

CARIBBEAN ENGLISH

Varieties of the English language are used in many of the islands of the Caribbean Sea and in several areas of the adjacent Central and South American mainland, and the label 'Caribbean English' is used, often with more geographical than linguistic accuracy, to refer to its distinguishing properties. The situation is unique, within the English-speaking world, because of the way the history of the region (p. 96) has brought together two dimensions of variation: a regional dimension, from which it is possible to establish a speaker's geographical origins, and an ethnic dimension, in which the choice of language conveys social and nationalistic identity. The interaction between these dimensions has produced a melting-pot of linguistic forms from which several varieties of varying distinctiveness and stability have emerged and now compete for survival. At least six categories of language use need to be distinguished.

- A variety of Standard English (British or American, p. 110) exists as an official means of formal international communication in the area, spoken by an educated minority with any one of a wide range of regional accents. Some have learned this variety as a mother tongue; most have acquired it in school as a second language. The traditional focus on British English is now diminishing in several areas. It is American English which has become the dominant voice of the mass media, and it is the USA which is increasing its role in relation to local economies, especially through tourism. Both models have their supporters and critics.

- Each English-speaking country in the region has to some extent developed its own variety of the standard language, most noticeably through variations in accent and the use of local vocabulary to reflect indigenous biogeography and cultural practices. Many of these varieties show the result of contact with other languages in the region, such as the leading colonial languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, p. 96), local American Indian languages (e.g. Carib, Arawak), and the languages of immigrant groups (e.g. Hindi).

- Because of the shared historical and linguistic heritage of the local peoples, the island varieties have a great deal in common, and the concept of a Standard West Indian English, as used by educated people, and distinct from either British or American English, has begun to emerge. The properties of this variety are gaining in recognition and acceptability, as they come to be used in literary expression and also to be treated more responsibly in schools and examinations.

- The area is chiefly characterized by the use of vernacular varieties known as creoles, some of which are the result of contact with the English language. Traditionally, these have been viewed as dialects of English, often referred to somewhat dismissively by such terms as 'patois'. In recent years, however, with the emergence of several Caribbean countries as independent nations and the growth of a more sophisticated linguistic awareness of the complexity found in creole languages, there has been a tendency to view these varieties as languages in their own right, and to avoid the use of such designations as 'Creole English'. Some supporters of the autonomy of creoles go so far as to suggest that they are varieties of a single language in the region, Creole (also called West Indian Creole or Caribbean Creole), and stress its links with the languages of West Africa (p. 102).

- None of the above varieties has a clearly definable boundary. Within any of the islands, it is possible to find a continuum of language use, with Standard English at one end and a creole language at the other. Within this continuum, the forms used in any one variety may influence those used in an adjacent variety. Thus, some creoles have moved more in the direction of Standard English than others, and educated regional varieties vary in the number of creole features they contain. The nature of this 'creole continuum' has attracted particular attention in recent years, as part of the research programme into the history and processes of creolization. The situation is also characterized by the existence of multidialectism, and by a great deal of code-switching, as people alternate between varieties depending on such factors as the formality and intimacy of the situation.

- Standard English has a limited role as a second language in the region, notably in Puerto Rico (p. 96). English-based creoles, however, are widely used as lingua francas in some of the Spanish-speaking countries, such as Colombia and Nicaragua. It is unclear whether such creoles should be classified along with those of the English-speaking territories, or distinguished from them.

In recent years, West Indian speech has come to be found outside the Caribbean, with large communities of emigrants in Canada, the USA, and Britain, and these new locations have given rise to new varieties. The children of Jamaicans now living in London (many of whom have never been to the West Indies) speak very differently from their counterparts in the Caribbean.

THE CARIBBEAN VOICE

The Caribbean island arc stretches for over 1,000 miles (1600 km), and a wide range of accents is only to be expected. What is surprising is to find that there are so many shared features in the region, resulting in an accent-type which sounds distinctively West Indian to the outsider, though containing many individual differences.

