



Spring 1984

English Interference Loans as a Resource in the Functional Expansion of St. Lucian Creole

Steve Jones
University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/wpel>

 Part of the [Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), and the [Syntax Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jones, S. (1984). English Interference Loans as a Resource in the Functional Expansion of St. Lucian Creole. *1* (1), Retrieved from <https://repository.upenn.edu/wpel/vol1/iss1/3>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <https://repository.upenn.edu/wpel/vol1/iss1/3>
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

English Interference Loans as a Resource in the Functional Expansion of St. Lucian Creole

Abstract

This paper is a study of language contact between French Creole and English on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Although much of the discussion is related to grammatical questions, the implications go beyond issues in descriptive linguistics. The nature of English-Creole contact is an important question for St. Lucian education and social life in general, especially given the increased promotion of Creole as a medium of contact between the St. Lucian government and people, and the possibilities of the future use of Creole as a medium of education and literacy. The study gives some evidence that English-Creole contact in St. Lucia is a phenomenon that may provide one of the mechanisms for the use of St. Lucian Creole (SLC) as an official or literary language, as demonstrated by the speech of St. Lucians in official and literary settings. The first part of the paper outlines the material and social history of the island as it relates to the language situation, particularly to forms of English-Creole contact. The second part reviews some models of language contact phenomena developed by linguists in the past several years, and describes some terminology taken from a study of a socially analogous situation on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica. The third part is a discussion of some material from Creole texts which were recorded in St. Lucia in official or literary settings, and a description of some of the formal aspects of English-Creole contact, specifically English interference loans in Creole discourse. By way of conclusion, the paper discusses problems of language development raised by St. Lucian language planners and educators, as they relate to the phenomena described in the study.

English Interference Loans as a Resource
in the Functional Expansion of St. Lucian Creole

Steve Jones

University of Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of language contact between French Creole and English on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Although much of the discussion is related to grammatical questions, the implications go beyond issues in descriptive linguistics. The nature of English-Creole contact is an important question for St. Lucian education and social life in general, especially given the increased promotion of Creole as a medium of contact between the St. Lucian government and people, and the possibilities of the future use of Creole as a medium of education and literacy. The study gives some evidence that English-Creole contact in St. Lucia is a phenomenon that may provide one of the mechanisms for the use of St. Lucian Creole (SLC) as an official or literary language, as demonstrated by the speech of St. Lucians in official and literary settings. The first part of the paper outlines the material and social history of the island as it relates to the language situation, particularly to forms of English-Creole contact. The second part reviews some models of language contact phenomena developed by linguists in the past several years, and describes some terminology taken from a study of a socially analogous situation on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica. The third part is a discussion of some material from Creole texts which were recorded in St. Lucia in official or literary settings, and a description of some of the formal aspects of English-Creole contact, specifically English interference loans in Creole discourse. By way of conclusion, the paper discusses problems of language development raised by St. Lucian language planners and educators, as they relate to the phenomena described in the study.

1. Social and historical background.¹

St. Lucia is one of the islands in the Windward Island chain in the eastern Caribbean. Like the rest of the smaller islands in the Caribbean, it was first settled by Arawak, and then Carib Indians. In the early seventeenth century, French and English planters based in other parts of the Caribbean began to take notice of St. Lucia, and attempted to establish preliminary agricultural settlements. Military conflicts between the two groups of European settlers, and between the Europeans and the Indians, prevented the creation of permanent settlements until

about 1723. In that year planters, mainly from the French colony of Martinique, took up the cultivation of coffee and cocoa on the island. The bulk of the workers in this early group were slaves taken from western Africa via Martinique, which is fifteen miles north of St. Lucia. Due to the fact that cultivation of St. Lucia's main crops at that time was done on a comparatively small scale, the country did not see a massive influx of linguistically heterogeneous people in its very early history, the French planters being content to bring fairly small numbers of workers from their existing operations in Martinique. For this reason, it is possible that the French Creole spoken in St. Lucia did not arise on the island itself, but was brought by Africans from Martinique, where social conditions for creolization were much more likely to exist.

