

Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht

Uitsluitend voor eigen gebruik / for own use only

Wittevrouwenstraat 7-11

Datum: 20-mar-02

Postbus 16007

3500 DA UTRECHT

Bonnummer: 20837

Telefoon: 030 - 2536601

Fax: 030 - 2538398

Email: klantenservice@library.uu.nl

Aan: SIJS, N. VAN DER

M. DE RUYTERSTRAAT 42 42
3572 XN UTRECHT
NEDERLAND

XX

Tav:

X **Aantal kopieën:** 23

Uw referentie(s): A065439112 X

SIJS, N. VAN DER

Artikelomschrijving bij aanvraagnummer: 20837

Artikel: Dutch linguistic legacy

Auteur: Robertson

Tijdschrift: BOLETÍN DE ESTUDIOS LATINOAMERICANOS Y DEL CARIBE

Jaar: 1983

Vol. 34

Aflevering:

Pagina(s): 75-97

Plaatsnr.: BCUSW

THE DUTCH LINGUISTIC LEGACY AND THE GUYANA/VENEZUELA BORDER QUESTION

Ian E. Robertson

INTRODUCTION

The Guyana-Venezuela border question has a history which dates back to the earliest Dutch settlements on what was known as 'the Wild Coast' of South America. It is essential that, as far as documents so far available for study of the first hundred and fifty years of Guyanese history go,¹ the borders were never adequately defined by treaty, maps or other conventional markings, though it may be argued that the British case as presented in 1899 provided strong evidence of Venezuelan acceptance of Dutch control in the Northwest region of Guyana.

On the one hand the Spanish regarded the Dutch as intruders into land which was first sighted by Columbus on their behalf and which the Papal Bull of 1493 has assigned to either Spain or Portugal. They felt that the Dutch could only lay claim to such lands as they were actually holding at any point in time and that all other lands belonged by right to Spain. The Dutch, on the other hand, never accepted this position and protested against the inclusion in the 1648 Treaty of Munster of a clause which could have been interpreted to mean that they were prepared to accept Spanish, though not Portuguese, sovereignty over territory which was as yet unsettled.² The Dutch protest was ignored but subsequent Dutch expansion indicated quite clearly that the Dutch felt that they had a right to take over any unoccupied territory. For nearly a hundred years no really serious protests were made by Spain until the territory actively controlled by either party approached that claimed by the other.

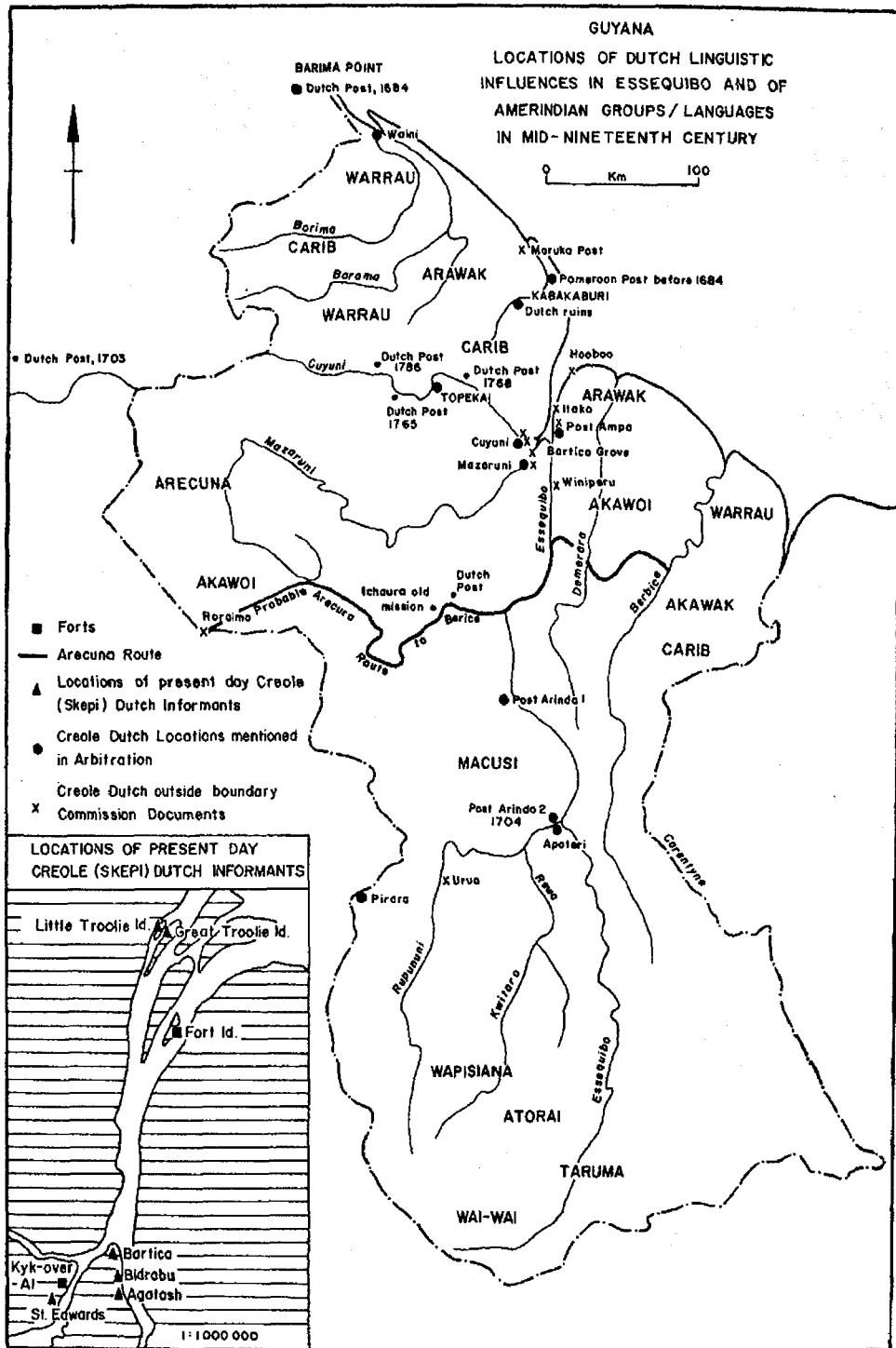
There were several accusations of violation of territorial integrity by both parties. No agreement was reached up to the time of the cession of the colonies to Britain in 1814. In a very real sense, therefore, Britain inherited the border problem from the Dutch, and Guyana in turn from Britain.

Ten years after Venezuela achieved her independence from Spain in 1830, she accused Britain, which had acquired the Guyana territories a mere seventeen years earlier, of expanding her territory beyond that ceded by the Dutch, into Venezuelan territory. Venezuela consistently argued that the British had no right to lands west of the Essequibo river. The British for their part claimed ownership of lands up to a point west of the Orinoco. The controversy raged until 1895, when President Cleveland of the United States of America used the principles underlying the Monroe Doctrine to force Britain to agree to arbitration. Accordingly, the arbitration tribunal was set up with two British members on one side and two American, nominated by the Venezuelans to represent their interests, on the other. These four selected a Russian jurist to serve as chairman of the arbitration tribunal.

