Spanish-English contact in the Falkland Islands: an ethnographic approach to loanwords & place names

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Chapter 1

1. General introduction

Language contact has had an impact on, presumably, all the world's languages. It is well known that the contact of languages may result in linguistic changes at all levels: phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, prosodic and lexical, depending on the intensity of the contact and the degree of relatedness of the languages involved (Norde et al., 2010). However, the lexical level is generally assumed to be the level that is most easily influenced (Thomason, 2001) and the different language contact histories may lead to differences in the composition of the lexicon, and consequently the semantics, of present-day languages. For instance, numerous Spanish words have expanded internationally due to the widespread dissemination of the ideas, products, or objects they denote (see Cioranescu, 1987; Friederici, 1960; Palmer, 1939; Rodríguez González, 1996; Serjeantson, 1935; Shaw Fairman, 1987-1988; Van Dam, 1944). When it comes to Spanish loanwords in English, there are studies of Peninsular Spanish words in British English (e.g., Muñoz and Salazar, 2016), and American Spanish into American English, (e.g., Otheguy, 2009; Varra, 2018) but there are no loanword studies of a variety of South American Spanish in a Southern Hemisphere English variety, and this is precisely the case of Falkland Islands English (henceforth FIE), in which the only evidence of language contact is the one with American Spanish.

This dissertation provides a thorough description of the lexical outcomes of the contact between the arguably young American Spanish and the youngest variety of Southern Hemisphere Englishes, thus closing a gap in the literature on Spanish and English as contact languages. The study is confined to the lexical sphere since unlike other contact situations between these languages the contact has only reached early stages (mainly jargonisation and borrowing)[1], while Spanish-English contact in places like Gibraltar and the U.S. has resulted in the emergence of new English varieties[2] (see Suárez-Gómez, 2012 for a detailed revision of both situations).

Both Spanish and English have played an important part when it comes to the field of contact linguistics. As a result of their colonial histories and

[1] FIE is a case where new-dialect formation was not triggered even though the conditions were ideal: dialect contact, insularity, sociodemographic stability and a time depth of more than a century and a half (Schreier, 2008, p. 54).
[2] Yanito emerged in Gibraltar and Chicano English in the U.S.

twentieth-century developments, they have become the two most widely spoken post-colonial languages worldwide today (Perez et al., 2022).

The case of Spanish stands out because of its contact with Amerindian languages, and it has been argued that its study is of utmost importance,

> not because there is something special about Spanish or any of the indigenous languages influenced by Spanish, but rather because of the almost global extension of the Spanish speaking areas past and present. The wide areal distribution of Spanish as a contact language offers a next to unique, laboratory-like opportunity to observe perhaps hundreds of near parallel cases of contact between Spanish and an indigenous language. The genetic, typological and areal background of these indigenous languages is far from being homogeneous. The only constant element is the donor language Spanish. A large-scale investigation into hispanicisation world-wide could thus become a major testing ground not only for universalist hypotheses, but also for more individualised concepts of language contact processes. (Stolz and Stolz, 2001)

Similarly, the spread and diffusion of English around the world also offers a peculiar, laboratory-like chance to study contact phenomena. Just like in the case of Spanish, the transplantation of English across the globe saw extreme diversification and the rise of 'new' varieties (Schreier, 2008). The 'export' of English offers fascinating perspectives for contact linguistics since the embedding of English into a multitude of contact settings (with countless co-existing language systems) entailed an unprecedented amount of contact-induced language changes (Thomason and Kaufman, 1988)[3]. Within these settings, insular ones lend themselves to *ab ovo* reconstructing the social history of a community, socio-historical information can be complemented and tested with diachronic and/or contemporary language data, permitting researchers to document and isolate the sociolinguistic mechanisms that operate(d), moreover, the socio-cultural characteristics of insular speech communities are shaped by geophysical seclusion from other settlements and speaker groups, and consequently: from other language varieties[4] (Schreier, 2008). Such is the case of the group of islands located in the South Atlantic Ocean, where 'new' varieties of English and Spanish would meet about two centuries ago.

[3] Borrowing has been particularly prolific between English and Spanish (see Muñoz-Bolsols and Salazar, 2016).

