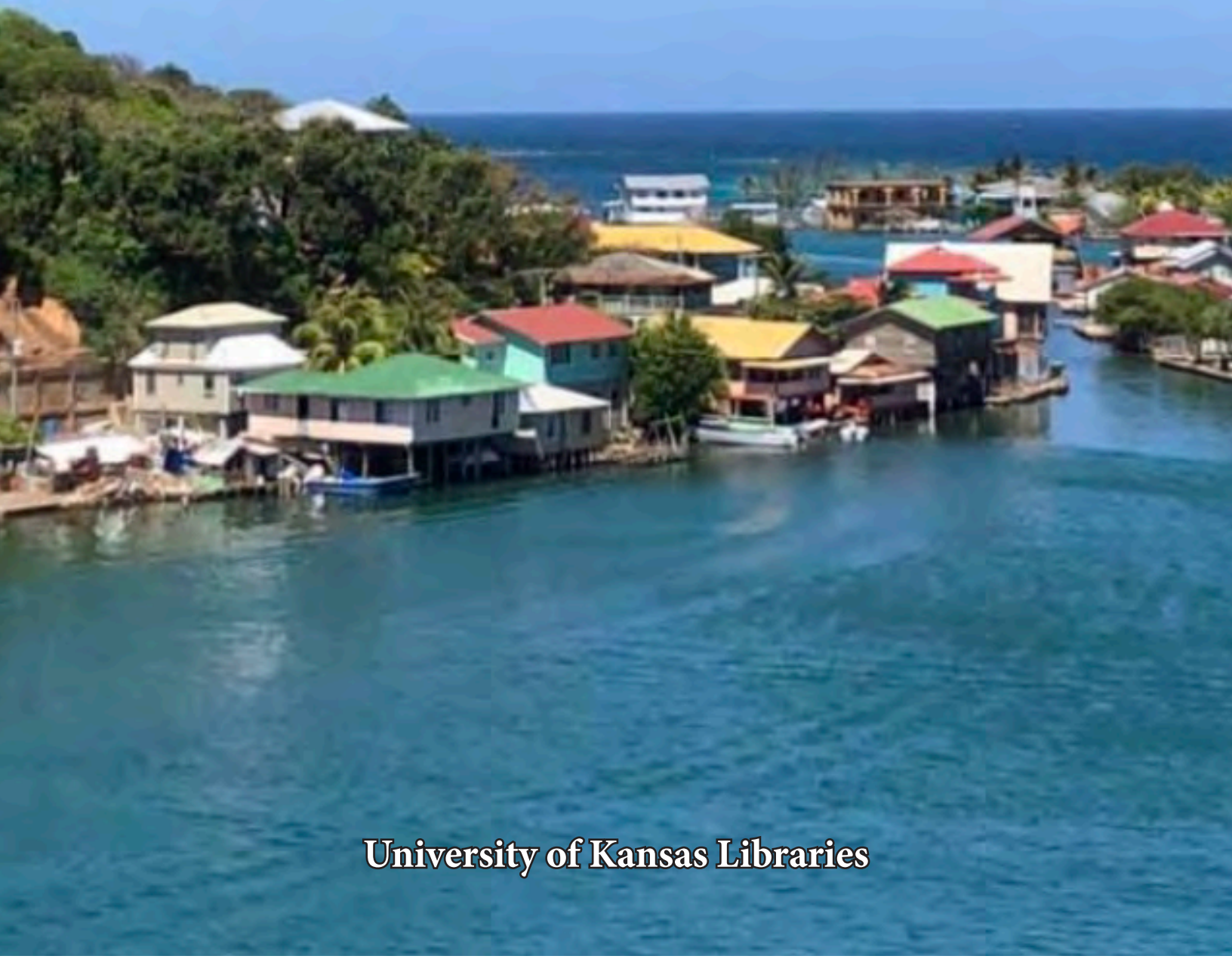


# The Peoples and Languages of Roatán

Edited by

Laura Hobson Herlihy



University of Kansas Libraries

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Elizabeth Kuznesof and Marta Caminero-Santangelo, two Directors of The University of Kansas Center of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, who graciously have supported the Miskitu Language program.



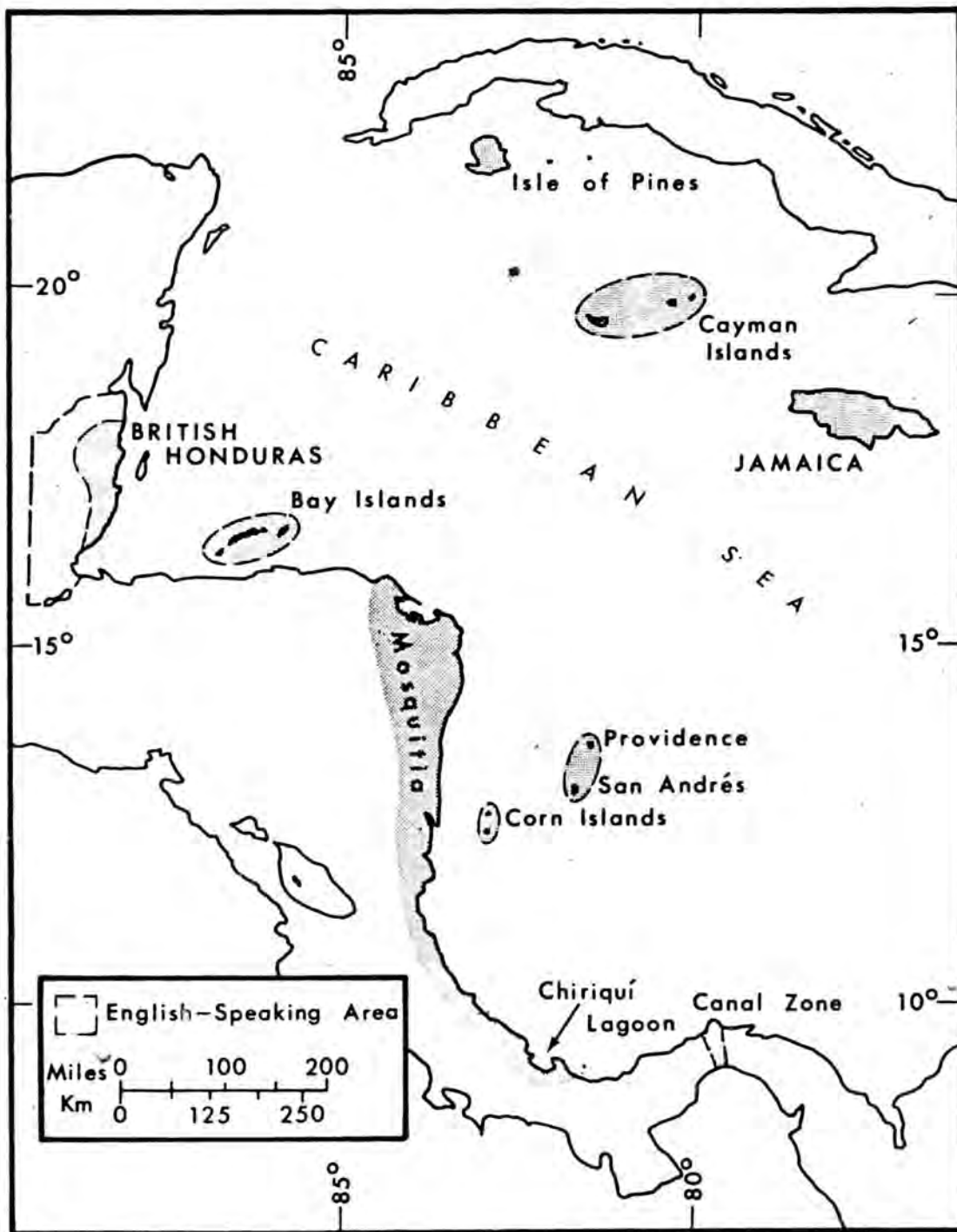
Elizabeth Kuznesof



Marta Caminero-Santangelo

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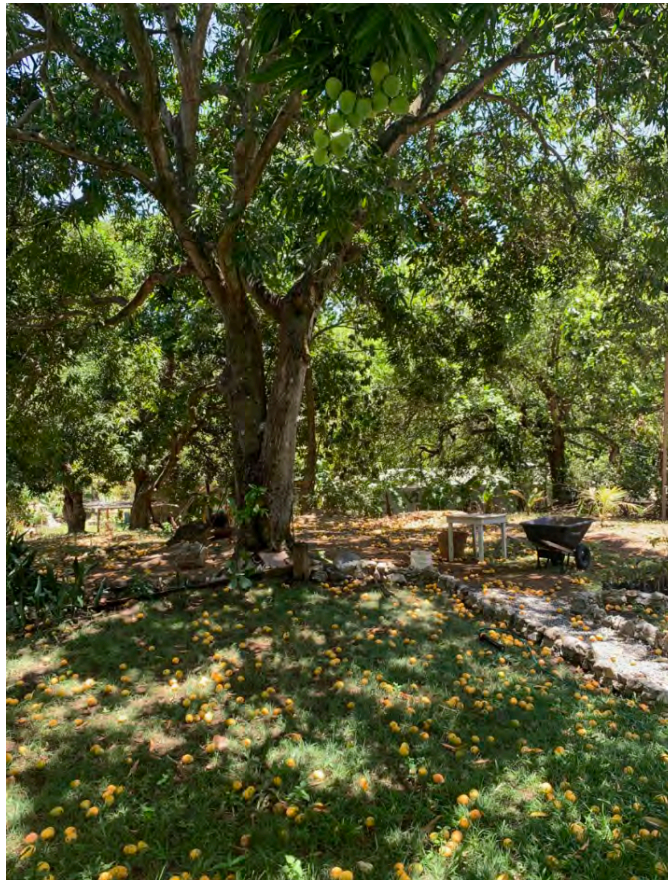


The English-Speaking Western Caribbean. Courtesy of William V. Davidson, 1974.

## Mango Season

In the absence between the pine trees  
Each dropping mango onto zinc roofs  
A measurement of the earth in season  
Orchards tumbling in rhythm  
(part of the cadence of dusk)  
The stains we leave on the dirt road  
The shade we carry home  
Our hands cupped in silence  
Abundant flower  
Earth water  
Keeper of landscapes  
Jewel of solidarity

Brett Spencer



Mangoes



Flamingo Center, Punta Gorda. Photo by Jaime Mejia.



## Prologue

In the summer of 2019, I led the University of Kansas Study Abroad Program to Roatán, Honduras, sponsored by the KU Center of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS). The program is a U.S. Department of Education (IRIS-) approved indigenous Miskitu language program on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, which I developed and previously directed since 2011. The KU Office of Study Abroad canceled the 2018 summer program after protests erupted in Nicaragua in April of that year. Due to the continued political crisis in Nicaragua, KU decided to relocate the Study Abroad program for Summer 2019. Following advisories from the U.S. State Department in Honduras, we decided to have the program on the Honduran Bay Island of Roatán, a migration site of the Miskitu people.

One of the main challenges of this year's program in Roatán was to find a way for the students to practice the Miskitu language with native speakers: the Roatán Miskitu people lived scattered across the island, but were not the dominant population in any one town. We stayed at Henry's Cove Dive Resort and Hotel on the outskirts of Punta Gorda, the island's lone Garifuna town. I chose Henry's Cove because of its location on the eastern and less touristy side of Roatán, and because it is close to Oakridge, where a large cluster of Miskitu speakers reportedly lives.

