Standards of English in the Caribbean: History, attitudes and functions, features

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1   Introduction

The English-speaking Caribbean constitutes a vast area stretching from the Bahamas, which lie immediately off the North American coast, over the Greater and Lesser Antilles to the South American mainland. It also includes parts of Central America (cf. Schneider 2011: 95; Deuber 2014: 4). For the most part, the vernaculars spoken in the region are creoles; they coexist with English as an official language in former British colonies.

Whereas the creoles of the anglophone Caribbean have received a fair amount of attention in the past fifty years or so, the standard varieties used there moved into linguistic focus fairly recently. This comparative neglect appears to be owed mainly to two factors. First, after the majority of territories had attained independence and creole studies had just emerged as a new scholarly discipline in the 1960s, the spotlight of linguistic description fell naturally on forms of speech maximally distinct from the language of the former colonial power, i.e., the basilectal creoles (e.g., Bailey 1966). Following the publication of the continuum model (DeCamp 1971), the massive variation characterizing creole speech communities resulted in another major line of research, which, however, did not usually include the standard, or acrolectal, end of the spectrum (e.g., Bickerton 1975; Rickford 1987). Second, within Caribbean anglophone speech communities themselves, sociopsychological factors, including "an inherent propensity for downgrading what is their own, and upgrading the metropolitan model" (Youssef 2004: 48), have militated against the acknowledgement of local norms. Accordingly, even today, a certain reluctance to view standard English as a significant component of their communities' linguistic repertoire may be observed among Caribbean linguists (Youssef 2004: 42-3): "They hold that it belongs to the American, to the Australian, to the Englishman, and, in the very act of speaking a local variety of Standard English they ask one another 'If there is a local Standard, what is it?'"

This paper seeks to provide a tentative answer to this question by bringing together what is currently known about standards of English in the Caribbean. After a brief historical outline, it reports on changes in attitudes toward and functions of English vis-à-vis the creoles which have taken place in the postcolonial era. It also looks at the features of Caribbean standard Englishes. Throughout, reference will be made to the Caribbean English-lexifier creoles, because, as will

be argued, standards of English in the Caribbean can only be described and defined in relation to those languages.

2   History

Historically speaking, there are two sources of English in the Caribbean (cf. Devonish & Thomas 2012: 179). There are, first, the non-standard vernaculars spoken by British indentured servants and other settlers from the seventeenth century onward. Many of these people came to the Caribbean via Barbados; in fact, Barbados has often been called the "mother colony" from which British settlement and linguistic influence spread throughout the region. As for the origin of the British immigrants to Barbados, Winford (2003: 315) notes that "Bajan grammar reflects heavy influence from southern English dialects, especially those of the South West of England" and that the "vast majority of settlers and indentured servants came from the latter region."

African slaves progressively displaced British indentured servants, particularly after sugar plantation agriculture had been introduced. Nevertheless, "[f]or roughly 25 years after its colonization in 1625, Barbados relied on a small farm economy in which […] settlers and servants were in close contact with Africans" (Winford 2003: 314). This kind of scenario suggests that the slaves acquired second-language varieties of non-standard British English showing substantial West African substrate influence. These varieties eventually spread not just within the African population but also to locally born and raised whites. As Cassidy (1961: 21) notes with reference to Jamaica, "the 'creole' speech which was so often a subject of comment (usually unfavorable) referred to the usage of both slave and master, in so far as that differed from English usage."

The Caribbean creoles as we know them today for the most part emerged in the eighteenth century, when plantation economies had been established everywhere in the region and the varieties of the founder populations were exposed to ever more African influence, as slave importations continued and increased, both from within the Caribbean and straight from Africa. There is still considerable dispute over how precisely creole formation took place, but agreement seems to have been reached on two points. First, it has become clear that neither substrate nor universalist theories on their own sufficiently account for the process; rather, features from all varieties and languages present in the "feature pool" (Mufwene 2001: 4) of the original contact situation had a chance of being selected into the emerging contact vernaculars. Which features eventually prevailed was influenced by a set of factors including typological, ecological, and cognitive ones. Particularly ecological factors, i.e., factors having to do with demographics, "codes of social interaction," and "specific sorts of community settings"

(Mintz 1971: 481), determined whether intermediate creoles emerged, as in Barbados or the Bahamas, or conservative ones, as in Jamaica, or even "radical" ones, as in Suriname.

Second, the view that the basilectal forms of any creole emerged first and that the mesolectal and acrolectal varieties came about as a result of decreolization, presumably caused by increased social mobility, economic opportunities, and access to education, possibly after Emancipation, but definitely in postcolonial times, has had to be abandoned. The argument that a spectrum of variation always existed in every colony was forwarded as early as 1971 by Alleyne, but even Bickerton (1988: 272), once one of the staunchest proponents of decreolization, has come to believe that

> the creole continuum came into existence 'backwards', so to speak – those varieties closest to English originating from the earliest contact, and those furthest from English, from the phase in which the original model was most drastically diluted by a massive and rapid increase in the non-European population.

The second historical source of English in the Caribbean consists in the "more standard forms" of the language (Devonish & Thomas 2012: 181) that were used by British colonial administrators, missionaries, and educators. Members of this group often mocked the speech of the locally born whites; a frequently quoted example is Lady Nugent, the wife of a British governor of Jamaica in the early nineteenth century, who described the way the locals spoke as "a sort of broken English, with an indolent drawling out of their words, that is tiresome if not disgusting" (Wright 2002: 98).

Colonial education in the main served the purposes of the colonizers rather than those of the colonized. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, children of the white elite were often educated privately at home or sent to schools and universities in Britain. There was no formal system of instruction for the slaves, as the general education of the colonized was seen to pose a threat to the established colonial order. Particularly toward the end of the period of slavery, however, missionary schools were established throughout the region. Their teaching obviously centered on the spread of the Christian faith, but children also acquired minimal literacy skills.

