

**Jane Doe**

**Master's Thesis**

**The History, Formation, and Usage of Gullah and Miskito Coast Creole**

**Morgan State University**

**Spring 2016**

**Abstract** The History, Formation, and Usage of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah identify similarities, differences, usage, and history among two English-based Creoles in North and Central America. During an excursion to Nicaragua in April of 2014, the writer experienced many cultural and linguistic differences. Eager to learn about the language and culture of Nicaragua, the writer attended many events to familiarize herself with life in Central America. J.L. Dillard, Lorenzo D. Turner, and Derek Bickerton are American linguist that have studied languages ranging from Black English to Creole. Throughout their studies, they often found characteristics that represent what some call “Broken English”. While identifying that both languages have influences from other authentic languages such as Spanish and West African Pidgin English, the researcher determined that while each of these languages are English-based, that does not mean they both have the same characteristics in Syntax and Phonology.

English-Based Creoles:  
The History, Formation, and Usage of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah

By

Jane Doe

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Art  
English

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
May 2016

ENGLISH- BASED CREEOLS:  
THE HISTORY, FORMATION, AND USAGE OF MISKITO COAST CREEOLE AND  
GULLAH

by

Jane Dope

has been approved

May 2016

THESIS COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

---

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair

Dr. Milford Jeremiah, Ph.D.

---

Dr. Joy Myree-Mainor, Ph.D.

---

Dr. Elizabeth Gunn, Ph.D.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to thank her instructors, Dr. Milford Jeremiah, Dr. Joy Myree-Mainor, and Dr. Elizabeth Gunn for their unwavering support during her matriculation at the University and through the critical stages of this thesis. The author would also like to recognize the numerous family members and friends that provided unconditional love and support during her matriculation at Morgan State University.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables	v
Chapter One: Who, What, When, Where .....	1
Purpose.....	1
Need and Timeliness.....	3
Nicaragua .....	4
Delimitations.....	6
Limitations .....	6
Origin of English-Based Creoles .....	7
Method of Analysis.....	8
Summary of Chapters .....	11
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	14
Chapter Three: “I Speak Gullah, You Speak Miskito” .....	25
Morphology.....	31
Chapter Four: Analysis.....	39
Chapter Five: Phonology.....	43
Chapter Six: Syntax.....	46
Chapter Seven: Conclusion .....	48
References .....	50
Appendices .....	51

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLES</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
Table 5.1 Phonology	42
Table 6.1 Syntax	45

# **Chapter One**

## **Who, What, When, and Where**

### **Purpose**

This thesis represents a linguistic examination of two English-based Creole languages, comparing, and contrasting various vernaculars or dialects among Americans and Nicaraguans. These vernaculars are derived from the English subgroup which projects it as the primary language as the *lexifier*. The idea for the initial study developed from a two -week excursion that occurred in the spring of 2014 to Nicaragua. Through this study, the writer hopes to effectively create a comparative model of English-based languages by examining the history, formation, and usage of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah. The writer recently discovered that even though they both belong to the same subgroup, there is a possibility that there are many differences and similarities within the English-based subgroup that goes beyond the point of locality. However, are there many differences and similarities amongst Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah? Do they embody the same characteristics as it relates to structure?

The structure of this analysis ranges from exploring the history of various vernaculars and regional dialects. From the location to the language of families to which they are categorized, there will be an examination of verbal communication and the effect it has on the ethnicities and gender differences within those locations. Ultimately, the goal is to examine and to gain an understanding of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah by comparing their word structure, syntax, vocabulary, and phonology. During this analysis,

the author is researching to determine if the vernaculars are only spoken in parts of the countries and or cities in question, or if they stretch across neighboring communities?

Several African American linguists have studied creole vernaculars. To date, Joey L. Dillard, and Lorenzo D. Turner are a few linguists who have studied the creole languages tirelessly to discover similarities. As a part of research, the writer studied the work of Lorenzo D. Turner and Joey L. Dillard to gain a better understanding of the different variations of creoles and how individuals use and view them. For example, in *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, Lorenzo D. Turner, elaborates on the relationship between the phonetic alphabet and diacritics in Gullah. According to Turner, [i] is a high front vowel that corresponds to the vowel in the English word *meet* (Turner 15). This discussion places emphasis on the tongue position when pronouncing like words in the English and Gullah language.

