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**VARIATION IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF SOME
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PLACE NAMES:
A STUDY OF LANGUAGE VARIATION**

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Abstract

Due to the varied sociolinguistic history of Trinidad and Tobago and a large number of place names within Trinidad and Tobago of many linguistic origins, there are many variations of pronunciations of place names among inhabitants of the country. Because of this discovery and observation, and because this area has never been researched before, it is important to conduct such a study, as well as raise awareness of this area. This study seeks to examine the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago.

Data collection contained primary data sourced via questionnaires, observations and interviews from University students and family members. On the other hand, secondary data came from articles, journals and books by academics and researchers as well as an interview with a YouTube vlogger who played the role as a reliable source. Furthermore, place names were chosen based on social geography as related to population density, as well as general familiarity as seen through traditional news media and social media news commentaries.

The data were analysed using Labov's theory, and Hickey's (2003, 2007/2008) model of language change and variation, with some elements of phonological variation. Influences such as linguistic, cultural, social and historical features were instrumental in highlighting and understanding the many diverse variations of pronunciations of place names by people within the country. With regard to examining the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago, they included interlocked/interwoven sociolinguistic co-variables such as education, socio-economic class, environment, family and community upbringing, as well as heritage language influences and background, reading pronunciations, and many more.

The study is significant with regard to showing the diversity of pronunciation of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as adding value to Trinidadian English Creole, Tobagonian English Creole, and Trinidad and Tobago English.

This research has not only shown, but proven, that many variations of pronunciations of some Trinidad and Tobago place names by all peoples are accepted and acceptable, even by outsiders contributing to language change in progress. The research also shows any sort of bias, claims, reservations and dispositions by some people that variations of pronunciations of some Trinidad and Tobago place names are wrong or misinterpreted or false has been refuted and proven wrong.

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List of Abbreviations

TTE-Trinidad and Tobago English

TrinEC-Trinidadian English Creole

TobEC-Tobagonian English Creole

UWI-University of the West Indies

UWILS-University of the West Indies Linguistics Society

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: D.Moore

Date: 30/04/21

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to examine the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago. Also, specific and special attention is given to people's pronunciation of place names and the different variations of place names. Furthermore, this study will not only seek to examine place names in relation to cities, boroughs, parishes, villages, communities, towns and regions but street place names as well. The study of place names is called toponymy which is the research of place names, their origins and meanings, use and typology.

Over the years, many of the place names within Trinidad and Tobago have changed some way or the other resulting in the many variations of pronunciations by people within the country. Previous research and literature have proven that variations in pronunciations of place names happen for different reasons, and are a relevant issue for research. However, there is a lack of literature regarding sociophonetic variations of place names in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the reasons for these variations. Therefore, a linguistic study of the contemporary variations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago is a pertinent study. Ultimately, this study will show the diversity in the country with respect to the variations of pronunciations of place names by people and the reasons why.

1.1 Historical Overview

There are several factors contributing to the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. These include historical, linguistic, cultural and social influences. These influences have contributed to the variations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. With regard to the historical influences, they include colonization, politics, language influences (such as European languages which include French, Spanish, Dutch, English, Portuguese and even Irish and Scottish influences, African languages such as Yoruba, Koongo and many others, and Amerindian languages such as Yao and others) that have come into contact with Trinidad and Tobago over a period of time and have contributed to the naming of place names within Trinidad and Tobago. These languages and more have even influenced the Trinidadian English Creole and Tobagonian English Creole languages, and have given rise to the many variations of pronunciations. Furthermore, in looking at the historical elements of the place names, certain questions must be asked; they include:

1. Has history influenced or changed some of the pronunciation of some of these place names?
2. What is the history of the naming of some of these place names?
3. Who named the place/places?
4. Who settled them for the first hundred years?
5. What is/are the linguistic inputs into these place names?

On the other hand, sociolinguistic influences include people's language attitudes, educational background, and class for account for the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, cultural influences take into

account people's identity, family upbringing and even environment for the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago. Lastly, variations of place names within Trinidad and Tobago also take into account linguistic influences with respect to spelling pronunciations of the word/name, people's own interpretation and pronunciation of place names, language influences in general as well as language policies, and even how language is constantly changing which results in language, words, and place names varying in pronunciation and changing in spelling. Because of this, these reasons, factors and influences contribute to the variations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago.

1.2 Socio-Historical Background

The sociolinguistic history of Trinidad and Tobago, described by Ferreira (1997), is vital to the project because it touches on the linguistic diversity within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the many influences. Based on the sociolinguistic diversity and linguistic influences within the country, one can interpret how place names came to be named, as well as why there are many variations of pronunciations for place names. Furthermore, it also touches on the language attitudes of people within Trinidad and Tobago towards Trinidad and Tobago English (TTE) and Trinidadian English Creole (TrinEC) and Tobagonian English Creole (TobEC).

The article on the history of Trinidad and Tobago's languages by Ferreira (2017) discusses the many languages that existed in the country over a period of time. While some languages may have died or in the state of endangerment, there are languages that are still in existence. All the languages of Trinidad and Tobago have laid the foundation for our history; however, the ones that are still in existence have visibly contributed directly to the linguistic

diversity we see within the country. Furthermore, that article calls for the need for language documentation, language revitalization, and language preservation in terms of saving those endangered languages varieties such as French and French Creole which have contributed to the development, as well as linguistic diversity with respect to place names, words, flora, fauna, foods, culture and the many variations in pronunciations we have. These languages have added to the rich diversity, heritage and culture. All these different languages within Trinidad and Tobago have given rise to the many variations of pronunciations we have by people within the country. Finally, while some languages may have died, as well as those minority languages which are not widely spoken by the population anymore, there is retention of some of these place names from these different languages. That article was applicable to my research because it touched on how the history of the languages of Trinidad and Tobago over a period of time allowed for the variations of pronunciations of place names, as well as how some place names came to be named.

1.3 Motivation

As we know, linguistics is the scientific study of language. It encompasses morphology and syntax, phonetics and phonology, semantics and pragmatics. Socio-phonetics is a branch of linguistics that encompasses both phonetics and sociolinguistics. It addresses the questions of how socially constructed variations in sounds are used and learned. Because of this particular branch of linguistics, the area of place names and the many variations of pronunciations by people within Trinidad and Tobago needed to be examined. Furthermore, out of this, the research questions came about, i.e., why do people pronounce certain place names differently within

Trinidad and Tobago? This study therefore aims not only to examine the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago but to shed light on the variations of pronunciations of place names in Trinidad and Tobago. This study has been done in the hope of adding value to Trinidadian English Creole and Tobagonian English Creole, as well as showing the diversification of pronunciation and ensuring the different variations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago are all acceptable, especially by those native to the areas in question, and with deep roots there for generations past.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research focuses on variations of pronunciations with respect to place names within Trinidad and Tobago. The methodological approach taken is a qualitative one, using scholarly articles based on the language history of Trinidad and Tobago, retention of place names and phonological variation. The literature review will also include relevant material on how place names may have variations of pronunciations. The themes of the research were derived from the information collected, which included history (linguistic, cultural and social) influences, pronunciations and retentions.

Robinson's (2019) "Phonological change in the English language" is helpful to my research because it discusses how people may pronounce the same word, for example, place names differently for different reasons, as well as how phonological change comes in many different forms. The concepts that were mentioned in this article are similar to my research because they showed how not only words go through phonological change but place names do as well. Some changes affect the way a single word is pronounced. In the United Kingdom, for example, older people tend to stress the first syllable of the word *controversy*, compared to younger people who stressed the second syllable.

In other instances, certain vowel or consonant sounds change slowly across successive generations, and thus have an influence on a large group of words. It is important to note that a change in pronunciation might initially take place only in one particular geographic location and remain local, or may spread over time internationally and hence affect all varieties of English. Furthermore, all languages go through change over time, and vary according to place and social

setting. One can observe phonological change, i.e., a change in pronunciation patterns, by comparing spoken English at varying points in time.

Kerek's (1976) "The phonological relevance of spelling pronunciation" was suitable for my research because it showed the importance of orthographic and phonetic forms with respect to words, sounds and spellings as well as, "when people say or think how the word is ought to be pronounced in such-and-such a way, it is because that's the way it is spelt." It was this same concept that was used in this study so as to better analyse place names, as well as understand the reasons for the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within the country. Furthermore, even though spelling pronunciation may be perceived as somewhat remote and random, it is in fact capable of influencing, and may yield profound phonological effects in at least two ways.

