

LIMON CREOLE AND PANAMANIAN CREOLE:
COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Anita Herzfeld

University of Kansas

Limon Creole and Panamanian Creole are spoken by Black minorities in neighboring otherwise Spanish-speaking countries, Costa Rica and Panama respectively. Since Limon Creole has been dealt with in detail elsewhere (Herzfeld, 1978) and Panamanian Creole has not been thoroughly treated yet,¹ here I shall limit myself to some general statements on both languages' social histories and I will present a brief comparison of their basilectal forms, paying somewhat more attention to Panamanian Creole, since this paper attempts to include a progress report on the study of the latter.

Panama is customarily regarded as a country with a racially mixed population² in which no one element predominates, but cultural considerations continue to be a relevant factor in determining the status of members of the society. In the same vein, failure to become assimilated to the prevailing Hispanic culture brings about animosity or resentment.³

Panamanian English Creole (hereafter PEC or PC), known as "wari-wari,"⁴ is spoken by a Black minority of approximately 100,000 people (Holm, 1978:10). The Black has constituted a significant segment of what is known today as Panamanian society for 400 years.⁵ The ethnohistory of this Black can only be understood vis-à-vis the history of that society itself.⁶ Three major structural changes can be pointed out in its development, which resulted in important alterations in the position of the Black:

1. the polarization of power which took place during and after the colonial period of Spanish domination (1530-1850);
2. the control of the transisthmian zone (1850-1946), exercised by the ruling investor of the moment: the U.S. railroad construction (1850-1880); the aborted French company canal venture (1880-1903); the successful American canal-building enterprise (1904-1914); and in the northwest, the United Fruit Co. banana plantation established in 1889; and
3. the legal and social reforms brought about by the 1946 constitution (1946 to the present).

Correspondingly, one might distinguish the presence of three types of Blacks, each type to be assigned to one of the above-mentioned time periods, respectively:

1. the African (or colonial) Black;
2. the West Indian (or Antillean) Black; and
3. the Panamanian Black.

These types represent different adaptation patterns to Panamanian culture at different points of time. While there is no evolutionary sequence of continuity from the first to the second period of Blacks--miscegenation was important during the colonial period--it was separatism that was fostered by the second period. The opposite is true about the Black who lived at the end of the second period into the third: acculturation and assimilation are important to him; consequently a West Indian heritage can be traced back--at least linguistically--for the Black of the third period.

The African Black descends from the slaves who were brought over during Spanish domination. With time all possible degrees of racial mixture occurred; consequently one can find mestizo descendants all over the country, particularly in Colón, Portobelo, Nombre de Dios and Panama City. Those people who descend from cimarrones (run-away slaves), however, have settled in isolated areas, such as the jungles off the Bayano River, the Darien rain-forest, and the Las Perlas Archipelago in the South Sea. Although they have managed to keep some of their traditions (particularly their music and dance)⁷ they have otherwise become acculturated to the Hispanic majority; they are a Spanish-speaking population.

Whereas the African Black has thus been incorporated into the mainstream of national life, the West Indian Negro of the second period arrived in Panama only about a century and a half ago, to work on the transisthmian railroad, the Panama Canal, or at the United Fruit Co. plantations. Although racially he resembles the African Black (and he presents even wider ethnic/social mixes), his past history, mostly under English domination in the Caribbean⁸ made him adopt different customs and language. Once on Panamanian soil U.S. investors encouraged him to keep them, thus facilitating the managers' unhampered use of coercion on the workers. This also facilitated operations and reduced Panamanian "intrusions." The acculturation and assimilation process of the West Indian Black to integrate Panamanian culture and society was slowed. The managers as well as the workers introduced their language, Standard English (SE) and most generally Jamaican Creole (JC), as the prestige language in their community. As a result other Panamanians have derogatorily called them "chombos," "jamaiquinos," "africanos

