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Book reviews and book notices

Out of Africa: African influences in Atlantic Creoles. By MIKAEL PARKVALL. London: Battlebridge Publications. 2000. Pp viii, 188. ISBN 1-903292-05-0.

This is a well-researched study. It constitutes the author's doctoral dissertation, submitted to Stockholm University in 2000. The book contains the following chapters: 1. Introduction (pp 1-16); 2. Epistemology, methodology and terminology in Creolistics (17-24); 3. Phonology (25-56); 4. Grammar (57-97); 5. Lexicosemantics (99-115); 6. Demographic data (117-144); 7. Summary and discussion of the data (145-159). There is a reference list (161-182) and an index of authors's names (183-188). There is no language index, nor any subject index.

The author's aims are "first and foremost to identify features that can be reliably ascribed to substrate influence, and secondly to examine whatever correlations there may be between those findings and what is known about the historical and demographic development of the communities where Atlantic Creoles are spoken" (p 1). Parkvall deals with Creoles from both sides of the Atlantic, but only those that have a European-biased vocabulary, so that, for instance, African-based Creoles are excluded. As for the choice of surveyed features, Parkvall includes those that he thinks are neither of European origin, nor due to language universals. (It is not clear if the selection of features was made before the actual analysis of the data, or if the author analysed more than what he presents in the book. If he made the selection before the analysis, then this would constitute a possible backdoor for unchecked biases in the end result.)

Parkvall has chosen to consider "any African language spoken close to the coast between Senegal and Angola as a potential substrate of virtually any Atlantic Creole" (p 4). With this aim he has chosen 168 languages, listed in a long table (pp 6-8). Among these, somewhat surprisingly, we find Lingala and Kituba, both of which are Bantu-based Creoles believed to have come into existence only during the (late) 19th century, that is, after the main slave trading period. The author in fact uses this as an argument to ignore the occurence of a

certain typological feature in Lingala at one point in his discussion (see footnote on p 65). Anyway, there are no literature references accompanying Parkvall's list of languages, making it cumbersome to evaluate the reliability of the data he has used, unless one makes a time-consuming scrutiny of the citations in the text and/or the bibliography.

Parkvall has classified/grouped the African languages according to the web-version of the *Ethnologue* (p 10), which I assume means the thirteenth edition, thus Grimes (1996). However, he cannot have used this or any other source (known to me) when deciding what is or is not a Bantu language, since he includes Bafut, Bamileke, Ejagham, Lamnso, Ngemba, Ngwe, Tiv and Yemba, all of which are non-Bantu Southern Bantoid languages, as well as Suga (more appropriately: Nizaa), which is a Northern Bantoid language. Thus Parkvall's 'Bantu' refers not to (Narrow) Bantu, nor Wide Bantu (= Southern Bantoid), but the entire Bantoid group. (Occassionally, Parkvall uses also 'Bantoid' without indicating any difference in meaning.) He could have checked the appropriate chapters in Bendor-Samuel (1989),[1] and thereby saved the book from a number of unnecessary confusions.

Parkvall uses various geographical labels. While the fairly familiar 'Upper Guinea', 'Lower Guinea' and 'Gulf of Guinea' are used for sections of the West African coast, the more unusual 'Buntu' is used for an area stretching from Cameroon to Angola, specifically referring to "the area in which Bantu languages are spoken" (p 12). Even if we disregard the fact that Parkvall's 'Bantu' refers to Bantoid, not Bantu, I would have been more comfortable with a qualified label like 'West Coast Bantu/Buntu' (or 'West Coast Bantoid' perhaps). 'Buntu' could mislead a reader into believing that it refers to the entire Bantu(/Bantoid) area, which the author clearly does not deal with. Incidentally, 'Buntu' contains an abstracted class 14 prefix, not a class 11 prefix (p 12).

Parkvall introduces also 'Delto-Benuic' (p 10), a term he uses in reference to the linguistic groupings Ijoid and Benue-Congo (à la Bendor-Samuel 1989) minus Bantu (read: Bantoid). Even though the use of this term seems to make full sense from the author's point of view, it is difficult to grasp the proper significance of this term. There is no explicit claim that it should be understood as an areal designation (but see p 10), although the impression perceived by the present reviewer is that that is how Parkvall prefers to understand it. If so, it might possibly have been more appropriate to define 'Delto-Benuic' in purely geographical terms, instead of linguistic-genetic ones. (But this is only of minor concern.)