Nevertheless, "[a]t abolition, the vast majority of the people could not read or write" (Higman 2011: 185). "The idea for a public system of universal education in the West Indies was born in 1833" (Gordon 1963: 1) with the Slave Emancipation Act, which not just freed all slaves but also made provisions for their education in the form of the Negro Education Grant, a ten-year public subsidy intended by the British government "to maintain an old established social framework, on the argument of well-worn religious precepts, which might be threatened by new conditions of living" (Gordon 1958: 140). Instruction was to be primarily religious and moral, but language also constituted an important element. "Essential to the post-slavery educational project was

teaching in the language of the imperial state and teaching from its books" (Higman 2011: 186). Accordingly, the British Colonial Office in 1847 specified the diffusion of "grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization for the coloured population of the colonies" (Gordon 1963: 58).

Those who had the task of presenting this grammatical knowledge were, of course, the teachers. But who were they? In his 1837 report on *Negro Education in Jamaica*, the first in a series of three reports that he drew up for the Colonial Office following his mission as an inspector of schools in the British West Indies, Charles Joseph La Trobe noted that these teachers had either been "imported direct from Britain, or recruited from among the 'coloured' class on the islands who had benefited from their mixed parentage by receiving the rudiments of education" (Reilly 2003: 77). As Devonish & Thomas (2012: 181) point out, the "varieties which have come to be labeled 'Standard Caribbean English' began with the teachers in these first decades of public education."

In the following century, roughly, the educational systems that had been established in the anglophone Caribbean expanded considerably. Primary schooling became widely available, and more and more locals, i.e., creole speakers, entered the teaching force, often via a "monitor" system whereby "the more capable pupils from the senior classes [were] delegated to pass on their imperfect skills to the younger children" (Craton & Saunders 1998: 27). Training colleges, such as the Mico University College in Jamaica, which had been established with the help of a charitable grant in 1836, or church-affiliated normal schools "provided a sound training for the times," but did so "on a lamentably small scale" (Gordon 1958: 147). Secondary schools were established in order to provide "education of a higher grade among those classes of the community who would value it, if placed within their reach but whose means do not enable them to send their children to Europe for the purpose of receiving it" (Cundall 1911: 604, quoted in King 1995: 248). In the Bahamas, for example, Government High School was founded in 1925 to accommodate the growing colored middle class and upwardly mobile blacks, who could seldom attend private secondary schools because of discriminatory policies (Saunders 1994: 11). Even Government High was out of reach for most blacks, however, as not only the entrance examination but also the annual fee of ten pounds was prohibitive to most. In sum, throughout the Caribbean, educational systems were geared to the maintenance of the power of the white ruling class, and secondary education remained the prerogative of a minority, including a small group of privileged blacks.

Linguistically, "[t]he result was a practical bilingualism" (Higman 2011: 186), which has been described (e.g., Devonish 1986: 9-10; Winford 1985; Shields 1989: 41) as a typical instantiation of diglossia as famously defined by Ferguson (1959). Others have argued for a continuum approach to model the interrelationships between creole and standard in the anglophone

Caribbean (e.g., Patrick 1999: 6-19). Speakers themselves usually conceptualize their linguistic resources as binary, i.e., as either English or creole (or "dialect" or "Patois"). The notion of the mesolect(al continuum) does not feature in this conceptualization. "What in a structural description qualifies as mesolectal speech may be the result of a dominantly Creole speaker attempting his or her best version of StE [i.e., standard English], but just as easily the most creole speech that an otherwise standard-oriented speaker attempts" (Hinrichs 2006: 11), a phenomenon that is fittingly illustrated by the results that Patrick (1999: 269-73) obtained with his English-to-creole and creole-to-English translation tasks in the Jamaican capital, Kingston. Obviously, a comprehensive discussion of the two models is beyond the scope of this paper; suffice it to note here that, apart from the shared focus on sociolinguistic variation in bilingual or bidialectal situations, diglossia more easily relates to the functional aspects of such situations, whereas the continuum model has been applied more successfully to the description of the structural interrelationships linking creole and standard.

Between 1962 and 1983, twelve former British colonies in the region became independent. "[T]hese territories include twelve independent nations […], each with a linguistic entitlement to a national standard language" (Allsopp 1996: xix). In each and every case, this language has been English. None of the creoles were considered for the role of national language, but then – in diglossic terms – this would have meant assigning "high" functions to the "low" code (cf. Ferguson 1959: 234-7). Rather, efforts were made to define norms for Caribbean English usage in public, formal domains, and more specifically examination settings. In order to achieve this, the Caribbean Lexicography Project was initiated in 1971. Its main outcome was the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (*DCEU*; Allsopp 1996), whose aim was at once to document standard Caribbean English (1996: xvii) and make prescriptions for it (1996: xxvi). Obviously, there is an underlying contradiction in this endeavor in the sense that those features which make English in the Caribbean distinct from other varieties of standard English are most often features which also exist in the creoles. So the problem was one of striking a balance between "local color" and "*Internationally Accepted English* [emphasis in the original]" (Allsopp 1996: liv; cf. Devonish & Thomas 2012: 189-90).

The *DCEU* solves this problem by including everything in it under the umbrella term *Caribbean English*. It then sets up a classification based on formality which contains four levels, i.e., "*Formal, Informal, Anti-formal, Erroneous*" (Allsopp 1996: lvi). Formal usage is defined as educated usage and/or "belonging or assignable to IAE [i.e., Internationally Accepted English]." "[R]egionalism[s]" may form part of such usage. Informal usage occurs in "casual, relaxed speech" and may be characterized by "morphological and syntactic reductions of English structure." "*Such forms constitute the bulk of everyday CE* [i.e., Caribbean English; emphasis in the original]" (1996: lvi). Anti-formal usage is "consciously familiar and intimate;" it forms "part of a wide range from close and friendly through jocular to coarse and vulgar, any Creolized or

Creole form or structure surviving or conveniently borrowed" may occur at this level of formality. Erroneous usage is "[n]ot permissible in IAE although evidently considered to be so by the user" (1996: ivii). A brief discussion of the implications of this classification may be found in Devonish (2003: 2089); for the purposes of the present paper, it is important to note that regionalisms (at the highest formality level) and creolisms (at the remaining three levels) play a role in each and every definition. The *DCEU* thus very clearly illustrates that standard usage in the Caribbean must always be seen in conjunction with creole usage and is at the same time crucially based on the creation and maintenance of distance from it.

