

# A Grammar of Pichi

Kofi Yakpo

Studies in Diversity Linguistics 000



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Kofi Yakpo


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To Yèni and Fodé



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# Symbols and abbreviations

-	morpheme boundary		
=	clitic morpheme boundary	DEF	definite article
!	directive clause; vocative	EMP	emphatic
*	ungrammatical example	F	feminine gender
,	continuative intonation	FN	first name
.	and pause	FOC	focus marker and identity
.	utterance-final:		copula
.	declarative intonation	H	high tone(d syllable)
.	word-medial: morpheme	HAB	habitual marker
	boundary in	IDEO	ideophone
	derived compound	INDF	indefinite
(...)	untranscribed part of	INDP	independent/emphatic
	utterance		pronoun
[ ]	explanation of translated	INTJ	interjection
	elements	INTR	intransitive
/	speech interruption	IPFV	imperfective aspect marker
?	final: question intonation	L	low tone(d syllable)
?	initial: grammaticality	L.H	low-high tone sequence
	dubious		over two adjacent syllables
[á]	IPA transcription	LH	rising contour tone over
/a/	phoneme		same syllable
<a>	grapheme	LN	last name
á	high tone diacritic	LOC	locative preposition
à	low tone diacritic	LT	lexical tone
%	boundary tone	MVC	multiverb construction
1, 2, 3	first, second, third person	n.a.	not applicable
ABL	abilitive mood marker	NAME	personal name
ADV	adverbial(ising suffix)	NEG	negative/negator
BE	identity copula	NP	noun phrase
BE.LOC	locative-existential copula	NSPC	non-specific
BT	boundary tone	OBJ	object (case)
CPD	tone deletion in	OBL	obligative mood marker
	compounding		

## *Symbols and abbreviations*

PFV	narrative perfective marker	REP	repeated word in repetition
PL	plural(iser)	SBJ	subject (case)
PLACE	place name	SBJV	subjunctive marker
POSS	possessive (case)	SG	singular
POT	potential mood marker	SKT	“suck teeth”
PP	prepositional phrase	SP	sentence particle
PREP	associative preposition	SPEC	specific
PRF	perfect tense-aspect	SUB	subordinator
PST	past tense marker	SVC	serial verb construction
Q	question particle	TMA	tense-mood-aspect
QNT	quantifier	TR	transitive
QUOT	quotative marker	v1	initial verb in MVC
RED	reduplicant in reduplication	v2	second verb in MVC
		VP	verb phrase



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The language and its speakers

Pichi is an Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creole language (Ethnologue code “fpe”) spoken on the island of Bioko, Equatorial Guinea (cf. Figure 1.1). Pichi is the most widely spoken language of the country’s capital Malabo next to Spanish, and it serves as a primary language to a large proportion of the capital’s inhabitants. Pichi is also used as a primary language in a number of villages and towns along the Coast of Bioko, amongst them Sampaca, Fiston, Basupú, Barrio Las Palmas, and Luba (Morgades Besari, p.c.), and it is spoken as a lingua franca throughout Bioko (cf. Figure 1.2 below). The language is also used by a sizeable community of people originating from Bioko in Bata, the largest town on the continental part of the country. In the literature, Pichi is known under the names “Fernando Po Creole English” (Simons & Fennig 2017), “Fernando Po Krio” (Berry 1970), “Fernandino Creole English” (Holm 1988), “Pidgin (English)” (Morgades Besari, p.c.) “Broken English” (Zarco 1938), and “Pichinglis” (Lipski 1992). While older speakers sometimes refer to the language as “Krio” or “Pidgin”, most present-day speakers refer to it as “Pichinglis”, “Pichin” with a nasalised final vowel, or “Pichi” *tout court*.

Pichi descends from 19<sup>th</sup> century Krio, which first arrived in Bioko, the former Fernando Po, with African settlers from Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1827 (Fyfe 1962: 165). Krio, in turn, emerged as the principal language of the urban population of Freetown, Sierra Leone, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Huber 1999). Modern Krio and Pichi are therefore both descendants of Early Krio. Linguistic and historical evidence suggests that the diffusion of Krio along the west coast of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century also contributed significantly to the formation of Nigerian Pidgin, Cameroon Pidgin, and Ghanaian Pidgin English (Huber 1999).

No linguistic census data exist in Equatorial Guinea, but probably up to 70 per cent of the population of Bioko island, hence well above 100,000 speakers, regularly use Pichi at various levels of nativisation and in various multilingual and multilectal constellations in and outside their homes (Yakpo 2013: 194). Next to Pichi, at least fourteen languages are spoken by the peoples of Equatorial Guinea (Hammarström et al. 2017). Fang has the largest number of speakers, but its use is largely limited to the continental part of the country (also referred to as “Río Muni”). Bubi is probably the second most widely spoken African language of the country, but its use is, in turn, limited to Bioko. There is an established pattern of language shift to Pichi and Spanish in Malabo and other larger agglomerations of Bioko, and there are indications that Bubi is under increasing pressure from these two languages. Equatorial Guinea also harbours the Portuguese-lexifier creole Fa d’Ambô, spoken by the people of the island of Annobón (cf. Figure 1.1).

## 1 Introduction

Fa d'Ambô shares historical and linguistic ties with the other Portuguese-lexifier creoles of the Gulf of Guinea, namely Lungwa Santome and Lunga Ngola (Angolar) in São Tomé, and Lung'le in Príncipe (Post 2013).

