

Phonetic Comparisons in English-Based Pidgins and Creoles from the Caribbean

Saschelle Dalrymple

Table of Contents:

I.	Title page.....	1
II.	Table of Contents	2
III.	Acknowledgements.....	3
IV.	Introduction.....	4
V.	Background	6
	A. The Caribbean	
	B. Pidgin/Creole studies and the Creole Continuum	
	C. Chosen English Pidgin Country of Origin (Jamaica, Trinidad and Grenada)	
	D. Phonetics of English-based Caribbean (Overview)	
VI.	Methodology.....	15
VII.	Th-Stopping Results.....	17
VIII.	R-Dropping Results.....	21
IX.	Conclusion.....	24
X.	Bibliography.....	28

III. Acknowledgments

Experiencing college in the COVID-19 pandemic was not the most ideal. I am a senior and somehow I feel like a junior due to the loss of around 2 years of the ‘normal’ college experience. However, I made it through thanks to my family, friends and professors that I shared this experience with at Bryn Mawr.

This thesis accredits the dedication and work ethic I was able to build before, during and after the major effects of a pandemic. I would like to thank my linguistics thesis advisors Kirby Conrad from Swarthmore College and Brook Lillehaugen from Haverford. Thesis work seemed like a lofty goal after going through a pandemic, but my advisors helped me through it academically and emotionally. Being part of a Tri-Co major was intimidating at first, but I appreciated the efforts that the linguistics departments have made to make my experience as a COVID-19 senior a good one.

IV. Introduction

Many pidgins and creoles found in the Caribbean have not been extensively researched. They have rich cultural and linguistic features that have yet to be studied thoroughly. The pidgin and creoles of the Caribbean mainly stem from either English, French, Spanish or Dutch. This is due to the Caribbean's history of being colonized by those nations. In my thesis, I focus on three Caribbean creoles that derive from the English language. There is a sufficient amount of English based pidgins that exist in the Caribbean. Some include pidgins that originate from the countries of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, the Bahamas and Barbados. They can be distinct from each other whether phonetically or semantically.

I explore the phonetic similarities between three of the English pidgins. I know Jamaican pidgin and, throughout my life, lightly observed that sometimes some of the other pidgins sound similar to the one I knew. I was born in the US, but grew up in Jamaica as a child up until 5th grade and am very familiar with Jamaican Patois (official name of Jamaican Creole). Although I have lived in America since then, I still use patois on many occasions like speaking to my immediate family (most of my family members were born in and grew up in Jamaica for most of their lives) or when I visit Jamaica. My father also insists on us communicating in patois as he finds it easier to understand than English despite living here for a long time. This connection to the region and its language is helpful when I am listening to my data sources as I am able to identify Caribbean features of speech easily.

The creoles I have chosen to compare are Jamaican Creole, Trinidadian Creole and Grenadian Creole. Additionally, the specific features I focus on include th-stopping and r-dropping. These consonantal features can be used in everyday speech and are easy to distinguish to my ear. I chose to listen through three online videos that range between 10-17 minutes. Using this data, I can analyze the different phonetic features I hope to compare from an easily accessible source, specifically vlogs found on Youtube. Using Youtube videos with people in the countries I chose to observe, will help me listen to the vloggers that use their natural linguistics when speaking of their everyday activities.

This research can increase an understanding of why these languages have sound systems that sound alike impressionistically. I also want to answer more specific questions like whether the features I am looking at stay persistent in generations of speakers overtime and how the distance between these islands affect what features are present. Is this because of their similar histories of colonization? Or did the different cultures from the slave trade affect the different linguistic features of the Caribbean indistinguishably?

Even though these islands exist in the same region, the islands I have chosen are also miles apart. Many regions have languages that share similarities, however the Caribbean contains mostly islands unlike other regions that are really close in proximity. Examining how the differences and similarities in certain English based pidgin can help bridge historical, cultural and linguistic aspects of some countries in the Caribbean.

V. Background

A. The Caribbean

The Caribbean is a region of the Americas, in the Caribbean Sea just below Florida (reference *Figure 1*). There are more than 7,000 islands and only 13 of them are independent countries. The Caribbean has around 44 million people (United Nations, 2022). There are four common official languages (English, Spanish, Dutch, French) along with many native pidgin and creole languages that are spoken among the Caribbean people (Clarke, 1998).



Figure 1 Map of the Caribbean (Research Gate)

The Taino people or the Arawak Indians were the first recorded people to arrive on some of the Caribbean islands. The region became their home but most of them suffered genocide when the different colonizing nations arrived on the islands. Christopher Columbus was one of the first colonizers to explore the Caribbean in the fifteenth century (Hillman, 2003). He thought he had reached Asia and named the region the Indies and now the Caribbean is often called the West Indies.

Slavery and colonization played a big role in influencing the people and languages of the Caribbean (Hillman, 2003). Many enslaved individuals from Africa were forced to work in the various sugar cane plantations in different countries (Hillman, 2003). There also were a lot of indentured slaves from a few various countries in Europe and Asia (Hillman, 2003). Pidgin and creole languages are prominent in the region of the Caribbean because those forced to work there had to adapt to speaking with the colonizers and other enslaved people that may have had a different linguistic background.

