12 English dialect input to the Caribbean

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1 Introduction
There is no doubt that in the settlement of the Caribbean area by English speakers and in the rise of varieties of English there, the question of regional British input is of central importance (Rickford 1986; Harris 1986). But equally the two other sources of specific features in anglophone varieties there, early creolisation and independent developments, have been given continued attention by scholars. Opinions are still divided on the relative weight to be accorded to these sources. The purpose of the present chapter is not to offer a description of forms of English in the Caribbean – as this would lie outside the competence of the present author, see Holm (1994) for a résumé – but rather to present the arguments for regional British English input as the historical source of salient features of Caribbean forms of English and consider these arguments in the light of recent research into both English in this region and historical varieties in the British Isles. This is done while explicitly acknowledging the role of West African input to forms of English in this region. This case has been argued eloquently and well, since at least Alleyne (1980) whose views are shared by many creolists, e.g. John Rickford. But the aim of the present volume, and specifically of the present chapter, is to consider overseas varieties of English in the light of possible continuity of input forms of English from the British Isles. This concern does not seek to downplay West African input and general processes of creolisation, which of course need to be specified in detail, but rather tries to put the case for English input and so complement other views already available in the field. In particular, consideration is given to historical forms of Irish English and South-West British English (Klemola 1996; Winford 2000), both of which are noted for the occurrence of an

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1 Whether there are specific creolisation processes is a matter of debate in the recent literature on the subject. Mufwene in particular argues against ‘particular linguistic evolutionary processes likely to yield (prototypical) creoles’ (2000: 66).
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habitual aspect. In fact Irish English has a large number of formally expressed aspectual distinctions (Hickey 1997, in press), something it shares with forms of English in the Caribbean.

It should also be stressed at the outset that for many phenomena in Caribbean forms of English, a convergence scenario may be closest to historical reality, although it is notoriously difficult to determine what this was probably like. For instance, the presence of aspectual categories in regional forms of British and Irish English is paralleled by similar categories – albeit with very different exponence – in the West African languages which represented the substrate for slaves in the early anglophone Caribbean and on the mainland of the later United States. Convergence may also have been operative on the phonological level, e.g. the occurrence of stops as equivalents to ambidental fricatives in standard English (in such words as thin and this) is paralleled by stops in Irish English and by the nonexistence of such fricatives in West African languages.

Recent reorientation has apportioned a much greater role to superstrate models in the early stages of English in the Caribbean and also in the American South (Schneider 1993, this volume), an area it is closely associated with. The view of such scholars as Winford (1997–8: 123) is that creolisation is a development which occurred somewhat after the initial settlement of the Caribbean and the American South and which was triggered by the establishment of a widespread plantation rural economy, something which was not present at the outset for either region. Supportive evidence for this stance is to be found in areas of the Caribbean where plantations were not established, e.g. on the Cayman Islands which retain distinctive traces of English regional input (Holm 1994: 332). Among the many views in this field are those which claim that the African slaves taken to the Caribbean had already learned a pidgin (Cassidy 1980) or possibly a creole (Hancock 1980) before their transportation. However, if this was true, then it was not so for the period in which the earliest slaves were taken to the Caribbean, i.e. not for the early seventeenth century.

According to Parkvall (1998: 69) the English slave trade to St Kitts only started c. 1660 (English slaving on the Lower Guinea coast starts c. 1640 but in considerable numbers only about twenty years later), so this can be taken as the earliest date that new slaves arrived from Africa, potentially speaking a pidgin. For St Kitts the first mention of African slaves is 1626: three ships deliver sixty Africans to the island (Parkvall 1998: 66). Now it is true that an English trading post had been established in Sierra Leone in the 1620s (the date has sometimes been pushed back to the 1610s), so it is imaginable that these slaves could have spoken a pidgin. Against this, note also that Parkvall (1998: 69) estimates that all slaves in the period up to 1629 were shipped by the Portuguese, who procured 96 per cent of their human cargo in the Congo/Angola region (where there was no English trading post), so the chances that these early slaves spoke restructured English upon arrival are very slight (Magnus Huber, personal communication).

The scenario in which approximation to English regional input precedes possible creolisation has wide-ranging implications for the interpretation of key
structures in both present-day Caribbean creoles and African American English (henceforth: AAE) (Wolfram 1990). It suggests that the first few generations, the founder generations of the formative years of English in this region, were exposed sufficiently to regional British English input for structural features of the latter to be transferred to incipient African varieties of English due to an unguided second language acquisition process among adults. In this respect the earliest years of English in the Caribbean among African slaves show distinct parallels with English in Ireland in the early modern period (from the early seventeenth century onwards). In both cases speakers shifted to English as adults, learning the language in an unguided fashion with obvious imperfect results. Such a scenario is one where both syntactic transfer from the substrate languages and the adoption of salient grammatical features of the superstrate language are at a premium. In the present context the concern is with discerning the latter features and considering whether there is sufficient evidence to conclude that these were adopted into early forms of non-native English in the Caribbean. It will also be questioned whether the presence of structural similarities in later attested forms of Caribbean English represent a case of historical continuity of regional input rather than a set of independent developments.

2 British and Irish regional input

It has been a received wisdom that during the ‘homestead phase’ of English in the Caribbean (the very early years before the arrival of large numbers of slaves), nonanglophones were exposed to regional forms of English. This point of view is considered here for the present section but it is necessary to stress that many authors do not accept it, e.g. Baker and Huber (2000, 2001) are of the opinion that nonanglophones were exposed to foreigner talk versions of English varieties and that this explains worldwide similarities.

A certain tradition has been established of referring to the likelihood of Irish influence in the formative period of Caribbean forms of English. Various syntactic features of Irish English, which show tantalising parallels with varieties in the Caribbean and with AAE (Hill 1975), are alluded to by different authors. For instance, Bickerton (1975: 10) mentions possible Irish influence when considering whether Gaelic *is* ‘is’ could be the source in *is*-initial sentences in Guyanese creole (this kind of topicalisation with *is* occurs in Barbados as well, Schneider 1990: 104). However, such references are not always uncritical: Bickerton is sceptical of tracing *doz be* in an habitual sense to Irish influence.

Holm (1988) mentions Irish English at a few key points. One is when discussing the palatalisation of velars before low front vowels within the general context of creole phonology (something discussed in detail in Harris 1987) and he indicates a possible link with (northern) varieties of Irish English. Another is when discussing *do(es) be* as an habitual marker and when dealing with embedded questions without inversion, both of which are features found in Irish English.
Holm (1994) mentions unstressed *does* as an habitual aspect marker in British varieties of English in his discussion of it in Caribbean creoles and adds that in Ireland it may well have gained support from Irish (Holm 1994: 375). He also echoes Rickford’s view (Holm 1986b: 257, 260, 263) that the use of *be* in AAE and *does be* in Caribbean creoles may well reflect a differential influence of Northern Irish English on the former and southern Irish English on the latter, a view apparently shared by Bliss (1972) and Guilfoyle (1983).

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) refer to the settlement of various Caribbean islands, notably Barbados, by Irish immigrants. This can be directly traced to the deportation practice of Oliver Cromwell, who sent many Irish to the island (many of these had been taken prisoner after the Battle of Drogheda in 1648). The authors also mention the West Indian *do/does*, used in an habitual sense, as deriving ‘to some extent’ from west of England and Irish usage.

Roy (1986: 143) mentions the extent of Irish immigration to Barbados in the mid seventeenth century. He regards an Irish origin of certain aspectual distinctions such as *do plus be* as probable (Roy 1986: 150f.) and quotes standard Irish sources to substantiate his arguments. The same is true of Roberts when talking of English on Barbados and Montserrat (Roberts 1988: 34).

Williams (1988) begins by considering habitual aspect markers in Irish English and in south-western dialects of English (the latter with special forms of *do* support). He then proceeds to consider the development of the aspectual systems of anglophone creoles in the Caribbean area and concludes that the contribution of earlier varieties of English is in many cases sufficient to explain existing aspectual distinctions without having recourse to a creolisation hypothesis. In his conclusion he assumes a considerable Irish English input for Saba Island (in the Netherlands Antilles), Bequia Island (in St Vincent and the Grenadines) and Barbados, three Caribbean locations he examined.