English-based Creole or Caribbean Creole English is derived from English which declares the English language dominant (“Caribbean English Creole”) in the formation of words. The beginning of this vernacular was established when a diverse group of individuals communicated during the slave trade and that interaction included West Africans and Europeans (“Caribbean English Creole”). According to the research, this collaborative effort ultimately became the dominant source of English-speaking colonists creating what we call regional dialects (“Caribbean English Creole”). Though each of these languages are members of the same subgroup, there are numerous characteristics that make them similar and different. Some of the distinguished characteristics of English-based Creoles are their “expressing tense mood” and aspect mainly by the predictive particles, marking noun plurals by post posed particles, and the difference in the singular and plural

forms of second person” (“Caribbean English Creole”). The individuals of Central America that have primary languages based on English-based Creole or Caribbean Creole English are very flexible depending upon setting. According to McArthur, the language can be spoken as informal and private (“Caribbean English Creole”). There are numerous types of English-based Creole languages such as Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah. These are only two of the numerous varieties of vernaculars derived from the English language that can be introduced in the Atlantic, Southern, Pacific, and Northern regions. According to the report, the majority of the Caribbean English Creole speakers reside in communities off the coast of Nicaragua and Honduras (Cassidy 164). For example, majority of the coast of those two countries speak Miskito Coastal Creole as their primary language as opposed to another vernacular. Cassidy found that even though majority of the population speaks the Creole language, the educators suggest that the children learn and use Creole when it includes topics not pertaining to academics (Cassidy 165).

### **Need and Timeliness**

A year ago, anxious about a new environment, the writer opted to travel to Nicaragua for two weeks. The trip was not only relaxing but was also a very engaging experience. The excursion immersed the writer in a complete culture shock due to being exposed to nothing but Nicaraguan traditions which are completely different from what she had been accustomed to living in the United States. The differences in the modes of transportation, sustenance, and the residences made the experience remarkable. Some of the areas traveled throughout Nicaragua were the capital Managua, Pearl Lagoon, Rama, Cookra Hill, and Awas Beach. Throughout the different areas located in Nicaragua, each community spoke a particular vernacular. While in Managua, she encountered Spanish,

then later traveled a few hours where she was exposed to Creole in Pearl Lagoon, and finally to Awas Beach where the individuals who reside there speak Miskito. So intrigued by the diversity within the communities, the suspense and eagerness to learn more grew. The mission was in the execution phase, and a family trip turned into a learning experience. The writer set out on a quest to not only enjoy the scenery but also to discover the regional dialects and languages of Nicaragua.

## **Nicaragua**

Under the leadership of President Jose Daniel Ortega since 2007, Nicaragua is located in Central America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and North Pacific Ocean (Nicaragua). As the largest country in Central America, Nicaragua is the home to approximately 5,800,000 people and is comprised of individuals belonging to Mestizo, White, Black and Amerindian descent (Nicaragua). Not only is Nicaragua the home of a large and diverse population, this is also the home of the largest body of freshwater in Central America known as Lago de Nicaragua (Nicaragua). According to the *World Fact Book* by the Central Intelligence Agency, as the poorest in Central America and second poorest in the Western Hemisphere; Nicaragua is often faced with natural disasters including Earthquakes and landslides (Nicaragua).

The official language of Nicaragua is Spanish. Other languages that are recognized in Nicaragua are English, Creole, and Miskito. There are also several other variants such as Magnue, Rama, and Sumu that are either extinct or indigenous. However, throughout different regions of Nicaragua, each community is responsible for its own language and dialect.

This study addresses a need for accurate and extensive interpretation of language other than one's native vernacular. While conducting this study and attending the excursion to Nicaragua, the writer concluded that there is a great need for individuals to be educated on past and present vernaculars when visiting a new country. Being knowledgeable will enhance the experience.

During the course of this study, it will become important that each individual is required to take a linguistics course regardless of major. As the national language, each American student will have experience speaking English. However, each student should be able to explain aspects of phonology, syntax, and morphology. Not many understand linguistics and how to diminish words and phrases to receive a clear understanding. It is imperative that when students and staff are awarded opportunities to travel that they be knowledgeable about the new culture they will embrace. This can also help with the adjustment to the environment and its people. One thing learned from the excursion to Nicaragua is that nothing makes the natives of the country any happier than someone attempting to learn their language and culture.

As a result, of English being taught in any particular region is positive due to the countless number of tourists who may originate from other parts of the world for vacation or for those who choose to retire in a foreign country. As briefly stated above with positive attributes, there is a substantial need for linguistics in each discipline at colleges and universities. English is actually one of the recognized languages for Nicaragua, despite not being the official language of the region. This means that although the language is not primarily known by every citizen of the country, it is learned for future progression in education, job security, and for the sake of communicating with tourists. With the

migration of individuals from one region to another for educational purposes and other factors, the diversity of the cultures and the enrollment of international students at universities across the globe have become a phenomenon.

### **Delimitations**

This study of Miskito and Gullah will be conducted from the perspective of an African American female with an English-speaking background. However, as a result, of this research being conducted under such circumstances, there are some modifications that were made to the analysis. Some of the delimitations of this study were as follows: First, there were no studies conducted using any of the cultures mentioned in this study. This study was influenced by the spring 2014 excursion to Nicaragua where I encountered their version of Miskito Coast Creole English or Nicaraguan Creole English as known to others. Secondly, there is no recorded interaction between any of the natives of these languages that were obtained, and finally, as a result of the weather, there was limited interaction between individuals on Awas Beach in Nicaragua that are native to the language.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study were the time in which the writer was allotted to experience in Nicaragua. The excursion lasted a total of two weeks which, is very little time to gain full exposure to the community. It is the researcher's opinion that if she were allowed more time to experience the environment with more interaction with individuals in Pearl Lagoon, Awas Beach, Cookra Hill and Managua the study of the creole language would be more understood. Some other limitations that the writer experienced were terrible weather conditions, which also limited the writer's ability to be outside and to

mingle with different residents in the Managua and Pearl Lagoon areas. Due to the weather conditions, the majority of residents stayed in their homes decreasing the amount of interactions that occurred on that two-week excursion. Some of the weather conditions experienced during the trip were earthquakes, extreme rain and thunderstorms.

