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Bush versus Stush: Linguistic Stereotypes in Trinidad

Authors:

	NAME	ID NUMBER
Author 1	THERON E. THOMPSON	812001686
Author 2	KRISTIN WRIGHT	812001806

Supervisor:

Dr Renée Figuera and Dr Gerald Stell

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3. Theron THOMPSON and Kristin WRIGHT for "Bush versus Stush: Linguistic Stereotypes in Trinidad".

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BUSH VERSUS STUSH:
LINGUISTIC STEREOTYPES IN TRINIDAD

Theron E. Thompson and Kristin Wright

Supervised by Dr Renée Figuera and Dr Gerald Stell

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Table of Contents

Abstact	5
Intoduction	6
Literature Review	8
Methodology	17
Results	19
Discussion	34
Conclusion	42
Works Cited	43

The University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus

Faculty of Humanities and Education

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics

LING 3099 Special Project in Linguistics

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

Student names: Theron E. Thompson and Kristin Wright

Student ID nos.: __ 812001686 and 812001806 _____

Degree Programme: Spanish and Linguistics

Supervisors: Renée Figuera and Gerald Stell

Title of Project: Bush versus Stush: Linguistic Stereotypes in Trinidad

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Abstract

Perceptual Dialectology (PD) is the branch of folk linguistics that deals with the regional distribution from the point of view of non-specialists (the “folk”). This study, *Bush versus Stush*¹ : *Linguistic Stereotypes in Trinidad*, aims to build upon this premise by juxtaposing these perceived dialectal boundaries and actual (linguist-defined) dialectal variation variables so as to analyse whether or not they correlate. To do so, how people describe language variation, the geolinguistic stereotypes that exist and the linguist-demarcated isoglosses of Trinidad must be understood so as to answer the questions of “What are the Perceptions of Language variation in Trinidad?”. As nothing of its kind has ever been performed in Trinidad, this study intends to pioneer the field of PD regionally, and hopefully to inspire other studies of its kind. The findings revealed intrinsic links between perceived language variation and geographical location, language attitudes and stereotypes, perceived socio-economic class and language variation and ethnicity and stereotypical language use.

¹ Stush - a Jamaican word that has recently entered the Trinbagonian lexicon.

Theron Thompson, Kristin Wright

Lecturers and Supervisors: Dr. Renée Figuera, Dr. Gerald Stell

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Bush versus Stush: Linguistic Stereotypes in Trinidad

Introduction

K.M. Petyt 1980 defines *dialectology* as the systematic study of dialect, and its history method and concepts, as opposed to its findings about a particular dialect or the dialects of a particular language. This definition is particularly interesting as one of the components is the concepts of dialects. These concepts can be systematic or ideological, resulting from ideas about dialect. This is the premise of this study; to unearth perceptions held by persons living in Trinidad about the language existing in their country. However, these perceptions held are not just perceptions of the language spoken. Preston 2013 highlights that it is perhaps the least surprising thing to find that attitudes towards language and their varieties seem to be tied to attitudes towards groups of people. Therefore it is important to first determine which dialects of the language are deemed to be distinct, where people believe linguistic boundaries exist and what mental maps of regional speech do they have (Preston 168).

Preston identified that language attitude studies do not determine where respondents think regional speech is distinct and also does not determine where regional voices are separated, which are key elements in describing and analysing why specific attitudes are held towards

particular languages. This was one of the reasons for the development of the field and methodology of Perceptual Dialectology (PD). In this way, perceptions ascribed to language and social groups, derived from general or personal stereotypes are analysed so as to better understand how and why language attitudes are prescribed, as well as the motivation behind these attitudes and perceptions.

Literature Review

Among the many existing definitions of dialectology, one common agreement is that it is the systematic study of dialects. This definition poses further questions as to what is a dialect. Chambers and Trudgill define dialect as “a variety which is grammatically (and perhaps lexically) as well as phonologically different from other varieties” (5). Today, traditional dialectology is a subfield of Sociolinguistics, which is the study of the social uses of language in its many guises (Chambers 1). Sociolinguistics was born out of the view that language could not be adequately understood without considering the social context.

Labovian sociolinguistics proposes that language variation is a reflection of social differentiation. This proposition is evident in Labov’s studies such as “The social stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores,” in which social class determined the value of the (r) employed by salespeople in socially stratified department stores across the city (Labov 45), as well as the Martha’s Vineyard Case Study, which noted age as a major determinant in the employment of the linguistic variables (aw) and (ay) on the island of Martha’s Vineyard (Labov 30). However, while Labov has pioneered research in sociolinguistics, specifically language variation studies, his methods are not without limitations. Some of these limitations include, that his studies are based on large corpora to which social values cannot be attached, the fact that they are based on pure data from which language attitudes cannot be gleaned and that these studies established sociolinguistics as a quantitatively oriented social science, leaving little room for qualitative data and its analysis.

Similarly, Dialectology has its own limitations. The main focus of traditional dialectological studies was to “draw up linguistic atlases showing the geographical distribution

of different dialect forms” (Britain). The field also aimed to disprove a theory of historical linguistics which stated that “all sound changes were regular and exceptionless” (David). The limitation of this is that these studies did not cater for perceived data, but rather produced data. The perceptions of these sound changes and the social impact of these sound changes on the population were not considered. Thus, a field in which the social perceptions of the language and language boundaries on which these linguistic atlases were analysed was developed in that of Perceptual Dialectology (PD).

Perceptual Dialectology is the branch of Dialectology that deals with regional distribution from the point of view of non specialists (the “folk”), but has, almost from the beginnings, attended to social and attitudinal factors (Preston 1). It must be noted that it has been recognised that attitudinal factors play pivotal roles in the perceptions of language; they are in fact encoded in and can be deduced from these perceptions. Thus, language attitudes inform perceptions.

In traditional PD studies, the respondent population was small, which resulted in limited data on language variation being gathered. Additionally, only one-word answers were elicited from these respondents which failed to give an accurate idea as to how persons used language. It was therefore necessary to use larger, more representative populations, and to instead focus not only on regional variation, but also on ideological ideas of language and language variation and the perception of this variation, its location and its function. For this reason, this study will take into account the perceptual language boundaries (isoglosses) which respondents identify. The isoglosses identified in this study will be compared to work on language variation in Trinidad done by Solomon, who identifies the social correlates of variation in Trinidad which are

socio-economic class, urban/rural origins, ethnicity, age and style of which the first three are applicable to this study (Solomon 180).

Although PD is seen as a relatively new and unexplored field, especially in the Caribbean region, it actually dates back to at least the 19th century with studies being conducted in The Netherlands and Japan by researchers such as Daan, Grootaers, Mase, Sibata and Weijnen. These studies focused primarily on perceptual difference in relation to the perceivers location and not perceptual difference in general. Respondents were asked to draw arrows from their location (location 1) to an area of perceived difference or similarity (location 2) assuming that the respondent in their identified area of difference or similarity (location 2) would draw an arrow back to (location 1) to identify perceived difference or similarity. This method was problematic given that arrows were not always reciprocated as respondents in location may have perceived speakers in location 3 and not in location 1 to be similar or different. However, this method was revised and further developed in the late 20th century as other methodologies in the field were used. The goals of PD are to understand how people describe language variation, to identify geolinguistic stereotypes/perceptions of regions, and to ascertain the extent to which these perceptions corroborate with actual isoglosses (dialectal boundaries) given by linguists/dialectologists, in this case Solomon's language variation boundaries of Trinidad.