The arbitration award was made in 1899 and the first maps setting out the boundaries were drawn up in 1905. The issue appeared settled and remained so for forty-nine

1 There are some historical references to the existence of an early treaty but the treaties have not been identified.

2 See A. O. Thompson, *A General History of Guyana c. 1580-1803* (forthcoming).



years until the death of the last surviving member of the commission, Señor Mallet Prevost, a junior member of the Venezuelan team, who, in a note which was made public at his specific request, after his death, claimed that the arbitration award was the result of a deal arrived at between the chairman, who was a Russian, and the other members of the tribunal.

The Venezuelan government used this note to begin protests against the award. For a while these protests were ignored by the British until the granting of political independence to Guyana was imminent.

Shortly before granting this independence in 1966, the United Kingdom government, in consultation with the government of British Guiana, agreed to establish a mixed commission to be charged 'with the task of seeking satisfactory solutions for the practical settlement of the controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom which has arisen as a result of the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899 about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela was null and void'.³ The Geneva Agreement, as this 1966 Agreement was called, made it perfectly clear that the agreement to seek 'satisfactory solutions' did not represent a repudiation of the positions taken by any of the parties involved in the Agreement.

The mixed commission failed to resolve the issue. In June 1970 a protocol was signed at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. This practically froze the boundary question for an initial period of twelve years. If neither party gave notice of its intention not to renew the protocol at least six months before the expiry date of the initial agreement, the protocol was to be deemed to have been renewed.

The government of Venezuela has now indicated its unwillingness to renew the protocol and is seeking a solution to the question of the validity of the tribunal award of 1899 and of its claim to the entire region of Guyana west of the Essequibo river.

The reader is here presented with an examination of the linguistic evidence adduced in support of the British claim of 1899 in the light of subsequent developments in the field of creole studies in general and of the research into Dutch-based creoles undertaken by the writer between 1974 and the present time.

LINGUISTIC ARGUMENTS PRESENTED IN 1899

Article IV (a) of the arbitration agreement states in part,

'The arbitrators may deem exclusive political control of a district, as well as actual settlement thereof, sufficient to constitute adverse holding or to make title by prescription.'⁴

The arguments presented at the arbitration therefore sought, in part, to establish the validity of the British claim to the lands in question on the basis of actual occupation of these areas by the Dutch, or, in the instances where large Dutch settlements never were established, to the political control of the area as might be determined by such features as the allegiance of the native Indian groups, the recognition of the right of the Dutch to award licenses for trade, fishing, etc. These lands, the British argued, formed part of the territory ceded by the Dutch and had therefore always been theirs.

It was to this question of allegiance that the linguistic evidence was crucial. The argument was best put as follows :

'The fact that the Indians of a district spoke this language is of itself strong proof that the district in question was Dutch. It is therefore worthy of note that this language was spoken by Indians in the Massaruni, Essequibo and Cuyuni as the

3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Documents on the Territorial Integrity of Guyana*, Georgetown, Guyana, 1981, p. 17.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

'language next to their own best understood by them, and was used by them in their intercourse with the settlers and that Governor Barkly, when he visited this part of the Colony in 1850, found that this dialect was still spoken by native Indians in the district of Barima, and that Dutch words had also been incorporated into the native Indian language.⁵ About the same period an Indian captain named Jan, who habitually spoke the Creole Dutch, was a well-known resident of the Wassekuru Creek, which is on the right bank of the Amakuru.⁶ The linguistic argument presented in support of the British claim to these lands derived from the former Dutch control was based on two factors.

Dutch lexical loans

The first is that the languages spoken by the Amerindians showed Dutch influence. This argument could not by itself establish anything more than the fact that Dutch trade must have been substantial, prolonged, more regular and perhaps earlier than that of any other country whose lexical items may have competed with the Dutch ones for use by the Amerindians. Only a very detailed linguistic survey of European loan words in these languages could answer the relevant questions on this issue. Any such survey must address itself to a number of crucial issues :

- The absolute quantities of such lexical loans.
- The chronology of these loan items in order to establish the predominant European influences at varying points in time.
- The extent to which loans penetrated to what may be considered the core of the vocabulary of the Amerindian languages.
- The historical sequence, if any, in which the various European languages made a contribution to the respective languages.
- The extent to which succeeding inputs may have supplanted those already extant.

It is important to note that both Spanish and Portuguese loan words are also present in the languages of the Amerindians. However, since the Spanish and Portuguese influences are continuing ones, while the Dutch ones were arrested more than one hundred and fifty years ago with the removal of the Dutch from Essequibo, it is crucial that any such surveys be restricted to the period of Dutch control of the Essequibo.

The fact that Amerindian chiefs were supposed to have had Dutch names adds some strength to the claim of recognition of Dutch control, for a people seldom changes its traditional naming systems without good reason, though even this must be qualified by the fact that the documents refer rather specifically to chiefs and not to the tribes in general.

The use of Creole Dutch

The second argument, that the widespread use of Creole Dutch by Amerindians points to a substantial Dutch allegiance and control, is much more substantial. However, independent research by the writer indicates that the submissions did not really do justice to the British case. There are several reasons for this, the main ones being a mis-

5 The word /sopi/, 'rum', is widely used in the English-based Creole of Guyana, in both the Dutch-based Creoles, as well as in several of the Amerindian languages. The second item specifically mentioned in this source is 'gunpowder', but thus far there is no evidence for the continued use of this term.

6 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela, Appendix VI, p.184 and Appendix VII, p. 236 (1898).

understanding of the nature of the 'Creole Dutch' with which they were dealing and of its history and linguistic significance, and a failure to cite the examples of the actual creole in use, especially since any such citation would have established beyond a doubt the fact that the language referred to was a product of the Dutch plantation system.

CORROBORATION OF DUTCH INTRUSION INTO AMERINDIAN LANGUAGES

There is abundant evidence for the intrusion of Dutch lexical items into the Amerindian languages of Guyana.

The following analysis of those lexical items assigned by De Goeje⁷ to Spanish or to Creole Dutch is used to illustrate the type of analysis which must be carried out as well as to underscore some of the difficulties.

The analysis presented here is far from final and the following limitations must be noted specifically :

- The analysis remains faithful to De Goeje even where the present writer does not accept his proposed source.
- De Goeje himself relies on the work of Rev. Brett, a missionary in Essequibo, and in particular on his translation of sections of the Bible.
- The semantic categories used for the analysis may be considered arbitrary though most analyses would perhaps use the major ones.

No.	ARAWAK	ENGLISH	DUTCH CREOLE	SPANISH	COMMENTS
1	bali	vessel for putting fish in	x		Utensils, containers, etc.
2	baka	cattle		x	Animals
3	bandola	harp		x	Musical instrument
4	botu	small ship	x		Travel (personnel, water and on land)
5	botoli	bottle	x		Utensils, containers, etc.
6	burigo	ass		x	Animals
7	fadem	fathom	x		Measurement/enumeration
8	penster	window	x		Building
9	pero	dog		x	Animal
10	plata	silver, money		x	Money
11	offern	offering	x		Religious

⁷ C. A. de Goeje, *The Arawak Language of Guiana*, Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam, 1928.