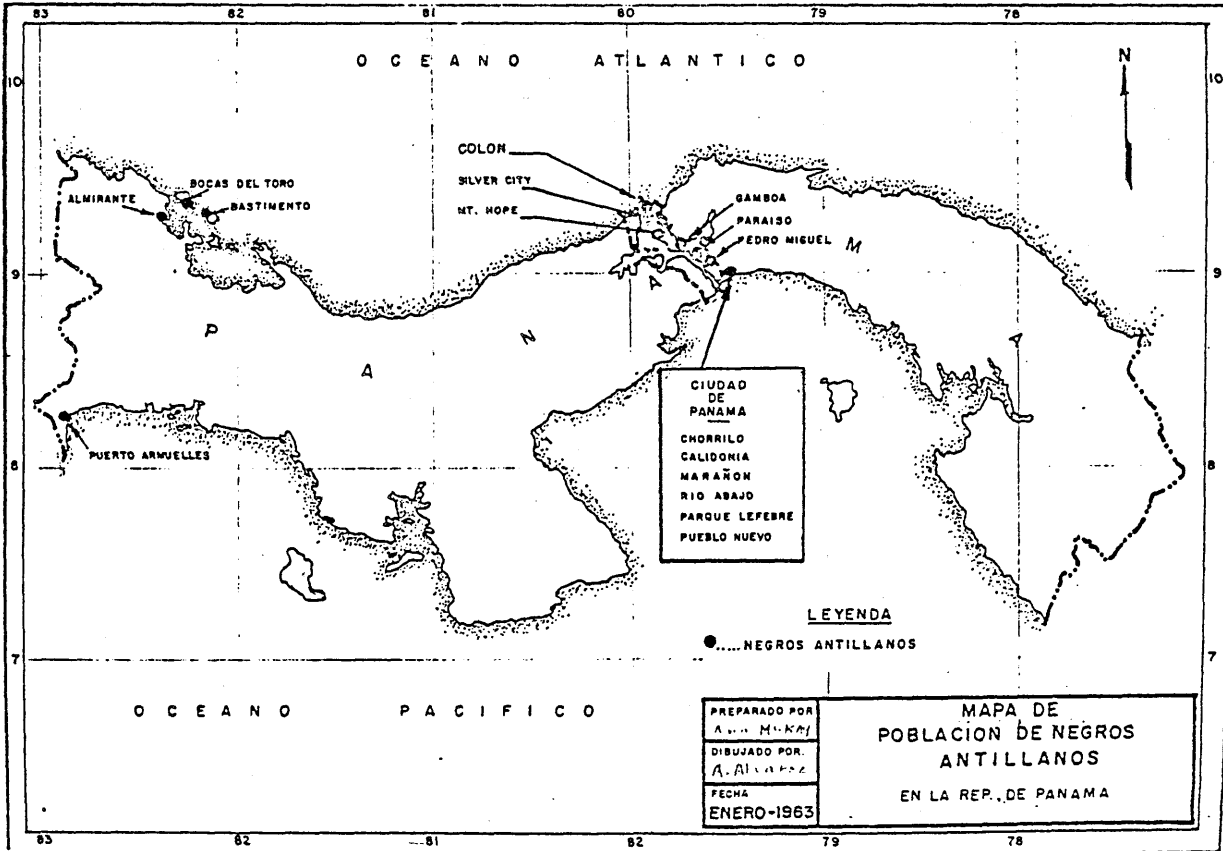
(de mierda)," "coco liso," and other denigrating names. West Indians of this period settled down to work in the Canal Zone, and the two major cities of Panama--the capital and Colón. Those who left the urban centers ended up by working for the Chiriquí Land Company (subsidiary of the United Fruit Co.), in Puerto Armuelles and Bocas del Toro. (Please see map on page .)

The West Indian Black of the second period--who greatly contributed to building the foundations of Panama--legally became a full-fledged citizen of the country as recently as 1946. Thus, officially he turns into the Panamanian Black of the third period, after finally being granted equal rights as all other Panamanian citizens by the constitution (which supersedes the racist Constitution of 1941, instituted by Dr. Arnulfo Arias). After 1946, he could consider Panama his real home, and although at first the process of becoming a different cultural type proceeded at a slow pace, lately, the active racial mixture, the intensive exposure to Spanish in public schools,⁹ and the efforts of the Catholic church to gain adherents have contributed to a faster acculturation.

It is this third group--the Panamanian Black of West Indian origin--that this study refers to, more specifically, to the group which settled in Bocas del Toro. While most studies, of a linguistic nature and otherwise, have concentrated on the behavior of the West Indians vis-à-vis the special problems brought about by the Canal in the highly controversial Zone, very little attention has been given to the particular group which has settled down in a rural context, in the Province and capital of Bocas del Toro.¹⁰

The Province of Bocas del Toro, in the northwest of Panama, is predominantly bio-technic; its economy is based on the agricultural activities mostly conducted by the Chiriquí Land Company on the mainland around Changinola.¹¹ Approximately half of the total population (48% of 43,531 inhabitants according to the 1970 census) is made up of Panamanian Blacks of West Indian origin. Most of them live in the town of Bocas del Toro,¹² the capital of the province, which is located on the Island of Colón, in the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Panama.

This paper is a progress report on the sociolinguistics of the tense and aspect of Panamanian English Creole spoken in the town of Bocas del Toro,¹³ Almirante (on the mainland), and in Bastimentos (on a neighboring island), as compared to Limon English Creole (LC), spoken in Costa Rica, as mentioned earlier. It was prompted by my previous work on LC,¹⁴ taking into account that the



HERZFIELD

speech communities chosen use "English as a lingua franca" since they belong to the belt of Caribbean regional commonality, which extends itself "from just outside British Honduras (Belize) on the Mexican side, on to the San Blas coast of Panama." (Bryce-Laporte, 1962:15).

Information gathered from readings (e.g. Cedeño Cenci, 1960; Hackedon, 1980; Justavino, 1975)¹⁵ made PEC appear suspect of being a mixture of every language supposed to be spoken in the region (Spanish, English, Guaymí, French). Once in the field, however, PEC seems very similar to LEC. This makes sense since the foundations of both are to be found in Jamaican Creole; both also show, in different degrees, the influence of Spanish since they are spoken in the midst of a Spanish-speaking majority, but no trace of Guaymí or French is apparent.¹⁶ There is a need for a word of caution at this point, because in creole studies the ever-present danger of failing to probe deeply enough always exists--probably because so many features appear on the surface identical, or at least similar, to other creole equivalents. (I.e., it is difficult to put aside analytical bias which results from the familiarity of the investigator with other creoles or the base language and to approach the particular creole on its own terms.)

Keeping Bickerton's 1975 model in mind, in what follows I should like to illustrate some similarities and differences which I have found so far, when comparing selected features of PC and LC. These will probably fall among the basilectal features of the creole continuum once the sociolinguistic analysis is carried out.¹⁷ All of the examples are drawn from actual recordings produced in the field; those of LC were discussed in Herzfeld, 1978; those of PC have only been collected at the time when this paper is being written.