C. Pidgin/Creole Studies and the Creole Continuum

Pidgin and creole languages exist all over the world and they all carry unique interpretations from the contact language or languages that they are derived from. The Caribbean has an array of pidgin and creole languages stemming from English, French, Dutch and Spanish. However, English pidgin has the most presence in the Caribbean linguistic repertoire (see *Figure 2* on next page).

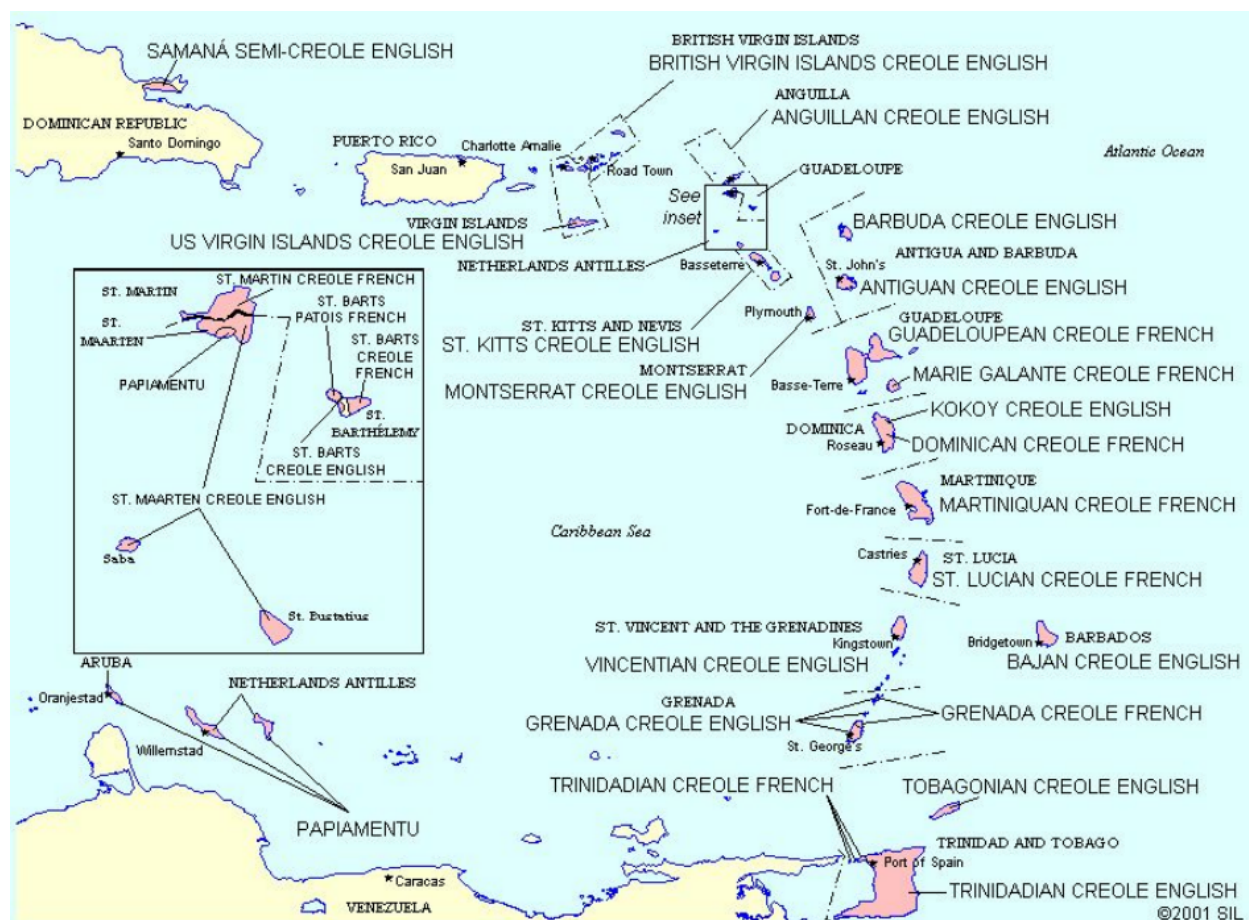


Figure 2: Linguistic Map of the Caribbean (SIL, 2001)

Pidgin is the general term for languages that are formed from people who have no shared language attempting to communicate in some way (Holm, 2000). They are usually not anyone's first language (Hyme, 1971). Creole is originally a word that refers specifically to Africans and Europeans in the West (Holm, 2000). The word then adapted to be related to pidgin languages that have become the primary language of a region (Hyme, 1971).

Pidgin and creole studies have increasingly reliable sources of research as time progresses. However, it still lacks in depth studies for certain regions and this can be due to many reasons. For example, pidgin and creoles have been negatively viewed in the early history of linguistics (Holm, 2000). They have been socially viewed as less than their

original language and can be seen as 'wrong' or 'corrupted' versions of their parent contact language (Holm, 2000).

