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A Discrete Co-Systems Approach to Language Variation on the Panamanian Island of Bastimentos

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1 Introduction

In its ideal form, the phenomenon of the creole continuum as originally described by DeCamp (1971) and Bickerton (1973) may be understood as a result of the process of decreolization that occurs wherever a creole is in direct contact with its lexifier. This contact between creole languages and the languages that provide the majority of their lexicons leads to synchronic variation in the form of a continuum that reflects the unidirectional process of decreolization. The resulting continuum of varieties ranges from the "basilect" (most markedly creole), through intermediate "mesolectal" varieties (less markedly creole), to the "acrolect" (least markedly creole or the lexifier language itself). The continuum model represents a continuous spectrum of varieties where there exists "no sharp cleavage between creole and standard" (DeCamp 1971:350).

The issue of variation between a creole language and the standard language it is in contact with is "ultimately a question about the degree of discreteness" between the linguistic systems involved (Romaine 1988:177). The continuum model has proved to be a powerful and popular theoretical construct for coping with the question of whether variation between creole and standard is continuous or discrete in situations where creoles are in direct contact with their lexifiers. Indeed, the continuum model has proved to be so popular that it has frequently been applied to situations where creole languages are in direct contact with national languages other than their lexifiers.

Washabaugh (1974:1) examines "variability in decreolization" on Providence Island, Colombia, where an English-based creole is in contact with the national language of Spanish and claims that "Standard British RP or Standard American English is the matricelect or model toward which the entire system is moving." Herzfeld (1977:205) proposes a model involving "second language acrolect replacement" for Costa Rica and claims that the national language of Spanish has "taken over" the position formerly occupied by Standard English as the acrolect language "towards which the LC

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[Limón Creole] continuum tends." Robertson (1982) proposes a Berbice Dutch-English continuum model to explain variation in Guyana where a Dutch-based creole is in contact with the national language of English, and links the emergence of a continuum to language death. Healy (1993) proposes a "parallel continuum model" for Suriname where Sranan, an English-based creole, is in contact with the national language of Dutch. A variety of continua-type models have been proposed to explain the situation on St. Lucia, where a French-based creole is in contact with the national language of English. Le Page (1987:118) and Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985:140) propose a "multidimensional continuum" while Garrett (2000:74) refers to a continuum with a "soft lexical boundary" between the "acrolectal" French-based creole and the "basilectal Vernacular English of St. Lucia".

This paper examines language variation on the Panamanian island of Bastimentos where an English-based creole is in contact with a national language of Spanish. Unlike earlier variation studies in creole/non-lexifier contact situations, analysis of spontaneous speech recorded on Bastimentos establishes the existence of two discrete systems, Bastimentos Creole (BC) and Spanish, and demonstrates that variation between the two systems is not continuous but is, in fact, discrete.

The paper is organized as follows. I begin by re-classifying the Caribbean creoles in order to demonstrate that many creoles in the Caribbean are currently in contact with national languages other than their lexifiers and to raise the question of why continua models continue to dominate the region. Next, I examine the sociolinguistic situation on the island of Bastimentos and present the case for discreteness through a consideration of three speakers' use of five linguistic features in the two systems. Finally, I discuss the lexical and syntactic variation resulting from the contact between BC and Spanish, and propose that such variation does not suggest a continuum.

2 Toward a Re-Classification of Caribbean Creoles

The classification of creole languages in the Caribbean has, it seems, largely been one of convenience. Caribbean creoles have typically been classified according to the European languages that provide the majority of their lexicons (e.g., Romaine 1988; Holm 1989, 2000; Smith 1995). Thus, Caribbean creoles are typically categorized as being Dutch-based, English-based, French-based, or Spanish-based. While such a classification may be convenient, it is not particularly useful for studies of language variation and change in that it fails to demonstrate that many Caribbean creoles are currently in contact with national languages other than their lexifiers. Hymes (1971:299) points out that "perhaps the most vital thing for the future of a

pidgin or creole is whether or not it continues adjacent (and subordinate) to a major source". A more useful classification of Caribbean creoles for language variation studies considers whether the national language of the country where the creole is spoken is also the lexifier language of the creole.

A classification such as that in Table 1 reveals fourteen Caribbean creoles currently in contact with national languages other than their lexifiers.