The distinctive prosody (p. 248) of Caribbean English is undoubtedly the feature which has the most unifying force. Syllables tend to be equally stressed, so that a word like *Jamaica* comes out with three roughly equal beats. A consequence of this 'syllable-timed' rhythm is that vowels which would be unstressed in most other English accents are here spoken with prominence, and schwa /ə/ is little used: *bigger* /'bi:ga/, *section* /'sekʃən/, *sofa* /'so:fa/, *consequence* /'kən'si:kwens/. This rhythmical pattern, widely heard in 'rapping', is the main point of contrast with British or American English accents, and the chief source of intelligibility problems for those unused to this style of speech.

The rhymes in this extract from a poem by West Indian writer, John Agard, illustrate the syllable-timed rhythm of Caribbean speech; the stress on *don* forces the reader to emphasize the second syllable of *Common* in verse 1 and the normally unstressed pronoun *one* in verse 2.

Me not no Oxford don
me a simple immigrant
from Clapham Common
I didn't graduate
I immigrate

But listen Mr Oxford don
I'm a man on de run
and a man on de run
is a dangerous one

I ent have no gun
I ent have no knife
but mugging de Queen's
English
is the story of my life

('Listen, Mr Oxford Don', 1985)

The Caribbean Islands, showing (a) countries where Standard English is an official language; in these areas, English-based creoles are also widely used; (b) countries where a language other than English is the official language, but an English-based creole is nonetheless spoken. The special standing of US English in Puerto Rico is noted separately (p. 96).



WHAT'S A TATU?

The difficulties facing the Caribbean lexicologist are nicely illustrated by this story from a researcher working on a dictionary of Trinobagian English.

One of the most tangled sets of names I've found started one day on the beach in Mayaro, on the east coast of Trinidad, where I was checking fish names and descriptions. While I was helping a friend's grandchildren make a sand pile, I uncovered a small, fast-moving animal. The children assured me that I could pick it up – 'Is a tatu. Yuh could eat dem.' So I caught it, a white crab-like animal, put it in an empty sweet drink bottle, and took it to the Department of Zoology at the University. There it was identified as *Emerita portoricensis*, a crustacean. But the more I thought I had straightened it out, the more confusion arose.

It turns out that that particular animal is known as *tatu* or sea *tatu* in Mayaro and neighbouring areas, probably because of the similarity of its articulated shell bands and its good digging ability to the land *tatu* (armadillo). It is also known as *kochikong*, an archaic name for the armadillo, and as sea *cockroach*. However, sea *cockroach* in Tobago and northern Trinidad also refers to the chitons *Chiton mar-moratus* and *Acanthopleura granulata*. Now these chitons are also known as *pacro*, a word which also refers in some areas to a black or dark brown mollusk which lives on shore rocks and is made into *pacro water*, a local aphrodisiac. Yet another sea *cockroach* is *Sphaeroma* sp., a small many-legged millipede-like arthropod often seen scuttling over rocks and seawalls. Just to introduce another invertebrate order, the word *tatu* is also used to identify the wasp known as *jep tatu*, *Synocera surinama*, whose mud nests are built in bands resembling the armadillo's.... (From L. Winer, 1989.)

SEGMENTAL DISTINCTIVENESS

The following vowel and consonant features will be heard in various varieties of Caribbean English, and some are quite widely represented across the region. (For phonetics terminology, see §17.)

- The /a/ and /ɒ/ vowels merge, so that such words as *pat* and *pot* rhyme, both being pronounced with /a/; /ɔ:/ may join them, so that all three words *cat*, *cot*, and *caught* sound the same.
- The /ɪə/ and /eə/ diphthongs also merge, so that such pairs of words as *fear* and *fare* sound the same.
- RP /eɪ/ (as in *cake*) is /te/ in some areas (e.g. Jamaica), but otherwise becomes the monophthong /e:/; similarly /əʊ/ (as in

coat) is /uo/ in Jamaica, but /o:/ elsewhere.

- RP /θ/ and /ð/ are usually replaced by /t/ and /d/, so that *tin* and *thin*, for example, are both /tɪn/.
- Some varieties pronounce /r/ after vowels in such words as *car* and *hard* (p. 245); this is normal in Barbados and the Virgin Islands, and is also often heard in Jamaica and Guyana.
- Final consonant clusters are commonly simplified, especially if they end in /t/ or /d/: *best* /bes/, *walked* /wɒk/.
- The 'dark' articulation of /l/ in such words as *feel* and *build* (in RP) is widely replaced by a 'clear' quality (p. 245).
- Consonants are often assimilated or elided (p. 247) to produce such forms as *already* /a:redi/ and *yesterday* /jeside/. Forms such as *ask* /aks/ and *sandals* /islandz/ show another common feature – metathesis.

GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

There are few obvious signs of distinctive grammar in the more standard varieties of Caribbean English, other than those features which betray the influence of a creole variety (p. 346). Linguists have, however, noted high frequencies of certain forms, such as a tendency for *would* to replace *will* (*I would go there tomorrow*), for *get* to be used as a passive (*It get break*, meaning 'it was broken'), and for questions to be marked by intonation rather than by inversion (*You going home?* for *Are you going home?*). It is also likely that research will one day bring to light more subtle patterns of syntax which colour West Indian speech, such as distinctive uses of *if*, *so*, or *well*.

Vocabulary, on the other hand, is as usual a powerful regional differentiator. Each of the islands has a wide range

of distinctive lexical items, often relating to its fauna and flora, or to its folk and religious customs. A few of these items have entered Standard English – for example, *calypso*, *guppy*, *dreadlocks*, *rasta* – but for the most part the vocabulary is regionally restricted. In an informal survey of three lexical projects (Jamaica, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago) one researcher found only about 20 per cent of shared vocabulary. For example, a dictionary of Jamaican English (with some 15,000 entries) includes *duppy* ('ghost'), *ganja* ('cannabis'), *susumba* (a type of plant), *sweet-mouth* ('flatter'), and *watchy* ('watchman'). On the other hand, *boar-hog* ('boar'), *roti* (a type of bread), and *congolala* (a type of medicinal plant) are not to be found in this dictionary, but in Trinobagian (Trinidad and Tobago) English. Lexical diversity is a major feature of Caribbean English. (For loan words from French and Spanish, see p. 96.)

There are easier ways of earning a living (though they are not usually so engrossing).

CREOLE CHARACTERISTICS

Despite the existence of many political and cultural differences, and the considerable geographical distances separating some of the countries involved, there are striking similarities among the English-based creole languages of the world. This identity can be seen at all levels of language structure, but is most dramatic in relation to grammar. It can be explained, according to the 'creole hypothesis', as a consequence of the way these languages have developed out of the kind of creole English used by the first black slaves in America and the Caribbean. This language, it is thought, was originally very different from English, as a result of its mixed African linguistic background, but generations of contact with the dominant white English population have had an inevitable effect, drawing it much closer to the standard variety. There are certainly many differences between the various Caribbean creoles, and between these and the varieties of Black English Vernacular used in the USA (p. 97) and the English-based creoles of West Africa; but the overall impression is one of a 'family' of languages closely related in structure and idiom.