Specifically in the Caribbean, linguistic research did not begin until the late nineteenth century (Kouwenberg, 2011). There were multiple conferences attended by different researchers that were interested in pidgin and creoles from all over the world. These conferences had only a few Caribbean based researchers, and that seems to be recurrent today. Not many researchers are Caribbean based and the possible reasons come from the stigma that the languages of the various third world Caribbean countries do not place value in theoretical linguistics (Kouwenberg, 2011).

Creole and pidgins began with the sought out need to communicate with others on the various colonial plantations that were formed in the region (Deuber, 2014). In a book by Dagmar Deuber, it quotes McWhorter, 2006 speaking of how creoles started because they had no access to the structure of the language they were learning.

Creole genesis is seen as tied to limited access to the lexifier model, and different degrees of restructuring of the lexifier are explained as the result of differential degrees of access in different circumstances and by different groups of substrate speakers. Theories of the plantation Creoles of the Caribbean as having emerged mainly in situ, with 'limited access' as a key factor in their development, indeed predominate current thinking on Creole genesis... (McWhorter, 2006)

The people of colonized regions like the Caribbean were expected to learn different lexifiers from their own linguistic repertoires without any formal help. They had to pick up words and grammar from one another and from listening to the native speakers. Pidgins and

creoles are the direct result of this and they tell a story of intertwining multiple language repertoires to survive. The new language and culture that was made from these struggles were viewed as broken, but the original speakers were piecing together the best of what was provided for them. This idea brings a whole new context to how language can be viewed as we see lasting pidgins with grammar structure and sound systems that are unique from their parent languages. Pidgins and creole also hold significance because they have become an essential part of the formed cultures way beyond the time that they were needed to help the people survive.

Despite the historical views of pidgin, more research has been done in the present day about their different influences and history. During my research, I saw a lot of studies (Gooden, S., & Drayton, K, 2017; Sobers, 2018; Miller, 1987; Irvine-Sobers, 2018; Harry, 2006) on the creoles of the bigger countries in the Caribbean individually (e.g. Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados), but not a lot of cross-analyzing work and this is what I hope my thesis can extend further upon.

B. Chosen English Pidgin and their country of origin (Jamaican, Trinidadian and Grenadian)

Jamaica is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the West Indies. Out of all the other island countries, it is the third largest and has a population of 3 million residents (Ferguson, 1999). The official language of Jamaica is Jamaican English (Ferguson, 1999). This is different from Jamaican patois which is what most locals speak. Jamaican English follows British English in syntax, structure and spelling. However, they generally don't

always sound the same, as speakers normally carry over their Jamaican linguistic features when speaking it.

Trinidad and Tobago is made of two prominent islands that make up one country. It is located in the southernmost part of the Caribbean and hosts approximately 2 million people (Brereton, 1999). It is known for its abundance of fossil fuels and an annual festival called Carnival. The official language is English, but they also speak Trinidad Creole and in a few areas, there are French creole, Spanish or Hindi speakers (Brereton, 1999). There is a big population of South Asian descendants in Trinidad and Tobago (Clarke, 1998). I am interested in seeing how that affects the phonetic features of the creole.

Grenada is located in the Lesser Antillies portion of the West Indies. The island is only about 21 miles long and 12 miles wide and has 200,000 inhabitants (Britten, 1999). Grenada is one of the countries in the Caribbean that are still dependent on British rule. It is known for its myriad of spices (Britten, 1999). The official language is also English and there is a patois variety that exists among the people of the island (Britten, 1999).

D. Phonetics of English-based Caribbean (Overview)

There is more research done on the grammatical and syntactical features of Caribbean creole than the phonetics of the languages (Kouwenburg, 2008). The common phonetic features that have been observed in English-based pidgin within the Caribbean include vocalic, consonantal and prosodic (Meer, 2021). There are many other specific features that have been analyzed and most research comes from the bigger and more popular islands like Jamaica and Trinidad. Therefore, smaller countries like Guyana have less resources about the phonetic features of their creoles.

Vocalic features in Caribbean phonetics are widely shared among the many pidgins that exist in the region (Meer, 2021). There can be slight differences between how long a certain vowel is produced among Caribbean pidgins. However, high vowels generally show many parallels. For example, the [ɪ] in KIT, [ʊ] FOOT and [ɛ] in DRESS show similar pronunciations and this is presented in research done in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Barbados (Meer, 2021). We can view these examples in countries in different linguistic data collected in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados and Trinidad (Meer, 2021). A difference in vocalic features can be exemplified by Trinidadian Creole which has little use of ‘strut vowels’ (ʌ~, ɐ~, ɔ~) while Jamaican Creole has sufficient speech evidence of this vowel distinction (Meer, 2021).