Mutual intelligibility between Pichi, Krio, Cameroon Pidgin, Nigerian Pidgin, and Ghanaian Pidgin English is relatively high. However, an impediment to fluid communication between speakers of Pichi and its African sister languages is the divergent path of development of Pichi since 1857. In that year, Spain began to actively enforce colonial rule in Equatorial Guinea. From then onwards, Pichi was cut off from the direct influence of English. Pichi has therefore escaped the phonological, grammatical, and lexical convergence with English that has been documented for English-lexifier creoles spoken alongside English (see e.g. Sala & Ngefac 2006 for Cameroon Pidgin). At the same time, Pichi has been in intense contact with Spanish for over a century and has undergone substantial lexical and some structural influence from the colonial language of Equatorial Guinea.

Equatorial Guinea has three *de jure* official languages, namely Spanish, French, and Portuguese. From the primary to the tertiary levels, instruction is given alone in Spanish, which is therefore the only *de facto* official language of the country. There is no legally or politically defined role for education in African languages (Yakpo 2011; 2016). However, the national education bill currently in vigour (Ley Núm. 5/2.007 2007) offers the optional use of indigenous languages in education (Olo Fernandes 2012). The socio-linguistic status of Pichi is particularly unfavourable among the natively spoken languages of Equatorial Guinea. During colonial rule, Pichi was considered an impoverished, debased form of English by Spanish colonial administrators and missionaries (see Zarco 1938: 5–7 for a pungent exposition of this view). Pichi, like the other creole languages of the Atlantic Basin, still has to struggle with this difficult legacy. In spite of its great importance as a community language and as a national and regional lingua franca, Pichi enjoys no official recognition nor support, is conspicuously absent from public discourse and the official media, and until today, has no place in the educational policy of Equatorial Guinea (Yakpo 2016).

The lingering colonialist perspective on Pichi and its sister languages in West Africa and across the Atlantic stands in stark contrast to the fact that these languages epitomise the achievements of African and African-descended peoples who, in resisting and adapting to the ignominious system of European slavery and colonialism, carved out in Africa and the Americas one of the largest, and today most vibrant cultural and linguistic zones of the world.

### 1.2 Contact with Spanish

Spanish has left a deep imprint on the lexicon and grammar of Pichi. Codemixing is an integral part of the linguistic system of Pichi (Yakpo 2009b, Yakpo 2018). The pervasive influence of Spanish on Pichi is for one part the consequence of language policy. Since colonial rule and the independence of Equatorial Guinea in 1968, Spanish has remained the sole medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system (Lipski 1992: 35–

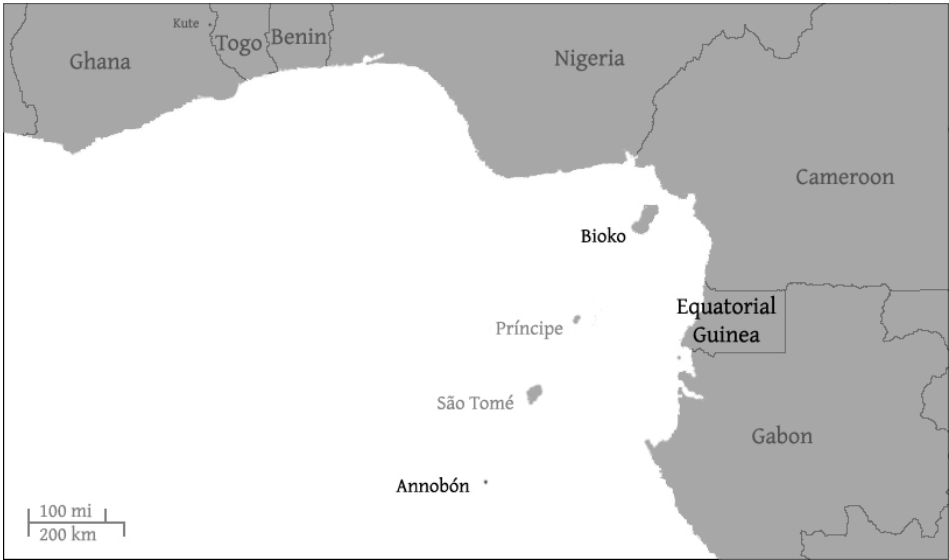


Figure 1.1 Map 1 Continental and insular Equatorial Guinea (in bold)

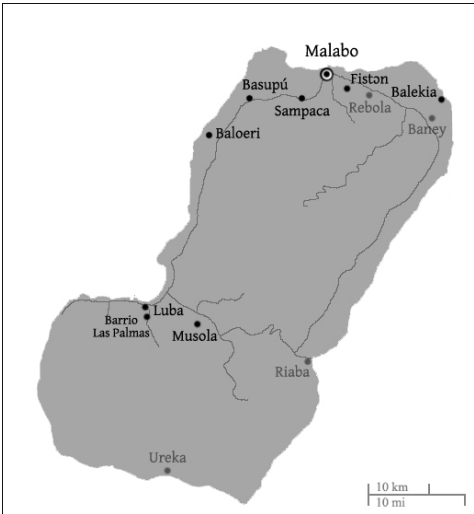


Figure 1.2 Map 2 Towns with Pichi-speaking communities in Bioko (in bold)

36). There is a widespread competence in different registers of Spanish by Pichi speakers in Malabo and Equatorial Guinea as a whole (Lipski 1985; Castillo-Rodríguez & Morgen-thaler García 2016). In Malabo, the acquisition of Spanish begins in early childhood, even for many working-class Equatoguineans with little or no school education.

