

The Americanization of Barbadian English

Christine Stuka

Justus-Liebig University, Giessen, Germany

Correspondence

Christine Stuka, Justus-Liebig University,
Giessen, 35394 Giessen, Germany.
Email: Christine.stuka@anglistik.uni-giessen.de

Abstract

This paper investigates attitudes and perceptions of Barbadians toward British and American English on the one hand, and the degree of structural Americanization of contemporary Barbadian English as documented in a corpus of Facebook comments on the other hand. The results indicate a discrepancy between explicitly formulated preferences and actual production patterns; while American English is devalued by most respondents, the advancement of cross-linguistic influence of American English on the levels of orthography and lexicon of Barbadian English is undeniable. The findings further suggest a continued linguistic identification with British norms in the perception of many Barbadians, while the awareness of an emerging local standard variety is only slowly gaining ground.

1 | INTRODUCTION

American English (AmE) was established and spread around the world through the political, socioeconomic, and cultural rise of the United States to world leadership. This shift of power from Great Britain to the United States, which was and is reinforced by globalization, technologization, and digitalization, has left traces in the linguistic structures of varieties of English in the Caribbean, and in former British colonies generally (Gonçalves et al., 2018, pp. 1–2). Postcolonial speech communities in the Caribbean and elsewhere have experienced a reorientation in terms of normativity, as the traditional exclusive status of standardized British English (BrE) was and is challenged by Americanization (Schneider, 2006, p. 67). This has led to varying degrees of coexistence of British Standard and American Standard English as linguistic targets in these territories. The anglophone Caribbean has been described as particularly affected by this process (Deuber & Leung, 2013, p. 296; Hackert, 2016, p. 99; Deuber et al., 2021, p. 1), due to its continuous historical, geographical, and sociocultural ties with the United States, which have only been intensified by globalizing forces (tourism, media, and so on). Additionally, local norms are currently emerging in the region (Hackert, 2016, p. 106). Therefore, the present linguistic situation in the Caribbean context is best described as a three-way interaction

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2022 The Authors. *World Englishes* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

of norms, shaped by the coexistence of “a still powerful traditional British model, the currently dominant American norm, and local usage” (Mair, 2006, p. 7; Meer et al., 2019).

Up to this point, research on the cross-linguistic influence of American English on Caribbean varieties of English has focused predominantly on larger islands like Trinidad or the Bahamas (Hackert, 2015; Hackert & Deuber, 2015; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019; Deuber et al., 2021). This present paper investigates Barbados, one of the intermediately sized islands. Barbados is commonly referred to as *Little England* in the region (Roberts, 1988, p. 86) – a nickname many Barbadians carry with pride as it alludes to cultural and linguistic proximity with the former colonizer. The target of exonormativity in Barbados used to be clearly defined as standardized BrE in the past (Belgrave, 2009, p. 156), while American influence is commonly evaluated more negatively by respondents of sociolinguistic interviews, similar to findings of previous investigations in the region (Westphal, 2017, p. 199; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019, p. 65). Despite the apparent preference for British norms in Barbados, it seems unlikely that the omnipresent phenomenon of American English through media, business encounters and other domains would stop at Barbadian shores, when its influence is demonstrably growing in the vicinity.

The present paper adds to the body of research on Americanization and normativity in the Caribbean with its special focus on Barbadian English. The assumed Britishness of Barbadian English motivates a closer inspection of the variety in terms of cross-American influence, and the aim of this study is to shed light on the question of whether openly stated attitudes towards British and American English are consistent with actual language production patterns of Barbadians. The investigation is divided into two mostly independent case studies which are subsequently triangulated. The first component is an attitude study based on an online questionnaire, which examines circulating attitudes and preferences regarding the two competing external standards in Barbados. In a second step, the findings of these explicitly formulated opinions are scrutinized by measurements of actual degrees of Americanization in contemporary Barbadian English on the structural levels of orthography and lexis. This part of the analysis is based on data obtained from a self-compiled corpus of Facebook comments of 1.4 million words. Americanization, in written language use, is often associated with colloquialization (Leech et al., 2009; Hackert & Deuber, 2015, p. 390; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019, p. 66). The stylistic dimension is therefore a crucial factor, and while previous research on the influence of American English on Caribbean English varieties has exclusively concentrated on newspaper language (Hänsel & Deuber, 2013; Hackert, 2015; Hackert & Deuber, 2015; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019; Deuber et al., 2021), the present study takes a new perspective by investigating a less formal register, the language of Facebook commentaries.

The following section will provide an overview of previous research on linguistic Americanization and norm (re-)orientation processes in the anglophone Caribbean. The sociolinguistic situation in Barbados is outlined in Section 3, followed by a description of the methodological design of the study in Section 4. The analysis is divided into two parts: explicitly formulated norm orientation in Barbados (Section 5) and targets of normative orientation in terms of language production in Barbados (Section 6). In a concluding step, the results will be interpreted, discussed, and implications for future developments will be elaborated.

2 | NORM ORIENTATION AND AMERICANIZATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

While attitudinal research in the Caribbean context has focused on the role of creoles in society for a long time, emerging local standard varieties have only recently entered the center stage of academic interest (Deuber & Leung, 2013; Oenbring & Fielding, 2014; Westphal, 2017; Meer et al., 2019; Meer & Deuber, 2020). The process of redefining standardness concerns both the endocentric and the exocentric dimensions of normativity (Schneider, 2007).

2.1 | Americanization

Americanization has affected the linguistic structures of several Caribbean varieties of English, albeit to varying degrees: Deuber et al. (2021, p. 30) in their study on 10 Caribbean varieties show that while American influence is

generally traceable in these Englishes, particularly so on the lexical level, no “across-the-board Americanization” could be observed in the data in spite of the geographical proximity to the United States. Barbadian English was found to display fewer structural American influences than other varieties in the vicinity, with an overwhelming adherence to British spellings (>97%). The findings further show that territory size correlates with the degree of homogeneity in norm adherence (Deuber et al., 2021, p. 12), as smaller countries show more variation with regard to spelling for instance than the larger and intermediate ones (Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago). Several factors have been found to further determine the extent of Americanization, among them geographical location (Deuber et al., 2021, p. 2), the level of globalization (Hänsel & Deuber, 2013), and the role English plays in the country (Gonçalves et al., 2018), but also the sociohistorical ties, economic and political relations, availability of US American media, mobility of the population, and the relevance of American visitors. Additionally, the degree of Americanization also seems to be closely related to the question of whether the United States are generally positively or negatively evaluated by the Caribbean speech community (McArthur, 2002, p. 231 cited in Laube & Rothmund, *forthcoming*). From a linguistic perspective, the degree of formality of the text category and the structural level are also decisive factors; the lexical level for instance is more readily affected by Americanization than spelling (Deuber et al., 2021, p. 1).