### **Origin of English-Based Creoles**

English-based Creole or Caribbean Creole English is derived from English, which makes the English language dominant (“Caribbean English Creole”) in the formation of words. The beginning of this vernacular was established when a diverse group of individuals communicated during the slave trade and that interaction included West Africans and Europeans (“Caribbean English Creole”). According to the study, this collaborative effort ultimately became the dominant source for English speaking colonists creating what we call regional dialects (“Caribbean English Creole”). Though each of these languages is associated with the same subgroup, there are numerous characteristics that make them similar and different. Some of the distinguished characteristics of English – based Creoles are their “expressing tense mood” and aspect mainly by the predictive particles, marking noun plurals by post posed particles, and the difference in the singular and plural forms of second person” (“Caribbean English Creole”). According to McArthur, Gullah shows little to no dependence on using –s and showing time of activity (“Caribbean English Creole”). The individuals of these countries that established their primary languages based on English- based Creole or Caribbean Creole English are very flexible depending upon the setting. According to McArthur, the language can be used as informal and private (“Caribbean English Creole”).

English-based Creole languages such as Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah are only two of the numerous vernaculars derived from the English language and can be introduced in the Atlantic, Southern, Pacific, and Northern regions. According to the study, the majority of the Caribbean English Creole speakers reside in communities off the coast of Nicaragua and Honduras (Cassidy 164). For example, the majority of those two countries speaks Miskito Coastal Creole as their primary language, as opposed to another vernacular. Cassidy argues in “English Language Studies in the Caribbean”, that even though majority of the population speaks the Creole language, the educators suggest that the children learn and use Creole when it includes topics not pertaining to academics (Cassidy 165).

### **Method of Analysis**

When beginning this study, the main goal was to investigate the language and dialect structures of the United States and Central America. Not knowing much about other languages I was curious about where they originated and the effect it had on the residents and how they were perceived. The language and dialect of a specific region or social group have a deeper connotation than what is recognized. Through an intensive examination of various literary resources, the following methods will be used for the comparison of English-based Creole languages and their dialects. Moreover, even though they each belong to the same subgroups and may share some similarities, they are dissimilar. Some information gathered during research contained information about the tribes that initially introduced Miskito Coast Creole to the Nicaraguan culture. The research has revealed the demographics of the individuals who are accustomed to speaking Gullah which is another English-based Creole that is spoken along the Southern regions of the United States.

The initial aim of my research proposal was to create a comparison of the languages and dialects in the United States and Nicaragua. This particular phase developed in April of 2014 after attending a two-week excursion in Nicaragua. With such a broad topic, the researcher decided to focus on creole languages that are English-based. This study was influenced by two vernaculars that are derived from the English-based subgroup. The following methods were used during this examination:

- A. The researcher then developed a list of terms that will be studied or referenced throughout this study. After compiling the list of terms, the author connected each word with the appropriate definitions. The list provided will be referenced periodically in the examination and provided as a guide for individuals not familiar with linguistics. An intense search for information on English-based Creole began. Through this search, information such as when the languages were formed, what cultures frequently use the language or dialect, and what initiated the usage of said language or dialect that may contribute to continuation or extinction of Gullah and Miskito. Approximately thirty different creole languages that are English-based. However, many of these languages are associated with separate dialects.
- B. The writer gathered information about the locations where Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah are primarily spoken. Through this research, I gained information about how many individuals actually reside in the areas and the ethnicities associated with these languages.
- C. While researching each language, one of the requirements was to obtain the historical content of where each language originated, who were the spoken of that specific language, the individuals who spoke it and why, and where those languages

still currently being used. Throughout this project, it was crucial that each language was explained and justified as to why regions are relevant.

- D. This examination will create an analysis of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah. Both of these languages are derived from the English language which makes English the lexifier. Furthermore, the languages are all very detailed and referenced according to relevance. As a result of this method, the writer had to examine the ability to identify through characteristics which linguistic family each language belongs to. Through this method, the writer will create a compiled list of similarities and differences for each of the languages.
- E. Examine the differences in phonology with short and long vowel sounds. Moreover, this project will also project the differences in the male and female terminology and linguistic families of these languages.
- F. Poems, stories, videos, and speeches will be examined to determine whether it was spoken in Miskito or Gullah. After that analysis, the writer will then translate the selected works into the English language for accuracy to the best of her ability to decipher the examples of phonology and syntax.

