



Lengua y migración / Language and Migration

E-ISSN: 1889-5425

lengua.migracion@uah.es

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Lengua y migración / Language and Migration, vol. 6, núm. 1, enero-junio, 2014, pp. 81-94

Universidad de Alcalá
Alcalá de Henares, España

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An outline of the social history of the creole language of Antigua (West Indies)

Teresa Galarza Ballester

This article examines the socio-historical circumstances that led to the emergence and development of Antiguan Creole (AC) from the earliest days of British colonization up to the Independence of Antigua and Barbuda. It is hoped to reveal that two significant background conditions determined the manner AC originated and developed. Firstly, the relative proportions of Africans and Europeans. In this regard, the research suggests that AC emerged in the late seventeenth century due to contact among Europeans, speakers of English, and Africans, speakers of Akan and Gbe languages. Secondly, it identifies the principles of social interaction governing the relationships and statuses of the distinct linguistic and ethnic groups in the Antiguan society. These factors are studied taking into consideration the following dividing lines: the pre-plantation society (c.1646-1705), the plantation society (c.1705-1834), Emancipation in 1834 and the Statehood in Association with Britain in 1964 followed by Independence in 1981. With respect to this matter, it is my purpose to show that the sociological changes that took place during these periods had significant repercussions in the development of AC.

Keywords: creole, creole language, Antiguan Creole, West Indies, socio-history, colony, demography, English language, African languages, linguistics, creolistics, pre-plantation society, plantation society.

Resumen de la historia social de la lengua criolla de Antigua (Indias Occidentales). Este artículo examina las circunstancias históricas y sociales que condujeron al surgimiento y desarrollo de la lengua criolla de Antigua, desde los primeros tiempos de la colonización británica hasta la independencia de Antigua y Barbuda. Es mi propósito arrojar luz sobre dos condiciones importantes que determinaron la manera en que el criollo se originó y desarrolló. En primer lugar, se estudian las proporciones relativas de la población africana y europea. En este sentido, la investigación sugiere que la lengua

criolla surgió a finales del siglo XVII debido al contacto entre europeos, hablantes de inglés, y africanos, hablantes de lenguas de los grupos akan y gbe. En segundo lugar, se identifican los principios de interacción social que gobernaron las relaciones entre los grupos de distinto origen además de determinar el estatus de los distintos grupos étnicos y lingüísticos en la sociedad antiguana. Estos factores se estudian tomando en consideración las siguientes líneas divisorias: la sociedad anterior a las grandes plantaciones de azúcar (c.1646-1705), la sociedad de las plantaciones (c.1705-1834), la emancipación en 1834 y la relación de Antigua y Barbuda como estado asociado a Gran Bretaña en 1964, seguido por la independencia en 1981. Con respecto a esto, es mi propósito mostrar que los cambios sociológicos que se llevaron a cabo durante estos periodos tuvieron importantes repercusiones en la formación y el desarrollo de la lengua criolla.

Palabras claves: criollo, lengua criolla, criollo de Antigua, West Indies / Indias Occidentales, sociohistoria, colonia, demografía, lengua inglesa, lenguas africanas, lingüística, criollística, sociedad de preplantación, sociedad de plantación.

1. Introduction

The present paper constitutes an analysis of the formation of the creole language spoken in Antigua, the larger entity of the twin-island State of Antigua and Barbuda (West Indies). Antigua, formerly a British colony, has kept English as its official language, although Antiguan Creole (hereafter AC) is the native language of nearly all Antiguanes. This study focuses on AC examining the context for its genesis and development, i.e., the history of the social patterns that existed among the various ethnic groups that shaped Antigua, from the first settlement of the island until its emergence into an independent country. Therefore, it aims to develop a socio-historical account of AC studying the factors that were linguistically significant during the formative years of the language: chronology, origin and relative distribution of the African and European population, settlement patterns and codes of social interaction.

This study confronts the same problems other creolists have had, namely, an absence of direct linguistic evidence of the stages of creole formation. This is not only due to the stigma attached to the creole but also for being among the majority group of languages with a short history in writing and literacy. Thus, it is necessary to assume a link between socio-historical circumstance and linguistic outcome in order to understand the nature of creolization. Thus, the socio-historical

account of creole formation that I put forward here must be consistent with the history of the colony. The socio-historical factors on which the account of AC formation is based include the numerical proportion of Africans to Europeans, the numerical proportion of locally-born blacks to African-born blacks, and the constitution of the pre-plantation and plantation economies.