2.2 | Endonormativity

Several studies concerned with standard varieties in the region reveal certain endonormative tendencies (Deuber & Leung, 2013; Westphal, 2017; Wilson, 2017; Meer et al., 2019; Laube & Rothmund, *forthcoming*). At the same time, recent findings suggest that the norm orientation in several Caribbean varieties is neither clearly endo- nor clearly exocentric (Westphal, 2017), but may be rather “multinormative,” a term introduced by Meer and Deuber (2020, p. 289) to refer to “a stable and systematic multidimensional orientation involving several coexisting norms.” Several Caribbean Englishes are said to have reached the stage of endonormative stabilization according to the Dynamic Model of post-colonial Englishes, including varieties spoken in Barbados (Schneider, 2007, pp. 225–226), Jamaica (Schneider, 2007, pp. 234–238), and Trinidad (Wilson, 2017, p. 27). This phase is characterized by cultural self-reliance and a process of nation building, expressed by a certain linguistic homogeneity of the new local norm (Schneider, 2007, pp. 49–52). However, the situation may be more complex than the one-directional progression suggested by the Dynamic Model: Westphal (2017, p. 49) for instance observes “a relative acceptance of different accents” in his data and according to a verbal guise experiment conducted by Meer et al. (2019) in the context of Trinidadian schools, both local and foreign accents are positively evaluated by the respondents. As Mair (2016, p. 33, 2017, pp. 7, 22) points out, endonormativity is clearly not the only option for these societies; but rather one of several potential outcomes of a very complex reality. As the exact targets of both endo- and exonormative orientation are far from easily identified, a plurality of coexisting local and external norms is more likely to reflect the linguistic reality (Meer et al., 2019, p. 44).

2.3 | Awareness

To better understand linguistic identity construction in speech communities with several coexisting targets of normativity, it is crucial to focus not only on linguistic evidence in terms of production patterns, but to also consider the speaker’s attitudes toward the respective codes. Attitudes are typically described as having three components, namely cognition, affection, and behavior (Allport, 1954; Garret, 2010, pp. 23–24). Testing the congruity of affective and cognitive conceptions on the one hand, and behavior in terms of speech production on the other hand may reveal discrepancies, as demonstrated for the Caribbean context by Deuber and Hänsel (2019) in their approach of contrasting language use of newspaper staff with their own and the reader’s perspectives. When asked directly about foreign models, respondents usually ascribe more prestige to British English, as research has shown in the context of the Bahamas and Jamaica (Oenbring & Fielding, 2014, p. 46; Westphal, 2017, p. 49). The same seems to be true for the context of choral singing in Trinidad, where British English pronunciation is explicitly preferred over American English

(Wilson, 2017, p. 103). It will be interesting to see whether the overt preference of standardized British English, in certain domains, coincides with patterns of language use or whether American-influenced linguistic variation may be observed (Deuber & Hänsel, 2019, p. 66). Moreover, while changes in production may often go unnoticed by the general public, they are not necessarily welcomed by everyone: as standardness in the Caribbean is frequently associated with foreignness and “mostly defined negatively, that is, in terms of distance from the creole” (Hackert, 2016, p. 85), the recognition of local standards of English may have a long way to go.

3 | THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION IN BARBADOS

Barbados, the most eastern Caribbean island, used to be a classic plantation colony. Annexed for the British crown in 1625, it was one of the Empire’s earliest possessions in the West Indies and served as a hub for the distribution of African slaves in the region from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. Barbados became independent in 1966 and today, the tourism industry has replaced the production of sugar cane as the economic focus of the country. Covering an area of 431 km² and with a total population of around 287,000, Barbados is one of the intermediate-sized islands in the Caribbean. It has one of the highest education standards in the world with an adult literacy rate of 99.6% (The World Factbook, 2021), its own campus branch of the University of the West Indies and an educational and economic system that is heavily oriented toward international norms. English, the official language of Barbados, is spoken alongside Bajan, which is the de facto national language and commonly referred to as “the dialect” by its speakers. The nickname “Little England” alludes to the presumed Britishness of Barbadian English, and the fact that in contrast to most other anglophone islands in the region,¹ no conservative creole is spoken in Barbados. It has been described as a “light” variety (Schneider, 2007, p. 224) or “intermediate creole” (Winford, 2000, p. 215) in the Caribbean context. The language situation in Barbados can be described as a continuum comparable to other anglophone Caribbean territories, distinct in the aspect that the range between acrolect and its most diverged form, rural Bajan, is smaller than in most neighboring countries, where basilectal varieties mark the extreme of the continuum. Most Barbadians are bidialectal speakers of both English and Bajan (Roy, 1984, p. 10).

Recent studies on language attitudes in the West Indian context have shown that the stigmatization of creoles is becoming less strong (Mühleisen, 2001; Jamaican Language Unit, 2005; Deuber, 2009; Oenbring & Fielding, 2014) while local influences on the English varieties become more accepted. At the same time, the traditional functional divide that categorizes creoles as “languages of solidarity, national identity, emotion and humour” (Youssef, 2004, p. 44), and the standardized variety as the unexceptional code of formal domains such as education, church, and administration is more fluid than in the past (Hackert, 2016, pp. 92–95). It is questionable, however, to which degree these recent developments have affected language use and attitudes in Barbados. It is important to note that in the conception of most Barbadians, the term creole does not apply to the local vernacular Bajan and creoleness is usually associated with far-away or even francophone varieties of the Caribbean (van Herk, 2003, p. 242). The fact that Bajan is not perceived as sufficiently different from standardized English can be expected to thwart its functional expansion, as it is often seen as a corruption or failure to speak “proper English,” a “dialect,” and not as a variety in its own right (Fenigsen, 2000, p. 44). As Bajan and standardized Barbadian English overlap in so many respects, it is impossible to structurally draw a line between the two (Fenigsen, 2000, p. 180). This circumstance further impedes the official recognition of Bajan, as is the case in other Caribbean territories as well (Hackert, 2016, p. 92). At the same time, standardness is often associated with foreign role models (Hackert, 2016, p. 85), and it is traditionally British English norms that are targeted as “correct English.” Belgrave (2009), in a small-scale matched guise experiment shows a strong underlying devaluation of Barbadian English. By contrast, the foreign accents, British and American English, were positively evaluated on traditional social status items. While the American voice scored higher in terms of social attractiveness, the British voice was evaluated most favorably in terms of economic success (Belgrave, 2009, p. 114). Belgrave (2009, p. 157) suggests that in Barbadian society, there is a strong linguistic preference for foreignness. The

exceptional overt prestige ascribed to British English is closely linked to the traditional predominance of British norms in the country, which, for a long time was the only model accessible for the general public.

But how does the global phenomenon of Americanization of the English language affect Barbados? In terms of the relevant factors identified in previous research, a similar progression toward American English should be noticeable in Barbadian English, as Barbados is among the most globalized countries in the Caribbean context, with a comparatively high level of socioeconomic and educational standards. The good technological infrastructure offers reliable access to American media such as TV and radio programs and US Americans form one of the largest groups of international visitors in the country, making up around 30% of all incoming tourists in 2018 and 2019 (Central Bank of Barbados, 2021). Personal relations are another influencing factor, as most Barbadians have relatives permanently living in the US. Cultural and political developments such as the establishment of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) or the transformation of Barbados into a Republic in 2021 demonstrate a growing independence from the former colonizer, which may further challenge the exclusiveness of British English as a foreign norm in the country.

4 | RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This paper compares explicit language attitudes language production in written communication. The following research questions will be addressed:

- RQ 1. Which variety do Barbadians orient toward on an explicit language attitudinal level?
- RQ 2. To what degrees do Barbadians' language and speech production patterns show linguistic alignment with British and/or US American English norms?
- RQ 3. Do perceived sense of linguistic identification and speech production match when it comes to normative orientation in Barbados?

Based on the associated Britishness of Barbados, it may be assumed that the prestige explicitly ascribed to British English will be particularly pronounced. Nevertheless, the growing influence of American English in the region is expected to show traces in Barbadian English language production as well, especially so in an online register, where American forms are frequently preferred (Mukherjee, 2015, cited in Gonçalves et al., 2018, p. 2). One can assume to find varying degrees of American influence on the different structural levels: the lexicon is usually affected most readily by Americanization in the Caribbean (Deuber et al., 2021, p. 1), while the orthography tends to behave more conservatively, retaining stronger alignments with British English norms.