## **Summary of Chapters**

“English-Based Creoles: The History, Formation, and Usage of Miskito Coast Creole and Gullah”, Chapter One states and identifies the purpose for this analysis. Throughout this selection, the writer will explain on why she chose to pursue a study of English-based creoles and what she learned from that experience. This chapter reviews the primary purpose of the study which evaluates the languages near and far by offering a

historical background of each language. The writer will include a reflection on how relevant this topic is to this study and what the writer hopes to gain from it. The study emphasizes will focus on where each language originated and document those persons responsible for introducing that language to the community.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature used to conduct the research of English-based creoles such as Gullah and Miskito Coast Creole. This chapter includes an extensive discussion of the various primary sources and scholarly journals that were obtained to conduct this research. This section will comment on how these studies and or anthologies support or hinder the research. This section also discusses two African American men who are very well known in the field of Linguistics. Derek Bickerton and Lorenzo D. Turner, who both conducted intense research that focused on the structure, history, and usage. Covered in this chapter will be an analysis of the resources such as YouTube videos, scholarly journals, and books used to conclude and support my purpose. In this section, the author will divert, add, and or concur with their findings.

Chapter Three examines the similarities and differences in the usages. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates which of the two vernaculars use the majority metaphors, along with word structures, sound systems and reference the features of the subject pronouns, possessives, and object pronouns of Gullah and Miskito Coast. There will also be at least three to four examples provided of each of the features listed above. Also, in this chapter, there will be a comparison of the differences of each to represent the Initial, Medium, and Final of the languages. This chapter contains examples and an analysis to demonstrate the writer has an understanding of phonological features and how they are possibly linked to morphemes.

Chapter Four creates an analysis of Gullah and Miskito based on how each of the languages is influenced by phonological issues, ethnicity-based variation, and lexical variation.

Chapter Five includes a brief explanation of phonology including an explanation of the table will illustrate a comparison of Creole A (Gullah) and Creole B (Miskito).

Chapter Six also includes a brief explanation but of Syntax. This includes an extensive explanation of the table that will include a comparison of Creole A and Creole B.

Chapter Seven highlights the pros and cons about conducting this research, ranging from what could have been done differently and an explanation of the writers' feelings towards the results. Through this chapter, the writer will elaborate on the findings that may or may not achieve her purpose for this study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

Prior to this study, because of the lack of interest in Miskito Coast Creole, there was little information provided through book and scholarly articles. However, according to some sources, Miskito Coast Creole is not very different from Belizean Creole. Throughout this research process, finding accurate and in-depth information was very challenging. The sources retrieved focused on the individuals who spoke creole, the usage

of feminine and masculine words, and the history of the people who influenced the development of the languages.

Eduard Conzemius's *Notes on the Miskito and Sumu Languages of Eastern Nicaragua and Honduras* (1929) provided detailed information about Miskito Coast Creole and the languages that played a major role in influencing the beginning of a new vernacular through such as a variety of African languages. Conzemius provided phrases, a very in depth vocabulary list that not only focused on the Miskito and Sumu versions but approximately three other languages that are similar to that of Miskito. Pronouns, verb tenses, phonology, and morphology are among the different focus points within this article.

This study confirmed the researcher's assumption that even though the languages both are derived from English the features of syntax are not the same. This was discovered by producing a comprehensive list of Miskito inspired words that represent the anatomy of the body, relationship terms and nouns. This particular source supports the author's claims that even though languages can originate by certain cultures or belong to certain demographics make up a specific community, it also adds to the claim that dialects and vernaculars can be regional. For example, Conzemius expressed that:

In spite of the distribution of the Miskito over so vast a territory the dialectical variations of their language are comparatively insignificant. For convenience sake, the Miskito language may be said to appear in five dialects... (Conzemius 59).

Conzemius asserts that not only do the variations depend on location, but it also proves that the vernacular can also be indigenous to the community and or culture that were recognized as the originators.

J. L. Dillard's *Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States* (1972) reveals insight on the categorization of Creole languages from each subgroup. Dillard references the Gullah dialect that individuals on the South Carolina and Georgia coast while also covering Haitian and Louisiana Creole that belongs to the French-based subgroup. Dillard provides in-depth information about pronouns, gender distinction of each language, verb changes, and examples of sentence structure. This reference gives background information on the tribes, regions, and people who created these languages and how much effect it will have on the generations that will come in contact with each pidgin and or creole.

Dillard compares that Southern dialect by establishing a comparison with Pidgin English to American English, ultimately implying that Plantation Creole could also be influencing the development of the language. This supports the researcher's claim that it does require various vernaculars to establish another indigenous language. Without the various influences from other authentic languages that support the creation of a new language whether regional or cultural, it is imperative to have a strong foundation for these languages. Throughout this anthology, Dillard compares the development of dialects and languages to race.

Dillard investigates the influence of Africans on the development of language compared to other races. This strategy often led to Dillard's questioning the patterns of

Black and White culture on the structuring of the Black dialect. To support his claims, Dillard demonstrates how verb forms and negators work while presenting them as informal or casual Standard English. During the explanation of Black English, Dillard explains the way sentences are formed in Creole dependent by adding *-ing*.