The KU program partnered with the Flamingo Cultural Center in Punta Gorda, under the direction of Audrey Flores. Audrey's family had recently moved back to Punta Gorda from NYC. The Fla-



TA LaToya Hinton at Anthony's Key,  
Sandy Bay



KU Group with Alex Brown Tour Company



Opni Ferrera, Miskitu language assistant



Audrey Flores, Director of Flamingo Center,  
Punta Gorda

Flamingo Center became our home away from home; here, we ate dinners and held one of our Miskitu language classes. The KU program TA, LaToya Hinton, an applied linguist (University of Arizona, Education, ABD), taught the afternoon Miskitu class. Johana Curbello, a Miskitu woman, traveled from Sandy Bay to teach the morning class at Henry's Cove. A Miskitu language assistant named Opni Ferrera lived with the group at Henry's Cove.<sup>1</sup>

Six students were funded by KU CLACS Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) awards. Four students were KU undergraduates—Mariah Brown, Francisco Garcia, Madeleine Housh, and Mathew Reinhold; and two were doctoral students—Momina Sims (Public Health, UM-Amherst) and Brett Spencer (Geography, LSU.) Ben Gotto, an undergraduate KU student majoring in linguistics, also participated in the program. Additionally, Jaime Fabricio Mejía Mayorga, a Honduran doctoral student in Education at the University of Arizona, joined our group.

Besides intensive Miskitu language studies, the students wanted to take a class in the Garifuna language, so they could interact with Punta Gorda residents and show respect for their language. Audrey Flores found a Garifuna teacher named Alfred Arzu, a native local English-speaker teacher, and former musician, who was originally from Belize. We scheduled the class at the Flamingo Center in the late afternoons, just before our nightly dinners there. Audrey and I designed a flier that circulated on social media and advertised the afternoon Miskitu and Garifuna classes free of charge. [see flier] While locals did not regularly attend, the flier announced our presence in Roatán and showed the KU program's support of indigenous languages.

KU Libraries Scholarworks agreed to publish this short book, "The Peoples and Languages of Roatán." This book includes my "Introduction to Roatán: The Garifuna and Miskitu"; Mathew Reinhold's "The Miskitu People of Eastern Roatán"; Ben Gotto's paper, "The Use of Music to Teach Garifuna as a Second Language in Punta Gorda, Roatán"; Jaime Fabricio Mejía Mayorga's "It's a Big Man Thing"; An Analysis of Roatán English"; LaToya Hinton's "The Challenges of Teaching Miskitu and Garifuna in Roatán"; and my final chapter, "A Traveler's Guide to the Languages of Roatán." This publication will be useful to anyone interested in learning about Roatán, the socio-linguistic panorama of the island, or the spoken Garifuna and Miskitu languages.

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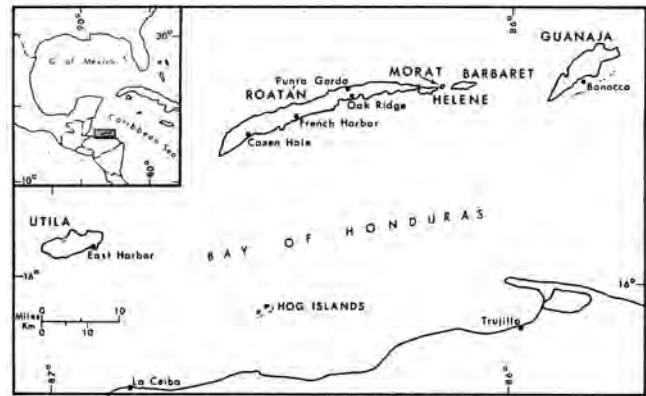
<sup>1</sup> I have known Opni since he was a young boy in the village of Kuuri in the Honduran Muskitia, where I did my doctoral research.

## Chapter One

### Introduction to Roatán: The Garifuna and Miskitu

Laura Hobson Herlihy

The Honduran Bay Islands of Roatán, Utila, and Guanaja, located 20-40 miles off the Honduran mainland, sat alongside the largest coral reef in the Western hemisphere. Roatán, the largest of the Honduran Bay Islands, was a well-known international and U.S. tourist destination. Roatán offered beautiful white sand beaches, turquoise colored waters, lush and verdant vegetation, and breathtaking sunsets. Tourists mainly came to Roatán for a beach vacation, and for scuba diving and snorkeling. Additionally, luxury cruise liners landed several times a week during high season, and passengers debarked for day trips on the island. The tourism industry kept Roatán economically afloat.



Bay Islands, Republic of Honduras.  
Courtesy of William V. Davidson, 1974.

The Honduran Bay Islands are culturally distinct from the mainland—they are part of the English-speaking Caribbean. Honduran Bay Island English (BIE) is spoken by two of Roatán's historic populations—the Black (Kriols) and White (Caracoles).<sup>2</sup> Roatán is also home to mestizo Spanish-speakers from the Honduran mainland;



Punta Gorda

<sup>2</sup> BIE is classified as Central American English (in Holm 1983).



Garifuna drummers, Punta Gorda

Afro-indigenous Garifuna-speakers, originally from the St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles; and more recently, indigenous Miskitu-speakers from the Honduran Muskitia. Many U.S. expats also live on the island, and North American and international tourists have a constant presence. Roatán serves as a dynamic site of multilingual, multi-racial, and transnational interactions.

Both BIE-speaking groups in Roatán, the Black Kriols and White Caracoles, are generally referred to as “Islanders” in English, and “Isleños” in Spanish. Both groups came to the Bay Islands in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly from the Cayman Islands. Their dialects differ, as Caracoles speak a Scottish-influenced English, while Kriols speak a more creolized form (Graham 1998). Kriols often work on luxury cruise ships, known for hiring English speakers, while Caracoles commonly own or work on semi-industrial fishing boats.

The Kriols live throughout the island, but more in the western municipality of Roatán, in towns like Sandy Bay, Coxen Hole, French Harbor, and Flowers Bay. In the eastern municipality of Santos Guardiola, Kriols live in towns like Pandý Town, Politilly Bight, and St. Helene. Most Caracoles live in Santos Guardiola, in the fishing towns of Oakridge and Jonestown. The Black and White BIE-speakers historically live in separate locations and do not intermarry. In the past, the Caracoles held a higher socio-economic status than the Kriols and reproduced racist ideologies toward the Kriols, whom they looked down upon because of their African ancestry and darker skin color. Large populations of Caracoles (called “Wuggies” by the Kriols) live in the other large Bay Islands of Guanaña and Utila, where they outnumber the Kriol.

Kriols and Caracoles both are proud of their Bay Island English, which serves as an integral component to their common Islander identity. BIE is spoken at home, in Protestant churches (like Church of God), private schools, and everyday interactions. The Honduran Bi-lingual Intercultural

Education program was implemented in the 1990s. While Islanders remain dedicated to teaching local culture and history, they opt for Standard English—not Bay Island English—to be taught to their children in public schools. Speaking Standard English is required to work in the international tourism industry and gives promise to economic mobility (Herlihy, 2018; Hertzfeld: Brook). Both tourism and the bi-lingual (Spanish-English) education program reinforces English, helping to maintain the island’s cultural distinctiveness from the Honduran mainland.

Spanish-speaking catholic mestizos, the national subjects of Honduras, are called Indios in the Bay Islands. Indios increasingly migrated from the mainland (*tierra firme*) in search of economic opportunity and to escape *narco* and political violence. Mainland Honduras was infamous for gang-related violence related to the U.S. war on drugs, which has caused massive waves of migration to the U.S. border, most recently in caravans. In the last year, on the Honduran mainland, pro-government military and paramilitary forces have also met political protests with a violent crackdown.

Indios are now the majority ethnic group in Roatán, comprising 60 percent of the population. Spanish, the national language taught in schools, is spoken increasingly in island social interactions. Indios typically marry Roatán residents of all races and ethnicities, including the Kriol, Caracoles, Garifuna and Miskitu. One Kriol man remarked, “the Indios are taking over the island.” He explained, “Roatán has so much intermarriage between the Indios and the other groups, the island will someday be like Brazil.”

The Indios historically lived in Juticalpa, a town settled by Olancho *campesino* farmers in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and Los Fuertes, where the mestizos settled in 1970’s and defended their right to occupy these lands. Indios now live throughout the island, but are attracted more to urban centers and often work in ground transportation, especially as taxi and *colectivo* (minibus) drivers. Although Kriols and Caracoles historically held high positions in Roatán’s socio-economic hierarchy, Indios are displacing them as the highest ranked group. Many Indios hail from Tegucigalpa, the nation’s capital, and are influential in the private sector.

Although the Indios dominate the island in population numbers, over half of Roatán lands are foreign-owned by North American expats and investors. The white-skinned North American foreigners (called Gringos in Spanish, and Americans or Yankees in Island English) hold the highest social status. Race, ethnicity, nationality, and class conflate to form a socio-economic hierarchy, where Gringos are at the top of the ranking; Indios, Caracoles, and Kriols are in the middle; and the Garifuna and Miskitu are at the bottom.

## **Garifuna Culture History**

The Garifuna have had a dramatic history of migration, warfare, displacement, and survival. The ethnogenesis of the Afro-indigenous Garifuna took place in St. Vincent, called Yuremei in the Garifuna language. The Carib Indians from the Orinoco river basin of South America (Venezuela and the Guyanas) ventured into the Caribbean and conquered the Arawaks, in what is today the British West Indies in the Lesser Antilles. On the island of St. Vincent, Carib warriors killed the Arawak men and married their women. The women passed down Arawak language to the children, yet some male Carib words and parallel grammatical constructions persisted.

Escaped African slaves from nearby islands and from vessels shipwrecked or lost at sea came ashore to St. Vincent and intermarried with the indigenous people. Two groups formed—the Red Carib, who intermarried more with the Africans, and the Yellow Carib. The Red Carib evolved into the Black Carib or Garifuna (Davidson, 1974; Gonzalez, 1998).



Chugu ritual in Punta Gorda

The French controlled St. Vincent in the 1700s and were allies of the Black Carib and never enslaved them. Following the Treaty of Paris in 1763, however, the British gained control of St. Vincent. The Black Carib remained loyal to the French and fought against the British in two Carib Wars. The British then deported over 2,000 rebellious Black Carib to Roatán in 1797, abandoning them in Port Royal. Some crossed the island by foot and settled Punta Gorda, the oldest Garifuna settlement in Central America. Other Garifuna left on Spanish ships for the Honduran mainland, where they expanded along the coast into Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Belize.

The largest population of Central American Garifuna people today lived in Honduras, in over 40 towns and villages along the Honduran Caribbean coast, in the departments of Gracias Á Díos, Colón, Atlántida, and Cortés, in towns such as Trujillo, Tela, and Triunfo de la Cruz. [see map] Sizeable populations of Garifuna also had relocated to the Honduran urban centers of La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula, and Tegucigalpa. The countries of Belize, Guatemala, and Nicaragua had fewer Garifuna towns, with smaller communities located in Nicaragua.

Today the Garifuna comprise around 300,000 and are known for being a multilingual (Garifuna, Spanish, English) and transnational people, with a presence in four Central American countries, as well as in Canada and the U.S., especially New York, New Orleans, and Los Angeles. Garifuna language and cultural practices united them across international borders and created their common ethnic identity. Considered global citizens, the Garifuna people have also contributed to world music. Several Garifuna musicians enjoy international success through what is now called, *punta* rock (Green, 2017).

Garifuna language, music, and dance were proclaimed a Masterpiece of Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2008 by The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Indeed, Garifuna was the only indigenous Arawak language spoken in Central and North America; and Garifuna music and dance are symbols of their Afro-descendant identity in the New World's African diaspora. Male drummers follow the beat of the dancers of *punta*, characterized by rapid, rhythmic hip movements. Garifuna women traditionally compose song lyrics and sing in a call and response fashion.

Garifuna supernatural beliefs and practices, like other Afro-Caribbean religions, incorporated music, song, and dance into their rituals, celebrations, and street processions. *Buye* or shaman-healers, often older women, diagnosed and cured spiritual, psychological and physical illness with plant-based and other remedies. These *buye* (healers) summoned supernatural power by connecting with the ancestors and asking for their help. The *dugu* ritual called the ancestor spirits back to the natural world, to honor them in a three-day celebration. Garifuna beliefs largely have undergone syncretism with Catholicism and Garifuna drumming, swaying, and hymns are incorporated into Catholic masses.