No.	ARAWAK	ENGLISH	DUTCH CREOLE	SPANISH	COMMENTS
12	flauta	European flute		x	Musical instrument
13	pesi	pitch	x		
14	prattana	plantain		x	Food (fruit, plants)
15	Pinkstdaka	Day of Pentecost	x		Religious
16	poroko	swine		x	Animal
17	fortalissa			x	
18	fiscal	town clerk	x		Admin./Legal etc.
19	planka	board	x		Building
20	plantasi	possessions (farm)	x		Proprietorship
21	kabrita	goat		x	Animal
22	primannu	fellows	x		Personal relationships
23	kapussina	Long beard (capuchin)		x	Religious
24	fort	fort	x		Military
25	kallena	chain		x	Tools instrument
26	kampanna	bell		x	
27	harpona	spear	x		Tools instrument
28	hondert	hundred	x		Enumeration/measurement
29	karina	hen		x	Animals
30	kaarta	letter, book		x	Correspondence
31	kapitan	magistrate, captain centurion	x		Legal/Admin.
32	kaputi	garment, clothes	x		Clothing, linen, etc.
33	kimisa	cloth, sheet		x	Clothing, linen etc.
34	kohoiyo	horse		x	Animal
35	kano	boat	x		Transport

No.	ARAWAK	ENGLISH	DUTCH CREOLE	SPANISH	COMMENTS
36	kasa	box	x		Utensils, containers
37	kulbara	gun powder		x	Military
38	akosa	needle		x	Weapons
39	kerki	temple	x		Religious
40	koporo	brass	x		Metals
41	gulden	piece of silver	x		Metals
42	lemono	lime		x	Fruit
43	masseta	cutlass		x	Instruments etc.
44	komiki	bowl	x		Containers, etc.
45	koning	king	x		Admin./Legal etc.
46	gouverneur	governor	x		Admin./Legal etc.
47	lampu	light	x		Instruments/tools
48	oili	oil	x		Mineral
49	logie	barn, garner	x		Architecture
50	matoroso	shipman	x		Travel
51	aransu	orange		x	Food, fruit
52	arimodi	row		x	Travel
53	meli	bread	x		Food
54	molo	mill	x		Machinery & plant
55	sapatu	shoe		x	Clothing
56	nete	net	x		Clothing, linen, etc.
57	sambulera	hat		x	Clothing, linen, etc.
58	sikalu	sugar		x	Food
59	anker	anchor	x		Travel

No.	ARAWAK	ENGLISH	DUTCH CREOLE	SPANISH	COMMENTS
60	riem	rudder-bands	x		Travel
61	saka	bag, scrip	x		Containers
62	temona	rudder		x	Travel
63	wela	sail		x	Travel
64	awelado	to sail		x	Travel
65	Saterdaka	Saturday	x		Days of the week
66	sesi	chariot	x		Travel
67	sikapo	sheep	x		Animal
68	slotro	key	x		Instruments
69	soldaro	soldier		x	Military
70	sulu	school	x		Education
71	Sondaka	Sunday	x		Days of the week
72	surabandi	upper room	x		Architecture/building
73	statuta	law	x		Legal/Admin.
74	tapel	table	x		Furniture
75	taraffa, treppa	stairs	x		Building/Architecture
76	tau	cord	x		Instruments, etc.
77	tenti	tent	x		Building etc.
78	wagen	chariot	x		Travel
79	winu	wine	x		Food
80	jagernu	horseman	x		Transport
81	sopi	rum	x		Food
82	alesi, resi	rice	x		Food
83	bokoloko	clothing	x		Clothing, etc.

Of the eighty-three items assigned by De Goeje to Dutch or to Spanish, fifty-three are assigned to Dutch Creole and thirty to Spanish. The data have a built-in bias towards the Biblical register but it is instructive that since the Venezuelan case is based in part on the activities of the church in Western Guyana, the bias in terms of total number of items should have been towards Spanish rather than Dutch. It may further be noted that active Dutch control ceased more than half a century before Brett did his translations of the Bible.

In several semantic fields the total number of items was too small for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn. The following may, however, be considered to be of some significance.

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Creole Dutch Sources</i>	<i>Spanish Sources</i>
Utensils, containers etc.	7	1
Buildings and Architecture	8	1
Administrative/Legal	6	0
Days of the week	2	0
Animals	1	7
Food, fruit, plants	4	4
Total	28	13

These six categories cover half of the total list. The fact that in four of the six cases the bias is heavily towards Creole Dutch, while only once is it towards Spanish, may be thought to have significance for the British case as presented to the tribunal.

It is virtually impossible to make any statement about the points in time at which these intrusions entered the language. This is especially true since Creole Dutch is known to have been in use in some areas of Essequibo up to recent times. It must, however, be recognised that Creole Dutch was losing prestige rapidly in the face of the English rule. It was in fact moribund. Creole Dutch would therefore have been an unlikely source of loan words after it lost its usefulness and status in relation to the colonising power.

It is equally difficult to make any firm statements about the replacement of Spanish items by Creole Dutch ones, or vice versa, based on this data.

What is crucial here is that this admittedly superficial analysis of items found in one Arawak source may be used to indicate the kind of in-depth lexical survey needed to draw firm conclusions about the influence of Creole Dutch or of Standard Dutch on the varying Amerindian languages spoken in Guyana.

Further, Edwards *et al.* (1977) contains several items of unmistakable Dutch origin in the languages of the Akawaio and Arekuna. Their data were collected from the Upper Mazaruni areas, which, the writers claim, the tribes have inhabited only from the beginning of this century.

The following short list provides examples of such influences which have survived to the present day.

<i>English</i>	<i>Akawaio</i>	<i>Arekuna</i>	<i>Creole Dutch</i>	<i>Dutch</i>
rice	eerchii	arikchii	/riʃi/	rijst
board	paranga	paranka	/planga/	plank
saw	saga	saka	(not known)	zaag
soap	seepoo	sawana	/sepu/	zeep
trousers	puuruukuu	puuruukuu	/bruku/	broek

None of the items in this list could be argued to have been a recent intrusion, though each is obviously part of a cultural intrusion and was most probably introduced through trade.

Both the Arekuna and Akawaio groups from whom the above data were collected took up relatively permanent abode in the upper Mazaruni area *after* the Dutch left Guyana. Consequently, they must be regarded as having transported the language into that area. In the case of the Akawaios, it may be argued that the Dutch intrusions into their language were the result of some degree of contact with the Dutch on the coast, since it is known that they were in contact with the Dutch on the Essequibo coast, whence this group of Akawaios had migrated.

The same could not be argued for the Arekunas. They migrated to present day Guyana from the Roraima area, which had in fact been awarded to Venezuela by the arbitration tribunal. The intrusions into this language must therefore be explained.