<i>Country</i>	<i>National Language</i>	<i>Creole Language</i>
Nicaragua	Spanish	Miskito Coast CE
Colombia	Spanish	Providencia/San Andrés CE
Costa Rica	Spanish	Limón CE
Panamá	Spanish	Panamanian CE
Suriname	Dutch	Sranan CE
Suriname	Dutch	Saramaccan CE
Suriname	Dutch	Ndjuka CE
Netherlands Antilles ²	Dutch	Dutch Windward Islands CE
Netherlands Antilles ³	Dutch	Papiamentu CS ⁴
Windward Islands ⁵	English	Lesser Antillean CF
Grenada ⁶	English	Grenada CF
Trinidad & Tobago	English	Trinidad CF
Guyana	English	Berbice CD
Guyana	English	Skepi CD

Table 1: Caribbean Creole/Non-Lexifier Contact Situations

A classification such as that in Table 2 reveals twelve Caribbean creoles in contact with national languages that are also their lexifiers. The Creole English/English group includes, among others, the two speech communities that are frequently cited as definitive examples of the creole continuum: Jamaica (see DeCamp 1971) and Guyana (see Bickerton 1975, Rickford 1987). The Creole French/French group includes the French-based creoles of Haiti, the French Antilles, and French Guiana. The Creole Spanish/Spanish

² The Dutch Windward Islands of Saba, St. Eustatius, and the southern part of St. Martin.

³ The Dutch Leeward Islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.

⁴ Papiamentu is an Iberian (i.e. Spanish and Portuguese) based creole.

⁵ The Commonwealth Windward Islands of Dominica and St. Lucia.

⁶ Including its dependency Carriacou.

situation involves Palenquero and Spanish in the village of El Palenque de San Basilio on the Caribbean coast of Colombia.

<i>Country</i>	<i>National Language</i>	<i>Creole Language</i>
Jamaica	English	Jamaican CE
Belize	English	Belizean CE
Virgin Islands ⁷	English	Virgin Islands CE
Leeward Islands ⁸	English	Leeward Islands CE
Barbados	English	Barbadian CE
Windward Islands	English	Windward Islands CE ⁹
Trinidad & Tobago	English	Trinidad & Tobago CE
Guyana	English	Guyanese CE
Colombia	Spanish	Palenquero CS
Haiti	French	Haitian CF
French Antilles ¹⁰	French	Lesser Antillean CF
French Guiana	French	Guyanais CF

Table 2: Caribbean Creole/Lexifier Contact Situations

It has been suggested that the non-Anglophone creoles of Colombia (see Holm 1989:311), Haiti (see Ferguson 1959), the French Antilles (see LeFebvre 1974, Rickford 1987:22, Holm 1989:366), and French Guiana (see Winford 1985:355) co-exist with their lexifier languages in discrete diglossic relationships. If this is indeed the case, it would mean that there are currently eight varieties of English-based creoles in contact with English as possible continua situations in the Caribbean (see Bickerton 1980:109, however, on the possible role of decreolization in Francophone areas). Further, if diglossia obtains in the British Virgin Islands as Holm (1989:455) claims, this

⁷ The Virgin Islands are politically divided into self-governing territories of Britain and the United States. The British Virgin Islands include the main islands of Anegada, Jost Van Dyke, Tortola, and Virgin Gorda. The U.S. Virgin Islands include the islands of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas.

⁸ The independent islands of Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, Nevis, and St. Kitts.

⁹ The populations of Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are largely Creole-English-speaking, but the variety of vernacular English spoken on St. Lucia represents a distinct relexified variety of Lesser Antillean Creole French.

¹⁰ The islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe and its dependencies of La Désirade, Les Saintes, Marie Galante, St. Barthélemy, and the northern part of St. Martin.

suggests that there are only seven varieties of English-based creoles in contact with English in possible continua situations in the Caribbean.

It could be said, then, that seven of the twenty-six Caribbean creole varieties listed in Tables 1 and 2 are currently in contact with their lexifier language and represent possible continuum situations. Why creolists continue to insist that "standard and lexifier are generally one and the same" (Patrick, 1999:17) and that "most creole languages co-exist with their lexifier languages giving rise to what is generally known as a creole continuum" (de Rooij, 1995:53) remains unclear.