Frequently studied consonantal features include “(th)-stopping, consonant cluster reduction in coda position, or rhoticity” (Meer, 2021). For example, there is often affrication present in <tr / thr > within words like *tree* or *three*. Affrication is when a stop sound like [t] or [d] gets pronounced as an affricate [tʃ] (Irvine-Sobers, 2018). Many dialects of English have affrication in words like *tree* [tʃi:], not just Creoles. Affrication in <thr> words, though, is less common in other English dialects, but not unattested. Within Jamaican and Trinidadian creoles (Meer, 2021), *three* is pronounced as [tʃi:].

Areas where there is a lack of sufficient research include affrication transformations, such as (tj) insertion in words like *question* [kwestjən] and *furniture* [fə:nɪtjə]. Also more research is needed on the palatalization in words *cat* [kʲat] or *gas* [gʲas]. Research on prosodic features in the Caribbean has incited many discussions for creole linguists. There is uncertainty about the influence of tones on certain pidgins. Recent studies have

debunked this theory for Jamaican and Trinidadian creole, providing evidence for a reliance on word stress but not tonal usage. The patterns in the word stress can also vary from the English lexifier in terms of where in the sentence stress is present. Speech rhythm is noted to be different in pidgins compared to other varieties of English, but there is more work to be done on the rhythmic patterns. (Meer, 2021)

Some phonetic comparisons seem to be difficult to examine between the creoles because there is variation in language. Especially, when the local creoles are mostly orally transmitted and seen as casual while there is also a high presence of the standard version of the creole that becomes lexically closer to the parent language. The phonological features of the Caribbean English based pidgins are subject to sociolinguistic variation and this can cause some stigmatization to how they sound (Gooden, 2017). However, it is very apparent that these creoles are significantly different from English phonetically and can also vary phonetically from each other despite being in the same region.

In my thesis I focus on two different consonantal variations:

(1) Th- stopping. The first feature is in regards to the sound <th> becoming a hard [t] or [d] when produced in speech (van den Doel, 2006). This feature is well researched in many countries in the Caribbean and it is present in other creoles and pidgins around the world. It occurs in any part of the word. I know that this feature is well used in Jamaican patois. I want to see if there is a difference in when in the word it used and how often was th- stopping used in the different pidgins I will analyze. There has also been a study on how th- stopping has been occurring less the Jamaican creole because of the influence of English (Sobers, 2018) (Miller, 1987).

Examples of th-stopping (The examples below are from my own speech.):

English Word	Transcription
thumb	[tʌm]
birth	[bʌt]
otherwise	[odəwaɪs]

(2) R-dropping . This feature is also known as non-rhoticity and it describes the lack of pronouncing /r/. It usually happens at the end of a sentence and can sometimes be replaced by certain vowels like /ə/, /ɪə/, /ɑ:/, or /ɔ:/ (Gick,1999). While less present in the linguistic literature about the Caribbean, it is used in the Jamaican vernacular I am acquainted with. Therefore, I wanted to see if it is significant in present patois and if it was in other pidgins. I wonder if there will be a few instances of this feature, but maybe not enough for extensive data analysis. There has to be a reason why I have not seen it in my resources. The outcome of r-dropping could be too inconsistent to be considered a feature in Caribbean creoles. Through my thesis work, I will be able to look at the evidence of possible r- dropping in Jamaican, Trinidadian and Grenadan creoles to conclude its phonetic status.

Examples of r-dropping (The examples below are from my own speech.):

English Word	Caribbean pronunciations
water	[wata]
cart	[ca:t]
internet	[ɪntənɛt]

These two features of th-stopping and r-dropping will be key to answering my research questions for this thesis.

VI. Methodology

Before I describe my methodology, I would like to quickly debrief on how I will be determining whether different creole languages are related to each other. This will be important for understanding how you compare languages on a phonetic level which is essentially my goal. Comparing languages phonetically is a major scale task, I am limited to only two features because of the limited time and resources I have. However, what I can do as benchmarks is give background on how the sound systems of the creoles were formed, give certain lexical standards and look at the outside influences that can cause similar or contrasting phonetic outcomes (Zokirov, 2020). I believe more comparative research is needed on the macro systems within the phonetics of Caribbean English-based creole to get a more dynamic answer to my research question, but I will start with the micro systems.

My methodology includes finding samples from the creole languages and analyzing two phonetic features to see how Grenadan, Jamaican and Trinidad creole sound systems are similar. I chose to search for my samples from young vloggers on Youtube. However, a lot of my literature resources are from earlier times (most before 2010 with the earliest being 1971). This adds an interesting layer to my research process; examining how phonological features stay relevant in everyday creole speech by viewing the recent videos. The two phonological features I will be looking at are th-stopping and r-dropping. I chose these because they are possible to hear on my own without the use of intense spectral analysis. Also, I think these are common features that encompass some changes from the English pronunciations.

I found three young youtubers and using the automated captions as a starting point, I created a full transcription in (modified) English orthography. For words of interest to this study, I transcribed them in IPA. Each video was over 10 minutes long and involved similar content where the youtuber is doing multiple things over the course of the video. Each vlogger was either in high school or had recently graduated from high school. The Jamaican vlogger (Renessa) was the oldest vlogger and she is my cousin. She had discussed starting to post Youtube videos and she loved my idea of using her video in my thesis. The Trinidadian (Mackala) and Grenadan (Felicia) Youtubers were each found while I was researching for vlogger contenders for each country. They were both around the same age group as my cousin and had fun content in their respective islands.