PD approaches can be seen as bridging the gap between language attitudes research and social dialectological studies (Preston 1). Herein lies the problem. Within the Caribbean context, and more specifically that of Trinidad and Tobago, there have been some studies conducted on language attitudes by the Jamaican Language Unit (specifically for Jamaica) and on dialectology most notably by Solomon. Thus, the research gap is found in the question put forward by this

study; “What are the perceptions of language variation in Trinidad?” which to date remains unanswered as it relates to this territory. The purpose of this research is to probe the issue of local conceptualisations about languages, speakers, and discursive practices also known as language ideologies by investigating the PD of Trinidad starting at the national level (in Trinidad only) and later expanding to other territories, institutions, social groups and more. In this way, this research will add value to the diversity of ways in which people assign social value to their own language and to that of others.

Just as PD bridges the gap between dialectological studies and attitudes to language, linguistic ethnography, the theoretical framework of this study conjoins two fields, Linguistics and Ethnography. Creese, 2010 postulates that there is more to be gained in the unison of Ethnography and Linguistics than in their separation. She posits that ethnography enhances the detailed technical analysis that linguistics brings, while linguistics is said to be enhanced by the attention paid to context (139). Ethnography provides linguistics with a close reading of context not necessarily represented in some kinds of interactional analysis and systematic discourse analysis while linguistics provides an authoritative analysis of language use not typically available through participant observation and the taking of field notes. This theoretical framework allows for the unconventional methodologies of PD while also promoting contextual analysis, a skill heavily needed in PD as the method of collecting data for this study requires contextual knowledge of Trinidad both for the researcher and the respondent.

All the available literature in this field are methodologies used in the field. Thus, the literature being critiqued in this study will be methodologies. Many different data collection

methods exist in PD. Three of these methods, taken from older as well as more recent studies include:

The “**Listen for Differences Method**”: this is a well-known method, also known as matched-guise, in which the respondent is played voice samples of speakers of different regions using speech without regionally distinctive grammatical or lexical features, and is asked to identify the region from which the speaker derives (“Perceptual Dialectology” 11–12). This method proves effective, but only to a certain extent as it only allows for the identification of geolinguistic stereotypes but does not facilitate the description of language variation nor does it provide information as to the relation of perception to isoglosses for a given territory. As a result, this method would have to be used alongside another to glean all of the information necessary for this study, which would be time consuming for the researchers and tedious for the respondent.

The “**Little Arrow Method**”: this is a study in which respondents are asked to draw on a map an arrow from their location to anywhere in their surroundings that they perceive as having similar or different speech. While this method was popular in earlier PD studies, “all the sites were not connected to each other, nor was any one site identified as similar by a respondent outside of the boundary and interconnected bundles of arrows seldom crossed the professional boundaries” (“Perceptual Dialectology” 3). This method proves to be unworthy of application to this study as it is simply too much to ask respondents to identify both similarities and differences in speech of different regions. Furthermore, it does not address how respondents describe language variation, nor does it facilitate the gleaning of geolinguistic stereotypical information. Additionally, this method is not culturally or geographically relevant to the study in Trinidad given that geographically, Trinidad is much smaller than Japan and the UK where this method

was employed, as well that Trinidad's language variation/ accent variation isn't as widespread as the situation in the UK.

Unlike the aforementioned methods which only addressed one of the three research questions, the **“Draw-a-Map Method”** (“Perceptual Dialectology” 14) is the most apt for this study. In this method, respondents are asked to draw boundaries of their perceptions of speech variation on a map provided and to write down as many descriptors of the way people spoke in those areas (“Perceptual Dialectology” 23). When respondents draw boundaries around places where they perceive that persons speak differently from themselves, they are, in fact, accessing their former perceptions of linguistic difference (“Perceptual Dialectology in the 21st Century” 2). This linguistic difference is the basis of how they describe the variation and can as well give insight into geolinguistic stereotypes as such stereotypes have an effect on how language difference is perceived. Furthermore, “in perception oriented tasks, respondents access their conceptual worlds, calling upon such things as mental maps of dialect regions and other deeply-held or presupposed beliefs about the nature of language diversity and even language itself” (“Perceptual Dialectology in the 21st Century” 3). This lends itself to perceptual boundaries which will be manifested on these maps, which will in turn be analysed against actual isogloss boundaries so as to ascertain whether or not these perceptual boundaries have corroborated with those put forward by scholars. According to Preston, for tasks in PD, respondents rely on their own internal concepts in order to provide information. For example, when respondents are given maps to label speech boundaries, the interviewees “elicit their internal concepts of the divisions to be made and what it means for people to speak differently in different places, for we have given them no examples of people speaking (“Perceptual

Dialectology in the 21st Century” 1).” For Preston, “hand-drawn maps also dig deeply into the conceptual world, not only for the concepts of dialect areas but for the associated beliefs about speakers and their varieties” (11).

Furthermore, Preston (1999) outlines different studies done in terms of the areal classifications of English dialects, comparing the works done by authors such as Inoue and Montgomery. The aim of the article was “to examine perception in relation to areal classification of English Variation in England and Wales” (1). Inoue’s study included the use of maps in order to gain access to the mental maps of dialect variation in the United Kingdom (5). On the maps, county boundaries were marked out in order to provide a guide to help the respondents with completion of the maps. The respondents used light and heavy lines to identify areas such as ‘Northern’, ‘Midland’, ‘Southern’, ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’. However, his respondents still were unable to accurately perceive dialectal variation at the time of the study as well as capture the extent of variation in England (“Perceptual Dialectology in Great Britain” 7). This proves that geographic notations of the map had no bearing on the respondents’ ability to correctly complete the task and that it simply is not enough to ask respondents to perceive differences without asking for a description and a label of this perceived difference.

A survey of the literature reveals that most PD studies look at the correlation between perceptual boundaries drawn by respondents and the actual dialectological boundaries imposed on the area of study by dialectologists. It is therefore necessary to have a working knowledge of the isoglosses of the said area or territory. In Solomon’s extensive work on the language of Trinidad, he identifies Socio-economic class, Urban/rural origins, Ethnicity (Indian/African), Age and Style (Solomon 180) as language variables which inform the language variation of

Trinidad. While this identification focuses on variables and not a definite isogloss, inferences as to the boundaries of confinement of these variables can be made so as to be able to answer the question of the corroboration between perceptual and actual boundaries.

Working with such a limited piece of information such as variables can be problematic as at first, it may seem that each variable is easily identifiable and therefore can be easily transformed into isogloss boundaries. Social class, urban/rural origins and ethnicity immediately testify to this fact as one can easily look at a map of Trinidad and point out areas in which people of relative affluence reside (Westmoorings/Valsayn) and those where impoverished people reside (Sea Lots/Laventille), rural areas (Toco/Mayaro) and urban areas (San Fernando/Chaguanas), as well as those that are predominantly populated by Afro-descendants (Diego Martin/Laventille) and those predominantly populated by Indo-descendants (Penal/Chaguanas). However, it becomes problematic when more than one variable becomes applicable to the same area. For example, Chaguanas falls into the variables of Ethnicity, being predominantly populated by Indians and Urban origins as it is one of the urban centres of Trinidad. Similarly, Laventille falls into the variable of Ethnicity being predominantly populated by Africans and Social class, being an impoverished area. Thus, it is clear that these variables are not quite enough to determine the isogloss of Trinidad, but as there is relatively little information of this type, it is necessary to use this limited information to inform the isoglosses of this territory.