[4] The living conditions of insular territories favour the development of local norms and the emergence of distinctive 'new' varieties, which is evidenced by the fact that dozens of post-colonial varieties have developed on islands in all of the major oceans (such as FIE, and Tristán da Cunha in the South Atlantic, Bonin/Ogasawara English in the Pacific, numerous English-based Creoles in the Caribbean, etc.) (Schreier, 2008).

1.1 The archipelago and its language situation

The Falkland Islands are administered as an overseas British territory. The archipelago is composed of 778 islands and islets and is located in the South Atlantic Ocean, about 400 kilometres from the Argentinian coast, 1,400 kilometres north of the Antarctic Circle, 1,900 kilometres from Uruguay, and more than 12,000 kilometres from the United Kingdom. They are located between Latitude 51° and 53°S and Longitude 57° and 62°W. There are two main islands, West Falkland and East Falkland. Of the rest, less than a dozen are inhabited. Stanley on East Falkland is its capital, hosting three-quarters of the total population which amounted to 3,354 in 2016[5]. The rest live in small settlements (of two or three to up to thirty people) in what is known as 'camp'[6] (from Spanish *campo*). There are also military personnel and civilians connected to the British armed forces, however, how many live there is classified information. The great majority live in Mount Pleasant, where the military base and the international airport are located, about 90 kilometres west of Stanley. Yet, Mount Pleasant military personnel and civilians are not considered part of the Islands' population, as most of them stay for short periods of time. Topographically the Islands are generally hilly, the climate is characterised by a narrow temperature range, which varies from 24°C (76°F) in January to -5°C (22°F) in July, with a mean annual temperature of approximately 5.6°C (42°F)[7].

FIE is one of the three varieties of the South Atlantic Ocean, together with those of St. Helena and Tristan da Cunha (see Schreier et al., 2010; and Buschfeld, et al. 2014), and ranks amongst the "lesser-known varieties of English" (cf. Schreier et al., 2010). Since the English occupation in 1833, the Falkland Islands[8] have been continuously inhabited by English speakers, making this variety the youngest of the 'Inner Circle'[9] (Kachru, 1985) and one of the few native varieties of English in the Southern Hemisphere. Both Trudgill (1986) and Wells (1982) have commented on the similarity of the English spoken in the Falkland Islands with those of the rest of the Southern

[5] The last census for which a report is available was done in 2016.
[6] 'Camp' in the Falklands is used in the same way as Sp. *campo* and Eng. *countryside*.
[7] Taken from https://www.falklands.gov.fk/our-home/location/
[8] The Islands are also known as *Islas Malvinas* in Spanish. However, in this dissertation the English place name is preferred since it is what the speech community under study calls the archipelago.
[9] Braj Kachru initiated and promoted the field of World Englishes and developed the idea of the three concentric circles of such language. The inner circle represents the nations in which English is a native language for most of its inhabitants, e. g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, England, the U.S. The outer circle includes countries where English is not the native language but has an important role such as India, Bangladesh, and Kenya. And the expanding circle encompasses countries where English does not have a historical or governmental role but is very widespread as a foreign language. Today, this involves most of the other countries in the world.

Hemisphere. Nonetheless, Sudbury (2000) demonstrated that this variety is divergent in certain aspects. Amongst the differences, she points out that the history of the Islands' settlements is atypical compared to the colonization of much of the English-speaking world since the only linguistic varieties that came into contact were those spoken by the settlers themselves, arguing that the Islands' situation provides a rare example of relatively 'pure' linguistic contact, without the influence of other languages (Sudbury, 2005)[10]. She probably referred to the influence of native languages (inexistent as the Islands were deserted before the European occupations), since contact with another language did take place. During the 19th century, gauchos[11] from the River Plate region set sail from the port of Montevideo to work in the archipelago in the livestock industry, giving way to Spanish-English contact. For Joan Spruce (2011) - a local historian and fifth-generation Islander[12] - the largest group of words characteristic of the Falklands is probably the one taken from the Spanish spoken by the gauchos and specifies that they brought with them the terminology and knowledge of how to make and use horse gear, which served both for transporting and driving animals, also giving name to streams, valleys and establishments[13]. However, in the late 19th century, cattle ranching was replaced by sheep, making the gaucho experience unnecessary. Such events appear to have diminished the vitality of Spanish loanwords. According to Sudbury (2000), the influence of Spanish has been purely lexical and quite insignificant. But even though many of the words borrowed from Spanish may have fallen into disuse, the Spanish linguistic contribution has not been trivial at all, as this thesis aims to prove. Today, Spanish-speaking immigrants (mainly Chileans) are an important part of the population of the Islands, and 11% of the Islanders use Spanish in their homes (according to the 2016 Census Report). Nevertheless, English is the first local and only official language.