The explicit statements that respond to RQ 1 were collected in a direct elicitation approach, a questionnaire (see Appendix). The online survey was distributed via Facebook groups and personal contacts between March 2018 and February 2019. Overall, 107 respondents from different social, educational, regional, and occupational backgrounds anonymously filled out the questionnaire. The demographic stratification of the respondents shows a somewhat imbalanced gender ratio (67% female, 33% male) but a wide range of age groups (from 12 to 88 years, with a sample mean μ of 34.08 and a standard deviation σ of 11.91). Respondents were from all 11 parishes of Barbados and had elevated levels of education, with roughly 70% of participants holding university degrees (BA, MA, PhD). For this case study with its focus on the targets of normative orientation, the following questions of the survey² will be considered:

Q5. Which do you like better: British or American English? Why?

Q4. Do you feel that the Standard English used in Barbados is the same as British English? If not, in which respects is it different?

Q5 is a closed question with two answer options ('British English/American English') provided, of which the respondents had to select one. The second part of the question ('Why?'), the comment section, is an open response field and answering is optional. The same applies for Q4 with a closed first part ('yes/no') and an open comment section. A

TABLE 1 Corpus design with reference to frequentation of Facebook pages (numbers of likes and followers extracted on January 25, 2021)

	Followers	Likes	Overall word count of comments (2018, 2019 & 2020)
The Nation Barbados	204.957	191.465	350.445
Barbados Today	193.498	184.728	239.916
Mia Amor Mottley	74.724	48.339	809.365

representative selection of the opinions and comments shared by the respondents is provided in the analysis. The overview includes particularly frequently recurring statements.

In addition to the questionnaire data, comments and information collected during more than 50 sociolinguistic interviews, conducted in 2016, were used to back up the argumentation. These interviews were methodically oriented toward the classic Labovian strategies for neighborhood studies including his approaches of allowing respondents to define the topic of conversation and “eliciting narratives of personal experience” (Labov, 1984, p. 30). Content wise, many respondents shared impressionistic accounts of cultural, political, and socioeconomic aspects of Barbados during the recorded conversations.

The second part of the analysis investigates language production patterns of Barbadians, to shed light on the question (RQ 2) of whether and to what extent they use standardized British English spelling conventions and vocabulary and to which degree the cross-linguistic influence of American English can be traced in the language production of Barbadians. For the investigation of lexical and orthographical usage patterns of Barbadians, a 1.4 million-word corpus of Facebook comments was compiled with the help of the data extraction software Facepager (Jünger & Keyling, 2019). The software automatically collects and extracts large sets of publicly accessible data from social media websites such as Facebook using application programming interfaces (APIs). The corpus was compiled with Antconc (Anthony, 2019) and concordances were cleared manually. In order to cover a broad range of the (Facebook-using) population, the three most frequented public pages in Barbados were selected: *The Nation Barbados* (newspaper), *Barbados Today* (newspaper) and *Mia Amor Mottley* (the current Prime Minister). Facebook is among the most popular social media platforms in Barbados, and residents from all social backgrounds and age groups follow official pages to stay informed about daily national issues and politics.

The data extracted covers all comments on Facebook posts of these pages, published in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Table 1 illustrates the corpus design with word count.

While the page of the Prime Minister has much fewer followers than the news pages, the comment section of her page flourishes, which is why it was included in the study. The small corpus size correlates with the size of the island and its population, which must be expected to produce less data than larger speech communities (Deuber et al., 2021, p. 8). The time periods covered in the corpus analysis correspond to the time frame of data collection of the online questionnaire (2018–2019), and some more recent data (2019–2020) was additionally included to increase the corpus size. As Facebook also served as a major distribution channel for the online survey, the participant groups are likely to overlap and should hence be adequate for comparative research.

The analysis of social media data corpora must be treated with caution. In the case of Facebook, this begs the questions of who the people are that use the platform, read the news, or follow the Prime Minister, and maybe regularly comment on the posts on such pages. The immense number of followers shows that a significant proportion of the population at least sporadically consumes this information. Nevertheless, the data certainly excludes certain parts of the population while overrepresenting others, and some of the comments are shared by Barbadians in the diaspora³ or non-Barbadians. Keeping these caveats in mind, the Facebook corpus offers a new perspective on the discussion of Americanization in the region, by investigating data from a less formal register than newspaper language for instance. To determine the degree of formality of the data, Facebook correspondence can be compared to social media

platforms such as Twitter, which has been described as more informal in nature (Gonçalves et al., 2018, p. 2), with variable levels of interactivity and as encompassing different individual styles (Biber & Conrad, 2019, pp. 216–219).

The corpus analysis is divided into two parts: an orthographic and a lexical component. The spelling part consists of five main categories with varying word counts while the lexical analysis includes 11 word pairs. The corpus data was analyzed using inferential-statistical techniques to examine whether there is a significant association between categories and the preference of American English vs. British English spelling/lexical variants and whether there are between category and between lexical pair differences. Investigating the effect of CATEGORY with generalized linear (mixed) models using the R packages “lme4” (Bates et al., 2015), “performance” (Lüdtke et al., 2021) and “Hmisc” (Harrell, 2021) and the effect of lexical pair with random Forest models using the R packages “party” (Hothorn et al., 2006; Strobl et al., 2007) will show which tendencies in the data are likely sample-specific and which can be generalized.

5 | QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

In a direct elicitation approach, Barbadians were asked which variety they prefer: British or American English. The result is nearly categorical: 93% of the respondents of the online questionnaire demonstrate a stronger identification with British English. From sociolinguistic interviews, the impression was gained that American English is appreciated particularly in the domains of business and economics: agents in call centers, for instance, may preferably be hired if they are capable of imitating an American accent, as I learnt from a Barbadian friend who used to work as a call center agent. In the educational sector or church-related matters, however, British English is the target of normativity.

Further insights into attitudes Barbadians hold toward British and American English were gained from the comment section. The explanations provided by the respondents regarding their preference for British English can be broadly divided into three categories: firstly, British English is perceived as the original form of the language, as the selected statements of Comment box 1 indicate.

COMMENT BOX 1 Perceived originality of British English

- (1) British English is the original English of the world. American English is a derivative.
- (2) It (BrE) is the origin of English. The American variant is simply in my view rebellion against the former.
- (3) It makes more sense British English has been around for a bit while American English seems to be generated after a fad.
- (4) It (BrE) is the origin of the language.

The comments demonstrate that American English is considered a recent spin-off from British English by many, which is, by implication, less valuable because of its recency.

Comments of the second category relate to the more general connotations Barbadians have of British and American English.

COMMENT BOX 2 General appreciation of British English/rejection of American English

- (5) British English is more eloquent.

- (6) British English is easier to spell.
- (7) There is more elegance and sophistication to the British English and it is understood by the majority of the world as opposed to certain words and phrases of American English.
- (8) American English is retarded.
- (9) American English is an excuse for linguistic laziness.

While British English is viewed as eloquent, sophisticated, and generally very prestigious, American English receives less positively connotated evaluations, with one respondent, quite expressively, rejecting it as a “retarded” form of British English. Some of the comments show contradictory notions: on the one hand, American English is considered lazy, too simple, and short in spelling, while on the other hand, some of the respondents find British English easier to spell and to understand.

The third category summarizes comments that reveal prescriptive standards that are imposed on young Barbadians in the educational system.