The data that forms the basis of this research consists of socio-historical and demographic data gathered from censuses, reports and secondary sources (the only sources available for a study of AC formation). Although scholarly works on AC began to appear in the 1970s, none of them dealt with the socio-historical context of its formation. Thus, this paper attempts to fill this gap in the literature, at least partially, by providing an account of Antiguan socio-history. The first study on AC was Reisman's (1970) *Cultural and Linguistic Ambiguity in a West Indian Village*, which explored the relation between cultural reference and linguistic expression. And the earliest purely linguistic description of AC is owed to Farquhar's (1974) Ph. D. Thesis, *A Grammar of Antiguan Creole*. This was followed by two other theses, Jeremiah's (1976) *The Linguistic Relatedness of Black English and Antiguan Creole*, and Shepherd's (1981) *Modals in Antiguan Creole, Child Language Acquisition, and History*. As it happened with other languages that had been traditionally stigmatized, the interest on AC coincided with the achievement of political independence and with the rise of a post-colonial consciousness.

2. Discovery and settlement

As in all of the other West Indian territories, Antigua was colonized by an European elite for territory expansion, national glory and wealth, i.e., new resources of goods and trade. Antigua was first sighted by Europeans during Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the West Indies, in 1493, when Carib and Arawak peoples no longer inhabited it, although the Caribs considered Antigua their property and prepared themselves to defend it. The island was not settled by the Spanish, but by the English almost two hundred years later (Oviedo y Valdés 1959: 35).

The English took interest in the Eastern Caribbean and landed in St. Kitts, in 1623, and in Barbados, in 1625. In 1632, approximately, a group of people led by Edward Warner crossed from St. Kitts to Antigua. Edward Warner and his father, Thomas Warner, achieved full security under the protection of the Earl of Carlisle, who had been given the proprietorship of the Caribbean Islands by King Charles I, in 1627. Edward Warner started a settlement in Antigua, but six years later the

Caribs almost wiped out the entire settlement. Following Edward Warner's death, Colonel Henry Ashton was appointed to take his place by Carlisle. He managed to oversee a continuing development of the settlement in the face of repeated Carib raids (Dyde 2000: 12-16; Flannighan [1844] 1991: 3-5; Smith 1994: 17).

The Caribs continued to resist European occupation of the Eastern Caribbean and occasionally sought to forge alliances with nations that were traditionally in conflict. Thus, in an attack that took place in Antigua in 1666, the Caribs were part of a French invading force as war between France and England had been declared in 1665. With that attack, Antigua fell into French hands and was not returned until the following year by the Treaty of Breda (Henry 1985: 15). Still frustrated by Carib attacks, the colonists petitioned their government for a commission to destroy the autochthonous population of the Eastern Caribbean. Permission was granted in 1674, and in 1683, massive attacks were carried on the main Carib settlements, such as those in Dominica, which almost caused the extermination of the Caribs. As Henry (1985: 15) writes, "in 1647 the Caribs numbered about five thousand. By the end of the century, they had been reduced to about two thousand. By 1730, there were only about four hundred left".

3. Socio-history and demographics of early Antigua

As in other socio-historical studies of creole languages, e.g., Chaudenson and Mufwene 2001, this work identifies two phases in the construction of Antiguan society: the first phase is the pre-plantation society, also known as the homestead society, and begins with the early settlements of the seventeenth century whereas the second phase is known as the plantation society and begins with the massive importation of slaves in the early eighteenth century. The factors that help divide Antiguan socio-history into the two phases are the ethnic make-up of the society, the economic targets of the colonial power, and the society organization. During the first phase, the population of European origin is more numerous than the population of African origin, but this situation changes during the second phase.

3.1. The homestead society

During the period of Edward Warner and his successor Colonel Henry Ashton, when the settlement materialized, Antigua had a population of

less than 1000, consisting mostly of European colonists who started the homesteads, European people of humble backgrounds who worked as servants, and African slaves (Dyde 2000: 20). European servants and colonists arrived from all parts of England, Ireland and Scotland, but Antigua also received great numbers of European descent immigrants from Barbados and Surinam (Sheridan 1974: 185; Watts 1987: 216, 376). With regard to the population of African origin, the first slaves arrived with Warner from St. Kitts, in 1632 (Dyde 2000: 20; Nicholson and Henry 2003: 1).