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[10] Trudgill (2004) lists rural FIE (together with Newfoundland English, and Cape Breton English) as one of the few known exceptions of colonial Englishes developed eminently as a result of dialect mixing.

[11] The gauchos were countryside men experienced in livestock tasks. They used to be mestizos who in the 18th and 19th centuries inhabited Argentina, Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). They were transhumant riders, very skilled in livestock work. Today, in Uruguay and Argentina, countrymen experienced in traditional cattle works are called 'gaucho'.

[12] Native Falkland Islanders are generally and locally addressed as Islanders.

[13] A substantial part of the toponymy of the Islands has a full or hybrid (Spanish-English) form based on Spanish.

Figure 1.1: An early map of the Falklands

1.2 Perspectives

Within the scope of socio-historical linguistics, this dissertation investigates language contact phenomena. The studies presented in it examine language contact from multiple perspectives, i.e.: contact onomastics, linguistic change and language attitudes. When studying the influence of one language on another, it is essential to observe it in its social setting and from a historical perspective. Following such a premise, this dissertation is written in the tradition of socio-historical linguistics aiming at the reconstruction of the history of a certain language in its socio-cultural context (Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre, 2012), aided by an ethnographic approach through participant observation and unstructured conversations with the speech community, gathering different quantitative and qualitative data. The general objective of this dissertation is to better understand the Spanish-English contact in the Falkland Islands, i.e., the scenarios in which it originated, the influence of Spanish on English from 1833 to date, and the Islanders' perceptions of the results of such phenomenon. The aim of this three-fold analysis is to provide readers with an overview of FIE that is as complete as possible, that gives much-needed information on a barely documented contact scenario of English and Spanish and its outcomes in terms of place names

and loanwords. Several sources are integrated into a socio-historical framework, including both synchronic and diachronic materials.

This thesis also discusses the relevance of these types of studies for various adjacent disciplines of linguistics. Moreover, it seeks to link the Islands' present and past through an in-depth analysis of language contact in order to look into the complex interplay of language-external (e.g., migration patterns) and internal developments, i.e., to discuss the full complexity of contact-induced language change, and by doing so, to offer some hypotheses on the relevance of Falklands English for current theories on lexical borrowing, as well as on the formation of postcolonial Englishes (as discussed in Schneider, 2007).

1.2.1 Outline

The structure of this thesis is as follows. The next chapter, Chapter 2 "A socio-historical overview of FIE in contact with Spanish" describes the social and historical context in which English and Spanish meet on the Islands from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day. The chapter aims to answer questions such as: To what extent is FIE the sole result of contact amongst English varieties? In which socio-historical context did/do speakers of Spanish and English converge? What kind of linguistic contact takes/took place in the Falklands between Spanish and English? The chapter summarises the historical and social evolution of the Falkland Islands population, subdividing its history into four sections (18th century: The many settlement attempts; 19th century: It all comes down to livestock; 20th century: Times of ups and downs; 21st century: Sovereignty assertion and the new Spanish wave). Moreover, this chapter provides steppingstones for the studies that follow as it introduces general principles of contact linguistics and identifies some major processes that underlie language contact. The aim is to set the groundwork in order to better understand language contact phenomena within a socio-historical framework of FIE, and to formulate some first hypotheses as to how the contact between Spanish and English may have originated and developed, which I then go on to explore in the following chapters.