Bailey (1982) reports on a number of features of Irish English which link it up with Black English and points out that constructions with *does + be* could derive from the Irish English which was transported to the Caribbean area (Barbados and Jamaica, for example) already in the seventeenth century. This would have happened before the slave trade got fully under way, Irish English features being then absorbed by the forms of English which arose with the displaced African population.

Labov (1998), in his discussion of nonfinite *be*, remarks that ‘comparatively few creoles have a specialised marker for habituals’. He goes on to say that ‘Invariant *be* is rare in the Caribbean, but it is a common feature of Hiberno-English’ and recognises the connection between an habitual use – with or without a form of *do* – and the existence of this category in Irish; he refers to Rickford (1986) who offered evidence for early contact between African slaves and Irish labourers (Beckles 1989).

It can be seen from this cursory glance at recent literature that the concern of authors is primarily with aspectual distinctions in Caribbean English, specifically with the expression of an habitual. The remarkable parallel between the
Caribbean and certain regions of the British Isles is the use of *do* plus *be* for the habitual. The two regions of the British Isles which can be considered as sources of historical input are the east/south-east of Ireland and the south-west of England (Ihalainen 1976; Matthews 1939; Weltens 1983). Indeed there is already an historical connection between these two areas as the initial population of the east of Ireland stems from settlers from the south-west of England who moved to Ireland (Hickey 2001). This issue is, however, not of central relevance in the present context and will hence not be considered in detail here. It should be mentioned, nonetheless, that the source of *do* to express an habitual in south-western English could conceivably be connected with Cornish, the Celtic language with which English was in contact for centuries (Poussa 1990: 417–21) until the former died out in the late eighteenth century. Concrete evidence for such a connection is missing and hence the view has not gained acceptance in the literature on the subject.

When examining the habitual with *do* and Caribbean English it should be stressed that for many varieties, this *do*, or a reduced form such as *[də]*, does not necessarily exist. Instead one may have just *be*, with or without an inflection. For instance, in his review of preverbal markers Schneider (1990: 90) has an habitual marker *doz/da* in only five localities (of the fourteen he examined): Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad (Youssef 1995), St Kitts/Nevis and the Bahamas, to which one could add Miskito Coast (Holm 1983a: 60). For those localities which do not show *doz/da* it may be possible to conclude that through phonetic attrition this form was lost from an earlier stage in which it existed (Rickford 1980).

3 Anglophone settlement of the Caribbean

References such as those above rest on the mention of linguistic parallels. They do not attempt to back up the suggestion they make about an historical connection by considering the extra-linguistic development of English in the Caribbean, i.e. its anglophone settlement history. A notable exception to this is Williams (1986) which examines in detail the immigration and demographic patterns in the Caribbean with a view to establishing the likelihood of Irish influence on the speech of the area. The main question is this context is: what was the situation like before the arrival of the slaves in considerable numbers and the development of large plantations, i.e. before creolisation set in? This question does not apply to the colonies which were established somewhat later, e.g. Jamaica, and which became plantation colonies almost immediately without going through a settler phase. However, this does apply to earlier settled smaller islands and to illuminate this matter a detailed consideration of Barbados, the key anglophone location for early Caribbean settlement, is offered.

3.1 The case of Barbados

In the history of anglophone settlement in the Caribbean the island of Barbados in the south-east (along with St Kitts somewhat to the north; see Baker and
Bruyn 1998) plays a central role. It was among the first islands to be settled by the English in 1627 (Andrews 1978, 1984) and, given its small size and quick growth in population, there was later movement from here to other parts of the Caribbean, notably to Jamaica, Guyana, and to parts of the southern United States, chiefly to the coastal regions of South Carolina and Georgia, to the Sea Islands along the littoral of these states where the creole Gullah (Turner 1949) developed and is still to be found (Hancock 1980).

There have been various reasons for the exploitation of Barbados by the English. Initially, the island functioned as a bridgehead for the English in the Caribbean which by the beginning of the seventeenth century was dominated by the Spanish. It was later to become important with the development of the cane sugar trade (Taylor 2001: 205–17; Dunn 1972), something which also came to be true of Jamaica after it was wrenched from Spanish control in the mid-seventeenth century (Taylor 2001: 217–21; Le Page 1960). Before the large-scale importation of African slaves got under way in the later seventeenth century, the English had a system of indenture whereby settlers from the British Isles went to the Caribbean to work for a period, typically five to eight years, after which they were free to move at will, their circumstances at the overseas locations permitting.

The settlement of Barbados is also linked to the deportation of Irish dissidents by Oliver Cromwell, as mentioned above, this element forming a significant proportion of early white settlers from the late 1640s onwards (O’Callaghan 2000: 65–76; Aubrey 1930–1) and these would have been in contact with African slaves in a work context (Rickford 1986: 251). There was also a later deportation to Jamaica (O’Callaghan 2000: 77–88). The vicissitudes of the Civil War in England (1642–51) were also responsible for the emigration of English as well. A well-known instance of this is Richard Ligon. He was probably one of the displaced persons who departed in 1647 due to war in England, claiming to have lost wealth and property in the Fens in East Anglia. Later he wrote a history of Barbados (Ligon 1657) which provides information on the early settlement of the island.

Given the size of Barbados and the relatively low social position of the Irish in the white community on the island, there would have been fairly intensive contact between Africans and the Irish. A further aspect which deserves consideration here concerns the gender of the early African slaves. Campbell (1993: 98) when dealing with ‘the component parts of the population’ says that he found no mention of female Africans before the 1640s, which means that for most of the first generation of English settlement on Barbados (from the late 1620s onwards) there was not only a preponderance of whites but no black families with children born there who could have initiated the creolisation process, assuming that the social scenario was already suitable then, though this was unlikely before the establishment of large sugar plantations with their pyramid structure, consisting

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2 Parkvall (2000: 185) notes that the ‘assumption that demographic disproportion – i.e. a number of substrate speakers that by far exceeds the number of speakers of the lexifier language – leads to more radical restructuring has long been inherent in contact language studies’. 
of a small number of whites ruling over a large number of slaves. Campbell (1993: 148) mentions the late 1640s as the beginning of the sugar revolution with the switch from tobacco. This was also the switch from white indentured servants to black slaves (Harlowe 1969 [1926]: 292–330) and the exodus of the former from Barbados. From 1650–80 upwards of 10,000 left Barbados (a conservative estimate). Settlers from other parts of the Caribbean left for the south-east of the North American mainland, chiefly to South Carolina, a movement which began in 1670 and which was largely completed by 1700 (Holm 1994: 342). It should also be mentioned that with the later concentration of African slaves on Barbados, settlement patterns arose which were conducive to creolisation: Rickford and Handler (1994: 230) point out that ‘these slaves lived in compact village settlements located next to the plantation yard’ and that ‘these are just the kinds of demographic and settlement patterns which would have produced and/or maintained creole-speaking communities’.

Yet another view is that proposed by Baker (1998: 346f.). He maintains that originally there would have been a ‘medium for inter-ethnic communication’ (his term) which the entire population would have participated in to begin with. Locally born blacks on St Kitts (the locality of Baker’s investigation) would have used this variety irrespective of whether they also acquired the language of the white community. Essentially what Baker is saying is that there was a split in the early anglophone population of St Kitts between the superstrate language English and a mixed language among the blacks. He further maintains that ‘many of the features typical of A(tlantic) E(nglish) C(reole)s are likely to have been established in the embryonic M(edium for) I(nter-ethnic) C(ommunication) of English St Kitts in the 1620s prior to other territories being settled from that island, and long before this became anyone’s first language’ (Baker 1998: 347).

This standpoint is shredded by Mufwene (2000: 72f.). Essentially Mufwene criticises Baker for assuming that with a label ‘medium for inter-ethnic communication’ he had identified a target towards which early slaves would have moved (see Baker 2000: 48f. where he implies a high degree of agency to this phenomenon). Mufwene rightly admonishes various authors for assuming that language learners deliberately created a creole given the situation they found themselves in. However, his conclusion ‘that these vernaculars are socially disfranchised dialects of their lexifiers’ (Mufwene 2000: 77) does not add any linguistic precision to the discussion.

Mufwene also assumes that ‘by the time plantation communities developed and non-Europeans became the majorities, language was still transmitted normally from one group to another, from the creole or seasoned slaves to the bozal slaves, regardless of the structural variation in the target’ (Mufwene 2000: 73). Ultimately Mufwene seems to see the justification in the study of creoles in the similarity of external sociohistorical situation and not in clearly definable structural characteristics which make them sui generis (2000: 78).