3 The Case for Discrete Coexistent Systems on Bastimentos

3.1 A Sociolinguistic Description of Bastimentos

The Caribbean island of Bastimentos is located in the province of Bocas del Toro in the Republic of Panama. The main settlement on the island of Bastimentos is known as Old Bank and consists of approximately 600 people, the great majority of whom are Afro-Panamanians of West Indian descent, living along a stretch of shoreline less than a mile long. Perhaps three percent of the population is comprised of indigenous Guaymí families that live on the fringes of Old Bank and Hispanic persons introduced into the community through exogamy. The island is remote and roadless, accessible only by boat.

In the community of Old Bank, the first language of all Afro-Panamanians is a variety of Panamanian Creole English first documented by Aceto (1995, 1996a, 1996b) and referred to by him as Bastimentos Creole (BC), although locally the creole is known as *guari-guari*. The national language of the Republic of Panama is Spanish and as a result the island's one primary school utilizes Spanish as the medium of instruction as though it were the students' first language. Virtually all of the island's residents (with the possible exception of the very oldest residents) are bilingual in BC and, in varying degrees, Spanish. Most of the island's residents have no more than the equivalent of an American high school education. Those residents that do go on to study at the university level typically leave the island to find employment in larger metropolitan areas. The island's isolation and lack of roads means that the all of the residents could be classified as rural.

The language contact situation on the island of Bastimentos, characterized by the stable co-existence and functional compartmentalization of Spanish and BC in an asymmetrical prestige relationship (see Snow 2000), provides a fruitful opportunity to consider whether variation between a creole and a lexically-unrelated national language is continuous or discrete.

3.2 Property-Item Matrices for Discrete Boundaries and Continuous Transitions

Rickford (1987:15) points out that any examination of the viability of the concept of the creole continuum model must address the question of whether the creole and the standard "represent discrete and sharply separated categories" or whether they represent "polar varieties between which there is continuous variation". Rickford approaches this question through an exploration of Labov's (1973) property-item matrices that demonstrate the boundaries between linguistic categories.

Table 3 illustrates a boundary between two discrete categories. X and Y may be different grammatical categories, language varieties, or, this paper proposes, a creole and a lexically-unrelated standard. Category X, in this case, would be BC and Category Y would be Spanish. Rickford (1987:16-17) points out that "items A-H may be, correspondingly, individual lexical items or speech samples, each of which either exhibits or does not exhibit properties 1-7".

<i>Item</i>	<i>Property</i>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Category X
B	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
C	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Category Y
F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
G	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 3: Property-Item Matrix for a Discrete Boundary¹¹

Table 4, on the other hand, represents a continuous transition, or non-discrete boundary, between Categories X and Y. The idea in this case, as Patrick (1999:6) points out, is that variation across speakers is so fine-grained that it makes the identification of boundaries between discrete categories impossible. According to Rickford (1987:17) item A may be unambiguously classified as Category X and item H may be unambiguously classified as Category Y, but items B through G contain properties of both categories X and Y in varying proportions.

¹¹ From Rickford (1987:16) adapted from Labov (1973:344).

<i>Item</i>	<i>Property</i>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Category X
B	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	
C	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	
D	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	
E	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	
F	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	
G	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	
H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Category Y

Table 4: Property-Item Matrix for a Continuous Transition¹²

According to Labov (1971:456), establishing the existence of two discrete systems requires demonstrating "that there are separate, internal constraints operating within each sub-system" and "that there are relations in equilibrium in one system which are inconsistent with the corresponding set in the other." Labov goes on to point out that "the actual work of separating such systems can only be done on a body of vernacular conversation, and this step Creolists have not yet taken" (1971:461). Thirty years later it appears that most creolists have not yet considered the role of discreteness in variation studies in creole/non-lexifier contact situations or attempted to separate the two systems involved.

