

7. Special education.
- 7.1 Investigation of the prevalence and distribution of conditions which would cause children to require special education.
- 7.2 Developing and standardizing I.Q. tests relevant to Trinidad and Tobago.
- 7.3 Survey to determine the need for programmes of special education in the normal school.
- 7.4 Survey of resources in the field of special education.
- 7.5 Determination of normative developments of Caribbean children to establish growth ratios, development norms, etc.
- 7.6 Survey of areas of co-ordination and co-operation within supportive agencies.

REVIEW ARTICLES

Studies in Caribbean Language, ed. by Lawrence D. Carrington, in collaboration with Dennis Craig and Ramon Todd Dandaré, St. Augustine, Trinidad, Society for Caribbean Linguistics, pp. xi, 338.

This is an enormously welcome book—not only because it provides valuable descriptions and discussions of Caribbean creole varieties (primarily the English-based ones), but also because a significant proportion of its contents was produced by scholars native to the Caribbean,¹ and the book itself was published in the Caribbean. I take these latter aspects of the book to be highly significant, and must therefore ask readers to bear with me as I digress to say why.

One of the crippling, often unrecognized, effects of the colonial experience was to deny Caribbean scholars access to publication, and thus to the privilege and responsibility of sharing their observations and ideas with others, including later generations. The denial was partly through limited access to publishing houses and financial resources, partly through limited access to higher education and the skills, books and materials required for analysis, and partly through the socio-psychological sapping of self-esteem, which made local scholars overly hesitant to be committed to print, and audiences less ready to take ideas seriously if they were 'local-made'.

Whatever the causes, the effects are clear. In the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, expatriate visitors to the Caribbean often had their observations of local language and life snapped up by local and European publishers, but the 'natives' who knew the situation best usually took their insights with them to the grave. Those European travel books and journals are valuable to us now for their information on the contemporary situation (Rickford, *in press*), but what we would give for similar records from the local populations of those times!

The situation has not changed significantly in the twentieth century, as a glance at studies in the area of Caribbean language—the focus of the book—will attest. Although a number of Caribbean scholars have been involved in the study of local creole varieties for the past quarter century,² and many younger Caribbean scholars have written articles, M.A. theses and doctoral dissertations on the subject over the past decade, their work remains much

less accessible than the work of European and North American scholars. Some of the Caribbean work, for instance Yansen's (1975) Guyanese lexicon, is available only in self-published, limited editions. Others, for instance Allsopp's pioneering (1958) M.A. thesis, are available only in a few fortunate libraries.

The scholarly proceedings of the Society for Caribbean Linguistics are themselves a case in point. Although this significant organization has had five biennial conferences since the first in 1976, *Studies in Caribbean Language* – which includes papers from the 1980 meeting in Aruba, Netherlands Antilles – represents the first time that an edited selection of the conference papers has been published. To its credit, the Society has always had bound, duplicated preprints of many of the conference papers available on site, but although these are useful, they hardly compare with the present volume in selection, availability, readability, or appearance.

In his introduction the editor apologizes for the three-year delay between the conference and the publication (not that long in Linguistics, actually) by noting (p. ix) that this period "has been filled with every frustration known to the business of editing and publishing, particularly at a time when resources have been eroded by an international recession." He continues:

The decision to publish the book in the Caribbean rather than through an established international publishing house was an act of faith – a faith repeatedly challenged as each power failure (to use only one example) mocked the presence of the technology and the will to produce the volume. But the conviction that, to the field of Caribbean language study, the contents would be worth more than these difficulties and that the value of the papers could only begin from the time of their availability in published form bolstered the flagging resolve of the editor to persist in the task.

Those of us who have had our books printed and published (usually self-published) in the Caribbean know only too well whereof Carrington speaks.³ We commend him and his colleagues all the more for sticking with the project to its completion.

With respect to the contents of the book, space will allow me to do no more than list all the papers, comment on a few, and make one or two general observations.

The twenty-six papers in the book are as follows: "William Greenfield, a neglected pioneer creolist" (J. Reinecke); "In search of the boundaries of Caribbean Creoles" (P. Christie); "Limon Creole and Panamanian Creole: comparison and contrast" (A. Herzfeld); "Barbadian Creole: a note on its social history and structure" (A. Burrowes with R. Allsopp); "The social history of Dread Talk" (V. Pollard); "The sociolinguistic situation in St. Maarten" (L. Richardson); "Early newspaper texts in Papiamentu" (D. Jenda); "Sources of the African element in Gullah" (F. Cassidy); "On the study of Creole Lexicons" (G. Huttar); "How to be a tone language" (H. Carter); "Sandhi phenomena in Papiamentu, African and other creole languages" (E. Bendix); "The Irish element in Montserrat creole" (J. Wells); "A methodology for the analysis of language use in a post-creole community" (C. Broadbridge); "The creole treatment of passivity" (R. Allsopp); "Observations on time reference in Jamaican and Guyanese creoles" (S. Mufwene); "Creoles and language acquisition: parallels in the expression of modality" (S. Shepherd); "The Belizean copula: a case of semantactic shift" (G. Escure); "A sociolinguistic analysis of negation in Trinidad English" (D. Winford); "The significance of Berbice Dutch suffixes" (I. Robertson); "The process of pluralization in Papiamentu" (M. Dijkhoff); "Linguistics and language teaching" (P. Roberts); "L'identification des codes linguistiques chez l'enfant haïtien" (Y. Joseph and A. Valdman); "The West Indian novelist and language: a search for a literary medium" (J. D'Costa); "Dialect and style shifting in the fiction of Samuel Selvon" (S. Bernhardt); "A longitudinal study of the expansion of the use of Creole in its relation to Belizean identity in Cayo district" (A. Tabouret-Keller and R. LePage); "Towards the establishment of an Institute for Creole Language Standardization and Development in the Caribbean" (H. Devonish).