The rest of the dissertation flows amongst and interweaves the three underlying sub-themes of this project, i.e., toponomastics, loanwords and language attitudes. The following chapters present an understanding of the phenomenon of place names of Spanish origin and their coexistence with English names, in relation to the past, and the present; understanding them as dynamic linguistic artefacts. Specifically, Chapter 3 "Spanish Place Names of the Falkland Islands: A Novel Classification System" addresses questions such as: Which Spanish place names are used in the Falklands? Which Spanish place names are used to name the Falklands from abroad? Where do they originate? What differentiates the two Spanish inventories? Chapter 4 "Competing place names: Malvinas vs. Falklands: When a sovereignty conflict

becomes a name conflict"[14] focuses on the following problems: What type of renaming process do Argentinian place names entail? Are there political intentions behind their use? What happens to the toponym *Puerto Argentino*, created during Galtieri's dictatorship? What are campers' and Stanley dwellers' attitudes towards Spanish place names such as Malvinas? Does the conflict with Argentina play a part when it comes to Islanders' attitudes towards Spanish place names? Chapter 5 "An ethnolinguistic approach to contact onomastics: Falkland Islanders' attitudes to gaucho place names" pays attention to locals' perspectives and sentiments towards Spanish place names with entries in British maps, addressing questions like: What might have originated these place names? What narrative do locals address to their existence? To which narrative do locals ascribe their existence? How do Islanders feel about them? How do these place names function within FIE speakers and the local community?

The rest of the thesis reports on two studies on loanwords. Chapter 6 "The Spanish component of Falkland Islands English: A micro-corpus approach to the study of loanwords" consists of a corpus-based study of Spanish loanwords in FIE. It addresses questions such as: How can Spanish loanwords in FIE be studied in the absence of a traditional corpus? Which elements of FIE can be the product of contact with Spanish? Do Spanish loanwords have entries in dictionaries? Are they confined to one semantic field? The second study on loanwords is Chapter 7, "Los préstamos lingüísticos como registro de la historia: indigenismos en el inglés de las Islas Malvinas/Falkland", which presents and analyses the Amerindian words that made it to FIE together with Spanish vocabulary. It also addresses the relevance of simultaneously studying historic and linguistic evidence given its potential to reconstruct past scenarios.

Finally, Chapter 8 provides a summary of the main findings, mentions the limitations of the study, discusses the theoretical and methodological implications, and makes suggestions for future research.

The repetition of certain aspects, such as the sociohistorical background and methodological approach across chapters, is the consequence of a cumulative thesis. The positive side is that each chapter is comprehensible on its own.

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[14] There are countless investigations and publications on the conflict and the 1982 war between Argentina and Great Britain. For instance: Guber, R., (2004). *De chicos a veteranos. Memorias argentinas de la guerra de Malvinas*. Antropofagia; Lorenz, F., (2017). *La llamada. Historia de un rumor de la posguerra de Malvinas*. EDUNT; Soprano, G., (2019). Violencia política y terrorismo de Estado en la Argentina de la década de 1970. Perspectivas y experiencias de los "combatientes"; desde una historia social y cultural de la guerra. Autoctonía. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales e Historia, 3* (1); Baker, K., (1993). *The Turbulent Years. My Life in Politics*. Faber and Faber; Benn, T., (1992). *The End of an Era. Diaries 1980-90*. Edited by R. Winstone. Hutchinson; Borsani, D., (2015). *La special relationship anglo-americana e la guerra delle Falkland: (1982)*. Le Lettere; Boyce, D.G., (2003). *The Falklands War*. Palgrave.

1.3 A Mixed-methods approach

Recent developments in contact linguistics suggest a considerable overlap of disciplines. Furthermore, given the lack of a unified method for studying language contact phenomena the studies of this dissertation rest within a cross-disciplinary framework in which diverse disciplines and subdisciplines overlap, i.e., contact linguistics, toponomastics, contact onomasiology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, language attitudes, conflict linguistics and linguistic ethnography[15]. Quantitative and qualitative linguistic data[16] from corpora, interviews and scientific and non-scientific[17] literature is investigated under the assumption that historical words provide a window on the concepts and materiality of a historical society (Schmidt-Wiegand, 1975). The creation, storage, maintenance, disclosure, archiving and sustainable preservation of research data complies with the FAIR principles of data management: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable.