3.3 The Separation of Two Systems for Three Speakers

Three speakers ranging in age from 28 to 56, two male and one female, were selected to represent contrasting patterns of the use of five linguistic features in both BC and Spanish. It should be remembered that all three speakers, and virtually all residents of Bastimentos, could be identified as rural and working-class with no more (and frequently much less) than the equivalent of an American high school education. Speaker 1 is a 28 year-old single male who left school after completing the sixth grade. He has no steady job to speak of, but earns money from odd jobs, hunting, fishing, diving, and turtling. Speaker 2 is a 47 year-old widow who completed secondary school. She owns a small shop on the island. Speaker 3 is a 56 year-old male who left school after the third grade. He lives alone on a small farm and subsists on what he grows and catches. The speakers are in many ways typical residents of Bastimentos: None of them has ever lived off the island for an extended period of time and, more likely than not, none of them ever will. All of the

¹² From Rickford (1987:17) adapted from Labov (1973:344).

informants are native speakers of BC who learned Spanish as a second language. Further, all of the speakers command a range of BC varieties, some of which are more markedly creole than others.

3.4 An Examination of Five Variables

On the island of Bastimentos, establishing the co-existence of two self-contained systems requires demonstrating that BC and Spanish have separate and competing grammars. The tense, aspect, pronoun, and determiner variables under consideration were selected to represent relations of linguistic co-occurrence and to demonstrate that the central structures of BC and Spanish constitute discrete systems when examined over stretches of spontaneous, vernacular discourse.

Table 5 compares the 3 speakers for the use of 5 variables in Spanish and BC over one hour apiece of spontaneous conversation recorded on Bastimentos during the summer of 2000. The variables examined include: (a) future tense constructions (b) past tense constructions (c) present progressive aspect constructions (d) subject pronouns (e) demonstrative determiners. The number of tokens are in parentheses.

<i>Speaker number</i>	<i>Variable</i>					<i>System</i>
	a	b	c	d	e	
I	1(6)	1(38)	1(9)	1(27)	1(10)	BC
II	1(3)	1(33)	1(11)	1(14)	1(4)	
III	1(3)	1(41)	1(13)	1(35)	1(5)	

I	2(2)	2(1)	2(3)	2(4)	2(1)	Spanish
II	2(3)	2(2)	2(4)	2(4)	2(2)	
III	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	2(2)	2(1)	

Table 5: Linguistic Features Used by 3 Speakers in BC and Spanish

The BC (1) future tense construction (a) included variants of *goin* (e.g., *im gwainan iit/im gwain iit*). The Spanish (2) future tense construction involved only *ir + a + V* (e.g., *él va a comer*), although other variants are, of course, grammatically possible. It should be pointed out that morpheme variants exist for most of the features in each system. So, for example, possible future tense constructions in BC include, among others, *goin/gwain/gwainan* while in Spanish possible future constructions include *ir + a + V/V + inflection*. This variation, however, is not considered to be a result of the contact between BC and Spanish and the results were therefore collapsed as representative variables of either System 1 (BC) or System 2 (Spanish).

The BC (1) past tense construction (b) included the following variants: zero/*di(d)/wo(z)* (e.g., *im iit/im di(d) iit/im wo(z) iit*). The Spanish (2) past tense construction was represented by the inflected form of the *V* (e.g., *él comió*).

The BC (1) present progressive aspect construction (c) included the following variants: *de + V/V + -in/iz + V + -in* (e.g. *im de iit/im iitin/im iz iitin*). The Spanish (2) present progressive aspect construction (c) was represented by *estar + inflected V* (e.g. *está comiendo*).

The BC (1) subject pronouns (d) included *shii/im/ii*. As was pointed out earlier, all of the speakers command a range of BC varieties, some of which are more markedly creole than others. This was evident in Speaker 3's use of *im* to refer to both masculine and feminine subjects. The Spanish (2) subject pronouns (d) included *ella/ él*.

The demonstrative determiner (e) *dat* was counted for BC (1) (e.g. *dat ting gud maan*) while the corresponding demonstrative determiners (e) *eso/esa* were counted for Spanish (2) (e.g. *esa cosa es buena*).

3.5 Discourse Analysis of Variable Co-Occurrence

In his examination of the creole continuum in Jamaica, Patrick (1999:81) points out that defining the mesolect "requires careful attention to the problem of representing relations of linguistic co-occurrence which are characteristically not either/or but less/more". On Bastimentos, however, representing relations of co-occurrence between BC and Spanish is not a question of less/more but either/or. While Table 5 clearly shows that BC is used far more frequently than Spanish, it also shows, more importantly, that the BC and Spanish variables under consideration do not co-occur over stretches of spontaneous discourse. In other words, speakers use either BC or Spanish and it is never unclear which system they are using.