*Verb Phrase Patterns in Black English and Creole* (1991) Walter F. Edwards and Donald Winford is a compilation that provides critical information about relationships in speech and vernacular in states such as South Carolina. The study delineates the development of Gullah and Black English. These two authors have enlisted help from other researchers to provide insight about urban vernaculars and the differences among them. In *On the Infinitive of Gullah*, Mufwene investigates the infinitives and whether they can be found in Gullah. Infinitives are morphemes that help with the support of relaxed verbs. Some examples of this form being used can be *to eat*, *to sleep*, and *to fight*. This particular source is supportive and comprised of various essays that reflect a connection of linguistics through Black English and Caribbean creole languages. This essay also observed why certain forms of Gullah may not be accompanied by an infinitive. The critical essay by Dennis R. Craig; “The Concept Do in English and English Lexicon Creole” displays phrases in English and also in Creole containing nonstative verb phrases, stative verb phrases, along with auxiliary *do* and lexical *do* (194). This particular theorist provides a table on the differences between stative and nonstative verb phrases and where they can be most heard. This particular source allows scholars to understand the formation of sentences by placing an emphasis on infinitive clauses and adverbial clauses which has to be introduced by a conjunction in a sentence.

Published in 1902, “Provisional Lists of Linguistic Families, Languages, and Dialects of Mexico and Central America” author Cyrus Thomas compiled using a study that used data derived from similar articles on the different groups of dialect relevant in Mexico and in Central America. Thomas compiled information to show connections between the Nicaraguan language and culture. The list includes linguistic families, languages, and dialects. There is also an indication of whether each language is extinct or currently active in the area. Some of the linguistic families include but are not limited to Ulvan, Zoe, and Subinha. The list also includes information about where the languages are most common and also which group declares it as the native language. This study is a representation regarding how one can have a native language, but can also be connected to other cultures because of the development of their language and a good representation of what languages are considered to be regional dialects.

In “Notes on Miskito Grammar and other Indian Languages of Eastern Nicaragua” by G.R. Heath concentrated on the language and culture of Eastern Nicaragua. Heath references the tribes of Native Indians that have influenced the language of Eastern Nicaragua and influence their culture as a whole. Heath examines are the Miskito, Sumu, and the Rama tribes. Throughout this article, Heath elaborates on the relation between notation and phonology.

This article is also responsible for displaying the word groups in first, second and third person along with verbal nouns along with displaying examples of differences among feminine and masculine usage for gender distinction. Heath expresses significant insight on the expressions ranging from the form of absolute to prefixes. The researcher finds this scholarly journal to be very helpful in many ways and agrees with Heaths’ journal that in

order to fully understand dialects, one has to invest time in learning the roots of the vernacular.

Heath includes an examination of history through the languages based on location, influences from pidgins and tribes, since the majority of these languages have been established based on interaction from one culture to another culture.

Frederic G. Cassidy, in “English Language Studies in the Caribbean” provides a synopsis on the English and French-based subgroups. Cassidy created a table that represents the territories that have English established as a part of their native language. Some of those countries include Bahama Islands, Cayman Islands, St. Lucia, and Trinidad. Within this display, it also shows the population of people that also reside in each territory that speak the primary language. For example, according to the article “St. Lucia at least 80 percent still speak French Creole at home, though this patois is absorbing English words” (Cassidy 80). Cassidy provides detailed research on the characteristics of French and English-based creoles. This article provides an overall generalization of what to expect when speaking creoles such as Jamaican Creole and Trinidadian Creole English. This journal is not a major component in this study, considering it only provides information pertaining to the differences and similarities in the major subgroups of creoles. However, it does help the author’s view that locality determines the design of a vernacular, as well as the people that speak it.

“The Ecology of Gullah’s Survival” by Salikoko Mufwene states that “Gullah also known as Geechee and Sea Island Creole is spoken by less than half a million descendants of African living in coastal South Carolina and Georgia” (Mufwene 69). This article

examines the survival of the Gullah language on the South Carolina coast. There are several factors that may cause the language to become extinct. Mufwene claims that some causes factors of the languages' extinction come as a result of "group identity, solidarity, loyalty, variation within the variety, residential patterns, and the ability to switch codes" (Mufwene 69). For example, obtaining loyalty to the language means that some may only speak the language when communicating with family and friends. However, if persons were to ever subject themselves to interaction outside of their comfort zone, they may completely eliminate the language depending on the environment.

After continuous switching depending on the environment, there is a possibility that one may never go back to speaking the Gullah language even after returning to one's hometown. The researcher concurs that everything is proven to be true. For example, the researcher is a native of South Carolina and has been a resident of Maryland for approximately three years. As a result of moving from a rural town to a big city, the researcher noticed that she too can turn off her accent to accommodate her surroundings. As a result some of the words that were used to describe simple everyday items that are not the same. An example of this would be that, in the southern states, the residents tend to say *coke* when referring to their beverage of choice while northerners actually use the term *soda*. Through experience, the researcher concluded that once one does leave their hometown, they do lose the accent and unconsciously adopt another.