In the theoretically oriented chapter 2, Parkvall starts by identifying four

[1] Erroneously dated 1984 in Parkvall's bibliography.

different sources for the linguistic make-up of any given Pidgin/Creole: (1) the lexifier language; (2) the substrate language(s); (3) universals of restructuring; and (4) independent development.[2] In order to determine the most likely source of any given linguistic feature, we should thus compare the linguistic system of the Pidgin/Creole under investigation with that of (a) the lexifier language, (b) the potential substrate language(s), (c) other unrelated Pidgins/Creoles, and (d) "a large number of typologically divergent languages unrelated to any of those involved in the restructuring situation" (p 17) in order to see whether or not that particular feature is cross-linguistically common or not. According to Parkvall, (1)-(4) correspond successively to (a)-(d). With this, the author has, as I see it, the basis for a sound comparative methodology when looking for likely substratal influences, especially since he adds much social and historical arguments to the discussion as well.

After an interesting discussion about various typological scenarios and their likely sources, including a critical examination of how some previous authors have arrived at faulty conclusions, Parkvall summarizes the chapter with four rather trivial suggestions (I take the liberty to rephrase them slightly):[3] (1) a certain Pidgin/Creole feature is a lexifier retention if it is found in the lexifier language but uncommon or absent elsewhere; (2) a certain Pidgin/Creole feature is a substrate transfer if it is found in the substrate languages but uncommon or absent elsewhere; (3) a certain Pidgin/Creole feature is a restructuring universal if it found in other Pidgins/Creoles but uncommon or absent elsewhere; and (4) a certain Pidgin/Creole feature is an independent development if it is uncommon or absent anywhere else. The important point, then, is that any other typological scenario requires more elaborate analyses, which would include taking also social and historical factors into consideration. All in all, chapter 2 is good and makes for interesting reading.

In chapter 3, which deals with phonology, Parkvall investigates a whole

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[2] Including "post-crystallisation changes either internally motivated or brought about by adstratal influence" (p 17) as well as, I take it, changes that represent "universals in the sense that they are manifestations of human cognition and processing capacity ..., articulatory capacity ... and/or economy principles versus expressive needs and perceptual salience" (p 18). This seems pretty much like a 'the rest'-category.

[3] I take exception to Parkvall's use of the logical phrase 'iff' (= if and only if), which occur in the original phrasings of the suggestions. Since we are, or at least ought to be, talking about probabilities, 'iff' seems somewhat malplaced here. The suggestions are better phrased in probabilistic terms. Hypothetically, any given feature present in a certain Pidgin/Creole could be a substrate influence irrespective of whether or not it is found in a group of present-day languages related to the supposed substrate(s). The feature in question could simply have disappeared from the present-day language(s); or, the particular substrate language(s) that "really" influenced the investigated Pidgin/Creole may no longer be spoken, and its features may never have been recorded. In neither case would there be any trace of the investigated feature in a 21st century language sample. (Parkvall's book clearly reveals that he is fully aware of this. I am just objecting to the phrase 'iff'.)

range of features, such as denasalisation, front rounded vowels, high nasal vowels, lack of / z /, interdental fricatives, coarticulated stops, palatalisation, apicals, vowel harmony, and several others. Many of the sections are well-written, but some are inconclusive (like the ones on rhotic sounds, implosives and aspiration), notably due to the poor nature of the data available to Parkvall, which is a common enough phenomenon for those rutinely using descriptive materials for comparative reasons.

The first subsection, which deals with vowel aperture, is based on an examination of the phonemic inventories of "a total of more than 80 West African languages" (p 26).[4] We are not, however, told which languages. This is a strategy that Parkvall adopts in several places in his book, although by no means everywhere. It is quite clear that Parkvall is comfortable when dealing with Creole data, which we are served extensively all through the book, but less so when dealing with the African data, which is often presented in somewhat sweeping and generalised formulations, with a minimal amount of examples drawn from the sources. This is unfortunate, since it severely lessens a reader's possibility of evaluating the author's analyses and interpretations.