That the central structures of BC and Spanish represent discrete systems is most apparent on the discourse level. Analysis of the data reveals that switches between BC and Spanish – for the variables under consideration – never occurs intra-sententially. While intra-sentential switches do occur with certain lexical items, as we will see below, the data revealed no cases of speakers switching within utterances in either the verb complex (e.g. **im gwainan comer/*él va a iit*), with subject pronouns (e.g. **él gwainan iit/*im va a comer*), or with demonstrative determiners (**esa ting gud maan/*dat cosa es buena*).

The discreteness of BC and Spanish outlined in Table 5 is most apparent in speaker output exhibiting clearly defined inter-sentential switches between the two systems in stretches of discourse. These switches occur mainly for

two reasons. First, some speakers from "outside" (e.g., teachers, tourists, government officials) do not speak English and this forces residents of Bastimentos to switch to Spanish as in lines 16-30 in Example (1).

- (1) 01 B: Luuz¹³ tel mii ii sii yuu
'Luz told me he saw you'
02 P: Yuu kom fram Bokas?
'Did you come from Bocas?'
03 B: Ye [ai ga-]
'Yeah I we-'
04 P: [Mii lef] fram Ool Baank
'I left from Old Bank'
05 B: No bu ai liiv fram Ool Baank an gaan Bokas an pik dem op
'No but I left from Old Bank and went to Bocas and picked
them up'
06 F: Yuu wuda mek a ten dala mo
'You would have made ten dollars more'
07 B: No maan I wuden chaj Palito maan
'No man I wouldn't charge Palito man'
08 F: ((laughter))
09 B: Ai kuden soo wikid maan
'I couldn't be so wicked man'
10 P: Ye Babo
'Yeah Babo'
11 F: Ina mai panga yuu hafa pii aal fiftiin sixtiin dala
'In my speedboat you have to pay fifteen or sixteen dollars'
12 B: Eh?
13 F: A likul sloo kanuu wii bring im frii
'In a little slow canoe we would bring him for free'
14 B: ((laughter))
15 F: ((laughter))
16 B: **Aii- Qué pasó Ana se perdió fue el otro lugar**
'Ay- What happened Ana you got lost you went to the other
place'
17 A: **Hola**
'Hi'
18 P: **Bueno amiga**
'OK, friend'
19 X: **Hola**

¹³ All names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

- 'Hi'
- 20 P: **¿Cómo está amiga?**
'How are you friend'
- 21 A: **Aquí bien**
'I'm good here'
- 22 P: ((laughter))
- 23 B: **Fumando su puro. Tú perdió Ana. Tú fue al otro-
el lugar equivocado**
'Smoking his cigar. You got lost Ana. You went to the other -
the wrong place'
- 24 A: **Equivocado**
'Wrong'
- 25 B: **Yo no sabía y yo ví que ustedes corre pa allá**
'I didn't know and I saw that you went over there'
y yo creo que tal vez ustedes [estaban buscando] la sombra
'And I thought that maybe you were looking for a shady spot'
- 27 P: [Yuu hiir dat maan?]
'Do you hear that man?'
- 28 B: **Dice que yo [no vió nada] uh-huh**
'I say that you didn't see any'
- 29 P: (((laughter)))
- 30 A: **Ai-yai-yai**
- 31 B: **Soo Indiiian we yuu gwain de dat ting dat sook de**
'So Indian what are you going to do with that thing that's
soaking there?'
- 32 F: **Mek joos**
'Making juice'
- 33 I: **Pain skin**
'Pineapple skin'
- 34 B: **Oo ai tink it woz noo- aah dat iz di ting wo Palito blaak op di
maan dem wid - pain chiicha**
'Oh I thought it was no- ah that is the thing that Palito gets the
men drunk with - pineapple chicha'
- 35 P: ((laughter))

Second, BC-speakers tend to switch to Spanish when speaking with other BC-speakers in order to describe interactions that occurred in Spanish with Spanish-speakers, as in the reported speech of line 2 in Example (2).