Although the island officially changed hands between France and Britain several times between 1723 and the 1760's, it was the French planters who maintained control of the plantations themselves during this period, minimizing the influence of English on the island. Sugar, the labor-intensive crop par excellence of the era, was brought to St. Lucia in 1765, by French planters who had been removed by the English from nearby Grenada and St. Vincent. By this time, the majority of the people living in St. Lucia were probably already native Creole speakers. A treaty with France turned the island over to the British in 1803, under whose control the island remained until the 1970's.

English administration of a French Creole-speaking country brought about a social division between the use of English and Creole, which was later re-enforced by the immigration of English-speaking teachers and administrators from Barbados and other English colonies in the West Indies. Until the 1970's, St. Lucian Creole had not been used for literary purposes (other than the publication of catechisms), was not officially used in the public schools, and

had no official status as a language of the country. However, 43% of the population were considered to be Creole monolinguals as late as the 1946 census (compared to roughly 2% English monolinguals), and Creole continues to be the first language of most St. Lucians today.

Some sociolinguistic work on St. Lucia has been done, and the question of St. Lucian language choice and its relation to social-situational factors has been particularly well-documented. The existence of English-Creole situational code switching (i.e., the choice of one code over another in response to social context) is uncontroversial (see especially Lieberman, 1974). Bilingual St. Lucians have strong ideas about the appropriateness of Creole or English for particular social roles, and although these ideas do not always conform to their actual use of one language or another, it is clear that English is preferred as the language of official communication, education, formality in general, and that Creole is preferred as the language of family contact, gregariousness, and informality in general.

Aside from this situational code-switching, at least some St. Lucians seem to practice a limited form of intrasentential code-switching, i.e., the use of structures or items from two codes within a single sentence. This kind of switching, which is the main object of study in this paper, was observed in all six speakers for whom texts are available, and impressionistically was seen to occur as a general pattern among St. Lucian bilinguals.

1.2. Language contact and language development.

Since the 1970's one of the factors affecting the St. Lucian language situation has been a powerful nationalist and social-democratic movement associated with the promotion of Creole as an official language,² as well as a general feeling among some intellectuals that Creole can and should be used for

any of the social purposes for which English had been used until now. As was made plain by the members of the 1979 committee formed to study the development of Creole as a language of education,³ in the face of social pressure to promote Creole, St. Lucians could not wait for the development of their vernacular before they began to apply it to official and literary purposes. They simply began to use it, and the existing practice of code-switching became a resource for them in fitting Creole to new purposes. The Creole texts discussed in this study (recorded in 1979 and 1981) are examples of this phenomenon. They were taken from radio news reports, an interview with the St. Lucian Deputy Prime Minister, two academic lectures on St. Lucian history and literature, and two political meetings. Before proceeding to a discussion of these texts, and what some of their implications are for the future of Creole, the next section will review some models developed for the description of language contact in general.

2. Models of the formal aspects of language contact.

In a report on the speech of Spanish-English Creole bilinguals on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica, Herzfeld (1980) identified several types of Spanish influence on the English Creole of black Costa Ricans. In her study, Herzfeld makes a distinction between two types of loans: "integrated" loans which, despite their historical provenance from Spanish are considered part of the Creole lexicon, and "interference" loans, which are momentary uses of part of the Spanish lexicon itself. The following are examples of interference loans:

1. yu fada kyatch yu - put yu in kana fi tan op castigar yu
your father catch you put you in corner comp. stand (tr.) chastize you
"Your father catches you - stands you in a corner - chastizes you."

2. seben yer ego now ai down bai no regalo fa mi fada.
seven year ago now I don't buy any gift for my father
"I haven't bought a present for my father in seven years."

In these cases Herzfeld implies that the speakers know the Creole word for castigar (chastaiz) and regalo (present), although these Creole words did not "come to mind." In other words, the knowledge of both Creole and Spanish is part of the Creole bilingual's competence, and at least some speakers seem to use items from the Spanish lexicon within otherwise Creole sentences.

Further, Herzfeld identifies more than one category of "interference" loan, dividing them between unadjusted and adjusted, the latter exhibiting some kind of adaptation to Creole morphology. Notice the following two examples:

3. yu confesar -in now.
you confess prog. particle
"You're confessing now."
4. wi trai to foment -eyt it a likl mor
we try to stir up verb marker it a little more
"We tried to stir it up a little more."