Like the aforementioned studies, this research aims to identify the perceptions which persons in Trinidad have of others, as well as of themselves, in terms of linguistic variation. More specifically, it aims to outline how people describe language variation, the linguistic stereotypes/perceptions of regions, and to what extent these perceptions corroborate with

isoglosses. The literature that was reviewed explored various methodologies with respect to gaining information on the perceptions of language variation. As indicated earlier, the best suited method for this particular territory was found to be that of the draw-a-map technique where respondents label dialectal boundaries based on their own concepts, beliefs and previous knowledge. With the completion of this research, there is the hope to bridge the gap between language attitudes and social dialectological research as well as to highlight the various ways in which people view their language as well as that of others.

Methodology

In order to investigate Trinidad residents' perception of geolinguistic stereotypes, to understand how Trinidadians describe language variation and to correlate Trinidadian perceptions of dialectal boundaries with actual boundaries, this study followed the methods of Perceptual Dialectology (PD) investigation as presented by Preston's *Perceptual Dialectology*. 100 Trinidadian undergraduate students from The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, have been identified as the informants for this study which was conducted by two final year undergraduate Linguistics students, 1 male and 1 female.

These 100 students were almost randomly chosen around campus during four weeks of the second semester. The informants were "almost" randomly chosen as this study was conducted outside of the linguistics department given that the premise of PD centres around the perceptions of non-linguists. Therefore, Linguistics students were allowed to participate in this study, and when a Linguistics student was randomly selected, he/she was not allowed to continue with the interview. The non-Linguistics students were given the research instrument, a photocopied page with an outline map of Trinidad, on which the following instructions appeared:

1. This map drawing task is part of a research paper for LING 3099 Special Project in Linguistics, the final year thesis project for Linguistics students at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. It is designed to discover your idea of geographic distribution of language in Trinidad. We are after your own, true opinions, based on your knowledge and experiences. The right answer is the one you have, not that of an expert. On the map of Trinidad before you, **please draw a boundary around each part of Trinidad where you believe people speak differently, and label/describe the area as you see fit.** You

may not have visited every area, but you may have heard speakers from these areas in person or through the media. You may draw as many boundaries as you want to and should include any information that you think is important about language use in Trinidad.

2. After completing the map, please turn over the paper and fill out the short survey. You are not required to put your name so as to ensure confidentiality.

Each fieldworker targeted 50 respondents who were required to label the map and answer the survey which included questions regarding demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation (if any), level of education, place of birth (in Trinidad), other places of residence (inside and outside of Trinidad) and native language. After completing the map and the survey, the informants were then asked to explain why they described or labelled a particular area in a particular way and what was meant by the label as well as open-ended questions based on the maps drawn. These open-ended questions differed based on the boundaries identified in each map and thus could be standardised for the purpose of this methodology.

The most accurate 75 responses were chosen to be analysed in the results. Accurate here means that these were the maps most accurately labelled geographically as many respondents were not able to identify common places on their blank map and therefore their boundaries were incorrect. As this study is not concerned with a particular feature nor with the frequency of appearance of such a feature but rather focuses on the descriptors of language variation assigned to perceptual boundaries and these perceptual boundaries themselves, the best method for analysis was qualitative. Additionally, the perceptions in the data were then quantified so as to gain an idea of the occurrence of these perceptions and stereotypes salient to a particular area.

Results

The present study aims to answer the questions: What are the perceptions of language variation in Trinidad? What are the perceived geolinguistic stereotypes? How do people describe language variation in Trinidad? And to what extent do these stereotypes corroborate with Solomon's isoglosses in Trinidad. The data collected was broken down into the following categories of analysis, given that these were the most popular categories gleaned from the data: Geographic/Regional perceptions, linguistic and social perceptions, language and dialect perceptions, lexical perceptions and social group and attribute perceptions, which serves to better answer the proposed questions.

Geographic/ Regional perceptions. The data gleaned from the draw-a-map task revealed that the respondents perceived language variation in Trinidad in two ways. One was by region e.g East, West etc, and the other was by specific geographic location e.g. Chaguanas, Point Fortin etc. From the 75 respondents, there were a total of 343 perceptions; this figure represents both regional and specific geographic perceptions (see figure 1). The specific locations were then divided into the general regions along with the number of times they were identified so as to make analysis easier as well as to make it easier to corroborate the maps with the actual map of Trinidad and the isoglosses identified by Solomon (see Table 1).

Figure 1

Total number of identified regional and specific geographical perceptions

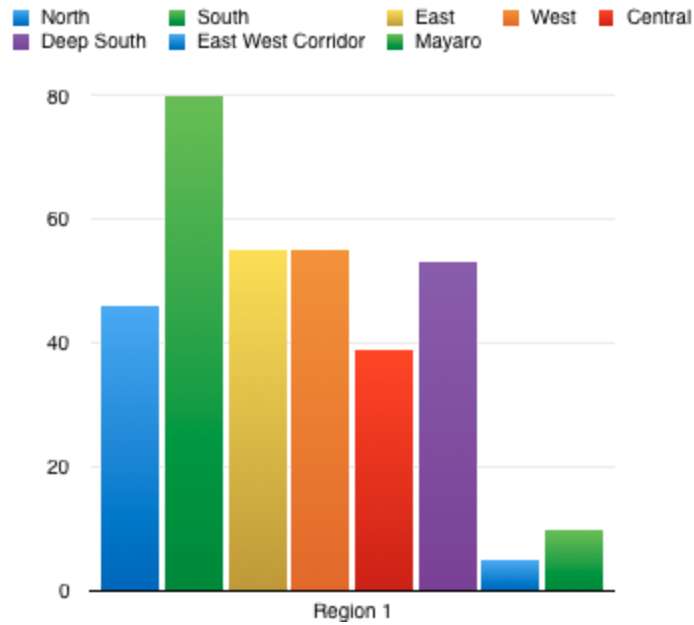


Table 1

Specific locations grouped according to general regions accompanied by the number of times they were identified