Another factor favouring codemixing is the positive attitude towards multilingualism in a highly polyglot society, against the background of a tenacious vitality of Pichi as a symbol of social identity. Presumably, Pichi-Spanish codemixing has for a long time served as a badge of identity for the population of Bioko in the course of a long history of immigration by speakers of other varieties of West African English-lexicon Creoles. Today, the language also plays an important role for the self-identification of those who grew up on the island in the face of an accelerated pace of internal migration by Equatoguineans from the mainland. *Bón na yá, gró na yá* ‘born here, grown up here’ is the mark which distinguishes Pichi-speaking islanders, irrespective of their ethnic background, from the late arrivals of mainland origin who speak little or no Pichi.

Equally, the burgeoning oil economy of Equatorial Guinea has led to increased urbanisation, extending multi-ethnic social networks and the spread of Pichi as a native language. In such a socio-economic environment and amidst a high general competence in the official language Spanish, codemixing between Pichi and Spanish, rather than being exceptional, is consciously and confidently articulated in daily life (cf. chapter 11 for a detailed description of codemixing). Pichi is also in contact with other African languages spoken in the region, amongst them Fang and Bubi, as well as Nigerian and Cameroonian Pidgin (Yakpo 2013 discusses influences on Pichi from these languages).

### 1.3 Variation

The variation recorded in Pichi appears to be determined by a mixture of the factors age, language background, and social class. Phonological variation is particularly conspicuous. Some of the variation in Pichi may be captured by an albeit oversimplified division of speakers into two groups. Group 1 principally consists of the Fernandinos, the old commercial and social elite of Bioko (Lynn 1984) that inhabits the historical centre of Malabo and has used Pichi as a home language since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Group 1 also comprises people of diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds who grew up in Malabo in the ambit of Fernandino culture. The lexicon, grammar, and phonology of Group 1 reflects an earlier chronolect of Pichi, which is also closer to (early) Krio.

Group 2 is larger and culturally more diverse by incorporating “nuevos criollos” (Morgades Besari, p.c.) who have been acculturated more recently into the Pichi-speaking urban culture of Malabo. It encompasses a large number of speakers with a Bubi cultural background who have shifted to Pichi as a primary language (Bolekia Boleká 2007), and it includes large numbers of speakers with varying degrees of nativisation. Group 1 is shrinking at the expense of Group 2 through rapid urbanisation, immigration, and language shift. The terms “Mesopidgin” and “Acropidgin” employed by Morgades Besari (2011) capture some of the socio-linguistic differences between Group 1 and Group 2. The distinction between Group 1 and 2 is also reflected in apparent-time differences,

where older speakers (principally those who came of age in the colonial era and the first decade of independence) tend to use the Group 1 lect, and the young majority population of Malabo and Bioko tends to use the Group 2 lect.

In this work, I privilege the description of the language of Group 2 in the wish to represent how Pichi is spoken by the young and multi-ethnic majority in the homes and streets of Malabo today. I nevertheless account for variation by employing alternate forms where they exist (e.g. *nóbà-néa* ‘NEG.PRF’, *tínáp-tánáp* ‘stand (up)’), and some of them may reflect differences between Groups 1 and 2. In the following, I present a few generalisations of the variation present in my corpus.

For Group 2 speakers, there is no phonemic contrast between the alveolar fricative [s] and the postalveolar fricative [ʃ] (1), and this is systematically applied to all words where Group 1 speakers use [ʃ] (2). Group 2 speakers also insert a palatal glide [j] between [s] and a following mid vowel where Group 1 uses [ʃ] alone (3–4):

	Group 1		Group 2
(1)	so	[só] ‘sew, so’ [ʃó] ‘show’	[só] ‘sew, show, so’
(2)	<i>fínis</i>	[fínɪʃ] ‘finish’	[fínɪs] ‘finish’
(3)	<i>sóp</i>	[ʃóp] ‘shop’	[sjóp] ‘shop’
(4)	<i>néʒən</i>	[néʒən] ‘nation’	[nésjən] ‘nation’

Group 2 speakers tend to neutralise the phonemic distinction between close-mid and open-mid vowels (5–6):

	Group 1	Group 2
(5)	<i>fɔ</i>	[fɔ̃] ‘PREP’
	<i>mó</i>	[mó] ‘more’
(6)	<i>mék</i>	[mék] ‘make, SBJV’
	<i>lɛk</i>	[lɛk] ‘like (preposition)’

Group 2 speakers also tend to nasalise [i]-final words with an H.L tonal configuration (7) and to prenasalise [j]-initial words as in (8). This may lead to the formation of homophones like (9) and (10) for Group 2 speakers:

	Group 1	Group 2	
(7)	<i>lókí</i>	[lókìn]	‘be lucky’
	<i>tóstí</i>	[tóstìn]	‘be thirsty’
(8)	<i>yandá</i>	[njándá]	‘yonder’
(9)	<i>yús</i>	[jús]	‘use’
(10)	<i>nyús</i>	[njús]	‘news’

