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Investigating attitudes towards an emerging standard of English: Evaluations of newscasters' accents in Trinidad¹

Abstract: This paper addresses the issue of the emergence of new standards of English in the postcolonial world by means of a language attitude study conducted in the Caribbean island of Trinidad that involved rating the accents of newscasters. Accents represented in the clips played to respondents comprised various local as well as non-local ones. The respondents disfavoured a local accent displaying many features shared with Trinidad's English-based Creole and particularly favoured a local accent that showed the comparatively greatest distance from Creole. Intermediate Trinidadian accents as well as non-local ones were in between and rather undifferentiated. We suggest that several partially conflicting factors are relevant to these results – a perception of Standard English in terms of distance from Creole, increasing endonormativity, as well as global influences that are particularly present in the media domain – and we support the notion that Standard English is becoming a more complex phenomenon in today's world that needs to be considered in relation to contexts of use.

Keywords: language attitudes, Standard English, accents, Trinidad, news broadcasts

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1 Introduction

In postcolonial anglophone Caribbean contexts, local varieties of English have been rising in prominence at the expense of the exonormative standard of British English. Indeed, after the standardisation of pronunciation in Britain and later on the US in the twentieth century, ‘similar developments are now to be observed in many parts of the ex-colonial English-speaking world, where local educated norms of speech are emerging in a three-way competition between an inherited, usually British, colonial norm, an American one which is currently dominant globally, and strengthening tendencies to assert local identity through the promotion of local accent features’ (Mair 2006: 158). It is in this potential three-way competition of pronunciation standards that the present study, investigating attitudes towards acrolectal accents of Trinidadian English, is located.

Though few studies of this type have so far been conducted in postcolonial contexts, accent attitude surveys can be usefully employed to assess the degree to which local pronunciation standards have superseded exonormative ones. In constructing accent attitude surveys to address this issue, it is necessary in most cases to use speech samples produced by different speakers, unlike in a matched guise design, as it is rare to find speakers who can authentically produce both types of accents (though see, e.g., Tan & Tan 2008). Other aspects of the research methodology of the early matched guise studies that have provided the impetus for this line of research need to be rethought as well: the speech situation must be given particular consideration in postcolonial multilingual or multivarietal contexts, with rating criteria also having to be adapted accordingly; English in such contexts is typically associated with specific domains of use such as education and the media, so accent attitude studies are particularly relevant in resolving questions of endo- versus exonormative standards when they target the status of different varieties in these domains. For example, Tan & Tan (2008) and Luk (1998) conducted studies in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively, in the context of schools, while in another study in Hong Kong by Bolton & Kwok (1990), speakers reading a short news item were rated on their suitability for the job of radio announcer, among other criteria.

In the language attitude survey we report on, conducted in early 2011, a design was used that targets attitudes towards various local as well as non-local accents in the context of the speech of newscasters. This is a context that still demands the use of a standard variety, despite the rise in prestige of Caribbean Creoles in the past few decades. It is thus suitable to investigate attitudes towards standard English spoken with different accents, rather than attitudes towards standard English versus Creole, which is what language attitude stud-

ies in the anglophone Caribbean have focused on thus far. In this way, we aim to add to research into the current state of development of local standards of English in the Caribbean while also contributing to the broader debate about standards of English in the 21st century. Beyond that, we hope that the study will encourage further research into attitudes towards emerging standard varieties of English.

The remainder of this paper will be structured as follows. We will first provide background information including an overview of methodological aspects and findings of relevant previous research in section 2. Section 3 will establish the context of the survey in terms of language use and attitudes in our specific setting. Sections 4 and 5 will describe the method and the accents used, respectively. The results will be presented in section 6, while the final section 7 summarises the findings and draws conclusions.

2 Background and previous accent attitude research

2.1 Methodological aspects

Lambert *et al.*'s pioneering matched guise research on attitudes towards French and English speakers in Quebec (Lambert *et al.* 1960) has served as a prototype for current accent attitude research. In its original form, a single speaker appears in several guises, reading the same text in different languages or accents. The motivation for this is to minimise the effects of inter-speaker variation: if voice quality is kept constant, then the listeners' perception of different languages or accents can be fairly assessed. Furthermore, this research method is indirect insofar as respondents are not asked to overtly assess language or accent prestige. Rather, they are usually asked to rate the presumed different speakers on scales for criteria of social prestige (or status) as well as social attractiveness (or solidarity), such as education or intelligence versus friendliness or honesty. A common finding is that the speaker is rated higher for social prestige in a standard language guise and higher for social attractiveness in a non-standard language guise.

One criticism of the original matched guise technique relates to the potential inauthenticity of the guises (see, e.g., Bayard 1990: 76; Hiraga 2005: 292). Indeed, finding a speaker who can render different dialects, accents, even languages with sufficient accuracy is often problematic. Therefore, researchers have increasingly used what is sometimes called the 'verbal guise technique'

(Garrett 2010), where natural accents of different speakers are used to construct the research tool instead of having the same speaker performing in different guises (e.g. Abell 1980 [as summarised in Gordon & Abell 1990]; Edwards & Jacobsen 1987; Bayard 1990, 2000; Bayard *et al.* 2001; Hiraga 2005).

Other problematic aspects of the matched guise technique include the use of decontextualised language to construct the reading text. Garrett, Coupland & Williams (2003: 61) recommend the use of ‘more ecologically valid source material than the mimicked vocal renditions of linguistic varieties in decontextualized environments that characterize so much matched guise research’ to construct the research tool for certain purposes.

As an alternative to vocal stimuli, some accent attitude studies have employed a conceptual mode of presentation, whereby the respondents are presented with accent labels only. A major example is the BBC *Voices* survey of attitudes towards accents in Great Britain (see Coupland & Bishop 2007), to be briefly discussed in the following section. An advantage of this approach is that it allows one to gather a large amount of data from diverse respondent groups, as was the case in the large-scale BBC *Voices* survey, whereas studies using vocal stimuli have, of necessity, generally been restricted to relatively small and homogeneous samples of university or secondary school students. It is also true though that a survey like BBC *Voices* represents an ‘an extreme level of decontextualisation’ and is therefore not appropriate to address sociolinguistic questions that require a more contextualised approach (Coupland & Bishop 2007: 84).

2.2 Changing attitudes towards accents in Great Britain

Coupland (2009) describes how, in the context of contemporary Great Britain, we can witness signs that point to the emergence of ‘a more multi-centred sociolinguistic culture’ (p. 45), as attitudes towards standard and non-standard varieties of English are becoming more diverse, i.e. less uniformly in favour of the former and more positive towards the latter (especially in particular contexts). This is also evidenced to a certain extent in the BBC *Voices* survey. In this survey, standard accents *did* continue to hold a dominant position, as in an earlier study by Giles (1970) comprising similar conceptual evaluations, in addition to evaluations of speech samples (see Garrett 2010: 172–177 for a comparison of Giles 1970 and BBC *Voices*). However, age differences were observed in the BBC *Voices* survey, with younger informants viewing standard accents not quite as positively and certain stigmatised accents not quite as negatively as older ones. Furthermore, there were indications of a certain rise of regional

accents, concerning in particular the Celtic varieties. Elsewhere in his book, Garrett refers to the emergence of a regional standard in Wales, suggesting that '[t]his notion that there might be more than one standard within a national context is arguably at odds with the general view of standard language ideology' (2010: 65), as this view stresses uniformity (Milroy 2007).

Another relatively recent UK-based study by Hiraga (2005), in which British and American standard and non-standard accents were included, points especially to a 'special status' (p. 305) of the American standard accent among British subjects, as this accent scored comparatively high on both the status and the solidarity dimension. We will now turn to further consideration of this special status of the American standard among other native speakers of English.

2.3 Native speakers' attitudes towards local and international accents of English: American English as a rising global standard?