The Antiguan society of that period was made up of colonists, servants and slaves who worked cultivating tobacco, cotton, indigo, cocoa, and other crops, in small holdings. Thus, the European descent people who would generally be in closer contact with the slaves were the servants (Gaspar 1985: 65; Roberts 1998: 112). The figures in Table 1 show the demographic evolution of Antigua during the first phase. The figures are based on Dunn (1972: 127), Dyde (2000: 25), Flannighan ([1844] 1991: 284), Gaspar (1985: 83), and several West Indian Censuses.

Year	European descent	African descent	Total Population	Percentage African descent
1646	-	-	750	-
1655	-	-	1,200	-
1672	800	570	1,370	41.6
1673	-	500	-	-
1676	-	-	3,500	-
1678	2,308	2,172	4,480	48.5
1690	600	-	-	-
1703	-	11,000	-	-
1705	-	12,187	-	-

Table 1. *Population of Antigua, 1646-1705*

In the pre-capitalist society of this phase, the larger holdings were the tobacco plantations that generated a growing demand for an imported working class, which included both African slaves and European indentured servants, while in the smaller farms most of the work was done by the owners who farmed for their own subsistence. These differences are important because in the economic organization of the tobacco plantation laid the structures of the system which, with the conversion to sugar, dominated the Antiguan system for three consecutive centuries (Henry 1985: 17-18). Besides, these differences allow us to

discern how the onset of contact occurred between the two different ethnic majorities of the colony. The total number of African slaves was small and they worked alongside their European owners and their indentured servants in the homesteads.

3.2. The plantation society

The second phase is characterized by a plantation society and an increase in the slave population. African slaves were imported in growing numbers as the main labor force for the sugar plantations after the sugar revolution took root and expanded. The planters switched to sugar when the price of tobacco decreased on the European market in the 1630s. Dutchmen had brought the sugar cane to Barbados and from there it spread north to the Leeward Islands, changing the white settler society of the tobacco period into a racially stratified society of whites and blacks, with the entire institutional structure centered on slavery (Gaspar 1985: 65).

Historians believe that the sugar industry developed fully after 1674, when Colonel Christopher Codrington emigrated from Barbados and established the first sugar plantation. Given that his production methods soon inspired other planters, his arrival in Antigua is seen as a major turning point in the island's development. For more than a century, the Codringtons' remained the leading planter family on the island, owning, in 1740, five sugar plantations. Besides, sugar was already being grown successfully by other men like Warner, Baijer, Winthrop and Byam, who had capital, useful connections, and considerable experience with plantation agriculture (Dyde 2000: 29; Gaspar 1985: 66).

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the censuses point to some changes that had taken place in the population size, the ethnic composition, and the property distribution. While the plantocracy was evidently developing, it was still small. Only five planters had as many as sixty slaves, but 47 percent of householders were slave owners, indicating that sugar and slavery were gaining ground. Still, the majority of landowners cultivated subsistence crops or were cane growers without mills. Perhaps, the most striking changes were in the size of both the European origin population and the African origin population. In 1646, there were only 750 people in the colony. They were indentured servants from the British Isles, and English, Barbadian and Surinamese colonists. By 1655, there were 1,200 inhabitants and, in 1676, the number was 3,500. By 1678, the population had increased to 4,480: 2,308 of European origin and 2,172 of African origin. Six years earlier there had been 570 of African origin and 800 of European origin. The dramatic increase of the slave population in six years is an indication of the spread of the sugar culture.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the plantocracy, in need of slave labor, extended its power, influence and resources. Slaves were taken from trading stations that sprang up along the west coast of that continent as English merchants joined Dutch and Portuguese merchants already experienced in the trade. Some African chiefs exchanged their people for tin, rum, gold and precious stones, among other goods, while other slaves were captured in wars between African kingdoms (cf. Dyde 2000: 25; Smith 1994: 19).

The formation of the Royal African Company, in 1672, with the monopoly to supply the English colonies with slaves, resulted in direct shipments to Antigua a decade later. By 1678, Antigua had a population of 4,480; 2,308 were Europeans, most of them from the British Isles (Watkins 1924: 19) whereas 2,172 were Africans (Dunn 1972: 127). Slaves not imported from the Royal African Company were delivered by separate traders (Dyde 2000: 31; Gaspar 1985: 69).