At any rate, going back to vowel aperture, Parkvall's unorthodox use of the term 'Bantu' leads here to potentially misleading claims. One of the tables says that 41% of the Bantu languages investigated distinguish three degrees of aperture, while 59% distinguish four degrees. In the Bantu area as whole, three-degree-systems are much more common than four-degree-ones; see, for instance, Bastin (1983: 19) and Möhlig (1981: 295, map no 1). Thus the given percentage figures are unreliable, since they seem to refer only to an undisclosed number of western Bantu, as well as some non-Bantu, languages.

Parkvall comes to the conclusion that nasal high vowels "are rare in Atlantic and Bantu languages" (p 31). This seems true enough, although nasalised high vowels are found, at least phonetically, in a number of the languages referred to as Bantu by Parkvall, something that he could have verified by checking his sources more thoroughly. Among the Southern Bantoid languages, "[n]asalized vowels are found frequently, but are often analyzed as VN" (Waters & Leroy, in Bendor-Samuel 1989: 439). They are also found in Northern Bantoid languages (see Hedinger, in Bendor-Samuel 1989: 426).[5] Thus they seem to be quite abundant in what Parkvall would probably refer to as 'North-West Bantu', in addition to what he has already noted, namely, Mande, Kwa and south-western 'Delto-Benuic' (≈ Benue-Congo minus Bantoid). To

4 In several places, Parkvall uses 'West Africa' when referring to the entire substrate area; thus including also what he has termed 'Buntu'. Referring to Kikongo and Kituba as West African languages is most unusual.

5 See also Endresen (1992: 35) for data on Nizaa (= Suga).

this, we should add also western Kru languages (see Marchese, in Bendor-Samuel 1989: 128). However, Parkvall admits that "[t]he evidence provided in this section must ... be taken as weak" (p 31), mainly due to the unreliability of the sources. Still, in the final chapter, where he tries to correlate the results from his typological survey with what is known about the social/demographic history of the early Creole speakers, he seems to treat all linguistic data on an equal footing.

A number of Parkvall's sections would have benefited by a more detailed study of the literature listed in his own bibliography. For instance, when he writes about interdental fricatives / θ, ð / in Angolar (a Portuguese-based Creole), the author suggests the Ndingi dialect of Kikongo as a possible substrate (p 32). He feels that his case could be strengthened if he knew whether or not the phonemes / s, z / occur in Ndingi. This he could have found an answer to in the long introduction to Laman's (1936) Kikongo-French dictionary, which Parkvall lists in his bibliography. In short, the central dialect's / s / and / z / usually correspond to / s ~ ʃ ~ θ ~ ts / and / z ~ ʒ ~ ð ~ dʒ /, respectively, in the other dialects; there are complementary distributions involved, and not all allophones occur in all dialects.

Chapter 4 deals with a whole range of grammatical features, such as reflexives, negation, postpositions, complementisers, conjunctions, serial verb constructions, determiners, verb fronting, number marking, and other things. This chapter seems on the whole to be more well-argued and well-done than the previous one on phonology. The sections on reflexives and negations, which he concludes are West African substrate phenomena, are especially convincing. For instance, Atlantic Creoles show preferences for reflexive constructions involving words for body parts, most often that of 'body', which Parkvall concludes is a substrate influence, despite the fact that it could theoretically be a lexifier retention, at least in the French-based Creoles. One of Parkvall's most convincing arguments seems to be that "hardly any Creoles with non-African substrata make use of 'body' or the names of body-parts in reflexive constructions" (p 57). However, he does not pinpoint the potential substrate area any further than saying that the influence is likely to come from Kwa, Atlantic and/or 'Delto-Benuic'.

Parkvall also discusses the use of postpositions, and how speech act verbs (like *say*, *talk*, etc.) have grammaticalized into complementisers in a number of Atlantic Creoles and how this latter phenomenon may be a substrate influence from West African, particularly Lower Guinean, languages. Both sections are very interesting and we learn how these things are used in Creoles, but the text includes little analysis of African data. The references to African languages are, again, sweeping and on the whole non-informative.