There is also some variation in the use and acceptance of certain grammatical structures. For example, Group 2 speakers seem to prefer the negative perfect marker *néa* over *nóba*. Equally, a serial verb construction (SVC) featuring the verb *sté* ‘be long time’ is not

readily accepted as grammatical by many Group 1 speakers (cf. §11.2.5) and may therefore be a more recent development. Conversely, other types of SVCs are more common with Group 1 than with Group 2. Amongst them are SVCs involving the verb *ték* ‘take’ (cf. §11.2.3) and motion-direction SVCs involving the verbs *gó* ‘go’ and *kán* ‘come’ (cf. §11.2.1). *Ték*-serialisation is very common in modern Krio and all other African English-lexifier creoles. Group 2 speakers instead tend to employ a combination of a verb and a prepositional phrase in these contexts. A final area characterised by variation is the extent of Pichi-Spanish language contact. For example, the names of weekdays and numerals are almost exclusively expressed in Spanish by Group 2 speakers. Group 1 speakers have access to both English- and Spanish-derived lexicon. They may employ *lunes* ‘Monday’ in a codemixed sentence, but are equally likely to use *mónde* ‘Monday’. Further, English-derived numbers above five are rarely used by Group 2 speakers (cf. §13.3.1). In contrast, Group 1 speakers master a wider range of the Pichi numeral system. However, even with this group, Pichi numbers above ten are seldom heard.

### 1.4 Affiliation

Pichi belongs to the grouping of languages referred to in the literature by various appellations, among them “English-based Afro-American” (Alleyne 1980), “Atlantic Anglophone Creoles” (Hancock 1986; 1987) “Atlantic English-based Creoles” (e.g. Muysken & Smith 1990), “Atlantic English Creoles” (e.g. Baker 1999). In this work and others, I employ the term “Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles” (abbreviated AECs) (Faraclas 2004) as a label that includes information about the speaker population (“Afro-”, i.e. people of African ancestry) and the two world regions where the languages are mainly spoken (“Afro-Caribbean”, i.e. Africa and the Caribbean). The use of “lexifier” underscores the dynamic character of the English input to the lexicon, which varies in size and nature between the different languages.

All Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles are transmitted and learned in various ways within the family and serve as means of communication and identification to linguistic communities. I therefore dispense with the term “pidgin” with its socio-structural connotations and use “creole” alone. When referring to the linguistic grouping, “Creole” is written with an initial capital letter. The generic term is written “creole” in lower case.

With well over 100 million speakers, the Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles and Pidgin-Creoles (henceforth AECs) spoken in Africa and the Americas together constitute one of the largest lectal continua of the Western hemisphere in speaker numbers and geographical extent (Yakpo 2016: 22–23). Besides Pichi, the African sub-grouping of the AECs contains Krio (Sierra Leone), Aku (Gambia), Ghanaian Pidgin English, Nigerian Pidgin, and Cameroonian Pidgin (Huber & Görlach 1996; Huber 1999; Baker & Huber 2001). There are also historical connections and cross-influences with varieties of Liberian English (Singler 1997). Even if many details are still unclear, the evidence that there is a degree of common ancestry between the African and Caribbean AECs is compelling (e.g. Hancock 1986; 1987; Smith 1987; 2015). There are also indications of a historical relation of the AECs with African American English(es) (Dillard 1973; Rickford 1999; Winford 2017).

Within the African AECs, Pichi is most directly related to the Krio language of Sierra Leone. A comparison of the two languages yields systematic lexical and structural correspondences. But it also reveals some differences. To begin with, both languages share a large percentage of non-basic vocabulary, as shown in (11a), with the same tonal configurations. However, the Yoruba (b), Mende (c), and Temne (d) component of the Pichi lexicon appears to be much smaller than that of Krio and is limited to a few words in the corpus (data from Fyfe & Jones 1980):

(11)	Pichi	Krio	Gloss
a.	à	à	'I'
	pósin	pósin	'person'
	(s)tík	(s)tík	'tree'
	yáy	yáy	'eye'
	yés	yés	'ear'
	bóbí	bóbí	'breast'
	belé	belé	'belly, foetus'
	watá, wotá	watá, wotá	'water'
	dotí	dotí	'be dirty'
	fódón	fódóm	'fall'
	chóp	chóp, ít	'eat'
	hós	hós	'house'
	tití	tití	'girl'
	mákit	mákit, máket	'market'
	wówó	wówó	'be messed up, ugly'
	bókú	bókú	'be much'
	yangá	nyangá	'be ostentatious'
	dúya	dúya	'please'
b.	ógi	ógi	'corn porridge'
	kúshé	kúshé	'expression of empathy'
	—	órewá	'goodbye greeting'
c.	nyóní	nyóní	'red ant'
	blókós	blókós	'scrotum, penis'
	kandá	kandá	'skin, bark'
d.	yabaś	yabás	'onion'
	—	kunkubé	'kind of boat'

The two languages also share a number of lexical items common to numerous African and American English-lexicon Creoles. These were first compiled by (Smith 1987; 2001b; 2015) and termed “Ingredient X, Y, and Z”. In (12), I list all the relevant words contained in the Pichi corpus. They comprise “Ingredient X” words of African origin (a), “Ingredient Y” words of Portuguese origin (b), “Ingredient Z” words of English origin (c), as well as a few function words of diverse origin (d):

## 1 Introduction

(12)	Ingredient X, Y, Z	Gloss
a.	<i>sósó</i>	‘only’
	<i>pɔtɔpɔtɔ</i>	‘mud(dy) substance’
	<i>akará</i>	‘bean cake’
	<i>fufú</i>	‘fufu’
b.	<i>sabí</i>	‘know’
	<i>pikín</i>	‘child’
c.	<i>kéch</i>	‘catch’
	<i>yér(i)</i>	‘hear’
	<i>ɛf(ɛ)</i>	‘if’
	<i>bwél</i>	‘boil’
	<i>(s)pwél</i>	‘spoil, spend’
d.	<i>na</i>	‘FOC’
	<i>una, unu</i>	‘2PL’
	<i>mék</i>	‘imperative, SBJV’
	<i>de</i>	‘IPFV’
	<i>dé</i>	‘there’
	<i>dé</i>	‘BE.LOC’

Some of the differences in vocabulary between the two languages owe to the same phonological characteristics that differentiate the members of Group 1 (Pichi) and Group 2 (Krio) in the preceding section. Hence, most speakers of Pichi make no phonemic distinction between alveolar and postalveolar fricatives (13a); the phonemic distinction between close-mid and open-mid vowels is neutralised by most speakers (b).