Several criteria justify the consideration of some LC and PC markers as truly basilectal features and the inclusion of others as part of the mesolect or acrolect. Among the decisive factors which determine the choice of certain forms as basilectal, the following have been taken into consideration: the frequency of usage in comparison with other segments of the continuum; the greatest difference from Standard Limon English (SLE) and Standard Panamanian English (SPE), (great proximity to the SLE and SPE end of the continuum makes a form qualify as acrolectal); the replaceability of grammatical markers (similar functions are rendered by other forms in the mesolect and acrolect), and the common denominators of the original contributing system (JC).

The system that is here called "basilect" for LC and PC will be illustrated by selected forms (not an exhaustive list): unmarked forms (the stem of the verb) which have specific grammatical assignments within the system, and four marked forms. As to the latter markers it was found that the use of did and don for both LC and PC, and that of doz and woz hav for PC only are far more representative of the basilectal tense and aspect system than of other segments. Three general observations may be made about the stem form:

1. it is identical with the stem form of its English cognate (except for phonological considerations and a few exceptions);
2. the frequency in usage of the stem form of the verb as compared to the marked forms is greater; and
3. the function of the stem form depends on the semantic distinction between "static" and "dynamic" situations (Bickerton, 1975:28).

It will also be apparent that pre-verbal markers are helpful in conveying information about the tenses. Pre-verbal markers which occur in the same clause, in subordinate clauses, or even in a removed context, do influence the LC and PC choice of tense both with "+ or - stative" verbs. LC and PC verbal relationships at the basilectal level are expressed in the following way, in the unmarked forms. (The numbers on the margin refer to tapes)

- | | Verb Form | | Tense |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.1 | STEM (-STATIVE) | = action is in the | punctual past(=SE) |
| | +
SENTENCE MODIFIER
(Expressing past) | | |
| LC 4.1.5 | <u>in ogos ev laas yeh/...</u> | <u>a kyach</u> | a kwol in miy fut/... |
| | <u>in August of last year/I</u> | <u>caught</u> | a cold in my feet/ |
| PC 1.1.20 | wen ay <u>woz</u> <u>smaal/...</u> | w1 <u>plye</u> <u>shap</u> | wid som flowez... |
| | when I <u>was</u> <u>small/...</u> | we <u>played</u> | shop with some flowers... |
| 1.2 | STEM (-STATIVE) | = action represents a series of | events which stretch back into the |
| | | past and forward into the future, | expressed in the present habitual |
| | | (=SE) | |

- LC 4.2.8 shiy rayt aal di taym...
she writes all the time
- PC 9.1.7 ay gow vizit may fren aal di taym (when I go to Almirante)
I go visit my friend all the time
- 1.3 STEM (-STATIVE) = action describes a set of events
envisaged as happening in the
present (iterative) (=SE)
- LC 17.1.5 (describing how to make a kite)
yu mek a likl faam/ put a nyel intu it...
you make a little form/(you) put a nail into it...
- PC 1.1.22 (describing how to play lata)
yu tek de milk pan an yu trwo it faa...
you take the milk pan and you throw it far...
- 1.4 STEM (-STATIVE) = universal truths, not limited by
past or future, expressed in the
present (=SE)
- LC 4.14.22 de son shayn...
the sun shines
- PC 1.3.13 wiy (women) plye domino tuw...
we play domino too
- 1.5 STEM (-STATIVE) = action is in the present
a. in temporal clauses
b. in conditional clauses
c. in passive voice expressions
- LC 1.13.15 wen ^yjysoz kom/ im not gowin tu tek de syent piypel dem...
when Jesus comes/ he is not going to take the holy people...
- PC 1.4.22 wen de neks man kom now/ dem staar dans...
when the other man comes/ they (will) start to dance...
- LC 1.22.24 if my hozband tel mi enitin/ ay ^yjes kik im owtsayd...
if my husband tells me anything/ I (will) just kick
him out...
- PC 9.4.7 if wi finish suwn tumoro/ wi kyan gow an waak op de
rwod...

PC 9.4.7. if we finish soon tomorrow/ we can go and walk up
(cont'd) the road...

LC 1.10.19 yu put di chye in di wata/ ... antil wen it rotin...
you put the chair in the water/...until it is rotten...

2.1 STEM (+STATIVE) = action is in the past
+
SENTENCE MODIFIER (pre-verbal marker)

LC 1.1.1 (when I was in school) shiy layk tu lik miy...
she liked to hit me

PC 1.5.19 (when the baby was born now)
shiy tel de nors/ shiy no waan de byebiy...
she told the nurse/ she did not want the baby...

In addition to the unmarked forms of the verb-stem, there are certain features which may be considered representative of the verbal basilectal range of the LC and PC continua. As mentioned earlier two features that are found in both creoles and two features found exclusively in PC will be illustrated below.

DID

The slot occupied by JC en as past tense marker is taken over by did both in LC and PC. As Bickerton notes for Guyanese Creole (1975:69), did, a morpheme which in appearance is derived from SE did, is used in the creole as substitute for standard-looking forms; however, the phonological resemblance is the extent of its similarity to SE did.¹⁸ Both in LC and PC did has several important functions:

1. did as a filler for the slot of to be;

LC 8.6.25 ya/man/ di taym did rof...
yes/ man/ the times were rough/...

PC 9.8.3 wen ay did smaal/ tin woz chlyp...
when I was small/ things were cheap...