In exploring the diachronic shift in the attitudes of native English speakers towards local and international accents, New Zealand English serves as a good case study. New Zealand English has received considerable attention in accent attitude research primarily because the accent has been slow in gaining prestige. Bell (1982: 255) has suggested that 'perhaps a speech community as small and homogeneous as New Zealand will regularly look beyond itself for a prestige speech standard'. Donn Bayard's work (1990, 2000; Bayard *et al.* 2001) indicates that this hypothesis holds some truth. Bayard noted in 1990:

... it seems clear that RP continues to have the considerable overt prestige in New Zealand evidenced in Huygens' and Abell's earlier studies. However, it seems equally clear ... that North American accents command almost as much overt prestige as RP, and more than any NZE [New Zealand English] accent. In terms of covert prestige or solidarity, North American accents rank over RP and most NZE accents. (Bayard 1990: 92)²

Bayard's (2000) study, which replicated the earlier one, showed significantly improved ratings for a speaker whose accent is described as 'young middle-class general New Zealand'. However, the North American as well as an Australian speaker were also rated more highly than in the earlier study, particularly for the social attractiveness criteria 'likeability' and 'sense of humour', where

² The references are to Huygens (1979) as summarised in Vaughan & Huygens (1990) and Abell (1980) as summarised in Gordon & Abell (1990).

(as in the earlier study) these two accents were in fact leading. For most of the prestige criteria, in contrast, the RP speaker was still rated most highly.

In Bayard *et al.* (2001), the authors expanded the respondent groups to include New Zealanders, Australians and Americans. These three groups then rated two clips of each of four varieties of English: New Zealand, Australian and American English in addition to RP. In this study, ratings of RP voices were not as high as expected from earlier studies, while the American voices were generally rated highly. Thus, Bayard *et al.* conclude that ‘the American accent seems well on the way to equalling or replacing RP as the prestige – or at least preferred – variety’ (2001: 22). As for the Australian and New Zealand accents, New Zealanders downgraded their own variety while Australians rated theirs more highly, but not as highly as the Americans rated the American accents. Bayard *et al.* (2001: 42) point out that these ratings parallel the proportions of local media content in each country: New Zealanders are exposed more to foreign than local accents; Australians receive significant amounts of both local and American programmes; and Americans hardly hear anything but American accents. The authors conclude their study by saying that ‘[i]t remains to be seen just how much individuality regional dialects – like the regional cultures who speak them – can retain in the face of the unceasing global media onslaught’ (2001: 44). However, caution should be taken in overgeneralising the global role of American English, since the complexities surrounding the issue of standards seem to require a more nuanced reading which allows for the existence of ‘layers or domains of standardness, with different varieties taking on subjective values in different contexts’ (Garrett *et al.* 2005: 214).

2.4 Studies of attitudes towards accents of English in other contexts

All of the accent attitude studies discussed in the above sections share a common focus on the standard and/or various non-standard accents of Great Britain, North America, Australia and New Zealand, i.e. countries where English is the native language of the majority of the population. To a lesser extent, foreign accents have been considered in conjunction with the aforementioned varieties (e.g. Giles 1970; Ball 1983). Respondents have generally been from the same countries as the varieties investigated.

As a continuation of their 2001 study, Bayard and his associates replicated the study in countries where English is not a majority first language (see Evaluating English Accents WorldWide), especially countries where it is learned as a foreign language (e.g. Germany, Japan) but also some where it has an official

status (e.g. Singapore, Hong Kong). No local voices from these countries were included, however; accents to be assessed were the same native English ones as used by Bayard *et al.* (2001). There are also a number of other studies on foreign learners' attitudes towards accents of English, some of which consider non-native accents as well as various native ones (e.g. Chiba *et al.* 1995; Dalton-Puffer *et al.* 1997; Ladegaard 1998; McKenzie 2008, 2010). However, what has been relatively less considered in accent attitude studies is the emergence of local standards of English in postcolonial states where English is not the first language of the majority of the population but where it has an established status as either a second language, as in anglophone nations in Asia or Africa, or a second dialect, as in anglophone Caribbean countries, where standard English typically coexists with a related Creole.³ The few studies that have been done in this area have centred on Asian contexts (Bolton & Kwok 1990; Luk 1998; Chia & Brown 2002; Tan & Tan 2008).

3 Context

3.1 Language attitudes in the anglophone Caribbean

The present study was conducted in Trinidad, the larger of the two islands forming the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. With 1.2 million inhabitants (most of them resident in Trinidad), Trinidad and Tobago is the second most populous nation of the anglophone Caribbean after Jamaica (2.9 million inhabitants).⁴

Former British colonies such as Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica inherited a linguistic situation in which British English functioned as the prestige standard. In contrast, the predominant attitude towards the local Creoles was that they were nothing but 'bad English'. The most conspicuous post-independence sociolinguistic development has been the rise in prestige of the Creoles, which have now become valued symbols of a local cultural identity. However, the diglossic division of language functions of the past has become only partially eroded; English is still regarded as the more appropriate variety for most public and formal types of communication whereas Creole usage is generally considered to be complementary to English.

³ We follow Görlach (1991) in designating situations where English coexists with a variety that is historically related but clearly constitutes a distinct linguistic system as 'English as a second dialect'.

⁴ The population figures are taken from Central Intelligence Agency (2011a, 2011b).

Language attitude studies in this context have focused on attitudes towards the Creoles, often described in relation to an ‘English’ that is not further specified (e.g. Winford 1976; Mühleisen 2001; Beckford Wassink 1999; Jamaican Language Unit 2005). Attitudes towards different varieties of English have so far hardly played role in language attitude research in the anglophone Caribbean (a recent exception being Belgrave 2008). It seems clear, though, that there has been a reorientation away from the British model and towards, on the one hand, American English – probably even more than in other former British colonies, due to geographical proximity – and on the other hand, emerging local standard varieties, even though British English continues to hold a particular type of prestige (cf. Belgrave 2008). The following pertinent observations are from as early as the 1990s:

In the Commonwealth West Indies standard American English is competing with southern British Received Pronunciation in influencing the emerging standard West Indian English and its regional variants. In many Commonwealth Islands the pronunciation favoured by television and radio announcers depends on where they as individuals received their higher education, although local pronunciation of standard English is finding increasing favour among the younger members of the new elite. (Holm 1994: 354)

With regard to language attitudes in Trinidad, Youssef (2004: 43) notes the problem (also for the anglophone Caribbean more generally) that ‘[s]peakers regard the Creole as their own language and the Standard as the property of the British and the American’, denying the existence of a local standard English. In a study of the language use and attitudes of Trinidadian secondary school teachers, Deuber (2009: 101) also observes that overt recognition of Trinidadian standard English seems to be lagging behind its development as a *de facto* standard.

3.2 Accent variability in Trinidadian media

Although a local standard has been developing, foreign-accented English is a feature of Trinidadian media discourse as well. On the radio local voices generally predominate and even Creole is now heard in some types of programmes, e.g. phone-in shows.⁵ What has also been observed, however, is the use of imitative American accents on some types of radio shows (mostly by male speakers), which are characterised by such features as the pronunciation of

⁵ Creole may even be heard on news broadcasts, where, however, it is confined to clips where ordinary citizens speak, e.g. when they are being interviewed by reporters.

postvocalic /r/, /t/-flapping, and a fronted and lengthened pronunciation of the TRAP vowel (Solomon 1993: 167–168). It is since the liberalisation of radio broadcasting in the 1990s that the radio has become more susceptible to foreign influence. Prior to 1990, there were only state-owned radio stations. The rise of private radio stations in the 1990s allowed station owners to create niche markets and to target specific listenerships. The linguistic reflex of this was that DJs would often accommodate to the exonormative variety generally represented in the musical genre associated with that station or particular programming segment.⁶

As regards television, Trinidadians have access to the same kind of American films, soaps, series, etc. on local television channels as audiences in other parts of the world. Additionally, they have had viewing access to a wide variety of American channels since the introduction of cable in the early 1990s. British accents have less of a presence than American ones with the exception of news broadcasts on local television and radio, which often feature clips from the BBC of international news events.

