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CARIBBEAN ENGLISH Short form CarE. A general term for the English language (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/english) as used in the Caribbean archipelago and circum-Caribbean mainland. In a narrow sense, it covers English alone; in a broad sense, it covers English and CREOLE (/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/people/creoles#1O29CREOLE). The term is often imprecise, however, because of: (1) A long-standing popular classification of varieties of Creole as dialects of English, sometimes called *creole dialects* and *patois*. (2) The existence of a continuum of usage between English and Creole. (3) The use by scholars of the term *English* to cover both, as in the Dictionary of Jamaican English (1967, 1980) and the Dictionary of Bahamian English (1982). In order of decreasing specificity, the term embraces: (1) Regionally accented varieties of the standard language: standard JAMAICAN ENGLISH (/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jamaican-english). (2) Localized forms of English: Barbadian English. (3) Mesolects between English and Creole, as found in most communities. (4) Kinds of English used in countries where SPANISH (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/spanish#1O29SPANISH) is official or dominant, such as the Dominican Republic (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/dominican-republic), Nicaragua (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/nicaragua-political-geography/nicaragua), and PUERTO RICO (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/puerto-rico#1O29PUERTORICO). (5) Varieties of English-based Creole: CREOLESE (/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/people/creoles#1O29CREOLE) in Guyana (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/south-american-political-geography/guyana), JAMAICAN CREOLE (/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jamaican-creole), SRANAN (/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/sranan) in Surinam.

Standard English

Although English is the official language of the Commonwealth Caribbean, only a small proportion of the nationals of each country speaks regionally accented standard English as a native language. Many, however, acquire it through schooling and taking part in activities in which its use is common and accepted. For such people, standard English is the register of formal communication, complemented by vernacular usage for other purposes. Conservative varieties of regional English have BrE as their reference norm, especially for writing and print, but the influence of the US mass media and tourism has made AmE a powerful alternative. Equally influential has been the attainment of independence by most regional territories and the national consciousness associated with it.

Localized English

In each country of the Commonwealth Caribbean there is a localized non-standard form of English whose prosodic and phonemic systems differ. In like fashion, vocabulary related to flora, fauna, local phenomena, and sociocultural practices varies from country to country. Such vocabulary is drawn variously from Amerindian languages such as Arawak and Carib, West African languages (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/african) such as Ewe and Yoruba, European languages such as DUTCH (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/dutch-language#1O29DUTCH), FRENCH (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/french#1O29FRENCH), PORTUGUESE (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/portuguese#1O29PORTUGUESE), and Spanish, and, as in TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/trinidad-and-tobago#1O29TRINIDADANDTOBAGO), South Asian languages such as Bhojpuri and Hindi (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/hindi), as well as, predominantly, Creoles based on European lexicons and with African substrates. Differences among CarE varieties are to some extent determined by the nature of the vernaculars with which they come into contact. In addition, three forces (operating in different ways in different countries) affect the degree of standardization of these forms: internationalization, regionalization, and indigenization.

Internationalization.

The acceptability of the norms of BrE depends on sensitivities related to the colonial experience of influential groups in individual countries. Degree of comfort with AmE norms also varies, depending on the perception of the US as a benevolent or malevolent force. At the same time, there is a body of pressure for the unequivocal adoption of an accessible and familiar internationally recognized standard variety as a reference norm.

Regionalization.

Pressures towards regionalization are stimulated by intraregional travel, the spread of regional art forms (especially music), the sharing of a regional university (the U. of the West Indies (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/west-indies)), and the existence of a common examining council for secondary-level certification across the Commonwealth Caribbean. Procedures for marking scripts have exposed teachers to the written work of students in all parts of the region. Starting from 1977, the *Caribbean Examinations Council* (*CXC*) has been replacing the Cambridge Examination Syndicate as the certifying body for secondary education. Scripts are marked collectively by teachers from all parts of the region. The Council's guidelines have been established with significant sensitivity to localized forms of English, helping to modify teachers' perceptions of the acceptability of the forms with which they have become familiar. At the same time as they have recognized that no localized form merits greater respect than another, teachers have grown conscious of characteristics of English shared throughout the region. As a result, they have become more receptive to the idea of standards other than BrE and AmE.

Indigenization.

Between 1962 and the early 1980s, most of the British Caribbean colonies became independent. This change has been associated with changes in the evaluation of local culture and institutions, including reassessment of Creole and other local speech forms. Positive evaluation of the vernaculars affects opinions about standardizing localized forms of English, and about the distinctness or 'purity' of a vernacular and

the extent to which it should be preserved. It also increases the acceptability of code-switching and bidialectal expression, decreasing sensitivity to the limits of each variety. Generally, the result has been increasing indigenization of the localized form of English.