PIDGINS AND CREOLES

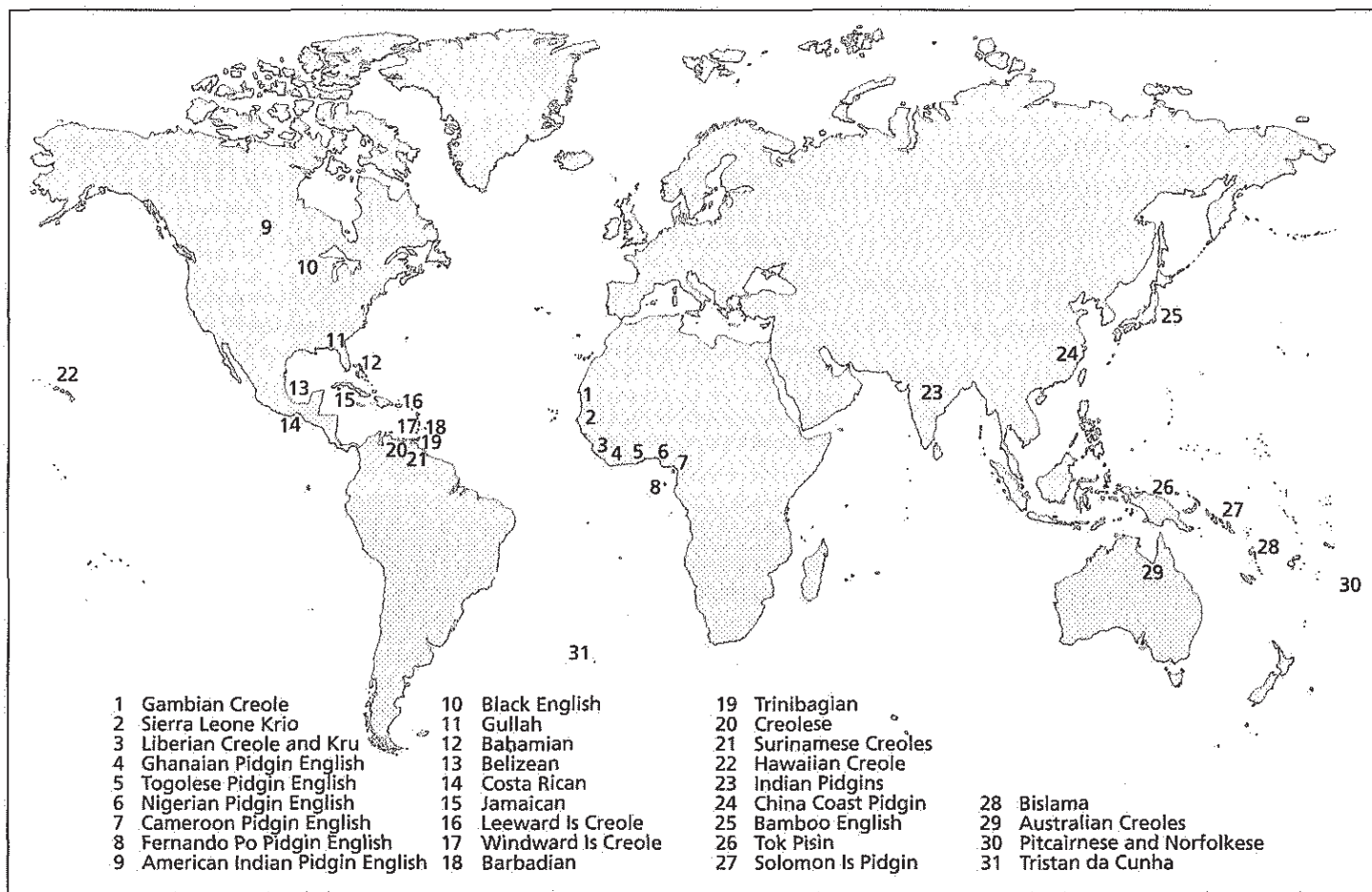
A *creole* is a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of a community – a definition which emphasizes that pidgins and creoles are two stages in a single process of development.

A *pidgin* is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other, usually for reasons of trade. Such languages typically have a limited vocabulary, a reduced grammatical structure, and a narrow range of functions, compared to the languages from which they derive. They are used only when they need to be, as a 'contact language' in circumstances where communication would not otherwise be possible. They are the native languages of no one.

It has often happened that, within a multilingual community, increasing numbers of people begin to use a pidgin as their principal means of communication. This causes a major expansion of the grammar and vocabulary, and of the range of situations in which the language comes to be used. The children of these people come to hear it more regularly, and in due course some of them begin to use it as a mother tongue. When this happens, the language is known as a *creole*.

The process of *creolization* is the most important linguistic element in the history of the Caribbean, with all the former colonial languages giving rise to creoles. The process of *decreolization* is also apparent, when creoles come into contact with standard languages and are influenced by them (p. 344).

The map shows the distribution of the chief English-based pidgin and creole languages. They cluster in three main areas: the Caribbean, West Africa, and the West Pacific. Most of the Atlantic varieties developed along with the growth in British colonial exploration and trade in the 16th and 17th centuries; the Pacific varieties emerged some time later. (From L. Todd, 1984a.)





Carnival in Trinidad



Notting Hill carnival, London

SOME GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

Although Carnival revellers in Jamaica and London have different accents and use different vocabulary, they are firmly linked by a core of common grammar. The grammatical features which distinguish Caribbean creoles from each other are few, and unlikely to interfere with intelligibility – or, at least, no more than we might expect to find between regional dialects anywhere. The following sentence from Jamaican Creole looks very similar when it is 'translated' into Guyana Creole (after L. Todd, 1984a):

Standard English

He used to go to school every day last year, now sometimes he goes and sometimes he doesn't go.