The section on conjunctions is very good and well-structured. Niger-Congo languages frequently have a single morpheme translatable as either ‘and’ (conjunctive) or ‘with’ (comitative). In (real) Bantu languages this most often has the form *na* or *ne* (other forms occur, too). Another distinctive feature is that while this conjunctive/comitative marker can coordinate noun phrases, it cannot coordinate verb phrases. Interestingly, “both these phenomena are relatively frequent in Atlantic Creoles” (p 67). They are, moreover, “virtually unattested in overseas varieties of European languages and rare in European-lexicon Creoles outside the Atlantic” (idem).

Serial verb constructions are also discussed. More specifically, Parkvall treats lative, benefactive/dative (jointly), comparative[6] and instrumental constructions, as well as tense-mood-aspect marking on serial verbs. All of these he finds are Lower Guinean substrate phenomena, more specifically Kwa and ‘Delto-Benuic’. Their restricted global distribution (mainly West Africa and South-East Asia) has, of course, been noted before, so the suggestion of a West African substrate does not appear very novel, but the discussion is interesting.

In a section dealing with the reinterpretation of category boundaries, eg. when the French article in *la porte* ‘the door’ is reinterpreted as a fixed part of the nominal root in Martinique French Creole, / lapɔːt /, something that seemingly has occured regularly in several Atlantic Creoles, though apparently not in all of them, Parkvall notes that these processes may have come about due to, again, a Lower Guinean substrate influence. I have here one small addition to make to Parkvall’s African data. He says, quite correctly, that in many Kwa and Benue-Congo languages (almost) all nouns begin with a vowel, while verbs do not, which he explains is “due to a noun class prefix consisting of a vowel having fossilised as part of the noun” (p 82; with a reference to Welmers 1973). Actually, quite a number of these languages, like Edo (see Elugbe, in Bendor-Samuel 1989: 299-301), have fully operative noun class systems, in which the use of vowel prefixes are definitely not uncommon. Those languages where no functional noun class system is found, like Igbo (see Rowlands 1969: 182ff), nonetheless employ regular prefixing processes involving vowels. They seem in most cases to be remnants of an earlier noun class system, true, but they are not fossilised parts of nouns. Many of them are used quite regularly as derivational items, as in Igbo where we find a prefix *a-* used with lexical compounds to derive nouns denoting people, as in *agétí* ‘crop-eared man’, consisting of *a-* + *gé* ‘(to) cut’ + *etí* ‘ear’ (idem: 182). Thus even languages that lack functional noun class systems have noun-initial prefixation (in this case derivation) processes, and thereby also show regular correspondences of noun-initial phonetics and

[6] See also Greenberg (1983) on this issue, as well as on the distribution of labiovelar stops, a subject also discussed by Parkvall (pp 38-9).

lexical semantics, to some degree at least; this is an issue that Parkvall finds important in his discussion.

In five Atlantic Creoles, a morpheme marking the progressive is also used to mark the future. Parkvall suggests that this may be a substrate influence from Kisi, Fante, Gã and/or Igbo (p 86).[7] Perhaps this is so, but the data to support this seems rather inconclusive. It is not unusual to allow for future readings of progressive forms (eg. the English phrase *I'm coming* in certain contexts). More importantly, however, is the fact that this phenomenon is attested in western Bantu languages.[8] In fact, Parkvall does note its presence in Tiene, but rejects it as a putative substrate because it is spoken in an area which was "hardly touched by the translatlantic slave trade" (p 86). Hence he does not list Tiene as a putative substrate influence. This strikes me as somewhat troublesome, since in a later chapter, when discussing to what extent the demographic and the linguistic data may match, he advances the following, in a section devoted to Western Caribbean English-based Creoles (two of which are involved in the progressive=future discussion): "the relative absence of Bantu influence suggests a crystallisation posterior to the 1640s, when Lower Guineans surpassed Bantus in number" (p 150). He may well be correct, of course, but the argument is potentially circular. If he first uses social/historical arguments to determine the set of putative substrate influences, then any deduction of social/historical facts from that set is completely useless. He ought to have started by accepting and listing all typological similarities, no matter where among the studied languages they showed up, and introduced the social/historical arguments only later, when trying to elucidate matches, that is, in his chapter 7.[9] Granted, his study contains a multitude of small typological mini-surveys, most of which are treated satisfactorily, and even in this particular case the consequences may not be too serious. However, considering how the

[7] Emenanjo's (1987) Igbo grammar does not allow for this interpretation. (Parkvall does not refer to any descriptive works of Igbo in this section, only what looks like second-hand reports.) In Twi, close to Fante and Gã, on the other hand, it seems to be true; the 'immediate future' is marked with a composite morpheme consisting of the 'progressive' *re-* and the 'simple future' *bɛ-* (Dolphyne 1996: 87).