I chose to look at vlogs (a video blog) to see if different features are highlighted more in different situations and if those situations vary amongst the creole languages. I then analyzed every word and sentence to see how many times th-stopping and r-dropping happened to see if the linguistic data from these videos are consistent. For th-stopping specifically, I also created an inventory and measured how many times th-stopping occurred in the word initial and non-initially.

My corpus includes all words from the videos. This includes the various English creoles, Standard Englishes from those countries, English and some African American Vernacular. Approximately more than three rounds of listening was required as I was the sole researcher. I had to listen for the different sounds as they could easily slip my attention as I am used to hearing them.

VII. Th-Stopping Results

I coded instances of th-stopping in the three videos in my corpus. The results are summarized below:

	Jamaica	Trinidad	Grenada
potential th-stopping environments	85	70	42
word-initial	43	24	5
not word-initial	12	6	6
th-stopping realized	55	30	11
% of realized th-stopping in all environments	66%	42%	26%
% word initial realized	78%	80%	46%
% not word initial realized	22%	20%	54%

Note that the Jamaican speaker uses *th*-stopping the most compared to the other speakers. The feature was realized 66% of the time when <th> (i.e. [θ] or [ð]). However, in the Grenada and Trinidad videos, they both only displayed *th*-stopping between 20 and 40% of the time. The Jamaican video had a little over 80 instances where a [th] word was used while the other videos had between 40 and 70. This is already a huge difference in the data itself and could be attributed to the fact of the Jamaican video being the longest video. It is also interesting to note how the Trinidad and Jamaica data correlate more than the Grenada videos, especially considering the proximity of these islands.

The most repeated instances of <th> becoming hard [t] and [d] sounds in each video was in articles like *this*, *that* and *the*.

Jamaican Pidgin:

Finish up **dat** and **den** do mi likkle face routine. (Pellington, 2022; 19:14)
Finish **that** up and **then** do my little face routine

Trinidadian Pidgin:

Dey can see mi...stop looking at me like **dat**. (Mackala, 2022; 6:06)
They can see me... stop looking at me like **that**.

Grenadan Pidgin:

I no sure if nobody even reach **dere** yet. (Caesar, 2022; 4:22)
I am not sure if nobody has even reached **there** yet.

In these three examples, we can observe that th-stopping occurs at the beginning of the word. There are other examples in the videos where the th-stopping happens in other environments. In the chart from the last page, you can see that I also measured when th-stopping happened in the word initial and when it did not. Jamaica and Trinidad had very high percentages in their pronunciation of <th> in the word initial. *Chart 1* and *Chart 2*, included on the next page, shows us the range of words present. We can see that the articles /dis/ (this) and /di/ (the) were the words that were consistently influenced by th-stopping.