Jamaican Creole

Him go a school every day last year, now sometime him go, sometime him no go.

Guyana Creole

Him a go a school every day last year, now sometime him a go, sometime him naa go.

The following features of creole grammar will therefore be observed in many varieties, though the similarities may sometimes be obscured by regional variations in pronunciation, or (in written form) by different systems of spelling (p. 348). The exact form taken by the various grammatical particles can also vary a great deal. In the following examples, a slightly modified Standard English spelling is used, to permit a clearer focus on the grammatical issues.

Syntax

- There is no concord between subject and verb in the present tense: *She sing in de choir*.
- There are no forms of *be* as copula or auxiliary:

Dem ready, She a nice person.

- Serial verbs are commonly used: *Take it go, He talk say you stupid, Dem go try get it.*
- A verb may be brought to the front of a sentence for emphasis – a common feature of West African languages: *A talk Mary talk make she trouble* ('Mary talks too much and that makes trouble for her').
- Passive constructions are avoided: *De grass cut* (= 'has been cut'), *Dis record play a lot* (= 'is played a lot').
- Adjectives are routinely used in adverbial function: *I like it good, She sing real sof*. The use of the *-ly* ending is rare.

Nouns

- Nouns often do not use *-s* to mark a plural: *two book, dem creature*.
- Particles may be used to mark plurality: *The rabbit dem eat it all, George dem went* (= 'George and his gang went').
- Possession can be expressed by juxtaposing the noun phrases (*dat man house*) with no 'apostrophe *s*', or (in Caribbean creoles) by adding a *fi* particle: *De coat a fi me* ('the coat is mine').

Pronouns

- No case distinctions are used in pronouns: *She see he come, take he coat, and go; Carry dat book to she teacher*.
- Several pronouns have alternative forms, such as (for *I*) *mi* and *a*, (for *he*) *im* and *i*, (for *you* plural) *yu* and *unu*, and (for *they*) *de* and *dem*.
- In some varieties (such as Gullah and West African Pidgins) male and female third person pronouns are not distinguished: *so one day Partridge take her headan' stick he head unduh he wing*.
- In Rastafarian speech, *I* is considered a syllable of special, mystical significance, and often appears in unusual contexts, as in West Indian poet Dennis

Scott's line 'Seals every I away from light' (*More Poem*, 1982), where there is a play on words between *I* and *eye*.

Verbs

- Past tenses are expressed using the base form without an ending: *Mary go last week*.
- *Did* is often used as a past tense marker with stative verbs: *He did know she name*.
- Particles such as *da*, *di*, or *a* are used to mark continuous actions: *David a go* ('David is going'), *She da work now* ('She's working now'). In much US Black English the particle is *be*: *Sometime dey be goin' to see her*.
- Completed action is expressed by *done*: *I just done tell dem, We be done washed all dose cars soon*.
- A verb is negated by inserting a *no* particle: *They no want it now*. Multiple negation (p. 194) is used for emphasis: *Ain't nobody found no money in no box*.
- Auxiliary *do* is not used along with a question word: *How they get that?, Why you hit him?*
- Past tense can be expressed using *been* or a variant form: *We been see him* (= 'we saw him'). This kind of construction is less common in UK West Indian Creole, where *been* tends to be replaced by *did* or *was*.

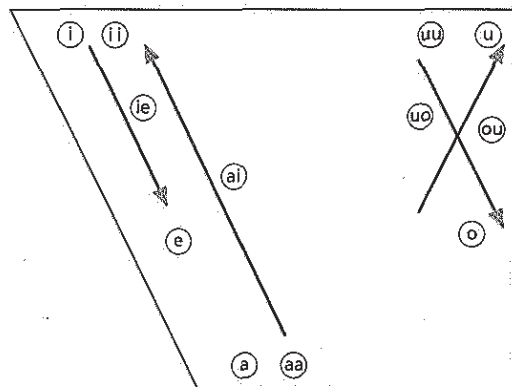
In addition, creoles are noted for their readiness to create new words using affixes (*no* jokifying) and through conversion (p. 129): *All dis murder and kill mus' stop*. Reduplicated forms are common: *picky-picky* ('choosy'), *one one* ('all alone'), *mess mess* ('wet and sloppy'). There may also be doubling of grammatical items: *only but, or either, dis here, an' plus*, as well as in such constructions as *Bill he gone*. Repetition is frequently an important rhetorical effect: *They jus' eat eat eat, An' it go far far far before we stop it*.