Firstly, it may induce the restructuring of the underlying form of morphemes within an orthographic paradigm, and hence prompt a redistribution of functional loads in the phonemic system, which often occur through a "reversal" of historical changes that are no longer active. Spelling pronunciations may also repeatedly block synchronic phonological rules, thus often resulting in the phonetic surfacing of underlying or near-underlying phonemic forms, which may not only slow down phonological change, but alter the phonetic character of a language in the long run. Although it commonly obliterates etymological distinctions as a mechanism of iconicity, spelling pronunciations promote spelling-sound isomorphism and thus tend to reduce purposeless variety in language. Widespread literacy has rendered the influence of orthography on phonology a significant external variable which linguistic description can no longer ignore.

Barbieri's (2008) "Patterns of age-based linguistic variation in American English" was useful to my research because it describes how speaker age has been considered one of the principal correlates of language change. It is this same model of language change that we can then use to dissect the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as examine who these people are and their ages. Younger speakers' talk may often be characterized by an unusually frequent use of slang and swear words, and by a marked use of features indexing speaker's stance and emotional involvement, including intensifiers, stance adverbs, discourse markers, personal pronouns, and attitudinal adjectives; older speakers favour modals (Barbieri). These patterns are suggestive of functional differences in the discourse of youth and adults. It is argued that the expression of personal stance is more explicit and plays a key role in younger speakers' discourse.

Wheeler's (2014) "Two Short "As" and a Rolling "R": Auto-ethnographic Reflections on a "Difficult" Name" was applicable to my study because it discussed how names are an important tool of our identity and sense of self. For those from minority communities, names may be particular, in some way, to our linguistic and cultural heritage, and thus may be at odds with their counterpart names from the dominant cultures within which we reside. The resultant tensions which ensue with regard to pronunciation and transcription can have a profound effect on the bearer of the minority name, inducing feelings of anger, disappointment, embarrassment, shame, and despair. Mispronunciation can also occur at random, even within our own linguistic cultural context, and thus can be annoying to the bearer or user of the name.

Dailey and Stabile's (2014) "Factors influencing the pronunciation of Hawaiian Place Names" was useful to my research because it took into consideration factors such as familiarity, ethnicity and national identity as important components of influencing pronunciation of place

names not only in Hawai'i but right here in Trinidad and Tobago as well. The factors mentioned in the article contribute to the variations of pronunciations of place names by people, as well as play an instrumental role in examining why people pronounce certain place names differently. The way people may pronounce certain place names is a reflection of their identity, environment and even familiarity as mentioned in the article.

Mallinson's (2007) "Social class, social status and stratification: Revisiting Familiar Concepts in Sociolinguistics" is important to my study because it takes into account how social class, in relation with other social and stylistic factors, affects language use. For example, in the article, the author compared how people of economic and social class pronounce certain words, slang, and place names compared to people of a lower economic and social class. It is this same principle with regard to variables mentioned here that I take into account when conducting my research, as well as evaluating the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago.

Kirwin's article "Pronunciation Keys in Dictionaries of Place-names" is relevant to my study because it touches on the change and development of place names with respect to spelling, writing, pronunciation, standardization, creators of the place names for dictionaries by bureaucrats/administrators, as well as the influence of environments based on the pronunciations of place names. The article also references the IPA chart as a tool to show how phonetic transcription of words, place names and sounds comes in handy for those who may have never heard or seen the place name before, as well as those who do not know how to spell it can use the IPA alphabet as a tool. Furthermore, people will try to produce what they see in front of them such as words and letters, and people will mimic the sounds and pronunciations they hear.

Laurence's (1975) "Continuity and change in Trinidadian toponyms" is a very pertinent study to my research because it touches on many aspects with regard to the retention of place names, as well as the changes of the place names within Trinidad due to the many linguistic influences. Some of the linguistic influences include Amerindian languages, European languages such as Spanish, French and English, African languages, Indic languages and others. These influences contributed to the linguistic diversity within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the reasons for the variations of pronunciation. Some of the place names of Trinidad and Tobago are still alive today from pre-Columbian days, such as Arouca and hundreds more, while others have changed. Other changes have seen the place name San Juan having a Spanish origin but influenced by French and French Creole now with regard to pronunciation.

According to Warner-Lewis, there are African retentions in the languages of Trinidad and Tobago with respect to place names, words, grammar, food, music, etc. (2-6). The place name Sierra Leone in Diego Martin, which is ultimately of Portuguese origin, is a country in West Africa. Other place names that are of African origin or heritage in Trinidad and Tobago include Mount Hololo in St. Ann's, Mandingo Road in Princes Town, Ibo Hill, Congo Village in Diego Martin, Yaraba village in Oropouche and Yoruba Village Square in Port of Spain. All these examples of place names show the diversity, influence and importance of African heritage and origin in Trinidad and Tobago languages, as well as retention of place names. Furthermore, the article mentions words such as *tabanka*, *tooloom*, *bobol*, *limbo* and *bum-bum*, and others which are of diverse African origins and are still used within the country, as well as contain strong African influence with regard to African retentions. This article was relevant to my study because it speaks about African retention within languages of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as

how some place names may have African influences with regard to the naming of them which is still prevalent up to this day.

Prescod's 2019 article on language, history and place names in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is also very useful to this study because it shows that some of the same events, as well as influences, that occurred in St. Vincent also happened in Trinidad and Tobago, with respect to colonization and slavery, as well as the naming of place names from colonizer countries such as Britain, France, and many others. For this same reason, we share similarities between the two countries with regard to retention of place names and variations of pronunciations of them. The article further states that after a period of time, some of these same place names have changed from or adapted to national Vincentian pronunciations as a reflection of that country's history, people, identity, culture and linguistic diversity, as well as that country gaining independence. For example, the place name Dorsetshire Hill which is of British origin is a good example of how pronunciation can transform names over time. This is so because many people in St. Vincent grew up saying ['dɔːstɪʌ] (referred to as the "Dorstruh" pronunciation) for [dɔːsɪt'ʃaɪə] Hill (1). In the context of the United Kingdom, the place names Gloucester and Worcester sound somewhat like ['glɒstə] and ['wɒstə], respectfully, to the Vincentian ear (Prescod). Because of this, the "Dorstruh" pronunciation may well be modelled on those pronunciations. However, as time passed, due to the word being written, many people resorted to the spelling pronunciation. Presently, the typical Vincentian pronunciation [dɔːsɪt'ʃaɪə] is commonly used as a reading or spelling pronunciation.

"Place names in Israel" by Haifa (1986) is very relevant to this research because it showed while there have been some changes of pronunciations with regard to place names; there are those which have retained their original pronunciations based on speakers, as well as

linguistic, cultural and social influences. The relevance of this article is to show the similarities of them with Trinidad and Tobago in relation to retention of place names and variations of pronunciations. The article is based on the retention of place names with respect to Israel by Arabic speakers. The article shows how Arabic speakers in Israel have generally been free to use Arabic names, i.e. names of Arabic origin, words, slang, place names, heritage, culture and identity when speaking or writing Arabic, even though it is not the dominant language. In Israel, English and Hebrew are commonly spoken. Also, the article shows the purpose of toponymic research in relation to finding suitable names for Hebrew speakers. It was discovered that the Arabic names of inhabited places come from older Hebrew, Roman and Greek origin. For example, the name Nablus reflects the Latin and Greek name Neapolis, which the Romans gave to the city called Shechem in the Bible. Furthermore, the place name Roman Scala Tyriorum was renamed by the Arabs Ras en Naqura, which in Hebrew has become Rosh-Hanikra over time. While some research from academics may say or show that some place names may have changed or been renamed, Hebrew names did not eradicate the Arabic names nor do they cast Israel in a bad light. On the contrary, they show noninterference in the linguistic traditions of Arabic speakers and the retention, in many cases, of Arabic names in Hebrew.

The web article “Aspiring Minds of Trinidad and Tobago” gives an account of the many place names of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the origin and history of these place names. The website in general gives an accurate account of the history of Trinidad and Tobago. The article is concise and to the point. It provided the necessary information pertinent to my research focus in-terms of socio-phonetics. The article went on to further classify the place names in terms of the origin of the name and language by language. For example, the place name Laventille is of Spanish origin. The article looked at a variety of place names which are from the French,

Spanish, Yao, Kalina, Lokono, English, Irish, and Welsh. Many of the place names within Trinidad and Tobago have a long history and influence from the many countries and people who have left an indelible mark on the country of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as have significantly contributed to the culture and identity of the country in terms of place names. This is why we have a great diversity among the country in terms of culture, identity, languages, heritage and retention of place names, as well as variations of pronunciations by people with regard to place names. This article was connected to my study because it displayed a list of place names within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the different origins of these place names in terms of languages.