Mesolects

A *mesolectal* or *intermediate* variety is a form of speech lying between a localized English and a local Creole, arising from prolonged coexistence and the uneven penetration of English over several centuries of colonization. Such varieties are characterized by variation in the forms and structures used by the same speaker at different times and by different speakers on particular occasions. For example, in Trinidadian vernacular usage, the existential expression *it have* is equivalent to English *there is/are*, as in *It have plenty people in the park*. In the intermediate varieties of Trinidad, however, *they have* is used with the same meaning as both *it have* and *there is/are*, as in *They have plenty people in the park*. All three usages may occur in the speech of the same speaker depending on the level of formality or casualness of the context, or any one may be the preferred variant of different speakers.

English and Spanish

The term *Caribbean English* is also applied to varieties in the Latin countries of the region. There are two broad categories: (1) 'Foreigner' varieties, produced by people for whom Spanish is the primary language. This is especially the case in Puerto Rico (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/puerto-rico), which, because of its close ties to the US, has AmE as the second language of the island. (2) Speakers of Creole in Colombia (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/south-american-political-geography/colombia), Costa Rica (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/costa-rican-political-geography/costa-rica), the Dominican Republic (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/dominican-republic), Honduras (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/honduran-political-geography/honduras), Nicaragua, and Panama (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/panama-political-geography/panama), whose language is deemed English by opposition to Spanish rather than by congruence with English in its strict sense.

Creole

The final sense in which the term *Caribbean English* is used refers to the related English-based range of creoles throughout the region. These vernaculars are often referred to as variations of one form: CARIBBEAN ENGLISH CREOLE (/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/caribbean-english-creole). They have traditionally been regarded as dialects of English, but are increasingly considered by scholars to be languages (*creoles*) or a single language with various forms (*Creole*) in their own right. There are close historical and linguistic links between the situation in and around the Commonwealth Caribbean and the PIDGINS (/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/pidgin#1O29PIDGIN) and creoles of West Africa.

Pronunciation

(1) The varieties of JAMAICA (/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jamaican-creole), BARBADOS (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/barbados#1O29BARBADOS), and GUYANA (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/south-american-political-geography/guyana#1O29GUYANA) are rhotic; the varieties of the BAHAMAS

(/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/latin-american-and-caribbean-physical-geography/abaco-and-cays#1O29BAHAMASThe), BELIZE (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/belize-political-geography/belize#1O29BELIZE), Trinidad and Tobago (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/trinidad-and-tobago), and the lesser Antilles are non-rhotic. (2) Rhythm tends to be syllable-timed. (3) There are fewer diphthongs than in RP: the distinction /iə/ versus /ɛə/ is neutralized in most varieties, so that *beer/bare*, *fear/fare* share the same vowels; in most acrolects, the equivalent of RP /eɪ/ in *face* is /e/, but in Jamaican and the varieties of the Leeward Islands (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/leeward-islands) it is /ie/; the vowel in such words as *goat* is generally /o/, but in Jamaican is /ʊo/. (4) Final consonant clusters tend to be reduced in all but the most careful speech, as in 'han' for *hand*. (5) There is a preference for a clear /l/ in such words as *milk*, *fill*, rather than the dark /l/ of RP.

Grammar

The syntax of CarE approximates fairly closely to general mainstream English. Special features include: (1) *Would and could* are common where BrE has *will* and *can*: *I could swim* I can swim; *I would do it tomorrow* I will do it tomorrow. (2) Where BrE has a simple past there is often a past historic: *The committee had decided* The committee decided. (3) *Yes-no* questions with a declarative word order and rising intonation are much commoner than the inversion of auxiliary and subject: *You are coming?* Are you coming?

Vocabulary

Regional usages include: (1) Local senses of general words: (Trinidad) *fatigue*, as used in to *give someone fatigue* to tease or taunt someone with a mixture of half-truths and imaginative fabrications; (general, as a noun) *galvanise* corrugated metal sheeting coated with zinc and used as roofing or fencing material; (Trinidad) *lime* to hang around, loiter without intent, be a casual observer of an event; (Trinidad and elsewhere) *miserable* mischievous; (Jamaica) *tall hair* long hair. (2) Local words: (Trinidad) *catspraddle* to send sprawling with a blow, to fall in an indecorous way; (Trinidad) *jort* a snack; (Trinidad) *touchous* touchy, short-tempered. (3) Loans from French Creole: *lagniappe* (shared with Southern AmE) something extra given by a vendor to a buyer for the sake of goodwill, a bonus; (Trinidad, SAINT LUCIA (/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/saint-lucia#1O29SAINTLUCIA)) *macafouchette* leftovers; (Trinidad) *ramajay* to warble, twitter, make an extravagant display. (4) Loans from local Spanish: (Trinidad, Barbados, and elsewhere) *alpargat*(*a*) a sandal with uppers made of woven rope-like material, canvas, or of intertwined feather thongs; (general) *parang* a term for a number of different musical

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