COMMENT BOX 3 Prescriptive standards imposed on Barbadians in the educational context

- (10) That (BrE) is what we were taught in primary and secondary school. And that (BrE) is what was accepted.
- (11) My Education was founded on British English.
- (12) It (BrE) is what I learnt in school and hence seems more correct
- (13) We’ve been socialized to respect British English more than American English. You know, as the “original English” (if that can even be counted as a thing. Lol) whereas American English is seen as an imitation form, created by the Americans who just wanted to break away. So of course any British system would have us believe that anything that deviates from what they created is not good enough. We’re also sometimes corrected by certain teachers for using American English.
- (14) That’s (BrE) what I learnt and think is correct.
- (15) It (BrE) is what we speak as Standard English.
- (16) I was taught British English so the alternative seems strange and too short in terms of spelling.

Many respondents consider British English to be “correct” in line with the variety targeted in Barbadian schools. Some of the comments imply that the use of American English is less accepted and sometimes even corrected in the educational context. Deviations from standardized British English seem to be generally viewed skeptically. One respondent explicitly indicates that standardness in Barbados is equated with British English.

The notion of standardness in Barbados was additionally tested by Q4 of the questionnaire: “Do you feel that the Standard English used in Barbados is the same as British English?” Forty-six percent of the respondents distinguish between a Barbadian standardized variety and a British standardized variety (Comment box 4).

COMMENT BOX 4 Perceived differences of British and Barbadian standardized varieties

- (17) Different pronunciations.
- (18) I find it is the same in the older generation but the younger generation is not as strict in terms of English language and there is a heavy American influence.
- (19) The grammar rules are different.
- (20) The influence of American culture has seen an increase in American English and not British.
- (21) I think our pronunciation and use of words somewhat vary.
- (22) The English use better pronunciation.
- (23) No because there are a number of Americanisms and American spellings which are creeping into the language. The official language might be British English as far as spelling goes but the spoken language is a different matter.
- (24) Spoken language is different.
- (25) In Barbados we may speak British English but we tend to write American.
- (26) The influence of North American media has changed some inflections and some meanings.

The most frequently mentioned factor in the distinction between British and Barbadian standardized English is pronunciation, but also grammatical and lexical differences are listed in the comment section. Fifty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they indeed consider British English to be the standard spoken in Barbados. Several of the respondents who differentiate between the standard spoken in Barbados and standardized BrE seem to relate differences to growing Americanization rather than the implementation of local influences.

The findings of the questionnaire draw a rather conservative picture that praises British English norms, scarcely recognizing emerging local standards, and rejects Americanization as a corruption of an assumed original variety of English. Impressions gathered during daily interactions in Barbados, however, drew a more moderate picture: several Barbadians positively reflected on cross-linguistic influences from Bajan entering formal English in the island. Additionally, opinions shared during personal conversations indicate that some Barbadians seem to feel linguistically attracted to Canadian English as an additional external model, as well as to creoles like Jamaican Creole for artistic expression particularly.

6 | THE ANALYSIS OF ORTHOGRAPHICAL AND LEXICAL PREFERENCES

In the following, the results of the corpus will be discussed individually for both linguistic levels.

6.1 | Orthography

On the level of orthography, five frequently used categories or spelling rules could be identified. Every category comprises several representative pairs of the rule with the exception of the miscellaneous category, which integrates variables that do not group with others. Only those samples that were frequent enough (>100 tokens per category) and rather categorically distinct in contemporary BrE and AmE were included.⁴ For example, in the case of [z] versus

TABLE 2 British and American spelling items in absolute frequencies of different types

British spelling	Tokens	Tokens	American spelling
<ou>			<o>
favour, -s	44	42	favor, -s
neighbour, -s, -ing, -hood	55	89	neighbor, -s, -ing, -hood
favourite, -s	45	47	favorite, -s
endeavour, -s	24	19	endeavor, -s
rumour, -s, -ed	24	26	rumor, -s, -ed
honour, -s, -able, -ary, -ees, -ed, -ing	271	338	honor, -s, -able, -ary, -ees, -ed, -ing
colour, -s, -ed, -ful	76	58	color, -s, -ed, -ful
behaviour, -al, -s	85	75	behavior, -al, -s
<tre>			<ter>
centre, -s, -d	51	55	center, -s, -ed
metre, -s	5	16	meter, -s
theatre, -s	9	3	theater, -s
<ence>			<ense>
licence, -s, -d	15	61	license, -s, -d
defence	22	29	defense
offence, -s	20	9	offense, -s
<ll>			<l>
travelled, travelling	52	46	traveled, traveling
cancelled, cancelling	17	4	canceled, canceling
<miscellaneous>			<miscellaneous>
mum, mummy	82	115	mom, mommy
programme, -s	46	149	program, -s
cheque, -s	68	58	check, -s

[s] in the spelling of *organization* or *realized*, the American realization is frequently attested even in England nowadays (Gonçalves et al., 2018, p. 4), which is why it was not included in this analysis.

Table 2 provides an overview of the categories and its types and tokens, including all variations investigated.

As Figure 1 shows, the categories are quite heterogenous in terms of frequencies per word types. For instance, the category of <o> versus <ou> comprises more than 1000 tokens in the corpus while the <ence> versus <ense> category only covers roughly 150 tokens. This is accounted for by discussing the five categories individually on the one hand, and by working with numbers normalized to the overall frequencies for the generalized outcome of the spelling production, on the other. All concordances were checked manually to identify and exclude false positives (as in *check* (v)) and proper names (as in *Caribbean Centre of Excellence*, *BOSS Program*).

The first category, <ou> versus <o> shows a slightly higher proportion of American spellings: 52.7% of all tokens of this category are spelt with <o>, and a closer look at the individual pairs reveals a close to 50/50 distribution in most cases, with a slight dominance of the American variants. Overall, the analysis of the category of <ou> versus <o> demonstrates that American and British spelling are equally present in Barbadian text production. When it comes to the spelling of <tre> versus <ter>, the balanced usage of both British and American could not be observed for all representations of the category: while Barbadians seem to prefer the American spelling for *meter* (76.2%), *theatre* is spelt in a traditionally British fashion (75%). The pair *centre/center*, which has the highest frequency in the corpus, is

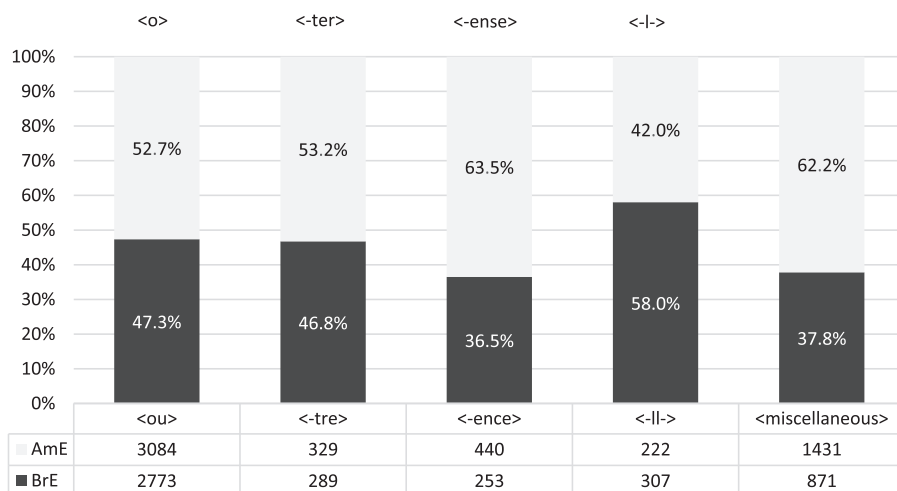


FIGURE 1 Percentages and normalized frequencies of British and American spelling items

rather balanced again (48.1% British, 51.9% American). The category of ←ence> vs. ←ense> is equally heterogenous in nature: while *licence/licence* shows a higher frequency of the American spelling variant (80.3%), Barbadians prefer British spelling for *offence/offense* (69%). *Defence/defense* on the other hand shows a slight preference for the American form (56.9%). The fourth category focused on words where the final consonant [l] is doubled in British English (and not so in American English). In the cases of *travelled/travelling*, which make up the main part of this category, the ratio is rather balanced again with 53.1% British and 46.9% American English orthography. The situation is different for the smaller sample of *cancelled/cancelling*, where British spelling is clearly preferred (81%). The miscellaneous category consists of three more pairs: *cheque/check*, *programme/program* and *mum(my)/mom(my)*. While Barbadians seem to prefer the American spelling of *program(s)* (76.4%), and *mom(my)* (58.4%), the British variant *cheque* occurs more frequently (54%) than the American counterpart. Again, categorizations are far from categorical and both orthographic options seem to be accepted.