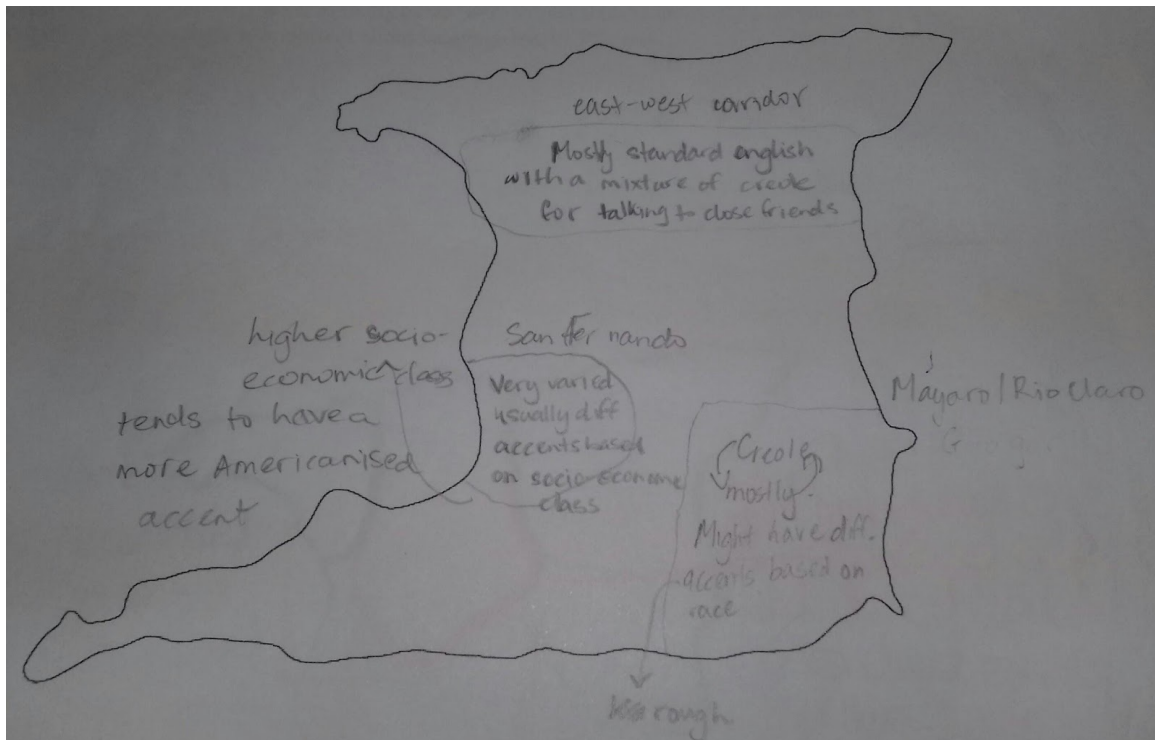
North (10)	South (24)	East (19)	West (20)	Central (18)	Deep South (10)	East/West Corridor (5)
Port-of-Spain (25)	Princes Town (3)	Arima (9)	Chaguaramas (11)	Chaguanas (12)	Mayaro (10)	
Laventille/Morvant (8)	Penal/Debe/Barrackpore (21)	Toco/ Grande (19)	Diego Martin (7)	Caroni (6)	Point Fortin/ La Brea (12)	
San Juan (3)	San Fernando (26)	Lopinot (3)	Westmoorings (17)	Tabaquite (1)	Moruga (8)	
Paramin (2)	Embacadere (1)	Trincity (1)		Couva/ Gran Couva (2)	Icacos/ Cedros (10)	
	Pointe-a-Pierre (1)	Piarco (1)			Erin (2)	

	Gasparillo (3)	Blanchisseuse (3)			Siparia (7)	
		Rio Claro (4)			Guayaguayare (2)	
		St. Augustine (2)			Palo Seco (2)	

The East-West Corridor (the EWC) was perceived as a specific region. This encompasses areas such as Port-of-Spain, Morvant/Laventille, San Juan, St. Augustine, Trincity and Arima. Therefore, it must be assumed that the respondents identifying the EWC as a region do not perceive difference within the region and therefore all of the included areas speak in the same way, as these respondents identified the EWC but do not identify other regions such as South as being different, but instead identified specific locations outside as being different e.g. San Fernando and Mayaro instead of South and Deep South (see figure 2).

Figure 2

Showing that the EWC was identified as a region,
but other areas were identified as specific places

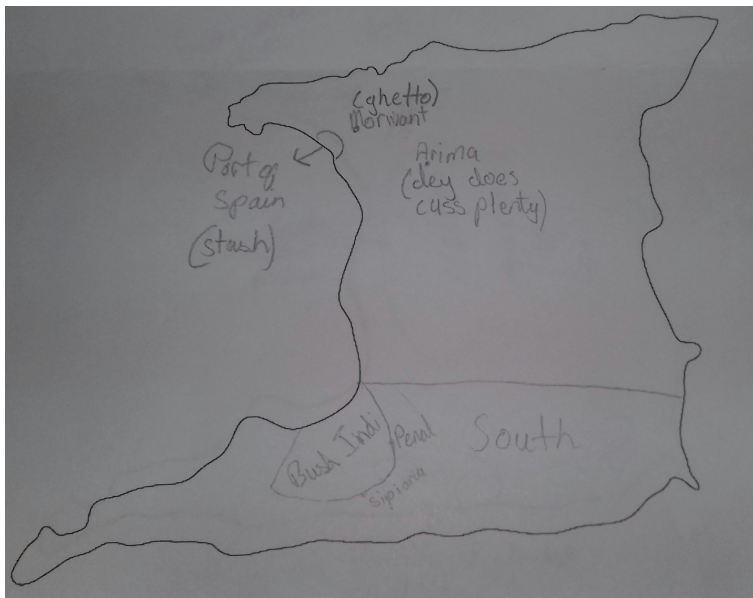
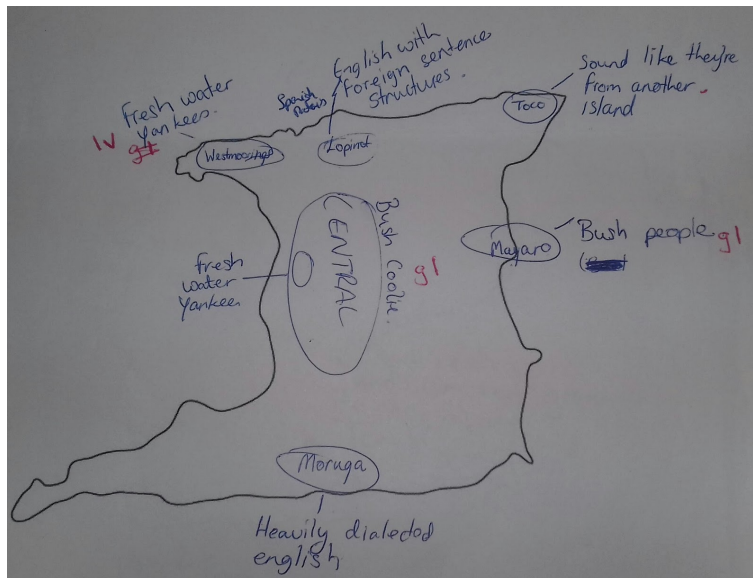


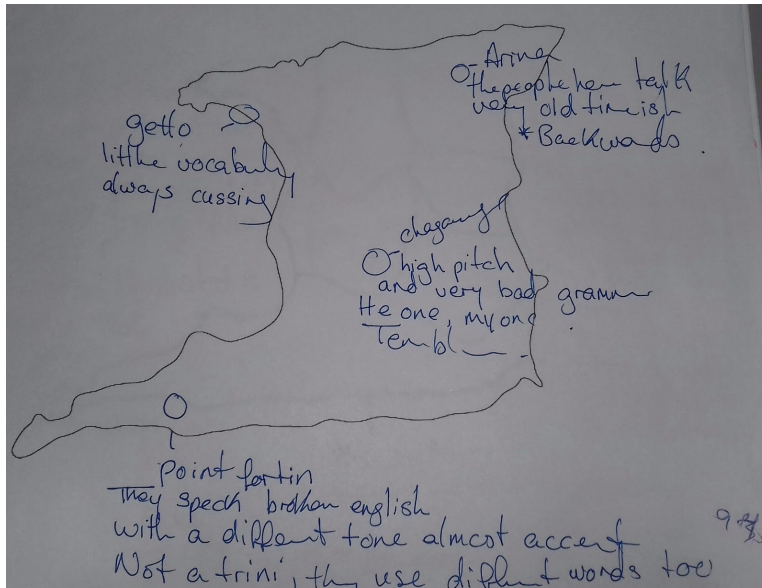
Linguistic and Social Perceptions. As the instructions on the draw-a-map task did not require participants to focus on any specific aspect of language, respondents were able to decide for themselves the linguistic phenomena most salient to them. Apart from the categories of analysis identified, participants mentioned the content of regional speech e.g. “Arima- does cuss plenty” “Toco- sounds like they from another island”/ “Speak in old time fashion and phrases” or “Port-of-Spain - always cussing.” (See figure 3, 3.1 and 3.2) Participants also perceived personality types which they deemed as dominant in a given area e.g, “Pointe-a-Pierre- plastics, like Disney Channel”, “Chag (Chaguanas) feel they better than everyone”, “Mayaro, Toco and