The Garifuna people traditionally resided in coastal communities, made a living through fishing and subsistence agricultural practices, and structured their domestic organization through matrifocal households and male absenteeism. Women tended their yuca fields near their beach-front homes, while men worked away from home in the fisheries and other migrant wage activities (Gonzalez, 1988). In the informal local economy, women cooked and baked Garifuna foods, such as cassava bread and coconut-based macaroons, while more immobile men were artisans, making crafts from natural materials, especially jewelry and musical instruments. Many Garifuna had moved to urban centers for higher education and hold professional occupations, especially as teachers. In Garifuna towns more recently, households survived by receiving remittances from family members in the U.S. and Canada.

### **The Roatán Garifuna**

The Roatán Garifuna mainly lived in Punta Gorda and in the nearby islands that comprise Cayos Cochinos. Punta Gorda is divided into six barrios, including Punta Gorda, Iguana, Inglés, La Cola, Lagarto, and Cañaveral (Davidson, 2001). Crossing town in a three-wheeled motor-taxi (called “Chinese taxis” by BIE-speakers) on the ocean-front main road, one could not help but notice a cultural divide between the Garifuna-speaking neighborhood of Barrio Punta Gorda and the English-speaking neighborhood of English town (Barrio Inglés), which is inhabited by the Kriols. These neighborhoods are separated by an uninhabited stretch of seaside vista with a cement path, called the Malecón.

Every Sunday, U.S. tourists arrive to the most populated and Garifuna-dominated neighborhood—Barrio Punta Gorda—to eat local foods like *machuca* (mashed plantain soup), drink *gifti* (made from rum, roots, and herbs), and watch or participate in Garifuna drumming and their signature *punta* dancing. Sea-side restaurants, bars, and cultural centers compete for the tourist dollar. Several English-speaking Punta Gorda residents have tourism agencies with websites, and their reviews can be found on Tripadvisor.

The Garifuna language is being lost in Punta Gorda today. Here, Garifuna is spoken by the older generation, but the younger generation increasingly speaks Spanish and English. The state provides for the Bi-lingual Intercultural Education program (Spanish and Garifuna) in Punta Gorda public

schools to combat Garifuna language loss. A private elementary school with outside funding also teaches Garifuna.

The Garifuna experience prejudice and racism on Roatán. Both the Isleños (Kriols and Caracoles) and Indios consider the Garifuna more “*rústico*” or primitive than themselves, and they often express fear of Garifuna magic potions. Garifuna magic is considered the strongest of all the island peoples’, each group having a version of folk and plant-based practices. The Garifuna are also considered the most Africanized people on Roatán, as the Kriols culturally distance themselves from Blackness, by self-identifying as English-speakers and descendants of the British (Gordon, 1988). Compared to the Garifuna, the Kriols, more modern and urban, live on the touristy side of the island and have a taste for First World luxuries. Despite their differences, both the Kriols and Garifuna peoples identify as Afro-descendant peoples at the international and national level. Together, in the 1970s they had formed O FRANEH Organización Fraternal Negro Hondureño to fight against racism in Honduras and to fight for their human rights globally within the framework of minority peoples.

The Garifuna are respected on the island for their cultural and political contributions to Roatán. The Roatán Tourism Commission consistently hires Garifuna drummers and dancers to perform in Coxen Hole, where the cruise ships land; a Garifuna museum was opened nearby to represent island culture. The Roatán Garifuna are also respected politically because they have fought against the Honduran government and won legal rights to their lands in date? Punta Gorda lands cannot be purchased by those outside the community, as opposed to the greater island, where most properties are now foreign-owned. The Garifuna have political representation in the Santos Guardiola municipality, with three elected legislative deputies (*concejales*). Indeed, the Garifuna feel culturally represented on Roatán—they are often featured on news programs on the local TV stations of MasTV and Infoinsular. MasTV hosted Garifuna representative and Punta Gorda resident, Alex Avila’s weekly talk show.

## **Miskitu Culture History**

The indigenous Miskitu peoples, a post-contact or colonial tribe, formed mainly through intermarriage of British, African and Afro-descendants (escaped slaves, freed men, and mulattos), and indigenous Sumu peoples near the Honduran and Nicaraguan Caribbean border, at Cape Gracias Á Dios. The colonial Miskitu expanded their population and dominated the Muskitia region (also known as the Miskito Coast or La Moskitia). Muskitia contains the largest rainforest region north of the Amazon in the Americas. Today, the Miskitu people (pop. 200,000) live in Muskitia, their autochthonous homeland, along the Honduran and Nicaraguan Caribbean coast, with about two-thirds of their population and lands in Nicaragua.

During the colonial era, the Miskitu formed an alliance with the British, who armed them with muskets (guns) to help fight against the Spanish. The colonial Miskitu also used their weapons to dominate surrounding indigenous groups. A British Protectorate was established on the coast, along with a hereditary system of Miskitu kingship. The Muskitia region was not integrated into the Spanish-speaking nation states of Honduras and Nicaragua until 1860 and 1894, respectively. English-speaking, German Moravian protestants missionized the Muskitia, arriving in Nicaragua in the 1860s and some forty years later, Honduras.

Miskitu language, a Misumalpan, Macro-Chibchan language of South American origins, serves as the lingua-franca of the bi-national (Honduras and Nicaragua) Muskitia rainforest region. Here, Miskitu is spoken by members of seven other indigenous and ethnic groups, including the indige-



nous Pech, Tawahka, Mayangna, and Ulwa, and the Afro-indigenous Garifuna, the Afro-descendant Kriols, and the mestizos. As the dominant indigenous group, the Miskitu has rapidly assimilated others, mainly through intermarriage and matrilineal residential patterns, where language has been passed down to their children through the female line. Like the Garifuna, Miskitu women live in female-centered families and transmit culture, language, and identity to new generations.

The Miskitu reside in both rainforest and coastal environments, engaging in slash and burn horticulture up-river and fishing on the coast. The Miskitu have historically worked as migrant wage laborers in various boom and bust economies, such as the fruit, lumber, and fishing industries. In the late-1970s, Miskitu men began working as deep-water lobster divers. Still today, the men risk their lives in a dangerous occupation to supply Caribbean rock or spiny lobsters to U.S. companies, such as Red Lobster, Inc. Miskitu households today mainly survive by the cash contributions from the men lobster divers. Miskitu women compete with one another, and often resort to trickery by using magic potions, to manipulate the men and gain access to their hard-earned wages.

The Miskitu supernatural healing system (*sika*) combines elements of Afro-Caribbean Obeah with South American animistic religions. The Miskitu *sukia* or shaman, like the Garifuna *buye*, diagnoses and heals a multitude of illnesses and vexations. *Sukias* differ from *buyes* because they call on the powers of the plant spirits, not their ancestors. Women also make potions from plants, in recipes handed down from *kukas* or grandmothers in their matrilineal domestic groups.

Syncretic religious beliefs and practices have developed, often blending native with Moravian religious beliefs. The main Miskitu goddess and owner of the seas and waterways, the *liwa mairin* (mermaid), is believed to have punished lobster divers with sickness and death for extracting too



Miskitu women masseuses, West Bay Beach

many of her lobsters. About 15 percent of the men are injured or paralyzed while diving for lobsters and Miskitu men in makeshift wheelchairs are a common sight in the Honduran and Nicaraguan Muskitia. (Herlihy, 2012). The wheelchair-bound men suffer from decompression sickness or the BENDS, which the Miskitu referred to as mermaid sickness (*liwa mairin sijniska*). The *liwa mairin* is interpreted by Moravian pastors in church as a fallen angel.

The Nicaraguan Miskitu people (pop. 125,000) fought during the Sandinista revolution (1979-1990) as counterrevolutionaries in the U.S., CIA-backed Contra War (1981-1987). Due to the Caribbean Contra resistance, the Nicaraguan Miskitu and neighboring indigenous and ethnic groups were awarded two politically autonomous regions in 1987. The regions were called the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions, each with the right to self-governance.

Many Miskitu people today, however, are saying goodbye to their rainforest homeland and their regionally dominant indigenous language. In Honduras, they are migrating to interior cities, such as La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula, and Tegucigalpa. The Miskitu have also migrated to Roatán, where the youth increasingly speaks Spanish and English.

### **The Roatán Miskitu**

The Miskitu people were relatively recent arrivals to Roatan, having migrated in the last forty years from the Nicaraguan and Honduran Muskitia. An estimated 2-3,000 Miskitu now reside in Roatán, but little is known about them. They live dispersed on the Island, alongside all other ethnic groups, fly under the radar, and have no political representation or rights to bilingual education.

The largest population of Miskitu people live in the municipality of Roatán, in the urban centers of Coxen Hole, French Harbor, and Los Fuertes. The Miskitu also live in Sandy Bay's *colonia* (also known as Balfate), Crawfish Rock, and anywhere they can find work. In the Island's eastern municipality of Santos Guardiola, Miskitu people mainly settled in Milton Bight (with a population nearing 100) and in the largest town of Oakridge, where over 500 Miskitu people live in the neighborhoods or barrios of Bight, Punta Caliente, and Lucy Point.

The following chapter by Mathew Reinhold gives more details of the Miskitu people in Eastern Roatán.

Although Miskitu people had a historic presence in Roatan during the colonial period, the first modern wave of Miskitu migration to Roatán began during the 1980s, when Miskitu people came from Nicaragua as political refugees, fleeing the Sandinista revolution and Contra War. In the last 30 years, however, most Miskitu people came to Roatán as refugees from Honduras, especially as many claimed, "since the *narcos* ruined Muskitia." Narcos had inundated Muskitia, a remote and lawless region, because it was the main route of cocaine trafficking from Colombia to the U.S. Small Cessna airplanes delivered cocaine packages on cleared airstrips in Muskitia. The *narcos* illicitly purchased and cut down indigenous rainforest lands for cattle-ranching and built numerous clandestine airstrips. The *narcos* then coerced Miskitu men and women to work for them, by threatening to kill them and their family members. After cocaine packages arrived by way of Cessna airplanes, corrupted Miskitu locals transported the product to speed boats waiting on the Caribbean shore, in route to Guatemala, where cocaine was transported overland via Mexico to the U.S..

Miskitu people understandably found Roatán to be a desirable place to live. Like the Copán Maya ruins, the area is protected by the state for the international tourism industry and no *narco* or gang activities were present. Many Miskitu come to Roatán to join relatives from their home com-



Miskitu women hair-braiders, West Bay Beach

munities in the Honduran Muskitia, such as Kaukira, Puerto Lempira, Barra Patuca, Ahuas, Brus Laguna, and Ibans; and they search for work in the fishery and tourism industry. The Miskitu people are not only fleeing *narco* violence in Muskitia, but also poverty and unemployment, climate change, and displacement by mestizo colonists. Many could no longer make a living off their Muskitia lands, due to rivers drying up, combined with unpredictable seasonal flooding. Additionally, armed colonists are encroaching more and more on their agricultural fields and hunting lands. Due to these realities, the Miskitu are losing their subsistence knowledge at an alarmingly accelerated rate.

Miskitu families in Roatán continue living in matrilocal groups. Miskitu men are commonly absent, working offshore on boats, as fishermen and lobster and conch divers. Other men work on Roatán as carpenters, building hotels and apartments for tourists, and remain present in daily domes-

tic life. Scores of Miskitu women participate in the tourism economy in West Bay, a site of high-end tourism in Roatán. Here, Miskitu women offer massages and hair-braiding to international tourists on the beach, at half the price offered in West Bay hotels. [pic.] The Roatán police working on the beach often ask the Miskitu women for identification and try to chase them away.