McWhorter (1998; 2000: 86), on the other hand, stresses the newness of creoles and says that this accounts for (i) a lack of inflectional affixation, (ii) tone
and (iii) derivational noncompositionality. These are all products of ‘diachronic
drift’ (McWhorter 2000: 99) which, if present, would lead to signs of these
processes arising in former creolising contexts. This also accounts for the ‘gra-
and McWhorter (2000) are concerned with whether one can define a Creole
Prototype (McWhorter’s capitals). But McWhorter maintains that many of the
putative creole characteristics are indeed those of analytic languages in general
(McWhorter 2000: 85f.).

3.2 Early Barbadian English

The departure from Barbados of white settlers and the transportation of African
slaves in large numbers to provide labour on the sugar plantations (at various
locations of the Caribbean) undoubtedly led to a reversal of the demographic
proportions in the late seventeenth and certainly in the eighteenth century. By
the end of the latter century the situation was one where whites were in a minority.
For Barbados in the late 1780s ‘slaves inhabiting plantations or small farm units
comprised about 88% of the total slave population’ (Rickford and Handler 1994:
230). The population figures are approximately as follows: 70,000 slaves and
around 17,000 whites, i.e. roughly 80 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

Reliable data for eighteenth-century Barbadian English is notoriously difficult
to come by. Rickford and Handler attempt an analysis of English at this period
by examining Dickson’s *Letters on Slavery* (1789) and give a list of features from
this work which they see as indicative of early creolisation (Rickford and Handler
1994: 233f.):

1. Absence of copula, so-called bare predication, *Da Ø good Backra*.
2. The realisation of English interdental fricatives as stops, *da* ‘that’.
3. Epenthesis (vowel insertion) as in *counterymen* (this is a particular feature
   of the south and east of Ireland and is amply attested in both English and
   Irish).
4. Simplification of word-final clusters, *hand* [han].

It is generally accepted that Barbadian English is less removed from main-
land English than other varieties in the Caribbean, notably Jamaican English
(Schneider 1990: 103), and various reasons have been put forward to explain
this. Schneider stresses the small size of the island and hence the lack of iso-
lation. At larger locations, above all Jamaica and Guyana, pockets of African
culture could develop and maintain themselves in relative isolation. Another
important factor with regard to Barbados is that the first settlers were of course

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3 One should also mention that there are various views on whether creole features in West African
creoles, above all Krio, have an indigenous source or stem from New World repatriated African
4 See Winer (1984) for similar data from Trinidad.
Table 12.1. Periodisation of English on Barbados

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1627–1650</td>
<td>Pre-plantation period with predominance of white settler speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>1650–1680</td>
<td>Early plantation period with a great increase in black population</td>
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<tr>
<td>1680–1800</td>
<td>Core plantation period</td>
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<tr>
<td>1800–1900</td>
<td>Late and post-plantation period</td>
</tr>
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</table>

poor whites and, going on the principle that those present early in the development of a variety are those who influence it most (Mufwene 1996), it is fair to assume that the speech of these English speakers was decisive in the formation of Barbadian English. This factor combined with the relatively high contact among speakers of all backgrounds on this small island was probably an inhibiting factor to the development of a creole with the more prototypical features found, for instance, in basilectal forms of creole in Jamaica or Guyana. For instance, anterior *bin* – the use of this form to express remoteness in the past – is something for which there is no conclusive evidence in contemporary Barbadian. But in historical texts, such as the nineteenth-century material examined by Hancock (1987), there would appear to be evidence for anterior *bin*. The question of what earlier Barbadian was like has occupied a number of scholars, notably Rickford (1992), Fields (1995) and Winford (2000). The latter two concede that the creole residue in Barbadian, which has been noted by many scholars, could be due to creole being introduced into Barbados by internal Caribbean migration, e.g. by African free labourers (Winford 2000: 218f.). Rickford and Handler (1994) then reject this importation view and prefer to interpret the creole residue as due to continuity from eighteenth-century antecedent structures on the island.

The situation in Barbados would seem to have disfavoured strong versions of the substrate hypothesis which postulate that the influence of the West African languages of the slaves on incipient forms of English was very strong. For example Alleyne (1980) in ‘The African base’ (1980: 136–79) presents arguments to substantiate his support of a contact hypothesis concerning the particular features of Caribbean ‘creole’ languages (the inverted commas are his). His thesis (p. 138) is that in the transition from the languages of West Africa to English, which grew out of the communicative need in the new situation of the displaced Africans, ‘transmissions and continuities’ from native languages of the peoples concerned occurred. Such substrate explanations have their opponents, for instance Bickerton. In Bickerton (1986) he is critical of extreme forms of a substrate hypothesis, the supporters of which are termed ‘substratophile’, and pleads for a more universalist approach to the genesis of various creole features. Romaine by contrast is of the opinion that ‘Bickerton (1981) has largely ignored the similarities in tense-mood-aspect marking between creoles and their substrate languages and instead has claimed that the common features are due to the operation of the bioprogram’ (1994: 595f.).
Whatever the merits of the substrate versus universalist hypotheses, for the present discussion the dichotomy which is of central importance is that of creolisation versus dialect retention. When dealing with the former scenario scholars have recognised that one is often dealing not with a simple decision of whether creolisation occurred or not, but rather with what Schneider (1990) terms ‘the cline of creoleness’. In its prototypical form, creolisation is associated with a number of sociolinguistic circumstances (on which, however, not all scholars agree). These can be summarised as follows:

1. A period of contact with the colonial settlers/administrators in which the rudiments of English are picked up.
2. A plantation-like situation in which the African slaves are amongst themselves and in which an expanded pidgin can arise.
3. A break with the linguistic background of the slaves which results in an interruption of linguistic continuity across generations. Separation and mixing of slaves from diverse linguistic backgrounds would have given rise to sufficient pressure for creole formation to be triggered.
4. At least two generations to ensure that creolisation can take place and establish itself in a community (even with abrupt creolisation).

The relative isolation from English settlers/administrators, which was necessary for creolisation, should be stressed. This helps to account for the comparative lack of divergence between Barbadian and more standard forms of English and contrariwise the distance from other forms of English which characterises creoles in Jamaica, Suriname (former Dutch Guiana) and even smaller Caribbean islands like St Kitts (Parkvall 1998).

Barbados is conventionally regarded as a Caribbean island which has a ‘less creolized dialect than most islands’ (Reinecke in Schneider 1990: 103). Winford (2000) terms it an ‘intermediate’ creole: ‘It is the result of creative adaptation and restructuring and not just a replica of a superstrate dialect or a decreolised version of a basilect’ (Winford 2000: 216). He sees it as lying between what he terms ‘indigenized’ varieties, like Irish English and African American English, and basilectal Caribbean English creole, e.g. Jamaican creole.

What is a matter of debate is whether the situation on Barbados is the result of decreolisation or whether a creole never developed in the first place, due to the specific social and geographical conditions on the island. Hancock (1980) is of the opinion that Barbadian English was always a local metropolitan rather than a creolised variety of English and that it was spoken by both blacks and whites. Rickford and Handler (1994) represent a different standpoint: they conclude

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5 Suriname was first populated with a hundred men sent in 1651 by the governor of Barbados because of overcrowding on the island. It later became Dutch Guiana but even then the Dutch used the English creole in their dealings with slaves (Holm 1994: 340).

6 Winford would appear to be using this term to refer to English which has been adopted by an indigenous population in a country or a non-English population moved to an anglophone country as with the African slaves.
from the historical texts they examined and from older speakers, whose language they investigated, that Barbadian English was indeed a full creole previously.

Bickerton is of the opinion (1992: 312f.) that a creole can arise and spread very quickly indeed. He cites the example of ‘Creole slaves’ on Barbados – slaves born in the New World and without an allegiance to an African regional background – whose social position was much higher than that of the ‘new Negroes’ – those slaves who did maintain allegiance to an African regional grouping on Barbados. Now while historical documentation for Barbados and other locations with slavery may allow one to recognise such a privileged group within the slave community, it is impossible to determine what their language was like. Bickerton assumes that the ‘Creole slaves’ were speakers of a creole and that their socially higher position in the black community meant that their language was imitated eagerly and hence spread very quickly.