2. did as simple past tense marker
a. did + Stative V (=simple past tense)

LC 28.15.5 es ke/ ay di waa gow in di hospital/
Es que/ I wanted to go into the hospital/

PC 1.4.1 im di layk his sista...
he liked his sister...

b. did + non-stative (+anterior meaning)

LC 17.30.32 (since I have been here)
a di only gow 28 mayl wan taym
I have only been to 28 Miles once

PC 1.5.32 (she had been so sick that)
im di ɥink dat (the baby) it ded
he thought that the baby had died...

3. did used in a counter factual environment, marking unrealized condition

LC 28.9.18 wen wi gow bak an aks fa biyh/ biy finish/ we did hapin
if aal dwowz
when we went back and asked for beer/ the beer was
finished/ what would have happened if all those...

PC not obtained in collected data yet

4. did + non-stative Verb (= past anterior)

LC 28.3.31 (I had to go) bikaz ay did tel de gorl yes orediy...
because I had told the girl "yes"
already...

PC 1.4.18 (She had an appointment to see the man)
shiy di bay a negosio from...
she had bought a shop from...

5. did + predicate adjectives

LC 28.15.21 di kot di wopin
the wound opened (burst open)

PC 9.6.3. syem taym ay pas/ de warf di brok down...
when I passed/ the wharf broke down...

6. overcorrection (did in expressions of gradual replacement of basilect to mesolect in the continuum)

LC 30.2.17 ay did ^yjes meyd di solisitu ...
I just made the solicitud (application)

PC not obtained in collected data so far

DON

The same as in JC (Herzfeld, 1978:221) in LC and PC don can occur preverbally and clause finally. It has two main functions:

1. main verb = 'finish' }
 - pre-verbal
 - clause final
2. iterative use = for repetitive patterns

Examples in both creoles follow:

1. don + Verb

LC 49.7.27 bay dat taym/ may owldis brada/ hi don stodiy...
by then/ my oldest brother/ he had finished studying...

PC 1.1.37 an wen dem don kyach evribodiy/ shiy kyach (the milk pan)
and when they have finished catching everybody/ she
catches...

2. Verb + don

LC 8.7.16 fayt don!
the fight (is) finished (over)

PC 1.3.17 (you win) wen aal yor domino don...
when all your domino (pieces)(are) finished
(used)

3. iterative use = don

LC 1.8.33 bika ebri taym de shwo don/ de big bos kaal miy
because every time the show is over/ the big boss
calls me...

PC 1.2.26 wen ay don lik owt aal a dem/ de gyem don
when I finish hitting all of them/ the game is finished

DOZ

Although not a form of JC and not present in LC either, it is frequently used in PC. It is likely that it entered PC through Barbadian Creole (please see Note 8), since the second largest group of West Indian immigrants that arrived in Panama was from Barbados. Again, although phonologically it may follow the model of SE does, it does not resemble it in meaning or grammatical functions. It does not alternate with do (it remains invariant regardless of person and number); and the same as did, it does not perform the support function it has in SE for questions or negation, or for contrastive purposes. It is exclusively used to mark iterative ('habitual') expressions in the non-past, while yuustu is reserved for habitual reference in the past. In LC the function of doz is performed by modifiers such as 'usually,' 'always,' etc., so that in PC doz is used:

[+iterative][+past] = yuustu

[+iterative][-past] = doz

Examples follow:

- 2.5.28 in de rekreo taym/ yu doz kom owt enly taym...dem doz gly
fiftiyn minit
during the break/ you come out any time...they give you
fifteen minutes...
- 1.7.9 ebribody from de hows/ bot de tuw smaalis wan/ dem doz gow
tu bed
everybody in the house/ except for the two smallest ones/
they go to bed
- 1.7.25 ay doz gow siy niyli ebriy sondey
I go to the beach nearly every Sunday
- 1.1.19 wen ay woz smaal ay yuustu plye wid doliy...
when I was small I used to play with dolls

WOZ HAV

In LC as well as in PC did as indicator of [+past] has had to give way to the rival form woz, which rapidly acquires speakers at this level. We are again in the presence of a marker which

etymologically corresponds to SE was; however, rather than consider it as representing a syntactic category (viz. "past for to be"), it would be better to consider it an anterior marker for [+stative] verbs.¹⁹ Again, this form is not to be found in LC. (The 'closest' in form of LC is had woz, which performs the function of had to in SE.) Thus, in PC

woz hav = had which alternates with di hav
woz + Stative Verb = [+past]

Examples follow:

- 1.5.2 shiy woz rich an shiy woz hav plenti moniy...
 she was rich and she had a lot of money...
- 1.5.3 shiy woz layk tu get on tuw moch...
 she liked to put on airs too much...
- 1.5.4 shiy yuustu gow tu skuwl/ an in dyer so/ shiy woz hav a
 profesa
 she used to go to school/ and there/ she had a professor...
- 9.2.7 dat uman/ shiy woz bilong tu miy...
 that woman/ she belonged to me...
- 9.4.6 im woz layk tu kom griyt miy/ wen im kom dis sayd...
 he liked to come (by) and greet me/ when he came this way...