The orthographic analysis has shown that the ratio of American and British spellings is rather balanced with 44.9% British and 55.1% American, indicating that both alternatives are broadly accepted by the Barbadian public. While a balanced ratio is found in most cases, there are a few spelling pairs such as *licence/licence* or *cancelled/canceled* where clear preferences (>80%) for one or the other variety are visible. These instances, however, are rather exceptions to the norm.

In a first step, a simple chi square test of independence (Preacher, 2001) was conducted on the data. It shows that there is a significant association at $p < 0.001$ between the five main lexical categories and the use of British and American spelling variants ($\chi^2 = 26.46$; $df = 4$). A generalized linear mixed model was performed on the data, with SPELLING VARIANT as binary dependent variable (BrE vs. AmE) and CATEGORY as a fixed effects factor with the 5 levels just outlined above. In addition, random intercepts were included for LEXEME (the 18 lexical items in varying forms illustrated in Table 2) and CORPUS.⁵ The inferential analysis confirms the findings of the descriptive statistics: while CATEGORY and CORPUS do not show a significant effect, it is rather the LEXEME, so the individual lexical items, that is the most important predictor. Based on this finding, a generalized linear model was built, again with SPELLING VARIANT as binary dependent variable but this time with LEXEME as fixed effect. Figure 2 highlights the rather random distribution of variants in the data: while there is a broad middle range where British and American variants are almost equally distributed, the lexical items that shows the highest probability for the American variant (*licence/license*) and one of those that show the smallest probability for the American variant (*offence/offense*) belong to the same category.

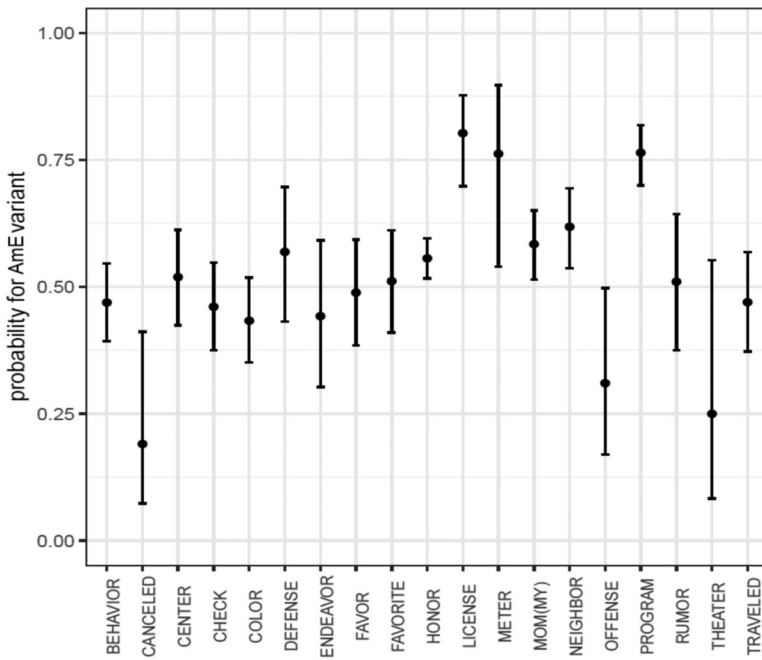


FIGURE 2 Probability for AmE spelling variant. Note: For better clarity, the plot only shows one form of the lexical items introduced in the table although all forms were considered in the analysis.

6.2 Lexicon

The second part of the corpus analysis focused on the use of lexical variants. The lexical items investigated had to meet several criteria: for each lexical pair, a minimum token number of 20 was set. On the lexical level, differences are often not as categorical as on the orthographic level: items that may be considered American may be found in both American and British English, and the same is true for assumed British lexical variants. As differences are rather a question of frequency (Algeo, 2006, p. 2, cited in Deuber et al., 2021, p. 28), it may prove helpful to work with reference corpora, to identify words that behave sufficiently distinct in American and British English. The selection of lexical pairs for this study was based on items used in previous studies on lexical representations of British and American forms in Caribbean Englishes like Jamaican English, Grenadian English, or Bahamian English (Deuber et al., 2021), and new Englishes generally (Gonçalves et al., 2018; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019). Only pairs of which previous research has demonstrated that British and American English show contrasting patterns of preferences were included in the analysis. Again, concordances were cleared manually, to identify and exclude proper names, idioms, and false positives such as *shop* (v), *ten yards*, *Spring Gardens*, *happy holidays*, *bank holiday* or *in store*. Overall, 11 lexical pairs were considered, and the token numbers identified in the corpus are listed in Table 3.

Considering the percentages and normalized frequencies (normalized to the overall token number of all lexical items investigated) visualized in Figure 3, the heterogeneous nature of lexical preferences in Barbadian language use on Facebook is evident: while some items show a nearly categorical preference for American variants (see *move forward/move forwards* and *gas(oline)/petrol*), the reverse case is found in the data as well, with *towards/toward*. In the cases of several pairs such as *math/maths*, *holiday/vacation* or *transport/transportation*, a rather balanced ratio indicates the usage of both British and American forms in Barbados.

The lexical preferences identified in the Facebook comment corpus roughly correspond to previous findings (Deuber et al., 2021). It is noteworthy that the strong preference for British *towards* is also observed in all of the Caribbean

TABLE 3 British and American lexical items in raw numbers

British item			American item
move forwards	3	42	move forward
headmaster/-mistress	10	27	principal
towards	118	14	toward
maths	11	9	math
holiday(s)	54	60	vacation
mobile (phone)	7	26	cell (phone)
shop(s)	125	114	store(s)
rubbish	55	177	garbage
transport	24	21	transportation
garden	27	72	yard
petrol	7	129	gas(oline)

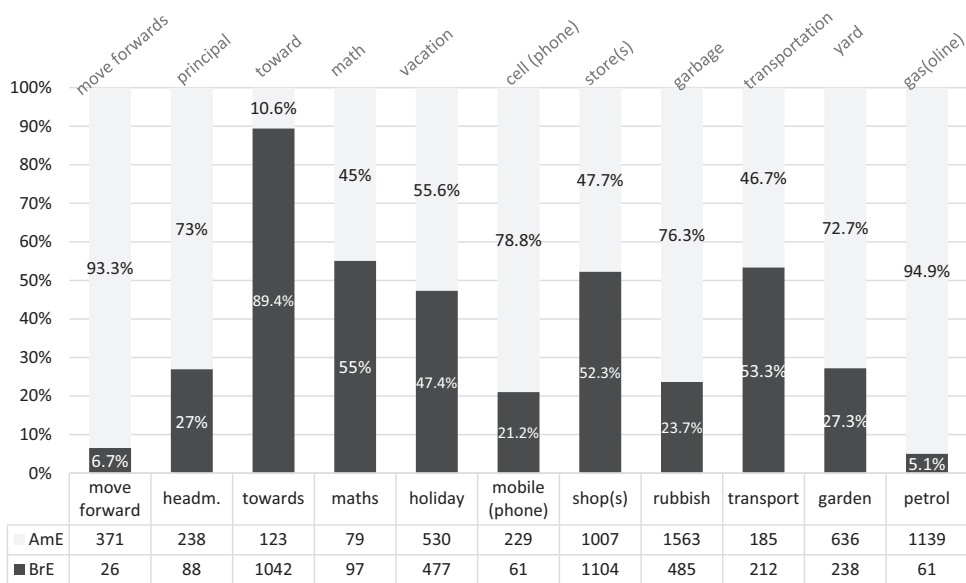


FIGURE 3 Percentages and normalized frequencies of British and American lexical items

varieties evaluated in Deuber et al. (2021). Generally, the distribution of lexical items in the data indicates a higher proportion of American forms than expected: 61% of the lexical items analyzed are American and only 39% of British variants were traced in the corpus.

