

# Caribbean English

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# Linguistic Background

- ▶ Number of former colonies – Spanish, French, Dutch, English.
- ▶ From the early 1700s, thousands of people were transported as slaves to the Caribbean, particularly from West Africa.
- ▶ Pidgin languages evolved into creoles (e.g. Jamaican Patois /Patwa/ and Barbadian Creole /Bajan/)
- ▶ Throughout the Caribbean, English is the language of education, although Jamaicans, Barbadians and others are rightly proud of their local patois as an important expression of their cultural identity.

# English-speaking Islands

- ▶ Antigua and Barbuda /æn'ti:g(w)ə -- bɑ:r'bu:də/
- ▶ The Bahamas /bə'hɑ:məz/
- ▶ Barbados /bɑ:r'beɪ.dɒs/
- ▶ Dominica /,dɑ:mɪ'ni:kə/
- ▶ Grenada /grə'neɪdə/, /gri-/, /gren'eɪ-/
- ▶ Jamaica /dʒə'meɪkə/
- ▶ Saint Kitts and Nevis /seɪnt'kɪts-ə-ni:vis/
- ▶ Saint Lucia /seɪnt'lu:siə/
- ▶ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines /seɪnt'vɪntsənt -- ,gren.ə'di:nz/
- ▶ Trinidad and Tobago /,trɪn.ɪdæd-ə-tɒʊ'beɪgɒs/

# Caribbean Phonology I.

Feature	Explanation
TH-stopping	<th> in words such as <i><u>th</u>ink</i> and <i><u>th</u>ree</i> is pronounced using a <t> sound and in words such as <i><u>th</u>is</i> and <i><u>th</u>at</i> using a <d> sound
H-dropping /inconsistent/	initial <h> is deleted in words such as <i><u>h</u>appy</i> and <i><u>h</u>ouse</i>
Consonant cluster reduction	complex strings of consonants are often simplified by deleting the final sound, so that <i>be<u>s</u>t</i> becomes 'bes', <i>re<u>s</u>pect</i> becomes 'respeck' and <i>lan<u>d</u></i> becomes 'lan'
Rhoticity /inconsistent/	the <r> sound is pronounced after a vowel in words like <i>ha<u>r</u>d</i> , <i>co<u>r</u>n</i> and <i>nu<u>r</u>se</i>

# Caribbean Phonology II.

Feature	Explanation
Unreduced vowel in weak syllables	vowels in unstressed syllables are not reduced, so that speakers use a comparatively strong vowel on words such as <i><u>a</u>bout, <u>ba</u>con or <u>arri</u>val</i> and on grammatical function words, such as in the phrases <i>lot <u>o</u>f work, in <u>a</u> few</i>
FACE vowel > /e:/	a similar vowel sound as that used by speakers in Scotland, Wales and the North East of England on words such as <i><u>g</u>ame, <u>tr</u>ay, <u>pl</u>ain, <u>re</u>ign, <u>th</u>ey and <u>gr</u>eat</i>
GOAT vowel > /o:/	a similar vowel sound as that used by speakers in Scotland, Wales and the North East of England on words such as <i><u>h</u>ome, <u>sh</u>ow, <u>bo</u>at and <u>to</u>e</i>
Final /ə/ open	Sounds like /a/ in words such as <i>own<u>e</u>r</i> .

# Caribbean Grammar

Feature	Explanation
Zero indefinite article	the indefinite article, <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> , is occasionally omitted
Zero past tense marker	verbs are left unmarked for tense, although other signals (adverbs of time, such as <i>yesterday</i> , <i>last week</i> etc.) often give linguistic clues about the timing of an event
Zero plural marker	nouns are left unmarked for plurality

# Bob Marley (1945 – 1981)

- ▶ Born in Jamaica
- ▶ Remark:  
Stolen  
Arrival,  
Buffalo  
Heart of Africa
- + h-dropping?  
rhotic?





# File Vault

- ▶ <https://is.muni.cz/auth/of/1421/AJ22093/podzim2012/36115213/>

# Sources

- ▶ Sounds Familiar? Consulted Octobre 21, 2012. Web.  
<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/caribbean/>
- ▶ About.com. Consulted Octobre 20, 2012. Web.  
<http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/pidginterm.htm> and  
<http://grammar.about.com/od/c/g/creole.htm>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION**



# Pidgin Language

- ▶ "At first a **pidgin language** has no native speakers, and is used just for doing business with others with whom one shares the pidgin language and no other. In time, most pidgin languages disappear, as the pidgin-speaking community develops, and one of its established languages becomes widely known and takes over the role of the pidgin as the lingua franca, or language of choice of those who do not share a native language."

(Grover Hudson, *Essential Introductory Linguistics*. Blackwell, 2000)



← BACK

CREOLE →

# Creole

- ▶ Sometimes the pidgin becomes stable and established and comes to be spoken as a mother-tongue by children: the language has then become a **creole**, which quickly develops in complexity and is used in all functional settings. The process of turning a pidgin into a creole is called *creolization*." (Robert Lawrence Trask and Peter Stockwell, *Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2007)