When presenting the case for one interpretation or the other, authors mention that in the seventeenth century during the formative period of English on Barbados, the blacks were outnumbered by the whites, at least for the initial decades of settlement (Schneider 1990: 104). In addition to this the small size of the island with its absence of isolated plantations with blacks (Holm 1994: 334) meant that the social setting for creolisation was missing, in strong contrast to Jamaica, for example. Schneider (1990: 104) is of the opinion that Barbadian English deserves to be labelled a creole, going on the features which he examined in his investigation of Caribbean English. For the current study this question is not of direct relevance. What is important is that Barbados has a clear habitual category, expressed by \( \text{do} + \text{be} \) (Alleyne 1980: 214; Burrowes and Allsopp 1983: 42) and that this island was repeatedly the source of internal Caribbean migration, also providing settlers for the south-east coast of the United States and feeding into later Gullah. Holm stresses that the transportation of English around the Caribbean (Holm 1986a) entailed the spread of Creole (his capital letter) on the part of the slaves who the whites took with them (Holm 1994: 335).

However, in the case of Barbados it was the indentured servants who left the island. To understand this one must grasp the situation on the island in the seventeenth century. For the first two decades of its settlement, until approximately 1650, the island was populated by regional speakers from the British Isles including a sizeable proportion of Irish indentured servants or deportees after Cromwell’s campaigns in Ireland. The switch from tobacco to the more profitable sugar crop in the 1640s meant that African slaves were imported to work under conditions which the whites found too difficult. Sugar plantations came to be established and the poor whites were pushed out by richer whites who bought up the land and used African slaves for the sugar crop. The latter were more suited to the harsh climatic conditions as they could tolerate the heat more than the Europeans. The displaced white servants chose to leave the island and settle at other anglophone locations in the Caribbean area, chiefly in Jamaica, in Suriname and, to the north of the Caribbean, in South Carolina. It is likely
that dialect mixing among the whites had occurred in the first decades after the initial settlement of Barbados and that this regional mixture (which may have contained an habitual aspect expressed by *do + be*) was carried to other locations. The arguments for and against this position are laid out in detail below.

4 Linguistic levels and Caribbean English

The present section is devoted to a consideration of various linguistic levels, for each of which the relative merits of the dialect retention and creolisation views are weighed up. In most cases the discussion is furthermore concerned with the arguments for a particular source within the British Isles for observed features in varieties of Caribbean English.

4.1 Phonology

The survival of possible phonological features from early dialect input is often viewed negatively. For instance, Wells (1980, 1983) is sceptical about the continued existence of phonological features from seventeenth-century Irish input in the English of Montserrat (Rickford 1986: 254, quoting Dunn 1972) which, after Barbados, was the main island of the Caribbean with significant Irish input.

A somewhat different situation obtains with other authors who have considered the phonology of English in the Caribbean. First and foremost John Harris has considered possible parallels resulting from historical input in this context. Two features in particular have been examined here. The first is the realisation of /ʌ/ in the *strut* lexical set, the second is the palatalisation of velars before short /a/ in the *trap* lexical set. The /ʌ/ vowel shows considerable variation in the anglophone world depending on the degree of rounding and height which the vowel still has, assuming a high round back vowel /u/ as the historical input before the lowering and unrounding in the south of England in the seventeenth century set in. Harris (1990, 1996) considers the possibility that the retracted and somewhat rounded realisation of the vowel in the *strut* class in Ireland is connected historically with similar realisations in Caribbean English. This is difficult to demonstrate conclusively, as he states, given that the range of realisations in Ireland itself is considerable, from [u] in the north to [ʊ] in Dublin to [ʌ] in the rural south. A rounded variant of the latter, [ɔ], is the variant which Harris sees as surviving in the Caribbean. Harris also points out that similar variants are to be found in forms of West African English where there was no Irish English input.

The second feature of Caribbean English phonology which Harris deals with is the realisation of velars with a following palatal glide before vowels of the *trap* class. This feature is on much more solid ground because it has a clear realisation in northern parts of Ireland and has been confirmed conclusively in the recordings for *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (see Hickey, this volume, chapter 3, for more
information) as seen in pronunciations like *cap* [kjæp] and *gap* [gjæp]. It is also recorded for forms of mainland English in the eighteenth century (its rise antedating these attestations) – this is according to Harris the original source of the feature – and of course it is recorded in forms of Caribbean English (Holm 1994: 370; see also Holm 1993: 324f.). Harris’ contention is that this palatalisation was carried to the Caribbean in forms of English, both Irish English and mainland English, during the early anglophone settlement of the seventeenth century and was later lost in mainland English, surviving in the British Isles only in forms of Northern Irish English.

Among the creole features of Caribbean English phonology the lack of interdental fricatives is worthy of mention. The words of the *THINK* and *THIS* lexical sets have generally /t/ and /d/ respectively. One interpretation of this situation is that the removal of marked elements (here: interdental fricatives) was the force operative in the rise and use of stops in Caribbean English. While this would seem to apply to creoles in general (Pacific creoles also share the stop realisation in the *THINK* and *THIS* lexical sets), many regional British inputs to the Caribbean would have had stops anyway. Certainly east coast Irish English would have had stops here (alveolar stops rather than dental stops, going on the distribution of these segments in present-day varieties as attested in *A Sound Atlas of Irish English*). One should be careful, however, in trying to link such phenomena in regional forms of British English to Caribbean English (and here the present author shares the scepticism of Wells 1980). The fortition of interdental fricatives is a widely attested phenomenon as is, for instance, the reduction of word-final consonant clusters, as in *desk* [des]. Here, as with many of the features of the varieties considered in this volume, the more general and widespread the phenomenon, the less indicative it can be considered of historical continuity between settler English and later forms of English at the overseas locations. And, of course, the nonexistence of interdental fricatives in West African languages is in itself reason enough not to expect these fricatives to surface in vernacular forms of Caribbean English.

In some cases the varieties of English in the Caribbean can be useful in a reverse direction, i.e. in helping to determine what earlier forms of mainland English were like. A case in point concerns the shift and/or merger of /w/ and /v/ which is treated in detail in Trudgill et al. (2004). The authors note that this shift/merger is the subject of much comment and literary portraiture in the late modern period but that it is no longer found anywhere in forms of British English. However, there are locations in the Caribbean, such as the Bahamas, where a bilabial approximant [β] is found for both /w/ and /v/ in words like *wet* and *vet*. It is also found in Gullah, which was settled from Barbados, the Leewards and Jamaica, and in Guyana (John Rickford, personal communication). The conclusion which Trudgill et al. draw from eleven different varieties with this bilabial segment which they investigated is that it existed in South-Eastern British English in the

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7 The vowel in Caribbean varieties would be [a]. There would have been no support for [æ] in the West African input (see Batibo 2000: 142 on the rarity of [æ] in African languages).
English dialect input to the Caribbean

early modern period, was transported to various overseas locations, including some in the Caribbean, and was later replaced, due to a reversal of the merger, by [w] and [v] in words containing /w/ and /v/ respectively.

It should be mentioned that not all scholars in the field agree on the dialect input hypothesis for the /w/–/v/ merger. For instance, Holm (1980) argues strongly that the /v/–/w/ confusion in Black Bahamian English is the result of African influence. This is also an origin countenanced for the West Indies as a whole by Wells, who writes ‘it is not clear whether this phenomenon . . . arose independently in the West Indies through the influence of an African substratum lacking /v/’ (1982: 568).

The retention of features not present any more in standard British English can also be seen among vowels in Caribbean English. As Holm (1994: 356) notes the /ai/ pronunciation in the choice lexical set, cf. bail ‘boil’, jain ‘join’ in Miskito Coast, is a remnant of a pre-1800 British (and indeed Irish) English pronunciation which has since been superseded in standard English.

The phonological restructuring of Caribbean English to conform with the simply CV template typical of creoles is widely attested, particularly in Jamaican English and in Sranan, e.g. by cluster simplification initially or finally, cf. Sranan tan from stand. To maintain sequences of CV+CV a vowel may be added finally to a word triggering resyllabification of the former coda consonant, e.g. Sranan dagu ‘dog’ (Holm 1994: 364).