Perhaps it would be useful to have a cursory look at a comparative table of usage (such as Holm, 1978:249 for Miskito Creole of Nicaragua) to summarize LC and PC basilectal tense and aspect markers found so far:

PC BASILECTAL PRE-VERBAL TENSE AND ASPECT
 MARKERS

	Aspect			
Tense	Progressive	Habitual	Perfective	
-Ant	Ø taak 'talk(s)' 'talked'	Ø taakin 'is/ are talking' 'was/were talking'	doz taak 'talks' 'talked'	don taak (already) 'has/ve talked'

	Aspect			
Tense	Progressive	Habitual	Perfective	
+ Ant	<u>di(d) taak</u> <u>ben taak</u>	<u>woz taakin</u> <u>did taakin</u>	<u>did yuustu</u> <u>taak</u>	<u>did don taak</u>
	'talked' 'had talked'	'was/were talking'	'used to talk'	'had (already) talked'

LC would not register doz taak, ben taak, de taak, di don taak.

In closing, some sociolinguistic observations might be of interest. Besides the basilectal linguistic similarities that I have mentioned, there are a number of social traits that are shared by both the LC and the PC speech communities located in Limon and in Bocas del Toro, respectively. Both groups of people were mostly made up of West Indians from Jamaica, as was already stated. (In Panama, however, there were also many Blacks from Barbados, St. Lucia and the French Antilles.) They had come to Costa Rica and Panama in each case, looking for working opportunities that would allow them to go back to their home country eventually. At the time when they arrived in Central America (middle of the XIX century), they were eager to have their children acquire "good" English, and therefore sent them to private English schools provided by their churches and the Company. Their loyalty to the Spanish-speaking country that hosted them was not at all encouraged by the foreign investors, and the national governments were too weak to enforce their obligatory Spanish-education legislation. The dates on which a major socio-structural change took place in both countries, vis-à-vis their West Indian minorities, are close in time (i.e., 1946 in Panama, 1948 in Costa Rica).

There are some differences, however, in two particular aspects which need some attention: education and racial make-up. On the one hand, Panama being an important "transit" zone at the time of Spanish domination, could boast of having some Spanish instruction being offered as early as the last decade of the XIX century--even in remote places such as Bocas del Toro. (Please refer to Note 9). In Costa Rica, a forgotten Spanish colony of not great wealth, all efforts to definitely institute Spanish as the official language in Limon failed until the 1950's. On the other hand, while according to the preliminary figures stated by the Census of 1970, the ethnic composition of Panama shows approximately 70% mestizos (considered any ethnic mixture), 10% white (European ancestry), 13% Blacks (of which 8% are Antilleans), 6% Indians, 1% Orientals (Area Handbook of Panama, 1972:98), in Costa Rica, the population

does not have but a meagre 2% of Blacks. (This is an approximate percentage since Costa Rica has not allowed ethnic counts since the 1950's.)

Traditionally, while in Costa Rica ethnic groups are still clearly distinguishable (the rate of intermarriage between Blacks and whites is negligible, Herzfeld, 1978:59), in Panama, as mentioned earlier, the ethnic mixture is such that the Blacks no longer constitute a genetically distinct group. This is particularly true of the transisthmian region, and to some extent in the Province of Bocas del Toro. Desegregation has gone much further than in Costa Rica; in Panama race does not seem to be a problem and it would appear that the Panamanian Black does not find his color a handicap. However, since cultural animosities that have marred intergroup relations focus attention mainly on Spanish, as the distinguishing mark of "panamenismo" those of West Indian descent are now all bilingual.²⁰ By the same token, they are reluctant to speak the creole in front of strangers, and sometimes they do not even wish to teach their children SE, so as to eradicate the last semblance of creoleness from their ancestry, and thus become completely integrated with the Hispanic majority. In Costa Rica, on the other hand, people do not feel quite as self-conscious about their language: in Panama it is an insult to refer to the creole; in Costa Rica it is part of the being "different" (i.e., not a member of the white majority), and is therefore not used defensively. Color lines divide language lines in Limon: when with Blacks LC is spoken, otherwise Spanish is. In Bocas everybody speaks the creole (including other minority members, such as Indians and Chinese, besides the "native Panamenos"). Here one has to know whether a person would prefer to speak one language or the other. That is, in spite of the racial integration--or because of it--language attitudes are exactly opposite.²¹

How does this difference affect the acrolect of the creole continuum? In the case of LC, as more and more 'Spaniards' arrive in Limon Province from the capital, and as strong feelings of nationalism arise in the country, Spanish acquires prestige at the acrolect extreme of the creole continuum, thus replacing SE. LC clearly shows that it is undergoing an active process of rule-restructuring to permit the incorporation of Spanish elements. In neighboring Panama, the trend towards assimilation is also strong, although social circumstances which prompt it are entirely different. Contrary to expectations, the long and controversial US presence in Panama--rather than drawing the Black to identify himself with the legacy of his ancestors and with his US employer--

has reinforced his choice of Spanish as mother tongue so as to be true to his Panamanian nationality.²² In LC, linguistically, it is interesting to note that as the dependency on Spanish grows stronger, particularly for today's LC mesolect members of the continuum, Spanish forms are added while SE forms are dropped or distorted into patterns closer to Spanish (Herzfeld, 1978:301). For PC speakers the situation is different. While it is probably true of all bi- and multilinguals that when they converse informally languages are alternated constantly--and PC speakers do do that--they rarely allow Spanish forms to interfere when they are speaking creole. There is some borrowing, but most generally, there is a switching of languages due to socio-cultural speech situations.²³

PC and LC are examples of how differing social histories affect language and the speakers' acceptance of it. In the case of Panama the two language varieties (PEC and Spanish) represent the distinct social groups that use them. As Holm puts it (1978: 51), "an individual's choice of language variety becomes grounds for social inclusion or exclusion"; in other words, there is "linguistic reinforcement of social barriers." In Costa Rica, the choice has not been polarized and mixture of both language backgrounds (LEC and Spanish) is actively taking place in the Black speech community.