Moodie-Kublalsingh's work on the Spanish influence in Trinidad and Tobago touches on a great deal of interesting information pertaining to my research area in terms of Spanish place names and variations in pronunciations. The article referenced the importance of the Spanish coming to Trinidad and Tobago and their influence on the population, as well as the many historical events. The Spanish also influenced the Amerindian community in some aspects, for example, the place name Las Cuevas which is Spanish and that of La Seiva which is both half Spanish and half Arawak/Lokono in Trinidad and Tobago. Also, the place name San Juan which is of Spanish origin, but has Trinidadian English/Creole and French Creole influences, contains two variations of pronunciation. Furthermore, Moodie also touches on how at one point, Spanish influence in Trinidad and Tobago, though very dominant once, has been diminished as a result of not having a large number of speakers and having lost influence, dominance, and status. It must be noted that many Spanish place names within Trinidad and Tobago are still alive to this day. This article was relevant to my research because it spoke about the Spanish influence within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as how some place names within the country came to be named by

the Spanish, which have contributed to the variations of pronunciations of place names within the country.

With regard to the Amerindian influence within Trinidadian and Tobago, place names have been one of the biggest contributors from the First Peoples in terms of the linguistic legacy which is still prevalent up to this day. Examples of these place names include Arima, Arouca, Tacarigua, and Caroni, as just a few examples. Important to note is that the place names of Trinidad and Tobago include villages, towns, and topographical features. This research was summarised by Adonis and Ferreira (2012), based largely on Baksh-Soodeen and Boomert. Hundreds of the island's main topographical features carry Amerindian names. Most of these place names which are derived from the Amerindians come from different groups within the First Peoples which include Yao, Carib/Kaina, and Warao. Even though there are few to no speakers of these Amerindian languages (except for Warao), there are still some descendents of the First Peoples within the villages and communities of Trinidad and Tobago, especially Arima. It is important to mention that the ancestral Amerindian languages were first substituted by the Spanish, then French Creole and finally English Creole and English. While some of these Amerindian place names may have died out or been replaced, there are those still alive, that is, there is still some retention of Amerindian place names within the country. With that being said, this article was pertinent to my research because it spoke about the Amerindian influence within Trinidad and Tobago, and how some place names within the country came to be named by the presence of the Amerindians which contributed to the variations of pronunciations of place names within the country.

The study done by Thompson (1959) on pre-British place names in Trinidad touched on the history of how some place names came into being as a result of the many influences. It first

started by giving account of the First Peoples then the Spanish, followed by the French and finally the British influence with some minor elements of the Dutch presence in Trinidad and Tobago such as place names and the culture of Tobago. It should also be mentioned that the study touches on how the collective suffix *-al* for phonological reasons ousted *-ar* in the Spanish variety of Trinidad and Tobago as seen in names like Maraval. Some of the early British place names such as Perseverance and Mount Pleasant which are ultimately of French origin are still in use up to this day in some cases. While some British place names may have been replaced, modified or even changed, there are those still with strong British influence with respect to retention of place names. This article is relevant to my research in regard to how the British influenced the place names of Trinidad and Tobago and the variations of pronunciation.

Ferreira's 2015 article touched on the importance of the French influence in Trinidad and Tobago. The French brought with them their vernaculars, i.e., French and French Creole (Patois). This development gave rise to its speakers of the language and creation of communities and villages which helped to spread and influenced the naming of place names, flora and fauna within Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these place names include Point Fortin and Petit Valley which are still in use up to this day. Even though French Creole is in a state of endangerment, there are attempts to preserve and revitalize the language in certain parts of the country, such as teaching in schools. Paramin is known for French Creole speakers among the elderly, as well as its church masses in French Creole, and finally parang (Spanish). While the French Creole variety here may be dying, the retention of place names will still be there as a reminder of the presence and influence of the language. This article was applicable to my study because it touched on the importance of the French and French Creole influences within the country, as

well as how the French and French Creole presence contributed to the naming of place names within the country.

This Literature Review is an important part of the thesis because it analyses relevant articles and information pertinent to the research question which is, why do people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The field of sociolinguistics is a descriptive one which looks at the general interaction between language and society with respect to the effects and all aspects of society affecting and influencing language. The terms “language change” and “variation” are important aspects of linguistics and fall under the purview of sociolinguistics that came into being as a result of the works done by Labov. Some of the broad areas of his research include language change (1963) and the role of social variables (1966). Language change is simply the variation over time in a language’s features, while language variation is basically a characteristic of language which looks at the regional, social, or contextual differences in the ways that particular language is used. With respect to structural features in particular, language goes through changes and variations as a result of external, social factors and internal, linguistic factors.

The theoretical framework of linguistic, specifically phonological, variation defines this study of pronunciation variations of place names among people in Trinidad and Tobago. It is instrumental in studying and understanding language in context (see Labov). Furthermore, theoretically, variation may be highly structured such that it uncovers systematic patterns of co-occurrence between language forms, such as the pronunciation of particular vowels and social

categories such as socioeconomic classes (Hickey). As a result, a wider framework based on the insights derived from studying language from a socially realistic perspective would give rise to the variations in the pronunciation of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. A sociolinguistic framework sheds light on place name variations due to the fact that it takes into consideration how a diverse range of speakers use the language in everyday situations. Overall, the parameters of linguistic variation with reference to language change in variation help to explain the macro and micro frameworks of the analysis.

Language variation is decided by or correlated to social class and status. It must be noted that sociolinguistics came out of dialectology. Types of language variation include: contact between speakers, the linguistic variable, indicators and markers, class and style, geographical variation and language contact.

According to Labov, speakers show recognition with their locality through the use of a local variety of language while on the other hand they desire social acceptance and hence in their speech they move towards the standardized variety or official language of their area (14). Labov also stated the necessity to collect data reliably (15). The linguist must be wise so that an informant will display the following characteristics in his speech: style shifting, varying degree of attention and a level of formality decided by the nature of the interview; it can change depending on how the participant responds to the interviewer and the circumstance he/she is placed in.

Lastly, with respect to language change, Labov suggested three phases which can be summarized as follows: 1) origin, a time in which many variants exists for one and the same phenomenon, 2) propagation, and 3) the period in which one of the variants created itself and the

conclusion in which the surviving variants are done away with (Hickey). Various external factors can speed up the stages of language change, above all social pressure from above or below. Additional factors are the level of literacy in an area and the controlling impact of a standard variety of a language.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the methods used in this research in finding out the variations of pronunciations of specific place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. Also, it describes the research approach, as well as how the primary and secondary sources were obtained and evaluated. This research is generally qualitative, as it evaluates data collected through interviews, observation and questionnaires. The interviews allowed for the researcher to hear the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. Lastly, place names were chosen based on social geography as related to population density, as well as general familiarity as seen through traditional news media and social media commentaries.

