





LANGUAGE PROFILE OF THE CARIBBBBEAN TERRITORIES


<u>Country</u>	<u>Official language</u>	<u>Majority language</u>	<u>Minority languages</u>
Cuba	Spanish	Spanish	-
Dominican Republic	Spanish	Spanish	...
Puerto Rico	Spanish	Spanish	English
Providence, San Andres	Spanish	English Creole	-
Barbados	English	English	-- .
Jamaica	English	English Creole	--
Guyana	English	English Creole	- Bhojpuri - Amerindian languages
Antigua	English	English Creole	-
St. Kitts	English	English Creole	-
Montserrat	English	English Creole	-
St. Vincent	English	English Creole	--
Belize	English	English Creole	- Spanish - Amerindian languages

<u>Country</u>	<u>Official language</u>	<u>Majority language</u>	<u>Minority languages</u>
Trinidad	English/ Spanish	English Creole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - French Creole - Spanish - Bhojpuri - Chinese
US Virgin Islands	English	English Creole	-
Grenada	English	English (influenced by French Creole)	French Creole (rapidly receding)
St. Lucia	English	French Creole	...
Dominica	English French	French Creole French Creole	...
Haiti			
Martinique	French	French Creole	...
Guadeloupe	French	French Creole	-
Suriname	Dutch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sranan - Sarnami Hindi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Javanese Malay - Maroon Creole languages - Amerindian languages
Netherlands Antilles & Aruba	Dutch	ABC: Papiamentu SSS: English (Creole)	Spanish

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- **The pre-Columbian situation:**
 - Arawakan and Cariban languages spoken in mainland territories spread into the island territories
 - contact / conflict — island Carib, an Arawak language which has incorporated Carib elements




The effect of European colonization on this situation:

- the demise of the indigenous languages; Black Caribs, deported to Belize
 - the introduction of European languages
 - the introduction of African languages
 - the introduction of Asian languages
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- **The development of a Caribbean identity:**
 - Caribbean varieties of European languages
 - Caribbean varieties of Asian languages
 - the emergence of Creole languages
 - the fate of African languages in the Caribbean:
 - words
 - ritual languages




The languages of the Caribbean today:

- indigenous languages survive in the mainland territories, but are under threat
 - the Caribbean is divided into Spanish-speaking, English-speaking, French-speaking, and Dutch-speaking
 - English, French, and Dutch are elite / minority languages
 - the Spanish legacy consists mainly of indiginized standard varieties; additionally: Papiamentu (vernacular, ABC islands), Palenquero (maroon Creole, Colombia)
 - in several Caribbean territories, Creole languages are majority languages
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The languages of the Caribbean today:

- in several Caribbean territories, change in colonial ownership has resulted in a modern situation where the official language and the Creole language do not match
 - Dutch Creoles, once spoken in Guyana (Berbice Dutch and Skepi Dutch) and St Thomas & St John (Negerhollands) have not survived the 20th century; English-lexifier Creole has spread at their expense
 - in "Dutch" Caribbean territories, Creole languages are spoken of English (Suriname), mixed English-Portuguese (Suriname) and mixed Spanish-Portuguese (ABC islands) lexical bases
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The languages of the Caribbean today:

- Spanish and Dutch show that colonial and linguistic dominance are not necessarily commensurate
 - in Suriname, Asian languages have viable speech communities (Sarnami Hindi, Javanese. Kejia)
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Jamaican

Columbus in 1494 settled the island in 1509, bringing the first African slaves.


By 1601 only a handful of Arawaks remained alive alongside 1,000 Africans.

- British arrived in 1655 with 9,000 troops, met 6,000 inhabitants, 1,500 of African descent and the rest mostly Spanish; after 1660, a few dozen Spanish remained, while 300 Maroons fought from the mountains.
- The Maroons, still preserve a distinctive speech form, Maroon Spirit Language (Bilby 1983).






Jamaican

- Jamaican Creole did not yet exist in 1658, when the 7,000 settlers and soldiers in the island from Britain, Ireland and the Americas outnumbered Africans 5 to 1; but between 1677, when there were about 9,000 each of whites and blacks, and 1703, when the white population had slightly declined but the numbers of enslaved Africans had risen to 45,000, the roots of Jamaican Creole were planted.
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Jamaican

- Creolization led to emergence of new cultural and social institutions, including language, but the subordination of Jamaican Creole to English -- the native tongue of a tiny minority -- has persisted to the present day, with consequences for education, economy, and psychological independence.
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Jamaican

- In the 21st century the Jamaican government seriously begun to explore language planning and recognition of Jamaican Creole as a national language.
- Influence of African languages (Akan and Kwa families, along with Bantu), and to a lesser extent British English dialects (West of England, Irish and Scots), as well as universals of language acquisition and creation.
- Over 90% of Jamaica's population are of African origin. Other groups claim Indian, Chinese, Syrian and European heritage; of these, only Europeans were present before 1845 and contributed to the formation of Jamaican Creole.

Guyana

Dutch, West African Languages, Arawakan and Carib languages, and to a lesser extent Indian languages.



- There are many sub-dialects of Guyanese Creole based on the race of the speakers and their geographical location within Guyana. For example, along the Rupununi River where the population is largely Amerindian, a distinct form of Guyanese Creole exists.
- Different ethnic groups of the country are also known to alter or include words from their own backgrounds

Suriname


Dutch may be the official language of Suriname, but most Surinamese speak Sranan, an English-based creole, which has been influenced by Dutch and Portuguese along with some West African languages.



- **Sranan** is only one of 16 languages spoken in Suriname. There are at least five different creoles used in Suriname, in addition to six indigenous languages of native peoples, two European languages, and two modified Asian languages.
- Sranan is short for *Sranan Tongo*, which means "Suriname Language."




Suriname

- Suriname was once populated mostly by Carib and Arawak natives.
 - Spanish and Portuguese explorers frequented the region during the 1500s.
 - Africans came from different linguistic backgrounds, but it is assumed that they communicated with each other in an early Afro-Portuguese pidgin that was common along the West African coast.
 - Africans picked up English, which forms the basis of contemporary Sranan. Contact with Portuguese speakers also affected the language.
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Suriname

- In 1667-68, the Dutch gained control of Suriname, and most of the English and their African slaves left over a period (1671-80).
 - Dutch continued to bring new African slaves to Suriname, but the English-based language lingered.
 - Even though the Dutch ruled the country until 1975, surprisingly enough the first recorded information on any language spoken among the Africans is English, in 1693.
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Suriname

- In a random sampling of 476 Sranan verbs, 44% were English-derived. About 40% of the words were from Dutch, 5% came from Portuguese, 2% had African origins, and 9% had unknown origins (Voorhoeve and Lichtveld 241).
 - In 1863 slavery was abolished. The slaves were replaced by East Indians and Chinese, who were contracted to work on the plantations for a specified number of years. About 37,000 Hindustanis arrived in Suriname before a movement in India led by Mahatma Gandhi stopped this immigration in 1916.
 - In addition to the influx of Indians and Chinese, thousands of Javanese contract workers, from the island of Java in Indonesia, poured into the country (from 1891 to 1939).
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Suriname

- The government in the early 20th century mounted their efforts eradicate Sranan and schools would severely punish kids who spoke it. Parents concerned about social status discouraged it in the home.
 - In the post-World War II era, J. G. A. Koenders tried to gain respect for Sranan as a unique language. He worked to change the prejudiced government policies and racist attitudes that sought to obliterate the language and culture.
 - Since independence in 1975, Sranan has gained greater status (although Dutch is still the prestigious language)
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