For the survey reported on in this article, we chose the context of news broadcasts to contextualise the different guises, for two reasons. Firstly, broadcast news is often regarded as ‘the embodiment of standard speech’ (Bell 1983: 29). Secondly, a variety of accents is available to the media consumer in Trinidadian broadcast news. As mentioned above, both local and non-local accents are present in broadcast media in Trinidad in general. Specifically in news broadcasts, local accents actually predominate, but there is nevertheless a range of accent variation. Over a one-year period of research in 2006–7 in which the first author listened to and recorded news broadcasts on most of Trinidad’s local radio stations that have regular news as well as on the local television station TV 6, it was observed that the majority of the newscasters spoke with a Trinidadian accent. However, there was considerable variation in the degree to which local pronunciation features were employed. Furthermore, among those persons that regularly read news on the stations one speaker (female) was noted to have a near-RP southern British accent. This speaker had been born in Britain to Trinidadian parents and had moved back to Trinidad as an adolescent.⁷ There was also another speaker (male) who employed American pronunciation features when reading news. According to radio station personnel, the speaker is Trinidadian, but he has spent an undisclosed amount of time in the US.

⁶ It should be noted that this phenomenon is not restricted to American English approximation but also occurs with Jamaican Creole among DJs working in stations which primarily play Jamaican dancehall.

⁷ This information was given in a talk programme on the same station on which this speaker also reads news.

4 Method

A total of eight sound clips, each from a different news broadcaster, were used to construct the survey tool. Each clip was approximately 45 seconds in length. As seen in table 1, a range of accents was represented. All Trinidadian clips (i.e. clips 1–6) came from local radio news broadcasts, recorded in 2006–7. Clips 1–4 represent typical Trinidadian accents found in news broadcasts, whereas clips 5–6, though Trinidadian, are respectively American- and British-influenced (the two speakers are the ones mentioned section 3.2). In addition to these, American and British samples, respectively clips 7 and 8, were included; clips 7–8 had been recorded from *The Voice of America* and the BBC in 2011.⁸

Clip no.	Accent	Gender of speaker
1	Trinidadian 1	m
2	Trinidadian 2	f
3	Trinidadian 3	m
4	Trinidadian 4	f
5	Trinidadian-foreign (American-influenced)	m
6	Trinidadian-foreign (British-influenced)	f
7	foreign (American)	m
8	foreign (British)	f

Table 1: Overview of accent samples.

Respondents were asked to rate each clip on a six-point scale – from *1-not at all* to *6-very* – for each of the following 12 criteria: with regard to the newscaster’s pronunciation – ‘correct’, ‘intelligible’, ‘standard’, ‘authentic’, ‘proper’, ‘refined’, ‘natural’, ‘appropriate’; with regard to the newscaster – ‘competent’ and ‘unpretentious’; and with regard to the newscaster’s voice – ‘pleasant’ and ‘suitable for newscasting’ (see also Appendix A). The criteria, while adapted to the context of the present study, were also inspired by previous research. Thus, like Chia & Brown (2002) in a study of varieties of English in Singapore,⁹ we

⁸ While it was not possible to obtain such samples with equivalent content to the other six, i.e. local news of Trinidad and Tobago, we chose the clips in such a way that the samples were not identified with any particular national context: the American sample is from medical news and contains no references to particular places, persons or institutions, and the British sample is from a report about a pirate attack on tourists sailing off the coast of Venezuela.

⁹ This study in fact focuses on the acceptability of Estuary English versus RP, but Singapore English was included as well.

directly asked respondents to rate standardness of pronunciation, but we also included several criteria which had emerged in previous research as relevant to standard English versus Creole in Trinidad: correctness was a major issue in Winford's (1976) study, while 'proper', 'refined', 'natural', 'appropriate' and 'unpretentious' were adapted from comments and answers to open-ended questions reported in Mühleisen (2001). 'Refined' also featured in Chia & Brown's (2002) study; like these authors, we were, furthermore, interested in intelligibility, and, particularly with the Trinidadian-foreign accents in mind, we added 'authentic'. Criteria relating to the newscaster's voice were included because, given that the survey of necessity used the verbal guise rather than the matched guise technique, we were interested in whether voice quality might have been a factor important in the respondents' judgments.

There were two versions of the survey differing in the random order of the clips. The survey was administered to several groups of respondents. The sample consisted of a total of 44 Trinidadian and Tobagonian nationals, 32 women and 12 men. The majority (31) were in the 18–25 age group, eight were 26–35 years of age and five were 36 or above. All respondents were tertiary level students; most studied Medical Sciences, Business, and Computer Science, while very few were from the Humanities.

A binomial logistic regression was used to test for differences in rating based upon clip. For this purpose the original ratings on the six-point scale were divided into a dichotomous variable. An original rating of 5 or 6 was classified as 1; any rating lower than 5 was coded as 0. The binomial logistic regression model could then effectively determine the log odds of a high rating depending on which clip was heard. A series of regressions was run for each of the twelve criteria and at different designations of the reference category.

5 Accent descriptions

5.1 Overview of Trinidadian pronunciation features

Trinidadian English differs from British English mainly in vowel pronunciations; some of the characteristic vowel pronunciations of the 'normative national Trinidadian and Tobagonian variety' (Youssef & James 2004: 515) are shown in table 2 in comparison to RP and standard American English. As table 2 indicates, there is variation between more RP-like and more distinctively Trinidadian and Tobagonian variants of some vowels. Generally, the Trinidadian

and Tobagonian vowel pronunciations shown in the table are mesolectal Creole variants that are now used to a greater or lesser extent in Trinidadian English as well:

	Trinidadian and Tobagonian English (Youssef & James 2004) ^a	RP (Upton 2004)	Traditional RP (Upton 2004)	Standard American English (Kretzschmar 2004)
FACE	e:	eɪ	eɪ	eɪ
GOAT	o:	əʊ	əʊ ~ oʊ	oʊ
TRAP	a > æ	a	æ	æ
BATH	ɑ:	ɑ: ~ a	ɑ:	æ
START	ɑ:	ɑ:	ɑ:	ɑɹ
letter	ə > ʌ	ə	ə	ɹ
NURSE	ɜ: > ɔ	ə:	ɜ:	ɹ
STRUT	ʌ > ɔ: > ɒ	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ

Table 2: Selected vowel pronunciations in Trinidadian and Tobagonian English compared to RP and standard American English.

^a Note that, while long and short pronunciations are indicated, vowel length is in fact ‘one of the most variant features in Trinidadian and Tobagonian speech’ (Youssef & James 2004: 516).

As far as consonants are concerned, the accent is normally non-rhotic and does not usually show intervocalic /t/-flapping as in American English. The voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives may be replaced by the corresponding stops, as is generally the case in the Creole.

The descriptions below of the accents represented in clips 1–6, i.e. the Trinidadian and Trinidadian-foreign accents, rely on lexical sets as a reference point.¹⁰ The sets are those shown in table 2, a selection where significant variation between Trinidadian, British and American pronunciations can be observed. Vowels occurring in stressed and unstressed syllables in mono- as well as polysyllabic words are described in reference to these lexical sets. Further vowel pronunciations as well as consonantal variation are commented on as applicable. Orthographic and phonetic transcripts of the six clips are provided in Appendix B.

¹⁰ The accents represented in clips 7 and 8 are the respective national standard accents and will not be commented on further.

5.2 Trinidadian accents

5.2.1 Clip 1 – Trinidadian accent 1

The speaker consistently used monophthongs in the FACE and GOAT sets. Vowels belonging to the TRAP set were realised consistently as [a]. For the BATH and START sets, there was only one token per set. *Past*, which belongs to the BATH set, was pronounced with the open front unrounded [a], and *argues*, which is part of the START set, was pronounced with [a:]. The *letter* set was realised with [ə]. In tokens belonging to the NURSE set, rhoticity was observed. Words belonging to the STRUT set were consistently realised with [ʌ]. The speaker also frequently used [ʌ] rather than schwa (i.e. the same variant as some speakers have for schwa in the *letter* set, see table 2) in final unstressed syllables in words such as *inflation* and *investment*. TH-stopping was noticed twice in the function words *that* and *the*.