The volume opens and closes, appropriately enough, with papers which deal with the status and official use of creole languages. The opening paper by John E. Reinecke is noteworthy not only because it is the last published work of this leading figure in the field of creole studies,⁴ but also because it demonstrates that attacks on – and defences of – creole languages are nothing new. The case in point is William Greenfield's scholarly and spirited 1830 defence of the publication of a "Negro English" (Stranan) edition of the New Testament for use by the Moravians in Surinam. The language used in this publication had been ridiculed by Andrew Thomson as "most ludicrous" and "gibberish", but Greenfield defended it by demonstrating its systematic, rule-

governed character, its historical origins, and its expressive adequacy. Since arguments about the value of creole languages are by no means *passé* (see Carrington and Borely [3], Rickford and Traugott [9], scholars involved in their study would do well to read Reinecke's discussion of the 1830 debate and attempt to get copies of the original documents referred to therein).

The closing paper, by Hubert Devonish, should be of particular interest to readers of this journal. (The educationally-oriented papers by Roberts and Joseph and Valdman should also be of special interest.) Linguists in the "English-speaking" Caribbean are commonly misconstrued to be advocating the teaching of English-based creoles in the schools and their use in official domains more generally, but their aims are typically more modest, limited, for instance, to arguing that children's creole competence be taken into account in attempts to teach them standard English. Devonish, however, is more radical, arguing for "standardization of Creole and its use as... the medium of instruction, etc. within the education system" and for its adoption as "the National Official Language of individual Creole-speaking societies in the Caribbean." (See Devonish [5] for more detail.) Many of us—colonially conditioned over the years—will react instinctively against the proposal. But we will find that there is hardly a counter-argument which Devonish has not foreseen and rebutted, and hardly an alternative which he has not considered and eliminated. I do not expect everyone to be convinced by his analysis and argumentation, but one can scarcely fail to be impressed. The article closes with specific recommendations for implementing Creole language standardization and development, and a discussion of the aims and functions which a pan-Caribbean language planning Institute could provide. Hopefully Caribbean governments and regional bodies will give Devonish's proposals the serious consideration they deserve.

The papers which come between these fine opening and closing papers cover a wide range of territories, including Antigua, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Curaçao, Dominica, Georgia/South Carolina, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Panama, St. Maarten, Suriname and Trinidad. Regrettably (and this has to do with the state of research and the scholars who attend meetings of the Society for Caribbean Linguistics), there is only one paper on Haitian Creole French and, with the exception of the Papiamentu papers, none on the Spanish, Portuguese, Bhojipuri and Chinese varieties in use throughout the Caribbean (for instance in Cuba, Santo Domingo, Brazil, Guyana). Most of the descriptive papers deal with morphosyntax (Christie, Herzfeld, Burrowes, Broadbridge, Allsopp, Mufwene, Shepherd, Escure,

Winford, Robertson and Dijkhoff), but two deal with the lexicon (Cassidy, Huttar), and three with phonology (Carter, Bendix, Wells). Carter's paper is one of several she has given us recently which—together with other work by Allsopp, Berry, Devonish and Holder—has helped to open up our understanding of tonal and other suprasegmental phenomena in Caribbean creoles.⁵ Shepherd's paper, which draws on material covered at greater depth in her dissertation [10], is valuable as one of the first studies of child language acquisition in the Caribbean, in fact in any pidgin-creole speaking territories anywhere. In the light of claims made elsewhere about the ready learnability of pidgins (Woolford [11]) and the close relation between creoles and an innate linguistic bioprogram (Bickerton [2]), the study of first and second language acquisition in pidgin- and creole-speaking communities should rank as a top research priority, but this does not seem to have been recognized or acted upon to date.

The most interesting papers in the volume, to me at least, were the ones which dealt with sociolinguistics and the use of creole in literature. The sociolinguistic work of Tabouret-Keller and LePage in Belize has become well known over the past decade, serving as the nucleus of the socio-psychological approach to the study of linguistic variation which has been adumbrated most recently and in most detail by LePage and Tabouret-Keller [6]. Their paper in this volume represents one of the few longitudinal (reinterview) studies available in the field of pidgin-creole studies. Pollard's study of Rastafarian Dread Talk is sheer gold, and should be treasured as such—not only because it documents one of the most interesting sociolinguistic situations I know of anywhere, but also because her work is difficult to find in print, a perfect exemplar of the point I was trying to make at the beginning of this review. D'Costa's insightful account of the ways in which she attempted to deal with the use of creole versus standard varieties in her four children's novels should be of interest to linguists and scholars of literature alike. Among other things, it describes some of the compromises she had to make "between my instincts and experiences, on the one hand, and the attitudes of editors, educators and members of the SE audience on the other" (p. 264). Bernhardt's paper deals with the fiction of Samuel Selvon, a writer whom he aptly characterizes as "remarkable for his ability to represent dialect variation not simply through a few stereotyped passages of dialogue, but throughout entire novels, subtly intertwining dialectal complexities with the narrative line" (p. 266).