It is possible to form a picture of the slave trade in Antigua, during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, using the reports of Governor Daniel Parke, who prepared the first detailed accounts of slave imports. His accounts cover the periods from June 1698 to December 1707, February 1702 to August 1707, September 1707 to September 1710, May 1711 to May 1712, and December 1721 to December 1726. According to the censuses, by the 1720s there were 19,186 slaves and 3,672 free men, therefore, we know that out of the 19,186 slaves, 17,293 had arrived directly from Africa. The data is summarized in Table 2.

Year	Slave Imports
1698-1707	8,926
1707-1710	1,926
1711-1712	1,808
1721-1726	4,633
Total	17,293

Table 2. *Slaves imported from Africa to Antigua, 1698-1726*

As the sugar revolution progressed, the number of slaves continued increasing until they outnumbered Europeans by significantly wide margins. Such black majorities would have important consequences for the island society. By 1720, nearly one out of every five whites was an indentured servant; white bondage was quite common. Yet, life for indentured servants was almost as hard as slavery, so they ceased migrating (Dyde 2000: 65-66; Gaspar 1985: 78, 80). Besides, proprietors with little capital could not compete with others so land accumulated in the hands of rel-

atively small elite. By 1724, there was no unpatented land, although the island was not under full cultivation. A new social order had emerged: an agrarian export-oriented capitalist society, based on large plantations and on slave labor (Gaspar 1985: 68; Henry 1985: 20).

The censuses show that while the European origin population reached a peak in 1720 and amounted to 3,652, the African origin population increased unevenly, up to 19,186. In the 1720s, a total of 11,278 slaves were imported (Oliver 1894: xcvi). Even taking heavy mortality into account, black population almost tripled in the period 1703-56. The number of slaves, 19,800, represented 79,2 percent of the total population in 1724, and by 1756 that proportion became 90,2 percent with 31,428 slaves (Flannigan [1844] 1991: 284). As for the European descent population, accounts of parish registers also confirm that burials normally exceeded births. This high mortality rate contributed not only to the slow increase of the white population in the first quarter of the eighteenth century but also to its absolute decline thereafter. The figures in Table 3 are based on Flannigan ([1844] 1991), Gaspar (1985), Oliver (1894) and the West Indian censuses.

Year	European descent	African descent	Total Population	Percentage African descent
1707	2,892	12,892	15,784	81.6
1708	2,892	12,943	15,835	81.7
1711	2,854	11,838	14,692	80.5
1720	3,652	19,186	22,838	84.0
1724	5,200	19,800	25,000	79.2
1729	4,088	22,611	26,699	84.6
1734	3,772	24,408	28,180	86.6
1741	-	27,418	-	-
1744	-	27,892	-	-
1753	3,461	-	-	-
1756	3,435	31,428	34,863	90.2
1774	-	37,808	40,398	93.5
1787	2,590	39,038	41,628	93.7
1788	-	36,000	-	-
1798	-	37,000	-	-
1805	3,000	37,300	40,300	92.5
1810	3,000	37,000	40,000	92.5
1817	-	32,249	-	-
1834	-	29,121	-	-
1861	2,560	-	37,045	-
1871	2,146	-	35,422	-
1881	1,795	-	34,964	-

Table 3. *Population of Antigua, 1707-1881*

The establishment of sugar monoculture brought fundamental changes in the ethnic composition of the colony but also in the organization of the economy and the plantations. Between 1730 and 1775, Antiguan society came to be dominated by 65 families who were the major landowners, sugar producers and slave owners (Sheridan 1961: 343). Slaves were organized in gangs, and their work was supervised by a hierarchy of masters, white overseers, and black overseers. The newly arrived slaves were distributed among the huts of Antiguan-born slaves, under whose direction they were trained to work and taught the language (Young 1801: 289-90).