A question that was left unresolved is whether there is or should be a pan-Caribbean standard of English. The *DCEU* clearly assumes such an entity and defines it as the "the total body of regional lexicon and usage bound to a common core of syntax and morphology shared with Internationally Accepted English, but aurally distinguished as a discrete type by certain phonological features" but also acknowledges that recognizably separate standards exist in the different countries (Allsopp 1996: lvi). Similarly, Christie (1989: 251-3) lists some differences between varieties of educated English in the Caribbean but still argues that these varieties are similar enough, particularly in syntactic terms (1989: 245), to warrant "recognition of Caribbean English as a variety in its own right" (1989: 262). Finally, work on the first Caribbean subcorpus of the International Corpus of English (cf. section 4) took into account the possibility of an emerging supranational standard (Mair 1992: 77). The search for this supranational standard seems to have been quietly abandoned in the meantime, however, as what might have been ICE Caribbean turned into ICE Jamaica, and analogous corpora have been begun for Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas, respectively. Speakers themselves also apparently favor national standards over a regional one. As Deuber (2013: 118) explains, this finding might be owed in part to the abstractness of the latter,

> but the lingering belief that the Creoles are the only true Caribbean varieties also has an important part to play in the perception of regional variation that led many to deny the existence of a Caribbean Standard English, as these display greater variation across the region than standard varieties.

The following section expands on such attitudinal issues.

3 Attitudes and functions

As noted above, the pre- and early post-independence Caribbean sociolinguistic situation has been described as diglossic. For Jamaica, for example, Shields-Brodber (1997: 57) notes the existence of "divergent, functionally complementary varieties. […] Jamaican Creole […] filled the role of language used for personal and informal experience […]. English, learned at school, was

the language of formal oral and written expression." The attitudes accompanying this functional separation were those described as typical of diglossia by Ferguson: "H [i.e., the "high" variety] alone is regarded as real and L [i.e., the "low" variety] is reported 'not to exist'" (1959: 330). Even today, the existence of the creoles is sometimes denied, not just by speakers who claim that they speak nothing but "the Queen's English," but also by institutions, as the following excerpt from a brochure issued in the late 1990s by the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism illustrates. Under the heading of "What Language Is Spoken In The Bahamas," it is claimed that

> English is our language – more British than American – and we have our own special way with it. You'll hear a musical lilt and detect interesting influences from Africa and from the Arawak Indians who lived here originally.

No mention is made of Bahamian Creole, locally labeled "dialect." This kind of shamefaced attitude has historical roots, of course, in the sense that, even though, as noted above, the Caribbean creoles had always been used not just by the black population majority but by local whites, too, they became prototypically associated with the former and with everyday, basic situation types: at home, at the market, in the village, street, or yard, and in interaction with servants, workers, and children. The low prestige attached to the creoles was reinforced by the fact that, other than the co-existing European standard languages, they lacked codification and a long tradition of written literature (cf. Siegel 2005: 145). In combination, the strict functional separation of the codes and the public "invisibility" of the creoles eventually resulted in what Shields-Brodber (1997: 59) has described as the "myth" of "monolingual," English-speaking societies.

The independence of the vast majority of former British colonies between 1962 and 1983 and the concomitant development of new national identities and indigenous cultural forms of expression resulted not just in the above-described efforts at codifying varieties of Caribbean English but also – and probably primarily – in increased attention to and legitimacy for the vernaculars. There has been a noticeable rise in the prestige of the creoles, which have developed into symbols of national independence and of a unique Caribbean cultural heritage. This overt change in attitudes was certainly aided by comparatively successful democratization and the social emancipation of large parts of the black population majority set in motion by the drive for political independence. Grass-roots activism by educators, artists, and other public personae has also played an important role in the process. At the same time, there has been a "functional dethronement of SE [i.e., standard English] as the exclusive language of public-formal domains" (Shields-Brodber 1997: 64). Both of these processes will be described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

3.1   Attitudes: From "bad" and "proper" English to endonormative standards

Probably the most conspicuous change that has taken place with regard to language in the postcolonial English-speaking Caribbean is a change in attitudes. Certainly, among large sectors of the population, traditional views still prevail. On the one hand, there is often a lack of distinction between creole and English, which obviously has an objective base. The bulk of the vocabulary of all varieties of English in the Caribbean is identical, and structurally it is impossible to draw exact lines between them. It is not surprising, thus, that many speakers find it difficult to regard the creoles as languages in their own right, claiming instead that they speak nothing but "the Queen's English" or merely dialects of English. On the other hand, those who acknowledge the creoles still often regard them as "bad" or "broken" English and oppose them to "proper" English. They associate them with backwardness and a lack of education and see them as obstacles to modernization and participation in the global economy. The fact that the vast majority of anglophone Caribbean countries depends economically almost entirely on service-oriented industries such as tourism and banking, both of which cater mostly to foreigners, makes the mastery of "good" English a seemingly indispensable prerequisite for socioeconomic success (cf. Irvine 2004).