4.2 Morphology

Although the most commonly assumed indicators of creoleness are frequently syntactic, many of the Caribbean islands show distinctive pronominal traits which can be used as a yardstick for assessing creole status, as Schneider (1990: 104f.) rightly points out. A reduction in distinctions for different grammatical categories is a good indication, for instance the use of one form for subject, object and possessive forms as in Barbadian English. The lack of a gender distinction may also be indicative of creole status (ibid.) but this can be reinstated in later decreolisation. Lack of number inflection (on nouns, not pronouns) is also a characteristic of conservative Barbadian English.

Forms of Caribbean English are noted for a reanalysis of morpheme boundaries or an inability to recognise existing boundaries in English words. This has led to forms like to marid ‘to marry’, to fishin ‘to fish’ where the past tense or continuous form was interpreted as a monomorphemic stem (Holm 1994: 361). Such formations are not generally found in regional English, certainly not for those varieties which represent an historical continuity of original forms of English in Britain. The English which resulted from the language shift from Irish (or other Celtic languages in Britain for that matter) may have shown a similar failure to recognise morpheme boundaries at earlier stages, but nothing like this is attested.

Clear parallels between input forms of English and later Caribbean English can be seen when one considers cases where morphological distinctions were introduced. Perhaps the best-known instance of this is the introduction of a special
form for the second-person-plural pronoun. Standard English is unusual in that it now does not distinguish number for the second person in the pronominal paradigm. However, most nonstandard varieties of English do make such a distinction, the actual realisations varying greatly across varieties (Hickey 2003a). Some well-established means of achieving this are listed in table 12.2.

The presence of (w)unu or some such similar form (Holm 2000: 222–6), as is widely found in the Caribbean, is not necessarily an indication of previous creolisation but simply of a transfer from the West Atlantic substrate Bantu languages (Williamson and Blench 2000) despite the assertion of Alleyne (1980: 214). The use of this pronominal form fills a gap in the system of more standard forms of English and in this respect the Caribbean forms of English have done just what so many other dialects of English also did in their different ways (Hickey 2003a).

There is another reason why the presence of (w)unu should not be regarded as an indicator of creolisation. This form introduces a distinction into the pronominal system of those varieties which use it. The other morphological features of creoles, the lack of case, number and gender distinctions, which occur in various combinations, are reductions in the grammatical system. However, it is quite problematical, and contested by many scholars in the field, to regard simplifications as indications of creolisation or conversely to ignore complications in creoles vis-à-vis lexifier languages. The relation of the creole copula to the following syntactic environment represents a complication of the grammatical system (John Holm, personal communication) as do the transitive markers in Pacific varieties (not present in English) and the different forms for the locative/existential and equative copulas in the Atlantic English creoles (Magnus Huber, personal communication).

### 4.3 Syntax

It is true to say that the syntax of Atlantic creoles shows great similarities and conforms to a given typological profile\(^8\) which can be labelled ‘prespecifying’.

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\(^8\) John Holm points out that it has become very controversial to talk of a single typological profile for a group of creoles.
Markers of grammatical categories such as number with nouns or tense and aspect with verbs show a significant tendency to come before the elements they qualify. Sometimes superstrate input can provide the exponence for prespecification as with the demonstrative *them* [dɛm] which is used as a plural marker in many forms of Caribbean English.

There are other features which might be regarded as indicators of creoles. For instance, the absence of a copula in equative sentences is such a feature (see Kautzsch 2002: 89–155 for a detailed discussion of this phenomenon in African American English). Generally, it is assumed that superstrate input from the British Isles did not have such copula deletion. However, such assumptions are often based on inadequate data from dialects in the source regions. For instance, a collection of conservative forms of English in the south-east of Ireland (an area already settled in the late Middle Ages) reveals many instances of verb deletion which in some cases involve the copula (see third example). The following instances are from recordings of Waterford English made by the present author: WR8: *There Ø [is] no hurry on you. You Ø [have] time enough.* WR37: *Another woman, what Ø [is] her name?* Such attestations, and more which could be given if relevant data was considered, would require that statements to the effect that copula deletion does not occur in British dialects (Rickford 1998: 187) would need to be relativised, if only partially. It is true, as John Rickford (personal communication) points out, that frequency and conditioning are of central importance and that the patterns found in the Caribbean have no equivalents in the British Isles.

4.3.1 Tense and aspect systems. Of all areas of creole syntax that which has been the object of greatest attention is the tense and aspect subsystem of verbal grammar. Creoles tend to show formal marking of certain aspectual distinctions, notably the perfective and the habitual. What is remarkable here is that in general creoles are sparing in morphosyntactic marking of grammatical categories, so it is all the more remarkable that they should do so in the area of aspect. Furthermore, the means for marking aspect stem as a rule from superstrate sources, usually with a semantic justification for the choice of markers. An example of this is completive *don* in Caribbean English. It is semantically consistent with the meaning of *do* to use it to express that an action has been completed. In addition, one should note that many dialects of English, e.g. virtually all vernacular forms of Irish English, have only one form of *do* in the past, namely *done*, e.g. *He done all the work for her*. The verb *do* was also co-opted to serve as a marker of the habitual, at least in most forms of creole English in the Caribbean, cf. the preverbal *does* of Barbadian speech (Burrowes and Allsopp 1983: 42).

Before beginning the discussion of habitual aspect in Caribbean English a few remarks are called for on the general structure of verbal grammar in creoles. Romaine (1994: 595ff.), partly summarising views of Bickerton, notes a number of similarities in this area and a list of these would look something like the following:
1. The simplest form of the verb without any markers refers to time in focus.
2. Each creole tends to have three markers: one to mark anterior tense (simple past for states and past before past for actions), one to mark irrealis mood (future and conditional) and one to mark nonpunctual aspect (progressive and habitual). In Hawai‘i Creole English, for instance, the markers are bin (anterior), go (irrealis), ste (nonpunctual).
3. Where there is more than one particle accompanying a verb, the particles always have a fixed order before the verb: tense–mood–aspect (though not all present in any particular combination), e.g. Sranan: me be sa e go ‘I would have been going.’

The tense distinctions of creole verbal systems are based on a binary or at most tertiary system: (1) time in focus, (2) time anterior to this, (3) time beyond that in focus, this being a future or conditional. Aspectual distinctions are also either binary or tertiary: (1) an imperfective, nonpunctual mode, (2) a perfective, e.g. with completive done, (3) an habitual, e.g. with does/do + be. The last of these distinctions may encompass both progressive and habitual. Perfective aspect in dialect input varieties of English to the Caribbean may have been expressed by word order, as in Irish English with OV word order, e.g. He has the work done ‘He has completed the work.’ But even if this model was available (see Filppula 2002 for a discussion of this structure in English), it was the functionalisation of done as a marker of the perfective which is remarkable for those varieties with this aspectual distinction. Preverbal done is, of course, in keeping with the prespecifying nature of creole syntax; the use of a contrastive OV word order is not.

4.3.2 The unanswered question: habitual marking. The habitual exists as a grammatical category which may or may not have overt marking in a variety of English. The semantic concept of habituality refers to an action which is repeated for a length of time at certain intervals which are regarded as sufficiently regular for the action to be referred to in a holistic manner (if the repeated action is punctual in nature then one is dealing with iterative aspect). In mainstream varieties of English habituality is expressed by the simple present as is obvious from sentences like The government introduces its budget in the spring; He lectures on Thursday morning. For these varieties the habitual aspect is expressed by an implicit contrast with the progressive form. For other varieties of English there exists a special marking of the habitual. Basically there are four means employed in the arena of anglophone varieties for the present–tense habitual (the habitual past is normally lexicalised, i.e. the verb used to is employed).

1. Suffixal –s on the verb stem, e.g. I meets my sister on a Friday afternoon.
2. Suffixal –s on be with the lexical verb in the progressive form, e.g. He bees working at the weekends. There may be varieties, e.g. AAE, where the be form is not inflected.
3. Suffixal -s on do with be and the lexical verb in the progressive form, e.g. He does be buying and selling old cars. In some varieties, e.g. South-West British English (see discussion below), the be does not have to occur.

4. Suffixal -s on do alone followed by the lexical verb. The inflected verb form may be invariant does, as in Barbadian English.

The use of suffixal -s implies that the variety in question shows inflectional marking on present-tense verb stems. But this need not be the case, without the habitual losing its character as a formally marked category, i.e. He be working at the weekends would be an equally genuine case of a formally marked habitual.