One possible explanation is that these items came into Arekuna from Akawaio. This is very plausible given the fact that the languages of these two groups are very closely related. It is also possible that the Arekunas, who were no less nomadic a group than any other Amerindian one, may themselves have had regular contact with the Dutch during their travels.

The evidence available on the languages of the Rupununi area — Wai Wai, Macushi and Wapishiana — is not sufficient to support or reject the argument on Dutch lexical intrusions. Since the plantation culture was very much a coastland phenomenon, any such intrusions would most likely have come from trade contacts.

The Warraus who inhabited the north-west region of present day Guyana were known to be the suppliers of boats and fish to the Dutch in Essequibo. Again, however, there is no available linguistic research on which the intrusion hypothesis could be tested.

DUTCH CREOLE

The Dutch Creole evidence presented to the arbitration tribunal sought to establish three things :

1. that the use of Dutch Creole was widespread;
2. that it was the language best known by the Indians after their native language; and as a consequence
3. that it was the normal language used for transactions with Europeans.

In support of the first argument the most important bits of evidence are provided by the responses of the postholders to a request from the governor in April 1836 requiring them 'to state how long you have been postholders and if you can converse with Indians in their own language.'⁸ Responses from the postholders at Berbice, Boeraserie, Waibana and Pomeroun, Post Ampa, Mazaruni Cuyuni pointed clearly to the use of the Creole Dutch language as the normal means of communication with the native Indian tribes.

In addition to these, several other instances of the use of Dutch in the other areas of the country were also presented. The use of Creole Dutch in the Barima area as mentioned by Sir Henry Barkly, is supported by the reports and letters of Sir Robert Schomburgk, who notes with reference to his surveys of the boundaries of British Guiana that :

⁸ British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. Appendix to British Counter Case, Part 1, 1898. p. 276.

'We entered the Amacura⁹ at 2 o' clock in the afternoon, and, following its course downwards were at 5 o' clock in the evening at the mouth of the rivulet Atucambo, flowing into the Amacura from the right or eastern bank. We ascended it in order to pay a visit to a settlement of Arawaks and Warraus, under the chieftan Jan. We found him an intelligent man who spoke the Creole Dutch fluently.'¹⁰

In addition to these, Michael McTurk points to the use of Creole Dutch in the Rupununi and on the Cuyuni, as the following indicates :

'Cornellisen and Cephas were other itinerant traders who traded with the Indians round Pirara (Rupununi Ireng) and it is significant that both these men carried on their transactions in Creole Dutch.'¹¹

Elsewhere it is noted that :

'Cephas was an Indian of mixed blood; he came from one of the rivers in Dutch Guiana, the Saramacca, I think. He came to this colony while quite a boy, and resided to the time of his death on the Essequibo River. His grandfather (a negro) was a runaway slave. Cephas spoke English very indifferently, but Carabisco, his mother tongue, and the Dutch patois of the Essequibo fluently and it was in this latter idiom that both his and Cornellisen's dealings were carried on principally.'¹²

In a declaration of 1898 McTurk also pointed to the use of the Creole :

'..... even at the present time at Apoteri close by the old Dutch Post of Arinda (Rupununi Essequibo) on the upper Essequibo a settlement of Carib Indians exist who use this language (Creole Dutch) in their intercourse with people other than those of their own nationality and recently there existed at Topekai, on the Cuyuni a settlement of Caribs who also used the same patois.'¹³

The Boundary commission documents clearly establish the use of a Dutch-based Creole at several locations within the area which is now being claimed by Venezuela as territory to which the British acquisition of the Guiana colonies gave Britain no right.

Searches beyond the boundary commission documents reveal evidence which not only corroborates that of the documents themselves but provides further evidence for the use of Creole Dutch in places other than those mentioned in the documents.

In 1833 the Rev. L. Strong of the Church Missionary Society wrote to Governor Durban :

'Mr. Armstrong has also regularly visited settlements of Indians in the Essequibo and Mazaruni rivers alternately every week, expounding, to some in English, to others, through an interpreter in the Creole Dutch..... Some of them can converse fluently in the Creole Dutch,'¹⁴

9 This river is part of the boundary set out by the award of the 1899 arbitration tribunal.

10 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. Appendix VII, British Case, 1898, p. 14.

11 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Brazil, 1903, p. 90.

12 *Ibid.* Annex to British Case, 1901, p. 3.

13 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. Appendix to British Counter Case, 1898, p. 407.

14 British Colonial Office. Rev. L. Strong to Gov. Durban C/o 111/126.

In his journal and letters between 1833 and 1839 the Rev. Thomas Youd establishes quite clearly that Creole Dutch was in use in all the places in which he worked since he preached or interpreted in Creole Dutch at each of them. These places included Cartabo, Bartica Grove, the Cuyuni Chapel, Winipera, Post Ampa, Hooboo, Epia and Itaka.¹⁵ Of these the Mazaruni and Cuyuni as well as Bartica and Post Ampa are specifically mentioned in the boundary commission documents noted earlier. There is also in these documents a general reference to the use of Creole Dutch on the Essequibo Rivers. The rather specific nature of Youd's locations where he preached in Creole Dutch clearly validates these submissions.

In addition Youd notes that :

'At a place called Winipera I lectured soon after the sun arose, in Creole Dutch, then prayed. There were about 20 present. I saw a few Akwi to whom I made known my mission and invited them to see me. I asked Aramoosy (the chief Akwi father of Aramoosy is called Drunkman) being the only one who could speak Dutch.....'¹⁶

Youd also notes (in 1839) :

'Nor is the knowledge of Creole Dutch altogether useless, even here, (Uruwa Rapids, Rupununi River) for now and then I meet with one or other that know something of it.'

Pascoe comments also that at Moruca, five miles north-west of the Pomeroon River, and at Cabacaburi¹⁷ Mission on the Pomeroon River :

'In less than a year from the time of Cornelius' first visit and before 1841 the descendants of the three sons of Noah — people of every shade and colour and sometimes of six languages viz : English, Creole Dutch, Arawak, Caribisee, Accowai and Warraw — were represented in the crowded congregation.'¹⁸

The primary function of the documentation of Creole Dutch from outside the boundary commission documents is to substantiate the claims made within the documents as to location.

These other sources indicate quite clearly that Creole Dutch was used in a number of areas not specifically mentioned in the documents presented to the tribunal. In addition, Youd's reference to his encountering 'now and then' people who knew something of it may be argued as being supportive of the McTurk argument for its use as the trade language of the south.

15 Rev. T. Youd. Journal. *md.* Church Missionary Society, West Indian Mission Records (1819-1861), CWO 94-100, 96568/14.

16 *Ibid.*

Since Youd's appreciation of the extent to which Creole Dutch was used among the Arawaks took one full year to develop fully, it is quite possible that at this meeting, which was his first, he was equally wrong.

17 There is a tributary of the Pomeroon known as Dutchman Creek. According to Rev. J. Bennett, (personal communication) the Dutch are said to have operated large concerns at Tororab and at Karowab where they farmed, traded and built boats. The Dutch also operated a sawpit at Aranamai and are believed to have dug five canals from the sea to this area to facilitate irrigation.

18 C. F. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years of S. P. G.*, London, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1901, p. 245.