These loans are regarded as belonging to the Spanish lexicon of these speakers, although they exhibit adaptations toward the Creole word-formation system.

The distinction between adjusted and unadjusted interference loans is also seen to be useful in the St. Lucian situation, although it seems to be carried further by the differential adaptation of loans to Creole phonology as well as word formation rules. For example, notice the unadapted loans from English in the following Creole sentences:⁴

5. nu vle pwã do twa disizjõ... mun sa pöte adã ['kɔn frɛns] la (5)
we want take several decision people can take into conference DET
"We want to make several decisions... people can take to the conference."
6. sa vle di jo ka sɛvi ['pa wa] adã suf la (1)
that means they prog. particle generate power in sulfur DET
"That means they're generating power from hot springs."

In these two cases, the English interference loans are characterized by phonological features peculiar to English phonology, particularly the presence of word stress on the first syllable. Contrast these examples with English loans which are adapted to Creole phonology, as in the cases below:

7. jo te di ki sɛt lisi se te ã lil [nu 'twa] (3)
they PAST say that St. Lucia be PAST a island neutral
"They said St. Lucia was a neutral island."
8. si nu kwije i kweol pitet nu kaj [di ko lo ni 'ze] ba'j la (3)
if we call it Creole maybe we IRREAL decolonize thing DET
"If we call it Creole maybe we'll decolonize the thing."

In the St. Lucian case, the question of integrated loans is probably best regarded as a historical one, not related to the simultaneous interaction of two discrete linguistic systems. On the other hand, the use of English interference loans in St. Lucian Creole is much more like the usual case of code-switching, in that it appears to obey certain systematic structural constraints. These constraints, which are important in understanding the speech behavior of some St. Lucian bilinguals in formal or official roles, might best be made clear by examining them in the light of recent work on code-switching done by transformational grammarians.

In the past few years there has been a growing literature on the topic of the syntactic constraints on code-switching (Pfaff 1979, Sankoff and Poplack 1980, Woolford 1982, Joshi 1983). This work views language contact from a purely cognitive point of view, that is that code-switching within the boundaries of sentences is controlled by a set of constraints relating solely to the organization and interaction of grammatical systems. It should be understood that the motivation for many of these studies is to develop evidence for competing points of view in controversies within generative grammatical theory, particularly relating to the question of the definition of constituent structures.

Although each of the four syntactic studies mentioned above presents a fairly consistent explanation for some of the structural aspects of code-switching for the data under study, taken as a whole, the ultra-cognitive view of language contact is still a rather contradictory and inconclusive enterprise. In the search for an account of code-switching which describes the phenomenon only in terms of phrase structure rules, constituent structures, or grammatical categories, these authors have not yet arrived at a single, general set of constraints. For instance, Joshi's (1983) Marathi-English data shows that certain categories from an L2 (the "embedded" language in this case) can be switched into L1 ("matrix" language) utterances, but not vice versa. Woolford's (1982) Spanish-English data, on the other hand, shows that items from either language can be switched into utterances in the other language. Some authors propose a more or less ad hoc set of syntactic constraints on switching (Pfaff 1979), while Sankoff and Poplack (1979) suggest that all switching is governed by exactly two general constraints. While it is not the purpose of this paper to go into the details of each of these theories, suffice it to say that a comparative study would show that each of these authors could provide at least some data that contradicts the generalizations made by the others.