Overall, this is, as I said, a welcome book. Some papers do have their limitations—a few too short to permit their authors to bite deeply into their

subject, a few depending too heavily on introspection and requiring supplementation with field research, a few standing to benefit from more extensive reference to theoretical models and descriptive studies in their respective subject areas. But together they represent a minor triumph with respect to research and publication on Caribbean languages. Such research and publication are vital to theoretical and applied issues, both within the Caribbean and within academia more generally. We have known for some time that what looked like red mud is precious bauxite. *Studies in Caribbean Language* symbolizes the fact that we have also begun to recognize the value of our linguistic *poto-poto* – or what some may have dismissed as such – and have begun to mine it for its riches.⁶

NOTES

- ¹ Approximately half of the twenty-six papers in this volume were produced by scholars born in the Caribbean. This represents a significant advance over creole conference proceedings produced earlier. For instance, only seven of the thirty-eight papers in Hymes (1971) and only six of the twenty-one papers in Valdman and Highfield (1980) were prepared by "native" creolists.
- ² Names like Alleyne, Allsopp, Bailey, Cassidy, Craig and Pomplius spring most readily to mind.
- ³ In one of his publications which I unfortunately cannot lay my hands on at the moment (is it the *Guide to the Published Works of Norman E. Cameron?*) the venerable Guyanese scholar Norman E. Cameron details the difficulties which he experienced in financing, printing and marketing/distributing (virtually door-to-door) his books locally. However, these difficulties didn't stop him from leaving us dozens of valuable plays, mathematical treatises, historical, philosophical and literary works. (Professor Joycelyn Loncke documented and assessed the scope of Cameron's work in her Edgar Mittleholzer lecture around 1979.) Examples like this – and there are others – should be an inspiration to us all.
- ⁴ He wrote an 880-page dissertation on pidgins, creoles and other 'marginal languages' in 1937, and was the principal editor-collaborator in the production of a bibliography (Reinecke et al [7]) which is the standard reference work in the field. He died in 1982.

- ⁵ One quibble about Carter's otherwise excellent paper in this volume is her use of BE for 'British English'. This abbreviation is so widespread for (American) "Black English" that it would have been better to use "BrE" or some other alternative.

- ⁶ Cassidy and LePage (1980:361) describe *poto-poto*, whose basic meaning is "mud", as follows: "a word of wide distribution in W. Africa, hence poss of multiple source in Ja: cf *Twi pɔtɔpɔtɔ* n. slimy sediment, a. slimy, muddy, mry."

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John Rickford

The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English by Paula Burnett, Harmondsworth, 1966.

when Spoiler see all this, ain't he must bawl
'area of darkness', with V.S. Nightfall?

Derek Walcott

Compiling anthologies can possibly be explained as a response to the challenge to put together the bare minimum needed to ensure basic understanding of an area of writing, assuming the reader is stranded on some desert island. They should be portable yet all-encompassing. The more ambitious they are the less likely they are to succeed. They are necessarily obsolescent since the shipwrecked reader, when rescued, will wish to go beyond the samples offered by the anthology. Success is not expected of anthologies but they should try to fail in an acceptable fashion.

The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English has the inadequacies associated with this kind of project. The very choice of a title presupposes positions silently – (or not so silently, given Paula Burnett's long introduction) – taken on 'Caribbean', 'Verse' and 'English'. The notion of the Caribbean used by Burnett is really that of the Commonwealth Caribbean – a notion which is a little at odds with the homily of gradual liberation preached in her introduction. If "Caribbean poetry has come a long way" as she says, surely a more pan-Caribbean approach is needed? Curiously enough, two anthologies published twenty years ago successfully used the latter approach to the Caribbean. Coulthard's *Caribbean Literature* (1966) and Howes' *From the Green Antilles* (1966) made selections from writing in English, French, Spanish and Dutch. The time for anthologies of Black literature, Francophone literature or Commonwealth literature is now past. 'Caribbean' in 1986 can only mean that which is relevant to a specific culture in the New World. How can we talk of popular traditions in verse and omit the French Guyanese poet Léon Damas? How can we avoid seeing the epic poems of Walcott and Brathwaite in the light of Aimé Césaire? Coulthard and Howes were more sensitive to this than Paula Burnett. The title of this collection also raises the slippery question of genre. Modern literary theory has made us very insecure on this subject. Is verse still a legitimate classification? How do we recognize it? Where does poetic prose end and verse begin? Where does verse end and song begin? These issues are particularly complex in