As for the Africans' native languages, Kwa languages of the Akan cluster, e.g. Asante (Ashante Twi, Asanti, Achanti), Twi (Akwapem Twi, Akuapim, Akwapɛ, Twi), Fanti (Fanti, Mfantse), dominated on the Gold Coast. Other Akan dialects were Agona, Anomabo, Abura Fanti, Gomua, Ahafo, Akyem (Akyem Bosome), Asen, Dankyira, Kwawu (Kwahu). As most slaves sent to Antigua originated in this area, these are, therefore, the substrate languages of AC. On the other hand, Slave Coast exports consisted of speakers of Kwa languages of the Gbe cluster, which had five language groups, Ewe, Fon, Gen, Ajá and Phla-Pherá, with several dialects each. They were called Poppas by Antiguan. The languages to the east and south were Delto-Benuic languages such as Yoruba, Nago, Ifè, Cabe, Ica, and Idaca, Ije. To a much lesser extent, Gambia supplied speakers of Atlantic languages such as Wolof, Fulfulde, Temme, Limba and Serer, among others, and Mande languages such as Bambara, Malinke, Mandinka, Dyula and Kpelle. From Biafra, slaves spoke Delto-Benuic languages such as Igbo, Ijo and Edo. Finally, Central Africa supplied slaves speaking Bantu languages (e.g. Kikongo, Kimbundu, Umbundu), after the 1730s.

4. Development of Antiguan socio-history

The development of AC socio-history is studied here taking into account two dividing lines: Emancipation in 1834 and Statehood in Association with Britain in 1964. The years before 1834 were characterized by the importation of African slaves in dramatic numbers, and those after the end of slavery by the stabilization of the population in demographic terms. The mid-twentieth century marks the post-colonial era with further changes in the society, the economy and the state organization.

4.1. From the Sugar Revolution through Emancipation

During the years of the sugar revolution through emancipation, Antigua was a heavily stratified society with slaves exposed to several

patterns of subjugation. As Gaspar points out, the control of slaves was not simply a matter of physical repression, but of creating ties of dependency. Several combinations of fear, coercion and negotiation, determined the patterns of master-slave relations (1985: 171). In this scenario, Antiguan planters had to prepare to fight against a consequent threat: the rebellious slaves. There were several slave revolts in Antigua. By 1687, maroons (runaway slaves that lived outside the social order of the plantation) were responsible for what is believed to have been the only genuine slave insurrection in the Leewards in the seventeenth century (Gaspar 1985: 176). The earliest report of violence for plantation slaves occurred in 1701 (Henry 1985: 41; Gaspar 1985: 185), and other outbreaks of a similar nature happened in 1708, 1709, 1738 and 1831 (Oliver 1894: 100). Finally, the most significant attempt of rebellion was the 1736 conspiracy because of its objectives and scale organization (cf. Henry 1985: 42), “all the White Inhabitants... were to be murdered, & a new form of Government... Established, by the Slaves, among themselves, and they intirely possess the Island” (Gaspar 1985: 3, quoting from the judges’ General Report).

The established social and economic system was also threatened when the economic bubble burst as a consequence of the American War of Independence, c. 1775-1783. Britain retained its West Indian territories against the Americans’ French and Spanish allies after the victory at the Battle of Frigate Bay, St. Kitts, in 1782, and trade between the West Indies and the US ceased. The effect of such measures in the Antiguan economy was that many small farmers sold out their properties and left, and the white population dwindled to 2,500. All coincided with a motion approved by the British Parliament, in 1792, that established that the trade of slaves ought to be gradually abolished.

The British Parliament prohibited the slave trade in 1807, although the slaves were not emancipated until 1834. The emancipation proclamation liberated 29,121 slaves, who were abandoned without income and without assets. Besides, with the end of slavery, plantation owners turned to indentured servitude for inexpensive labor. Just over 2,500 Madeirans migrated to Antigua between 1846 and 1870 and Middle Easterners also arrived in growing numbers (Dyde 2000: 165). In fact, the population increased during those years. In 1834, there were 29,121 Antiguan of African-descent while European-descent people continued decreasing; by 1871, the overall population of Antigua amounted to 35,157. Therefore, the population increased due to natural growth and to the importation of laborers. Thereafter, the island population remained stable. According to the censuses, the population amounted to 34,964 in 1881 and 36,819 in 1891.

With emancipation, land was made available for ex-slaves who wished to settle off the estates. These plots of land had been set aside by

the colonial government with the objective of attracting white settlers, but as the idea did not progress, working-class Antiguan were entitled to buy them. Other plots of land were also sold by planters. The result was the creation of villages, the first in 1835; other 28 had been established by 1842 (Henry 1985: 50).