Table 1: 2011 Population Consensus Report

Central Statistical Office

Ministry of Planning and Development

Place Name	Population	Status	Pronunciation 1: Broad IPA Transcription and Respelling used in Questionnaire	Pronunciation 2: Broad IPA Transcription and Respelling used in Questionnaire	Pronunciation 3: Broad IPA Transcription and Respelling used in Questionnaire	Pronunciation 4: Broad IPA Transcription and Respelling used in Questionnaire
Bacolet	433	Comm unity	/ba.ko'.let/ “Ba-co-LET”	/ba.ko'.le:/ “Ba-co-LAY”	/ba.ko'.le / “Ba-co-LEH”	
Blanchisse use	1,375	Rural	/blan.tʃi:.ʃɛ:z/ “Blan-chee- SHARES”	/blan.ʃi:.ʃɛz/ or /blã.ʃi:.ʃɛz/ “Blan-shee- SHEZ”	/blan.ʃi: ʃɛ:z / “Blann-chee-C HAIRS”	
Brazil	5,383	Semi- Urban	/'bɹi:zil/ “BRA-zil”	/bɹi'zil/ “Bra-ZIL”		
Brasso Seco	447	Rural	/bɹi.so:.'se.ko:/ “Bra-so SEH-ko”	/bɹi.'se.ko: / “Bra-SEH-ko”	/bɹi.'se:ko: / “Bra- SAY-ko”	/bɹi.so:.'se:ko: / “Bra-so- SAY-ko”
Canaan	2,120	Comm unity	/'ke:.nʌn/ “Kay-NAN”	/'ke:.nɪn/ “Kay-NIN”		
Champs Fleurs	2,476	Urban	/ʃa.'fle/ “Sha-FLEH”	/ʃa.'flɛə/ “Sha-FLARE”		
Diego Martin	5,967	Urban	/'di.go: 'ma:.tɪn / “DIH-go”	/'di.go:/ “DIH-go”	/'de:.go: 'ma.tɪn /	/'de:.go:/ “DAY-go”

			“DIH-go Mar-tin”		“DAY-go Mar-tin”	
Ecclesville	2,063	Rural	/ˈɛ.kl̩z.vɪl/ “EH-cles-ville”	/ˈiː.kl̩z.vɪl/ “EE-cles-ville”		
Edinburgh	8,462	Urban	/ˈɛ.dɪn.bɪʌ/ “EH-din-burg”	/ˈiː.dɪn.bɪʌ/ “EE-din-burg”		
Endeavour	4,449	Urban	/ɪn.ˈdɛ.vʌ/ “IN-dea-vour”	/ɛn.ˈdɛ.vʌ/ “EN-dea-vour”		
Enterprise	14,434	Urban	/ˈɛn.tʌ.pɪaɪz/ “EN-ter-prise”	/ˈɪn.tʌ.pɪaɪz/ “IN-ter-prise”		
Erin	403	Rural	/ɛ.ˈɪrɪn/ “Eh-RIN”	/eː.ˈiːrɪn/ “Ay-REEN”		
Icacos	1,093	Rural	/aɪ.ˈkɑ.koːs/ “Eye-CA.cos”	/iː.ˈkɑ.koːs/ “Ee-CA-cos”		
La Horquetta	13,614	Urban	/lɑ.hɔː.ˈkɛ.tʌ/ “La Hor-KETTA”	/ˈlɑ.hɔː.kɪ.tʌ/ “LA.Hor-kitta”	/lɑ.ˈhɔː.kɪ.tʌ/ “La HOR-kitta”	
Lambeau	1,278	Community	/ˈlɑm.boː/ “LAM-bo”	/ˈlɑm.buː/ “LAM-boo”		
La Puerta	3,891	Urban	/lɑ.ˈpwe.tʌ/ “La-PUER-ta”	/lɑ.ˈpweɪ.tʌ/ “La-PUERR-ta”	/lɑ.ˈpweɪ.tʌ/ “La PUEL-ta”	/ˈlɑ.pwe.tʌ/ LUH Puer-ta

La Seiva	1,577	Urban	/la.'saɪ.vʌ/ “La-SIGH-va”	/la.'si:.vʌ/ “La SEE-va”		
Laventille	11,311	Urban	/la.vɛn.'tɪl “La-ven-TILL”	/la.vã.'ti:/ “La-van-TEE”		
Les Coteaux	665	Community	/'le.ki:.to:/ “LEH-kee-to”	/'le:.ko:.to:/ “LAY.ko-to”		
Los Bajos	663	Urban	/lo:s.'ba.ho:s/ “Los-BA-jos”	/lo:s.'be:.ho:s/ “Los-BAY-jos”		
Maraval	4,646	Urban	/'ma.ɪa.val/ “Ma-RA-val”	/'mɑ:.val/ “MAR-val”		
Matelot	553	Rural	/'mat.lɒt/ “MATT-lot”	/'me:t.lɒt/ “MATE-lot”		
Matura	1,772	Rural	/ma.'tu:..ɪʌ/ “Ma-TU-ra”	/'mɔ:.tu:..ɪʌ/ “MER-tu-ra”		
Mausica	3,214	Urban	/'mɒʊ.sɪ.kʌ/ “MAU-si-ca”	/'mɔ:.sɪ.kʌ/ “MOH-si-ca”		
Mayaro	2,791	Semi-Urban	/me:.'ja..ɪo:/ “May-YA-ro”	/maɪ.'ja..ɪo:/ “My-YA-ro”		
Moriah	2,151	Community	/'mɔ:..ɪʌ/ “MORE-rah”	/mɔ:.'ɪaɪ.ʌ/ “Mo-RYE-ah”		

Morne Diabolo	2,536	Rural	/ˈmɔːn ˈdi.a.bl/	/mɔːn ˈdʒab/	/mɔːn dia. ˈblo/	/ˈmɔʊnt dia.blɔ/
			“Morne-Dia-BL”	“Morne-JAB”	“Morne-Dia-BLO”	“MOUNT-Diabolo”
Morne Quinton	188	Community	/mɔːn ˈkwɪn.tʌn/	/mɔːn ˈkɪn.tʌn/		
			“Morne-KWIN-ton”	“Morne-KIN-ton”		
Palo Seco	1,770	Urban	/ˈpaloː ˈse.koː/	/ˈpaloː ˈseː.koː/		
			“Pa-lo SEH-co”	“Pa-lo SAY-co”		
Piparo	1,249	Semi-Urban Community	/ˈpi. ˈpa.ɪoː/	/ˈpiː. ˈpa.ɪoː/		
			“pih-PA-ro”	“Pee-pa-ro”		
Plymouth	1,191	Community	/ˈpli.mʌθ/	/ˈplai.mʌθ/		
			“PLIH-muth”	“PLY-muth”		
Preysal	4,544	Urban	/ˈpreː.sal/	/ˈpriː.sal/		
			“PRAY-sal”	“PREE-sal”		
Princes Town	9,233	Urban	/ˈpɪn.ses.tɔŋ/	/ˈpiɛs.tɔŋ/	/ˈpɪn.sɪs.tɔŋ/	
			“Prin-CESS-Tong”	“PRESS-Tong”	“Prin-CISS-Tong”	
Roussillac	2,105	Urban	/ˈɹo.si.lak/	/ˈrɒʊ.si.lak/	/ˈɹuː.si.lak/	
			“ROH-see-lac”	“ROW-see-lac”	“ROO-see-lac”	
Sainte Madeleine	2,450	Urban	/ˈseːnt mad. ˈlɪn/	/ˈseːnt mad. ˈlɪm/		
			“Sainte-Mad-LYN”	“Sainte-Mad-LINE”		

Sangre Grande	20, 710	Urban	/san.'di: gɪɑn.'di:/ “San-DEE Gran-DEE”	/'gɪɑn.di:/ “GRAN-dee”	/san.'gɪe: gɪɑn.'de:/ “San-GRAY Gran-DAY”	
San Juan	15,772	Urban	/'sa.wɔ:/ “Sah-WORE”	/'san.wʌn/ “San-WON”		
Siparia	6, 170	Urban	/sɪ.'pɑ.i.i:.ʌ/ “Si-PA-ree-a”	/sɪ.pə.'i.i:.ʌ/ “Si-puh-REE-a”		
Xavier Street (Extension) (St. Charles Village)	5,320	Urban	/'zɑ.vje:.sti:t/ “ZAH-vi-er Street”	/ɛk'ze:vjʌ.sti:t/ “EX-zay-vi-er Street”		

This table simply displays the place names of the study in relation to the population size, the status of each place name, as well as the respelling and phonemic transcription of the place name. See Appendices for the questionnaire.

3.2 Research Questions

The following section starts with the main research question, followed by the sub-questions. The research question is “Why do people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago?” In relation to the sub-questions of the research, they include:

1. “Who are the speakers using or pronouncing some of these place names?”

2. “What areas do the participants reside from who pronounce these place names differently?”
3. “What place names do the participants pronounce differently?”