Point Fortin- aggressive” , “Westmoorings- fake, stuck-up air of faux superiority” and “South- have real manners”. (See figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6)

Figures 3, 3.1, 3.2

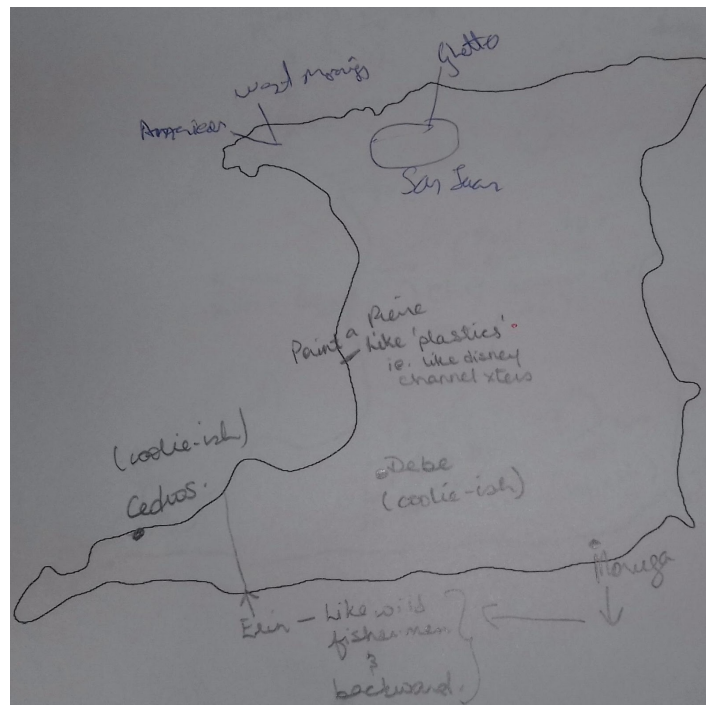
Showing linguistic perception, the content of regional speech

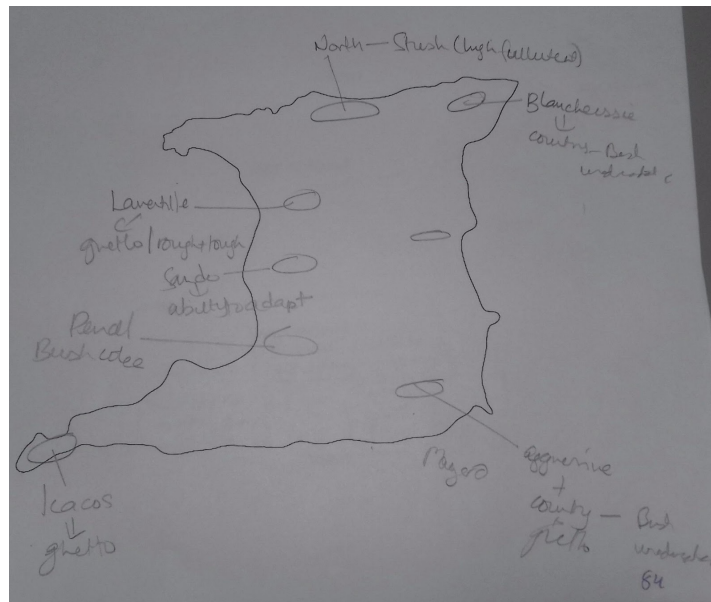
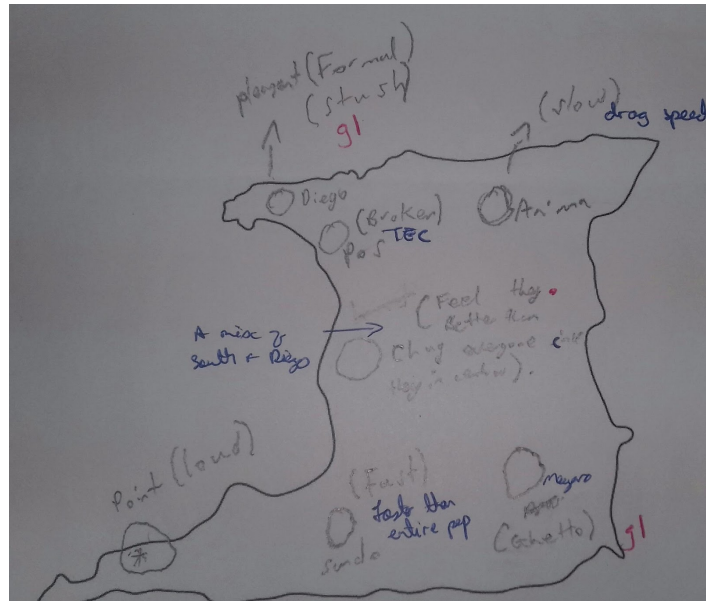


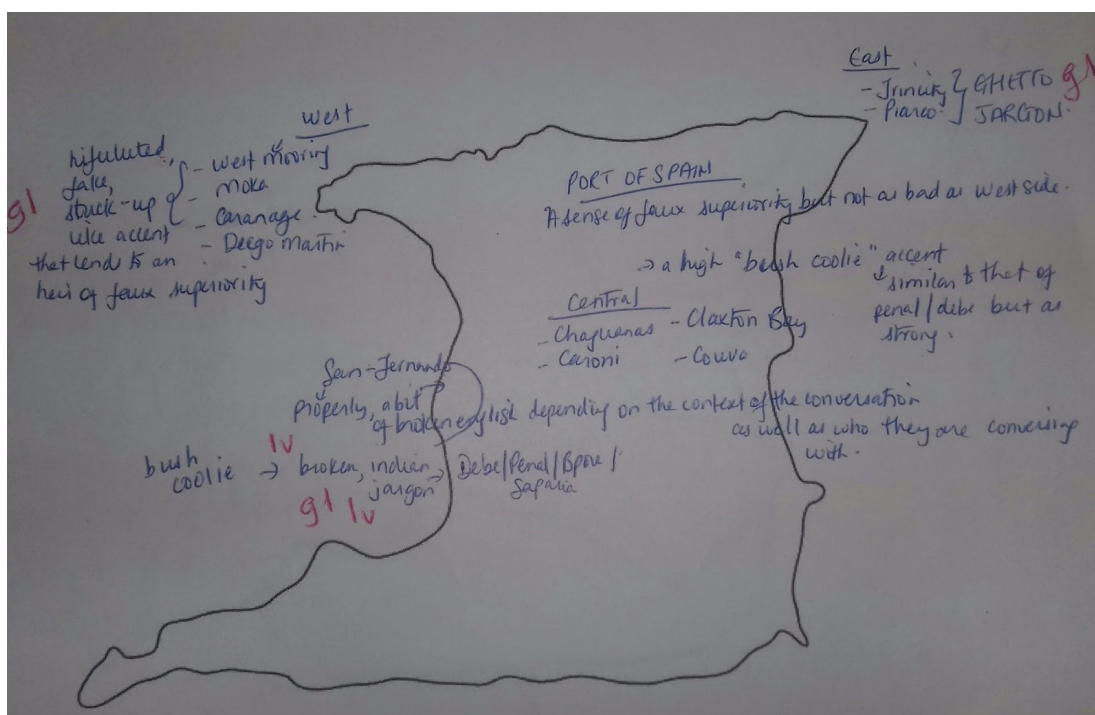


Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6

Showing social perceptions (characteristics dominant in particular areas)