The Miskitu people are the lowest ranked social group in the island's ethnic hierarchy, commonly experiencing racism and prejudice—they are both dark-skinned and poor.<sup>3</sup> Although the Garifuna have darker skin than the Miskitu people, the Garifuna hold the advantage of being native Islanders, while the Miskitu are recent immigrants. Not surprisingly, Miskitu people commonly hide their identity from others and pretend not to speak Miskitu, choosing to speak Spanish and Island English for economic and social mobility.

Like the Garifuna, the Miskitu people are losing their language in Roatán. Miskitu language dominates primarily in the privacy of their homes, in ersatz Miskitu-dominated churches in Coxen Hole, Los Fuertes, and Oakridge, and on lobster boats docked in front of homes on Roatán's southern coast. In Oakridge, during our stay, a lobster boat speaker system loudly blared Miskitu pop music, rarely heard on the Island, to animate the workers and distract them from the daily grind. In these isolated spaces on docked boats, Miskitu language was celebrated.

Miskitu and Garifuna culture history share several similarities. The ethnogenesis of both Central American groups can be traced back to the colonial era—they emerged through intermarriage of indigenous, African, and European ancestors. Their populations grew and expanded in territory, while other indigenous peoples were decimated by European contact, conquest, and colonialism. Both the Miskitu and Garifuna remained free peoples, and the colonial powers with whom they interacted—the British, Spanish, and French—never classified them as slaves.

Both the Miskitu and Garifuna languages are of South American origins, having been passed down through the women in female-centered domestic groups, and are influenced by English and Spanish, mainly through loan words. Garifuna language, however, is more influenced by French loan words and more directly, through West African languages. Additionally, gendered vocabulary and grammatical structures persist in Garifuna.

Garifuna and Miskitu grammars differ significantly. Garifuna has verb initial sentence structure (verb-subject-object), while verb final sentence order (subject-object-verb) exists in Miskitu. Distinctive Garifuna grammatical features are a heightened use of affixes, and a unique gendered language, with male lexicon and syntactical structures hailing from Carib, and female forms from Arawak. Miskitu grammar is distinguished by switch reference verbs and modalities that express probability. Sadly, distinctive features of both the Garifuna and Miskitu languages are currently being lost in Roatán.

Garifuna has hard to pronounce vowels, perhaps from West African languages, and inconsistent grammar. Miskitu has similar vowels to both English and Spanish and Miskitu grammar is highly consistent. Miskitu only has three vowels—a; i; and u, but these vowels can be nasalized, elongated, palatalized, and more.

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<sup>3</sup> The Kriol and Caracoles both referred to the Miskitu people as “Waika,” which is the Miskitu word for an animal's tail. “Waika” probably comes from their mispronunciation of the word for man or people in Miskitu, “Waikna.” The Garifuna calls the Miskitu, “Idudu,” which to the Miskitu ear, sounded curiously like the Garifuna word for fish (iduru). The Spanish call the Miskitu, “Misquitos,” which conjured images of pesky and infectious insects.

## Chapter Two

### The Miskitu People of Eastern Roatán

Mathew Reinhold

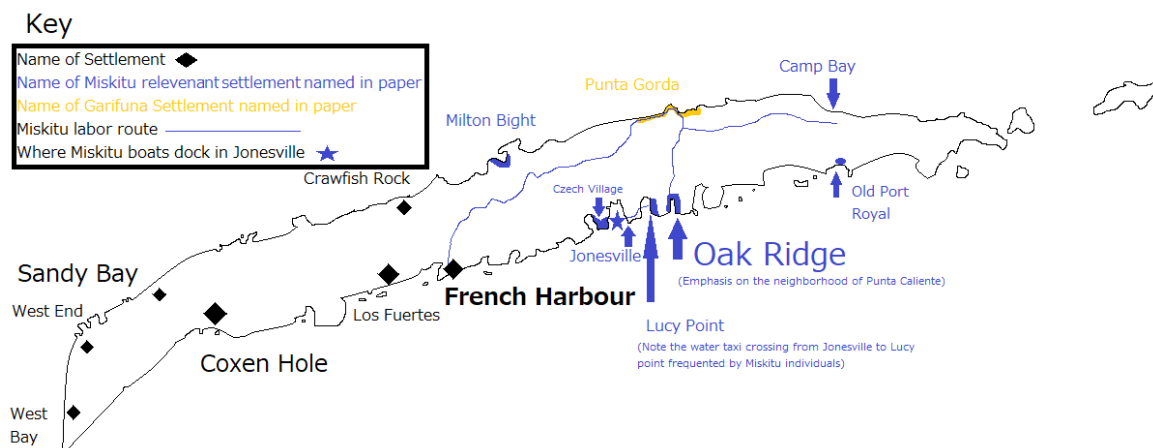


Figure 1: Map of Roatán Miskitu Settlements

In the summer of 2019, I joined Dr. Laura Hobson Herlihy's intensive Miskitu Language and Culture Field School on the island of Roatán in the Bay Islands of Honduras. The Bay Islands are not traditionally considered part of Muskitia, the homeland of the indigenous Miskitu people. Nevertheless, the island has thousands of migrants from the Muskitia and, also Miskitu people born on the island, who were descendants of early migrants.

In this paper I hope to describe my experiences interacting with the Miskitu of the eastern half of the island, primarily within the Municipality of Jose Santos Guardiola. The goal of this paper is to assist those working with the eastern Roatán Miskitu and those interested in researching this migrant community. The paper provides some basic logistical and anecdotal information on the community.

The Miskitu community living on the more developed and tourist-heavy western half of the island is larger than their community in eastern Roatan. Nevertheless, the eastern Roatán Miskitu form a vibrant and growing community. The eastern half of the island of Roatán also has many thriving commercial ventures, including tourism and fisheries.

While doing interviews in eastern Roatán, I met a Miskitu woman who had come to the area in 1983 and had established her family in a matrilineal domestic unit, with her daughters and grandchildren living in houses around her own home. Alternatively, I met a Miskitu man who had just arrived from Nicaragua a few days prior, among other recent migrants to Roatán. Many Miskitu who lived in the eastern Roatán told me they came to the island because in the Mosquitia, "*wark apu*" (there is no work). While many Miskitu migrants have found employment, many continue to struggle to find work on the island. All disparaged how expensive it was to live on Roatán, with the cost of living higher than in the Honduran and Nicaraguan Muskitia. Miskitu women particularly struggle once arriving on the island. Many must care for dependents but lack English language skills commonly required for many jobs on the island.



Miskitu family in Punta Caliente, Oakridge

I realized the important economic connection that Miskitu people had with Roatán, and how their families have followed similar U.S. patterns of chain migration. Miskitu-crewed fishing boats have docked in Roatán since the 1970s. Islander-owned boats regularly picked up Miskitu workers along the Miskito Coast (Muskitia) and after a fishing trip, returned to Roatán to deliver their product to sea food factories located there. Many Miskitu migrants initially came to the island on fishing and lobster boats and stayed during the off-season to find work. Later, their families, extended family members, and neighbors followed.

Due to the proximity of where fishing boats dock, Oakridge has become the main Miskitu community in eastern Roatán. Clusters of Miskitu households can be found in several Oakridge neighborhoods, such as Bight, Punta Caliente, and Lucy Point.

**Bight:** Three Miskitu teachers lived in Bite and worked at the Dionicio Herrera School. These teachers started a Miskitu dance troupe that performed at the school's special events celebrating national holidays. Miskitu high school students from Milton Bite came to the Dionicio Herrera school on Sundays for continued education; Milton Bite had a Miskitu population of about one hundred. This education program was funded by an NGO project for economically challenged Islander youth, who could not attend high school because they had to work during the week.

**Punta Caliente:** The barrio of Punta Caliente was known as a Miskitu barrio and Miskitu families owned small tiendas or shops there. The largest Moravian church near Punta Caliente had a Miskitu pastor, yet he preached to the multi-lingual (Bay Island English/Spanish/Miskitu) congregation in Spanish.

**Lucy Point:** Adjacent to the center of Oak Ridge is Lucy Point (see Map). Locals told me this geographic feature was named after a woman (named Lucy) who lived there not that very long ago, when the area was not populated like it is now. Today, Lucy Point is a thriving community with a strong Miskitu component. In Lucy Point, there was a Moravian Miskitu church service held weekly in a small, makeshift church. Here the Miskitu pastor preached in his native language to a completely Miskitu congregation. I learned that Lucy Point Miskitu children regularly went by water taxi to schools in Jonesville and Czech Village. (see Map).

Jonesville is a Caracol (white descendants who speak BIE) community across the water from Lucy Point, where Miskitu youth attended the public high school. Some Miskitu families lived in Jonesville but many more Miskitu men arrived on ships that docked there. Miskitu crew members commonly walked along the main road along the waterfront, to the small dock that faces Lucy Point.

Czech Village, a unique community of Czechoslovakian expats with fancy homes, sponsored an elementary school for Miskitu children from Lucy Point and even provided food to the students. At the same time, Czech expats had a private school to educate their own children. I was told that at least one Miskitu family lived across from Jonesville near the Czech village.

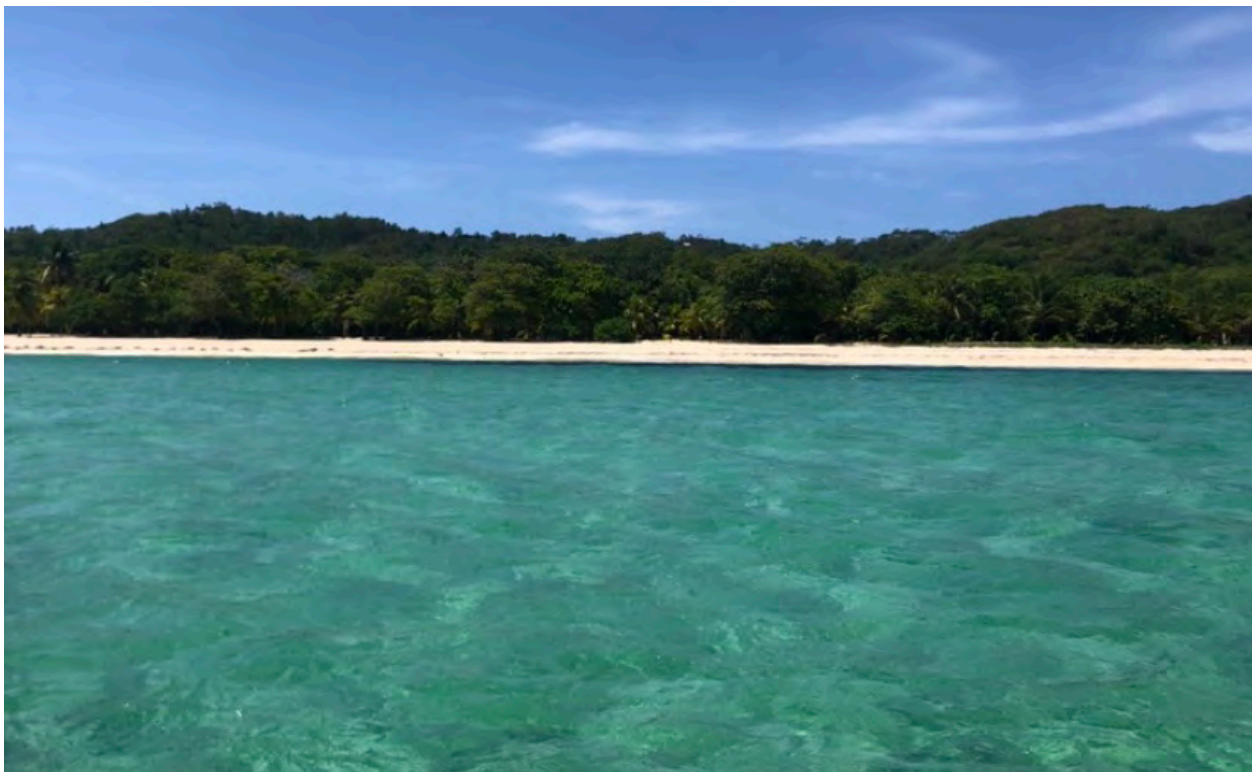


Oakridge

Many Miskitu from Oak Ridge and its environs commute to work on the western side of the island. They take minibuses (*colectivos*) that run regularly from Oak Ridge to French Harbour, where they transfer to minibuses headed further west. These buses run through the Garifuna community of Punta Gorda (near Oak Ridge), where Dr. Herlihy's program was based. From central Oak Ridge, Miskitu people commonly take *tuk tuks* (motorized, round-bottomed sea canoes) to Lucy Point, where they transfer to water taxis headed to Jonesville and the Czech Village. Other Miskitu people head east on *tuk tuks*, going through a narrow waterway to reach the Camp Bay area for work. At least one Miskitu family lived in Old Port Royal, where the husband-father works as watchmen. (see Map)

Miskitu people of the older generation are proud of their language and identity and will gladly engage with visitors who can speak even a few phrases in Miskitu. For example, in Jonesville, I was walking along a road and passed a woman and initially said "*buenas*" and received it back in turn with no enthusiasm. I proceeded to say "*tutni yamni*" (good afternoon in Miskitu) and the woman spun around with a big smile and a bunch of questions. Although many people first assumed that I was a missionary, this method of greeting people in Miskitu was very successful. Many Miskitu people show great enthusiasm and pride that U.S. students are studying their language, and a few offered to let me practice with them and gave me impromptu Miskitu lessons.