"Gullah", published by the Oceanic Linguistics Special Publications, is a succinct study that examines the many active speakers that are currently identified as speakers of the native language of Gullah, whether past or present. According to the essay, there are approximately 100,000-150,000 that dates back to the 1860s (468). It is believed that

Gullah was established on the coast of South Carolina during the 1700s. This article is a critical component in establishing how many individuals reside on the coast of South Carolina and bordering states like Georgia that have remained loyal to the Gullah/ Geechee culture by establishing numerical data that displays of how many individuals still use the language today.

“Contemporary Gullah Speech: Some Persistent Linguistic Features” by Patricia Jones-Jackson demonstrates how exclusivity of the Gullah language is on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. Jones-Jackson displayed the differences within the language through pronoun usage, and absence of the pronoun *it* and *us*, and the absence of possessive pronouns among some other features. Jones-Jackson expresses that other linguists have studied the black dialect; however, there is a generalization that all inner-city communities and rural areas speak the same, but their dialects are completely different. The researcher does not agree that all inner city communities and rural areas sound the same. For example, individuals from more rural communities, especially in the South, tend to have a drawl however not every southerner has a drawl.

From researcher observation, individuals that grow up in the inner city are very proper. Even though the writer did not agree with Jones-Jackson’s claim, the researcher does agree that each authentic language is a result of being merged with another language often from different cultures. This essay also provides relevant information on the group of races that speak Gullah. In this journal, Jones-Jackson elaborates the reason each race use the language through their communities to communicate. Jones-Jackson creates a clear distinction between the masculine and feminine usage, pronouns, absence of the pronoun,

verbs, and uninflected verbs among the speakers of the language which allows the language to be viewed as one of not having any rules.

“Linguistic Innovation and Relationship Terminology in Pearl Lagoon Basin of Nicaragua (1998)” by Marc Jamieson focuses on the relationship of the Miskito language and the impact it has on the community. Jamieson referenced current and past changes in the terminology of the Pearl Lagoon Basin. The map displayed in the article displays the coast which included neighboring communities of Rio Coco, Managua, and Corn Islands. Relationships between gender conscious words were derived by comparing parallel, lineal and cross-linguistics. The study, Jamieson focused on the usage of terms by males and females using a table that reflected words used by fathers, mothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and brothers. The table indicated a relationship between some of the vocabulary used by mothers to sisters and fathers to brothers which in some cases there were parallels. Jamieson focused on the development of the language in Pearl Lagoon. During the trip to Nicaragua in 2014, the writer’s experience with the terminology through communicating with residents would change but only within a couple miles of each other. Visiting Corn Islands, Awas Beach, or Managua, the terminology was never the same and can sometimes distinguish which part of Nicaragua the speaker originally lived. The relationship in this study is also accompanied by historical facts that ultimately led to the progression of the Miskito language over time through influences of other languages.

A.M. Elliot, “The Nahuatl-Spanish Dialect of Nicaragua” The Johns Hopkins University Press, elaborates on the Spanish influence of the Nicaraguan culture. However, the primary focus of this study was to inform the audience of the continuous use of the Spanish language in Nicaraguan households. According to Elliot, some of the words in

this language have an approximately sixteen syllables and the phrases or sentences can be tremendously crowded (Elliot 54). Knowledge is demonstrated by enlightening the reader on the background information by providing and identifying weak vowel words. Other elements, also include phonetics and the primary distribution of the language. This article gives comprehensive details about the vowel power in the Spanish language and among the Nicaraguan community. This study supports the phonological trait of the study by providing insight on the mood, tense, and gender distinction of the language. This text demonstrated or illuminated which features exist in Miskito while and included a list of sample words to demonstrate mouth positions in their vocabulary.

In *Dynamics of a Creole System*, Derek Bickerton focuses on the Creole languages from the aspect of the free variations, basilect, acrolect, and mesolect. Covering the main components from verb phrase to free variants, Bickerton is a well-known linguist who studied the English-based creoles and pidgins such as Guyanese Creole. In this manuscript, Bickerton uses Guyanese Creole features to compare and to find flaws in the development of these vernaculars.

Guyanese Creole is the primary language spoken by the individuals in the community of Guyana. From basilect, acrolect, and to mesolect, Bickerton uses this manuscript to address similarities in forms and characteristics of pidgins and creoles. Some of the similarities and differences are connected to using prefixes and suffixes while also identifying what it would consist of if these were not available in Creole. Some other topics discussed throughout this manuscript focuses on syntactic structures to Jamaican creole with the standard and non-standard forms of creole.

*Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* by Lorenzo D. Turner focused on the substantial influence that West African language and culture have the English-based creole. Turner elaborates on the phonetic alphabet of the vernacular. The evidence in this source surrounding the presence of diphthongs, consonants, voiced, voiceless, the function of the uvular while having a compiled list of West African term is very detailed. Turner also offers examples of the variations and influence of West African languages.