Language and Dialect Perceptions. From the data gathered, it was revealed that respondents perceived both language and dialectal variation. Languages such as Spanish, Hindi and Patois were identified for both general regions e.g. Central, East and Deep South, as well as for specific locations, including Palo Seco (Spanish), Debe (Hindi) and Patois (Paramin) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Languages identified by specific location and region

Spanish	Hindi	Patois
Palo Seco	Rio Claro	Blanchisseuse
Icacos	Penal	Toco
Cedros	Debe	Paramin
Central	Central	Deep South

Perception in dialectal variation, however, was a bit more complicated to report. The main dialects identified were “proper”/Standard English and English Creole (see discussions for explanation). However, English Creole, which was also in itself identified as a dialect (of English), serves as an umbrella for other perceived dialects existing in Trinidad, e.g., Dialect (see discussion for explanation), Afro-Dialect, Indo-Dialect, “broken” English/Dialect, A mix of Standard English and English Creole, Urban English and Rural English (see Table 3).

Table 3

Dialects identified by region

“Proper”/ Standard English	Dialect	Afro-Dialect	Indo-Dialect	“Broken” English/Dialect	Creole	Mix of Standard/ Creole	Urban English	Rural English	Stush English
San Fernando	Central	San Juan	Debe/ Penal	Mayaro	Arima	Chaguanas	Chaguanas	Mayaro	West
Diego Martin		Arima	South	Caroni	Laventille	Chaguaramas	Central	Toco	
Port-of-Spain		Piarco	Deep South	Point Fortin	Toco	North		Sangre Grande	
Westmoorings		East		Penal/Debe	Point Fortin				
North				Barrackpore	Palo Seco				
South				Toco	East				
East				Sangre Grande	Central				

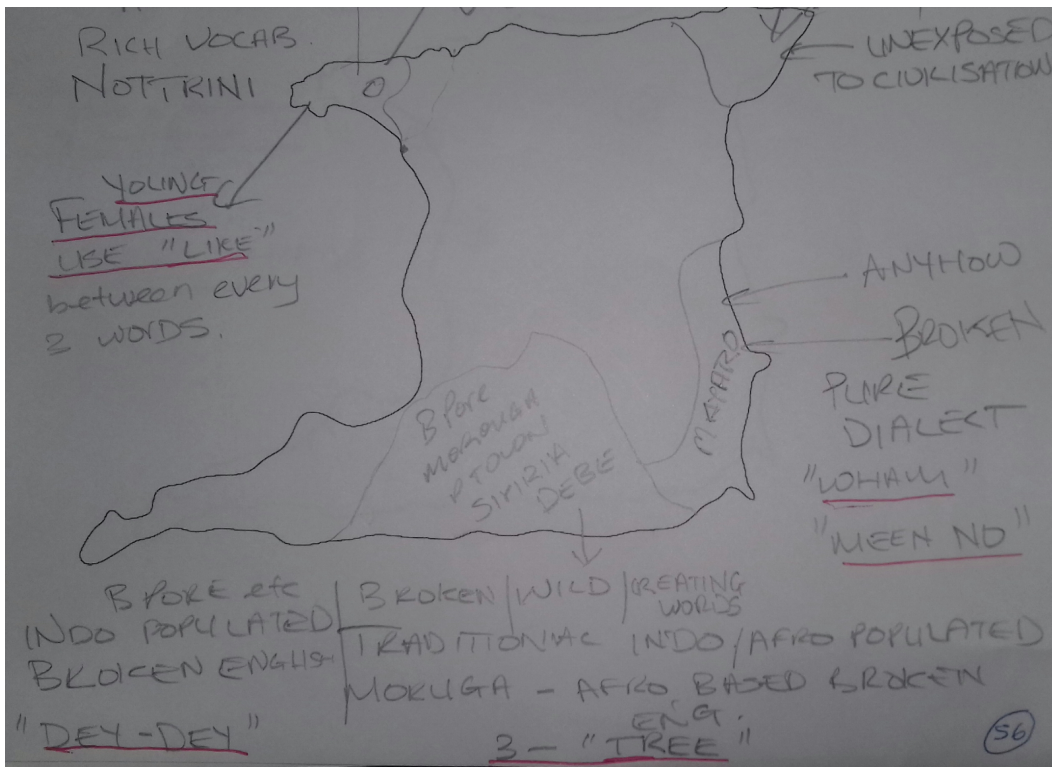
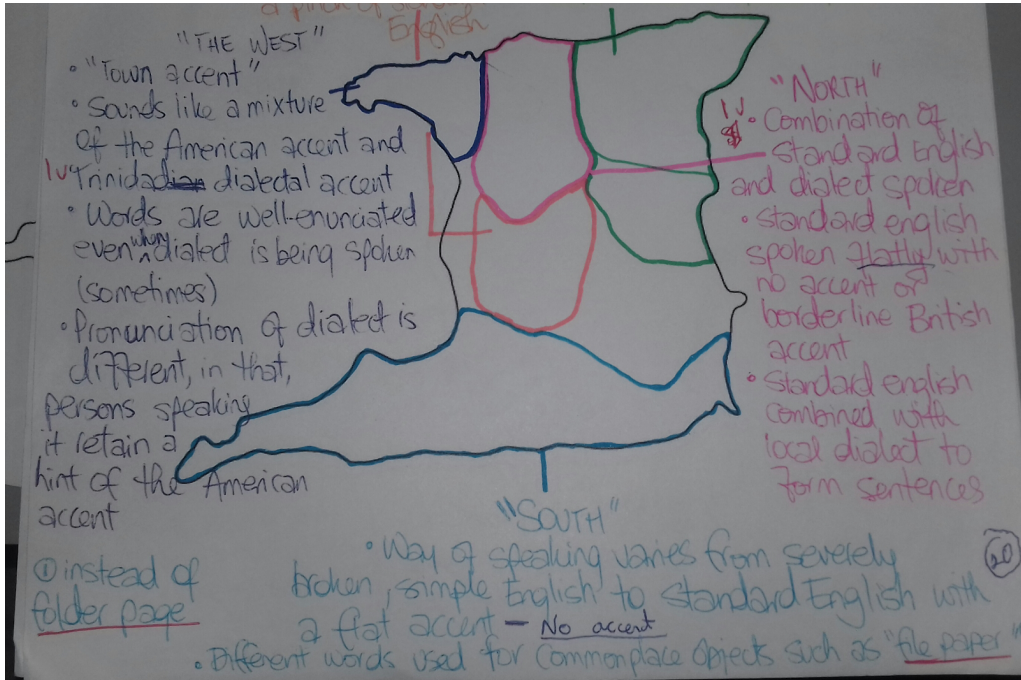
West				Cedros	North				
Central				Central	South				
EWC				East					
				South					

These were all grouped under Creole as these dialects were gleaned from respondents' answers, in that different respondents perceived more or less the same area in different ways, e.g. respondent A perceived the Central region to be speaking "Broken english" while respondent B perceived the same region to be speaking "Urban English". Therefore it must be assumed that "broken english" and "urban english" refer to the same thing, i.e., Trinidadian English Creole (further explanation in the discussion).