For type 1 the absence of marking would mean syncretism with the mainstream present and hence it is difficult to maintain that such a variety has a formally manifest habitual in the first place. Type 3 can also show a lack of inflection, as in She do be worrying about the children. In addition type 3 always shows a lack of stress on the form of do which is used. The lack of stress was probably an historical feature of the use of do with present-tense verbs and later the stressed form came to be used for emphasis, a usage which has been maintained in mainstream varieties. Furthermore, the unstressed do normally shows a reduction in the vowel to a shwa, as is evident in the current use of this verb for habituality in south-east Ireland: [ʃi думал у рідоля . . .] (Hickey 2001). There is no pause or intonational drop between the do and be so that the former has the character of a proclitic on be indicating habituality. What appears to be a phonetic detail about a minor variety of English is in fact of relevance in principle for the development of habitual marking in the New World. The reason is that there is a conflict between anglophone varieties of the Caribbean and AAE in that the former show habitual marking with some form of do and the latter only with uninflected be (Labov 1998: 121); Rickford (1980) seeks to show that a bridge may have been through Gullah. The cliticisation of do on be could historically be a stage on the path to the loss of do entirely, but there must have been a restructuring stage in which the inflection from do was transferred to be (if this is marked).

4.3.3 Possible transatlantic connections. To begin the discussion in this section it would seem appropriate to consider the major article in the field, the study by John Rickford of New World forms of the habitual (Rickford 1986) and the comparison with those in the British Isles both in South-West British English and in Irish English. Rickford is furthermore concerned with the possible diffusion of (does) be as an aspectual marker from Irish English to African American English in the United States. He devotes a large portion of the article to determining how extensive and of what nature the contact between the Irish and African American populations of America was, beginning, however, with the Caribbean (Barbados, Montserrat and to a lesser extent St Kitts) where there is an historically attested Irish influence due to the Cromwellian deportations in the mid seventeenth century. Rickford also points out that there was considerable contact between Irish indentured servants and African slaves. He continues his
outline of demographical developments by sketching the emigration to America at a later stage (a shift northwards took place in the eighteenth century with the switch from earlier deportation to later immigration). The linguistic analysis in this paper sets in with a consideration of habitual aspect marking in AAE and Irish English. Rickford then looks at periphrastic do, a common feature of south-western varieties of English, and suggests that this too could have diffused from the speech of the many immigrants from this part of England into the Caribbean area.

A similar study is that by Donald Winford (see Winford 2000) in which he takes a close look at superstrate antecedents of aspectual marking in Caribbean English, specifically in mainstream Barbadian English which he regards as an intermediate variety independent of basilectal English on Barbados and not deriving historically from the latter via decreolisation. Winford (2000: 228f.) initially favours South-West British English as the source of the Barbadian English structures involving forms of do, viz. does for the habitual, did for the relative past and done for the perfective (completive) aspect. The thrust of his investigation of Barbadian English is that does in this variety represents a case of reanalysis of a superstrate form under contact-induced change. My assumption here is that Africans acquiring approximations of the settler dialects in 17th century Barbados re-interpreted does as a Habitual marker on the model of the Present Habitual categories in their native languages. The evidence available to us indicates that most of the likely substrate languages introduced to Barbados in the 17th to 18th centuries had a distinct Habitual category. (Winford 2000: 231)

Later in the same article he maintains that the Irish English input was significant on Barbados. The reason for considering the latter is that Barbadian English favours the use of invariant does, rather than uninflected do, as well as the co-occurrence of does with be. Both these features are not characteristic of present-day South-West British English nor do they seem to have been, at least for the nineteenth century, as attested in the study by Elworthy (1877).

It is unfortunate that despite the quality of Winford’s study, his information on Irish English is inaccurate, deriving from second-hand sources such as Klemola (1996), who is unreliable when it comes to Irish English, and Curme (1931) which is quite unsuitable for the discussion. Winford (2000: 232) quotes both of these authors to show that Irish English has a tendency to generalise does to all subjects and links this up to the similar pattern in Caribbean creoles. However, there is no evidence of this in Irish English. Perhaps the claim derives from a misunderstanding of the use of suffixal -s with the first person singular for aspctual purposes (see above) or its use in the third person plural as part of a variable subject concord rule. But even this only applies to lexical verbs. In addition, South-East Irish English tends to use do /də/ + be to express the habitual, this do probably being an inherited form from the south-western English
settlers in this part of Ireland. I will return to the question of inflected *does* in Barbadian English below.

4.3.4 The rise of uninflected *be* in African American English. Although most forms of mesolectal creole English in the Caribbean (except Jamaican English) have *does* /dəz/ as the expression of habitual aspect, it is a notable feature of AAE that this does not occur, but it is found in Gullah (Rickford 1986: 260). This fact is a major difference between the latter variety and the speech of other African Americans and may offer support for the view that Gullah is an imported creole from the Caribbean which developed independently of African American English of the southern United States.

The concern in this section is with the use of uninflected *be* in AAE and its possible historical source. Sentences illustrating its current use would be: *I think those buses be blue, The children be at school when I get home, They be done left when I get there* (Green 1998: 39, 2002: 47–54). There are essentially three views on the rise of uninflected *be* to express habituality in New World varieties of English:

1. It arose in Caribbean English, carried to the south of the later United States through deletion of an unstressed, proclitic *do* (Rickford 1986: 265), which left the bare *be* to express habituality (Rickford 1980). In Bahamian English this intermediary stage is attested (Holm 1994: 375). An essential difficulty with this interpretation is that it requires that uninflected proclitic *do* was dropped and inflection introduced for those varieties which use *bees*, i.e. an inflected form of *be*.

2. It is an inherited habitual marker from Ulster Scots English which was passed on to AAE in its early stages due to the large number of northern Irish immigrants in the eighteenth century, especially with those in South Carolina. There may be evidence for a continuation of northern English /Scots *beon* ‘to be’ from the north Anglian variety of Old English, Scots, with habitual meaning9 which was transported to the United States via Ulster (Traugott 1972: 177ff., 190f.). Rickford (1986) further maintains that the use of *be* in AAE and *does be* in Caribbean creoles may well reflect a differential influence of northern Irish English on the former and southern Irish English on the latter. However, the question of contact between Irish and African Americans in the later United States is unresolved, particularly as the former settled further inland (the eighteenth-century Ulster Scots moved through western Pennsylvania to the Appalachian and Piedmont areas) whereas the African Americans were to be found on the Atlantic seaboard.

3. The use of uninflected *be* (as above) is an innovation in nineteenth-century AAE as it is not attested in the documents for Ulster English which are extant before this date (Montgomery and Kirk 1996: 318f.). This view assumes that

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9 Michael Montgomery maintains that there is no convincing evidence that *be* is, or was, habitual in Scotland and he points out that the many citations of inflected *be* in the *Scottish National Dictionary* and other sources cover a wide range of semantic categories.
if habitual *be* did in fact already exist in early Ulster English then it would be attested somewhere. This leaves one with a shared nineteenth-century innovation – habitual *be* (uninflected in AAE, inflected in Ulster English) – between two varieties which showed some contact historically, but little if any settlement overlap. This innovation is incidentally not found anywhere else between two varieties of English. The argument of Montgomery and Kirk is reinforced by the fact that habitual *be* does not occur in present-day or historical forms of Appalachian English where influence from Ulster was considerable (Montgomery 2001: 136). A minor but not irrelevant point is that the investigation by Montgomery and Kirk (1996) is of emigrant letters in Ulster English and present-day material outside the core areas of Ulster Scots settlement in northern Ireland. Montgomery (personal communication) is of the opinion that habitual *be* was borrowed from Ulster English into Ulster Scots.10

The last view is the most recent and it throws doubt on many of the postulations concerning the historical continuity of habitual forms in New World English. If Montgomery and Kirk (1996: 331) are right in their rejection of a link between AAE *be* and regional British/Irish English, then a similar question must be asked about the link between the *do/does + be* habitual, derivatives of which are found in the Caribbean, and Southern Irish English. The attestations of this type of habitual are now considered in the light of corpus texts from the history of Irish English.