Turner dedicated his study to the language by perfecting the syntactical features of Gullah and the usage for sound patterns. Gender distinction is also a major component of the Gullah language that includes the difference between feminine and masculine words. However, Turner does not acknowledge differences with gender when speaking the language. Turner compiled a list of several texts in Gullah that included a prayer, numerals, and songs. This text also provided sample stories from one of the islands that are located along the coast of South Carolina where the Gullah culture is thriving.

## **Chapter Three**

### **I Speak Gullah, You Speak Miskito**

The resources used in this study were videos, scholarly journals, and books that covered each language, and sometimes the creole system. However, the writer utilized videos to gain a better knowledge of the languages. To gain a better understanding of the vernaculars and their differences, the researcher watched various videos that would

effectively display Gullah and Miskito. Each of the videos had to follow certain criteria to be considered as a part of the data. The criteria followed to view the videos were:

- A. Each video had to be in the form of an interview or a story;
- B. Each video must contain individuals from the regions of that the language originated;
- C. The video must contain English translations, so the writer could follow along, however; exceptions can be made;
- D. Videos must not exceed six minutes;
- E. Videos must contain background information on where the language was originated and what group discovered the language.

After thoroughly searching YouTube for videos that adhered to these guidelines, the writer chose to evaluate four videos. One video contained the Miskito language, and the final three videos represented the Gullah language and culture. The videos range from approximately three to five minutes of information that supported claims regarding about on or about the languages formation and also their usage. These videos revealed are categories in Gullah differently with conversational and storytelling.

*Gullah: A Story told in the Traditional Gullah Language at African American Heritage Day* posted on February 14, 2013 by PMFMedia at Pendleton Historic Foundation's Annual African American Heritage Day celebration featured an African American interpreter that is telling the story of Bin Ya, Bin Ya in the Gullah language. In this video, the storyteller uses hand and body movements to help convey meaning to audience members who may not be familiar with the language. This version of Gullah is very authentic and requires extensive research of vocabulary to follow along. Through

observation, there are various versions of this language, and depends on what capacity the language is being used when examining pronunciation.

In the second video, from the National Geographic and is called *Gullah/ Geechee Storyteller Preserves Painful Past* storyteller Theresa Jenkins Hillard discusses the pain that her ancestors endured during slavery in the low country of South Carolina. As enslaved individuals, they were forced to create a way to communicate with one another and eventually resulted in the creation of the Gullah. The video opens with Hillard and functions between English and Gullah in an effort to explain the story for those who may not understand the language. The video contained no gender distinction but used a lot of sound substitution. Generally characterize the area of linguistics this covers words like there and they were referred to as |e|. Words, like they have, would be referred to as *dey*. In words like something or nothing the |th| and the |g| is silent ultimately resulting in each of those letters of the being silent. During another excerpt in the video, the storyteller was trying to say garden, however, the |r| was never pronounced and that caused them to say *gawden* which also accompanied a drawl. As she proceeded to continue, the writer noticed that children were pronounced *chillen*, which eliminated several of the actual letters and replaced with letters that form from the tongue freely which ultimately changed the sound pattern. In the Gullah language, the complexity of the language is determined by how much someone knows about the language. This video offers powerful historical content on the struggle of enslaved individuals but, why the language was created. The video interprets the importance of educating future generations to preserve the legacy of the struggle and language.

*Gullah Traditions of the South Carolina Coast* is Discover South Carolina's interpretation about the language creation and the individuals that speak Gullah. This video featured numerous individuals from the South Carolina coast performing as the storytellers.

*Gullah Traditions of the South Carolina Coast*, illustrated how culture plays a major role in language formation. According to numerous sources in the video, Gullah individuals are actually heirs of slaves from West Africa who were brought to the United States to work on plantations during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

According to the documentary, Gullah individuals are considered to be very spiritual, family-oriented and influenced by the Gola tribe, which accounts for the name of the vernacular. According to the documentary, individuals in this tribe were avid rice growers. As a result of mastering the process of the production of rice, they then became suppliers of rice. Considered “broken English,” the Gullah community frequently drops letters in words and results in changes to the sound. Below several example words and phrases taken from *The Black Border* by Ambrose E. Gonzales dropping letters and change the sound:

- A. answer-ansuh
- B. after- attuh
- C. better-bettuh
- D. they –dey
- E. themselves- demself
- F. come here- come’yuh
- G. girl-gal
- H. alligator-gatuh

The words and phrases listed above demonstrate how people in the Gullah culture can change the spelling of a word by adding a letter and or subtracting a letter, and it will result in the changes in pronunciation of the word. Changes in pronunciation can result in a word being voiced or voiceless. As previously stated, one would have to know the language in order to effectively understand someone in the Geechee/Gullah culture.

Viewing the Gullah language videos put a lot of things into perspective. After viewing the videos, a lot of questions still remained unanswered. The first two videos focused on Gullah show two different versions of the language. The first version was more excessive and exaggerated, while the second version was slower and displayed a thick and authentic version of the language.