SPELLING

The choice of a spelling system is one of the critical questions facing anyone who works with creole, or who wishes to write in it. Some writers use spellings which are close to Standard English (e.g. writing *car* as *cah*); others try to maximize the differences between the two systems (e.g. writing *car* as *caa*). A phonetic-like transcription is not unusual, because of the considerable differences between the creole sound system and that of mainstream accents (e.g. writing *car* as *kaa*). Several variant forms will be found in these pages.

The problem is particularly acute in deciding what symbols to use for vowels. There is a much reduced vowel system, with most Caribbean creole speakers using only 12 phonemes instead of the 20 found in RP. Many spelling alternatives will be found for the /ie/ diphthong, which is a particularly distinctive feature of Jamaican speech: *same* might appear as *siem*, *sehm*, *syehm*, *syem*, *siehm*, and in other ways.

The cardinal vowel diagram (p. 238) shown below summarizes the vowel system generally found in speakers of a Caribbean creole (from L. Todd, 1984a). Each phoneme is accompanied by an example.



Short vowels

/i/ kil kill
/e/ dem they, them
/a/ mada mother
/o/ op up
/u/ put put

Long vowels

/i:/ trii three
/a:/ daag dog
/u:/ duu do

Diphthongs

/ie/ biesin basin
/ai/ blain blind
/ou/ roun round
/uo/ uol old

One effect of the reduced inventory is to permit much larger numbers of words which sound the same (homophones) compared to most other British or American accents. Thus /den/ could mean *den* or *then*; /rat/ could be *rot* or *rat*; /la:d/ could be *lord* or *lard*; /tai/ could be *toy* or *tie* (see also p. 345).

The months of the year as spelled in two pidgin language texts: one in Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), the other in Kamtok (Cameroon). There is a great similarity between the pronunciation of these words in the two languages, but (apart from three cases) they certainly look very different.

Tok Pisin	Kamtok	Tok Pisin	Kamtok
Janueri	Janyuari	Julai	Julai
Februari	Fehrhuari	Ogas	Ohgohs
Mas	Mach	Septemba	Sehptehmba
Epril	Epril	Oktoba	Ohktoba
Me	Mei	Novemba	Novehmba
Jun	Jun	Desemba	Disehmba

VOICES

London Jamaican Creole, as recounted by Jennifer Johnson in the short story 'Ballad For You' (from D. Sutcliffe, 1982, p. 24).

There is five gal I want to tell you 'bout. Dem lick head from different part a London; but is one t'ing dough, dem is one an' di same but individual in every sense. Mek a tek dem one by one.

Lightening hail from Guyana an' is a soul-

head. Before she buck head wid dem addah gal she couldn't chat a word a bad English; now she pass CSE ina it. Why dem call she 'Lightening' is because when dem sit down ina corner a chat people business, she always miss everyting an' a confuse di issue...

gal girls dem lick head they met up dough though mek a tek let me take soul-head soul music fan buck head met up dem addah those other a chat discussing

Black Vernacular English, used in a translation of the Gospel of St John (Ch. 3) by Walt Wolfram and Ralph Fasold, but in a spelling which is close to Standard English (from J. C. Baratz & R. W. Shuy, 1969).

It was a man named Nicodemus. He was a leader of the Jews. This man, he come to Jesus in the night and say, 'Rabbi, we know you a teacher that come from God, cause can't nobody do the things you be doing 'cept he got God with him.'

Jesus, he tell him say, 'This ain't no jive, if a man ain't born over again, ain't no way he gonna get to know God.'

Then Nicodemus, he ask him, 'How a man gonna be born when he already old? Can't nobody go back inside his mother and get born.'

So Jesus tell him, say, 'This ain't no jive, this the truth. The onliest way a man gonna get to know God, he got to get born regular and he got to get born from the Holy Spirit...

An extract from a Gullah folk tale, as told by Jane Hunter to a researcher in a field trip in 1971 (from I. Van Sertima, 1976).