In both cases, it would be hoped that proficiency in S and SE would make speakers more aware of the richness of their background and better prepare them to be successful in the world, now that, hopefully, ethnic factors are slowly giving way to wealth and personal achievement as markers of social status.

NOTES

¹Scholarship on Panamanian Creole is limited to Primeras Jornadas Lingüísticas: el Inglés Criollo de Panamá (1976), Pedro Cohen y otros, which contains six papers. Two Bachelor-level theses were undertaken by students at the University of Panama: Nilsa E. Justavino's "West Indian English dialects in Panama: a historical, social and linguistic approach," 1975; and Marva Myles Spragg's "Origin and nature of the English dialect of Colon and its implications for the teaching of Standard English," 1973. Although considerable efforts for the level, they are both very general surveys. A related paper, also an unpublished thesis submitted by a student at the University of Panama is Norma Mason's "Common problems in the use of prepositions by native speakers of

Spanish and speakers of Creole English," 1979. To my knowledge, the only dissertation on the topic is Hezekiah Adolfo Bishop's "Bidialectal Traits of West Indians in the Panama Canal Zone," (1976), submitted to Columbia University Teacher's College to fulfill partial requirements for an Ed.D. degree.

²A leading Panamanian anthropologist, Dra. Reina Torres de Araúz, (1970:21) distinguishes the existence of five ethnic groups in Panama today: 1. the aboriginal group, made up of five extant cultures; 2. the Spanish-indigenous (mixture of Spanish colonizers, Indians and some negroid element); 3. and 4. two groups of Blacks the colonial and the Antillean; and 5. a small percentage of imported minorities (e.g. Chinese, Hindu, etc.) who immigrated to Panama looking for economic opportunities.

³Basically, although the color of one's skin and even the hair type seem not to be determinant of position in the social scale, a significant dichotomy is established between the basic structures of the Hispanic culture (white, Catholic and Spanish-speaking), and the basic traits of each minority group.

⁴"Wari-wari" (often also spelled "guari-guari" or "guariguari") is widely known in Panama as the name of the Panamanian English Creole, if somewhat derogatorily applied to the "raw" speakers. Besides Cassidy and Le Page's Dictionary of Jamaican Creole, which has the entries "wara-wara" and "wari," Holm (1978:59, 422, 358) lists a lexeme "wáari" in Miskito Coast Creole (Nicaragua) meaning "white-faced hog," or "wild boar," or "white-lipped peccary." What it stands for in PC is unknown to me at this time. Folk etymology attributes it the meaning of "gibberish talk" (a reduplication such as "bla-bla-bla," as it were), i.e., the PC for Spanish and SE speakers who don't understand it. Others say it is a Guaymí word ("a worm"). Be that as it may, it does seem as though the name had been imposed upon its speakers from the outside, rather than being derived from the language itself.

⁵Historically, what is known as Panama today was part of Colombia during Spanish domination (the Virreinato de Nueva Granada) and even after liberation from Spanish rule in 1821, until the Republic of Panama was formed in 1903. It was an extremely active zone for the placement of slaves throughout South and Central America, and many, of course, stayed on. In the XVIII century, Panama is said to have had 30,000 slaves while at the same time Costa Rica never had more than 200 altogether. (Jaén, 1978)

⁶Michael D. Olien has suggested a similar outline for Costa Rica, which was dealt with in Herzfeld, 1978. The dates on which the social changes occurred in Costa Rica are very close to those for Panama. The events that prompted them are:

1. the Spanish domination;
2. the establishment of the United Fruit Co.; and
3. the Revolution of 1948.

The effect on the types of Blacks is similar as well. The social outcome, though, is different as we shall see.

⁷For instance, the dance performed by the "congos." During the "Second Congress of Black Culture in the Americas" (Panama, 17-20 de marzo, 1980), it was the first time that all Black groups in the country performed on the same stage. The "congos" are usually not counted as true Negro folklore because */it tw spanish/* as the West Indians would say!

⁸Census statistics show the following distribution of the West Indian immigrants to Panama (1950 and 1960) registered in the main provinces:

TABLE 1
ANTILLEAN-BORN POPULATION REGISTERED IN
BOCAS DEL TORO

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
Bahamas, Bermuda, and Nassau.....	0	2
Barbados.....	24	13
Curaçao.....	1	5
Martinique and Guadeloupe.....	29	13
Jamaica.....	1,272	665
Trinidad and Tobago.....	7	4
Other British Antilles.....	64	32
Other French Antilles.....	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals.....	1,397	735

TABLE 2
ANTILLEAN-BORN POPULATION REGISTERED IN
COLON

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
Bahamas, Bermuda and Nassau.....	33	21
Barbados.....	1,152	919
Curaçao.....	17	19
Jamaica.....	4,322	2,874
Martinique and Guadeloupe.....	252	142
Trinidad and Tobago.....	141	91
Other British Antilles.....	508	424
Other French Antilles.....	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>
Totals	6,425	4,496

TABLE 3
ANTILLEAN-BORN POPULATION REGISTERED IN
PANAMA

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
Bahamas, Bermuda, and Nassau.....	55	37
Barbados.....	2,974	2,303
Curaçao.....	99	72
Jamaica.....	10,363	7,146
Martinique and Guadeloupe.....	703	429
Trinidad and Tobago.....	370	226
Other British Antilles.....	1,568	1,205
Other French Antilles.....	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
Totals	16,140	11,427

TABLE 4

BLACK POPULATION IN THE
REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Province	1911	1920	1930	1940
Total in Panama Rep.	48,967	81,050	69,583	82,871
Bocas del Toro	7,180	9,816	6,278	5,867
Colon	14,114	27,283	26,284	28,703
Panama	17,166	38,543	27,646	38,770

Note: Although these figures include Spanish-speaking Blacks. they do show the demographic trends of the Antillean group; the concentration of Blacks in the three provinces listed above is mainly of West Indian origin. Source for these figures: Contraloría General de la República: Estadística y Censo.