Most Roatán residents do not hold particularly negative views towards the Miskitu. The main tension is between Islanders and those from the Honduran mainland. Sometimes the Miskitu are immune to this hostility because they are from Muskitia, while other times, they are grouped in with other mainlanders. Bay Island's English speakers use the old exonym, "Waika," to refer to Miskitu people on the island. This article is intended as a brief introduction to the Miskitu community of eastern Roatán. More research is needed on this growing indigenous migrant community.



Camp Bay Beach



## Chapter Three

### The Use of Music to Teach Garifuna as a Second Language in Punta Gorda, Roatán

Benjamin Gotto



Alfred Arzu, Garifuna teacher, Punta Gorda

“English is an expressive language, Spanish is a romantic language, but Garifuna is a musical language.” This is how Alfred Arzu, a teacher of English and Garifuna in Roatán, described the essence of each language he speaks. When beginning to learn the Garifuna language, the prospective student is immediately struck by the frequent presence of music in their lessons. The main content of my first lesson, for example, was learning a Garifuna song and translating it into English. While it is true that many language classes incorporate music into their pedagogy to some degree, Garifuna classes place a special emphasis on music. Music is used not only to help understand the phonology and syntax of the Garifuna language, but also to provide insight into the Garinagu<sup>4</sup> culture.

#### Literature Review

Scholarship regarding Garifuna music consistently insists that music plays a very important role in Garifuna culture (Greene 1998; 2002; 2018). Greene (2002:?), writing about the relevance of music to Garifuna ancestor worship stated that “Music ... is a principal means of reinforcing social values. Song texts, drumming, and rattling are media of communication

through which the worlds of the living and the ancestors interact and converse.” Greene (ibid) goes on to relate an interview with a Garifuna *buyei*, or shaman, who described music as capable of attracting ancestors through a spiritual vibration. Song and drumming are extremely important components of the Garifuna system of ancestor worship, especially the *dügü*, a ceremony where the spirits of the Garifuna ancestors are called to inhabit certain family members, in order to right a perceived wrong to them or help with the healing of a family member. Drumming, rattling and song play an extremely important role in this ceremony. The songs, which are said to be revealed in dreams, are a way for the ancestors to continue to interact with their living family members. The centrality of song in the *dügü*, and by extension the traditional Garifuna religious system, illustrates music’s centrality to traditional Garifuna culture. Thus, the preservation of Garifuna music is an important part of

<sup>4</sup> The word *Garifuna* refers to the culture or to the language, while *Garinagu* refers to the people.

preserving Garifuna culture. However, music is not solely relegated to traditional aspects of Garifuna society. The most effective method of preservation has been to modernize Garifuna music in order to make it appeal more to the young.

Punta rock is a genre of Garifuna music whose aim is the preservation of Garifuna culture in the modern era. According to Greene (1998; 2002; 2018), “The principal objective for the creation of the genre ... was cultural preservation”. Punta rock evolved from punta, a traditional form of dance which features “an almost motionless upper torso in contrast to the almost constant movement of the hips, legs and feet” (Greene 2002: ?). This traditional form of song and dance was adapted into the more modern punta rock through the addition of nontraditional instruments such as synthesizers and electric guitars. Punta rock songs are performed in the Garifuna language, and often feature lyrics taken from traditional punta songs, revolving around Garifuna identity and social issues such as work and infidelity. The stated aim of punta rock is to make punta music and by extension, Garifuna culture seem cool to younger Garinagu. Punta rock serves as a method of preserving Garifuna music, and thus, culture and language.

Music has long been recognized as a useful tool for second language pedagogy. Yukiko Jolly (1975) highlights three advantages to using music to teach a foreign language. First, music can teach a lot about the phonology of the target language. For example, a song in Chinese conforms to the tonal system of the language, which can be instructive to learners whose languages are non-tonal. Secondly, songs can teach about the syntax of the native language. By providing an engaging method to repeatedly practice the target language’s grammar, music aids immensely in grammatical retention in second language speakers. Finally, as has been previously mentioned, music can provide insight into the target language’s culture. In this paper, I will show the prevalence of music in teaching Garifuna as a second language.

## **Methodology**

This paper is an account of the methods of teaching the Garifuna language through music used in the town of Punta Gorda, Roatán. While living in Punta Gorda for a month, I attended Garifuna classes taught by a native speaker. My experiences in this class form a good deal of the basis for this text. In addition to attending class, I carried out several in depth, open-ended interviews with Garifuna teachers within the community. During these interviews I asked my informants questions pertaining to their methods of teaching Garifuna. Specifically, I asked about the structure of the classes, whether music was used in teaching, how it was used, and why its inclusion was necessary. These interviews were conducted using an I-phone’s recording software. In addition to interviews, I recorded songs from several community members, including those that Alfred, my Garifuna teacher, used in lessons. Finally, I had the opportunity to attend a Garifuna class for young children. I was not permitted to record the class, but I took notes while attending and was able to capture the class proceedings.

## **Results**

In Punta Gorda, I attended one of the bi-weekly Garifuna classes for children. The students were all ethnically Garifuna. However, according to their teacher, few spoke the language proficiently. Speaking on the subject, he said,<sup>5</sup> “Some of the students already speak a little bit of Garifuna be-

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<sup>5</sup> Translated from Spanish



Alfred Arzu speaking Garifuna with Ben Gotto

cause, yes they are Garifuna, but they barely speak it (the language) because we are already losing it, and we already don't know to speak to the children in Garifuna.”<sup>6</sup> While many elders of Punta Gorda do still speak Garifuna, they are not passing that knowledge on to their children. The main goal of the class, according to its teacher, was to ensure that, in future generations, Garifuna was still spoken in Punta Gorda.

The class began and ended with a sustained period of practice in traditional Garifuna music, including both drumming and singing. After this period had elapsed, the lesson began. Class was mostly conducted in Garifuna, although the teachers gave highly specific or complicated instructions in Spanish. Students first practiced the Garifuna alphabet, then moved on to naming simple colors, numbers up to twenty, and greetings, all of which were posted as signs on the wall. Following this practice, the class moved on to focus on pronunciation of vowels. Garifuna has all of the vowels associated with Spanish, namely [a], [i], [ɛ], [ɔ], and [u]. However, it also has a central high rounded vowel, [ɨ], traditionally written as “ü” in Garifuna orthography. The students, all native Spanish speakers, had an immensely difficult time pronouncing this vowel, and required numerous repetitions of the sound by their teachers in order to pronounce it. Each student was called on, one after the other, and prompted to produce every vowel sound in Garifuna, and then asked to repeat any sounds that they were not able to produce correctly. Once every student had passed this test, the lesson moved on to a conversation portion, wherein students were required to mimic a short

<sup>6</sup> Taken from an interview conducted by the author in Punta Gorda, Roatán on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

conversation with their parents regarding the content of the previous night's dinner. After this, the students were quizzed on ten vocabulary words they had been given in their last lesson and given ten new vocabulary words for the next lesson. Finally, the class ended with another session of singing and drumming.

According to the class's teacher, the intent of using music in these classes was mostly cultural. Speaking on the subject, he said the following<sup>7</sup>: "The practical part of our music, yes we use it, but not as a part of class. As an assimilation or as an activity within the class, it's something like that, so we start to sing with them, sometimes so the children feel the environment, so it's something recreational, it's an activity to keep them active. We also have Sundays that we use only to practice the instruments, so they can learn songs, dances, and all of our dances. In these dynamics, we use various types of songs. For example, we use the *fedu*. ... And as well, we teach the children *paranda*, we teach them *punta*, and in this process we are teaching them the various types of typical dances that the Garifuna have."

Music is a regular part of class, and it is frequently included, even when not scheduled. However, its use is not pedagogical in nature. Rather than using music in order to teach specifics of Garifuna grammar or phonology, the teachers of Garifuna use it to teach children about the Garifuna culture. It is used as an "assimilation", in order to help students understand the culture better. Considering that the students are all ethnically Garifuna, and that the stated goal of the class is to help with the revival of Garifuna culture, the use of Garifuna songs as a cultural rather than a grammatical tool makes sense.

The use of music to preserve Garifuna culture observed in Punta Gorda is consistent with the use of punta rock to preserve Garifuna culture as observed by Oliver Greene. According to Greene "The retention, survival, and preservation of culture and language have been focal points of punta rock since its conception. ... Early punta rock songs were intentionally written and performed in Garifuna as deliberate gestures of cultural retention." (Greene 2002: ) That punta rock, the most internationally popular form of Garifuna music, was created deliberately with the intention of preserving the Garifuna culture. This illustrates that the Garifuna people place a great amount of importance on music as a means of preserving culture. The use of music to teach their culture to young Garifuna children is another reflection of the primacy of music on Garifuna society.

While our group did use music to learn about the Garifuna culture and identity, we also learned a good deal about Garifuna grammar and phonology using music. Alfred, our Garifuna instructor, was not a professional teacher of Garifuna. He taught English and was a native speaker of Garifuna, but he had never studied the language academically. His lack of formal training led to several difficulties in our learning process. We used linguistic field methods to figure out conjugation and word order, two fundamentals of syntax, through careful questioning of our teacher. However, Alfred's frequent use of music as a teaching aid helped us greatly. Our interaction with the Garifuna language was musical from the beginning. On the very first day of class, we used much of our time learning the melody to a Garifuna version of the "Our Father" prayer. Over the next few days, we learned and translated the lyrics to this song, presented here:

"Waguchi Bungiu, lidan sun fulasu,  
*Our father, present everywhere*  
Nübi la barueihan woun

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<sup>7</sup> Translated from Spanish

*may your reign come to us*  
Aduguwa la le babuserum be  
*may your will be done*  
Lidan mua, lidan sun fulasu  
*on earth, everywhere”*

The benefits of this kind of practice were immediate and manifold. First, learning a song gave us an engaging way to practice vocabulary through repetition. We added words such as *aguchi* meaning “father”, *lidan* meaning “in”, and *bungiu* meaning “god” to our vocabulary without the need to constantly practice them as is typical of second languages. The repetition that singing the song provided expanded our speaking capabilities dramatically. The song also helped us immediately to grasp Garifuna phonology. Garifuna devoices word-final vowels, as evidenced in the word *fulasu*, which is pronounced [fulas]. Learning this song alerted us to this phonological feature and allowed us to practice its use very early in our time learning.