VALIDATION OF USE FOR COMMUNICATION WITH EUROPEANS

In several of the submissions made to the arbitration in 1899 clear reference is made to the fact that Creole Dutch is the language after their native ones which is best understood by the Amerindians. In 1844, for instance, A. F. Baird, Superintendent of Rivers and Creeks in Essequibo, wrote :

'These are chiefly of the Arawak nation, with a few Caribesee in the Masserooney and Cuyuni. *The Creole Dutch is the language next to their own best understood by the Indians in their intercourse with the settlers.*'¹⁹

It is in this context that the work of the Rev. Thomas Youd, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, becomes particularly significant. Youd had more than an ordinary interest in the languages used in the areas in which he worked. The major indication of this interest is the following information contained in his journal entry for March 31st, 1837 :

'.... to lay before the corresponding committee when I go to town, as also the three general dictionaries of words both in *Creole Dutch*, Caribeez and Macushi alphabetically arranged, of which they will of course report to the corresponding committee. But as additions and corrections will of course be necessary to make them complete, I request the corresponding Committee to return them to me for that purpose.'²⁰

Further mention is made of this work on July 4th, 1837, but this time one more language, 'Akwi', is added.

These 'dictionaries' underscore the greater than average interest which Youd must have had in language study even though there can be no doubt that the simple pragmatics of spreading the Gospel in unknown tongues must have been an equally compelling force. What is significant, though, is the fact that neither Spanish nor English was included or indeed used since neither seemed to have been of much significance.

In the case of English, this is hardly surprising since the British had had relatively little sustained contact with South American colonies prior to taking over the Dutch colonies of Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo. These were in fact the only British colonies in South America throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. One of the tasks Youd set himself was to teach English to the children of those tribes with which he came into contact. The absence of English is therefore of little significance.

The virtual absence of Spanish, however, is not so easily explained, for, given the fact that Spanish would have had greater international currency and prestige than would Creole Dutch, one would have expected it to be more widely used for religious purposes. Indeed Spanish was of so little importance that only once does Youd refer to its use and this in a very specific reference. Again, however, given the fact that nowadays many Amerindians speak Spanish and Portuguese, it may be necessary to examine the relative modernity of this phenomenon.²¹ The religious argument is again important here, for if the Amerindians had already been exposed to religious teaching by Spanish-speaking

19 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. Appendix VI, No. 827.

20 Rev. T. Youd, *op. cit.*

21 *Ibid.*

missionaries then Spanish rather than Creole Dutch could have been expected to form a better medium for religious instruction.

Initially even Youd was not aware of how deeply rooted the Dutch Creole was. He had arrived as schoolmaster and Catechist on 23rd December 1832, but he was forced to assume full responsibility for religious instruction in the area in 1833 when Mr. Armstrong was forced to return to Britain because of ill health. On April 15th 1833 he noted :

'..... engaged in study and preparing a creole Dutch discourse for the Indians, in which I intend to tell them for what purpose I am sent out for they do not seem to understand clearly (at least many of them) notwithstanding our manner of acting among them, one reason is because we have not been able to speak to them freely, not knowing their language. *I intend to try what creole Dutch will do* in setting before them the gospel. *My plan is to read a creole dutch discourse* and if I can get the captains to translate what I say and to tell his people as they sit around in their own language whether they be Arawaks, Carabeese or Akwis. I feel a difficulty before me but the word is "Try".'²²

The approach was typical of those used by colonising powers when they encountered communication difficulties. In such cases the norm was to select a few people and to use them as interpreters. Obviously the more prestigious the interpreter was in his society the greater the chances of his achieving significant success.

Two facts are clear. The first is that English was not widely used, as he noted ten days later : 'I addressed them as well as I could in Dutch for they understand not English.'²³ The second is that Youd hoped to experiment with Creole Dutch. For him, it did not appear to have been that crucial to the society. Three days later, on April 28th 1833, Youd is slightly more positive when he notes that 'The Arawaks can chiefly understand Dutch.'²⁴

By October 1st 1833, Youd wrote to the Church Missionary Society :

'At present I am obliged to speak to the Indians in Creole Dutch, which many understand tolerably well. Creole Dutch, I can speak somewhat fluently, but as soon as I shall be able to speak the Carabeese language I shall find greater access to the minds of the Akawis as well as the Carabeese and Macushis.'²⁵

By the end of 1833, however, his illusions were clearly dissipated, as the following entry for 11th December clearly shows :

'Went according to appointment to meet the Caribeese at Cartabo, about seven miles from Bartica, while (statement on location of these points). I found to my joy about 40 of the Carabeese and a few coloured persons. I spoke to them in Dutch for a length of time; and then through a female interpreter endeavoured to make known to the Carabeese, what I had previously said in Dutch. But some of them telling the female she did not interpret correctly, she desired

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 This is Youd's only reference to Spanish Caribs and even here they appear to be outsiders. Again this was Youd's first encounter with this group and, as was demonstrated with the Arawaks, Youd's initial estimate was quite wrong. In later entries he comments specifically that the person supplying the Cuyuni chapel had to use Creole Dutch mixed with Carib.

me to speak again in Dutch. "For", said she, "they understand you very well". (Fearing that they did not understand me I had asked her to interpret; she understanding the Dutch well and being herself a Carabeese). The Spanish Carabeese from the Guine who were to have met with the rest today, scarcely understand a word of Dutch and for them I shall need an interpreter.²⁶

Within a year of his arrival at Bartica, therefore, the full significance of Creole Dutch within the Amerindian community was clearly brought home to Youd. He notes on September 30th, 1834 : 'Creole Dutch is the prevailing language here'. On April 27th, 1837 Youd made the following journal entry :

'Today I've been to the Arawaks..... It is remarkable that there were present people of no less than eight different languages *but all more or less acquainted with Creole Dutch. The congregation consisted of Dutch Caribees, Akawi, Arawak, Macushi, Proweevan Portuguese and one person of the Marco Nation.*'

Creole Dutch was clearly the convenience language for all these groups. This position is supported by the entry of Saturday, 21st December 1839, which states :

'In the afternoon I collected the Wapishanas and endeavoured to instruct them a little in the word of God, by means of one of their company who understands and speaks Creole Dutch, as well as Wapishana.'

The location here is in the Rupununi where Youd was stationed at the time.

The vibrance of Creole Dutch and its pervasive nature cannot be denied. These could be thought to account for Youd's decision to compile a dictionary for Creole Dutch as well as one for each of the Amerindian languages with which he had come into contact.

The significance of the use of Creole Dutch in these areas is not, therefore, to be underestimated. There are further bits of supporting evidence. Rev. James Williams notes in 1917 that Sir Robert Schomburgk 'had with him in London for a time one Sororeng, a Parvilhano Indian, who could speak three native Indian languages as well as English and Creole Dutch.'²⁷ This appears to validate Schomburgk's claim to have encountered speakers of Creole Dutch even though this specific tribe no longer inhabits present day Guyana.