In addition, the distinction between velar and labial nasal consonants tends to collapse in word-final position (c); phonological processes create preferred CV sequences (d), voiced obstruents are normally devoiced in word-final position (e), while other words have different coda consonants (f). In general terms, present-day Pichi as spoken by the majority of its speakers exhibits a tendency towards the reduction of phonemic contrasts when compared to Krio.

(13)	Pichi		Krio		Gloss
a.	<i>sút</i>	[sút]	<i>shút</i>	[ʃút]	‘shoot’
b.	<i>fɔ</i>	[fɔ~fò]	<i>fɔ</i>	[fɔ]	‘PREP’
c.	<i>frɔn</i>	[frɔn ~ fròm]	<i>frɔm</i>	[fròm]	‘from’
d.	<i>smól</i>	[simó ~ sùmó]	<i>smól</i>	[smól]	‘be small’
e.	<i>bíg</i>	[bík]	<i>bíg</i>	[bíg]	‘be big’
f.	<i>(s)trón</i>	[(s)trɔn]	<i>(s)tróng</i>	[(s)trɔŋ]	‘be strong’

Other differences in vocabulary, phonology, and grammar stem from the divergent socio-political development that Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone have gone through in the last hundred years. In Sierra Leone, British colonisation and the retention of political, economic, and linguistic ties with Britain after independence have reinforced the relationship between Krio and English. In Equatorial Guinea, the direct link with English



was severed in 1858 when Spanish assumed the role of the dominant language. Equally, the influence of Krio on Pichi had petered out by the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Spanish colonialism gradually put a stranglehold on relations between Fernando Po and Sierra Leone.

The role of the respective superstrates English (for Krio) and Spanish (for Pichi) can be read from the impact of these two languages on institutional and administrative terminology (14a), the numeral system above ten (b), and other lexical items (c). The use of a larger number of English-derived lexical items in Krio corresponds with a stronger presence of Spanish-derived lexicon in Pichi:

(14)	Pichi	Krio	Gloss
a.	<i>profe(sor), tícha</i>	<i>tícha</i>	‘teacher’
	<i>Camerún</i>	<i>Cameroon</i>	‘Cameroon’
	<i>aeropuerto</i>	<i>épot</i>	‘airport’
b.	<i>diez</i>	<i>tén</i>	‘ten’
	<i>doce</i>	<i>twélf</i>	‘twelve’
	<i>las dos</i>	<i>tú oklók</i>	‘two o’clock’
c.	<i>bikɔs, porque</i>	<i>bikɔs</i>	‘because’
	<i>sube, gó ɔp</i>	<i>gó ɔp</i>	‘go up’
	<i>sigue</i>	<i>kɔntínyu</i>	‘continue’

There is a high degree of correspondence between the forms of Pichi and Krio function words and the categories they express. For example, the forms and functions of the TMA markers in (15) are largely coterminous:

(15)	Pichi	Krio	Gloss
	<i>de</i>	<i>de</i>	‘IPFV’
	<i>go</i>	<i>go</i>	‘POT’
	<i>bin</i>	<i>bin</i>	‘PST’
	<i>dón</i>	<i>dón</i>	‘PRF’
	<i>fɔ</i>	<i>fɔ</i>	‘PREP’
	<i>kin</i>	<i>kin</i>	‘HAB, ABL’

However, the distribution of the markers in (15) is not always identical in the two languages. For example, the Krio data reveals more combinatorial possibilities of the habitual marker *kin* ‘HAB’ with other TMA markers (cf. Smith 2001a), while the Pichi imperfective marker *de* ‘IPFV’ seems to have a broader range of functions than the Krio cognate form. Moreover, Krio has at least two auxiliary constructions which are not attested in my data. The verb *blánt* is only employed as a lexical verb with the meaning ‘reside’ in Pichi. In Krio, the element *blant* is a preverbal TMA element that expresses habitual aspect. Further evidence for grammaticalisation is that *blant* is L-toned in this function. Consider the following example (Krio sentences are marked KRIO):

## 1 Introduction

(16) KRIO

*Olú blant gó London fɔ́ Krísmes.*

NAME HAB go PLACE PREP Christmas

‘Olu always goes to London for Christmas.’ (Yillah & Corcoran 2007: 181)

Further, Krio employs the locative-existential copula *dé* ‘BE.LOC’ together with the preposition *pan* ‘on’ in an, albeit lectally restricted, auxiliary construction to express progressive aspect (17). The construction is rejected by Pichi speakers (18):

(17) KRIO

*Olú dé pan kám.*

NAME BE.LOC on come

‘Olu is coming (right now).’ (Yillah & Corcoran 2007: 179)

(18) \* A *dé pan chóp.*

1SG.SBJ BE.LOC on eat

Intended: ‘I’m eating.’ [ye07je 025]

Conversely, there is no data to suggest the existence in Krio of the Pichi egressive aspect construction involving the auxiliary verb *kómót* ‘go/come out’ (19) or, obviously, the continuative aspect construction featuring the Spanish-derived verb *sigue* ‘continue’ (20). Equally, an adverbial SVC involving the V1 *sté* ‘stay, be a long time’ appears to be unique to Pichi (21):

(19) *Wí kómót chóp nów só.*

1PL come.out eat now like that.