The texts in the study were recorded by the investigator under a variety of circumstances. They fall into six groups, according to speaker. Although no systematic study of speakers' competence in any language was made, a few casual observations on that question may be relevant. Group 1 consists of radio news stories broadcast in Creole from the capital city, Castries, in 1979. The news stories dealt with both national and Caribbean-wide events. The news reader reportedly read from notes written beforehand in English. Although the speaker was clearly fluent, it is worth mentioning that one informant made the evaluation that he did not speak "good Creole." Group 2 consists of part of an interview with the St. Lucian Deputy Prime Minister, which was recorded from St. Lucian television. The speaker had received a college education in England, and spoke fluently in Creole and English, both of which were used in the interview. In the interview, English replies were given to reporters who spoke English, and Creole replies were given to questions in Creole. Group 3 consists of two presentations given by a St. Lucian linguist at an academic conference. One of the texts consists of a talk on St. Lucian sociolinguistics given to a large gathering of speakers of French, English, and several French creoles. A second text was given by the same speaker to a smaller, equally linguistically mixed group. The speaker was fluent in English and Creole, and was seen to use French in a half-humorous three-way translation of some of his own comments. Group 4 consists of a talk by a St. Lucian folklorist on oral literature, which was recorded at the same conference. This speaker was also a highly literate person, fluent in English. His knowledge of French was unknown. Group 5 consists of a short presentation at a local meeting of a political party. The speaker, the only woman in the texts, was a member of government, who had a British university education. She had at least some knowledge of French. Group 6 consists of a talk during a local meeting of banana growers, during which political and financial matters were discussed.

This is not to say, however, that there are no syntactic constraints on code-switching, or that the study of code-switching has no value for grammatical theory. There is no doubt that there are certain systematic constraints involved, but it is too much to say that code-switching is constrained solely by the organization of grammars, or of the human mind. There is plainly more than one kind of code-switching, simply because contact between languages takes place under circumstances that differ according to relative competence in the two languages, the social appropriateness of each language for particular topics and settings, and so on.

In this study, the notions and models derived from the studies mentioned above will be discussed to the extent that they assist in understanding the formal aspects of English-Creole contact in the particular case of St. Lucia. An example of one of these useful notions comes from Joshi (1983). Joshi has pointed out a distinction between two classes of grammatical categories, "closed class," those categories which contain a finite set of lexical items (e.g., determiners, prepositions, auxiliary verbs) and "open class," those categories which contain a practically infinite set of items (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives).

In Joshi's work on English-Marathi code-switching, these two classes of categories appear to behave differently: in switching English items into Marathi, closed class items are constrained from being switched, unless they are dominated by a higher open class node. Although there are certain problems with this approach as a complete explanation for the syntactic constraints on Marathi-English code switching, the notion of open and closed class categories also appears to be useful in the description of the St. Lucian case.

3. Code-switching in St. Lucia.

It is important to recall that each of these texts represents a contradiction between some of the basic facts of linguistic life in St. Lucia. First, they occur in social situations in which traditional norms of code assignment among bilinguals would call for the use of English. Yet for whatever reason, plainly ideological in several cases, Creole is the code that is chosen. This presents speakers with a problem: because of the long-established "division of labor" between English and Creole, they have selected a code which in some ways lacks the referential resources for the task at hand. The speakers in this study have resolved this contradiction by simply using resources they have at hand: a limited type of intrasentential code-switching, the form of which is the subject of this study.

Although impressionistically the English content of the texts seemed fairly substantial to the investigator, on closer investigation stretches of English no longer than one item were seen to appear in the texts. These items can be usefully be regarded as loans, following the terminology of Herzfeld. Integrated loans, which are considered part of the Creole lexicon, will not be discussed here. Interference loans, which are the main object of interest, can be identified partly on the basis of phonological features peculiar to the West Indian English sound system, including :

Word stress on a syllable other than the last:

9. ačweImã nu ni ã difewã ['a tI tjud] (5)

now we have a different attitude

"Now we have a different attitude."

The presence of the phonemes /r/, /ə/, or /I/:

10. pu mete ['lIt rãčã] owal ada pi gwa perspective ... (4)

to put literature oral into bigger perspective

"To put oral literature in a bigger perspective..."

The presence of certain initial or final consonant clusters, as in speech [spič] or act [akt]. (5).

In the data, which totalled about two hours running time, forty-one clear instances of unadjusted interference loans were recorded, and a study of the possible grammatical or other constraints on their position was done. It immediately appeared that only open class categories were available for switching; there were no cases of pronouns, verb markers, or determiners being switched. Second, it was seen that forty of the forty-one unadjusted interference loans were nouns, perhaps indicating a tendency for verbs and adjectives (the other open class items presumably eligible for switching) not to be loaned into Creole. Twenty-nine of the loans were head nouns of direct object noun phrases, and ten were objects of prepositions.