Count of Jamaica Th-Stopped Words

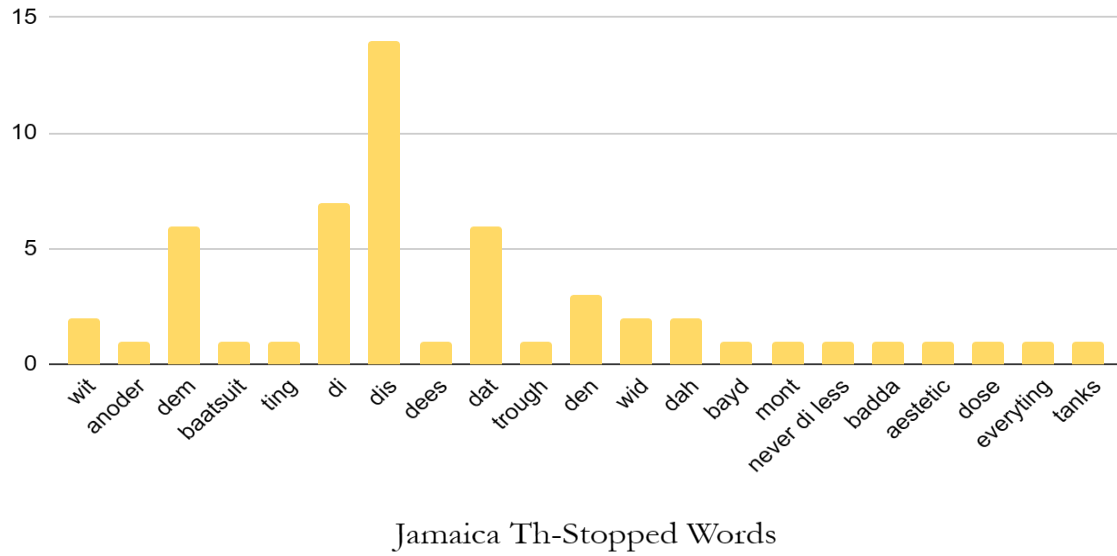


Chart 1

Count of Trinidad Th-Stopped Words

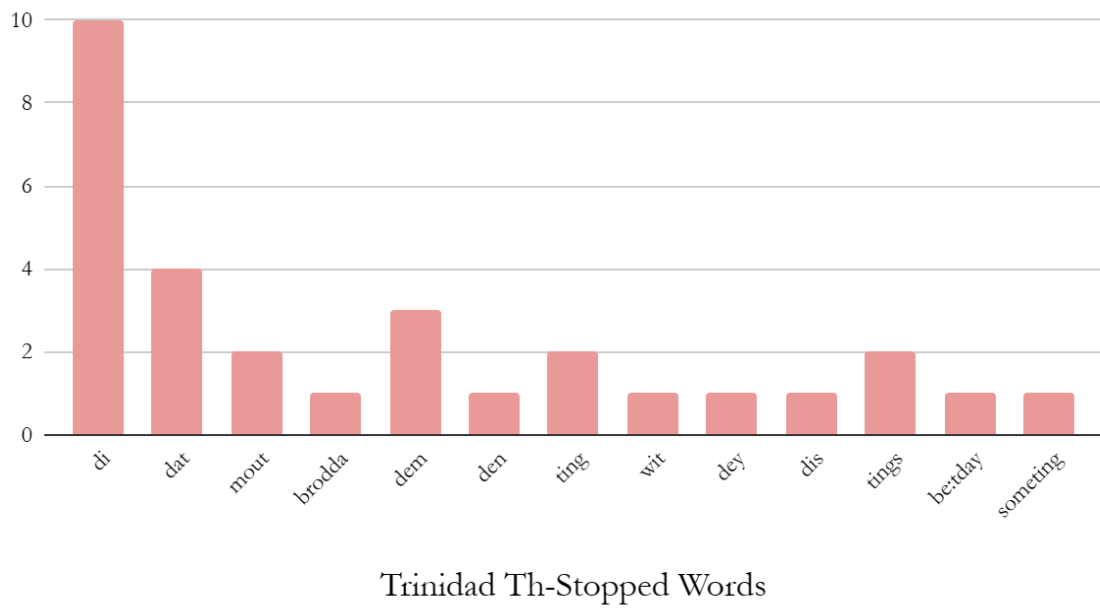


Chart 2

Grenada's corpus of words that have been th-stopped were only 11. Therefore, this caused very low results in the speaker producing th-stopping in the initial (5 words) compared to the non-initial ones (6 words). It is also good to note that the Grenadan video was the least lengthy compared to the other videos.

Sentence examples of non initial th-stopping words looked like this:

Jamaican Creole:

Hey, **evertiŋ** mi laugh afta ino. (Pellington, 2022; 18:11)
Hey, I laugh after **everything**.

Trinidadian Creole:

Ok, I gone when my **modda** get back in dis caa. (Mackala, 2022; 6:18)
Ok, I'm gone when my **mother** gets back in this car

Grenadian Creole:

Currently waiting on my friend to come pick me up and then we're going to be going **togeda**. (Caesar, 2022; 7:56)
Currently waiting on my friend to come pick me up and then we're going to be going **together**.

Overall, th-stopping is prevalent in these Caribbean countries' pidgins, but at different levels with Jamaica being the most. Th-stopping also proved to be more used in the word initial than in the non-initial. R-dropping results, in the upcoming section, led to some different conclusions than those found in the th-stopping results.

VIII. R-Dropping Results

The r-dropping result my research observed were as follows:

	Jamaica	Trinidad	Grenada
potential r-dropping environments	50	54	51
r-dropping realized	16	37	19
% of realized r-dropping in all environments	32%	68%	37%

R-dropping showed low results for the speakers from Jamaica and Grenada but was more realized by the speaker from Trinidad. The point in the Trinidadian video where a lot of this r-dropping is noticed is while the speaker was singing a viral song from the social media platform TikTok.

Trinidadian Creole:

“Okay I’m *bored* in *the car* and i’m in *the*

car *bored* hey **bo:d** in **di caa** and i’m in **di**

di caa bo:d bo:d in **di caa**

bo:d in **di caa bo:d**” (Mackala, 2022; 5:24)

What is interesting to note about this instance is that she starts off the song without th-stopping or r-dropping, then continues to sing it with the linguistic features that can be seen in Trinidad Creole. She is influenced by the media in the sense that she has been exposed to the English pronunciation of these words. However, she slips into her natural speech features as she continues to enjoy the short song that relates to her current state.

I think this feature should be studied in more depth. On a recent trip to Jamaica, I noticed how r-dropping was practiced in common names. For example, with the names Jordan and Charmaine. These names would be pronounced as /Jaadon/ and /Chaamin/ due to the r-dropping. The pronunciations of these names are not used for nicknames. They are said this way because of how the phonetics of Jamaican patois with r-dropping allows a stylistic, natural way to say these names in daily conversations. Patois speakers would still recognize the more English pronunciations of these names, but, when using patois, they would rarely pronounce it in that way. This distinction allows me to believe that r-dropping can be interesting to research further.

