakers, is historically related to a process Aye calls "Anglification" whereby labels would probably not have continued to lead separate lives in Nigerian history books, but support the above argument is a 1786 diary entry, cited by an stray gloss—of uncertain provenance, due to the vagaries of the document itself—which may be a centralized high vowel.

Orok was changed into Duke; Efiom was anglicised as Ephraim; Akabor, Ekpennyong, Asibong became Cobbam, Young and Archibong respectively. Attempts were even made to anglicise Asuquo as Escon. (1967, 87; cf. Simmons 1956b, 69)

Place names are similar: "Guinea Company is the English name for the Efik town of Adiabo, situated on the west bank of the Calabar River..." (Simmons 1956b, 70), etc.

54. Cited by Nair (1975, 190) as occurring on p. 566.

55. In Crabb's transcription, barred <i> is a centralized high vowel.

56. As a non-specialist, I may have rediscovered something obvious to cognoscenti. The three labels would probably not have continued to lead separate lives in Nigerian history books, but for the political marginality of the bearers vis-à-vis their Efik-speaking neighbors. One more stray gloss—of uncertain provenance, due to the vagaries of the document itself—which may support the above argument is a 1786 diary entry, cited by an Efik-speaking historian, written by someone variously identified as "Antera Duke or Ntiero Edem Efisom" and referring to "Eko (Coqua)" (Asuquo 1978, 50). My interpretation of this doublet is that the parenthesized Efik… had left Ibom [near Calabar] because of wars involving groups characterized as Akpa" (Matthews 1927, quoted by Áfigbo 1981a, 223). The reliability of Matthews' perception of consonants is unknown, though he wins points for correcting the errorist spelling of the root vowel of the word Årj itself (Áfigbo 1981a, 218). But the change of kp to kw is also found in Cuban Lucumi (see above), so it most likely reflects a more general type of phonetic restructuring.

57. The story comes full circle, or at least is further complicated, by the tradition that ["the Efik... had left Ibom [near Årj] because of wars involving groups characterized as Akpa" (Alagba 1992, 450). From this geographic origin, Áfigbo draws the further conclusion that "[the Efik were originally an Igbo clan living on the boundary between the Igbo and the Ibibio where they progressively acquired Ibibio cultural traits..." (1965, 272). However, this does not seem like the only way to explain the observation that "the Efik despise the Ibibio" (1965, 271), normal ethnic rivalry being more plausible, cf. Údú (1976, 16f.).

58. Cognates exist in other Benue-Kwa languages, but the Igbo form is the closest.

59. Igwe's gloss of Chukwu abiahuna as "God the provider" (1999, 3) is tendentious. The most recognizable morpheme in the epithet is -bahu 'come' which, Nwíagwu observes, happens to be the root on which all Igbo dialects build an agent noun meaning 'stranger/visitor'. Njiojü (<http://www.wku.edu/~johnston/njiojukw/> reports that Árj tourists refer to "Chukwu Obioma"—which could simply be mistranscribed if it doesn't reflect a new folk etymology of 'kind-hearted'. Njiojü elsewhere has "Chukwu Abiama (Great and All Knowing God)" (<http://www.wku.edu/~johnston/njiojukw/history/>, again without etymological foundation. The first source cites the oracle name as "Ibin Ukhipa"—an unconventional segmentation with an enticingly Oriental flavor recalling Ibn Khaldun etc.

60. As noted by Nwíagwu (1984, 44ff), the wish to invent a sky god with which to dupe one's neighbors was not limited to Árj, which was preceded in the Premier by Náj centuries before: from Jeffrey (1934), Ònwujegbukwu (1980, 41) quotes an Náj proverb, Òbyú avú ji ili otó (roughly, 'We use an ancestral shrine to scam inland dwellers'). Oral tradition contains many texts in which the character of Chukwu figures as just another of the dramatis personae, and one who can himself be duped on occasion. It is also fascinating to read, in the context of missionary rivalry, that the adoption of the Árj cult name Chukwu by Catholic translators was "why the Protestants had changed to Chineke though the Catholics who came later to Qunícha still used Chukwu" (Nwíagwu 1984, 26). The neologistic formation of Chinekéris well critiqued by Achebe (1975).

61. Westermann & Ward rephrase the rule as follows: “in certain dialects of Igbo, ... a rolled r is used between all vowels except i and j, where the flapped sound is used" (1933, 75). It clearly matters which dialects if any besides Árj are being referred to; Ward (1941, 35) doesn't elaborate. Another phonetic feature which has been at least casually described in Árj, and which may register in Abakú (e.g. in the name Abakú itself, among other items) is "the interchangeability of the sounds kp and kw in local pronunciation" (Matthews 1927, quoted by Áfigbo 1981a, 223). The reliability of Matthews’ perception of consonants is unknown, though he wins points for correcting the errorist spelling of the root vowel of the word Årj itself (Áfigbo 1981a, 218). But the change of kp to kw is also found in Cuban Lucumi (see above), so it most likely reflects a more general type of phonetic restructuring.

62. A current replicant of the 'Hebrews mene' appears in a pamphlet from the National African Language Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which refers to seriousness (and with little disregard for Igbo orthography) to a historical scenario whereby...

...the Igbo are descendants of early Jews because most of their customs and practices are similar to those of the Jews. A few examples are the celebration of the newborn (Omagwo), naming ceremony (Igbo aha), marriage ceremonies (Ihu nwanyi), atoning for accidental killing (Kwa echu) and many others.

<http://african.lss.wisc.edu/nalrc/prog-serv/Map/Brochures/Igbo.pdf>

63. Añiñigbá (1999) rejects Peel's more ambitious claim, that the wide ethnic category of Yorùbá was not merely exploited by 19th-century Saró (returned Sierra Leonian) converts in their protestant self-fashioning, but was actually created by them as a spinoff of bible translation into the dialect of fallen Òyò, but Peel himself notes that the Igbó corpus of oracular poetry (E-language) was cognitively salient, to the point of official scandal, for the Saró missionary converts E. Liájdú and J. Johnson (2000, 302). That Igbó's standardizing norms aren't literate was irrelevant in a preindustrial context; they sufficed for political agitation per se, as in the oratorical success of Chief S.L.A. Añiñigbá (2003) finds that Áñiñigbá (1984, 221). Similarly, Arùká (2003) finds that din-din drummed surrogate speech reflects Òyò dialect even in non-Òyò areas, again suggesting pre-literate standardization.

64. The story, recorded from Gullah-speakers on the Georgia coast (W.P.A. 1940), has been reenacted by Latter-Day Heebrews (<http://www.hbrafuland.com/ibbo/20%20Anstand>, n.d., <http://authors.aalbc.com/juliedashchattext.htm>), and not without Catholic translators

<http://www.biafraland.com/Ibo%20Landings.htm>

65. At the 2003 African Studies Association meeting in Boston, Prof. Emcnjãn suggesting his view "that Igbó literature is for the most part written in English" (1978, 189)—a notion swiftly rejected by Emcnjãn (1982, 47f). With respect to the present discussion,
however, Žeműcsényi’s original position has the merit of diagnosing a real ambivalence, on the part of Igbo-speaking authors, to the choice of any particular linguistic medium of expression, so long as their texts “remain essentially Igbo in idiom and content” (1978, 189).

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