It at first appeared significant that only one case of switching appeared within a noun phrase functioning as the subject of a sentence. However, this is probably explained by the fact that few subject noun phrases in the texts contained nouns as their heads. As a test of this explanation, an approximately five-minute sample of extemporaneous "official" Creole was checked for subject noun phrase structure, and it was seen that only about 14% of sentences exhibited subject noun phrases containing nouns. This indicates the possibility that the apparent lack of switched subject nouns in SLC is a reflection of the lack of subject nouns in the texts. By contrast, in the same five-minute sample of speech, 100% of the direct object noun phrases were switchable, as were 88% of the objects of prepositions. This indicates that we are not seeing a syntactic constraint on the position of interference loans in this case, other than the one imposed by a possible feature of SLC discourse: subject noun phrases tend not to contain nouns, and thus tend not to be switchable.

Aside from the question of the apparent constraints on switchable categories in St. Lucian, the texts were looked at from the point of view of syntactic constraints on code-switching. As was mentioned above, in the studies of intra-sentential code switching, constraints on the insertion of lexical items from the languages involved are seen to be related to syntax. For example, in the case of Spanish-English code switching, Woolford (1982) claims that nodes expanded by phrase structure rules unique to one language must contain lexical items from that language. This could explain, for example, why the sequence N Adj in Woolford's data may not contain English lexical items, while the sequence Adj N, which can be generated by the rules of both English and Spanish, may contain items from either language:

- 12. the big casa
 "the big house"

 *the casa big
 "the big house"

In another study, with similar but more general conclusions (Sankoff and Poplack 1980), it is argued that there are two basic constraints on code-switching. One of these, which is on the lexical insertion for strings generated by two grammars, says that switching may occur only at a point between structures which have a word order possible in both languages. For example, this "equivalence constraint" allows switching at the points noted below, which occur between structures "equivalent" in Spanish and English:⁵

- 13. I | seen | everything | 'cause | I | didn't | take | anything
 Yo | vi | todo | porque | yo | no | cogí | nada
 I | seen | everything | 'cause | no | cogí | nada

A switch is forbidden at the point between the subject and verb phrase of the subordinate clause, presumably because the order of constituents in the verb phrase is not the same in the two languages. The third line of the sample is the actual code-switched utterance.

The second constraint is that switching is only allowed between free morphemes. That is, items from one language cannot be attached to bound morphemes from another language, presumably ruling out utterances such as:

14. *estamos train -eandos
we're train bound prog. marker
"We're training."

unless train was considered part of the Spanish lexicon of these speakers.

From the perspective of these syntactic studies, there is little of interest involved in English-St. Lucian code-switching in the data. Although there is fairly widespread use of English items, there are no cases in which English phrase structure rules can be seen to be operating intrasententially with Creole rules. Similarly, it is not the case that English items are switched only in structures that could have been generated by rules of both grammars. Notice the following:

15. ... pu voje resignation jo ãdidã (2)
to send resignation their in
"... to send in their resignations."

16. tut se big shot la ã polis la... (2)
all DET big shot DET on police DET
"all the big shots on the police..."

Both of these examples clearly violate Sankoff and Poplack's equivalence constraint, since both of them show noun phrase rules operating which are peculiar to Creole

and thus should not be eligible for switching within the noun phrase. The second example also violates Woolford's constraint mentioned above, since the Creole bound determiner should not be allowed to attach itself to an English lexical item. Perhaps this indicates that the phenomenon in the St. Lucian data is something different from code-switching in the same sense as in the studies mentioned above. Apparently what we are seeing here is access to part of the English lexicon within sentences that are grammatically Creole. In general, unadapted interference loans in the data can thus be described as follows:

- (i) Only nouns and verbs are loaned, with no syntactic constraint on their position.
- (ii) Loaning of verbs is severely constrained, but not categorically forbidden.