Duh Rabbit en duh Patrid, dey was two great fren. So one day Patrid take her head en stick he head unduh he wing, went to Rabbit house.

[Rabbit] say, 'Ol fren, watcha doin?'

Say, 'Oh, I ain't doin nuttin but sittin in duh sun.'

Say, 'Oh, wheahs you head?'

Say, 'Man, I leave my head home fuh my wife to shave.'

All dat time he had his head unduhnea' his wing. Rabbit run in duh house, say, 'Ol Gal,' he say, 'Come on to chop my head off.'

'E say, 'No, Mistuh Rabbit. If I chop yuh head off, you'll die.'

Say, 'No, I won' eidduh, cause Mistuh Patrid leave he head home fuh his wife to shave en so why caan I leave my head fuh you to shave?'

So all his wife, all duh res uh he wife tell him, [he] say, 'If you doan chop my head off,

I'll chop you head off.'

So das two fren now. Das why you fren in duh one who gets you, enemy who come en accoshu. Buh if yuh get hurt, it [you] kin get hurt from fren. So he go en bawl his wife, bawl. Duh wife take duh big knife en chop 'e head off 'en 'e chop 'e head off.

So Patrid had a pretty girfren. Rabbit had a very pretty girl, en Patrid wife wasn' as goodlookin as Rabbit wife. Patrid had a love fuh Rabbit wife, see? En dats duh only way he coulda get Rabbit wife by doin im some haam. So when duh lady gone en chop duh Rabbit head off, Rabbit pitch off yonduh en die.

En duh Patrid take 'e head from unduhnea' he wing, say, 'Wing, nuh foolin, nuh fun. En wing, no livin, no gettin love.' En den she had two wife, had his wife en duh Rabbit wife.

Patrid Partridge fren friends eidduh either res rest uh what doan don't accoshu accost you

Jamaican poet Linton Kwesi Johnson's orthography, seen here in the middle lines of 'Time Come', captures the accent of much Caribbean speech. (From *Dread Beat an Blood*, 1975.)

wi feel bad
wi look sad
wi smoke weed
an if yu eye sharp,
read de violence inna wi eye;
wi goin smash de sky wid wi bad bad blood

look out! look out! look out!

it soon come
it soon come:
is de shadow walkin behind yu
is I stannup rite before yu;
look out!

but it too late now:
I did warn yu.

TOK PISIN

Tok Pisin is an English-based pidgin, influenced by local Papuan languages, used in Papua New Guinea by around a million people. It has been creolized in some areas. The language has a nationwide presence, being widely seen in advertisements and heard on radio and television. There is also a weekly newspaper written entirely in pidgin, *Wantok* ('Friend').

The illustration is the last page of an Old Testament story published by a Christian missionary organization in Papua New Guinea. It is from the story of Daniel (*Stori bilong Daniel*), in which *Daraias*, the king of Babylon (*Bebilon*) is persuaded to put Daniel into a den of lions (*hul bilong lion*). On the previous page, the king has just called down to see if God has looked after Daniel.

Glossary

a emphatic particle
amamas be happy (from Malay)
antap on top
autim made, put out ('out')
bagarapim ruin, damage ('bugger up')
bekim give back, repay ('back + -im')
biknem praise (big name)
bikpela big ('big + fellow')
bilip believe

bilong indicates possession

('belong')

bosim rule ('boss + -im')

dai die

em he, him

gat get

gutpela good ('good + fellow')

inap can ('enough')

kalabusim imprison ('calaboose + -im')

kam come

killim kill ('kill + -im')

-im suffix marks a transitive verb

laik want, like

lo decree ('law')

long indicates location ('along')

mas must

maus mouth

mi I, me

na and

nau now

ol they, them ('all')

olgeta all, entire ('all together')

orait all right, fix

pasim close, fasten ('fast -im')

pastaim in the past ('past time')

pipel people

singautim call, shout ('sing out + -im')

stret straight away

tasol but, however ('that's all')