Nevertheless, throughout the Caribbean, things have been changing. Whereas Winford (1976), in a survey among trainee teachers in Trinidad, found a strong tendency to apply the label "bad English" to the local creole, Mühleisen (2001), in a follow-up study, discovered that overtly negative evaluations of Trinidadian Creole as an inferior form of English had disappeared along with the terminology. Similarly, Beckford Wassink noted that the equation between Jamaican Creole or "Patois" and "broken English" or "slang" no longer held but for her oldest informants and – interestingly – preschool and primary school teachers. The majority of other informants regarded it as a "language" distinct from English which had its place in society and which it was appropriate to use in certain social circumstances (1999: 81). A survey conducted by the Jamaican Language Unit, finally, showed that even the social profiles stereotypically associated with English and creole speakers had become more fluid. Even though, predictably, status attributes such as education, intelligence, and, to a lesser degree, material well-being ("Has more Money") were still mostly associated with speakers of English, the likeability attributes honesty, friendliness, and helpfulness patterned fairly evenly across the two groups (2005: 19). This seems to indicate that, as Craig (2006: 108) has put it, "traditional attitudes to 'low' and 'high' language have become diluted" in the postcolonial Caribbean in the sense that the use of English or creole is no longer determined exclusively by social status but often indicates "choices of style and register." Thus, as Shields-Brodber (1997: 63) has argued for Jamaica, "code-switching has become a norm for educated and non-educated" speakers alike, and,

depending on how great a command of either language they have […], many speakers are thus taking full advantage of their linguistic options, and performing a range of acts of identity (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985) as they relocate themselves in their multidimensional space.

This generally optimistic outlook is dampened by the fact that at least in some cases (future) teachers, i.e., linguistically sensitive professionals functioning both as role models and instructors, have been found to harbor the most negative feelings toward the creoles. Thus, as just noted, Beckford Wassink (1999: 69) found that among her Jamaican respondents, kindergarten and elementary school teachers were overrepresented among those who equated Jamaican Creole with "broken English" or "slang," and Oenbring & Fielding, in a survey investigating language attitudes among Bahamian college students, discovered that education majors often expressed the most negative attitudes toward and conservative views on the use of the Bahamian "dialect" (2014: 45). They nevertheless conclude on a hopeful note, pointing out that the students who took part in the survey were all beginning students who had two mandatory linguistics classes ahead of them, "classes designed in part to inoculate future English teachers […] against uninformed folk attitudes about standard and nonstandard varieties" (2014: 47).

Other than the above-mentioned studies, which are concerned exclusively with the contrast between the creoles and an otherwise undefined "English," Belgrave (2008), Deuber & Leung (2013), and Deuber (2013) investigate attitudes toward different varieties of English used in the Caribbean, based on the assumption that

> there has been a reorientation away from the British model and towards, on the one hand, American English – probably even more than in other former British colonies, due to geographical proximity – and on the other hand, emerging local standard varieties, even though British English continues to hold a particular type of prestige (Deuber & Leung 2013: 296).

Deuber & Leung (2013) asked tertiary-level students in Trinidad to rate sound clips taken from radio news broadcasts in Trinidad and Tobago as well as from the Voice of America and the BBC in terms of the newscasters' pronunciation according to correctness, intelligibility, standardness, authenticity, properness, refinement, naturalness, and appropriateness. Whereas the most creole-sounding accent was disfavored by the raters, a local non-creole accent received the highest score. Intermediate Trinidadian accents as well as the foreign-sounding ones were in between, all with rather similar scores. According to Deuber & Leung (2013), this suggests, first, that the notion of "standard" in the Caribbean context implies primarily distance from the creole, or, in the words of Irvine (2004: 68), "the form English takes in our social context, particularly its pronunciation, is shaped in part by the idea speakers have of what Creole is." Such a negative definition of standardness, in turn, leaves considerable room

for variation, which explains why the raters in Deuber & Leung's study (2013) assigned very similar scores to all of the intermediate local-sounding clips as well as to the foreign-sounding ones. Second, endonormative standards seem to be recognized and valued, otherwise the British- or American-sounding clips might have received the highest scores.

Deuber (2013) surveys the overt expression of beliefs about standard English among university students from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. While the ideas about standards of English expressed by the students varied widely and included, as Deuber puts it (2013: 112), "some that do not coincide with linguists' understanding of such varieties," many participants in both countries claimed that national standards existed but rejected the notion of a pan-Caribbean standard (cf. section 2). At the same time, standard English was still often associated with foreign countries and only the creoles were regarded as distinctive and unique to anglophone Caribbean countries. Youssef (2004: 42) notes similar beliefs among the Trinidadian population at large, pointing out that even Caribbean linguists "talk almost exclusively about the Creole" when examining local language use, "and while they argue that many speakers' competence embraces Standard English, they are totally resistant to regarding that variety as their own" (2004: 42-3). In this connection, even though the growing importance of American English and a certain mixing of British and American features in local language use were noted by some participants in Deuber's survey, those who voiced an exonormative orientation predominantly named British English as their target. In sum, while overt beliefs about standards of English still often center around the former colonial power, awareness of emerging local norms and diversity seems to have grown considerably in the postcolonial Caribbean.

3.2   Functions: Language use in the media and in education

With regard to the functions of English and creole, both change and stability may be observed. Thus, Youssef's observation that "the Creole is the language of solidarity, national identity, emotion and humour, and Standard the language of education, religion, and officialdom" (2004: 44) still holds throughout the English-speaking Caribbean and also emerges in all of the above-quoted surveys. In both Trinidad (Mühleisen 2001) and Jamaica (Beckford Wassink 1999; Jamaican Language Unit 2005) speakers deem the creoles appropriate in private, informal interaction, while the standard is the form of speech called for in public, formal situations.

At the same time, the creoles have been encroaching on English in a number of domains. In the media context, they feature most prominently on the radio, especially in entertainment programs and the popular phone-in talk shows. The use of English and creole in Jamaican phone-in programs has been analyzed by Shields-Brodber (1992) and Sand (1999: 151-74); Shields-Brodber (2006) even documents the use of Jamaican Creole by a doctor of English origin

giving medical advice in one such show. The language of radio or television news programs has also become more diverse through clips in which ordinary people are interviewed or comment on the events reported. Still, "the narrative [of newscasts has] remained essentially English" (Shields-Brodber 1997: 62). In general, the creoles occur less frequently on television than on the radio, as television programs are often imported, mostly from the U.S. Newspapers, too, are still largely in the hands of the standard; cartoons or columns, however, also make use of the vernacular. In these genres the creole basically functions as a stylistic device, employed to obtain realism or convey authenticity. In artistic forms of expression, such as poetry, plays, or novels, the creoles no longer function in this merely expressive way or symbolically by way of metalinguistic comment, but they also assume referential function as well as authority by being assigned to the narrative voice (cf. Mühleisen 2002: 183-221). This, in turn, has enhanced their prestige value, as has their use in music styles such as reggae, dub, calypso, and soca, which have become popular worldwide.