In addition to the type of interference loan discussed above, a second type of loaning, called "adjusted" by Herzfeld, occurred in the data. Adjusted loans are characterized by the phonological adjustment of English items in the direction of Creole word structure and phonology. In general, the adjustment of loans can consist of one or more of the following four processes:

Placing the stress on loan words on the final syllable:⁶

- 17. document [do kju 'mã] (3)
- pneumonia [nju mo 'nja] (3)

Replacement of /ə/ with a full vowel:

- 18. regional [ri ʒo 'naɪ] (1)
- literature [lɪt rə 'cu] (4)

Replacement of /r/ with /w/:

- 19. diachrony [da ja kwo 'ni] (3)
- preparation [pwe pa we 'sjõ] (1)

Adjustment may also consist of the following processes, whose actual productivity however, is still in doubt. Addition of the verbal suffix /-e/ to English verbs:

20. propose [pwe po 'ze] (2)

Replacement of the English /-ajz/ with Creole /-ize/:

21. decolonize [di ko lo ni 'ze] (3)

Replacement of English /-ənt/ with Creole /ã/:

22. document [do kju 'mã] (3)

Replacement of English /ʃən/ with Creole /-sjɔ/:

23. preparation [pwe pa we 'sjõ] (1)

Replacement of English /-ity/ with Creole /-ete -ite/:

24. community [kõ mju ni 'te] (3)

- continuity [kõ ti nju e 'te] (3)

One apparent effect of the adjusted loaning is that it relaxes the constraints against the switching of certain categories. For example, the following show adjusted loans of verbs and adjectives, which apparently are constrained from appearing in their unadjusted form:

25. ki manjɛ guvenmä u [pwe po 'ze] pu atake pwoblem mitiŋ jɔswɛ(
- how government your propose to attack problem meeting last
- "How does your government propose to attack the problem of last night's meeting?"

26. nu ka tune... pu a ti moso efomasjō [ri Jo 'nal] (1)

we prog. particle turn to a little news regional

"We're turning... to some regional news."

The appearance of adjusted loans from these categories allows us to add to the description of the loan process outlined above the following rules:

- (i) Verbs may be switched, but there is a preference for the phonological adjustment of loaned verbs.
- (ii) Adjectives may be switched, but they must be adjusted.

4. Summary and implications.

4.1 Summary.

The study shows the following formal features in English-Creole contact in the speech of six bilinguals in formal or official situations:

- (i) Virtually all data can be accounted for by the rules of Creole grammar alone. There are no cases of the switching to English grammatical rules.
- (ii) Only open class categories (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) are available for switching. Verb markers, determiners, pronouns and prepositions are not switched.
- (iii) There is an apparent tendency for verbs and adjectives not to be switched, and for those verbs and adjectives which are switched to be phonologically adapted.

4.2. English-Creole contact and Creole literacy.

As the report to the Standing Committee on Creole Studies (SCCS) noted in 1980, English loans in SLC are a problem for those interested in developing Creole as a language of literacy. If educators are to promote Creole literacy as a somewhat separate enterprise from literacy in English, decisions will have to be made as to what to count as Creole. We have pointed out the existence of three possible types of loan, and discussed the structural constraints on

two of those types. Loans in SLC are probably best looked at as representatives of three levels of integration of English items into Creole speech: phonologically unadjusted interference loans, adjusted interference loans, and integrated loans. Recognition of these types might be a basis on which to decide what to count as part of a future Creole of literacy. Although the SCCS has already advocated that English items not be used when Creole equivalents are available, we have seen that at least in formal speech, use of unintegrated loans is fairly widespread. Instead of "banning imports," future language planners may choose to recognize a regular set of rules for the adaptation of English loans, rules which we can already see operating in the texts.

4.3 English Creole contact and the future of Creole.

In 1980, P. Louisy, writing for the SCCS, wondered aloud if the widespread loaning of English words into Creole was part of an inexorable process of decreolization. In one sense, we would want to suggest that the answer to that question is "no." The speech of the fully bilingual St. Lucian in our study exhibited none of the features of decreolization: the basic grammatical structures, categories, and markers are exactly the same as those described in the basic descriptive works of the language (e.g., Carrington 1967), with one or two exceptions. Virtually the only influence of English is seen in the lexicon, and perhaps in the strengthening of a few derivational relationships between nouns and verbs. This is perhaps good news for those Creole partisans who hope the language can survive "development" more or less intact.