5.2.2 Clip 2 – Trinidadian accent 2

The speaker in clip 2 was also inclined to use monophthongs for tokens belonging to the GOAT and FACE sets; in very few instances, she used diphthongs in words from the FACE set, either the full diphthong [eɪ] or (in one instance) the slightly diphthongised variant [eʰ]. Variation between [a] and the raised variant [a̠] was noted in the TRAP set, the latter being somewhat more frequent. The BATH set occurred only once with the word *last*, its phonetic realisation being [a:]. For the START set, there was variation between open front unrounded [a:] and its backed counterpart [ɑ:] (two occurrences – both in the same word – versus one, respectively). As for the *letter* set, [ə] was consistently used. Only one token belonging to the NURSE set was found in the data, which was realised as the close mid central unrounded vowel [ɘ:]. There were no instances of rhoticity in the speaker's speech. Words belonging to the STRUT set were consistently realised with [ʌ]. In two instances, [ʌ] rather than schwa was used in final unstressed syllables (*national*, *correction*). A particular feature noted in this speaker's speech was the tendency to use the raised variant [ɔ̠] in words belonging to the LOT set.

5.2.3 Clip 3 – Trinidadian accent 3

This speaker demonstrated a tendency towards using the slightly diphthongised variants [eʰ] and [oʰ] for the FACE and GOAT sets, respectively. In the TRAP set

the slightly raised variant [a̠] was predominantly used. Very few tokens were found in the BATH and START sets. The word *last*, which belongs to the BATH set, was pronounced with the open front unrounded [a], whereas items belonging to the START set were rendered with [a:]. Tokens belonging to the *letter* set were consistently realised with [ə]. Regarding the NURSE set, vowel lowering was noted as variants ranged from [ɜ] to [ɜ̞]. There was no evidence of rhoticity in the speaker's speech.

5.2.4 Clip 4 – Trinidadian accent 4

The speaker in this clip generally used diphthongised variants in the FACE set, with realisations varying between the full diphthong [eɪ] and the slightly diphthongised [eʰ]. The GOAT set was realised with the slightly diphthongised [oʊ]. In the TRAP set, the speaker used a number of variants differing in vowel height ([a, a̠, æ]), with the slightly raised variant [a̠] predominating. The BATH and START sets were consistently pronounced with the open back unrounded vowel [ɑ:]. Pronunciation of postvocalic /r/ was observed in the *letter* set in four cases, of which three, however, can be accounted for by the linking /r/. Apart from these cases, words in the *letter* set were generally pronounced with [ə]. Tokens belonging to the NURSE set were realised as [ɜ:]. Regarding the STRUT set, there was variation between the open mid back unrounded vowel [ʌ] and the variant [ʌ̠], which is slightly lowered.

5.2.5 Summary of key features

Table 3 provides an overview of what appear to be the key features differentiating between the Trinidadian accents represented in clips 1–4 as described in sections 5.2.1–4 above.

lexical set/variable	Clip 1	Clip 2	Clip 3	Clip 4
FACE	e	e > eɪ > eʰ	eʰ > e	eɪ > eʰ
GOAT	o	o	oʊ	oʊ
TRAP	a	a̠ > a	a̠ > æ ~ a	a̠ > æ > a
BATH	a:	a:	a	ɑ:
START	ɑ:	ɑ:	ɑ:	ɑ:
vowel in final unstressed syllables such as <i>-ion</i> , <i>-ment</i>	ʌ > ə	ə > ʌ	ə	ə
voiced TH	ð > d	ð	ð	ð

Table 3: Key features of Trinidadian accents.

5.3 Trinidadian-foreign accents

5.3.1 Clip 5 – Trinidadian-foreign accent (American-influenced)

The speaker with the American-influenced accent had a tendency to use diphthongised variants in words belonging to the FACE and GOAT sets. In the case of the FACE set, variation was observed between the full diphthongal realisation [ei] and the slightly diphthongised [e^ɪ]. As for the GOAT set, most variation was noted between the monophthong and the slightly diphthongised [o^ʊ] though there was also a single occurrence of the fully diphthongised variant [ou]. Words belonging to the TRAP set were consistently pronounced with the near-open front unrounded vowel [æ]. For the BATH and START sets, there was only one occurrence per set. The word *afternoon*, which belongs to the BATH set, was rendered using [æ], while *charged*, belonging to the START set, was realised using the open back rounded vowel [ɑ] followed by [ɪ]. Overall, a strong tendency towards rhoticity was observed. This was evident in the realisation of the *letter* and *nurse* sets, respectively [ɝ ~ ə] and [ɝ]. The *strut* set was consistently realised using [ʌ]. In rendering words such as *matters*, *thirty* and *forty*, this speaker used the alveolar tap [ɾ].

5.3.2 Clip 6 – Trinidadian-foreign accent (British-influenced).

The speaker with the British-influenced accent used diphthongs consistently in both the FACE and GOAT sets, [ei] and [əʊ], respectively. It should be noted that no other speaker surveyed in this paper apart from the British speaker recorded from the BBC used the diphthong [əʊ] in the GOAT set. In the TRAP set, the speaker had a tendency towards using the open front unrounded variant [a] though a single case of the raised variant [æ] was noted. The BATH and START sets were realised using the open back unrounded vowel [ɑ:]. The *letter* set was consistently realised with [ə], while the *nurse* set was consistently pronounced with [ɜ:]. There was no evidence of rhoticity in this speaker's speech. Words belonging to the *strut* set were consistently realised with [ʌ].

6 Results

6.1 Descriptive statistics and their interpretation

Table 4 provides an overview of the mean ratings (and standard deviations) for each clip based on each of the twelve criteria; highlighted cells indicate the clips with the lowest as well as the highest mean rating:

Criterion	Clip 1 Tr.	Clip 2 Tr.	Clip 3 Tr.	Clip 4 Tr.	Clip 5 Tr.Am.	Clip 6 Tr.Br.	Clip 7 Am.	Clip 8 Br.
correct	3.6 (1.37)	4.3 (1.02)	4.5 (0.85)	4.7 (1.06)	4.3 (1.25)	4.2 (1.18)	4.4 (1.09)	4.1 (1.21)
intelligible	3.2 (1.18)	4.1 (1.21)	4.5 (0.90)	4.7 (1.14)	4.4 (1.19)	4.1 (1.05)	4.0 (1.09)	4.0 (1.11)
standard	3.5 (1.25)	4.3 (1.06)	4.4 (1.13)	4.7 (1.03)	4.2 (1.17)	4.0 (1.08)	4.1 (1.21)	4.0 (1.24)
authentic	3.6 (1.15)	4.0 (1.11)	3.9 (1.25)	4.3 (1.24)	3.9 (1.34)	4.0 (1.12)	4.0 (1.07)	4.0 (1.07)
proper	3.5 (1.30)	4.1 (1.24)	4.3 (1.08)	4.7 (1.15)	4.3 (1.29)	4.2 (1.21)	4.3 (1.09)	4.1 (1.24)
refined	2.8 (1.08)	3.6 (1.34)	4.2 (1.03)	4.5 (1.25)	3.9 (1.36)	3.9 (1.17)	4.1 (0.96)	4.0 (1.19)
natural	3.4 (1.40)	3.8 (1.40)	3.9 (1.28)	4.4 (1.39)	3.7 (1.36)	4.0 (1.29)	4.0 (1.20)	3.8 (1.13)
appropriate	3.1 (1.27)	4.1 (1.27)	4.2 (1.33)	4.7 (1.22)	3.9 (1.35)	4.0 (1.26)	4.0 (1.27)	3.9 (1.21)
competent	3.2 (1.29)	4.0 (1.26)	4.3 (1.31)	4.5 (1.32)	4.5 (1.09)	4.3 (1.16)	4.3 (1.11)	4.1 (1.25)
unpreten- tious	3.4 (1.14)	3.7 (1.23)	4.0 (1.39)	4.3 (1.37)	4.0 (1.10)	3.9 (1.07)	4.0 (1.18)	3.9 (1.10)
pleasant	3.0 (1.24)	3.7 (1.29)	3.9 (1.26)	4.8 (1.23)	4.2 (1.34)	3.6 (1.28)	3.6 (1.26)	4.0 (1.27)
suitable	2.5 (1.21)	3.8 (1.50)	4.2 (1.41)	4.7 (1.50)	4.2 (1.34)	3.8 (1.49)	3.7 (1.36)	4.0 (1.45)

Table 4: Mean ratings (and standard deviations) for each clip by criterion.