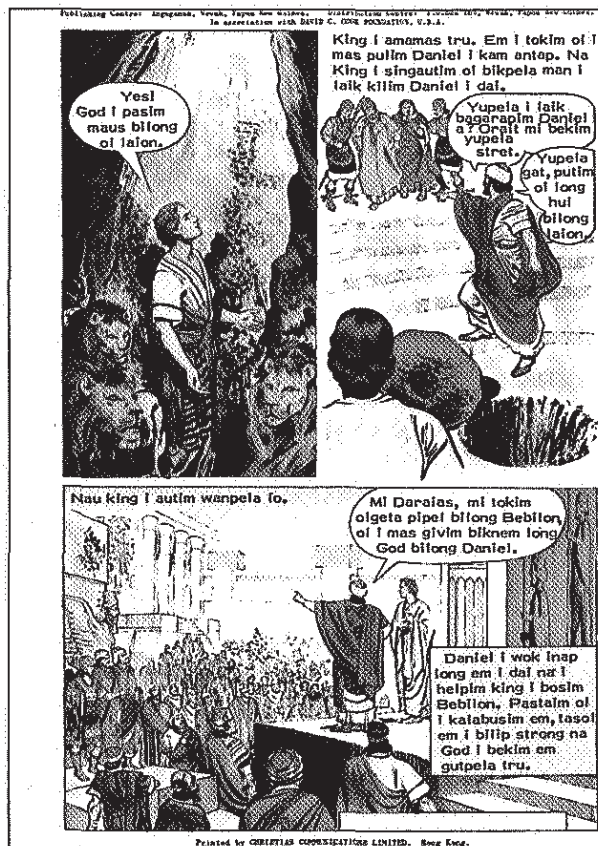
tokim tell ('talk + -im')

tru very much ('true')

wanpela a, one ('one + fellow')

wok work

yupela you ('you + fellow')



CREOLE TRANSLATIONS

Wilhelm Busch's *Max and Moritz*, first published in German in 1865, has been translated into dozens of languages (including Scots English, (p. 330). Here the opening verse of the 'Fourth Prank' is given in four creole/pidgin translations. A translation into Standard English by Elly Miller is shown for comparison. (From M. Görlach, 1984.)

Fourth Prank

As has frequently been stated
People must be educated.
Not alone the A, B, C,
Heightens man's humanity;
Not just simply reading, writing,
Makes a person more inviting;
Nor does Arithmetic learning
Make a pupil more discerning.
Reason, Wisdom, Moral Thought
Must be equally well taught;
And to teach with erudition
Was Professor Lample's mission.

Jamaican Creole

Badness Nomba Fuor
Ole-time people mek wan rule:
'Learn and study while in school!'
ABC kyan ongle staat
Lov a knallidge in de haat:
Readin, writin, ritmetick
Kyan gi Sietan wan good lick,
Higle smaddy wid no fait
Fine demself a Debbil gate;
Show respect an lov de wise:
Solomon wi gi yuh prize!
Stody ow fi ondestan
All de ways a Gad an man.
In all learnin, Teacha Lempel
Set de very bes example.
(Jean D'Costa)

Cameroonian

Nomba Foa Koni
Panapu dei, a raitam dong,
'Man mas len fo dis wi grong.'
No bi daso A, B, C,
Mek wi sabi hau fo bi.
No bi ol sens dei fo tali
Chinda sabi dis fo Bali.
Man i get fo lisen wel
Fo di tru wi papa tel.
Pa Matyu, wi katakis,
Sabi okgut fashon dis.
An i glad fo tich wi tru
Ol ti ting man g 1ot fo du.
(Loreto Todd)

Krio

Nomba Fo
Dem kin se, en misef gri,
Man fo lan pas ABC.
Wetin go pliz God insef
Na if wi bete wisef.
Rayt en rid noto ol o,
Posin we get sens fo no.
Noto arifmitik wan
Posin fo tray gud wan pan;
I fo gladi fo lisen
We big wan de gi lesin.
Ticha Lempel olwez si
Dat i du dis wit sabi.
(Freddie Jones)

Tok Pisin

Trik Namba Foa
Long ol ples i gat rul
Ol manmeri i mas skol.
Rit na rait na ABC
I save mekim man i fri.
Man i no gat save long ol namba
I gat het olsem kukamba.
Man i no save wok bilong gavman
Em i no man tru, tasol i hapman.
Ologeta samting bilong skol
Man i no save, em i ful.
Na bilong givim gutpela eksampel
Mi tok long wanpela tisa, Lempel.
(Don Laycock)