3.3 Sources of Data

In attempting to answer this question, “Why do people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago?”, qualitative analysis is the best option in conducting this research. Shank clarifies qualitative research as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (5). In structuring and evaluating this problem, both primary and secondary sources were utilized. The basis of this study is generally qualitative due to the fact that it evaluates data through observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

3.3.1 Primary Data

With respect to the primary sources of data, they included the interviewing and observation of variations of pronunciations of place names by seventy students from The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, as well as among some family members of the researcher between the ages 12 and 79 who reside in the West and South parts of Trinidad. This allowed for a wide range of data and a varying degree of responses from all different walks of life and backgrounds. Furthermore, questionnaires were also used in some aspects with respect to reaching out to people and getting feedback. Emphasis was placed on the diversification of pronunciation and adding value to Trinidad and Tobago English and the two English Creoles with regard to the participants of the research and variables such as age, formal education, residence, ethnicity and socio-economic class.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

With regard to secondary data, these were acquired through articles, books, journal articles by academics and researchers with respect to studies done on retention of place names, variations of pronunciations and the history and origin of place names (see Literature Review). Also, my project supervisor, Dr. Ferreira was instrumental in providing relevant information and helping guide the research. Furthermore, there was an interview done with Theron Thompson, who is a recent graduate and vlogger on YouTube (@HunterTT) with respect to videos done on variations of pronunciations in regard to words, place names and slang used by citizens, university students and people in general from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

The gathering of primary data included responses from seventy University students and twenty family members between the ages 12 and 79 through questionnaires, interviews and observation.

The questionnaires emphasized the pronunciation of place names, as well as where the primary stress was placed. With respect to the fifty University students chosen, some were drawn from the UWI Linguistics Society (UWILS) They included thirty-five males and thirty-five females were equally chosen so as to ensure a fair balance in regard to having no gender bias among participants, as well as an all round study with respect to different walks of life, background and the outright diversity within the country. Furthermore, with regard to collecting data from family members, a similar approach was also taken, i.e., ten males and ten females were also chosen so as to ensure fairness and no gender bias.

Participants were asked to pronounce place names as they knew them to be, with emphasis placed on the pronunciation and audio recordings being used so as to conduct the interviews and ensure credibility and reliability. Lastly, with respect to the questionnaires, they were used in some instances where other participants could not always be interviewed. Participants responded to the choices on the questionnaires based on what they knew the place name to be. The gathering of data was conducted over the latter part of 2020, through online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, as well as face to face interaction.

With regard to secondary data, these were gathered through nine other articles based on different language influences on place names, phonological variation and retention of place names as well as weekly meetings with my project supervisor. As mentioned, I also interviewed Theron Thompson, a graduate of Linguistics (and Spanish), who is also interested in this topic and who produced some YouTube videos on the topic. It must be noted that the interviewee gave his permission to be interviewed and recorded with respect to the study in focus (see Appendices). The interview consisted of about 10 semi-structured questions based on his own experience and findings with respect to variation of pronunciations within Trinidad and Tobago. The interviewee was a valuable informant/consultant, and as such fulfilled the role of a source in the context.

3.5 Data Analysis

The primary data collected were based on the responses by participants between the ages 12-79, i.e., University students and family members who came from different areas, backgrounds and walks of life with respect to the variations of pronunciations of place names within Trinidad and

Tobago. The data reflected how people who came from or reside from the South side of Trinidad pronounced place names, compared to people who came from the West part of Trinidad, as well as other regions. This showed the diversity, as well as the variations of pronunciations within Trinidad and Tobago. With respect to University students, not everyone came from South and West Trinidad. There were people who came from or resided in East, North and Central Trinidad, as well as Tobago. Some of these same participants had their own variation of pronouncing place names, while there were those who had another variation for pronouncing those same place names. Furthermore, the same concept that was used to target university students is the same one that was used to approach family members. Family members came from all different parts within Trinidad. They included East, North, South and West Trinidad. This was done to ensure the diversity among the family members from the different areas. Also, factors such as age, area of residence and how long they have been living there were taken into consideration when going about this research. One can say that the participants pronounced place names or chose place names on the questionnaire based on their community or idiosyncratic style. With that being said, this can include what they grew up hearing, what they were taught, the fear of being ridiculed because of the way they pronounce things, their own interpretation of the pronunciation of the word, the influences of their environment, as well as language influences, education and social status.

Secondary data were obtained through online articles. The online articles in journals provided information about the phonological variation and retention of place names. The recording of the interview was transcribed into text which allowed for thorough analysis of the material by a member of the YouTube and UWI fraternity.

3.6 Presentation of Data

Table 2: The preliminary results of the questionnaire on place names and the number of people who chose the different variants

Place Names	Options				
Bacolet	“Ba-coLET” 58	“Ba-co-LAY” 11	“Ba-co-LEH” 7		Don’t know 14
Blanchisseuse	“Blan-chee-S HARES” 54	“Blan-shee-SHEZ” 28	“Blan-chee-C HAIRS” 5		Don’t know 3
Brazil	“BRA-zil” 55	“Bra-ZIL” 32			Don’t know 3
Brasso Seco	“Bra-so SEH-ko” 45	“Bra-SEH-ko” 10	“Bra-SAY-ko” 4	“Bra-so SAY-ko” 27	Don’t know 4
Canaan	“Kay-NAN” 75	“Kay-NIN” 3			Don’t know 12
Champs Fleurs	“Sha-FLEH” 36	“Sha-FLARE” 45			Don’t know 9

Diego Martin	“DIH-go Mar-tin” 28	“DIH-go” 6	“DAY-go Mar-tin” 50	“DAY-go” 3	Don’t know 3
Ecclesville	“EH-cles-ville” 62	“EE-cles-ville” 7			Don’t know 21
Edinburg	“EH-din-bur g” 77	“EE-din-burg” 11			Don’t know 2
Endeavour	“IN-dea-vour” 13	“EN-dea-vour” 77			Don’t know 0
Enterprise	“EN-ter-prise” 78	“IN-ter-prise” 12			Don’t know 0
Erin	“Eh-RIN” 63	“Ay-REEN” 18			Don’t know 9
Icacos	“Eye-CAcos” 10	“Ee-CA-cos” 68			Don’t know 12
La Horquetta	“La-Hor-KET TA” 31	“LA-Hor-Kitta” 5	“La HOR-kitta” 50		Don’t know 4

Lambeau	“Lam-BO” 58	“Lam-BOO” 17			Don’t know 15
La Puerta	“La PUER-ta” 75	“LUH Puer-ta” 2	“La PUEL-ta” 5	“La-PUERR-ta”	Don’t know 8
La Seiva	“La-SIGH-va” 30	“La-SEE-va” 40			Don’t know 20
Laventille	“La-ven TILL” 78	“La-van-TEE” 11			Don’t know 1
Les Coteaux	“Leh-KEE-to” 8	“Lay-KO-to” 55			Don’t know 27
Los Bajos	“Los-BA-jos” 57	“Los-BAY-jos” 18			Don’t know 15
Maraval	“Ma-RA-val” 82	“Mar-VAL” 7			Don’t know 1
Matelot	“MATT-lot” 69	“MATE-lot” 16			Don’t know 5
Matura	“Ma-TU-ra” 76	“MER-tu-ra” 10			Don’t Know 4

Mausica	“MAU-si-ca” 69	“MOH-si-ca” 12			Don't know 9
Mayaro	“May-YA-ro” 79	“My-YA-ro” 9			Don't know 2
Moriah	“MORE-rah” 8	“Mo-RYE-ah” 67			Don't know 15
Morne Diablo	“Morne-Dia-BL” 3	“Morne-JAB” 1	“Morne-Dia-BLO” 66	“MOUNT-Dia-blo” 2	Don't know 18
Morne Quinton	“Morne-KWIN-ton” 44	“Morne-KIN-ton” 19			Don't know 27
Palo Seco	“Pa-lo SEH-co” 44	“Pa-lo.SAY-co” 42			Don't know 4
Piparo	“Pih-PA-ro” 64	“Pee-PA-ro” 22			Don't know 4
Plymouth	“PLIH-muth” 49	“PLY-muth” 39			Don't know 2

Preysal	“PRAY-sal” 53	“PREE-sal” 35			Don’t know 2
Princes Town	“Prin-CESS Tong” 30	“PRESS Tung” 1	“Prin-CISS Tong” 55		Don’t know 4
Roussillac	“ROH-see-lac ” 36	“ROW-see-lac” 13	“ROO-see-lac ” 26		Don’t know 15
Sainte Madeline	“Saint-Mad- LYN” 61	“Saint-Mad- LINE” 19			Don’t know 10
Sangre Grande	“San-DEE Gran-DEE” 52	“GRAN-dee” 12	“San-GRAY Gran-DAY” 21		Don’t know 5
San Juan	“Sah WORE” 85	“San WON” 4			Don’t know 1
Siparia	“Si-PA-ree-a” 86	“Si-puh-REE-a ” 3			Don’t know 1
Xavier Street	“ZAH-vi-er Street” 59	“EX-zay-vi-er Street” 26			Don’t know 5

3.7 Ethics

With respect to collecting data from University students and family members, oral consent was asked and granted when it came to conducting interviews. Nothing was done without permission. However, when it came to conducting questionnaires, proper instructions were still stated and ethical procedures were observed and executed. The identities of the participants were not revealed in the study out of respect and ethics. Also, for the interview with the YouTuber, oral consent was asked and granted.