‘We just ate right now.’ [ge07fn 208]

(20) A *sigue plé ból sóté ívin tén.*

1SG.SBJ continue play ball until evening time

‘I continued playing ball until the evening.’ [be07fn 189]

(21) A *sté chóp.*

1SG.SBJ stay eat

‘It’s been a long time since I ate.’ [au07ec 078]

The literature on Krio also indicates a wider range and a more pervasive use of SVCs than attested for Pichi. For instance, Krio has a resultative SVC featuring dynamic verbs in the V2 position (22) and a GIVE-type SVC in order to mark a recipient or beneficiary (23). Both types of construction are not attested in Pichi:

(22) KRIO

*Di húman kúk rés sél.*

DEF woman cook rice sell

‘The woman cooked rice and sold it.’ (Finney 2004: 72)

- (23) KRIO  
*I báy klós gí in pikín.*  
 3SG.SBJ buy clothing give 3SG.POSS child  
 ‘He bought some clothes for his child.’ (Finney 2004: 72)

In contrast, resultative state of affairs similar to (22) above may only feature stative property items as secondary verbs. Such constructions in Pichi are best seen to involve secondary predication (24):

- (24) *Den dón bíl di hós strón.*  
 3PL PFV build DEF road be.strong  
 ‘The house is solidly built.’ [ra07ve 069]

At the same time, Pichi only employs a less integrated type of multiverb construction, namely clause chaining, in order to express a sentence like (23), involving a dynamic V2. Note that unlike the Krio sentences above, the Pichi example in (25) exhibits resumptive subject marking, i.e. the subject is repeated with the second verb in the series:

- (25) *Yu ték di móni yu gí mí.*  
 2SG take DEF money 2SG give 1SG.INDP  
 ‘You took the money (and) gave it to me.’ [ro05de 033]

Numerous questions, however, remain open with regard to the extent of differences between the two languages. A considerable obstacle to comparative research is the lack of fresh data on Krio since the 1980s.

## 1.5 Previous research on Pichi

Yakpo 2009a (in English) and 2010 (in Spanish) are the first in-depth descriptions of the phonology and grammar of Pichi. Zarco (1938) is a language guide with a vocabulary list and a short grammar section. Trinidad Morgades Besari, former Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Equatorial Guinea and a well-known philologist of the country, has written about the use of Spanish and Pichi in Equatorial Guinea (Morgades Besari 2005; 2011). Morgades Besari’s unpublished work encompasses wordlists, a collection of stories and proverbs and proposals for an orthography of Pichi (see Yakpo 2011 for a discussion of the orthography). CEIBA Ediciones (Barcelona) has published a series of works dealing with the precolonial and colonial history and the political economy of Fernando Po, as well as the pivotal role of the Fernandinos in the making of present-day Bioko (e.g. Martín del Molino 1993; Cantús 2006).

## 1.6 Standardisation and orthography

No commonly accepted standard orthography is in use for Pichi. The transcription used in this work follows the Krio orthography employed in the seminal Krio-English Dictionary (Fyle & Jones 1980) and subsequent revisions (Coomber 1992), which, in turn, relies

on the IPA-based Africa Alphabet ([International African Institute 1930](#)) and the African Reference Alphabet ([UNESCO 1981](#)). In the Krio/Pichi orthography, the grapheme <ɛ> renders the open-mid front vowel [ɛ], and <ɔ> renders the open-mid back vowel [ɔ]. Other graphemes approximately represent the corresponding IPA sounds. In codemixed sentences, Spanish material is rendered using the standard Spanish orthography.

Tone is marked on all Pichi words throughout this book. H-toned syllables bear an acute accent, e.g. *wét* [wét] ‘wait’, and L-toned syllables remain unmarked, e.g. *wet* [wèt] ‘with’. Tonal notation applies to the morpheme (i.e. the root), not the phonological word. In multimorphemic words, each morpheme therefore receives separate tone marks, e.g. *ús=tén* {ús ‘Q’, *tén* ‘time’} ‘when’, *fáyɛn-wán* {*fáyɛn* ‘nice’, -*wán* ‘ADV’} ‘nicely’. Acute accents over Spanish words are orthographic, and hence not tone marks.

## 1.7 Methods and data

This grammatical description of Pichi is based on the analysis of a corpus of 46,060 words of dialogues, narratives, procedural texts, and elicitations. The data was collected during three stays of four weeks each in Malabo between 2003 and 2007 as part of the research for my PhD thesis ([Yakpo 2009a](#)). Recordings were conducted in the quarters of Ela Nguema, Nyumbili, and the historical centre of Malabo. Recordings were done with a digital mini disc recorder and transcribed and analysed using the SIL Toolbox 1.5 programme. The analysis of tone was done from connected speech and words spoken in isolation using the Praat 5.0 software ([Boersma & Weenink 2008](#)). Much of my approach is guided by linguistic typology and the descriptive apparatus developed in research on African languages. I try to describe as much variation as feasible. I largely avoid comparative or etymological observations with respect to English and African languages and try to look at Pichi “from the inside”. This grammar has also been published in Spanish ([Yakpo 2010](#)) in an abridged version for use in Equatorial Guinea by researchers and university students, teachers, and educationists.