Parsons (1954:12) states,

After 1896 the Panama Canal construction brought West Indians by the thousands to Panama. Once the Canal was built, many of the West Indians--of whom Jamaicans were in the majority--moved north along the coast to banana and cacao plantation jobs and to construction work at Bocas (del Toro, Panama), Limón (Costa Rica), or Bluefields...Jamaicans are recognized everywhere as the superior farmers...

⁹Since Panama was part of Colombia, Spanish was taught by Colombian teachers by 1873 and by one Bocatoreña, Isabel Silvera who had studied in Cartagena, by 1884. (Cedeno Cenci, 1960: 106-7). As Reverend Alphonse states (personal communication), "From one day to the other, you had to go to school in a different language" (probably in 1904). The Panamanian government has conducted active campaigns to inculcate the importance of the Spanish language among the West Indians. Gordon (1969:57) mentions the signs that the Bocas del Toro plaza donned in the 1950's "Hable castellano, somos Panamenos!" He also says that Protestant ministers who give their sermons in English are supposed to re-read them to their congregations in Spanish, but the regulation is commonly disregarded, as I have witnessed.

¹⁰Such is the case in Primeras Jornadas...none of whose papers refers to Bocas del Toro. Only one of the theses written on PEC deals with Bocas PC--Justavino's. At this point, I should like to thank Prof. John Reinecke, without whose excellent net of communication and usual efficiency my introduction to PEC would have been severely hampered. Many University of Panama faculty members and administrators were also very helpful.

¹¹Earlier the Company's headquarters were located in the capital of the Province, Bocas (as the town is commonly referred to). Later they were moved to Almirante. Both of these towns were bustling with activity at that time (1890-1930) until a sickness affected the banana plantations and shut down production. Today, Bocas is a ghost town whose only communication with the mainland is established by small planes and slow boats.

¹²The earliest creole-speaking inhabitants of Bocas were the West Indian slaves who accompanied a series of Scottish and English brothers who arrived on the island at the beginning of the XIX century from San Andres and Providencia Islands, to avoid heavy taxations imposed upon them by the Colombian government. Some American brothers joined this immigrant group later, as well as a number of enterprising Germans. Most Blacks there today are descendants of Jamaican immigrants. There are approximately 3,000 people in the town of Bocas del Toro today, out of which 48% are Black.

¹³This research project is being carried out under the auspices of a Fulbright-Hays grant for faculty development, hereby gratefully acknowledged. I should also like to thank Prof. James Hartman of the University of Kansas, Department of Linguistics, and Dr. Roy Bryce-Laporte of the Smithsonian Institution for valuable comments of an earlier version of this paper.

¹⁴Limon Creole (LC) claims about 40,000 speakers mostly settled on the Atlantic lowlands of Costa Rica, as opposed to the white, Spanish-speaking, Catholic majority of the central highlands. Perhaps one could go along with Bryce-Laporte (1962:6) in general terms, when he finds three generations operating in Limon: the first is Jamaica-oriented, speaks English and is highly agricultural; the second speaks some English and some Spanish, and it is engaged in widely varying occupational patterns. The third generation is Costa Rica-oriented; Spanish is the language of

prestige, but LC continues to be its mother tongue, as will be seen later.

¹⁵In Cedeño Cenci, Diógenes, F., "El Idioma Nacional y las causas de su degeneración en la Provincia de Bocas del Toro," Lotería, Vol. V, mayo 1960, No. 54, 2a. época, he states:

The confusion brought about by such disparity of ethnic elements had of necessity to degenerate in an irrecognizable tongue, a mixture of very ill-spoken English, with patches of Spanish, French, and Indian lexico; this degenerate language is vulgarly known as GUARI-GUARI. (The translation is mine)

Cedeño Cenci (1960:124)

The anthropologist Stanley Heckadon Moreno in "Los criollos de Bocas del Toro: la historia oral de Carlos Reid," 17-20 de marzo de 1980, p.iii, Segundo Congreso de Cultura Negra de las Américas states:

Who are the Creole people?...Their mother tongue is English although all of them are bilingual, but one must clarify that the English creole is a rhythmical patois called "guariguari," the lingua franca of the province. The guariguari is a mixture whose principal base is the Antillean English to which many Guaymí and Spanish words have been added. (Translation is mine)

Heckadon (1980:iii)

In the Bachelor's thesis on "West Indian dialects..." by Nilsa Esther Justavino, she writes:

Under such circumstances, Bocas del Toro constituted a conspicuous community, where the dialects of English were and still are the language of the townspeople, a very peculiar blend of English, Patois, Guaymí, and Spanish.

Justavino (1975,29)

¹⁶The French Creole speakers known to have lived in "Patois Town" in Almirante have completely disappeared by now.

¹⁷At this point in time, although the data for the study has been collected, the frequency count of tokens is still to be completed, thus the somewhat impressionistic presentation of the data.