Though the argument presented in the arbitration proceedings that Creole Dutch was used and that its use was not restricted to the areas near to the coast is well supported by the information gathered from other sources, these documents generally point to a widespread familiarity with the language among the Arawaks and the Caribs, the groups which maintained very regular contact with the plantations. The remaining references are rather specific to the use of Creole Dutch by the chiefs or single members of tribes. According to the arbitration papers :

'All the Indian Captains in the Barima (including Aruka) and Waini at this date (1839) received their insignia of command from the British Government and shared in the distribution of presents. The Creole Dutch was spoken among them.'²⁸

26 Rev. T. Youd, *op. cit.*

27 Rev. James Williams, 'Indian Languages', *TIMEHRI* IV, 1917 (Third Series), pp. 83-86.

28 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. British Case. 1898. p. 117.

This bias in the references may have resulted from a number of factors. In the first place, the documents submitted to the tribunal had as their specific aim proving that the Amerindians showed an allegiance to the Dutch. The best way to do this was to show that even the Chief followed a linguistic pattern which suggested acceptance of the Dutch. The statements generally make no comment about other members of the tribe. The only exceptions were McTurk's comments about a group of Creole Dutch speakers at Apoteri near the old Dutch post at Arinda in the northern Rupununi, and Youd's two comments, one of which said specifically that only the son of a particular Ackwi chief at Winiperu could speak Dutch, and the other giving a list of eight linguistic groups. Considering that the Winiperu visit was Youd's first there and bearing in mind that even his initial assessment of the linguistic skills of the Arawaks and Caribs, as was demonstrated earlier, was wrong, it is difficult to accept this initial assessment of the situation without reservation.

Secondly, as Youd's feeling that he should use the captains as interpreters illustrates, the norms of interaction between outsiders and the native tribes generally required interaction with the chiefs. It would follow from this that people whose visits were irregular or who were on their first visits could only speak about the language of the chief. The tendency to speak about chiefs of tribes cannot therefore be construed as a statement about the entire tribe.

The most significant exception to this restriction of the use of Creole Dutch to the chiefs of tribes is to be found in the following extract from Rev. Dance. The passage is so significant that it must be quoted in its entirety :

'But hitherto the strength of Mekro's 'piai' or his good fortune had prevailed over the machinations of his enemies, who now were numerous, and their hatred of him inveterate. Those who tried to poison him he poisoned : he wrestled with Kanaima, and with the coup de grace affixed the deadly feud-mark that was intended for himself. The impunity apparently accorded to him made him supercilious beyond endurance, so much so that the poisoners of his own tribe, despairing of wreaking their vengeance upon him by themselves, sent a deputation to the Indians of the Arecuna tribe with a present of guns, salem-pores, and ringas (earrings), and a tender of their friendship, if they would send over a company of men to exterminate Mekro and his settlement. These Arecunas came over from a great distance, chosen for the deed of blood on account of the remoteness of their habitation as likely to baffle all trace of the originators. Their settlement being in the district of the Roraima mountains, they had to cross the Mazaruni at its sources, traverse mountains, descend the Potaro and the Essequibo, cross over the Demerara, and descend the Viruni, which runs into the Berbice; then passing over the savanna of Peereborne, they came out at Lana, one of the properties of Mr. Sander, in which he resided at that time. Lana is about ten miles from the confluence of the Ituni and Berbice.

At Lana the Arecunas discovered an old black man, Thompson, at work repairing corrials and punts. Thompson — who at the time he narrated this to me, was the oldest man on the river — said that the Indians were somewhat intoxicated, and made very free with the tools and other articles in the workshop, or 'logie', as he called it. They took up, examined, and put down the things again, without taking the least notice of the old man. The cutlasses, three in number, appeared to tempt their cupidity; for they were coolly walking out with them, when the little old man, fiery even in the days of his faiblesse, ordered them to put down the cutlasses. At first they laughed at him; and when they saw that he was prepared to resist them, one of them pointed his gun at him, and said in Creole

*Dutch, "Me brave man, kill plenty man, kill all man, kill great Mekro, kill you".*²⁹

The passage is important because as late as the latter half of the nineteenth century Arekunas used Creole Dutch with at least one person from outside their tribe, who was presumably a speaker of Creole Dutch. It is also important because it clearly points to an Arekuna acquaintance with Creole Dutch. Its greatest importance lies, however, in the fact that, as was noted earlier, the Arekunas came from the Roraima area and prior to the 1860's at the very earliest had not entered Essequibo, but are thought to have inhabited territory which the arbitration tribunal assigned to Venezuela. When this feature is taken in conjunction with the earlier evidence of lexical intrusions into Arekuna, it provides a compelling argument in support of regular and sustained Dutch contact and even acceptance of Dutch control.

HISTORY AND NATURE OF CREOLE DUTCH

Yet another fundamental weakness of the submissions on Creole Dutch made to the arbitration tribunal is the failure to characterise adequately the phenomenon known as Creole Dutch. There is no explanation of the nature of the creole and the only submission on its history is easily demonstrated to be wrong.

The affidavit of Sir Henry Barkly quoted an 1833 Postholder's report thus :

*'As a result of the constant intercourse between the Dutch and the Indians, the native Indians became, in course of time, entirely incorporated in the Dutch colonies and there sprung up a language known as "Creole Dutch" which, when the British came into possession of the conquered territories, formed the best and most convenient form of communication between the settlers and the native Indian population.'*³⁰

This claim contradicts the position taken by Schomburgk, who says that :

*'In European families, English is of course the general language of communication; not so among the coloured people and negroes who talk a mixture, one might also say a real pidgin (kauderwalsch) derived from almost all the idioms of Africa, the indigenous so-called "Creole Dutch". The Dutch language which was brought by the first owners of the colony constitutes its basis. In the course of the constant changes of ownership, the next following temporary possessors on each occasion left behind certain traces of their language with the result that, in the course of time, among the coloured people and negroes, many a common expression is seen to be derived from Dutch, French, English and African occupation, and has now also spread among the indigenous coastal tribes.'*³¹

The first quotation argues that the Dutch Creole was a spontaneous development out of the Indo-European contact, while the second asserts that the Creole Dutch devel-

29 Rev. Charles Dance. *Chapters from a Guyanese Log Book*. London : Royal Gazette. 1881. Pp. 16 & 17.

30 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Brazil. British Case, Pp. 96-97.