As evident in table 4, clips 1 and 4 stand out as different from the others. Across all criteria and all clips, clip 1 has the lowest mean score. In contrast, clip 4 has the highest mean score across all criteria and clips. The only exception is with competence, where clip 4 ties with clip 5 for the high mean value of 4.5.

There is clear evidence here that clips 1 and 4 were evaluated quite differently. The natural question that follows from these preliminary results is how these two Trinidadian accents differ phonetically. As seen in table 3, Clip 1, which received consistently lower ratings, contains more mesolectal features, namely variable TH-stopping, [ʌ] in final unstressed syllables such as *-ion*, *-ment*, and possible merger of the BATH and TRAP sets resulting in [a]. Clip 4, in contrast, is more acrolectal: there is consistent TH realisation, use of [ə] in final unstressed syllables, and BATH–TRAP differentiation. Other phonetic realisations which mark clip 4 as more acrolectal include the raising of TRAP

words and the diphthongisation of words belonging to the GOAT and FACE lexical sets; it should be noted that these variants in the GOAT and FACE lexical set realisations are not representative of typical Trinidadian pronunciation, but tend to be found mainly in the domain of broadcast media and quite possibly constitute an approximation to exonormative varieties such as American and British English. The remaining two Trinidadian clips, 2 and 3, fit into this picture neatly: they were consistently rated in between 1 and 4 (see table 4) and the accents are intermediate between those in clips 1 and 4 with respect to the phonetic features discussed (see table 3).

Given the differences from the other clips in the evaluation of clips 1 and 4, there was ample justification in using each as the reference level in the binomial regression models. These will be reported in the next section.

6.2 Regression results

In the first series of regressions, clip 1 was used as the reference category. That is to say, all other clips are compared to clip 1 to assess the log odds of a high rating. A summary of the results is presented in table 5:

Criterion	χ^2	<i>p</i>	Odds Ratios						
			Clip 2	Clip 3	Clip 4	Clip 5	Clip 6	Clip 7	Clip 8
			Tr.	Tr.	Tr.	Tr.Am.	Tr.Br.	Am.	Br.
correct	20.89	.004	3.51	3.93	8.67	4.90	4.90	4.90	3.92
intelligible	38.98	< .001	8.22	9.14	15.71	9.13	4.79	2.64	4.79
standard	30.70	< .001	7.41	6.57	12.13	3.17	2.45	2.79	4.06
authentic	13.42	.063	1.73	1.52	5.02	1.97	2.22	1.16	1.73
proper	17.10	.017	2.42	1.77	6.19	2.42	2.19	1.59	2.42
refined	33.30	< .001	4.67	8.99	21.22	8.99	7.34	7.34	7.34
natural	10.20	.180	2.02	2.02	4.65	1.55	2.02	2.02	1.55
appropriate	26.90	< .001	3.50	3.88	12.40	3.14	3.50	2.82	3.14
competent	27.00	< .001	4.15	6.53	9.12	10.21	7.30	7.30	5.22
unpretentious	16.90	.018	2.00	6.03	6.85	2.70	3.11	3.11	2.70
pleasant	58.50	< .001	9.72	8.56	65.34	22.17	7.51	5.68	12.41
suitable	43.00	< .001	6.12	9.52	27.91	13.07	8.55	4.82	10.59

Table 5: Logistic regression results (reference = clip 1).

As an example of how to interpret the results, consider that the table reveals that overall clip was a significant predictor of the log odds of a high rating of 5 or 6 for the criterion ‘correct’, $\chi^2(7, 352) = 20.89, p = .004$. Cells in the

table have been highlighted if the clip was individually found to be significantly different from the reference category. So, for ‘correct’, the evidence is that clips 2 to 8 were all found to be rated significantly different from clip 1. Furthermore, all other clips had higher odds of receiving a higher rating than clip 1. For example, with an odds ratio of 3.51, the proper interpretation is that the odds of clip 2 receiving a rating of 5 or 6 are slightly more than 3.5 times higher than the odds of clip 1 receiving such a high rating.

At an alpha of .05, clip was found to be significant as a predictor of the log odds of a high rating for all criteria but ‘authentic’ and ‘natural’. For the criterion ‘authentic’, with a p-value of .063, it can be argued that clip is marginally significant with the effect predominantly being one of a significant difference between clips 1 and 4. For the criterion ‘natural’, which was not found to have a significant clip effect overall, it was still observed that clips 1 and 4 received significantly different ratings. In all cases, whether or not the pair-wise difference was significant, the direction of the relationship was the same. With an odds ratio greater than 1, the compared clip had odds of receiving a high rating that were greater than the odds of clip 1 receiving a high rating.

The series of regressions was repeated with clip 4 used as the reference category. The results are presented in table 6:

Criterion	χ^2	p	Odds Ratios						
			Clip 1	Clip 2	Clip 3	Clip 5	Clip 6	Clip 7	Clip 8
			Tr.	Tr.	Tr.	Tr.Am.	Tr.Br.	Am.	Br.
correct	20.89	.004	0.115	0.40	0.45	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.45
intelligible	38.98	< .001	0.064	0.52	0.58	0.58	0.31	0.17	0.31
standard	30.70	< .001	0.083	0.61	0.54	0.26	0.20	0.23	0.33
authentic	13.42	.063	0.199	0.34	0.30	0.39	0.44	0.23	0.34
proper	17.10	.017	0.162	0.39	0.29	0.39	0.35	0.26	0.39
refined	33.30	< .001	0.047	0.22	0.42	0.42	0.35	0.35	0.35
natural	10.20	.180	0.215	0.43	0.43	0.33	0.43	0.43	0.33
appropriate	26.90	< .001	0.081	0.28	0.31	0.25	0.28	0.23	0.25
competent	27.00	< .001	0.110	0.45	0.72	1.12	0.80	0.80	0.57
unpretentious	16.90	.018	0.146	0.29	0.88	0.39	0.45	0.45	0.39
pleasant	58.50	< .001	0.015	0.15	0.13	0.34	0.11	0.09	0.19
suitable	43.00	< .001	0.036	0.22	0.34	0.47	0.31	0.17	0.38

Table 6: Logistic regression results (reference = clip 4).

All that is different in table 6 as opposed to table 5 is that the reference category was changed. Therefore there are no changes in the conclusions regarding overall significance of the factor clip in predicting the probability of

a high rating for each criterion. The model still says that clip is a significant predictor for all criteria but ‘authentic’ and ‘natural’.

Table 6 shows that, with the reference category set to clip 4, only clip 1 was found to have a significantly different odds ratio (when using an alpha of .05) for ‘correct’ and ‘competent’; for ‘proper’, ‘refined’, ‘appropriate’, and ‘pleasant’, all other clips were found to have significantly lower odds of being rated highly, while for the remaining criteria between two and six of the other clips had significantly different odds ratios from clip 4.

The direction of the effect was that the compared clips had lower odds of receiving a high rating in all cases except for clip 5 with criterion ‘competent’. In this case, the odds of clip 5 receiving a high rating are 1.12 times higher than the odds of clip 4 receiving a high rating. However, the evidence is not sufficiently strong to state this conclusion with the desired 95 percent confidence.