A chi square test of independence that was conducted on the data shows that there is a significant association at $p < 0.001$ between the individual lexical pairs and the use of British and American spelling variants ($\chi^2 = 288.63$, $df = 10$). In order to investigate differences between the individual lexical items, a random forest analysis was performed on the data with LEXICAL VARIANT as binary dependent variable and LEXEME as independent variable. The model's goodness-of-fit value of $C = 0.85$ ($D_{xy} = 0.70$, $N = 1132$) is good enough to proceed with the further analysis. Following Heller et al. (2017, pp. 123–124), the probabilities for the American variant for each LEXEME category were then averaged. The results are visualized in Figure 4. Again, the analysis confirms the descriptive statistics in that the data

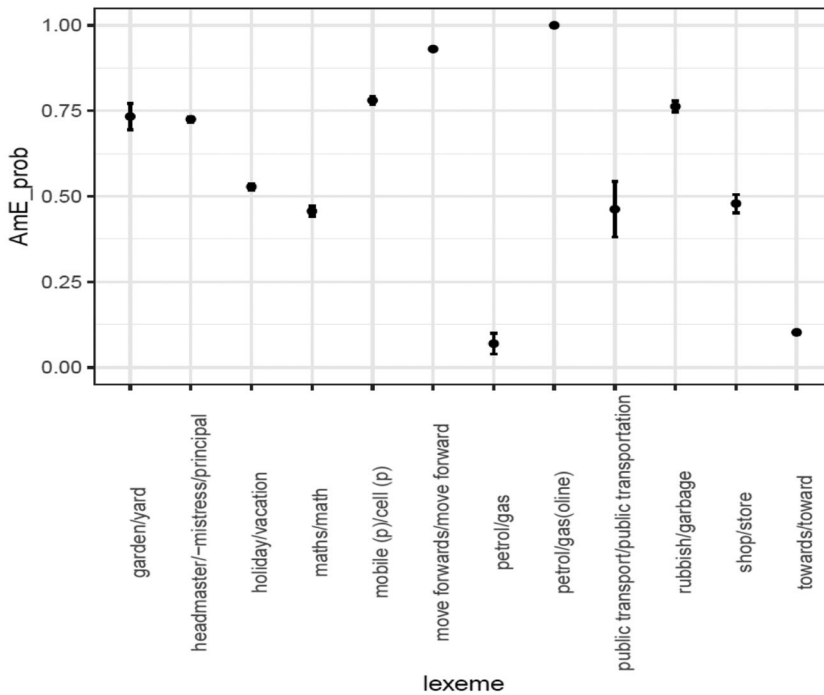


FIGURE 4 Probability for AmE lexical variant

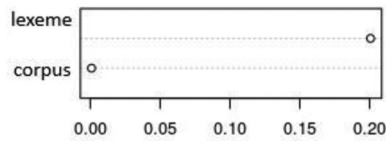


FIGURE 5 Variable importance ranking

shows a seemingly random distribution of British and American variants, with a probability for the American variant ranging from 0.11 (*towards/toward*) to 0.95 to (*petrol/gas(oline)*).

The variable importance ranking (Figure 5) reveals that LEXEME (in this case the individual lexical pair) is again the most important predictor.

The comparative analysis of the two structural components lexis and spelling in Barbadian English language production (Figure 6) shows that the American variant is dominant on both linguistic levels, and, as expected, even more so on the level of lexis than on the level of orthography.

7 | DISCUSSION

This paper investigated normative orientation in contemporary Barbadian English. The study was divided into two parts: an attitudinal analysis based on an online survey and a language production analysis based on Facebook commentaries. The first component of the analysis addressed the question of varietal orientation of Barbadians on an explicit language attitudinal level (RQ 1). Although a reorientation toward American English seems to have taken place in some territories (Deuber & Leung, 2013, p. 296) because of geographical reasons and strong media influences, the

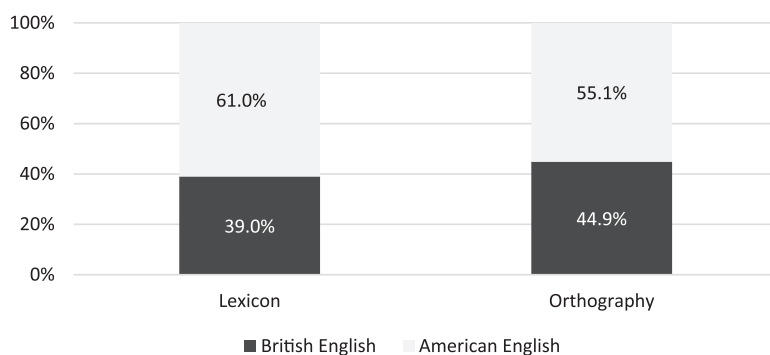


FIGURE 6 Relative proportion of British and American lexical and spelling variants

questionnaire data clearly ratifies the prevalence of British English as the explicitly perceived linguistic role model in Barbados. The finding that the majority of respondents show a stronger identification with British English is not entirely surprising, considering the prevailing stereotype of Barbados being particularly British-oriented in the region. The comments reveal that American English is considered a recent spin-off from British English by many, which is, by implication, less valuable because of its recency. This is a perspective commonly found in anglophone postcolonial societies, which may be explained by the general notion that standardization is a historical process and historicity an important part of standard language ideologies (Milroy, 2001, p. 535). The spread of American English through digitalization seems to reinforce the notion of a fad. Additionally, pressure put on Barbadians to stick to British forms in the school context further discourages an explicit orientation toward American English. The forces of educational socialization are known to remain influential throughout the lifetime of individuals, as habitus generates practices that lead to cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

The finding that 54% of the respondents consider British English to be the standardized variety spoken in Barbados carries important implications for presumed endonormative stabilization: as long as the majority is unaware of an emerging local standard, and standardness is associated with British English, deliberate endonormative orientation seems improbable. This improbability is reinforced by the finding that several respondents interpret deviations from standardized British English as Americanization rather than local influences. Since the survey has shown that American English is explicitly not preferred, newly emerging forms will rather not be cherished as a legitimate alternative to “the Queen’s English.”

The second component of the study investigated to what degrees Barbadians’ language and speech production patterns show linguistic alignment with British and American English norms (RQ 2). The corpus analysis has shown that both British and American forms coexist on both structural levels with a stronger preference for American variants. As expected, with a proportion of 61% of American variants, the level of lexis is more affected by American influences than the orthography. However, the degree of Americanization on the orthographic level is only slightly smaller, at 55.1%. Variation was observed between and within most categories and between lexical pairs. The results of both structural sub-analyses are by no means homogenous in nature and the degree of Americanization is highly word-specific: American norms are clearly preferred for some lexical items, but contrary cases are found in the data as well. While some lexemes are almost categorical in terms of norm orientation, the overall trend observed in the data is a rather balanced ratio with a slight dominance of the American variants. The findings thus imply that while no clear orientation toward one or the other external model could be traced in the data, both British and American English are almost equally established and accepted in Barbados.