4.3.5 The corpus evidence. The essential question here is whether one can find enough reliable evidence to decide conclusively on an historical link between the occurrence of the habitual in Caribbean English and in regional forms of English in the British Isles. The two major varieties which to this day show a formally marked habitual are (i) South-West British English11 and (ii) Irish English (various forms). English in the south of Ireland generally favours the *do/does + be* habitual. This is somewhat similar to the position in the south-west of England, but here an uninflected *do* is used with a lexical verb and does not require *be*. Two sentences to illustrate the main difference would be: *He does be fishing a lot* (Southern Irish English) versus *He do fish a lot* (South-West British English). This difference is significant because for Barbadian English and Bequia (Williams 1988: 263) as well as for the Trinidadian variety (Harris 1986: 183) it is

10 ‘Ulster English’ is a term used to refer to varieties spoken by those people in northern Ireland whose ancestors were settlers from northern England rather than from western Scotland (the main source of Ulster Scots).

11 Wright (1905: 297) notes that periphrastic *do* is in general use in the south-western dialects of British English. Klemola (1996: 45) offers a reassessment of the distribution of periphrastic *do* on the basis of the *Survey of English Dialects* fieldworker notebooks. This shows that it covers the entire south-west (including the surroundings of Bristol), but not Devon and east Cornwall (a gap in this distribution).
the *do + be* model which applies. The situation is by no means clear cut and in mesolectal varieties *do + be* constructions are also common (Harris 1986: 191).

To come closer to an answer to the current question concerning the origin of New World habitual marking, the present author consulted an electronic corpus which contains attestations of Irish English from the early modern period. There is a certain body of texts exhibiting Irish English which date back to the late sixteenth century. These are contained in the collection originally presented by Bliss (1979) and are now available in an electronically expanded and revised form in *A Corpus of Irish English* (Hickey 2003b).

The most prominent of the authors who wrote such texts is undoubtedly Shakespeare who has the Irishman Captain Macmorris speak with a putative Irish accent in the ‘Four Nations Scene’ in *Henry V*. The other English authors who wrote pieces with stretches of Irish speech are Thomas Dekker (?1570–1632), Ben Jonson (1573–1637), Thomas Randolph (1605–35), Thomas Shadwell (?1642–92) and John Durant Breval (c. 1680–1738). The imitation of Irish English by non-Irish authors seems to be largely restricted to broad renderings of pronunciation in eye dialect and perhaps the occasional use of an Irish word in the texts.

Among the attributable prose fragments by an Irish author from the seventeenth century is *The Siege of Ballyally Castle* (1642) by one Maurice Cuffe. But this piece is descriptive and unlikely to have attestations of the habitual, given its textual structure. The earliest play which contains a large stretch (its seventh scene) in what was putatively Irish English is *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1605). The author is unknown but the assumption that he was English may be justified as the main character of the play is one who defended Dundalk during its siege by the native Irish in 1566. In addition to these texts there are various macaronic items with Irish and English but these are again unlikely to contain any instances of an habitual given their narrative structure.

Two small pieces from the seventeenth century are by Irish authors: *Hic et Ubique* (1663), a short dramatic interlude by Richard Head (1637–86), and *Ireland Preserved, or the Siege of Londonderry* (1705) by John Michelbourne (1646–1721). The latter author is the more important of the two as he appears to have spent his life in Ireland (which Richard Head did not) and died in Derry. The piece mentioned here, *Ireland Preserved*, contains a number of syntactic features of Irish English, notably the immediate perfective (in a future sense) as in *I’ll bee after telling dee de Raison*. The lack of an habitual in this piece is thus a setback in the search for an early attestation of this syntactic feature of later Irish English.

Eighteenth-century literary documents become increasingly uninteresting to the linguist as the language in plays by such writers as William Congreve (1670–1729), George Farquhar (1678–1707), Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74) or Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816) is far too standard to show such vernacular features as an habitual even if this had existed then.

The upshot of these considerations is that despite the number of extracts and short texts in Irish English which exist from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth century, only one or two would fulfill the criteria for reliable attestations of the
syntax of Irish English at the beginning of the early modern period and these do
not contain any occurrence of the later habitual structure with \textit{does/do + be}.

The period when attestations of this structure begin to appear in abundance is
the mid nineteenth century. The first writer to make frequent use of this form of
the habitual is the playwright Dion Boucicault (1820–90), as in these examples:

Sure he does be always telling me my heart is too near my mouth (\textit{The Shaughraun}, 1875)

I do be afraid to go near some girls for fear of spoilin’ their new and beautiful
clothes (\textit{Arrah na Pogue}, 1864)

Later notable literary figures followed suit, above all Lady Augusta Gregory
(1852–1932), John Millington Synge (1871–1909) and Sean O’Casey (1884–
1964). In the plays of these authors there are hundreds of attestations like \textit{I do be on
the watch every night} (O’Casey, \textit{Shadow of a Gunman}). This situation is all the more
surprising as several prose authors of the early nineteenth century do not have
any sentences with \textit{does/do + be} despite their representation of Irish English in
narrative stretches of their texts. Three authors in particular are noted as reliable
observers of the native Irish in their manners and customs and who attempt to
represent the speech of these people in their writings: Maria Edgeworth (1767–
1849) author of \textit{Castle Rackrent} (1801), William Carleton (1794–1869) author of
\textit{Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry} (5 vols., Dublin, 1830–3), the brothers
John (1798–1842) and Michael Banim (1796–1874), authors of \textit{Tales of the O’Hara
Family} (6 vols., 1825–6).\footnote{When considering the literary documents one should stress that these come from different parts of Ireland: William Carleton was from Ulster in the north, Maria Edgeworth from Co. Longford (north Leinster), the Banim brothers from Kilkenny in the east/south-east and Dion Boucicault was a Dubliner as was Sean O’Casey.} Going on literary attestation, with careful electronic
retrieval (these texts are all in \textit{A Corpus of Irish English}), a picture emerges in
which the habitual with \textit{does/do + be} in Irish English is a new structure arising
in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.\footnote{Note that the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary} (version 3.0 on CD-ROM) is unfortunately of no assistance in searching for early attestations of the habitual as it does not record any (though it does mention the prefecutive use of \textit{done} briefly in the entry for \textit{do}).}

This picture, dictated by literary attestation, poses several difficulties. Assuming
that the writers just quoted are reliable portrayers of Irish peasant speech,
one is forced to assume that the appearance of the \textit{does/do + be} habitual is located
towards the end of the language shift period. Recall that this began in earnest in
the seventeenth century with the widespread plantation of Ireland, both north
and south, with speakers of English and the general reorientation of the Irish-
speaking population towards the increasingly more important English language.
But if the motivation for the rise of the \textit{does/do + be} habitual lies in the desire on
the part of Irish speakers to gain an equivalent in English to the habitual in Irish
(Hickey 1997) then why did this not occur in the seventeenth century when the
language shift had really got under way? There are two possible answers to this.
First, the literary attestations are misleading because they do not represent the
does/do + be habitual in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although this existed in the speech of the Irish. But it is extremely unlikely that a structure could exist for two centuries in a variety and not be recorded anywhere, especially in texts specifically intended to represent this nonstandard variety. Second, the account of the rise of the habitual as a search for categorial equivalence on the part of the Irish learning English is incorrect and this structure arose spontaneously in the first half of the nineteenth century, finding its way into literary representations by the 1860s.

If the second is the more likely of the two explanations, then how should this have occurred? The answer would seem to lie in an extension which happened in Irish English in the early nineteenth century. To explain this, observe the fact that in *Castle Rackrent* (1801) by Maria Edgeworth (this regional novel is contained in *A Corpus of Irish English*) there are no does/do + be habitual sentences, but the structure do + be does indeed occur. Consider the following attestations:

(1) Ah, don’t be being jealous of that, (says she) I didn’t hear a sentence . . .
(2) . . . that’s a great shame, but don’t be telling Jason what I say.\(^{14}\)
(3) . . . (says I) don’t be trusting to him, Judy
(4) Nay don’t be denying it, Judy, for I think the better of ye for it . . . (*Castle Rackrent*, 1801).