The song also allowed us to practice one of Garifuna’s most challenging phonetic features for native English speakers: its middle high consonant. The word *Nübi*, pronounced [nibi], appears in the beginning of the song. While we found it extremely difficult to master the pronunciation of this vowel, it was nevertheless useful to begin practicing it our first day, and the repetition that singing our song provided helped us to approach a proper pronunciation of the vowel. Finally, translating *Waguchi Bungiu* allowed us to figure out several grammatical concepts that we would have taken far longer to grasp had we not begun with music.

While *Waguchi Bungiu* was helpful as a starting point due to its relative simplicity and catchy tune, the next song we used was far more strategic for learning the grammar. The song consisted of excerpts from Millie Vanillie’s “Girl I’m going to miss you” partially translated into Garifuna. It ran as follows:

“It’s a tragedy for me to see, the dream is over,  
and I never will forget the day we met,  
I’m going to miss you  
*Naluguba buagu, naluguba huagu, naluguba tuagu, naluguba luagu*  
You’re leaving  
*Beibuga, Leibuga, teibuga, heibuga”*

This song was less useful for learning phonology, since so few of the words were Garifuna. However, it was instrumental in teaching us about the Garifuna syntax. Garifuna assigns prefixes to verbs based on the subject of the verb. For example, *neibuga* means “I am leaving/going”, while *beibuga* means “you are leaving/going”. The song does not simply translate certain lines into Garifuna, however. For example, “you’re leaving” is translated literally first, into *beibuga*. However, after the initial translation, the song continues to inflect on the verb for different subjects; i.e. *teibuga*, *leibuga*, and *heibuga*, meaning she, he, and they are leaving respectively. This partial translation is designed both to teach students new vocabulary words (*eibuga* especially is an extremely common word), and to introduce the concept of prefixes, rather than suffixes, being used to conjugate the verb. The song introduces most of the inflectional prefixes and prompts the student to practice them. As observed earlier with *Waguchi Bungiu*, “Girl I’m Going to Miss You” teaches vital Garifuna concepts through easy repetition.

The final song we examined closely in class, *Natural Soup*, was less helpful for us to learn grammatical concepts than the other songs. Due to its length and complexity, we were unable to fully memorize it, and much of its syntax proved to be a challenge. However, singing it provided us with practice in speaking the language, and it was extremely helpful for practicing the prosody (the patterns of stress and intonation, or rhythm) of the language on a large scale. Most of the Garifuna which we could produce was limited to short utterances. For example, we might be able to greet someone with *Buiti rabanweyu*, meaning “good afternoon”, and inquire after their health with *ida biña*, but that was the extent of our utterances. We had very little feel for how it was supposed to sound in larger phrases. Singing *Natural Soup* gave us some of this much-needed practice. Here is the text of the song in full, translated into English:

“Aba lachülürun merigain  
*The American arrives*  
 Hagairun nege Garinagu  
*at the Garifuna village*  
 Aba lariñagun merigain  
*The American says*  
 I am hungry, la madinah  
*I am hungry, I am hungry*  
 Aba tiabin nofuri  
*The Aunt comes*  
 Aba tadugun supu lun  
*to make him a soup*  
 Biguatuguya cebuya  
*she cuts up some onions*  
 biguatugya udurau  
*she cuts up some fishes*  
 biguatuguya wadabu  
*she cuts up some conch*  
 Aba lariñagun merigain  
*the American says*  
 tau taruma la nigi  
*with a clean heart*  
 Natural soup, tubamuge supu le  
*natural soup, throw that soup away*  
 aital supu, tubamuge supule  
*Idolized soup, throw that soup away*  
 abidiyetitia tumututu  
*this lady didn't know*  
 larigegugan la neke merigain  
*that the American was saying*  
 seme la nege supu le  
*about her soup*  
 Buidu la nege ti lasusun  
*that her soup was good*

Natural soup, tubamuge supu le  
*natural soup, throw that soup away*  
aital supu, tubamuge supule  
*Idolized soup, throw that soup away*”

The main conflict and hook of the song has to do with an intercultural misunderstanding. An American, called *Merengue*, is in fact complimenting the soup, but the English words he used, “natural soup” sounds like he is saying, “throw that soup away” in Garifuna. The song revealed the humor brought from the frequent language-based and cultural misunderstandings between Garifuna- and English-speakers during social interactions.

One line was particularly instructive as to the nature of Garifuna prosody. *Larigegugan la neke merigain* is a particularly difficult line to sing because eleven syllables must fit into four beats of music. This would sound ridiculous in English music, but it is entirely permissible in Garifuna. In this way, the songs that we learned in class taught us a great deal about the Garifuna language. *Waguchi Bungi* taught us about the sounds, “I’m Going to Miss You” taught us about grammar, and *Natural Soup* helped us practice our speaking.

## Conclusions

The use of music is vital to teach Garifuna as a second language. In Punta Gorda, it is used as a teaching aid in both classrooms for Garifuna children and foreign university students. Music is intimately tied to the Garifuna culture. It is used extensively in their system of ancestor worship, especially during the *dügü* ritual of ancestor pacification. Garifuna songs are also used as a means of preserving and propagating Garifuna culture, both in the original forms of *punta*, *paranda*, *fedu*, and in new inventions such as punta rock. Due to its cultural significance, any class of Garifuna which aims to preserve the culture, as do the classes in Punta Gorda, would be incomplete without the use of Garifuna songs. In addition to their cultural uses, Garifuna songs are extremely valuable tools for teaching linguistic concepts. The prosody, phonetics, syntax, and vocabulary of Garifuna can all be easily taught through Garifuna music, since repetition through music is easier than simple rote memorization. The ease with which music teaches linguistic concepts, and its primacy in Garifuna culture, account for the frequency of music in Garifuna pedagogy in Punta Gorda, Roatán.

## Glossary of Garifuna Terms

Buiti achülüruni – welcome  
Buiti binafti – good morning  
Buiti guyon – good evening  
Buiti rabanweyu – good afternoon  
Buyei – Shaman  
Dügü – a ceremony central to Garifuna ancestor worship  
Fedu – traditional type of Garifuna song  
Ida biña – how are things; how are you doing  
Paranda – a traditional Garifuna dance  
Punta – a traditional Garifuna dance  
Uwa digyati – alright; not bad; traditional response to *ida biña*



Kriol girls in St. Helene



Miskitu young men outside of Moravian church, Las Fuertes



Cayos Cochinos





Garifuna family at night, Bunta Gora



Landscape overlooking Punta Gorda



A cruise ship at the Port of Roatan



Spanish-speaking Ladino Oscar Acosta of Sandy Bay



English-speaking Islander Mr. Eberet of Jonesville



A Miskitu neighborhood in Punta Caliente Oakridge

## Chapter Four

### “Top Siders Is a Big Man Thing”: An Analysis of Roatán English

Jaime Fabricio Mejía Mayorga

This paper presents an artifact analysis of Roatán English, a variety of English spoken in the largest Bay Island of Honduras. I analyzed Jhaytea’s song “Top Siders” following the framework utilized by Galloway and Rose (2015) when discussing World Englishes. This analysis, though brief, presents a linguistic and sociolinguistic interpretation of such artifact. In a nutshell, the song tell us about how top siders (boat shoes such as the ones from the Sperry brand) have a specific meaning for the Roatán community, as it is a clothing item that represents the lifestyle of the island and the identity of an islander. The website <https://tinyurl.com/roatanenglish> presents a slightly different analysis. This paper is a shorter version of it.<sup>8</sup>

#### Top Siders Is a Big Man Thing

Hey Real Roatanians  
We don't wear Pumas  
Nor parades  
Straight topsider, Perry Ellis  
Lemme show dem how we do it

Top Siders is a big man ting  
Yeah. Top Siders go with any ting  
Aiy Top Sider short khaki  
Button shirt, it got me looking like kirby (courtesy)  
We wear dem to church  
And we wear them to party



Top Siders, a song by Jhaytea

In da Top Sider  
Ee fuck enough shawty-(girls)

In a da club like tv  
them a watch me  
them a take picture  
like them some paparazzi

Top Siders is what the big man's rockin  
I'll let my shoes do da talkin

refrain 2x

<sup>8</sup> I analyzed this artifact as part of an assignment for a course I was taking during Fall 2019 on Global Englishes and University of Arizona. I would like to thank the wonderful people of Roatán. Thanks for showing me how to live!

Dey got the black, blue, green, brown  
Top Siders around da town  
Everyone dey want fe buy one  
Like the devils mud stove  
now topsider them hot,  
number one pon the billboard chart  
Every ghetto, every town, every block  
topsider poppin down

Aiy Top Sider, short,  
khaki Button shirt  
it got me looking like kirby  
We wear dem to church  
And we wear them to party  
In da Top Sider  
Ee fuck enough shawty-(girls)

In a da club like tv  
them a watch me  
them a take picture  
like them some paparazzi

You can take your Pumas  
and Paraders them back  
Real Roatanien ting  
we no wear that

Top Siders look good with anyting on  
Jeans khaki slacks anyting

Refrain 3xs  
Top Siders is a big man ting  
Yeah Top Siders go with any ting

Top Siders is what the big man's rockin  
I let my shoes do da talkin  
Show em how we do it  
Show em how we livin

(translated by Cristhian Zoniga, Roatán)

Even though I have been exposed to Roatán English before conducting the analysis, I sought help for this translation. I would like to thank Chriss Bennet who helped me translate the song. As someone from Roatán, Chriss was able to grasp the cultural references and the relevance of wearing top siders for the Roatán People. I apologize if we are missing some lyrics or if the translation is not



Julio Bodden, a Kriol Tour guide, in Top Sider shoes

faithful to the original lyrics. More than presenting a correct translation, we hope that the content of this paper does justice in representing the people from Roatán and their unique and wonderful way of seeing and living life.

Wearing top siders is a performance of Islander identity. Both women and men take pride in wearing top siders, as these shoes have a strong cultural value rooted in connection to place, to being born in Roatán, and embracing the Roatán way of being. For some individuals in Roatán, top sider shoes are considered a luxury item, if compared to the flip-flops, which are commonly worn by people in the island. Besides top siders, Columbia fishing shirts are also clothing items that show the Islander way of being.

People who listen to the song “Top Siders” by Jhaytea are mainly residents of the island of Roatán, people in the surrounding areas, such as Utila and Guanaja, the other two Honduran Bay Islands, as well as and La Ceiba and Trujillo, the closest cities on the mainland. Other listeners could be found in Belize and the Cayman Islands, and the places that comprised the former British Honduras (see Galloway and Rose, 2015, Chapters 1 and 4 for a reference on the British-dominated Caribbean region and Caribbean English).

People from these places share a common history. They listen to the song on the radio or at parties. The song's musical genre is dancehall, a commonly found musical genre in the Caribbean. These listeners' shared knowledge is a sort of Caribbean literacy (sailing, Caribbean music, outfits, etc.) of people who live a coastal-Caribbean lifestyle.

## Roatán English

The British Empire controlled and colonized Belize, the Honduran Bay Islands, and La Mosquitia (a region shared by Honduras and Nicaragua where the Miskitu people and other Indigenous people live). Before contact, the Indigenous Paya people lived in the Bay Islands and along the north coast of the Honduran Mosquitia. The Paya retreated inland, after they experienced genocide—they were greatly reduced in number due to Spanish and British colonization, slavery, 'mestizaje', and multilingualism.

In the Honduran Caribbean, English-speaking colonizers dominated and those who did not speak English had to find ways to communicate. English evolved over time and new varieties of English developed. The Bay Islands English (referred to as BIE from now on) in Roatán, Guanaja, and Utila. are considered distinct dialects (see Galloway and Rose, 2015; Graham and Schreier, 2010; Graham, 1997; Quirk, 1990). The song "Top Siders is a Big Man Thing," is an example of Roatán native English. Some of the unique/notable linguistic features of Roatán English in this song/artifact are:

### Phonological Variation:

- If you listen carefully to the words, "thing" and "anything", you will see that the [th] sound (voiceless, interdental, fricative) sounds like [t] (voiceless, alveolar, stop).
- Also, the words "ready" and "party" have a different sound if compared to "standard" English. Instead of [y] at the end, Roatán English users seem to pronounce an [ɛ].
- The word "rocking" also sounds as if [ɛ] was being used when pronouncing the word instead of [i].
- The distinctive prosodic variation in Roatán English is also salient on this artifact/in the song.