During the nineteenth century, the class structure of the Antiguan society continued being very rigid. At the top of the society were the planters. Among themselves, there was a division between Antiguan-born planters and British citizens which gave maximum recognition to European people and their culture, but due to the economic situation that caused the return of many planters to Europe, it was dissipating. Below the planters there was the mixed race group. People of this group were lighter in complexion and on that basis had a higher status. Within them there were several divisions as well, moving from black to white: the mongrel, the mulatto, the mustee, the fustee and the dustee (cf. Henry 1985: 64). Next in this hierarchy were the Portuguese, and below the Portuguese were the Middle Easterners, who together with the Afro-Antiguans were located at the bottom of the society.

Regarding the living conditions of working class Antiguan, their situation did not improve during the period covering emancipation through the mid-twentieth century, and it worsened when the wars in Europe brought shortages in food, drugs and other basic goods, and unemployment was widespread and chronic; overall, the island had a marked poverty-stricken appearance (Colonial Office Report of 1938-1946). In the following decade, there were “many major developments in public works, water supplies, education, housing” etc. (Colonial office Report of 1955-56). Also, the first elections under full adult suffrage took place, in 1951. However, the unemployment rate was high and the sugar industry was collapsing.

4.2. The post-Colonial period and Independence

Antigua and Barbuda moved into the 1960s with a stronger economy, but the colony needed a range of industries: the sugar, oil, tobacco and corn-meal factories, which had been set up in an attempt to diversify the economy, closed. Then, investors from many countries moved to Antigua developing tourism as the major economic sector (Smith 1994: 145-147). In the meantime, at the constitutional conference, Britain granted Antigua Statehood in association with Britain. Constitutional change meant local people could serve on government bodies and Antigua and Barbuda were now responsible for their own domestic policies. Antigua got independence from Britain on November the 1st, 1981.

There were also changes in the class structure of the Antiguan society. At the top, the hotel owners and other entrepreneurs had replaced the planters. Mostly, they were British and American citizens. At the bottom there was a working class, Antiguans and Barbudans. The middle levels of class hierarchy, which had previously been defined according to skin color, disappeared, and the mulatto class turned into a unified black class. This was the consequence of black political control of the decolonized state (cf. Henry 1985: 182).

5. Conclusion

According to the evidence presented in this study, AC first took shape during the pre-plantation, or homestead, society phase of the seventeenth century and the creolization process extended during the phase of the plantation economy in the eighteenth century. The creole became stabilized when migration to the island and from the island ceased. Therefore, AC did not develop abruptly, but gradually. The socio-historical research also suggests that the circumstances for the genesis of AC concern the nature of the contact situation, i.e., a homestead society with speakers of different varieties of English, who had to communicate with speakers of several West African languages, creating the first AC varieties, and subsequently, a plantation society in which newly arrived African slaves targeted the local language varieties.

Antigua was colonized in 1632, and until 1655 the population consisted mainly of European settlers and servants, who were speakers of several dialectal and sociolectal varieties of English, from which a colonial variety of English began to be shaped. Subsequently, with the importation of African slaves, contact between speakers of European and African languages gave rise to the first varieties of AC. The introduction of African slaves began from 1655 to 1672. The contact between speakers of Antiguan English and other dialects imported from England on the one hand, and Kwa languages of the Akan and Gbe clusters and Delto-Benuic groups, on the other hand, gave rise to the first varieties of AC. During that period, the African population was estimated at 41 percent. The contact among nearly all Europeans and Africans were close and intimate and the social gap between whites and blacks did not yet exist as both ethnic groups were confined to the narrow environment of the homestead. This situation remained stable until c.1703-1707.

AC formation continued during the plantation phase when speakers of African languages surpassed the local creolophone population. The formation process continued gradually: c.1749 the population imported

from Africa extended to 64 percent, and c.1770 to 93 percent. In this context, the African-descended slaves had limited access to the superstrate language because the degree of segregation on the plantations had increased. Therefore, the first varieties of AC did not develop abruptly but gradually during the seventeenth-century homestead society phase. The creolization process continued until the balance between the locally-born and the foreign-born population shifted in favor of the former by the end of the eighteenth century. Thereafter, the changes in the ethnic composition of Antigua were not dramatic enough to be considered part of the creolization process, but as cases of ordinary language change.

In conclusion, AC was modelled on the Europeans' and Africans' varieties of AC when the two ethnic groups underwent language change in order to meet certain, new communication needs. The process occurred gradually during two socio-historical phases. Thus, the research challenges theories that view creolization as a unique and abrupt process of language creation and supports those that view creole formation as a gradual process in which a variety of different inputs intervene.

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Recepción: 27/10/2013; Aceptación: 22/03/2014

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