[8] In Kikongo, "[w]hen it is desired to express definitely continuous action in the future, the Continuative Form may be used, as a Future even" (Bentley 1895: 977), although usually the continuative (= progressive, in this case) and the future forms are kept apart. Also in Ndonga, another western Bantu language (spoken in northern Namibia), the morpheme *-ta-*, glossed as 'incompleted or anticipated action', occurs in all progressive verb forms as well as all (immediate) future forms, but nowhere else (Fivaz 1986: 96-7). The implication is that this might well be a wide-spread western Bantu phenomenon.

[9] And thereby fulfilling what he in fact had set out to do. "[O]ne of the basic methodological features underlying this thesis is that the Creoles should first be examined without reference to demographic data. Demographics and history should *only later* [author's own emphasis] be taken into account" (p 4). Parkvall seems to break this postulate at several places in his book.

African data is often presented and discussed in sweeping and generalised ways, making it well-nigh impossible to verify the data without time-consuming labours, one cannot rid oneself of the suspicion that other and perhaps more severe cases of circularity may be hidden in other parts of the book.

After the grammar-chapter, there follows a chapter on lexicosemantics, in which Parkvall discusses various putative cognates, both closed-class and open-class items, in Atlantic Creoles and African languages.[10] Some of these he finds support to accept as substrate phenomena, others he refutes, and some he abstains from drawing any conclusions about. He looks, for instance, at various pronoun forms and concludes that the 2nd person singular / i / and plural / unu / (apparently with a wide range of alloforms) pronouns in English-based Atlantic Creoles derive from Igbo / i / and / unù /, respectively (p 103). He is reluctant in accepting an Igbo origin for the 3rd person singular pronoun / a /, since he can only attest the form / o ~ ɔ / in Igbo. This last form is a bound form, that is, it is prefixed to the verb. Apparently, he (or his source) has missed that Igbo also has an unbound (free) pronoun / ya / (see Emenanjo 1978: 61). It is not a perfect match, but close enough to strengthen his case (but see Parkvall's footnote 11 on p 103).

Chapter 6 starts with a condensed history of the transatlantic slave trade, in which Parkvall also pinpoints the period from the 1620s till the mid-18th century as being of major interest to him. He discusses various locations where the Atlantic Creoles are spoken, and he includes much statistical information about the (geographical) origin of the slaves during different decades of the period in question. At the end, there are some cursory and poorly substantiated sections trying to identify substratal origins for a number of anthropological traits, such as oral traditions, burial traditions, kinship systems, dances, games, and others. (Here we also find headings for pragmatics and ideophones!) Most of these traits are explained as being Kwa-influenced, but the data used in this section seems very fragmentary, and should perhaps have been left out.

Chapter 7, the last one, starts with a four-page table containing a long list summarising the linguistic features that Parkvall has studied and their suggested substrate influences. The author singles out Berbice (Dutch-based), Angolar (Portuguese-based) and Palenquero (Spanish-based) as exceptional in that their respective substrate languages are easy to pinpoint; Ijo in the case of Berbice, Kimbundu in the case of Angolar and Kikongo in the case of Palenquero. "For the other Atlantic Creoles, the picture is considerably more complex" (p 149). Kwa-features seem to dominate in English-based Creoles, which Parkvall refers to as a mystery, because no known demographic/historical facts seem to be able

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[10] He does not appear to have used Guthrie's (1970) monumental survey of various lexical and grammatical morphemes in Bantu languages, though it is listed in his bibliography.

to account for this (p 154). On the whole, Parkvall admits to have found fewer clearly substrate-influenced features in the Atlantic Creoles than he had initially expected. Those that he did find are predominantly of a Lower Guinean origin, something that he seems to feel slightly uncomfortable with, not being entirely sure whether it represents the true state-of-affairs, or is an artefact of a hidden personal bias (p 155). (Possibly he could have arrived at more secure conclusions had he treated the African data in more detail. At least his discussions would have greatly benefited from this.)