The roles that English and the creoles play in the educational systems of the English-speaking Caribbean must be seen against the backdrop of the development of most countries in the region from societies of the colonial type, in which the majority of the population received only a rudimentary education, to independent nations with diversifying economies based on tourism and other service-related industries, as outlined above. A major shift in orientation occurred during the early postcolonial phase, when the various ministries of education recognized the creoles as independent forms of language and introduced new language arts syllabi which replaced the traditional monolingual approach to the teaching of English by one of "transitional bilingualism" (Craig 1980: 250-1), which means that the students' vernaculars were to be accepted until they had acquired a sufficient command of English. In Jamaica, this happened in 1962 (Shields-Brodber 1997: 61), in Trinidad and Tobago in 1975 (Youssef 2004: 43).

Transitional bilingualism still underlies current syllabi. In the Bahamas, for example, even though "**standard English is the expected language of the classroom** [emphasis in the original]," the "students' language is valued as a means of learning, changing, and growing" (Department of Education 1999: 2). With the exception of individual schools in Jamaica, where the Bilingual Education Project of the Jamaican Language Unit has made efforts at implementing a policy of full bilingualism, as outlined as desirable by the country's Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture in 2001, by means of teaching in the "home language" at the primary school level, throughout the anglophone Caribbean, English is currently taught with the overall aim of achieving monoliterate bilingualism (cf. Craig 2008: 600). The reasons for this are summarized for Jamaica by Carpenter & Devonish (2010: 167): "(1) the lack of a standard writing system for the teaching of Jamaican [...]; (2) the absence of written teaching materials in Jamaican; and (3) the perceived lack of public will to have children educated in Jamaican" (cf. Oenbring & Fielding 2014: 34 for the Bahamas).

It is interesting to note that at least some language arts syllabi recognize the existence of local standards and specify these as the goals of language education. Thus, the Bahamian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology mentions "standard Bahamian English" as the target variety in its language arts manuals for teachers, and the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture's Language Education Policy (2001) "declares the country bilingual in Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican Creole" (Deuber 2013: 123). In Trinidad and Tobago, by contrast, no national standard is recognized, but then, as Deuber surmises, the recognition of endonormative standards correlates with the state of research into the respective variety, and "a T&T [i.e., Trinidad and Tobago] Standard English is not yet supported by linguistic research to the same extent as the Jamaican variety" (2013: 125). Even though research on standard Bahamian English has only just begun (cf. section 4.1), there is the *Dictionary of Bahamian English* (Holm & Shilling 1982), which might have had a similarly supportive effect on the recognition and appreciation of things Bahamian in language.

Traditionally, the creoles were the home language for the vast majority of Caribbean school children (even though, as noted by Deuber 2014: 35, there has always been a small minority of speakers employing the standard as their vernacular), and the school was the first place children came into contact with standard English. This seems to have changed with increased social mobility; in the Bahamas, for example, many parents now encourage the use of the standard at home, even though the driving force behind their linguistic efforts may be less actual competence than social ambition (cf. Hackert 2004: 61). It is widely acknowledged that the teaching of standard English to a student population for whom it is neither a first nor a foreign language but rather a "second dialect" (Görlach 2002: 54) poses special problems (cf., e.g., Youssef 2002) and that, despite the fact that teachers are alerted to the complexities of the situation during their teacher training, "the policies have in actual practice not always translated into much more than tolerance of the Creole" (Deuber 2014: 39) and a contrastive approach to grammar (cf. Craig 2008: 606), in which "the pedagogical emphasis remains – from the primary up to the postsecondary level – in large part on students' mechanical correctness in Standard English" (Oenbring & Fielding 2014: 29-30).

Accordingly, numerous problems remain, including comparatively low primary school performance and poor results in secondary-school examinations in English (cf. Deuber 2014: 39). The development of oral skills in the standard appears to be particularly difficult, which may be owed not only to high student-teacher ratios and a lack of teaching materials (2014: 40) but also to insecurity among teachers as to how tolerance for the students' vernacular and an insistence on the appropriateness of standard English in certain speaking situations might be conveyed at the same time. Finally, precisely the change in linguistic attitudes described above seems to have aggravated the problem, as there is now a substantial group of speakers, among them a growing population of disaffected youth, for whom socioeconomic success, education,

and competence in standard English are no longer indissolubly linked. As Youssef & Deuber (2007: 2) put it,

> [i]n former times the Standard variety was pursued as the route to educational success and its literature was valued as part of a culture of learnedness, but today, we are justifiably proud of our own culture, which the Creole represents, and the backlash of this is a disinterest and even hostility towards the Standard and those persons it is perceived to represent.

As for actual language use in the school context, Caribbean teachers agree that standard English is the primary classroom language but that the creole also has an important role to play, especially among younger children, to secure intelligibility or establish personal rapport, and in the teaching of particular subjects (cf. Hackert 2004: 62; Deuber 2009a: 98-9). In secondary schools, a full and consistent use of creole is definitely not the rule. Nevertheless, as shown by Deuber (2009a: 88-95), teachers' speech in Trinidadian high schools often displays not only local accent features but also grammatical ones, both in terms of indirect influence of the creole on how a form also present in the standard is used (as with the modal pairs *can*/*could* and *will*/*would*) and in terms of direct takeovers from the creole, which include not only zero auxiliaries, copulas, or inflections but also overt preverbal markers. Such features will be treated in more detail in the following section.

4   Features

As outlined in sections 2 and 3, in the postcolonial anglophone Caribbean, local varieties of English have been rising in prominence. This rise is embedded in what Mair has called "a three-way competition among a still powerful traditional British model, the currently dominant American norm, and local usage" (2006: 7). The competition has affected speech and writing differently. The "creolization" of Caribbean standard English is easily visible in the spoken mode and not restricted to accent, as will be shown in section 4.2. In writing, by contrast, creole influence "plays a surprisingly limited role" (Mair 2002: 36). Nevertheless, if compared to other varieties, written Caribbean English definitely possesses a distinct local flavor, which will be sketched in section 4.1.