3.8 Limitations

With respect to the gathering of data collection for both primary and secondary sources, limitations were encountered. It must also be mentioned that some of these articles or journals were not always readily available. Because of instances like these, the variety of online and print sources was relatively limited. There are also no prior studies done on the pronunciation of place names within Trinidad and Tobago, and the reasons for the variations of place names within Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, the availability of setting up interviews was not always easy due to the fact that participants were not always available and had to reschedule. It was also difficult to screen out participants who were simply guessing the pronunciation of place names without any familiarity with the places or acquaintance with their inhabitants. Lastly, with regard to secondary data, it was lacking due to the fact there was not a wide enough variety of people to contact or interview, etc., with respect to this study of focus.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the results found after the collection of data and analysis in relation to the research question; “Why do people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago?” This section was divided into three subsections which were further dissected based on the sub-questions of this research regarding categories on variables such as social, linguistic, cultural and historical.

4.1 Social Variables on Language Variation with regard to place names:

In looking at the data, we saw that social variables or factors played a critical role in influencing people, as well as contributing to the variations of pronunciations. Some of the social variables included age, gender, place of residency, education, socio-economic class and even ethnicity. With regard to place of residency or geographical location, we saw that based on the area participants came from and how long they have been staying determined how they pronounced a particular place name or variation. For example, participants who came from or resided in South or even Central Trinidad and spent 20 years, 30 years living in these areas or regions pronounced certain place names a particular way, for example, “Si-pa-REE-a”, “ZAH-vi-er Street”, “San WAH” “BRA-zil” and “La-van-TEE”, for Siparia, Xavier Street, San Juan, Brazil and Lavntille, respectively, compared to outsiders and newcomers from East, West or North Trinidad who had spent less than 15 years there and pronounced the same place names another way, for example, “Si-PAA-ri-a”, “EX-zay-vi-er Street”, “Sah WON”, “Bra-ZIL”, and “La-ven-TILL”.¹

¹ I note that Laventille Road in Santa Cruz is pronounced “La-van-TEE”, but the dwellers of that area pronounce the Port-of-Spain place as “La-ven-TILL”, to clearly distinguish between the two.

In addition to place of residency, age was another important factor. In linguistics, age grading variation means the distinctions in speech habits within a community that is related to age (Wagner). Some of the ages of participants ranged from 21 years to 56 years of age. The ages of participants simply reflected the linguistic changes of one's speech over their ageing process and within a particular community level. Each generation's vernacular can simply be a reflection of their age. It was found that the older generation pronounced place names based on the typical or common pronunciation, compared to the younger generation which had a different variant or twist to the typical variation, for example, "Ma-RA-val" compared to "Mar-VAL" for Maraval, and "PRESS Tung" compared to "Prin-CISS Tong" or "Prin-CESS Tong" for Princes Town.

Furthermore, as it pertains to socio-economic class and education, it was observed that educated/university students, classist and rich people pronounced place names based on a more Anglicised or reading pronunciation version or variant compared to poorer, rural and less formally educated people who pronounced place names the more traditional way, for example. Also, in terms of gender, it was discovered that more women eventually completed the questionnaire than males. It must be noted that there were differences in speech patterns of both genders with regard to their vowel patterns and syllable stress, an interesting area for further research which is currently beyond the remit of this study.

Lastly, ethnicity was another important factor in looking at the research, as well as determining how they spoke and where they grew up. Some of the ethnicities of the participants included African, Indian, Dougla, Chinese, Syrian and Caucasian. Each ethnicity had their own way of pronouncing place names. For example, Indo-Trinidadians in West Trinidad would say "PRAY-sal" compared to Indo-Trinidadians in Trinidad South Trinidad who would say

“PREE-sal”. Afro-Tobagonians in Tobago would say “PLIM-muth”, compared to Afro-Trinidadians in North and East Trinidad who would say “PLY-muth”.

4.2 Linguistic and historical influences on language Variation in reference to place names:

Linguistic and historical influences were another important factor that played a pivotal role in this research, as well as stood out in the results or analysis. The data showed that participants chose place names based on the spelling pronunciation of the word, phonological variation of place names with regard to stress, place and manner of articulation, vowels such as front, central and back vowels, as well as consonants, for example, diphthongs and monophthongs, syllable stress, people’s own interpretation and pronunciation of place names, language influences in general as well as language policies and even how language is constantly changing which results in language, words, and place names varying in pronunciation and changing in spelling. For example, more respondents appeared to favour the variation “MAY-ah-ro” compared to “MY-ah-ro” due to it being the spelling pronunciation of the actual word, i.e., Mayaro, and the variation “EN-dea-vour” compared to “IN-dea-vour” for the actual name, i.e., Endeavour. In terms of people’s own interpretation and pronunciation of the word, we found that participants chose place names based on what they thought it to be, for example, “La SEE-va” compared to “La SIGH-va” even though the traditional or common or typical pronunciation of the actual word La Seiva is “La SIGH-va.” Furthermore, with respect to phonological variation, we saw that participants chose place name pronunciations based on where they thought the emphasis or stress was, as well as place and manner of articulation with regard to vowels and consonants.

Finally, in terms of language and historical influences, as well as language change, participants with some foreign language background tended to choose place name pronunciations based on countries or speakers that may have named them as a result of language, history and colonization, for example, the variation “San WON” tries to approximate Spanish pronunciation, while “Sah WAH” is traditional and French and French Creole-influenced.

4.3 Cultural influences on language Variation in respect to place names

Lastly, it was observed that cultural influences played an influential role in this study. Based on the data, participants chose place names based on general familiarity, personal identity, family upbringing, environment and what they were taught. For example, participants more favoured the variation “San-DEE Gran-DEE” compared to “Gran-DEE” and “San-GRAY Gran-DAY”, “DAY-go Mar-tin” compared to “DIH-go Mar-tin”, “DAY-go” and DIH-go”, also “EN-ter-prise” compared to “IN-ter-prise”, as well as “MATE-lot” compared to “MATT-lot” even though the general pronunciation of the actual word Matelot is “MATT-lot” and finally “Morne Dia-BLO” compared to “Morne Dia-BL”, “Morne JAB”, “MOUNT Dia-blo”, with a few participants choosing the option “don’t know.” It is important to also note that some of the participants did not know some of these place names, did not know how to pronounce some of them, as well as never heard of them before.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study revealed that there were many reasons for the variations of pronunciations by people within the country as a result of variables, influences, as well as linguistic, cultural, social and historical factors. These factors, variables, and influences were important in making connections as well as highlighting certain variants, observations and discoveries.

Based on the variations of pronunciation, the study shows the diversity within the country. The study showed that the variations of pronunciations of place names by all people within the country are acceptable, except to natives of the area with a long family history and deep roots in a particular locale. The categories found within the study coincided with the definitions and literature from Labov's theory and Hickey's model of language change, as well as works by other linguists, with regard to variables, factors, and external influences on language.

The results revealed the importance of variables as a contributing factor in examining the reasons for the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. These variables included gender, age, geographic location, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and many more.

The discussion will highlight specific patterns of pronunciations, for example similarities and differences, as well as further examine all of the reasons for the variations of pronunciations by people within the country. Lastly, this study found that the same concepts, variables, factors, influences discussed here in relation to looking at variations of pronunciations of place names by people in Trinidad was also similar to other studies done around the world.

5.1 Significant Outcomes

The results of this study revealed that there were in fact variations of pronunciations of place names by people within the country, as well as there were many reasons for these variations, and the variations of pronunciations of place names put forward are acceptable, and the ones stated may not only be right for University students and family members but for all peoples within society. While some reasons may have been generally positive and common with regard to showing the diversity for the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within the country, there were some aspects that were a bit concerning with respect to people's attitudes towards other variations of pronunciations by other people, as well as the fear of being ridiculed for even the usage of Trinidadian English Creole and Tobagonian English Creole and associated place name pronunciations. All this can be attributed to what people may have been influenced by, taught, and believed. This study has not only shown, called and highlighted the need for acceptance of diversity of variations of pronunciation of place names by people but also the recognition and status of Trinidadian English Creole and Tobagonian English Creole as official languages and not just marginalised languages. Hopefully, this research will bring about such changes with regard to diversity of variations of pronunciations of only not place names but words, slang, idioms, jargon, and many more, as well as the end of stigmas and negative attitudes towards Creole languages, languages in general and even variations of pronunciations. Also, it is also important to note that the feedback from participants has generally been favourable and inspiring with regard to the research.