The occurrence of the continuous with the (negative) imperative in Irish English was and is quite typical. Its source would seem to lie in Irish where the habitual verb form b´ı ‘be’ is always used in the imperative; the nonhabitual tá ‘is’ only occurs in the indicative. The habitual in Irish requires a continuous form of the lexical verb it governs. Examples of its use are the following: (1) Ná bí ag déanamh imrí[not be-HABITUAL-YOU(pl) at doing worry] ‘don’t worry’; (2) Ná bí ag labhairt mar sin [not be-HABITUAL-YOU(sg) at speaking like that] ‘don’t talk like that’. One must now revise the statements made about the does/do + be habitual: there are no occurrences of this in the indicative before the middle of the nineteenth century, but many of it in the imperative. The language change which lies behind the attestations at this crucial period could very well be an extension of the (negative) imperative habitual to the indicative (this is what one then recognises as the does/do + be habitual of later Irish English): (1) *Don’t be worrying about the children* ([negative] habitual imperative) > (2) *She does be worrying about the children* (habitual indicative).

With authors of the mid nineteenth century and later, like Dion Boucicault, one finds the habitual in both imperative and indicative uses. A few examples of the former from Boucicault’s plays are the following:

(1) Nora Kavinagh, don’t be provokin’ that boy before he’s able for ye.
(2) Don’t be showin’ the sorrow in your breast . . .
(3) . . . and don’t be showin’ her the rags of your heart. (*Arrah na Pogue*, 1864)
(4) But don’t ye be after forgettin’ your pretty girl (*The Colleen Bawn*, 1860)

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\(^{14}\) John Holm (personal communication) points out that such structures are typical of present-day AAE but not of general US American usage.
The extension postulated here gains additional credence from a further extension which occurred with the habitual. Consider the following three sentences which show the outset of this chain of developments and the two extensions which are attested in present-day Irish English:

1. *Don’t be worrying about the children.* [negative] habitual imperative >
2. *She does be worrying about the children.* habitual indicative >
3. *His uncle does be a hard worker.* character trait

The step from (2) to (3) is a typical case of metaphorical extension. A person who is always working hard is regarded as a hard worker: formally the habitual comes to be used to express a characteristic of an individual (sentence (3) is an actual attestation from the Waterford recordings by the present author).

If this explanation for the relatively sudden appearance of the *does/do + be* habitual in nineteenth-century Irish English is accepted, then certain developments can be linked to it. Montgomery and Kirk (1996) are puzzled by the fact that the typical habitual of Northern Irish English, i.e. inflected *be /biz/,* is not attested before the early nineteenth century. They note that the Irish scholar O’Donovan in his *A Grammar of the Irish language* (1845) incidentally mentions the attempts of the Irish to produce an equivalent to the habitual of Irish (his consuetudinal present): ‘The Irish attempt to introduce this tense even into English, as “he bees”, “he does be”, &c.’ (O’Donovan 1845: 151, quoted in Montgomery and Kirk 1996). There are a number of interesting facts here. The first is that O’Donovan associates the habitual with Irish speakers and the second that he had done this already by 1845.15

So perhaps the use of the *does/do + be* habitual goes back as far as the beginning of the nineteenth century, but had not established itself throughout the entire country to have reached the areas where the characters of the prose works of Edgeworth, Carleton and the Banim brothers stemmed from (this is a minor issue of exact dating). The third fact is that O’Donovan explicitly mentions *bees* as an optional equivalent to the habitual among the Irish. Unfortunately this statement is too short and imprecise to construe an interpretation of it as referring to Irish speakers using English or just any Irish people, including those in the north/north-east of the country for whom this form, *bees,* was probably that used to express the habitual, and still is to this day. This matter is all the more tantalising as O’Donovan was born in Co. Kilkenny in the east/south-east of Ireland (Boylan 1988: 288), an area where there is just a possibility that *bees* survived as an habitual marker from archaic forms of English; his home county was one of the first parts of Ireland to be settled by the English in the late medieval period. The lack of attestations for inflected *be* before the nineteenth century, which is the central theme of Montgomery and Kirk (1996), might on the other

15 The association of the *does/do + be* habitual with Irish speakers is given some justification by the geographical distribution of its acceptance today. As noted in Hickey, this volume, chapter 3, it rated highest among speakers from Co. Donegal, one of the counties with Irish-speaking districts to this day.
hand suggest that the Northern Irish English speakers began to use inflected be in this habitual sense on the model of the does/do + be habitual which had become established in other varieties of Irish English.

5 Conclusions

The assumption of clear lines of historical continuity which is implied in studies such as Rickford (1986) and Harris (1986) is seen upon closer examination, and above all on the examination of historical documents, to be somewhat hasty. The picture which emerges from the textual attestation of key varieties such as Irish English is not as conclusive as supporters of historical connections would like it to be. It is, however, difficult to say what conclusions should be drawn from this. On the one hand, there are clear structural parallels between input dialects and varieties of Caribbean English, but linking up the details of form and determining the precise historical movements of settlers proves to be an intractable task. Perhaps greater weight should be accorded to independent developments which, with obvious impetus from transported dialects, arose in the environment of the early anglophone Caribbean after the initial regional English input. To conclude, the possible scenarios for the development of habitual aspect, which have been central to this study, are listed below along with arguments against them and in their favour. The following scenarios are listed in this form to add clarity to the discussion of the developmental possibilities of the habitual in Barbadian English. Again, it should be stressed, of course, that convergence may well have occurred, i.e. that combinations of these accounts may have been operative.

Scenarios for the development of habitual does + be in Irish English

(1) Refunctionalisation of afunctional unstressed declarative do by Irish speakers shifting to English in a situation of uncontrolled second language learning (Hickey 1995, 1997). It can be assumed that this held for Irish English in the early seventeenth century as the language shift had already begun by then.

Pro: This type of reanalysis is typical of untutored second language acquisition (Schumann 1978; Andersen 1983). The does + be habitual shows greatest acceptance in Irish-speaking areas today as shown by *A Survey of Irish English Usage* (see Hickey, this volume, chapter 3).

Contra: There are no written attestations of the does + be habitual in Irish English before the mid nineteenth century.

(2) An extension of the use of do + be in the (negative) imperative of early nineteenth-century Irish English occurred. This extension led to the does + be habitual establishing itself quickly in the course of the nineteenth century (see detailed discussion above).

Pro: This scenario is in keeping with the attestations for Irish English for the nineteenth century, see section 4.3.5 above.
Contra: Such a scenario implies that Irish English played no part in the development of the habitual aspect on Barbados and so cannot contribute to accounting for inflected *does* and *does + be* in Barbadian English.

*Accounts for the rise of does and does + be in Barbadian English*

(1) The input for inflected *does* and the co-occurrence of *does + be* came from Irish English speakers.

Pro: This would account for its occurrence in Barbadian English and not require any further interpretation of the South-West British English input.

Contra: The two aspectual types are not attested in Irish English before the mid nineteenth century.

(2) Inflected *does* and *does + be* occurred in South-West British English input and may derive from a percentage of Irish English speakers among the early settlers from Britain (assuming with Beier 1985 that many of the Irish vagrants in England could have been transported as indentured servants).

Pro: This view helps to account for *does* and *does + be* in Barbadian English.

Contra: There is no historical evidence for this. Furthermore, the occurrence of uninflected *do + be* /dəˈbi/ in south-east Ireland (Hickey 2001) would suggest that this form of the habitual, imported there from south-western England at least as far back as before the seventeenth century, already existed in the British source by the beginning of the early modern period.

(3) Refunctionalisation of afunctional unstressed declarative *do* by Irish and/or nonfluent Irish English speakers occurred during the contact with English dialect speakers and African slaves in early anglophone Barbados (during the seventeenth century). This view would crucially depend on establishing objectively what percentage of Irish settlers on Barbados were Irish-speaking (Rickford 1986: 253).

Pro: This scenario is independent of the much later attestation of the *does + be* habitual in Ireland.

Contra: However, the scenario is entirely speculative as there is no evidence for it from Barbados.

(4) Inflected *does* and the co-occurrence of *does + be* arose independently on Barbados because of (i) substrate input from West African languages which had a habitual category and (ii) universals of the language-shift / creolisation process (Baker and Huber 2001) where aspectual distinctions are foregrounded, in this case by co-opting syntactic material available in superstrate English dialects on Barbados.

Pro: This account is entirely independent of British/Irish dialect input.

Contra: However, the account is entirely speculative and rests ultimately on whether linguists are convinced of the ability of such creative forces
in comparable language development situations to ‘usurp’ superstrate material and re-functionalise it for the expression of putatively universal categories, in this case of habitual aspect.

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