Before the 1980s, there existed no substantial descriptions of Caribbean English (cf. Craig 1982). The earliest of such descriptions (Miller 1987; Shields 1987; Christie 1989) were published in the late 1980s; just like the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, they had an educational impetus. In the 1990s, the Jamaican component of the International Corpus of English (ICE) was initiated; this added a second, more descriptive focus to the field. Just as in creole studies earlier on, Jamaica has been at the center of research activities concerning

Caribbean standard Englishes. Even though both Christie (1989) and the *DCEU* (1996) contain information pertaining to the Caribbean as a whole, the first separate publications on other territories appeared in the new millennium. In a 2004 article, Youssef gives an overview of some features of "Trinbagonian," and following the launch of ICE Trinidad and Tobago, a series of articles employing the corpus material was published by the compilers (Deuber & Youssef 2007; Youssef & Deuber 2007; Deuber 2009a, 2010a, 2010b). Even more recently, work was begun on ICE Bahamas; the first publication resulting from this material is Bruckmaier & Hackert (2011). Very little is known about other forms of standard English in the Caribbean, and it certainly seems to be desirable to extend the field to other national varieties as well as to the varieties used in dependent territories such as the Virgin Islands, where local norms would be determined by a yet more complex set of factors than in the independent countries in the region. As will be outlined in the following section, comparative studies of newspaper writing have begun to address this desideratum.

4.1   Written English in the Caribbean: Newspaper studies

Most studies of written Caribbean English have analyzed newspaper writing. On the one hand, this is certainly owed to convenience, as newspaper texts can be downloaded easily from online archives; on the other, "newspaper prose seems to be the most promising genre to analyze in any study of language change in progress, given its openness to innovation" (Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi 2007: 441). This is, of course, a factor well worth considering in a situation such as it obtains in the postcolonial anglophone Caribbean. At the same time, it is evident that the findings from a newspaper corpus must not simply be generalized to other genres or even to entire languages or varieties.

One research question that has loomed large in the study of Caribbean newspaper writing is that of the American impact on language use in the region. Americanization has been identified as a major force influencing present-day English in general (Schneider 2006: 67). This influence is usually taken to be at least indirectly related to the rise of the United States to a position of global dominance in politics, economic matters, and popular culture in the post-World War II era, but owing to its geographical position, the Caribbean appears to be a world region particularly susceptible to it. What Christie (2003: 20) says about Jamaica could easily be extended to other Caribbean islands:

> Jamaica's geographical proximity to the USA makes it particularly open to the influence of US English. This is fostered by both formal and informal contacts including business and cultural interchanges of various kinds, business, and vacation travel as well as travel for purposes of study, employment and professional contacts, for example. Family ties are also an important source of influence. Almost every Jamaican has at least one relative

who resides permanently in the USA with whom more or less regular contact is maintained. The most direct cultural influences stem from popular entertainment, tourism, and goods and services that reflect US industry and lifestyles.

Indeed, studies on Jamaican, Trinidadian, and Bahamian English (Mair 2002, 2009; Oenbring 2010; Bruckmaier & Hackert 2011; Hänsel & Deuber 2013) have shown that contemporary newspaper writing in all three countries evidences a significant trend toward the use of American forms, especially in the area of lexis. Deuber & Hackert (2013) present an overview of newspaper language in nine Caribbean territories, covering not only lexis but also grammar and orthography; they find that the degree to which American features are employed varies considerably by level of language as well as by variety and depends, among other things, on a community's sociohistorical relations with the U.S. The Virgin Islands are neatly divided, with language use in the U.S. Virgin Islands corresponding very closely to that in the U.S. and the British Virgin Islands patterning more like the rest of the Caribbean than like British English. In the independent countries, American influence is most noticeable in the Bahamas, which, after all, are closest to the North American mainland and have strong historical ties to it (cf. Hackert 2004: 46-7, 58-64; Hackert & Huber 2007). At the opposite end of the spectrum, we find Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Both have a firm British normative base but since independence have also witnessed the emergence of endonormative standards. The smaller countries (Barbados, Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Vincent and the Grenadines) can be found in between, and it often depends on the level of language or the feature under investigation whether a variety appears more British or American-influenced.

What all of this work lacks is diachronic evidence. A recent series of studies has attempted to remedy this situation. Hackert (fc.) investigates the use of so-called "pseudotitles," i.e., determiner-less structures providing descriptive information in front of name NPs, as in *Bahamian Prime Minister Perry Christie*, in historical and contemporary samples of Bahamian news reports. Pseudotitles are frequent in journalistic language; they clearly originated in the United States (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 276) but have been spreading to varieties of English worldwide (cf. Meyer 2002). Bahamian journalists used them liberally even when the country was still under British colonial rule and have been stretching the construction to its limits in terms of both frequency and complexity. Hackert & Deuber's (2015) findings are more mixed. They investigate four corpora of press news reports, one from the late 1960s and one contemporary, from the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago. The following features are studied: (1) contractions of negatives and verb forms, (2) the *be*-passive, (3) relative *that* vs. *which*, and (4) pseudotitles. Both contractions and the *be*-passive show a widening gap between British and American newspaper language on the one hand and Caribbean journalistic writing on the other, and especially between American and Caribbean styles. With regard to relativizers, even though rates of *that* use in the contemporary Bahamian data are higher than in contemporary

British ones, they still do not nearly resemble those found in American newspapers today (cf. Leech et al. 2009: 226-33). The contemporary Trinidadian data appear even more conservative than the British ones, in that *that* is used even less frequently. In sum, even though Caribbean journalists have been following trends observable in news writing around the world, it would be amiss to speak of wholesale Americanization. This is confirmed by Hackert (2014) for noun phrase structures (parts of speech and noun types, noun-noun sequences, genitive variation, and relativizers) in late colonial and contemporary Bahamian news writing.