The answers to the many questions posited above are explored throughout the three stages of this project. The first part of this investigation resorts to corpus linguistics. Research on lesser-known language varieties is rarely able to draw on large and well-balanced corpora (Meyerhoff, 2012). Hence, it is not much of a surprise that locally written material is scarce[18] and no large searchable (online) corpus or a database for the investigated variety is available. Therefore, I decided to study several written sources about the Falkland Islands in which vocabulary of Spanish origin is mentioned, more specifically Beccaceci (2017), Blake et al. (2011), Lorenz (2014), Migone (1996), Roberts (2002), Spruce (1992), Steen (2000), Strange (1973), and Vidal (1982). Only Vidal (1982) and Roberts (2002) had the explicit purpose of addressing the issue of Spanish loanwords. The rest of the works mention loanwords but without this being the primary objective of their work. The result of this stage is a list of 168 entries (I am not aware of a more

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[15] Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of this thesis, each chapter will consist of a theoretical review of the matter in question.

[16] All data is backed up in SURFdrive, a personal cloud storage service for the Dutch education and research community used to store, synchronise and share files. Data, however, has not been made openly available due to the confidentiality promised to participants (it should be noted that opinions are sometimes related to politics).

[17] Meaning academic/non-academic.

[18] Previously noted by Massolo (1990), who stated that "The war fought over the Falkland Islands between Argentina and Britain briefly captured world attention in 1982 and generated masses of books in English, Spanish, and other languages. With very few exceptions, academics, journalists, and propagandists focusing on international relations have perpetuated stereotypes of the conflict's antecedents. Few have shown any interest in local matters, which, despite their apparent parochialism, help explain the situation in the region today. An important but neglected aspect to consider is the world view of the islanders as expressed through their customs (p. 284).

exhaustive list on Spanish loanwords in that variety). Concomitantly, literature on the toponymy of the Islands (e.g., Munro, 1998), as well as maps were surveyed looking for Spanish and bilingual place names (English-Spanish). Maps of all types and periods were studied, and those created in the Falklands were compared to those of the Argentinian authorities.

In the second stage of this project, I resorted to an ethnographic approach to data collection, i.e., participant observation and interviewing 40 speakers in their cultural setting[19]. In the linguistic ethnography approach, the researcher gets involved with the community in order to better understand the language under study. Linguistic ethnography combines theoretical and methodological approaches from both linguistics and ethnography to look into social matters that involve language (Tusting, 2019). Ethnography provides reflexivity about the role of the researcher; attention to people's emic perspectives; sensitivity to in-depth understandings of particular settings; openness to complexity, as well as contradiction and re-interpretation over time (Rampton et al., 2004).

Data were collected *in situ*, and processed through field notes and personal reflections, which materialise in a better understanding of the phenomena. The tools consisted of field notes, a field diary, a recorder, and a camera. All my reflections and observations were recorded with at least one of them. For interviews, guidelines were developed for each individual informant. For example, guidelines for rural workers assessed their knowledge about the history of gauchos in the Islands, as well as their knowledge of toponyms and names of horse tack of Spanish origin; while the guidelines to interview politicians had the focal point on issues such as language attitudes towards Argentinian toponyms. In this study, attitudes are understood as a way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, as a mental construct (Garret, 2010). However, informants were not directly asked about their opinions, instead, these came up naturally in an unstructured manner.

There were two visits to the Falklands: in 2019 and 2020. Meetings and interviews were arranged with English and a few Spanish speakers from different parts of the Islands (permanent residents as well as immigrants) and of different ages; especially old informants to contemplate the phenomenon of apparent time[20] (Chambers, 2002; Eckert, 1997). The informants were students, government officials, MLAs (members of the legislative assembly), Islanders whose ancestors can be traced back to more than nine

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[19] Finding the funding to visit the Islands was a task that at times seemed impossible, until in 2019 I received financial aid from the Falklands government, the Foreign Commonwealth Office, the Shackelton Fund, and the British Embassy in Uruguay.