31 Richard Schomburgk. *Travels in British Guiana 1840-1844*. Guyana edition W. Roth (ed. & trans.) Georgetown. Daily Chronicle, 1922. p. 44.

oped out of the relationships between the Africans and the Europeans. One of these explanations must be wrong, or, if both are correct, then one must have been dealing with separate phenomena both of which bore the name Creole Dutch. However, there is much evidence to confirm that the Creole Dutch used by the *Amerindians* was identical with that used by the *coloured people and negroes*. A passage from Sir Henry Barkly suggests that, when he claims that in their dealings with Europeans the Amerindians used a creole Dutch 'the use of which was diminishing among the negroes of the colony'.³² In addition the Rev. Youd makes no distinction between a Dutch Creole of the Amerindians and one of the negroes and few coloureds who were often part of his congregation, as he notes on May 1st 1833 :

'Went down the river Essequibo preached at Stampa to about 14 or 15 persons from thence to Etaka about 16 miles from Bartica and there preached to a few slaves, and three or four coloured free men.'³³

Rev. Brett further confirms this position in the following stanza of an introductory poem to his *Legends and Myths of the Aboriginal Indians of British Guiana* :

'There he (*an Indian*) of God and of the soul
would question in the "Dutch Creole".
A 'patois' I could daily hear
From an *old negress* living near.'³⁴

Finally the few examples of Creole Dutch cited in Youd's diary are in perfect accord with the fragments of Skepi³⁵ Dutch which have been collected from those people in Essequibo whose parents and grandparents used the language as their normal means of communication. In the words of one informant, these people are all 'a sort of reddish mixish people', a mixture, judged by their own accounts, of Amerindian, Dutch and African. All such informants spent the greater part of their lives in the Essequibo, the lower areas of Mazaruni and Cuyuni areas and on some of the islands in the mouth of the Essequibo River.

Elsewhere³⁶ it has been argued that this Skepi Dutch is, as Schomburgk noted, a product of Dutch African contact on the plantations. The argument is too complex to be analysed in detail here, but its essentials are that Skepi Dutch contains significant Africanisms such as /tata/ 'father'; /tata faʔr/ 'God'; /akruma/ 'ochro'; /gangay/ 'grandmother'; and /lo/ 'go'. Also Skepi Dutch bears some striking grammatical parallels to the Creoles of the Caribbean region generally, and more specifically to Negerhollands of the U. S. Virgin Islands of St. Thomas and St. John. None of these creoles has ever been thought to have been the result of contact between the Europeans and native Indians. Finally, Skepi Dutch, i.e. the Creole Dutch of the Essequibo, which is to be identified as that referred to in Youd and the boundary commission documents, bears no clear indication of a fundamental Amerindian influence. The language therefore was clearly one of the mainstream creoles of the Caribbean region.

32 British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. Appendix VI. 1898. No. 861. p. 184.

33 Rev. T. Youd, *op. cit.*

34 Rev. W. H. Brett. *Legends and Myths of the Aboriginal Indians of British Guiana*. London : William Wells Gardner. 1880. pp. 3-5.

35 This word is derived from Yskepi, the word used by the Dutch for Essequibo.

36 Ian E. Robertson. *Berbice Dutch - A Description*. Ph. D. dissertation. University of the West Indies. 1979. Chapter 8.

ESSEQUIBO DUTCH CREOLE

The samples of Skepi Dutch which have so far been collected identify it unambiguously as a mainstream creole. It displays several of the characteristics which Taylor³⁷ has identified as being common to the creoles of the region.

Phonology

At the level of phonology it shows a tendency to a cv final syllable structure in which a consonant is followed by a vowel e.g. /jɔŋku/ 'young man' from Standard Dutch *jongen*; /stɛki/ 'piece' from Standard Dutch *stuk*; /krabu/ from Dutch *krab*; /fɛʃi/ from Dutch *vis*.

Verb system

Within the verb system a single invariant word base is used with particles to signal aspect and time. Skepi Dutch verbs show no morphological sensitivity to person and tense.

1. a. /ɛk da lo nau/
I am going now
b. /ɛnder ni lʷɛnɔg/
You (pl.) not gone yet?
2. a. /ɛk sla ju/
I hit you
b. /ɛk sa sla ju/
I will hit you
3. a. /rɛŋɛn da kom/
Rain is coming

Example 1 indicates that there is no change of the order of words in the sentence to indicate a difference between a statement and a question, while example 2 shows no distinction in the base form of the verb to signal past and that used to signal futurity. The use of the form /da/ in example 3 is particularly significant because the form itself has no counterpart in Standard Dutch — unlike English *does*, for instance — and because the form has often been assumed to be of West African origin.

Pronominal System

Further proof of the basic similarity between the Dutch Creole of the Essequibo and the mainstream creoles of the Caribbean region is to be found in the pronominal system. As a general rule the pronouns in the Caribbean creoles have a single form which does not vary for case and, in most cases, for gender. Significantly, though, virtually all

37 Douglas Taylor. 'Grammatical and Lexical Affinities of Creoles', in : Hymes (ed.), *Pidginisation and Creolisation of Languages*. Cambridge University Press, 1971. Pp. 294-295.

Caribbean creoles show a difference between the singular and plural forms of the second person pronouns. This also holds for Skepi Dutch.

4. a. /ɛk da lo giɛntɛ/
I am going over there
b. /gɛf ɛk stɛki brɔt/
give me piece bread
5. a. /war ɛk sa lɛkɛm/
Where will I put it
b. /war ɛm sɛt/
Where it is
c. /ɛm bɛn ɛn da :ndi mɔrk/
He is a fashionable youth

Examples 5(a) and (b) indicate that the subject and object forms of pronoun are identical in shape, while 5(a) and 5(c) show that no formal distinction between human and non-human is signalled within the pronominal system, /ɛm/ being used for *he* and *it*.

The use of the form /jɛndɛ/ for second person plural in example 1(b) parallels the French Creole /zot/. Both are derived from forms which in the lexically related standard languages would mean 'you others' (*je anders* in Dutch; *vous autres* in French).

Sentence Structure

The sentence structure also fits the generally accepted sentence patterns of other creoles of the Caribbean. There is no inversion of the normal word order for asking questions e.g.

6. /war ju da lop/
Where are you going?
7. /jɔŋku ju ni kika ɛk sara/
boy you not see my petticoat

Also equational type sentences with adjectival predicates have no overt copula in the present e.g.

8. /ɛk hungɾ/
I hungry
9. /ɛk sɛt/
I O.K.

As yet no full description of the structure of Essequibo Dutch exists but the data collected by the author between April 1976 and January 1980 suggest quite clearly that the language was a genuine creole. What is more, many informants attest to the fact that their parents and grandparents used it fluently often as their only language. Indeed, two well educated members of the Guyanese community claim to have seen a translation of the new testament in this creole. This work has not been located but at least one

informant has indicated that his grandmother, who died in the early seventies, could write this creole, a significant achievement in any creole and also an interesting parallel to Negerhollands.

The full significance for the boundary question of the use of a Dutch-based creole by native Indians inhabiting the territory being claimed can only be appreciated in the wider context of the social history of Caribbean Creoles generally. Although English, French and Portuguese-based creoles have been documented in several parts of the Caribbean, e.g. Jamaica, Guyana, St. Kitts, Surinam, Cayenne, St. Lucia, Dominica, Haiti, Curaçao and Aruba, as well as in other areas of the world, there had been up to 1975 no instance of a fully fledged Dutch-based Creole in any of the territories which had actually been Dutch colonies. Indeed, the only Dutch-based creole which had been clearly accepted was that used in the Danish West Indian islands of St. Thomas and St. John, now part of the United States Virgin Islands. The case of Afrikaans in South Africa has never been established beyond doubt but it is certain that the language was at least partially creolised.