As noted above, creolisms are rare in newspaper writing. The term *creolism* has been defined as a "word, phrase, or usage borrowed from the particular CREOLE (language) of a territory but used for convenience or in error in the formal spoken or written English of that territory" (Allsopp 1996: 178). Of course, what may be perceived as an error may eventually become accepted as part of a new standard variety of English (cf. Hundt this volume). This is more likely to happen in the case of indirect influence of the creole on the way an English form or construction is used than in the case of forms directly associated with the creole. The latter often indicate code-switching, at least if they are overt forms rather than what Allsopp (1996: lvi) has described as "morphological and syntactic reductions of English structure," such as zero copulas or auxiliaries.

In Caribbean newspapers, direct creolisms generally occur either as mentions (Mair 2002: 44) or in quoted speech (Bruckmaier & Hackert 2011: 202). What may be more interesting is indirect creole influence, such as it may manifest itself in, for example, the frequency and use of modal verbs, as in the following quote from a Bahamian news report, where *could* is used where *can* would be expected in British or American English:

> "When there is partial planning in some sectors without consideration for ramifications on other affected areas, we increase the probability of increased disaster in that we could become reactive and thus create programmes and procedures that become more destructive than constructive," he stated (Bruckmaier & Hackert 2011: 198).

Such uses are owed to the fact that Bahamian Creole possesses a system of modal verbs in which *could* is actually a non-past form, the corresponding past form being *coulda*. They also occur in Trinidadian English and are much more frequent in informal spoken language, where they lead to *can*/*could* ratios which are in sharp contrast to those found in other varieties of English, both native and non-native (Hackert et al. 2013). Interestingly, they are not found in Jamaican English, but then Jamaican Creole also has a different set of modals. The past form is *coulda* as well, but the corresponding non-past form is *kyan*, i.e., the equivalent of standard English *can*. In other words, the creole and standard English forms of the non-past modal of permission, possibility, and ability are identical in Jamaica, which precludes creole influence in this area. An analogous pattern has been found for *will*/*would* (Deuber et al. 2012).

4.2   Spoken English in the Caribbean: The English-creole continuum revisited

With regard to the pronunciation of acrolectal Caribbean English, Jamaican (Devonish & Harry 2004: 460) and Trinidadian (Youssef & James 2004: 515; Leung 2013) are once more the only two varieties for which there exists substantial information. In both their vowel and their consonant systems, they share a number of features, which, accordingly, appear as likely candidates for a pan-Caribbean pronunciation standard (cf. Allsopp 1996: xliv-xlvii). Thus, the FACE and GOAT vowels are both monophthongs ([e:] and [o:] respectively), as are the (usually merged) NEAR and SQUARE vowels [e:] or [ɛ:]. The TRAP vowel appears as a low-central [a], while the onset of the MOUTH diphthong is often a backed and rounded [ɔʊ] (cf. Deuber 2014: 14). As for consonants, the realization of interdental fricatives as stops is common throughout the Caribbean, as is the alveolar pronunciation of suffixial *-ing* (Allsopp 1996: xlvi).

Where Caribbean Englishes differ is in rhoticity. According to Allsopp (1996: xlvi), postvocalic (r) is "always pronounced in middle-level and usually in upper-level speech in Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Belize and many other territories, but not in Trinidad, St Vincent and most other Eastern Caribbean islands." The rhoticity of Jamaican English has been ascribed to American influence by Wells (1973: 6) and Akers (1981: 69), but Shields-Brodber (1997: 60) points out that spelling pronunciation has also crucially shaped the emerging endocentric norm. In the only empirical study of the phenomenon to date, Rosenfelder (2009) analyzed roughly 2,000 tokens of (r) in the speech of 55 speakers from ICE Jamaica. She found a surprisingly low overall degree of rhoticity of approximately 20 percent, concluding that "the traditional characterization of Jamaican English as 'generally rhotic' is clearly not warranted" (2009: 80).

A landmark study of acrolectal Caribbean pronunciation is Irvine (2004), who investigated linguistic variation at JAMPRO, a Jamaican government agency whose task is to market Jamaica to foreign and local investors. The agency itself specifies a "good command of the English language" as an employment requirement; it is staffed by highly educated personnel throughout. Irvine interviewed 82 JAMPRO employees in a formal situation; her findings, thus, may be taken to represent the very acrolectal end of the pronunciation spectrum in Jamaica. In view of this it is interesting to note that Irvine's data contain "few, if any, phonological features that are not shared with other varieties within the social space" (2004: 66). What characterizes acrolectal speech is, first, a low frequency of stigmatized creole features, such as word-initial /h/ dropping, /θ/ stopping, or [uo] diphthongs in GOAT words. Then there are features that are typically associated with Jamaican Creole but nevertheless used frequently, such as /ð/ stopping or palatalized velars in *can* or *girl*. Finally, some features appear to be produced in response to an idea of what is stereotyped creole, distancing speakers from it even when the creole form is like the standard form in any other variety of English, e.g., [-ʃɔn] in words ending

in -*tion* or [-tj-] in *culture*, etc. Such "hypercorrect" usages have also been found at the lexical level, where *persons* is preferred to *people* or *assist* to *help* (cf. Sand 1999: 104-5; Mair 2002: 48; Bruckmaier & Hackert 2011: 192-3). All in all, Irvine's study clearly shows once more that what is deemed "standard" in the Caribbean is, first and foremost, determined by speakers' perceptions of what is or is not "creole." If, however, standard usage is thus defined negatively, considerable space for variation is opened up (cf. section 3.1).