In Equatorial Guinea, I worked with altogether seventeen language consultants. All speakers have been using Pichi continuously since childhood onwards. Without exception, they are inhabitants of Malabo since birth or infancy. Most of them use Pichi more often than any other language, and most speakers view Pichi as the language they know best. Additionally, all speakers also know at least one of the following other languages in varying degrees of proficiency: Fang, Bubi, Fa d’Ambô, Kombe, Lungwa Santome, Nigerian Pidgin, Twi, Spanish, French, English, and German. There is a bias in the data towards speakers with a Bubi ethno-linguistic background, reflective of the circumstance that the majority of people who use Pichi as their primary language are from a Bubi background. The numerical dominance by these “nuevos criollos” over the “old” Creole community of Fernandino descent (Morgades Besari, p.c.) represents a significant shift in the social dynamics of the language which is reflected in my choice of speakers.

A few words are in order on aspects of my linguistic background and communicative approach during the research leading to this book. During my first stay in Malabo, I used Ghanaian Pidgin English and Spanish as working languages. During subsequent

visits, when I felt confident enough to use Pichi without impeding fluid communication, I conducted my research exclusively in Pichi. My acquisition of Pichi and integration into social networks in Malabo was greatly facilitated by fluency in Ghanaian Pidgin English, competence in, and exposure to other Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles and West African languages, and a cultural and communicative *savoir faire* acquired during a childhood spent in Ghana. Fluency in French and Portuguese were also important resources in navigating the plurilingual landscape of Malabo and Bioko at various junctures during my research.

Table 1.1 lists relevant information on language consultants. Speakers are sorted alphabetically along the “code” column. The symbol “N.N.” in the last row of the “speaker” column stands for incidental data collected from strangers in the streets, markets, and other public places in Malabo. Not included in the list is my own speaker code (ko). My participation in recorded conversations was kept to a minimum, but due to the nature of the method, it was more extensive during elicitations. Utterances of mine are, however, nowhere included in the analyses and interpretation of data. The symbols for gender are (F)emale and (M)ale. Age is provided in brackets of 10+, 20+, 30+, etc. The column “languages” specifies self-identified language knowledge. The symbol (h) in the “languages” column indicates home languages used for interaction within the (extended) family. Languages are listed in alphabetical order but home languages come first. Basic information on social class can be deduced from the “activity” column. The column “residence” indicates the neighbourhood of Malabo in which the respective speakers are domiciled. Detailed information on the corpus is provided in Table 1.2 further below.

Table 1.1 Language consultants

Code	Speaker	F/M	Age	Languages	Activity	Residence
ab	Abuela	F	80+	Bubi (h), Pichi (h), Spanish (h)	Child rearing, farming	Town
au	Agustín	M	30+	Fang (h), Spanish (h), Pichi, French	Senior civil service	Ela Nguema
be	Beatriz	F	20+	Bubi (h), Pichi (h), Spanish	Child rearing	Ela Nguema
bo	Aboki	F	40+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Trade	Town
ch	Charlie	M	10+	Pichi (h), Spanish	School goer	Ela Nguema
dj	Djunaïs	M	20+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Cook	Ela Nguema
eb	Ebongolo	M	20+	Kombe (h), Pichi, Spanish		Ela Nguema
ed	Eduardo	M	30+	Fa d'Ambô (h), Lungwa Santome (h), Fang, English, Pichi, Spanish	Civil servant	Ela Nguema
f1	Fita 1	M	20+	Unknown	Mechanic	Nyumbili
f2	Fita 2	M	20+	Unknown	Mechanic	Nyumbili

Table 1.1 Language consultants

Code	Speaker	F/M	Age	Languages	Activity	Residence
fr	Francisca	F	30+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), English, French	Civil servant	Ela Nguema
ge	Lage	F	30+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), English	Restaurant owner	Ela Nguema
he	Hermina	F	30+	Kombe (h), Fang, Pichi, Spanish	Child rearing	Ela Nguema
hi	Hilda	F	50+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi, English	Trade	Town
ku	Tía Kuki	F	50+	Kombe (h), Fang, Pichi, Spanish	Trade	Ela Nguema
kw	Kwame	M	40+	Twi (h), English, Pichi, Spanish	Security guard	Kolwatá
li	Lindo	M	30+	Kombe (h), Pichi (h), Spanish	Worker	Ela Nguema
lo	Lourdes	F	30+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), English	Manager	Town
ma	María	F	30+	Bubi (h), Pichi (h), Spanish	Domestic worker	Nyumbili
mi	Miguel	M	10+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	School goer	Town
ne	Nenuko	M	30+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Mechanic	Ela Nguema
pa	Pancho	M	20+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Hustler	Ela Nguema
ra	Maura	F	20+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Secretary	Los Angeles
ro	Mami Rose	F	50+	Bubi (h), Pichi (h), Spanish	Domestic worker	Ela Nguema
sa	Don Samuel	M	70+	Kombe (h), Fang, Pichi, Spanish	Entre-preneur	Town
to	Tía Tokó	F	50+	Bubi (h), Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Nigerian Pidgin, English	Accountant	Town
tr	Doña Trinidad	F	70+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), English, French	Academic	Town
ur	Ursus	M	30+	Pichi (h), Bubi, Spanish	Worker	Ela Nguema
ye	Boyé	M	20+	Pichi (h), Spanish (h), Bubi	Worker	Ela Nguema
nn	N.N	M/F	Div.	Diverse	Diverse	Diverse

Table 1.2 provides information on the corpus. The list is sorted alphabetically according to the “text code” column, which lists the name of the text (e.g. 03ab). Text names

were given according to mnemonic principles. An “e” at the end of text code indicates that the text consists of elicited data (e.g. 05ae). The “type” column indicates the text genre, “contents” provides a short description of the text. The column entitled “word count” provides an indication of the relative length of texts. An asterisk (\*) after the “text code” indicates that the corresponding text is contained (in part or in full length) in the text section of this book.