Despite the above criticisms, however, Parkvall has produced a laudable study in search of African influences in the Atlantic Creoles. The most appealing aspect of this book is the impressive coverage of linguistic features, which includes a vast array of phonetic/phonological, lexical and grammatical features. Thankfully, the organisation of the contents is admirable, making it easy to follow the author's reasonings and argumentations. Thus I can warmly recommend this book to anyone interested in typological studies of languages. I would even recommend it for Niger-Congo (and of course Creole) specialists since it is quite instructive to see how African language data is used outside the immediate domain of Africanistics.

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Grammar of literary Swahili. By JAN KNAPPERT. Studies in Swahili language and literature, vol 2. Lewiston (New York), Queenstown (Ontario) & Lampeter (Wales): Edwin Mellen Press. 1999. Pp vi, 121. ISBN 0-7734-7882-5.

The variety of Swahili described and discussed in this book is that of "the traditional literary language, the idiom in which the epic poetry, the proverbs and the traditional songs are composed" (p 1), and found in literary works dating from c.1720 to the 1920s. This includes seventy-two epic poems, numerous songs, lyrical and political poems and epigrams, satirical poetry, and the prose texts of the chronicles and memoirs of the first Swahili prosaists (p 2). "All of this literature was first written down in Arabic script in the literary language which has been developed over 200 years" (idem).

The book comprises 14 chapters: I. Introduction (pp 1-4); II. What is Swahili like? (5-7); III. Spelling variations in traditional Swahili poetry (8-13); IV. The noun (14-32); V. The relative (33); VI. The adoption of arabic nouns into the Swahili class system (34-37); VII. The adjective (38-41); VIII. The pronominal system (42-49); IX. The numeral (50-51); X. Adverbs and adverbial phrases (52-62); XI. Prepositions (63-68); XII. Conjunctions (69-77); XIII. The common interjections in Swahili poetry (78-80); XIV. The verb (81-115). At the end, there are two tables, one consisting of a paradigm of noun class morphemes (116-117) and one with pronouns (118-119). There is also a short bibliography with "Some editions of long Swahili poems and prose texts" (120-121). There is no index.

In the introdution, there is a passage that reads: "The time-range of the idiom described in this chapter is about two centuries" (p 1). I take it that "chapter" should read "book". Thus possibly Knappert's grammar was initially intended as an introduction/appendix to the forthcoming dictionary of Literary Swahili by L. V. Vessel & J. Knappert mentioned on page 3. This could account

for the somewhat uneven structure of the book. Some chapters contain little more than long lists of words and phrases, as does the chapter on conjunctions, while others include lengthy discussions, like the chapters on nouns and verbs, which are highly instructive much thanks to the discussions accompanying the many examples.

The only seriously negative aspect of the book, at least for a linguist, is the complete lack of a morphological segmentation of the linguistic examples, or so-called interlinearization. There are occassional discussions of individual morphemes, but the understanding of the whole book would have benefited greatly by the use of interlinearization. Due to this lack, the reader needs a previous knowledge of (standard) Swahili morphology in order to appreciate the contents of this book in full.

The description of *mwenye/mwenyi* (p 41) is potentially misleading, partly due to the lack of interlinearization. It is described as a 'linking adjective' enabling "the speaker to connect nouns with qualifying nouns, especially infinitives with their objects" (idem), as in *Ndimi mwenye kukuua* meaning 'I am the one who will kill you'. All Knappert's examples involve human referents, and the initial *mw*-part is in fact a noun class affix (even though we are not told this). The adjective root *-enye* can, at least in Standard Swahili, also be used with non-human referents, as in *chumba chenye giza*, meaning 'a dark room, i.e. a room having darkness' (example taken from Ashton 1947: 63). Unless the use of *-enye* is indeed restricted to human referents in the texts analyzed by Knappert, we are left with the impression that *-enye* occurs only as *mwenye* (or rather that *mwenye* is an unanalyzable whole).

The lack of an index is less unfortunate than it might seem at first, since the book has a transparent organisation, which, with a simple layout, makes most things fairly easy to find. In fact, Knappert's grammar is a highly useful contribution to any linguist's library.

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