The question of variation in educated Caribbean usage is one which has been at the heart of the work done on ICE Jamaica and ICE Trinidad and Tobago so far. The ICE project goes back to the late 1980s and Greenbaum's (1996: 3) proposal to provide a set of comparable corpora for the study of standard varieties of English, and, in fact, the recent extension of ICE to a third Caribbean country, i.e., the Bahamas (cf. above), has led to a renewed interest in features common to the region (cf. section 2). Each ICE corpus follows the same design and comprises 500 samples of written and spoken English of 2,000 words each, distributed across a range of text types such as face-to-face and telephone conversations, broadcast news, classroom lessons, legal presentations, business letters, student examinations, news reports and editorials, and novels and short stories (Nelson 1996: 30). It is important to note that the notion of "standard" in the ICE context is based not on a specific language use but on who uses the language (Greenbaum 1996: 6). Speakers or writers must be at least eighteen years old, and they must have completed secondary school. This, of course, also holds for the speakers or writers represented in Irvine (2004) or the newspaper studies reported on in section 4.1, but other than the monostylistic data samples underlying those studies, each ICE corpus comprises a range of styles. To be sure, most of those styles are formal and thus represent "high acrolect[al]" (Patrick 2008: 613) usage as well, but conversations "can be anything from intimate to fairly formal, i.e. they range from the type of excited exchange that occurs between two best friends […] to discussions between colleagues at work or even more interview-like exchanges between relative strangers" (Deuber et al. 2012: 84).

In one of the earliest studies utilizing material from ICE Jamaica, Mair already drew attention to the fact that spoken Caribbean English comprises not only acrolectal but also mesolectal speech and even "allows for occasional forays into more basilectal territory" (2002: 36). In her book-length treatment of spoken text types in ICE Jamaica and ICE Trinidad and Tobago, Deuber (2014) confirms this with regard to the grammatical domain (cf. also Deuber 2009b). She finds that while usage in the formal styles represented in her sample conforms largely to the "common core of syntax and morphology shared with Internationally Accepted English" (Allsopp 1996: lvi), creole forms, "though generally relatively infrequent, are an important feature of style in spoken English in the Caribbean" (Deuber 2014: 238). Zero forms are predominantly found in informal text types, while overt forms often occur in "anti-formal" contexts (Allsopp 1996: lvii; cf. section 2). While the basic workings of style variation are

identical in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, differences between the creoles make themselves felt at every stylistic level. In conversations, for example, there are differences in the occurrence of zero copula in the various grammatical environments (Deuber 2014: 141). Different overt creolisms, such as preverbal *does*, which expresses present habitual aspect in Trinidadian Creole, or *a*, which is a preverbal progressive marker in Jamaican Creole, are found in anti-formal contexts (2014: 239). Even indirect creolisms, such as the use of the modal pairs *can*/*could* and *will*/*would* with creole meanings, which, as described in section 3.2, may also occur in public, written text types, follow patterns laid out differently by the creoles.

In theoretical terms, Deuber's study centers around the notion of the creole continuum and the question of its relevance for the description of educated speech in the anglophone Caribbean. While Deuber generally answers this question in the affirmative, she emphatically points to the need to add a stylistic dimension to the model. Earlier analyses of linguistic variation in the two countries investigated (i.e., Winford 1972 for Trinidad; Patrick 1999 for Jamaica) had primarily sought to correlate linguistic usage with social class membership, but such a group-based account would have missed most of the variation extant in Caribbean ICE corpora. This is owed at least in part to the above-described changes in attitudes toward and functions of English and creole which have been taking place in the postcolonial era. Speakers have been reinterpreting and adapting the range of linguistic resources at their disposal; this process has resulted in a more fluid language use in which they perform individual acts of identity by making finely graded stylistic choices between English and creole forms which complement each other rather than representing mutually exclusive opposites. Thus, in Deuber's view (2014: 245),

> standards and style in English in the Caribbean are closely intertwined. […] the Caribbean ICE corpora represent educated English but – inevitably, given the nature of the local language situation – their spoken components encompass a range of styles of which only a small segment is understood to be Standard English.

This form of complex identity management is also in evidence in new, hybrid forms of communication such as email messages (Hinrichs 2006) or web communication (Moll fc.). Hinrichs, in his work on computer-mediated communication among Jamaican university students, argues for a code-switching approach to such genres. He notes a "wealth and diversity of switches" between English and "Patois" in his data that range "from purely highlighting functions […] to those that are based on complex implicatures drawing on the social and cultural meanings of Patois." While Jamaican Creole often functions as the "we"-code, in certain situations "this functional distribution between English and Patois may be reversed" (2006: 134). In sum, as already noted in section 3.1, both the symbolic values that English and creole have in the Caribbean today and their use have become fairly fluid.

5   Conclusion

In modification of what Mair (2002: 31) has said about Jamaica, the present paper could be summarized as follows: "Standard English in the Caribbean has had a long history, but Caribbean Standard English is only now emerging." Former British colonies such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, or the Bahamas inherited a linguistic situation in which educated British English functioned as the prestige standard. In the early postcolonial phase, the prevailing attitude toward the local creoles was that they were simply "bad English." The most conspicuous post-independence sociolinguistic development has been the rise in prestige of the creoles, which have now become valued symbols of national independence and of a unique Caribbean cultural heritage. At the same time, the diglossic division of language functions of the past has become partially eroded. English is still regarded as more appropriate in most public and formal interactions, but creole use has come to be seen as complementary to English. Attitude studies have demonstrated that even though many speakers, including highly educated ones, still view standard English as an essentially foreign entity, awareness and appreciation of endonormative standards is rising. In both evaluation and production speakers aim at "local color" now while maintaining a certain distance from the creole.

The rise of local standards has happened in a forcefield of influences. The British norm is still often acknowledged as a target and still seems to dominate spelling. American forms are often found at the lexical level but also in grammar, but not necessarily as postcolonial innovations. The creoles obviously influence standards of English in the Caribbean as well, with indirect creolisms occurring even in writing. Educated spoken usage evidences the whole range of creole features, including zero forms as well as overt ones, depending on the formality of the interaction and/or particular effects that speakers may want to achieve.

Clearly, standard English in the Caribbean is not a monolithic entity. Even though there are features that unite Jamaican, Trinidadian, Bahamian, and other Englishes, within each community, the standard variety is shaped by various and partially conflicting factors, and it assumes fairly different guises depending on who uses it in what situation. Thus, the postcolonial perspective from the Caribbean shows that English today is more than just a pluricentric language.

6   References

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