Differences in the relative frequencies of AmE spelling variants between the present study (55.1%) and the Barbadian newspaper data examined by Deuber et al. (2021) (3%) suggest an effect of register, such that American variants seem to be more frequent in the more informal, online context studied here. In addition to the lower degree of

formality, the higher number of authors involved, and the diversity in the educational and socioeconomic background of the contributors, may have played a role. Moreover, American English is the dominant code of electronic communication including social media, and default settings of computers/smartphones and keyboards as well as automatic spelling correction may also determine the use of the variety as far as spelling is concerned. The effect of register does not seem to concern the lexical level, where both studies corroborate a preference for American forms, which may imply that they are so established in Caribbean English today that they are not perceived as salient American forms (Deuber & Hänsel, 2019, p. 66). Also, we cannot presuppose that spelling and/or lexical choices are necessarily a conscious and controlled process for everyone; speakers may not be aware of what the British and what the American variant is, and some may simply associate them with local language use. In this respect, more profound research on the awareness of language use would be desirable. Limitations of the corpus analysis such as general disadvantages of Facebook data (see Methodology) and the interrelatedness of online text genres and predefined settings of electronic devices must be kept in mind as well.

The comparative analysis has disclosed a discrepancy between explicitly articulated preferences and actual language production patterns in Barbadian English (RQ 3). On the one hand, Barbadians express a much stronger linguistic identification with standardized BrE than with standardized AmE. On the other hand, the corpus-linguistic evidence at the level of language production shows Americanization in Barbadian English on both structural levels examined. As the ratios of allocation of British and American English are rather balanced, we can speak of a coexistence of both exocentric norms. The appreciation of additional external models such as Canadian English or Jamaican Creole adds to the complex nature of exonormative orientation in Barbados. In terms of presumed endonormative stabilization, the present study shows that the lacking awareness of differences between local and foreign standard forms on the one hand and the observed interpretation of linguistic changes as Americanization make it difficult to speak of a deliberate turn toward local norms. Consequently, normativity in Barbados, both in terms of attitudes and language production, cannot be defined as endocentric, but it is not clearly exocentric either. Instead, the coexistence of all these forms in Barbados could be interpreted as indications of increasing *multinormativity*, as Meer and Deuber (2020) suggest for the very dynamic and complex nature of norm orientation in Trinidad.

8 | CONCLUSION

As the coexistence of BrE and AmE in Barbados is rooted in sociohistorical, geographical, political, economic, and social interconnections with the UK and the US respectively, access to both codes will likely persist in the foreseeable future, provided that close relations with these countries will continue. As long as Britishness is overtly appreciated and Barbadianness defined by a certain identification with the former, which is also perceived as a distinguishing element in contrast with fellow Caribbean English speakers, it is unlikely that Barbadians will fully recognize the emergence of a local standard, let alone the suggested “remarkably homogenous” (Schneider, 2007, p. 51) standardized variety in terms of a pan-Caribbean norm. The growing acceptance and appreciation of Bajanisms in less formal contexts and literary expression (see Lickmout’ Lou column by Jeannette Layne-Clark, short stories by Timothy Callender) as well as the recent sociopolitical developments, however, may be indications of a gradual change in direction toward national (linguistic) self-confidence and awareness. As emerging local forms will continue to shape Barbadian English, multinormative orientation (Meer & Deuber, 2020) can be expected to grow in the future, maybe to a degree that “variation is the norm,” as suggested for spelling preferences in St Kitts and Nevis by Deuber and Hänsel (2019, p. 65). Additional external models such as Canadian English or Jamaican Creole will influence the dynamics of the situation further, and linguistic boundaries can be expected to become more fluent over time. In future research, the investigation of additional linguistic levels such as grammar and phonology as well as the consideration of different text categories would be desirable in order to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of normative orientation in Barbados.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

NOTES

¹ Except for Trinidad for instance, where there is no basilectal creole either.

² Originally, the questionnaire is a larger compilation of 13 content questions of which only two are included in this study.

³ There are currently 112,925 Barbadians living in the diaspora according to the European Union Global Diaspora Facility, available at <https://diasporaforddevelopment.eu/>. This number corresponds to 39.3% of the current island population.

⁴ The types selected for this analysis are based on items used in previous studies on orthographic representations of British and American forms in different varieties of English (Gonçalves et al., 2018; Deuber & Hänsel, 2019; Deuber et al., 2021). Deuber et al. (2021) underpin their selection of orthographic items by working with British and American reference corpora, which show a categorical distribution of the items.

⁵ As the data was anonymized by the Facepager software, SPEAKER could not be modeled in this approach. CORPUS, the three subcorpora included in the analysis, thus seemed the closest approximation in order to account for the data's hierarchical structures.

REFERENCES

- Algeo, J. (2006). *British or American English? A handbook of word and grammar patterns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allport, G. (1954). The historical background of modern social psychology. In G. Lindzey (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 3–56). Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Anthony, L. (2019). *AntConc*. (Version 1.2.1). Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software>
- Bates, D., Maechler, M., Bolker, B., & Walker, S. (2015). Fitting linear mixed-effects models using lme4. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 67, 1–48.
- Belgrave, K. (2009). Investigating acceptability in Barbadian language [Doctoral dissertation, The University of the West Indies].
- Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2019). *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Central Bank of Barbados. (2021). Barbados stopover visitors. *Tourism Analytics*. Retrieved from <https://tourismanalytics.com/barbados.html>
- Deuber, D. (2009). Standard English in the secondary school in Trinidad: Problems—properties—prospects. In T. Hoffmann & L. Siebers (Eds.), *World Englishes: Problems, properties and prospects* (pp. 83–104). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Deuber, D., & Hänsel, E. C. (2019). The English of current Caribbean newspapers: American, British, in between or neither? In V. Wiegand & M. Mahlberg (Eds.), *Corpus linguistics, context and culture* (pp. 43–74). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Deuber, D., & Leung, G. (2013). Investigating attitudes towards an emerging standard of English: Evaluations of newscasters accents in Trinidad. *Multilingua*, 32, 289–319.
- Deuber, D., Hackert, S., Hänsel, E. C., Laube, A., Herjani, M., & Laliberté, C. (2021). The norm orientation of English in the Caribbean: A comparative study of newspaper writing from ten countries. *American Speech*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00031283-8791736>
- Fenigsen, J. (2000). Regimes of inequality: Linguistic ideologies and practices in Barbados [Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University].
- Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gonçalves, B., Loureiro-Porto, L., Ramasco, J., & Sánchez, D. (2018). Mapping the Americanization of English in space and time. *PLoS ONE*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197741>
- Hackert, S. (2015). Pseudotitles in Bahamian English: A case of Americanization. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 43, 143–167.
- Hackert, S. (2016). Standards of English in the Caribbean: History, attitudes, functions, features. In E. Seoane & C. Suárez-Gómez (Eds.), *World Englishes: New theoretical and methodological considerations* (pp. 85–112). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hackert, S., & Deuber, D. (2015). American influence on written Caribbean English: A diachronic analysis of newspaper reportage in the Bahamas and in Trinidad and Tobago. In P. Collins (Ed.), *Grammatical change in English world-wide* (pp. 389–410). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hänsel, E. C., & Deuber, D. (2013). Globalization, postcolonial Englishes, and the English language press in Kenya, Singapore, and Trinidad and Tobago. *World Englishes*, 32, 338–357.
- Harrell, F. E., & Dupont, C. (2021). Hmisc: Harrell miscellaneous. R package version 4.5-0. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=Hmisc>
- Heller, B., Bernaisch, T., & Gries, S. T. (2017). Empirical perspectives on two potential epicenters: The genitive alternation in Asian Englishes. *ICAME Journal*, 41, 111–144.