In a very real sense, therefore, the Dutch-based creoles of Guyana (two of them), Berbice and Skepi Dutch, are unique, for they represent the only instances in which Dutch is known to have been creolised within a Dutch colony. They also represent two of three cases in which the creolisation of Dutch has been established: Negerhollands of the former Danish West Indies mentioned above, Berbice Dutch and Essequibo Dutch.

The use of the Skepi Dutch by the Amerindian tribes does not necessarily constitute absolute proof that the area in question was under total Dutch sovereignty. That case can be bolstered by looking at some of the sociological features of Caribbean Creoles. The most significant of these is the fact that the creoles of the region were essentially products of the plantation system where a small, powerful, linguistically homogeneous group (usually European) dominated a larger, heterogeneous linguistic group to the extent that the latter made untutored attempts to acquire the language of the former. The result was a form of language which relied heavily on the dominant language for its vocabulary while retaining many of the structural (both grammatical and semantic) features common to the socially subordinate languages.

A second significant socio-psychological feature related to these creoles is the fact that as a consequence of their main users being people from the lowest strata of slave society, the languages themselves were (and still are) highly stigmatised. Even today many users of these creoles are not willing to acknowledge their use of creole, however much such denials represent a denial of self. Indeed, in the words of one of the more fluent speakers of Berbice Dutch, 'Some of them does be as if they shame to talk it, but they know it'. The writer's field experience has confirmed this position at all levels, and particularly in the Essequibo region.

In this context therefore the use of the Creole Dutch by the Amerindians takes on additional significance. The first question to be resolved is the spread of the language to the Amerindians. There seem to have been several avenues through which this may have taken place.

The diffusion of Creole Dutch to the Amerindians

Firstly, there were Amerindian slaves used on some of the plantations. The practice was not nearly as widespread as that of using African slaves, but such Amerindian slaves as there were would doubtless have acquired the Dutch-based creole from the slaves on the plantations. It must be noted, though, that the use of Amerindian slaves was more common and lasted longer in Berbice than in Essequibo.

In addition there were Amerindians who, though not themselves slaves, maintained close and regular contact with the plantations and in some instances acted as guides or

crewmembers to the Europeans. Their regular contact with the plantations would therefore have given them enough exposure to the Dutch-based creoles for them to acquire a significant amount of them.

A further source of the spread of the Dutch Creole language to the Amerindians would have been the family relationships set up between the Amerindians and the Africans, in particular the maroons and the runaways. As a general rule, historians make much of the hostility which existed between Africans, the runaways in particular, and the Amerindians, but there seem to be strong enough grounds to support an opposite view. That deep-seated hostility existed cannot be denied, but the evidence indicates that it was neither as widespread nor as consistent as historians would have us believe.

There seems little reason to doubt that Amerindians and Africans working together as slaves could not build up an alliance in the face of a common enemy and indeed in the parallel situation in Berbice several Amerindians are known to have fought alongside the slaves in the 1763 rebellion.³⁸ At any rate at least one writer argues :

'Runaway slaves were sometimes not captured but formed settlements in the forest and were known as maroons. These men took Indian wives and their descendants were gradually absorbed into Indian stock.'³⁹

Bronckhurst,⁴⁰ citing the Dutch writer Hartsink, substantiates the existence of such 'runaway or Bush Negroes' and so do several reports in nineteenth century newspapers.

The fact of the existence of Bovianders, a unique racial mixture of Amerindians, Africans and sometimes Dutch, presents a strong support for this argument. These groups were significant in the nineteenth century. As early as November 20th 1749, Governor Laurens Storm Van Gravesande wrote that

'the children of a black father and a red mother are incomparably more beautiful. They are, it is true, more stubborn than the others, also somewhat prouder but this is adequately compensated for by their speed and good understanding.'⁴¹

Bernau notes also :

'A race of half-caste Indians has arisen from intercourse with Europeans, who, in many instances have mingled again with the negro race, so that on the rivers of British Guiana shades of all descriptions are met with.'⁴²

Bancroft says :

'The promiscuous intercourse of these different people has likewise generated several intermediate castes, whose colours immutably depend on their consanguinity to either Whites, Indians or Negroes.'⁴³

38 Mrs. A. Benjamin, a researcher in Guyanese history, assures me of this.

39 Henry Kirke. *Twenty-five years in British Guiana*. London : Sampson, Low Marston and Co. Ltd. 1898. p. 173.

40 Rev. H.V.P. Bronckhurst. *The Colony of British Guiana and the Labouring Population*. London: T. Woolmer. 1883. p. 84.

41 Gravesande, Laurens Storm Van. Letter to Directors of Zeeland Chamber, 20.11.1749, in Netscher, 1881 : 381.

42 Rev. J. H. Bernau. *Missionary Labours in British Guiana*. London : John Farquhar Shaw. 1847.

43 E. Bancroft. *An Essay on the Natural History of Guiana*. London : T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt. 1769. p. 251.

Rev. Brett says in the 1840's :

'On the banks of the rivers of those three colonies there was, however, a considerable mixed population some being woodcutters belonging to the plantations and others free settlers — negroes and mulattoes.'⁴⁴

The mixing of the Africans with at least some of the Indian tribes points to another very real possibility of the source of spread of the plantation creole to the specific Indian tribes.

The other major means by which the Creole Dutch language was spread was by trade. It is clear that in many of the areas in which the use of Dutch creole has been attested there was no vibrant and sustained plantation system. What there was, however, was a brisk system of trade in houses, clothing, tobacco, annatto and letterwood etc. In addition the basic supplies of fish were gained from the Barima-Orinoco Waini region and the supply of boats was obtained mainly from the Warraus who inhabited the north western areas.⁴⁵ The main people providing labour on these trade routes, according to Thompson,⁴⁶ would have been the creole slaves, but other slaves were used as well. These would, logically, have been speaking Creole Dutch.

The initial use of Creole Dutch in these far-flung areas could therefore be attributed logically to trade rather than to the presence of plantations. One would assume, though, that once the trade need ceased the use of the Creole would have ceased also. This is especially true since, as has been noted, these languages are highly stigmatised. Their continued use points perhaps to a deeper significance, that is, a continued acceptance of Dutch control.

The most powerful argument which Creole Dutch provides on this boundary question is related to the fact that it would have been, and indeed still is, highly stigmatised. The use of Dutch, Spanish or any Standard European language could well be argued to have been an imposition. In this context it must be noted how frequently schools followed religious missions in the Guianas and that one aim of these was to teach literacy in the relevant European Standard. In addition, the high prestige of these European languages virtually guaranteed a willingness to learn them. Not so Creole Dutch. Its low prestige status should have guaranteed that it would have been shunned. Yet its use and its spread cannot be questioned. The users recognised its significance, a significance which points in the direction of Dutch control.

44 Rev. W. H. Brett. *Mission Work in the Forests of British Guiana 1840-1841*. London : SPCK. 1881. p. 8.

45 A. O. Thompson. *A General History of Guyana c. 1580-1803* (forthcoming).

46 A. O. Thompson. 'Brethren of the Bush — A Study of Runaways and Bush Negroes in Guyana c. 1750-1841'. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill (mimeo).