[20] A methodological construct from sociolinguistics which allows the study of language change by comparing the speech of individuals of different ages, assuming that older generations will represent an earlier form of the language. Famous studies that resorted to such a construct include Labov's Martha's Vineyard study (1994) as well as Chambers' study on Canadian /wh/.

generations[21], rural workers, archivists, museologists, independent researchers, members of the Falkland Islands Association, artists, Spanish and English teachers, hostages of the 1982 conflict, pre- and post-conflict immigrants, and teachers. The meetings took place at the home / workplace of the informants or at a meeting point such as restaurants or the hotel where I stayed. All interviews were done by me and were recorded with a three-microphone Olympus device which guarantees sufficient quality for phonetic analysis[22]. During fieldwork, I visited the capital (Stanley), and the countryside (the camp), both East Falkland and West Falkland. Moreover, for the socio-demographic framework, I visited the Jane Cameron Archives to study sources about 19th-century immigration rates as well as the Historic Dockyard Museum Archive.

The third stage was interspersed with the fieldwork trips and consisted of the analysis and reflection based on the data obtained. The data collected in the first fieldwork trip served as a foundation for the next visit, re-signifying what had been done to consider potential reformulations of the approach in the following trip (Guber, 2011). Both in the fieldwork as well as in the writing of the dissertation, the fundamental ethical precautions of scholarly research were considered. All participants were asked to sign informed consents[23]. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants (no informant is named), in conformity with all relevant ethical standards and regulations, including the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation of Leiden University). An Information Sheet was left behind so that informants had the opportunity to contact a responsible research official in case they deemed it necessary.

Informants became active participants and not mere sources of information. With every conversation, they helped re-signify what had been done allowing me to consider potential reformulations. Face to face meetings and group discussions took place in order to understand the present and past linguistic reality. While in fieldwork two talks were given in the Historic Dockyard Museum of Stanley. They were followed by an interactive discussion with attendees, which permitted collecting more qualitative data as well as bonding with the community. These instances provided Islanders with a space to share and display their knowledge as well as time to reflect on language phenomena. Furthermore, a Facebook page on the topic of Falkland Islands English was created to share some data with the local community and to gain insights from Islanders through social media. Within the ethnographic approach taken, I privileged the trust with the speech community under study,

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[21] It is particularly important to consider this population given the change of practices in rural areas and the high number of immigrants on the Islands.

[22] A phonetic analysis was not part of my research objectives but recording in high quality is important in case I decide to do so in the future.

[23] The Acceptance Letters of the Scientific Research Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Humanities in Universidad de la República and the Ethics committee for the faculties of Humanities and Archaeology in Leiden University were obtained prior to the first fieldwork.

on the assumption that in comparison to meeting informants once with the only intention of gathering data, staying in touch with the community and keeping them posted on the different stages of the project was not only fair for them but also convenient for my research as locals helped me throughout my discovery and reflection processes.

1.4 Relevance

Being a language of colonialism and expansion, English led to the emergence of 'new' varieties that originated due to linguistic contact. Their development provides a showcase scenario for research on contact linguistics, challenging us to rethink social, political, ethnic, economic and linguistic facets of the relationship between language and space (Schreier, 2008; Schmidt and Auer, 2010). As I have already mentioned, the 'export' of English becomes fascinating for contact linguists, since the embedding of English into a multitude of contact settings constitutes a remarkable amount of contact-induced language change (Thomason and Kaufman, 1988) which should eventually help formulate a language contact theory. Furthermore, countless contact situations all over the world remain to be examined. One of those scenarios is the one of the Falklands, where language contact has only been mentioned marginally and its outcomes downplayed (see Sudbury, 2005). The present study is the first to look into the linguistic history of the Falkland Islands from a language contact perspective, an ever-relevant topic in linguistics (Norde et al., 2010). Even though the contact of English varieties in the Falklands has received attention, no study has been done on contact between languages. Furthermore, this is also the first study contemplating language attitudes on the Islands, making this research innovative also in that respect. It is worth noting that this study pivots around the Falkland Islands speech community. Hence, one of its outreach aims is also to provide the locals with a thorough analysis of their history and culture, an examination that would not have been possible without their active participation and collaboration. Lastly, it intends to contribute to the international sociolinguistic history, since the past and present of this neglected post-colonial variety of English is coined by many cultures, peoples and nations. It also expects to collaborate in better understanding contact phenomena, providing the scholarly community with a case study, in the ideal microcosm provided by islands.