Table 1.2 Corpus

Text code	Type	Contents	Speakers	Word count
03ab*	Narrative	Sickness	ab, fr	1911
03ay	Narrative	Youth memories	ab	2384
03cb	Conversation	Female-male relations	hi, bo	2872
03cd*	Conversation	House-building; joking; home affairs	dj, fr, ko, ye	1827
03do*	Procedure	Preparation of a dish	dj	778
03ft	Narrative	Family history	fr	2771
03wt*	Narrative; conversation	Supernatural encounter	dj, fr, ru	813
03fp	Procedure	Car maintenance	f1, f2, kw	274
03gm	Narrative	Language issues	to	683
03hm	Narrative	Working in Gabon	ma	3983
03ni	Conversation	Life in Nyumbili	ma, ko	468
03sb	Narrative; procedure	Supernatural encounters	ed, kw	3073
03sh	Narrative	Anecdotal story	ma	291
03sp	Narrative	Student days in Cuba	ed, kw	1324
05ae	Elicitation	Complementation; lexical aspect	dj, ye	1930
05be	Elicitation	Spatial relations	dj	1431
05ce	Elicitation; conversation	Basic vocabulary; metalinguistic discussion	dj, pa, ye	2329
05de	Elicitation	Relativisation; adverbial relations; questions	ro	620
05ee	Elicitation	Copula meanings	ro	1101
05fe	Elicitation	Colours, numbers, time	ro	256
05rr	Conversation; procedure	Cooking at home	ro, ye	1278
05rt	Narrative	Marital affairs	ro, ye	891
07ae	Elicitation	Grammatical relations	dj	3213
07ce	Elicitation	Derivation	au	739

Table 1.2 Corpus

Text code	Type	Contents	Speakers	Word count
07de	Elicitation	Double objects	ye	205
07he	Elicitation	Questions; conversation	be, lo	242
07je	Elicitation	Pragmatic routines	ye	1072
07fn	Conversation	Field notes	Diverse	1304
07ga*	Conversation	Anecdotal story; joking	la, ne, ye	430
07me	Elicitation	Multiverb constructions	pa	1077
07pe*	Elicitation (video)	Caused positions	li, dj	783
07re	Elicitation (video)	Reciprocity	dj	494
07se	Elicitation (video); conversation	Staged events; metalinguistic discussion	au, fr, ra	2649
07ve	Elicitation	Derivation	ra	571

The corpus presented in Table 1.2 consists of altogether thirty-four texts of different genres totalling 46,060 words. Based on the figures of the “word count” column, narratives constitute approximately 37 per cent of the total corpus (the word count of texts with two genres has been divided by two). This genre encompasses life stories and family histories, illness and near-death accounts, supernatural encounters and other emotionally charged experiences, as well as travel and life abroad. Conversations amount to 25 per cent of the corpus. The topics range from house-building to gender relations, from jesting and joking to metalinguistic discussions during elicitation. In many of the conversations recorded, in particular those involving peer-to-peer communication, form is just as important as content. These conversations “for their own sake” are characterised by emphatic, expressive, and figurative language.

Procedural texts account for some 7 per cent of the corpus. They describe various types of routines, for example the preparation of dishes, car maintenance and repair, medical treatment and sorcery, habits and ways of doing things. Elicitation makes up about 33 per cent of the corpus. I employed oral (Spanish to Pichi and monolingual Pichi-based) elicitation to obtain data chiefly on grammatical relations, the classification of situations (i.e. dynamic vs. non-dynamic verbs vs. adjectives), complementation, relativisation, and derivation. I made use of visual, video-based elicitation to uncover the expression of spatial relations including caused positions, the expression of certain complex events (“staged events”), and reciprocity. The video clips of the Language and Cognition Group of the Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen provided the basis for these elicitations. Most elicitations were conducted in groups of two or three speakers.



This produced valuable data on variation and encouraged vivid metalinguistic discussions during the exercise.

## 1.8 Presentation of the data

In examples, the free translation is followed by a text code in squared brackets. Whenever an example features elicited data, the second letter of the text code is an “e”, e.g. [dj07ae 137] and [ra07ve 069]. Common parentheses in the free translation line contain supplementary and disambiguating translation material. Squared brackets provide contextual or other relevant meta-information. Punctuation in the Pichi examples follows intonation: A full stop indicates an utterance-final boundary tone, a comma continuative intonation. A slash denotes a speech interruption and hence an incomplete sentence. Spanish words are rendered in the Spanish orthography. I do not provide category labels for Spanish grammatical morphemes where they occur, since this would have complicated interlinear glossing and given Spanish material undue prominence.

A final note is in order on the notion of frequency employed throughout this work. When an exact percentage is not given, certain expressions may indicate the relative frequency or importance of a phenomenon. The expressions in the left column of Table 1.3 correspond approximately to the percentages given in the right column (Michaelis et al. 2013).

Table 1.3 Frequency of phenomena

Expression	Approximate percentage
Pervasive, the overwhelming majority, the vast majority	90%
The majority, very common, a high frequency	70%
About half, equally often, fairly common	50%
The minority, a low frequency	30%
Marginal, a small minority, a small number, seldom, rare	10%

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