Furthermore, this study also shows how the variations of pronunciations of place names is acceptable and can be used by the media, television presenters, business community, civil society, as well as be taught in schools based on their language influence and country of origin.

Tourists and other foreigners (including newscasters), as well as people in the country who may have never heard of some of these place names before and do not know how to pronounce them, can now use this study as a guide in pronouncing some of these place names. It can also be used for maps, brochures, dictionaries, pamphlets, advertisements, endorsements, public relations and even advertisements. Caribbean countries, as well as other countries in the world can also use this as a guide to looking at variations of pronunciations of place names within their own country. Lastly, this study has also shown the need to look at and do more research of place names within the country, as well as examine, observe and even record other variations of pronunciations by linguists, researchers and students and other citizens within the country.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The research question, “Why do people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago?”, was constructed so as to examine the reasons for the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as to identify the many variations of place names within the country. The question was successfully answered in this study, as the findings revealed that there were many reasons for the variations of pronunciations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago. Some of the reasons included education, class, prestige, reading pronunciations or dependence on spelling, language influences, people’s attitudes and the fear of being ridiculed, as well as family influences and upbringing, environment, culture, identity and even our one’s own interpretation and intuition of the place name. In some cases, people did not know the pronunciation of the place name or had never heard of the place name before.

Furthermore, in conducting this research, age, gender, as well as where people lived and how long people have they been living there were taking into consideration and factored in with relation to targeting UWI students, as well as family members which gave for a better analysis and a clearer understanding of the research, as well as the validity and reliability of the study. It also touched on an area of study that has never been done before in the country which made it very interesting.

With respect to the analysis of data, this aspect of the study saw an emphasis on the number of areas in which the many participants came from for example West, South, Central, North and East Trinidad, as well as Tobago and how long have they been living there, as well as

the different variations chosen by the participants with respect to the place names they knew or grew up saying. In some cases, participants chose the option they did not know. Furthermore, based on the analysis of data, it was concluded that factors and influences (social, linguistic, cultural, historical) account for the reasons why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago

Limitations were met during the collection of data for both primary and secondary sources. Data were collected from articles, online journals and books. It must be mentioned that some of these articles or journals were not available due to the fact that the author or website was not making it available. Furthermore, the availability of setting up interviews was not always easy due to the fact that participants were not always available and had to reschedule. Lastly, with regard to secondary data, it was lacking due to the fact there was not a wide variety of people to contact or interview, etc, with respect to this study of focus, as well as research or studies done on the retentions of place names within Trinidad and Tobago, and the reasons for the variations of place names within Trinidad and Tobago.

The aims were met, however, by highlighting the many variations of place names by people within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as advocating the need to add value to Trinidad and Tobago English Creoles and showing the diversification of pronunciation within the country by people.

Recommendations for future research on this topic would include looking at more place names, street names within the country, as well as the wider Caribbean, even words in general with respect to variations of pronunciations, as well as sayings and terminologies. Furthermore,

the scope of research will not only be centred on UWI students and family members but people in general so as to get a general consensus of the population.

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Appendices

Variations of Pronunciations of Place Names by People within Trinidad and Tobago:

This is part of my research project. The research is focused on how and why people pronounce certain place names differently within Trinidad and Tobago.

Please help me by filling out the questionnaire. Each place name has two or more options - two or three different ways of being pronounced. You should choose one. If you have any questions or comments or alternative pronunciations, please contact me at daniellmoore767@gmail.com. Thank you.

Sex:

Male

Female

Age:

Where do you live?

How long have you been living there?

1. Siparia

Si-PA-ree-a

Si-puh-REE-a

Don't know

2. Preysal

PRAY-sal

PREE-sal

Don't know

3. Princes Town

Prin-CESS Tong

PRESS Tung

Prin-CISS Tong

Don't know

4. Les Coteaux

LEH-kee-to

LAY-ko-to

Don't know

5. San Juan

Sah-WORE

San-WON

Don't know

6. Champs Fleurs

Sha-FLEH

Sha-FLARE

Don't know

7. Sangre Grande

San-DEE Gran-DEE

GRAN-dee

San-GRAY Gran-DAY

Don't know

8. Xavier Street

ZAH-vi-er Street

EX-zay-vi-er Street

Don't know

9. Diego Martin

DIH-go Mar-tin

DIH-go

DAY-go Mar-tin

DAY-go

Don't know

10. Brazil

BRA-zil

Bra-ZIL

Don't know

11. Piparo

PIH-pa-ro

PEE-pa-ro

Don't know

12. Laventille

La-ven-TILL

La-van-TEE

Don't know

13. Mayaro

May-YA-ro

My-YA-ro

Don't know

14. Morne Diablo

Morne Dia-BL

Morne JAB

Morne Dia-BLO

MOUNT Dia-blo

Don't know

15. Plymouth

PLIH-muth

PLY-muth

Don't know

16. La Puerta

La-PUER-ta

La-PUERR-ta

La-PUEL-ta

LUH-Puer-ta

Don't know

17. La Seiva

La-SIGH-va

La-SEE-va

Don't know

18. Matelot

MATT-lot

MATE-lot

Don't know

19. Edinburgh

EH-din-burg

EE-din-burg

Don;t know

20. Icacos

Eye-CA-cos

Ee-CA-cos

Don't know

21. La Horquetta

La-Hor-KETTA

LA-Hor-kitta

La-HOR-kitta

Don't know

22. Lambeau

Lam-BO

Lam-BOO

Don't know

23. Enterprise

EN-ter-prise

IN-ter-prise

Don't know

24. Matura

Ma-TU-ra

MER-tu-ra

Don't know

25. Palo Seco

Pa-lo-SEH-co

Pa-lo-SAY-co

Don't know

26. Mausica

MAU-si-ca (first syllable rhyming with COW)

MOH-si-ca

Don't know

27. Blanchisseuse

Blan-chee-SHARES

Blan-shee-SHEZ

Blan-chee-CHAIRS

Don't know

28. Moriah

MORE-rah

Mo-RYE-ah

Don't know

29. Canaan

Kay-NAN

Kay-NIN

Don't know

30. Roussillac

ROH-see-lac

ROW-see-lac (ROW rhyming with COW)

ROO-see-lac

Don't know

31. Bacolet

Ba-co-LET

Bah-co-LAY

Bah-co-LEH

Don't know

32. Sainte Madeleine

Saint Mad-LYN

Saint Mad-LINE

Don't know

33. Ecclesville

EH-cles-ville

EE-cles-ville

Don't know

34. Brasso Seco

Bra-so-SEH-ko

Bra-SEH-ko

Bra-SAY-ko

Bra-SO-say-ko

Don't know

35. Endeavour

EN-dea-vour

IN-dea-vour

Don't know

36. Los Bajos

Los -BA-jos

Los-BAY-jos

Don't know

37. Morne Quinton

Morn-KWIN-ton

Morn-KIN-ton

Don't know

38. Maraval

Ma-RA-val

Mar-VAL

Don't know

39. Erin

Eh-RIN

Ay-REEN

Don't know

Other Comments

Interview Questions:

1. Intro-brief intro of yourself- who are you, how old are you, etc.
2. What was your research on?
3. What made you do research in this particular area?
4. What was your research focus on? What was the aim? / purpose?
5. What did it tell you? Or what did you find out?
6. Were there any differences or anything that stood out? If yes, what were they?
7. How was research/ data collected?
8. How were the participants chosen? What were their backgrounds, i.e. ages, nationality, education, etc?
9. With respect to your YouTube channel, what made you start doing linguistic videos with regard to language variation?
10. How did your video on the Bajans and Jamaicans pronouncing certain things come about?

Transcription of Interview with Theron Thompson

Interviewer: Brief intro of yourself - who are you, how old are you?, etc.

Interviewee: My name is Theron Thompson and I am 27 years old. I am originally from Trincity but went to school in the South all my life. After secondary school, I attended UWI and graduated in 2016 with a BA Linguistics and Spanish. I am currently a Spanish teacher at Success Laventille School.