- (2) 01 C: **Bot ai fraitin di gurl cuz ai noo ow shii wo gwain git fraitin**
'But I frightened the girl because I knew how she was going to
get frightened'

- 02 Ai tel ar 'Salta salta el bo- el bo- um- barco se va a hundir'
'And I told her 'Jump jump the bo- the bo- um- the ship's going to sink''
- 03 An shii git fraitin cuz di boot tuch aan it
'And she got frightened because the boat touched on it'
- 04 Ai tel ar 'lai lai lai maan'
'I told her 'lie lie lie man'
- 05 Dat time shii sii di fokin boot de naad yu noo Piik
'At that point she saw the fucking boat was listing you know Peek?'
- 06 P: Mm-hmm yuu hafa wuk
'Mm-hmm you had to work'

4 The Impact of Spanish on BC

4.1 Adlexification

While the central structures of BC and Spanish (e.g., verbal tense and aspect) clearly represent discrete systems, this does not mean that Spanish has no influence on the development and structure of BC. This influence is most apparent, not surprisingly, in the lexicon.

Adlexification in this case refers to the incorporation of Spanish lexical items into BC due to the fact that the terms do not exist in BC. These terms are typically associated with those formal domains where Spanish is used on the island (e.g., technology, government, and education).

(3)	<u>BC item</u>	<u>Spanish item</u>	<u>English item</u>
a.	<i>salbabiida</i>	'salvavidas'	'life jacket'
b.	<i>tarea</i>	'tarea'	'homework'
c.	<i>alcalde</i>	'alcalde'	'mayor'
d.	<i>klabe</i>	'clave'	'ATM card'

4.2 Loanshifts

Loanshifts are English lexical items that have been incorporated into BC that have undergone semantic shift as a result of the influence of false cognates in Spanish.

(4)	<u>BC item</u>	<u>Spanish item</u>	<u>English item</u>
a.	<i>kalij</i>	'colegio'	'high school'
b.	<i>surbis</i>	'servicio'	'bathroom'

c.	<i>taim</i>	'tiempo'	'weather'
d.	<i>tuch</i>	'tocar'	'play (the drums)'

4.3 Verb Phrase Calques

Verb phrase calques are verb constructions patterned on Spanish that have been incorporated into BC.

- (5) BC: *Houw much yiirs yuu gaat?*
 Spanish: '¿Cuántos años tiene?'
 English: 'How old are you?'

4.3 The Pragmatic Role of Borrowed 'ya'

The Spanish adverb 'ya' has been incorporated into BC with both its grammatical function as a marker of completion, in variation with *don* and *aredii* (Example (6), lines 02 and 08), and its pragmatic function as a directive to stop because the point of completion has been reached (Example (6), line 06).

- (6) 01 A: An wen ai- wen- wen ai rialaiz Piik di flouwa reez-
 'And when I- when- when I realized Peek the dough raised-'
 02 **Ya i don reez aredii**
 'It already raised'
 03 Jos fi kot an put in di pot fi em- [beeik]
 'It only had to be cut and put in the pot to em- bake'
 04 C: So no [beeik]
 'So now bake'
 05 P: mm-hmm
 06 A: Ee heer ar – whu shii se – 'no no no maan ya ya'
 'And hear her- what she said 'no no no man stop stop''
 07 Se 'wat'
 'I said 'what''
 08 Se 'flouwa reez op ya'
 'She said 'the dough raised already''
 09 Se 'ye'
 'I said 'yeah'

5 Conclusion

It seems clear that the sociolinguistic situation on the island of Bastimentos represents a case of two discrete systems in contact. Analysis of the use of selected tense, aspect, pronoun, and determiner variables by 3 speakers in vernacular conversation demonstrates that BC and Spanish are discrete systems and that speakers recognize this fact. That the central structures of BC and Spanish represent discrete systems is apparent from analysis of extended stretches of spontaneous discourse. Clearly defined inter-sentential switches between the systems reveal two separate, self-contained, competing grammars. Finally, a synchronic consideration of both lexical and syntactic variation resulting from the contact between Spanish and BC further demonstrates that a continuum of varieties ranging from a "basilectal" variety of BC to an "acrolectal" variety of Spanish does not exist on Bastimentos. Further research will reveal if a discrete co-systems approach may be appropriate for variation studies in other creole/non-lexifier contact situations.

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