¹⁸In the basilect did does not have a support function such as in SE questions and negations (e.g. "Did you see him? I did not see him") or even the contrastive emphatic sense (e.g., "But I did tell you to look him up," said about something which has obviously not been done).

¹⁹It might well be that once the sociolinguistic analysis is completed, this form will fall among those that mark the transition from the basilect to the mesolect.

²⁰Their Spanish is so fluent in fact that already in 1953, Reverend Alphonse was able to write in The Bocas Defender,

If hispanization is considered from the Panamanian point of view as a mark of progress, then the success it has reached in Bocas del Toro is greater than the impatience of educators is likely to admit.

Alphonse (1953:8)

²¹My presence (a white US-Argentine woman) had little to do with this, since recordings and observations were made through Black natives of the town.

²²This must be taken as a general statement only.

²³The most common pattern of integration/interference for PC is what I have called "idiomatic substitutions" (Herzfeld, 1977: 202) Spanish syntactic patterns and idiomatic expressions are translated into English (function words, verb constructions, relative clause constructions, word order, etc.). Some examples are:

SE

FW de tiycha dwon shwo notin (The teacher does not teach anything)
 SP la maestra no enseña nada

- FW him did pas it bad (He had a bad time)
 SP lo paso mal
- FW shiy marid wid im (She married (to) him)
 SP se caso con él
- FW wen rekreo toch (When it was time for the break)
 SP cuando toca recreo
- FW im tochiz de trompit (He plays the trumpet)
 SP él toca la trompeta
- FW = fieldworker (PC phonemic version)
 SP = Spanish (Spanish orthography)
 SE = Standard English (spelling)

As mentioned earlier, all the claims made in this paper are tentative and will have to be substantiated once the sociolinguistic count is accomplished.

REFERENCES

- Alphonse, Ephraim, Reverend. 1953. Progress of the Bocas Indians in 50 years. The Bocas Defender No. 8. Panama: Almirante.
- Araúz, Reina Torres de. 1970. Los grupos humanos de Panamá. Lotería. No. 174, mayo. 21-34.
- Bickerton, Derek. 1975. Dynamics of a Creole System. Cambridge: University Press.
- Bishop, Hezekiah Adolfo. 1976. Bidialectal Traits of West Indians in the Panama Canal Zone. Ed.D. dissertation. Columbia University Teacher's College, Department of Language and Linguistics.
- Bryce-Laporte, Roy S. 1962. Social Relations and Cultural Persistence (or Change) Among Jamaicans in a Rural Area of Costa Rica. Thesis, Advanced Center in Caribbean Studies. University of Puerto Rico.
- Cassidy, Frederic C. and Robert B. LePage. 1967. Dictionary of Jamaican Creole. Cambridge: University Press.

- Cedeño Cenci, Diógenes F. 1960. El Idioma Nacional y las causas de su degeneración en la Provincia de Bocas del Toro. Lotería. Vol. V, mayo 1960, No. 54, 2a. época.
- Cohen, Pedro I. y otros. 1976. Primeras Jornadas Lingüísticas: el Criollo Inglés de Panamá. Panamá: Editorial Universitaria. Centro de Investigación de la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Educación.
- Gordon, B. Le Roy. 1969. Anthropogeography and Rainforest Ecology in Bocas del Toro Province, Panama. MS. University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State College.
- Heckadon Moreno, Stanley. 1980. Los criollos de Bocas del Toro: la historia oral de Carlos Reid. 17-21 de marzo de 1980. Segundo Congreso de Cultura Negra de las Américas. Mimeographed copy.
- Herzfeld, Anita. 1977. Second Language Acrolect Replacement. Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics. Vol. 2: 193-222.
- _____. 1978. Tense and Aspect in Limon Creole: A Sociolinguistic View Towards a Creole Continuum. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Kansas.
- Holm, John. 1978. The Creole English of Nicaragua's Miskito Coast: Its Sociolinguistic History and a Comparative Study of its Lexicon and Syntax. Ph.D. Dissertation. University College, London.
- Jaén Suárez, Omar. 1978. La Población del Istmo de Panamá: del Siglo XVI al Siglo XX. Panamá: INAC, Impresora de la Nación.
- Justavino, Nilsa Esther. 1975. West Indian Dialects: A Historical Social and Linguistic Approach. B. A. Thesis. University of Panama.
- Mason, Norma. 1979. Common Problems in the Use of Prepositions by Native Speakers of Spanish and Speakers of Creole English. B.A. Thesis. University of Panama.
- McKay, Ana Matilde. 1963. Los Negros Antillanos en Panamá. B.A. Thesis. University of Panama.

- Olien, Michael D. n.d. The Negro in Costa Rica: An Historical Perspective. Mimeographed copy.
- Parsons, James J. 1954. English-speaking Settlements of the Western Carribbean. Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers. Vol. 16:3-16.
- República de Panamá. 1979. Situación actual de la Provincia de Bocas del Toro. Estudio para el desarrollo integral de Bocas del Toro. Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica.
- Scigliani Hassan, Sonia del C. 1972-73. Incorporación del Grupo Negro Antillano en los Aspectos Socio-económicos y Culturales de la Provincia de Bocas del Toro: Sus Proyecciones. B.A. Thesis. University of Panama.
- Spragg Myles, Marva. 1973. Origin and Nature of the English Dialect of Colón and its Implications for the Teaching of Standard English. B. A. Thesis. University of Panama.
- Weil, Thomas E. et al. 1972. Area Handbook for Panama. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Press.