R-dropping was mostly seen at the end and in the middle of certain words.

Jamaican Creole:

Hey, everting mi laugh **afta** ino. (Pellington, 2022; 18:11)
Hey, I laugh **after** everything.

Trinidadian Creole:

Ok, I gone when my **modda** get back in dis caa. (Mackala, 2022; 6:18)
Ok, I'm gone when my **mother** gets back in this car

Grenadian Creole:

Currently waiting on my friend to come pick me up and then we're going to be going **togeda**. (Caesar, 2022; 7:56)
Currently waiting on my friend to come pick me up and then we're going to be going **together**.

R-dropping may occur in certain environments to avoid ambiguity of words. For example, the /r/ in the word 'train' would not be dropped because 'tain' would be strange to say and connote a word that does not exist.

'Internet' was a word seen in both the Grenadan and Jamaican Youtube videos and they both pronounced it with an r-drop. 'Birthday' was also pronounced similarly with a r-drop and th-stopping in the Trinidadian video and the Grenadan video. This shows how these different Caribbean shows can use similar phonetic features in their forms of communication.

A final interesting difference in r-dropping I noticed in the corpus was with the words /hair/ and /wearing/ in all the videos. In the results shown above, r-dropping is inconsistent across cross-cultural Caribbean speech and individually. In Jamaican Creole, the words /hair/ and /wearing/ are not usually pronounced with an <r>, presumably, because of stylistic differences. However, in the Trinidadian Creole Youtube video and /wearing/ are pronounced with r-dropping.

Trinidadian Creole.

Do not ask me what I **we:ing** today. (Mackala, 2022; 3:50)

Do not ask me what I am **wearing** today.

/Hair/ is also a word that shows up in all three videos and both the Grenadian and Trinidadian videos avoid pronouncing the <r>. It was interesting to observe that this sounded strange to my ear. Although Jamaican Creole shows some r-dropping, there might be a certain pattern or social conclusion on what words sound right when pronounced a certain way.

IX. Conclusion

The results I have shown from my research offer some reasons why English-based Caribbean pidgin tend to sound similar. Jamaica, Trinidad and Grenada all showed evidence of th-stopping and r dropping at variable rates. Jamaica showed the highest results in th-stopping which highlights how central it is to the creole even if sometimes speakers do not th-stop, while the Trinidadian speaker showed the highest results in r-dropping.

The variation in rate of these features could stem from two underlying causes. Firstly, is that, in the Youtube videos, the vloggers are trying to reach a wide audience. For instance, the Jamaican speaker was trying to promote her business of selling waist beads and you can hear a distinct transition from when she was talking about her business compared to her daily activities.

Jamaican Creole:

Daily activities

Um mi mek breakfast, you know, heng out some of the clothes...uh clean up a little bit and bayd. (Pellington, 2022; 10:09)

Um I made breakfast, you know, hung out some of the clothes... uh cleaned up a little bit and bathed.

Business Promoting

If you guys don't know, I sell waist beads. anklets, bracelets. (Pellington, 2022; 11:02)

The Grenadian speaker showed more speech patterns closer to English, but she also displayed an instance in a school conference about internet safety where the least of the tracked features were found.

Grenadian Creole:

I would always be asking my cousins to use their devices and asking questions about it because I thought it was very interesting at the time. (Caesar, 2022; 1:59)

Some other noticeable facts based on the topic of sounding more English (having fewer anticipated features of creole) due to a global media engagement proves to be consistent in the intros and conclusions of all the videos.

Jamaican Creole:

Make sure to head on over to my night routine video and make sure to leave a like and subscribe and make sure to comment on this video. (Pellington, 2022; 19:24)

Trinidadian Creole:

What's poppin babies? It's your girl Mackala and welcome back to Mackala's world. (Mackala, 2022; 0:14)

Grenadian Creole:

Hey beautiful person...it's currently Thursday night (Caesar, 2022; 0:48)

This trend shows that a more standardized variety of English is seen as the most appropriate language for business, school settings and for things made towards a more general audience. Pidgins and creoles are seen as a language that is spoken casually or at home. In my experience, I know a lot of Jamaican speakers don't see patois as its own

language in general. I also struggled with seeing Jamaican patois as a separate language from English, until majoring in linguistics. Even knowing it is a language, I still would be hesitant to call myself bilingual or put Jamaican patois on my resume.

In my Jamaican elementary school experience, I remember our Language Arts (English class) textbooks having sections on how to translate the patois we spoke everyday to English wording. In an article by G. Alison Irvine-Sobers from 2018, it mentions how the Jamaican school system is pushing Standard Jamaican English and this has a possibility of eradicating certain pronunciations of words. Standard Jamaican English is the official language of Jamaica and is regarded as the acrolect while Patois is the basilect (Shields-Brodber, 1997). This dynamic highlights how the parent language, in this case English, is seen as more formal to pidgins and creoles.