Lastly, the regressions were repeated so that all clips had the opportunity to function as the reference category in all regressions. The complete results for this large number of regressions are not included, but a summary of all the significant differences noted at a 95 percent confidence level is provided in table 7.

Table 7 highlights once again the main aspect of the findings, that is, clips 1 and 4 proved to be significantly different from all other clips with regard to

Criterion	Reference clip							
	1 Tr.	2 Tr.	3 Tr.	4 Tr.	5 Tr. Am.	6 Tr. Br.	7 Am.	8 Br.
correct	all	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
intelligible	2,3,4,5,6,8	1,7	1,7	1,6,7,8	1,7	1,4	2,3,4,5	1,4
standard	2,3,4,5,8	1,6,7	1,6	1,5,6,7,8	1,4	2,3,4	2,4	1,4
authentic	4	4	4	1,2,3,5,7,8	4	–	4	4,4
proper	4	4	4	all	4	4	4	4
refined	all	1,4	1,4	all	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,4
natural	4	–	–	1,5,8	4	--	–	4
appropriate	all	1,4	1,4	all	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,4
competent	all	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
unpretentious	3,4,6,7	3,4	1,2	1,2	–	1	1	–
pleasant	all	1,4	1,4,5	all	1,3,4,6,7	1,4,5	1,4,5	1,4
suitable	all	1,4	1,4	1,2,3,6,7,8	1,7	1,4	1,4,5	1,4

Table 7: Pairwise listing of significant differences according to logistic regressions^a.

^aBoldface indicates that the particular clip has a higher probability of getting a high rating than the reference clip while ordinary typeface indicates that the particular clip has a lower probability of getting a high rating than the reference clip.

most criteria. There are only a few other significant differences. Compared to clip 7 (American accent), not only does the most favoured clip 4 have a higher probability of getting a high rating for ‘intelligible’, but also clips 2 and 3 (intermediate Trinidadian accents) as well as clip 5 (American-influenced Trinidadian-foreign accent). Clip 2, furthermore, has a higher probability of getting a high rating for ‘standard’ than clip 7, while compared to clip 6 (British-influenced Trinidadian-foreign accent) both clip 2 and clip 3 – in addition to clip 4 – have a higher probability of getting a high rating for this criterion. Clip 5, meanwhile, is perceived particularly favourably with regard to the criterion of pleasantness of voice, where it has a higher probability of getting a high rating than clips 3, 6 and 7, and, finally, clip 5 also has a higher probability of getting a high rating than clip 7 for suitability of the voice for newscasting.

7 Summary and conclusions

Eight clips from news broadcasts were evaluated in this study. The accents represented in the clips included four Trinidadian ones ranging from one that showed the greatest use of Trinidadian English pronunciation features – shared with the English-based Creole spoken on the island – (clip 1) to one that showed the least use of these features (clip 4), though it was still recognisably local. Furthermore, there were two accents labelled as ‘Trinidadian-foreign’ because the speakers, while being Trinidadian, approximated standard American English and RP, respectively, to a considerable degree (clips 5 and 6). Finally, two ‘foreign’ accents were included; the respective clips had been recorded from the Voice of America and the BBC, representing the respective pronunciation standards (clips 7 and 8).

Logistic regressions indicated that clip 1 had a lower odds ratio and thus a lower probability of being rated highly than any of the other clips when evaluated for correctness, refinement, appropriateness, competence, pleasantness and suitability. It had a significantly lower probability than most of the other clips with regard to intelligibility, and a significantly lower probability of receiving a high rating than did clip 4 for authenticity, properness and naturalness.

Logistic regressions furthermore showed that clip 4 had a significantly higher odds ratio, and thus a significantly higher probability of receiving a high rating than any other clip for criteria pertaining to properness, refinement, appropriateness and pleasantness. It also had a higher probability than most of the others of receiving a high rating for authenticity and suitability, and it was significantly more likely to receive a high rating for correctness and competence than clip 1.

Few significant differences emerged between any pairing of clips not involving clip 1 or 4, so the remaining six clips were not greatly differentiated although quite different accents were represented in them – the two Trinidadian accents intermediate between those in clips 1 and 4 as well as the two Trinidadian-foreign and the two foreign accents.

Several factors can be considered to have been influential in the results. Phonetic examination of the clips revealed a range of broadcast accents in Trinidadian English. Overall, some Creole pronunciation features are now used in domains where traditional acrolectal features would be expected – in this case, broadcast news. Despite this, respondents in the survey appeared to be evaluating the notion of standard pronunciation in opposition to Creole pronunciation. This line of reasoning is reminiscent of what Irvine (2004: 68) has suggested in her work on Jamaican pronunciation:

[T]he form English takes in our social context, particularly its pronunciation, is shaped in part by the idea speakers have of what Creole is. [...] [That is,] English is, in part, negatively defined in relation to what Creole is believed to be [...].

In other words, the notion of standardness is not centred primarily on one particular variety but rather on distance from one particular variety. If standard English in Trinidadian newscasting is partly defined by the distance from Creole pronunciations, there will be considerable room for variation provided that the pronunciation is not ‘too Creole’. Thus, distance relative to the Creole – as part of the notion of standardness in this domain – explains why clip 1, the most Creole of the clips, was the most disfavoured and why clip 4, which was relatively less Creole, was rated highly. The remaining clips got very similar ratings because they fell into that space which allows for variation. Further factors that have probably contributed to levelling potential differences in evaluations are the presence of foreign accents in the media domain in Trinidad next to local ones, and the global rise of American English at the expense of British English, the ex-colonial standard in Trinidad. However, the data do not support Bayard *et al.*'s (2001) suggestion of American English as a dominating and homogenising force; it rather appears as one player amongst several. Besides, while the clips representing the foreign and Trinidadian-foreign accents could well compete with the intermediate Trinidadian accents, i.e. those in clips 2 and 3, in most respects, the fact that clip 4 stood out from the rest with positive ratings underscores the importance of endonormativity at the present stage of the development of standard English in Trinidad. It may in fact be argued that for the respondents in our survey, the accent in this clip probably represented the best compromise between distance from Creole, on the one hand, and localness, on the other hand. Overall one may say, though, that standard English in

newscasting in Trinidad cannot be defined as a monolithic entity because it is shaped by various and partially conflicting factors. This is not to say that a standard language ideology is not relevant to this postcolonial context, but it seems to be one that admits of more variation than is the case in the traditional ‘standard language cultures’ (cf. Milroy 2007) of European nation states, for various reasons having to do with current sociolinguistic developments both at the local and the international level.

The range of rating criteria included in the present study might conceivably have led to differentiated ratings. For example, while attributes such as ‘correct’, ‘proper’ or ‘refined’ are associated with standard English in Trinidad, ‘natural’ is rather associated with Creole (cf. Mühleisen 2001). In addition, standard English speakers may be perceived as ‘pretentious’ (Mühleisen 2001). This perception may be particularly strong if a non-local accent is adopted: ‘Use of MSE [Metropolitan Standard English], arguably, can tell Jamaican listeners only that the speaker is foreign or pretentious’, as Irvine (2004: 67–68) has remarked with regard to the in many ways similar context of Jamaica. In light of this, it might have been assumed that clip 1 would receive higher ratings than it actually did for ‘natural’ and ‘unpretentious’, and it might also have been suspected that authenticity would have been a critical issue perhaps with regard especially to the clips representing Trinidadian-foreign accents. However, the ratings on the different criteria were rather relatively homogeneous, though it did turn out in the regression analysis that unlike all other criteria, ‘authentic’ and ‘natural’, while distinguishing clips 1 and 4, did not have a significant influence overall. Given that the same was the case in Giles’ (1970) study, where respondents rated accents rather than the personalities of speakers, which also applied to eight out of twelve criteria in the present study but is not usual in matched and verbal guise research, it is not entirely unexpected that the ratings were relatively similar across criteria. Perhaps even more important, however, is the fact that the speakers were rated as newscasters. It is possible that some speakers would have been considered pretentious, and their accents inauthentic or unnatural, in another context, but for the present survey the context of newscasting seems to have provided a unifying frame of reference. Within this frame of reference, the personality and voice criteria seemed to be related to the overall impression in the same way as the pronunciation criteria, though at least in one case (clip 5) the results suggest that there may have been a minor effect of a particularly favourably perceived voice quality.