Lexical Perceptions. Apart from the perceptions for languages and dialects, some respondents also identified specific linguistic items as characteristic to a particular region. These perceptions were largely lexical items and phrases. E.g. One respondent differentiated between the ways that one can ask “how are you? “North- how are you”, “Sangre Grande- wat up?”. Another perceived that young women in Diego Martin and Westmoorings “use ‘like’ between every 3 words”, and that people in Barrackpore say “dey dey”, while another perceived that residents of Penal/Debe say “dais she one”. Yet another participant said that South employed “different words used for commonplace objects such as “file paper” instead of “folder page” (see figures 4 and 4.1). Interestingly, she said “instead of folder page” insinuating that there is a right and a wrong way to say it.

Figures 4 and 4.1

Showing Lexical Perceptions in Trinidad



Social Group and Attribute Perception. The above results of lexical perceptions indicate a close relationship between language and social groups so much so that social group labels and linguistic labels like “talk” and “speech” were combined e.g. “country talk” or “ghetto speech”. This was also true for regional perceptions such as “South Trinidad speech”. However, compared to lexical perceptions, social group and attribute perceptions occurred much more frequently in the data.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide a summary of the most common social perceptions provided along with the regions in which a particular social label was identified. The most common social group perceptions were, American, Bush Coolie/Bush Indian, Creole while, the attributes of the speech in these areas included Proper, Stush, Broken, Bush. Other perceived social groups and their attributes included, white, rough and posh, among others. These perceptions appeared less frequently in the data but they connote the same meaning as the others. E.g. White and Posh connote the same meaning as American, not that White and Posh are characteristics of Americans, but they are stereotypes held by Trinidadians regarding America.

Table 4.1**Social groups identified**

	North	South	East	West	Central	Deep South
Indian		5	2		5	4
White		1		6		
American	1	1		15		
Bush Coolie/ Bush Indian			2		9	19
Creole	5		5			10

Table 4.2**Attributes of the social groups identified**

	North	South	East	West	Central	Deep South
Proper	3	4		9		
Stush	1	2		23		
Broken	3	1	8		5	16
Ghetto	15		2	1		18
Rough	2					2
Bush	1		14		7	24
Normal	1	9	1			

Discussion

What are the perceptions of Language Variation in Trinidad? This section discusses the data in relation to the question “what are the perceptions of language variation in Trinidad?” After an analysis of the data was carried out, it was revealed that these perceptions manifest in specific locations e.g. *San Fernando, Chaguanas, Port-of-Spain* as well as in regional distinction e.g. *South, Central, North*. The purpose of the analysis was to determine the most common perceptions and to ascertain which perception was most salient to respondents. As table 1 suggests, the most frequently identified perception was that language varied in specific locations instead of by region, as the total number of perceptions of specific locations constantly surpassed that of the regional perceptions. Although both perceptions appear in the data, there is no clear distinction in their identification i.e. while some maps were divided and perceived regionally, and others were divided and perceived by specific locations, there were some that were perceived as both e.g. East-West Corridor (an identified region) perceived as different, but Mayaro and San Fernando (two different specific locations) also perceived as different by the same respondent. Thus, the perceptions and not respondents (entire map) were individually counted so as to more precisely answer the question. Therefore, given that specific locations surpass regions in number of perceptions, it must be assumed that respondents perceived language to be varied or distributed across specific locations in Trinidad. It is possible to group many of the perceived locations into one region, as was done in figure 1 (for the purposes of corroboration with an actual map of Trinidad and the isoglosses of Solomon). While there were some irregularities in that areas that fall within the same region were perceived as being different

e.g. San Fernando and Penal/Debe both perceived as having distinct speech characteristics, the occurrence of this was negligible and thus does not affect the overall results in the data.

In addition to geographic and regional perceptions, the data revealed language and dialect perceptions. Respondents identified Spanish, Hindi and Patois as salient to 12 different locations in Trinidad. While only 15% of respondents perceived this language variation, it is of particular importance that these specific languages were mentioned as they all have had significant influence in the linguistic history and development of Trinidad. This prompts the researcher to believe that the respondents identifying such language distinctions have some knowledge of the linguistic influence, especially in places such as Blanchisseuse and Paramin in relation to Patois and Caroni and Penal/Debe in relation to Hindi, especially since these were not common perceptions. However, given that the respondents perceiving such language distinction do not live nor had ever lived in any of the areas they identified, it remains unclear as to whether these languages are perceived to be physically existing in these locations or whether they think that these language have had significant impact on the English/ variety of English spoken there.

Furthermore, the dialectal perceptions were quite difficult to distinguish. The main dialects identified were “proper”/Standard English and English Creole. Other perceived dialects existing in Trinidad were Dialect, Afro-Dialect, Indo-Dialect, “broken” English/Dialect, A mix of English and English Creole, Urban English and Rural English. In order to understand the most salient dialects perceived, they must be defined/clarified within the Trinidadian context as in Trinidad, as they do not connote their conventional meanings. Winer 2008 clarifies that “proper English is Standard English, especially in terms of grammar, also of pronunciation, in conformity with rules; accura(cy); correct(ness)” (724) , she further defines “dialect (as) the local variety of

English especially. the local [national] Creole language” (296) and notes that “The English Creole language of Trinidad and Tobago (is the same as) broken English, Creole English, dialect, English Creole, Negro English” (264). These clarifications highlight the terms used by Trinidadians to refer to their language. Therefore, “Proper”/Standard English and English Creole can serve as umbrella terms for all of the dialects perceived in Trinidad as these perceptions as with the definition of such terms. Thus, according to the data, “Proper”/Standard English and English Creole are the two main varieties perceived which exist in Trinidad.

What are the perceived geolinguistic stereotypes? To answer the question of what are the perceived geolinguistic stereotypes in Trinidad, an in-depth analysis of the linguistic and social perceptions and the social group and attribute perceptions sections in the results chapter must be carried out. The linguistic and social perceptions section reveals that respondents ascribed linguistic content and personality traits deemed salient to specific geographic locations. These include: “Arima - does cuss plenty” “Toco - sounds like they from another island”/ “Speak in old time fashion and phrases” or “Port-of-Spain - always cussing.” While these perceptions were few in number, they reveal important stereotypical information and attitudes held towards speakers from these areas as these perceptions were held by persons living outside of these areas. The personality traits delved even more into the stereotypical notions and attitudes to language held by respondents e.g. “Pointe-a-Pierre - plastics, like Disney Channel”, “Chag (Chaguanas) feel they better than everyone,” “Mayaro, Toco and Point Fortin-aggressive” , “Westmoorings - fake, stuck-up air of *faux* superiority” and “South - have real manners”. These personality perceptions are linked to the type of language or dialect perceived in the area, especially that of

Westmoorings. “Fake, stuck-up, air of *faux* superiority” identically mirrors the “posh”, “stush”, “white”, “Standard English”, “American” labels continually ascribed to that area by almost every respondent. Similarly, the perception of “aggression” ascribed to areas like Mayaro, Toco and Point Fortin, mirror the linguistic perceptions ascribed to these areas such as “Afro-Dialect and Creole”.