However, this is not the same as answering whether decreolization is in fact taking place in St. Lucia. Firstly, decreolization is not considered to be in the hands of fully bilingual speakers such as those in this study. It is a process that is involved with the learning of languages in such a way

that utterances somehow between the norms of both languages are produced. The nature of the mixtures we have seen is much more like the usual case of code-switching, which is based on more or less complete grammatical competence in both languages. Whether speakers at large in St. Lucia are carrying out decreolization is a question that is best studied within a wider cross-section of speakers.

Secondly, it is controversial whether decreolization in the usual sense is even possible in a case in which the standard language is not the same as the lexifying language of the creole. It is the similarity in vocabulary that presumably allows the existence of the creole-standard continuum which is basic to the process of decreolization. Studies of St. Lucian bilingualism (e.g., LePage 1978), although they have mentioned the general use of English in Creole speech, have concluded that no decreolization is taking place.

Still, the question about decreolization in the sense of the disappearance of a creole language is a good one. French Creoles of the other Lesser Antilles have nearly disappeared under British colonial administration in the cases of Grenada and St. Vincent, and the role of English in the process of disappearance is certainly an interesting question. This study raises the possibility that influence from English can be limited to a type that does not affect the structural integrity of St. Lucian Creole. However, this does not mean that social conditions for the continued use of Creole as a medium of literacy or official communication will continue to exist, or that true decreolization will not proceed by other means.

Notes

1. Most of the demographic information in this summary is from the introduction to LePage's 1978 report on St. Lucian bilingualism.
2. One example of the interest of the St. Lucia Labour Party in the official use of Creole was in the presentation of the 1980-81 budget in the House of Assembly. The then Minister of Agriculture gave parts of his speech in Creole. This was said to be the first time "in recent times" that Creole was used in the Assembly.
3. This committee was called the Standing Committee on Creole Studies at the time. It is now the Mouvman Rweyol Sent Lisi.
4. Sources for SLC-English contact data are denoted by the numbers in parentheses after the examples. See section three for an explanation of the numbering system.
5. In this example from Sankoff and Poplack, a dotted line indicates a possible switch point, and the solid line indicates a point where switching cannot take place. The top line is the equivalent sentence in English, the second line is the equivalent line in Spanish, and the third line is the actual code-switched utterance.
6. It should be pointed out that the set of adjusted loans listed here exhibit phonological features that make their English origins obvious, despite the fact that they are partly adapted to Creole phonology. The following is a relisting of these examples, with the features that identify them as English-derived underscored. document [do kju 'mã,], pneumonia [nju mo 'njã], regional [ri jo 'na], literature [lit rə 'çu], diachrony [da ja kro 'ni], preparation [pwe pa we 'sjõ], propose [pwe po 'ze], decolonize [di ko To ni 'ze], community [kõ mju ni 'te].

References

- Carrington, L.D. 1967. St. Lucian Creole: a descriptive analysis of its phonology and morpho-syntax. PhD. dissertation. Univ. of the West Indies.
- Herzfeld, A. 1980. Creole and standard languages: contact and conflict. In P.H. Nelde (ed.), Sprachkontakt und Sprachkonflikt. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Joshi, A.K. 1983. Processing of sentences with intra-sentential code-switching. In D. Dowty, L. Karttunen, and A. Zwicky (eds.), Natural Language Processing: Psycholinguistic, Computational, and Theoretical Perspectives. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- LePage, R.B. 1978. De-creolization and re-creolization: a preliminary report on the sociolinguistic survey of multilingual communities. Stage II: St. Lucia. York Papers in Linguistics. 7: 107.
- Lieberman, D. 1974. Bilingual Behavior in a St. Lucian Community. PhD. dissertation. Univ. of Wisconsin.
- Louisy, P. 1980. Towards a St. Lucian orthography. Paper presented to the International Conference on Creole Studies, Castries, St. Lucia.
- Pfaff, C. 1979. "Functional and structural constraints on language switching." Language 55:2:291-318.
- Sankoff, D. and S. Poplack. 1980. "A formal grammar for code-switching." Centro Working Papers, 8. New York, N.Y. Centro de Estudios Puertorriquenos.
- Woolford, E. 1982. Bilingual code switching and syntactic theory. MS.