It is in fact quite important for the overall interpretation of the findings that we have explicitly contextualised our survey in the particular domain of the media, which is most open to foreign influences. Though this remains to be investigated, it is possible that the results would have been different if we had

chosen the domain of education, for example, where the orientation is more local. The notion of ‘layers or domains of standardness’ introduced into the discussion about attitudes towards accents of English by Garrett *et al.* (2005: 214) may be relevant in this connection; it might be useful to distinguish different layers (local, global), on the one hand, and different domains like media and education on the other hand. What we might then be able to see in postcolonial contexts like that of Trinidad is differentiation in what functions as standard, with a different balance between local and global layers of standardness in different domains. At the present stage of research we can only suggest this as a possibility, however. In order to further investigate the question by means of accent attitude studies, specific research designs will be needed that pay particular attention to the context of language use. In sum, our findings support, from a postcolonial perspective, the notion that standard English is becoming not only a more pluricentric, but also a more complex phenomenon in today’s world.

Bionotes

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Appendix A

Rating sheet

1. The newscaster's pronunciation was:

	not at all					very
correct	1	2	3	4	5	6
intelligible	1	2	3	4	5	6
standard	1	2	3	4	5	6
authentic	1	2	3	4	5	6
proper	1	2	3	4	5	6
refined	1	2	3	4	5	6
natural	1	2	3	4	5	6
appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. The newscaster gave the impression of being:

	not at all					very
competent	1	2	3	4	5	6
unpretentious	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. The newscaster's voice was:

	not at all					very
pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6
suitable for newscasting	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix B

Transcripts of clips 1–6

Clip 1

And one of the country's most senior economists is taking issue with the Prime Minister's bold declaration over the weekend that citizens must choose between unemployment and inflation.

ən wʌn ʌv ðə 'kʌntɪ:z mɔ:s 'si:njə i'kɒnəmɪsts ɪz 'tekɪŋ 'ɪsju wɪθ ðɪ pɹaɪm 'mɪnɪstəz bɒl dɛklə'reɪʃən 'ovə ðə wɪ:k'end ðət 'sɪtəzənz mʌst tʃu:z bə'twi:n ənɛm'plɔɪmənt ænd ɪn'fleɪʃən

Government has been severely criticised for its massive public investment programme that has driven inflation well past ten per cent.

'gʌvmʌnt hæz bi:n sə've:li 'kʌrəsai:z fɔ its 'masɪv 'pʌblɪk ɪn'vesmʌnt 'prɔɡrʌm ðæt hæz 'dʒu:nɪn ɪn'fleɪʃn wɛl pʌst tɛn pɜ'sɛnt

But in response the Prime Minister argues that his government has reduced unemployment to almost five per cent and in that context he says the population must make a choice between low inflation and low unemployment.

bəri:n ɪs'pɔns ðə pɹaɪm 'mɪnɪstə 'ɑ:gju:z ðæt hɪz 'ɡʌvənʌmənt hæz rɪ'dʒʌst ənɪm'plɔmənt tʌ 'ɔlmɔst faɪv pɜ'sɛnt ən ɪn dæt 'kɔntɛkst hɪ sɛz də pɔpə'leɪʃn mʌst mek ə tʃɔɪs bə'twi:n lɔ ɪn'fleɪʃn ənd lɔ ʌnɪm'plɔmənt

But now economist Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir is saying the Prime Minister has all but admitted Government's culpability in creating inflation.

bət naʊ ɪ'kɔnɔmɪs 'dɔktə dɪ'neɪʃl mə'hə'bɪr ɪz 'seɪɪŋ ðə pɹaɪm 'mɪnɪstə hæz ɔ:l bət əd'mɪtɪd 'gʌvmʌnts 'kʌlpəbɪlɪtɪ ɪn kɪ'je:ɪŋ ɪn'fleɪʃn

Clip 2

The ruling People's National Movement has taken action against the Guardian newspaper for a report last Sunday headlined 'Douglarisation'.

ðə 'ru:lɪŋ 'pi:plz 'nəʃənəl 'mu:vmənt hæz 'tekən 'ækʃn ə'ɡenst ðə 'ɡɑ:dʒən n'ju:z'peɪpə fɔə rə'pɔ:t lɑ:st 'sʌnde 'hedlaɪnd dɔɡləraɪ'zeɪʃən

The PNM has lodged an official report with the Media Complaints Council saying that the headline was without basis and served only to engage in mischief.

ðə pi en em hæz lɔdʒd ən v'fɪʃl rə'pɔ:t wɪðə 'mi:dɪə kəm'plents 'kaʊnsɪ 'senɪ ðæt ðə 'hedlɪn wəz wɪθ'aʊt 'bɛsɪs ən sə:vɪd 'ɔnli tə en'ɡedʒ ɪn 'mɪʃɪf

The PNM has also called on the media body to intervene.

ðə pi en em hæz 'ɔlsɔ kɔ:ld ən ðə 'mi:dɪə 'bɔdi tə ɪntə'vɪ:n

The party's public relations officer Jerry Narace claims that the newspaper report was aimed at sensationalising and misrepresenting statements made by Prime Minister Patrick Manning.

ðə 'pɑ:tɪz 'pʌblɪk rə'leɪʃənz 'ɔfɪsə 'dʒɛrɪ nə'res klemz ðæt ðɪ 'nʒuspeɪpə rə'pɔ:t wəz e:md ʌt sɛnsɛɪʃnəlraɪzɪŋ ʌn mɪsɪrɛpɪ'sentɪŋ 'stetmənts me:d baɪ pɹaɪm 'mɪnɪstə 'pɑ:tɪk 'mʌnɪŋ

Mr. Narace has also written to the Guardian seeking an apology and correction.

'mɪstə nə'res hæz 'ɔlsɔ 'ɹɪtɪŋ tə ðə 'ɡɑ:dʒən 'si:kɪŋ ən ə'pɔlədʒɪ ʌnd kə'rekʃən

Clip 3

A young man has been held in connection with the murder of Rehanna Ramlochan and a domestic situation is being blamed.

ə jʌŋ məen hʌz bɪn heldɪn kənɛkʃn wɪðə 'mɜ:də əv rɪ'hənə rəm'lo:ʃən ʌnd ə dɒ'mestɪk sɪtu'weʃən ɪz 'bɪjɪn ble'md

Twenty-two year old Miss Ramlochan's body was found in the Tunapuna cemetery late last evening.

'twenti tu jɛ: ɒl mɪs rəm'loʃənz 'bɒdi wəz faʊndɪn ðe 'tunəpʊnə 'semɪtɪ le't last 'i:vniŋ

Miss Ramlochan of Ajodha Road, Cunupia was kidnapped in Chaguanas twelve days ago.

mɪs rəm'loʃən əv ə'dʒɒdhə ɪoʊ:d kʊ'nʊpjə wəz 'kɪdnəptɪn ɪn ʃə'gwɔnəs twelv de'z ə'goʊ

This morning Police Commissioner Trevor Paul confirmed the discovery of the young woman's body and the issue was raised in the Senate today.

ðɪs 'mɔ:niŋ pə'lis kə'mɪʃnə 'tɪvɛl pɔ:l kən'fɜ:md ðə dɪs'kʌvɪ əv ði jʌŋ 'wʊmənz 'bɒdi ʌnd ði 'ɪsju wəz ɪe'zdɪn ðə 'senɪt tə'de'

Opposition Senator Jennifer Jones-Kernahan said she's shocked by the killing and Member of Parliament for Fyzabad Chandra Sharma has criticised the actions of the Minister of National Security in dealing with Rehanna's kidnapping.