Furthermore, geolinguistic stereotypes go beyond linguistic and social perception and into social groups and attribute perceptions. The social groups identified in the data are Indian, White, American, Creole, and Bush Coolie/Bush Indian, the latter of which require clarification in the Trinidadian context. Except for French Creole, a cover term for Euro-Trinbagonians (now in general, versus specifically Franco-Trinidadians in the past), Winer 2008 defines Creole as “people, of primarily African descent and cultural-ethnic identification, especially in contrast to European, Indian and Amerindian” (262). *Coolie* refers to “ a person of East Indian descent, usually of the working class. Nowadays this term is generally considered very negative and insulting” (Winer 245), while *bush* refers to “a remote or isolated rural area” (Winer 144). From this definition, it can be deduced that a “Bush Coolie” is someone of East Indian descent typically residing in or being originally from a rural area. These social groups have been identified to be residing in particular areas around Trinidad, e.g., Bush Coolie in Deep South, American and white in the West, particularly Westmoorings, East Indian in Central and Creole in the East. The perceived attributes ascribed to these social groups constitute the other geolinguistic stereotypes in the data. The data reveals that the most salient geolinguistic stereotype in the north was “ghetto” in that this label accounted for 60% of the perceived attributes. This prompts the researcher to probe the underlying beliefs and presuppositions which

informed such a stereotype. The northern region includes areas such as Port-of-Spain, Morvant/Laventille and San Juan, areas well known for criminal activity in Trinidad, which are predominantly populated by people of African descent. Therefore, it was assumed that this stereotype was informed by the behaviour associated with the persons living in the region. In the southern region, 56.3% of the perceptions favoured the label “normal”. This perception referred to the city of San Fernando only. While normal/regular was an uncommon perception in the data, it is worth mentioning because of the fact that these perceptions came from residents of San Fernando, who were unable to perceive themselves as being different. They were unable to identify any specific characteristic of their language that distinguished them from the rest of the country.

Conversely, in the East and in Central, 56% and 58.6% of the perceptions accounted for the label “bush” respectively. In both cases, this stereotype is ascribed to rural areas; Toco in the East and Caroni in central Trinidad. This too is an ascription based on the perceived behaviours of persons living in the areas.

Furthermore, in the region of deep South, the label bush was most salient amounting to 40% of the perceptions. This region also featured very popular labels such as broken and ghetto which amounted to 25% each of the region. The perception of bush was in specific reference to Cedros, Icacos, and Erin, again all rural areas. Thus this perception is once again based on the perceived behaviour associated with the people living in the area. The label “ghetto” was specifically targeted at the areas such as Mayaro, Point Fortin and La Brea. While these areas as not classified as rural, Point Fortin and La Brea do consist of high population of persons of African descent, which leads the researcher to assume that “ghetto behaviour” is associated with

persons of African descent, similar to the case of Morvant/Laventille and San Juan. The label “broken”, was identified in reference to places such as Guayaguayare, Siparia and Moruga. These areas constitute a mix of rural and urban statuses as well as a mix in the population, in that both East Indians and persons of African descent equally populate them. It can therefore be assumed that “broken” here referred to the aforementioned “dialect” perceived to be spoken by Trinians as this label was not deduced from any perceived behaviour of the people living in these areas.

Finally, in the west, the geolinguistic stereotype of “stush” amounted to 69.7% of the perceptions. This label connotes an American influence of the language. Seventy percent of the perceptions of “stush” was accompanied by the description “American accent” or “American influence”. This label was ascribed with specific reference to Westmoorings. Westmoorings in the known area of residents of expats and the economically powerful in Trinidad. Thus, the label of stush results from the perceived bourgeoisie behaviour of the persons living in that area.

How do people describe language variation in Trinidad? The data reveals two categories for describing language variation in Trinidad. The first is through lexical perceptions. In this category, respondents identify lexical items that differ across the society. E.g. One respondent differentiated between the ways that one can ask “how are you? “North- how are you”, “Sangre Grande- wat up?” Another perceived that young women in Diego Martin and Westmoorings “use ‘like’ between every 3 words”, and that people in Barrackpore say “dey dey”, while another perceived that residents of Penal/Debe say “dais she one”. Yet another participant said that South employed “different words used for commonplace objects such as “file paper” instead of “folder

page”. This was identified both regionally and by specific locations. The respondents perceiving such difference did so by focussing completely on the linguistic content of the language/dialect spoken in their areas of perception. It remains unclear though whether they did not perceive any other difference or whether they felt that their limited information would have been enough for the researcher to analyse. The second category for describing language variation in Trinidad was the use of geolinguistic stereotypes as behavioural attributes of social groups, which was discussed in depth in the answering of the last research question (See *What are the perceived geolinguistic stereotypes in Trinidad?*).

To what extent do these stereotypes corroborate with Solomon's isoglosses in Trinidad?

Solomon, while not identifying physical isoglosses in Trinidad, identified 5 variables that are indicators of language variation. These are, Socio-economic class, Urban/rural regions, Ethnicity (Indian/African), Age and Style (Informal/formal) (Solomon 180). Three first three of these variables remain salient to this research topic. Firstly, according to the data, perception of socio-economic class played a major role in differentiating the labels/perceptions attached to particular areas, e.g., the rich expats and the economically powerful of Westmoorings were perceived to speak “proper”/Standard English, while the poor farmers in the rural areas as well as those living in economically depressed areas such as Sea Lots and Morvant/Laventille were perceived to speak broken, dialect and Afro-Dialect. Secondly, according to the data, urban and rural regions were also perceived as inherently different. For example, Toco, Mayaro and Caroni, were overwhelmingly perceived as having “bush” speakers due to their isolated/rural natures. However, Diego Martin, Chaguanas and Arima were perceived as having either speakers of

“broken English” or those speaking having a mix of Standard English and “dialect”. Furthermore, ethnicity played a role in the perception of language variation in the data. Areas populated mostly by Afro-Trinidadians were highlighted as “ghetto” while places most populated by Indo-Trinidadians were perceived as “Coolie” or “bush coolie”. A fourth and final variable and final variable of Solomon’s was identified in the data, in that of style (informal/formal). While this variable appeared infrequently in the data, it is worth mentioning as it does in fact assist this study to corroborate with Solomon’s variables. Some respondents did perceive that areas such as San Fernando, Chaguanas, and Port-of-Spain contained speakers who were able to speak either Standard English, or “broken” English, depending on the context of the conversation and to whom they were speaking. This perception hints heavily at Solomon’s style variable. While all of Solomon's language variation variables were not identified in the data, the researchers have still concluded that the perceptions of language variation in Trinidad do in fact corroborate with the potential isoglosses identified by Solomon in that 4 of his 5 variables were identified in the data.

Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to answer the four proposed research questions. The data revealed that respondents perceived language to be varied across specific locations in Trinidad with specific reference to language and dialect. A plethora of dialects were perceived to be existing on the island, all of which were grouped into two categories, “proper”/Standard English and English Creole. Furthermore, the information gleaned from the data showed that geolinguistic stereotypes were perceived from personality traits deemed salient to specific areas, from the perceived linguistic content of the speech in particular areas and from perceived behaviours attributed to social groups perceived to be living in specific areas. Additionally, language variation was perceived to be described through the identification of lexical items perceived as characteristic of specific areas, as well as through geolinguistic stereotypes detached from the perceived behaviour of the people living in a particular area. Lastly, the data disclosed that the perceptions of language variation held by residents of Trinidad corroborated with 4 of the 5 language variation variables identified by Denis Solomon. These were socio-economic class, urban/rural regions, ethnicity (Indian/African) and style (informal/formal).

It is hoped that the information presented in this study will serve as a base for other similar studies to be carried out in Trinidad and Tobago and even in the wider Caribbean. Language attitude studies have long ignored the perceptions held by individuals, the motivation of the attitudes held, and the mental dialectal maps drawn by citizens based on their perceptions. As this study shows, this information is in fact very important and useful as it not only allows for

ethnographic results, but has interdisciplinary value as the stereotypes and perceptions held can all be studied from social psychological and sociological perspectives.

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