### Lexical Variation:

- The word "shawty" is being used. This word is widely used among individuals from communities of the African diaspora in America.
- I argue that "top siders" has a context-specific reference. It showcases alignment to the urban/popular culture in that context. While for other English-speakers, top siders might be just a kind of shoes, for Roatán natives, they represent affiliation to a lifestyle and to a community.
- In the lyrics, the singer refers to a "mud stove" that is an old-fashioned, sometime outdoor, wood-burning stove made of mud.
- "Kirby" is a BIE word that comes from the English word courtesy.

### Grammar-syntactic Variation:

- Roatán English uses the form of the verb 'be' "is" after a noun that is plural. An example of this is: "*Top siders is* a big man thing". Top siders, from a prescriptivist

stance, would have to be followed by the verb 'be' in its form «are» as top siders refer to a third person plural entity.

- “fe” is a rhythmic syllable that is incessantly added between words with no meaning.

Pragmatic Variation:

- The hook of the song is “top siders is a big man thing”. This phrase means that using top siders positions the individual as someone who participates in the life and culture of the island. The phrase could be interpreted as, if you have a pair of top siders, you are a member of the community and you are identifying yourself as one of “us”. I think this is a pragmatic variation, as this phrase can simply be interpreted as top siders being for only men and/or men who are either big in size or age. As the video showcases, men and women from the island appear with their top siders.
- As a pragmatic reference, the song says that top siders can be used to go to church or to go party. In Roatán, as well as in other places in the Caribbean, going to Church is one of the most important activities families engage in. They go to Church every weekend and even during the week. As odd as it might sound, the lifestyle of an islander can include both activities: going to church in a religious manner and going to party—probably in a religious manner, too!

Additional thoughts on variation and use:

Following Galloway and Rose (2015) framework, Roatán English as a variety of BIE could be considered “native” and a “new” variety because it is spoken by people “native” to the Caribbean. When comparing Roatán English to other varieties of English, it has similarities to Scottish English in that it uses the form “is” of the verb ‘be’ even if the subject or noun before it is a third person plural subject/noun.

Currently, Roatán English is spoken widely: islanders use it in everyday interactions and for all activities, even though their school education is either in Spanish or in standard English, and mirrors US curricula. Islanders working in the tourism industry use standard English with visitors, yet continue to speak BIE between themselves. Their language continuously comes up in conversation with tourists, who find BIE fascinating and a notable cultural trait. The islanders take pride in their unique language, which the tourists cannot readily understand.

## Conclusions

Jhaytea’s catchy tune, “Top Siders Is A Big Man Thing,” is a clear example of Roatán English used for artistic and creative purposes. The song also has an interpersonal function of signifying and building individual and collective identity as People from Roatán, as it is a symbol of community and it promotes a sense of belonging. Others commented that the song has had a positive impact on the Roatán community, even on the children. They felt the song described and represented a way of being, knowing, and doing that is specific to the people living in that place. This showcases ownership of the language and the intimate relationship between language and a lifestyle (Baugh, 2016); it shows the Roatán way of thinking, doing, and being.



# Clases Gratis! IDIOMAS

Presentado por la  
Universidad de Kansas



## CLASES DE **MISKITO**

Instructor: LaToya Hinton  
Dia: Lunes - Viernes  
Hora- 2:00pm - 4:00pm

## CLASES DE **GARIFUNA**

Instructor: Alfred Arzu  
Dia: Lunes - Viernes  
Hora- 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Lugar: Flamingo Cultural Center  
Punta Gorda  
Fecha: 8 Julio - 26 Julio



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## Chapter Five

### The Challenges of Teaching Miskitu and Garifuna in Roatán

LaToya Hinton and Laura Hobson Herlihy

As a University of Arizona graduate student, LaToya was awarded two FLAS grants (2013 and 2014) to participate in the KU Miskitu language program in the Caribbean port town of Puerto Cabezas-Bilwi, Nicaragua. She then served as the KU Miskitu program's TA in Bilwi in 2015. LaToya continued to learn and study the Nicaraguan Miskitu dialect in Bilwi during her doctoral research that focused on language ideology on the Nicaraguan Caribbean coast. Four years later, in 2019, just after defending her dissertation, LaToya became the TA for the KU Miskitu language program in Roatán, Honduras. While teaching and working with Miskitu language assistants in Roatán, she was exposed to the Honduran Miskitu variant.

#### Language Variation in Miskitu: Honduras vs. Nicaragua

Linguists have commonly distinguished three variants of Miskitu—Mam is spoken in Honduras; Wangki, along the Wangki or Coco river; and Sal Uplika or Tawira, along the Nicaraguan coast. However, some linguists believe there were as many as five or six variants (personal communication, 2016, Ruth Rouvier.) Miskitu variants were mutually intelligible with minor differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

One of the main differences between Honduran and Nicaraguan Miskitu variants is that Honduran Miskitu borrows lexical items more from Spanish, while Nicaraguan Miskitu loan words come from English, especially verbs. More English influence affects the Nicaraguan dialect due to demographic, religious, economic,<sup>9</sup> and political reasons. A much larger Kriol English-speaking population lives along the Nicaraguan Caribbean coast than in the Honduran Muskitia; Moravian missionary schools here teach in both Miskitu and English; more U.S. extractive fruit and hardwood companies were present in the port towns of Bilwi and Bluefields; and the Nicaraguan Miskitu, Sumu (Mayangna, Twahka, and Ulwa) and Kriol people in the 1980s fought for and were awarded two politically autonomous regions. The Honduran Muskitia was much more easily colonized by the Spanish-speaking nation-state than the Nicaraguan Caribbean coast.

This Honduran 'Spanish' versus Nicaraguan 'English' linguistic-borrowing variation is revealed in basic numbers and dates. Spanish count numbers in Honduran Miskitu were *seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez, once, doce*, etc., while Kriol English count nouns commonly used in Nicaragua are *siks, sebm, ait, nain, tin, libm, twilb*, etc.<sup>10</sup> Regarding dates, Honduran Miskitu-speakers say "*Dos mil diez y nueve*," when Nicaraguans say "*Twinti naintiin*" for the year 2019.

Although more English loan words are prevalent in Nicaraguan Miskitu, one significant anomaly occurs in Honduras. The traditional Miskitu terms "*Titan Yamni*" and "*Tihmia Yamni*" are used to say

<sup>9</sup> In Nicaragua, a Miskitu helping or auxiliary verb, that means "to do" or "to make" follows an English root verb, such as *marit takaia, ilp munaia, len takaia, wark daukaia*, meaning to get married, to help, to learn, and to work.

<sup>10</sup> In both countries, more traditional Miskitu numbers are still used for numbers 1 through 4—*kumi* (one), *wal* (two), *yumhpa* (three), and *wahl wal* (four)—and sometimes 5 and 6—*matsip* (five) and *matlalkabbi* (six). Honduran and Nicaraguan elders still recalled and sometimes used older forms of Miskitu for higher numbers, such as *matawalsip pura yuhmpa* for thirteen.



Miskitu language assistants,  
Opni Ferrera and Johana Curbello

“Good Morning” and “Good Night” in Nicaragua, where the Kriol English terms “*Manin*” and “*Gutnait*” are used in Honduras. Yet, returning to the dominant pattern, Nicaraguan Miskitu uses the Kriol English term *dinar* for the big mid-day meal, which is all but absent in Honduras.

One of the main markers of Honduran Miskitu-speakers is the ‘to be’ verb (*kaia*) spoken in the past tense. For “I was,” “you were,” “he/she was,” Honduras used *kari*, *karam*, *kan*, while most Nicaraguans alternatively use *kapri*, *kapram*, *kan*. Nicaraguans often call Hondurans “*kari uplika*” (the Kari people), due to this commonly spoken verb tense in their conversations.

Nicaraguans also call the Honduran Miskitu and their dialect “*winik*.” *Winik* seems to be a combination of the Miskitu past tense of the verb *wiaia* (to say), which is *win*, and *-ik*, a Honduran Miskitu suffix. Differing from Nicaragua, where the suffix *-iki* is added to many kinship terms in the first-person possessive form, such as *Mamiki* (my mother), *Papiki* (my father), or *Antiki* (my aunt); *-iki* is shortened to *-ik* in Honduras and the following forms are used instead—*Mamik*, *Papik*; *Antik*.<sup>11</sup> *Winik*, then, refers to the Honduran Miskitu propensity to end first-person possessives with *-ik*. This practice goes beyond kinship terms and more broadly characterized possessive noun forms in Honduras.

We observed many slight vocabulary differences between Honduran and Nicaraguan Miskitu. Just a few examples were the following. ‘Sky’ in Honduras was “*ebin*,” while “*kasbrika*” meant ‘cloud.’ In Nicaragua, however, “*kasbrika*” was used to mean ‘sky.’ The word for knife was *kisura* in Honduras but *kiru* in Nicaragua. *Wanina* meant jealous in Honduras,<sup>12</sup> but *tawan lawaia* was used in Nicaragua. In general, Nicaraguans viewed Hondurans as using vulgar Miskitu terms, which were not thought of as vulgar in Honduras. For example, the word *slakni* meant loose or relaxed in Honduras, but was imbued with sexual connotations in Nicaragua.

### **Additional Observations on Roatán Miskitu Language:**

In Roatán, the younger generation are losing Miskitu to Spanish and English, the languages taught in public schools and needed for employment, especially in the tourism industry. As stated by Herlihy in Chapter One, Miskitu is now being lost by the Miskitu people in Roatán. Younger generations increasingly speak Spanish and Kriol English, and bilingual education in Miskitu is not offered by state schools in Roatán.

- Roatán Younger Language Assistants’ Miskitu Dialect Possesses a High Level of Spanish Borrowings.

<sup>11</sup> Kikalmuk was used instead of Muihki almuk for oldest sister. Masalmuk instead of Maisa Almuk.

<sup>12</sup> a shortening of *wan nina lawaia* (to get mad behind someone’s back).

- Most Miskitu speakers on Roatán are at least bilinguals in Spanish and Miskitu, so the variation in Miskitu reflects the speaker base.
- Roatán Elder Language Assistants' Miskitu Possesses a High Level of Original Terminology.
  - 1) For example, all months of the year (with the exception of Krismis Kati) taught by Elder Language Assistants were in Miskitu rather than in Kriol English or Spanish. This generational shift occurred in both Honduras and Nicaragua, with the youth mainly using Spanish vocabulary for months of the year.

### Teaching Garifuna in Roatán:

LaToya have more experience learning and teaching Miskitu, but she assisted Garifuna teacher Alfred Arzu to teach Garifuna to KU students for five weeks. Due to her limited exposure to the Garifuna language, she offers the following observations:

#### Language Variation in Garifuna:

- Garifuna speakers are highly multilingual (Spanish, English, Garifuna)
- The Garifuna language reflects this multilingualism (there are many borrowings from Spanish and English)
- The Garifuna have bi-lingual education in Punta Gorda

#### Numbers

Aban – 1  
 Biama – 2  
 Ürüwa – 3  
 Gadürü – 4  
 Seingü – 5  
 Sisi – 6  
 Sedü – 7  
 Widü – 8  
 Nefü – 9  
 Disi – 10

#### French Numbers

5 – cinque  
 6 – sis  
 7 – sed  
 8 – ouid  
 9 – nief  
 10 – diz

#### French Influence

Faransu - francés  
 Aransu – orange  
 Dimasu – Dimanche (Sunday, etc.)