'ɒpəzɪʃn 'senɪtə 'dʒenɪfə dʒoʊ'nz 'kɜ:nəhən sɛd ʃɪz ʃɒkt' bʌ ðə 'kɪlɪŋ ʌn 'membə əv 'pɑ:ləmənt fɔ 'faɪzəbəd 'ʃʌndʒərə 'ʃɑ:mə hʌz 'kɪrɪsəɪzd ði 'ʌkʃənz əv ðə 'mɪnɪstə əv 'nʌʃənəl sɪ'kʊɹɪtɪ ɪn 'di:lɪŋ wɪθ rɪ'hənəz kɪd'nəpɪŋ

Clip 4

The United National Congress is condemning what it says is the disgraceful behaviour of Point Fortin MP Larry Achong who publicly insulted a university student at a smelter symposium last week.

ði ju'nnaɪtɪd 'nɑ:ʃnəl 'kɒŋgrɪs ɪz kən'dɛmɪŋ 'wɒrɪt sɛz ɪz ðɪ dɪs'grɛɪsfəl bɪ'he'vjə əv pɔɪnt 'fɔ:tɪn ɛm pi 'lɑ:ɪ 'ʌʃŋ hu 'pʌbɪklɪ ɪn'sʌltɪd ə 'junɪvɜ:sɪtɪ 'stju:dənt ʌt ə 'smeltə sɪm'pɒzɪjəm lɑ:st wɪ:k

In a release the UNC is demanding that Mr. Achong apologize to the young woman as well as the women and children who reside in his constituency.

ɪn ə rɪ'lɪ:s ði ju ɛn sɪ ɪz dɪ'mɑ:ndɪŋ dət 'mɪstə 'ʌʃŋ ə'pɒlədʒəɪz tə ði jʌŋ 'wʊmən əz wɛl əz ðə 'wɪmən ænd 'ʃɪldrən hu rɪ'zɑ:dɪn ɪn hɪz kən'stɪtjuənsɪ

The party says Mr. Achong has a duty to listen to his constituents' concerns and to provide information in an intelligent manner.

ðə 'pɑ:ti sez 'mɪstə 'ʌfɔŋ hʌz ə 'dʒʊti tə 'lɪsŋ tu hɪz kən'stɪtʃuəns kən'sɜ:nz
and tu pɹə'vaɪd ɪnfə'meɪʃən ɪn æn m'telɪdʒənt 'mʌnə

The UNC says the MP's conduct indicates that Government is not serious about hosting a public consultation later this month which it claims is nothing more than a farce.

ði ju en si sez ði ɛm pɪz kən'dʌkt ɪndɪkerts ðæt 'ɡʌvnmənt ɪz nɒt 'sɪrɪjəs
ə'baʊt 'hɒʊstɪŋ ə 'pʌbɪk kʌnsɪ'teɪʃən 'le'tə ðɪs mʌnθ wɪtʃ ɪt kleɪmz ɪz 'nʌθɪŋ mɔ:
ðʌn ə fɑ:s

Clip 5

The two men who were charged with last week's fifteen million dollar drug bust were absent when their matters were called in court this morning.

ðə tʰu mɛn hu wɜ ʃtʃɑɪdʒd wɪθ læs wi:ks 'fɪfti:n 'mɪljn 'dɔlə dʒɹʌɡ bʌst wɜ
'æ:bsənt wən ðə 'mæ:rɜz wɜ kɔ:ld ɪn kɔ:rt ðɪs 'mɔ:ɪnɪŋ

Thirty-year-old Anand Ramlogan and forty-year-old Michael Boodoo both of Chanka Trace, El Socorro, San Juan were not brought to court because there was a shortage of court and process officers.

'θɜ:ri jɪrɔld 'ænənd ræm'logŋ æn 'fɔ:ri jɪrɔld 'mɪkəl 'bʊdʊw bɒʊθ əv 'ʃækə
tɪe's el sə'kɔrɔʊ sæn wʌn wɜ nɒt brɔ:t tə kɔ:rt brɪ'kʌz ðe wʌz ə 'ʃɔ:rtɪdʒ əv kɔ:rt ʌn
'pɹɔ:sɛs 'ɔ:fɪsɜz

When the matter was called at ten a.m. before Magistrate Maria Earle-Busby-Caddle at the Four A Magistrate's Court, Prakash Ramadhar, attorney for Ramlogan, was also absent.

wɪn ðə 'mæ:rɜ wɜz kɔ:ld ət tɛn 'eɪjɛm bə'fɔ: 'mædʒɪstrɪt mə'ɪɪjə ɜl 'bʌzbi
'kɪædɪ æt ðə fɔ: ɛɪ 'mædʒɪstrɪts kɔ:rt 'pɹækæʃ 'rʌmədɑ ə'tɜ:ni fɔ: ræm'logən wɜz
'ɔ:lsɔʊ 'æbsənt

Magistrate Busby-Caddle then stood down the case for one this afternoon when the prisoners are expected to be brought to court and applications of bail will be heard.

'mædʒɪstrɪt 'bʌzbi 'kɪædɪ ðɛn stʊd dæʊn ðə ke's fə wʌn ðɪs 'æftənʊn wɛn
ðə 'pɹɪzənɜz ə ɛks'pektɪd tə bi brɔ:t tə kɔ:t ɪn æplɪ'keɪʃənz əv beɪl wɪl bi hɜd

Clip 6

Works and Transport Minister Colm Imbert promises that the breathalyser legislation will return to Parliament in a short while.

wɜ:ks and 'tɹɑns'pɔ:t 'mɪnɪstə 'kɔlm ɪ'mbɛ 'pɹɔmɪsɪz ðæt ðə 'brɪθəlaɪzə
lɛdʒɪs'leɪʃən wɪl vɪ'tɜ:n tə 'pɑ:ləmənt ɪn ə ʃɔ:ʔ wɪl

Imbert disclosed that Government is in the final process of making amendments to the bill and the bill is set for debate.

'ɪmbɛ dɪs'kləʊz ðæt 'gʌvmənt ɪz ɪn ðə 'fainl̩ 'pɹɪəʊsɪs əv 'meɪkɪŋ ə'mendmənts tu ðə bɪl an ðə bɪl ɪs set fɔː dɪ'beɪt

Over the weekend six people lost their lives on the nation's roads in three separate incidents.

'əʊvə ðə wɪk'end sɪks 'piːpəl lɒst ðeɪ laɪvz ɔn ðə 'neɪʃənz rəʊdɪz ɪn θviː 'sɛpərɪt 'ɪnsədəns

Imbert believes the breathalyser will reduce road carnage but thinks other measures need to be put in place.

ɪmbɛ bɪ'liːvz ðə 'breɪθəlaɪzə wɪl ɪ'dʒʊs rəʊd 'kɑːnɪdʒ bət θɪŋks 'ʌðə mɛ'ʒəz nɪːd tə bi pʊt ɪn pleɪs

The Minister is also of the view that there needs to be a review of the country's legislation and raise the alcohol age limit since research on the Bill proves that most accidents are caused by young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five who are under the influence of alcohol.

ðə 'mɪnɪstə ɪz 'ɔlsəʊ ɒv ðə vjuː ðæt ðeɪ nɪːdɪz tə bɪjə vɪ'vjuː əv ðə 'kʌntriːz lɛdʒɪs'leɪʃən and ræɪz ði 'ʌlkəhɒl eɪdʒ 'lɪmɪt sɪns ɪ'sɜːtʃ ɒn ðə bɪl pɹuːvz ðæt məʊst 'æksɪdnts ɑː kɔːz bɑɪ jʌŋ 'piːpl̩ bɪ'twiːn ði 'eɪdʒɪz əv 'eɪtɪːn and 'twenti faɪv hu ə 'ʌndə ði 'ɪnfluwəns əv 'ʌlkəhɒl

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