- Hothorn, T., Buehlmann, P., Dudoit, S., Molinaro, A., & Van Der Laan, M. (2006). Survival ensembles. *Biostatistics*, 7, 355–373.
- Jamaican Language Unit. (2005). The language attitude survey of Jamaica: Data analysis. <https://www.mona.uwi.edu/dllp/jlu/projects/Report%20for%20Language%20Attitude%20Survey%20of%20Jamaica.pdf>
- Jünger, J., & Keyling, T. (2019). Facepager: An application for automated data retrieval on the web. Source code and releases available at <https://github.com/strohne/Facepager/>
- Labov, W. (1984). Field methods of the project on linguistic change and variation. In J. Baugh & J. Sherzer (Eds.), *Language in use: Readings in sociolinguistics* (pp. 28–54). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Laube, A., & Rothmund, J. (forthcoming). “Broken English,” “Dialect” or “Bahamianese”? Language attitudes and identity in The Bahamas. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*.
- Leech, G., Hundt, M., Mair, C., & Smith, N. (2009). *Change in contemporary English: A grammatical study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lüdecke, D., Ben-Shachar, M. S., Patil, I., Waggoner, P., & Makowski, D. (2021). Performance: An R package for assessment, comparison and testing of statistical models. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 6, 3139. Doi: [10.21105/joss.03139](https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.03139)
- Mair, C. (2006). *Twentieth-century English: History, variation and standardization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mair, C. (2016). Beyond and between the three circles: World Englishes research in the age of globalization. In E. Seoane & C. Suárez-Gómez (Eds.), *World Englishes: New theoretical and methodological considerations* (pp. 17–36). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Mair, C. (2017). Crisis of the “Outer Circle”? Globalisation, the weak nation state, and the need for new taxonomies in World Englishes research. In M. Filppula, J. Klemola, A. Mauranen, & S. Vetchinnikova (Eds.), *Changing English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 5–24). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- McArthur, T. (2002). *The Oxford guide to world English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meer, P., & Deuber, D. (2020). Standard English in Trinidad: Multinormativity, translocality, and implications for the Dynamic Model and the EIF Model. In S. Buschfeld & A. Kautzsch (Eds.), *Modelling world Englishes: A joint approach to postcolonial and non-postcolonial Englishes* (pp. 274–297). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Meer, P., Westphal, M., Hänsel, E. C., & Deuber, D. (2019). Trinidadian secondary school students’ attitudes toward accents of standard English. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 34, 81–122.
- Milroy, J. (2001). Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 5, 530–555.
- Mühleisen, S. (2001). Is “bad English” dying out? A comparative diachronic study on attitudes towards Creole versus Standard English in Trinidad. *Philologie im Netz*, 15, 43–78.
- Mukherjee, J. (2015). Response to Davies and Fuchs. *English World-Wide*, 36, 34–37.
- Oenbring, R., & Fielding, W. (2014). Young adults’ attitudes to standard and nonstandard English in an English-creole speaking country: The case of The Bahamas. *Language, Discourse & Society*, 3, 28–51.
- Preacher, K. J. (2001). Calculation for the chi-square test: An interactive calculation tool for chi-square tests of goodness of fit and independence [Computer software]. Available from <http://quantpsy.org>
- Roberts, P. (1988). *West Indians and their language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roy, J. (1984). *An investigation of the processes of language variation and change in a speech community in Barbados* [Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University].
- Schneider, E. W. (2006). English in North America. In B. Kachru, Y. Kachru, & C. L. Nelson (Eds.), *The handbook of world Englishes* (pp. 58–73). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strobl, C., Boulesteix, A., Zeileis, A., & Hothorn, T. (2007). Bias in random forest variable importance measures: Illustrations, sources and a solution. *BMC Bioinformatics*, 8(25).
- The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency. (2021). Barbados. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/barbados>
- Van Herk, G. (2003). Barbadian lects: Beyond meso. In M. Aceto & J. P. Williams (Eds.), *Contact Englishes of the Eastern Caribbean* (pp. 241–264). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Westphal, M. (2017). *Language variation on Jamaican radio*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wilson, G. (2017). Conflicting language ideologies in choral singing in Trinidad. *Language & Communication*, 52, 19–30.
- Winford, D. (2000). Intermediate creoles and degrees of change in creole formation: The case of Bajan. In I. Neumann-Holzschuh & E. W. Schneider (Eds.), *Degrees of restructuring in creole languages* (pp. 215–146). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Youssef, V. (2004). “Is English we speaking”: Trinbagonian in the twenty-first century. *English Today*, 20(4), 42–49.

How to cite this article: Stuka, C. (2023). The Americanization of Barbadian English. *World Englishes*, 42, 91–114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12611>

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Survey on language use in Barbados

Thank you for taking the time to fill this questionnaire. The data acquired from this survey will be exclusively used and handled by the creator of the study, Christine Stuka, researcher from the English Department at the University of Giessen, Germany.

Please answer all questions spontaneously and honestly. As this questionnaire is designed to capture personal opinions, there are no correct or incorrect answers. Your participation in this survey is entirely anonymous. Filling the form will take you approximately 10 minutes.



1. What languages do you speak? *

Your answer

2. Are Bajan and English different languages? *

yes

no

Comment.

Your answer

3. How comfortable are you using Bajan? *

- 1 2 3 4 5
- very comfortable very uncomfortable

Comment.

Your answer

4. Do you feel that the Standard English used in Barbados is the same as British English? *

- yes
- no

If not, in which respects is it different?

Your answer

5. Which do you like better? *

- British English
- American English

Why?

Your answer

6. Are there any differences between Barbadian speech and the speech of other West Indians? *

- yes
- no

If yes, please give examples:

Your answer

If yes, do you think Barbadian speech to be better or worse than the speech of other West Indians?

Your answer

7. Are there situations/topics that require Bajan specifically? Which? *

Your answer

8. Are there situations/topics where the use of Bajan would be completely inappropriate? Which? *

Your answer

9. Would you rather use Bajan or Standard Barbadian English or both in these domains/with these interlocutors/topics? *

	Bajan	both	Standard English	not applicable
university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
schoolyard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
explaining an assignment to a classmate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
giving a presentation in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
at a job interview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in a bank encounter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

in a business meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lunch with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to an employee at the supermarket	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to a member of your religious congregation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to a neighbor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to your parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to your friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to your grandparents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to your friend's grandmother	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to an unknown elderly person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to a clerk at the public library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to a fellow patient in the waiting room of a doctor's office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to a doctor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talking about sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talking about the bible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talking about your term paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talking about the news of TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

talking about politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talking about personal issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
texting on WhatsApp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
texting on Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
texting on Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
speaking to your partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As an additional language used in schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cultural domains such as music, literature, film etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
religious contexts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Would you appreciate to hear/see Bajan used more frequently in the following domains? *

	more Bajan	neutral	less Bajan
Radio programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political speeches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV shows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News on TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic domains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Written correspondence (signs, papers etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: "Bajan is...

*

	agree	unsure	disagree
...a language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...an accent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...a dialect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...a creole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...broken English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...part of my personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...fun to communicate in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>