The second reason for why there is inconsistency in my research could be the increased exposure to English from social media, family or TV. In all three videos I detected viral phrases from social media platforms that stem from African-American Vernacular. For instance, phrases such as 'what's poppin' (Mackala, 2022; 0:14), 'girl, come on' (Caesar, 2022; 10:36) and 'body yody' (Pellington, 2022; 11:14) came from each video. All these examples represent slang terms that have derived from AAVE and reach the vernacular of these teenagers in the Caribbean through the media.

Social media can have a huge influence on the way younger generations speak. Now more than ever creoles need to be studied because trends from our globalized world have the possibility to change certain features. Languages always change over time and this is inevitable. However, creoles and pidgins, being languages that formed from survival, have a different story to tell. Already being less researched compared to bigger languages, there is

a lot of data tied to culture that could potentially be lost. The Caribbean creole and pidgins speakers no longer have to learn a language to survive. Now, they have to protect the stories, histories and cultural influences that have been tied to the many features of the words they speak.

Future research can help keep these seemingly small languages alive. I think a team of native and non-native speakers listening to these types of videos will be able to hear the most accurate production. I found that even though I was a native speaker of Jamaican Creole, certain features would be missed because they were normal to my ear. Research questions around social phonetic language norms would also be interesting, because even though th-stopping and r-dropping were not significant for all countries, the features were used in their own distinctive ways.

X. Bibliography

Articles & Books:

Barbara Lalla, Jean D'Costa. (1990). *Language in Exile : Three Hundred Years of Jamaican Creole*. University Alabama Press.

Deuber, D. (2014). The sociolinguistics of style and the Creole continuum. In *English in the Caribbean* (pp. 44–66).

Gick, Bryan (1999). "[A gesture-based account of intrusive consonants in English](#)". *Phonology*. **16** (1): 29–54.

Gooden, S., & Drayton, K. (2017). The Caribbean: Trinidad and Jamaica. In R. Hickey (Ed.), *Listening to the Past: Audio Records of Accents of English* (Studies in English Language, pp. 414-443). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781107279865.018

G. Alison Irvine-Sobers. (2018). The acrolect in Jamaica: The architecture of phonological variation. (Studies in Caribbean Languages 1). Berlin: LanguageScience Press.

Harry, O. (2006). Jamaican Creole. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 36(1), 125-131. doi:10.1017/S002510030600243X

Hillman, R.S., & D'Agostino, T.J. (2003). Understanding the contemporary Caribbean.

Holm, J. (2000). *An introduction to pidgins and creoles*. Cambridge University Press.

Hymes, D. H. (Ed.). (1971). *Pidginization and creolization of languages*. CUP Archive.

Kouwenberg, & Singler, J. V. (2008). *The Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies*. (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Kouwenberg, S. (2011). Linguistics in the Caribbean: Between theory and practice. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole languages*, 26(1), 219-233.

Kumar Mahabir (1999) The Impact of Hindi on Trinidad English, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 45:4, 13-34, DOI: 10.1080/00086495.1999.11671866

Language & the social construction of identity in Creole situations. (1994). In *Language & the social construction of identity in Creole situations*. Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.

Meer, P. (2021) Select phonetic and phonological features of Caribbean varieties of English: An overview.

Mordecai, M., & Mordecai, P. (2001). *Culture and customs of Jamaica*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Shields-Brodber, K. (1997). Requiem for English in an “English-speaking” community: The case of Jamaica. *Englishes around the world*, 2, 57-67.

Studies in Caribbean language. (1983). In *Studies in Caribbean language*. Society for Caribbean Linguistics.

van den Doel, Rias (2006). *How Friendly Are the Natives? An Evaluation of Native-Speaker Judgements of Foreign-Accented British and American English* . Landelijke onderzoekschool taalwetenschap (Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics).

Zokirov, M. T., & Zokirova, S. M. (2020). On researching phonetic level of the languages. *GIS Business*, 15(6), 148-154.


Images:

Figure 1: Cashman, A. (2014). Water Security and Services in the Caribbean. *Water*, 6, 1187–1203. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w6051187>


Figure 2: Jo-Anne Ferreira, J.F. (2022, October 26). *Multilingualism in the Historical and Contemporary Caribbean: Attitudes and Issues*. [PowerPoint slides]. Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, University of the West Indies.

Videos:

[ItsRenessa]. (2022, October 13). *DAY IN MY LIFE VLOG | Crochet Swimsuit/ Waist beads, Anklets/ Tattoos | Package* [Video]. Youtube.

 DAY IN MY LIFE VLOG | Crochet Swimsuit/ Waist beads, Anklets/ Tattoos | Package

[Felisha Caesar]. (2022, June 9). *Eventful Days In My Life | Movie Night, Thrifting, Hauls, School event, Birthday...* | Felisha [Video]. Youtube.

 Eventful Days In My Life | Movie Night, Thrifting, Hauls, School event, Birthday... | Felisha

[Mackala's World]. (2022, July 23). *Responsible Vlog ft. My mummy |•Mackala's World •|Trini*
youtuber 🚩 [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek99FAFxaWQ&t=237s>