Diwein – du vin – vino  
 Fedu – fête  
 Lendí – Monday, all days of week  
 Samudi – Samedi (Saturday)  
 Tú mari – her/your? husband  
 Catoúrusu – 14, most numbers  
     – see numbers 5 and above  
 Glise – iglesia  
 Simisi – shirt

#### English Influence

Animalu – animal  
 Buíduti – beautiful;  
 Chapu – shop  
 Dábula – table  
 Fuláru – flour  
 Garu – got to  
 Keimon – come on; vámonos  
     in Spanish  
 Kopu – cup  
 Posu – purse  
 Sódini – suddenly  
 Sugara – sugar  
 Wachi – watch  
 Welu – well

#### Spanish Influence

Ayó – adios  
 Chikule – chicle  
 Furuda – fruta  
 Gayu – gallo (ariran -old Garifuna)  
 Gárada – carta  
 Liburu – libro  
 Peru – pero  
 Sabadu – zapato  
 Sagadi – zacate  
 Tarangilu – tranquilo  
 Turonja – toronja (charigi – old Garifuna)  
 Gabayu – caballo  
 Durudiya – tortilla  
 Sigaru – cigarro  
 Lápisi – lápiz  
 Leskuela – escuela

- Many Garifuna speakers on Roatán request French Language Instruction
  - 1) The Garifuna language has a high level of French borrowings (the number system can be used as an example of this)
  - 2) A strong history of collaboration with the French has endured over a few hundred years

**Language Ideologies in Pluricultural Roatán:**

- A Linguistic Hierarchy exists on Roatán—with all of the languages spoken on the island—similar to other parts of *La Mosquitia* (Puerto Cabezas-Bilwi, Nicaragua): English and Spanish are ranked above the indigenous and Afro-indigenous languages.
- Island English versus Standard English: The Roatán tourism industry demands Standard English proficiency but many local residents speak their own variant of Island English with family and friends.
- Roatán teachers provide Spanish and Standard English instruction in Public Schools
- Miskitu is not taught in public schools on Roatán and, as a consequence, parents express some insecurity about speaking Miskitu with their children.
  - 1) Mr. Alfred Arzu (English/Garifuna/Chemistry instructor) explained that many Miskitu students speak English as a third language well.
- Unlike Miskitu, Garifuna is taught in schools in Punta Gorda as part of the bilingual intercultural education model.



A KU Miskitu class in Sandy Bay.

## Chapter Six

### A Travelers' Guide to Roatán Languages

Laura Hobson Herlihy

The following guide is designed to help an English-speaking traveler to have a conversation in the four languages of Roatan—Garifuna, Miskitu, Island English, and Spanish. The lexical items are translated from standard English in that order, to Garifuna, Miskitu, Island English, and Spanish, as modeled in the first entry. Some Garifuna entries have two forms, marked by gender, and are indicated by the letters “f” (feminine) and “m” (masculine).

<b>Welcome</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
Buiti achülüruni!	(Garifuna)	Ayi (f), Aye (m.)	paat apu
		Awu	blessing
			de nada
Yamni balram!	(Miskitu)	yea man	
Welcome in!	(Island English)	Sí	<b>Forgive/Pardon me</b>
			Feruduna
Bienvenidos!	(Spanish)	<b>No</b>	Ikskyus ai muns
		Nu	ah sorry for that na
		Apia	perdóname
<b>Good morning</b>			
Buiti binafi	(G.)	na man	
Titan yamni	(M.)	No	<b>What's your name?</b>
Gamawnen	(I.E.)		Kabir? Ka briri bei?
Buenos días	(S.)	<b>Please</b>	Ninam dia?
		fulese	wha you name is bra?
		pliskam pali	Cómo te llamas?
<b>Good afternoon</b>		please na	
Buiti rabanweiyu		por favor	
Tutni yamni			<b>My name is Barbara</b>
Gudnevin		<b>Thank you</b>	Barbara niri
Buenas tardes		sereme	Yang nini Barbara sa
		tinhki pali	Barbara me name dey
		you welcome	Me llama Barbara
		gracias	
<b>Good evening</b>			<b>Her name is Laura</b>
Buiti guñyon		<b>Thank you a lot</b>	Laura liri
Tihmia yamni		sereme buidu	Witin nina Laura
Gud night		uba tinhki/tinhki pali	Ha name Laura
Buenas noches		yuh bettah count yuh blessins	Ella se llama Laura
		muchísimas gracias	
<b>Goodbye</b>			<b>How Are You?</b>
Ayó		<b>You're welcome</b>	Idabiña?
Aisabe		nikatale	Nahki sma?
Lattah			Wha go on pale???
Adiós			Cómo estás?

**I am good**

Buiduti/Buitina  
 Yang pain sna  
 ah doin gud man  
 Estoy bien

**I am fine**

Uwa digiyat  
 Yang pain sna  
 Boy ai chillen na  
 Estoy bien

**I am good**

Magadientina  
 Yang yamni sna  
 right here catching while you  
     calling; it good time  
 estoy tranquilo

**And you?**

Agi buguya?  
 Manka?  
 Wha bout you?  
 Y vos? Y tu?

**I'm good too**

Abale  
 Yang sin pain sna  
 I'm straight naa  
 Estoy bien

**Let's go!**

Kai ma! (f.)/ Kai mo! (m.)  
 Kaisa/Kaya wap!  
 Leggo then!  
 Vámonos!

**Where are you going?**

Halia bei ba?  
 Anira auma?  
 Which pat yuh goin?  
 Dónde vas?

**Where are you all going?**

Haliun badi bu?  
 Man nani anira auma?

Which way enna going bra?  
 A donde van?

**Where are you coming from?**

Haligia biyabin?  
 Ani winah aulma?  
 Wey the ras you coming from?  
 De dónde viene?

**Where are you?**

Halia ya díbu?  
 Anira sma?  
 Which part you is?  
 Dónde estás?

**I am in the Flamingo Center**

Hanáhaya Flamingoru  
 Yang Centro Flaminko ra sna  
 I Flamingo now  
 Estoy en el Centro Flamenco

**Where are you from?**

Halia na buguya?  
 Ani winah sma?  
 So from which pat yuh from?  
 De dónde eres?

**I am from Guatemala**

Wadimaluna nuguya (f.);  
     Wadimaluna au (m.)  
 Wuatemala winah sna  
 I'm a Guatamantaken  
 Yo soy de Guatemala

**I am from the U.S.**

Merigana nuguya  
 Tech winah sna  
 I am from the States bra  
 Yo soy de los Estados Unidos

**I am from New Orleans**

Nu Orlians giñe niñbi  
 Yang Norliyans winah sna

I from up yanda  
 Yo soy de Nueva Orlans

**What are you doing in Punta Gorda?**

Kasa badugubei ya Punta Gorda?  
 Dia daukisma ba Punta Gorda ra?  
 Wha yuh doing up ya tho?  
 Qué haces en Punta Gorda?

**Where do you live?**

Haligia baredera? Halia baredera?  
 Anira iwisma?  
 Where you like live? Which  
     part yuh house is?  
 ?Dónde vives?

**How old are you?**

Átiri irumu bau?  
 Mani an brisma?  
 How old you is?  
 Cuántos anos tienes?

**I am \_\_\_\_ years old**

\_\_\_\_ irumu nau  
 Yang \_\_\_\_ mani brisna  
 I'm \_\_\_\_ na bra  
 Tengo \_\_\_\_ años

**Do you want to have beer?**

Uba jaba jabuhnuhu?  
 Bir kum din mai dauksa?  
 You wan one coley?  
 ¿Quieres tomar una cerveza?

**How much does it cost?/****How much is it?**

Ati tuago (f.) Atiri luago (m.)  
 Nahki prais?  
 wha yuh say it fa?/ How much  
     that fa bra  
 Cuánto cuesta?

**Money**

Seinsu  
 Lahla  
 Kiash, paipeh, buyuyu  
 Dinero, plata

**To be broke**

ubati seinsu  
lahla apu  
out of kiash/I don't have no  
buyuyu  
no hay dinero

**See you tomorrow!**

Darí harúga  
Yauka wal prawaia!  
Check ya when the chicken  
crow!  
Nos vemos mañana!

**I'll see you tomorrow**

Narihiba dibu haruga  
yauka mai kaikaisna  
we go catch up  
Te veo mañana

**Until tomorrow**

Darí harúgula  
yauhka kat  
catch you dereckly  
hasta mañana

**Ethnic Terms of Reference:****Garifuna**

Karibe Wuritiñu  
Karibi  
Karab; 36  
Caribe negros, morenos

**Miskitu**

Idudu  
Miskitu  
Waika  
Mosquitos

**Kriol**

Giuu

Kriul  
Kriol?  
Negros/Isleños/Ingleses

**White Islander**

Ubouhuna? – Isleño?  
Musti nani  
Wagay  
Caracol

**Indios/Ladinos/Mestizos**

Muladdu?  
Ispail  
Spaniard  
Español or ladino/indio

**North American**

Merengue/Anagüna  
Miriki  
Yankee?  
Gringo/a

**Additional Notes on the Garifuna and Miskitu Languages****Grammar****Word Order**

Garifuna – VSO (verb-subject-object)

Miskitu – SOV

**Garifuna (singular) – Garinagu (plural)**

Ida biña – how are you?  
Ida niña – how am I?  
Ida waña – how are we?

Ida haña – how are they?  
Ida liña – how is he?  
Ida tiña – how is she?

Nafuri ida biña – how are you Aunti?  
Numada ida biña? – how are you my friend?

**Miskitu – Miskitu nani**

Nahki sma?  
Nahki sna?  
Yang nani nahki sna?/  
Yawan nahki sa? \*inclusive we  
Witin nani nahki sa?  
Nahki sa?  
Nahki sa?

Anti, nahki sma?  
Painika, nahki sma?

## Woman and Man

Würi dinguti – Blue Woman (m.)  
Wügüri avbana – Green Man (f.)

Hiñaru – mujer (f.)  
Würi – mujer (m.)  
Wügüri – man (f.)  
Eyeri – man (m.?)  
Hiñaruña – mujeres (f.)  
Würiña – mujeres (m.)  
Wügüriña – men (f.)  
Eyeriña – men (m.)

## Time

Wurínauga – yesterday – (also Wurinega)  
Uguña – today  
Haruga – tomorrow  
Binafe – morning  
Rabanweiyu – afternoon  
Gunyon – evening

## Question Words

Katun – who (f.)?  
Katai – who (m.)?  
Idaba – when?  
Halia – where?  
Atiri – How much? Ati – (f.)  
Ka – What? Which? Ka sa?  
Ida – How?  
Ka me – for what? Why?  
Ka nagu – why?  
Ka uma – with whom?

Mairin blu  
Waikna sangni

Mairin.  
Mairin.  
Waikna.  
Waikna.  
Mairin nani.  
Mairin nani.  
Waikna nani.  
Waikna nani.

Nawahla.  
Naiwra.  
Yauka.  
Titan.  
Tutni.  
Tihmia.

Ya?  
Ya?  
Ahkia?  
Anira?  
An? Nahki prais?  
Anik?  
Nahki?  
Dia muni?  
Dia muni?  
Ya wal?



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*The Peoples and Languages of Roatán* is a compilation of writings by Herlihy and the undergraduate and graduate students participating in the University of Kansas Summer 2019 Indigenous Miskitu Language Program in Roatán, Honduras. The KU group lived mainly in Punta Gorda, an Afro-indigenous Garifuna community, who speak their own language. Herlihy and students (undergraduates Ben Gotto and Mathew Reinhold; and graduate students LaToya Hinton and Jaime Mejía Mayorga) wrote chapters about the diverse peoples and languages they interacted with in Roatán, including the Miskitu, Garifuna, Bay Island English-speaking Kriols, and Spanish-speaking Ladinos (mestizos). A special focus is given to the use of language in inter-ethnic relations and pedagogy. The book also includes maps, pictures, and a practical traveler's guide with common expressions used by the four major linguistic groups of Roatán.

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