Interviewer: What was your research for your thesis?

Interviewee: Perceptual dialectology with respect to the way people thought language varied across Trinidad and Tobago.

Interviewer: What made you do research in this particular area?

Interviewee: Initially this was not my first idea. My partner, Kristin Wright, and myself wanted to look at language variation with regard to panyard language, slang or expressions. However, we realized there was not enough information on the topic to do a lit review and other stuff. Because of this, as well as advice from my thesis supervisor, Dr Stell, and some curiosity, we decided to look at perceptual dialectology with regard to the way people thought language varied in Trinidad and Tobago. The idea came about when looking at a similar study done in California, USA. We simply wanted to look at how people in the south said something compared to people

from East or West Trinidad, for example, St. Augustine, as well as due to the fact we were both from south. Lastly, it was a study that had never been done before.

What was your research focus on? What was the aim?/ purpose?

It had nothing to do with language variation necessarily but more the perception of language variation by people in Trinidad and Tobago. We all use the term *dialect* very loosely. We all used the term *dialect* for everything until we went to university at UWI and studied linguistics and realized it takes a different meaning to what the layman calls *dialect*. We wanted to see if there was any merit in these perceptions of these people who are linguists, general people, random people and see if that information, those perceptions corroborate with what actual linguist say or language variation in Trinidad, see if there was any collaboration there, as well as see if there was any value in the information.

Interviewer: How were the participants chosen? For the research per say, what was the criteria used? Did you all have specific words, slang, phrases?

Interviewee: In the study we looked at in California, we saw that the people there based their responses according to lexical items rather than language variation theorists. People from this area say “totally hot” and things like that, instead of “totally”, or whatever the right pronunciation is. We also started to see the value of the hip accent and the hillbilly accent. We didn’t really want to focus on the accents but just on the perceptions of language variation. What we did was ask people to circle or identify areas in Trinidad that they thought were different for

them. There were steps you had to go through in terms of looking at a map and identifying where people spoke differently to you. The next step was to say how they spoke differently and why you think they spoke differently, like give it a label and out of these labels, you had distinct things like bush language, stush language, ghetto language and gangster language, and things like that. So yeah it was text and you had to identify the different boundaries of language variation in Trinidad based on their own regular knowledge and then they had to give a label, and after had to clarify why they gave it a label. Some people who were not too sure of things, we had to look at it and then ask them, why you cannot say this, can you give a clarification why you say Hindi. Some people started to identify Hindi as a language variation in Trinidad, but of course not we don't speak that here. So we then had to find out, "Do you think that Hindi is used by certain people in this area or do you think people speak Hindi in this area?" The final part was that they had to do a short bio of themselves of their age, nationality, where they from, etc. Of course, we only wanted people who were Trinidadian, even though we had foreigners who were studying at the UWI. The only problem with the foreigners was that they were not from here and wouldn't understand the language variation from here.

Interviewer: Based on the results or what you saw over a period of time with respect to the responses by participants, what did it tell you? Or, what did you find out or see or even picked up on?

Interviewee: Firstly, before I answer that question, I would have to give you a bit of a background of the research question that we were looking for, and looking to find, as well as the linguistic definition and the isoglosses we used to corroborate the information. So we wanted to

find out what perceptions of the language variations in Trinidad, what were the perceived geolinguistics stereotypes, how people described language variation and to what extent these stereotypes matched isoglosses in Trinidad. According to a sociolinguist language varies by five variables, including socio-economic class, social, urban and rural areas, race, age and style. So out of the five things, the linguist or researcher said language varied on, the results that we got showed that the perceptions of people corroborated four of those things. They include socio-economic class, ethnicity, urban and rural areas. So in the results, we started to see people from this area speak like ghetto people, or people from this area speak like stush people, people from this area speak like bush people, people from this area speak Patois, Spanish and things like that. So we now have to say what these people are saying about these areas, so for instance people were identifying areas like Morvant/Laventille with ghettos and west like the so-called rich. It doesn't mean that everybody who comes from these areas speaks like that. Based on the place names the respondents called, we then had to base it on urban areas, high social class, low social class, Africans, Indians, etc. We also had to look to see if there was any sought of biases towards place names chosen by participants based on certain views, beliefs, stereotypes, etc. I believe this was research to really explore and it was interesting.

Interviewer: Were there any differences or anything that stood out? If Yes, what were they?

Interviewee: There were some people who did not know Trinidad, especially people from the East/West corridor. They were asking where the boundary between north and south is, where central is, as well as this whole notion about anything past the lighthouse, grand bazaar is south,

etc. It is true. These people from the west especially, there were some people from the east/west corridor who did not identify anywhere we know, like Grand Bazaar as speaking differently to them because in their minds those places were scarce. There were definitely biases coming from there. One of the major differences coming out of there is that the perceived behavior from a certain place definitely had something to do with a gauge more than a geographical location or scope, for example, north vs. south. People literally ascribing behaviors to these people, for example the black people, the Indian people, sometimes racist and inappropriate were generally the perceptions of some people in looking at language variation, as well other factors such as ethnicity, etc.

Interviewer: How were the participants chosen? What were their backgrounds, i.e. ages, nationality, education, etc?

Interviewee: The requirement was to be a student at UWI, St. Augustine with at least a secondary school education and undergrad. No Master's or PhD students, just undergrad students from Trinidad. We tried to vary them as much as possible with people from the East/west corridor, central, south, males, females, etc. Simply a good mix of balance. Because it was my friend and myself doing the research, I took fifty students and my partner took fifty students. We were not really that random in choosing participants. Even though we were targeting university students, we did not want linguists or any student who had a language background. We did not really want to skew the data. We really wanted folk linguistics people who did not know linguistics even though they had a university education and had some level of intelligence. We wanted people who did know the terms of linguistics or simply the ins and outs of it. With that regard it wasn't

that random. The participants also had to write their background on the back so their ethnicity, where they from, their secondary school education/undergrad status. So generally it wasn't folk linguistics or random people from the streets, but I think that will be a great study. With regard to the perceptions, even though the responses were from university students, it still varied, some were not that great.

Interviewer: How was research/ data collected?

Interviewee: We really only had one methodology because the best way to represent the information was on a map, so we had the land with the outline of Trinidad and Tobago, and then asked people to draw linguistic variation boundaries on the map and then explain it. With regard to the methodology, in order to investigate Trinidad, the resident's perception of geolinguistics stereotypes to understand how Trinidadians describe language variation and different dialectal perceptions of dialectal boundaries with actual boundaries, the study followed the method of perceptual dialectology as prudent in a dialectology book. In looking at perceptual boundaries themselves, and other things, the best model was a qualitative one. Other relevant aspects of the methodology included questions, the importance of quantifying stuff and finally confidentiality.

Interviewer: With respect to your YouTube channel, what made you start doing linguistic videos with regard to language variation?

Interviewee: I started doing those videos because I was living in Colombia at the time and just finished UWI, and had fresh ideas, interests. Also doing four courses with Dr. Ferreira had a lot

of influence at UWI with regard to her experiences, stories. Many of the things Dr. Ferreira had an interest in; I also had a likeness for it as well, especially linguistics-involved things in Trinidad. I basically wanted to find out more information. Even though I was not good in phonology, pronunciation variation was something I really liked or distinguished. For example, your neighbor says baigan and you say melongene. I also did a video on people saying file page and folder page, for example I say file page and people from the east/west corridor say folder page. I just love exploring and doing social experiments.

Interviewer: How did your video on the Bajans and Jamaicans pronouncing certain things come about?

Interviewee: At the point in time, there were a lot of Trininis living in Colombia due to the partnership between UWI and the government of Colombia where students could have gone to Colombia and spent some time. While living there, I asked some of my Trini friends to come across and be part of a video where they simply pronounce some Trinidad and Tobago place names. For example, Laventil and Laventille, where a person from south may say Laventil and a person from Valsayn may say Laventee. Unfortunately, they could not come due to bad weather, so then I had to settle for my roommates who were Jamaican and Bajan. They basically had no clue how to actually pronounce some of these place names since they were not from here. They just had to look at the phonemic representation of the word and tried to pronounce it as best as possible. It also made me do other videos with me taking expressions, slang, words, from the Trinidad and Tobago English/Creole dictionary and asking my friends to give their interpretation

on what they think it means, for example, *pull bull*, *piper*, etc as commonly used within Trinidad and Tobago.