*Easy Miskito – We are Miskito* (Easy Languages) focuses on the language and culture of individuals in Nicaragua. This video tackled the modes of transportation and their perception of their ethnicity. This video set in El Rama and eventually continued until the host reached Bluefields, a small town in Nicaragua. Continuing on the streets of Nicaragua, Nicaraguans discuss who they are, where they are from, and what they like about their culture. The video was recorded in Bluefields approximately eight hours from Pearl Lagoon located five minutes down the road is Awas Beach where individuals are speaking Miskito. Proven to be a very beautiful but complex language, most individuals in Nicaragua grow up in a household that speaks multiple languages. Ranging from the quality of the language to the pronunciation of the letters, there are a lot of connections between Spanish and Miskito. Compared to Gullah, speakers of this language are much faster with their words. For example, in the documentaries highlighting the usage of Miskito, the participants spoke faster and displayed confidence while speaking. These

videos demonstrate how these languages are influenced by other authentic languages and also have influenced by the cultures that they embrace.

Along the regions of Nicaragua and Honduras known respectively as the Mosquito Coast, reside four influential tribes known as Miskito, Sumu, Paya and Rama (Conzemius 57). According to Conzemius, as the most populous tribe on the coast, the Miskito has an astounding number of members at approximately 15,000 individuals (Conzemius 57). During the development of this tribe, there were numerous encounters that ultimately led to the creation of Miskito Coast Creole.

Even though Miskito was created as a result of several different cultures intertwining together, it has incorporated a generous amount of English in the vocabulary leading it to be a part of the English-based subgroup. However, even though English is known as the lexifier; Miskito also has a generous amount of Spanish and African influence (Conzemius 58). According to Conzemius, Miskito has approximately five dialects associated with the language. However, that is not the only English-based creole that includes other major influences which result in being a part of Misumalpan.

Located on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, approximately half a million individuals speak the Gullah language (Mufwene 69). In a study that she conducted on the use of Gullah and the individuals who speak the language. Jones-Jackson credits to the research that some residents of the region claim to have learned the language and did so from those in their communities and those related to them. According to Jones-Jackson in “Gullah”, Gullah is considered a language and not a dialect because it lacks the quality of being equal to that of the English language (Jones-Jackson 291).

As the researcher continued compiling background information of Gullah and Miskito, she began to learn about the morphophonemic features, a interconnection between morphology and phonology which elaborates on the relationship between sound patterns and units. Morphophonemic features involve an intense study of phonological variation. Using phonological variation allows individuals to determine where one may be from without naturally asking. What are morphology and phonology?

## **Morphology**

According to Fasold and Connor-Linton, morphology is linguistics that is concerned with the analysis of internal word structure, including the categories and processes for producing and interpreting the possible words of one's language (Fasold; Connor-Linton 508). To someone with no experience or interest in linguistics, morphology is the form in which the words are used and created. For example, in the formation of the sentences one can refer to the subject of the sentence as in first, second, third person and even singular and plural form. In morphology, one cannot simply change the subject by adding the suffix *s*, but one must also alter the agreement that would also change the subject from singular to plural. During the phase of morphology, new words are created. Whether one is adding on to the beginning or ending of the word the process is widely referred to as the suffix and the prefix. The process of morphology promotes that in order to make a word plural it must be attached to ending such as *| -s/ or /-es|*. Not only are those aspects of sentence structure considered, but also subject, object, and possessive forms.

The representation of morphophonemic features involves the English-based Creole subgroup; however, it only categorizes the Miskito Coast Creole, also known as

Nicaraguan Creole English and Gullah also known as Geechee to locals and those familiar with the language. Miskito Coast Creole can be identified along the coast of Honduras and Nicaragua; while Gullah is prominent along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

A comparison of morphophonemic features include parts of speech such as a subject pronoun, possessives, and object pronouns. This comparison helps distinguish the differences and or similarities between the two languages. Two of these languages are derived strictly from the English language, meaning that a lot of the characteristics and words are considered a part of the English-lexifier. In other words, each of these languages is influenced by the English language in one form or another and it is dominant. However, how many of these languages are influenced by English but have different characteristics?

In linguistics, the subject pronouns will always come before the verb. Examples of subject pronouns include *I*, *you*, *she*, *he*, *they* and *we* and through this list of words, some can be categorized as singular and or plural. The subject pronouns in English carry gender distinction which means whenever they are used, they are referenced in masculine and feminine form. However, even though each of the referenced languages is derived from the English language Creole languages, such as Miskito and Gullah do not consider gender distinction when referring to their subject pronouns and often utilize a substitute. For example, in Miskito, *he*, *she*, and *it* are known as *witin*. Due to each of those terms sharing the same form in Miskito, they are not linked to either feminine or masculine distinction. These words can be used in any form regardless of the context.

As a member of the English-based subgroup, Gullah also does not always use gender distinction which some previous studies say may be because of the influences from

other West African languages. Terms *he* and *she* can be substituted for the word ‘e as an alternative when using subject pronouns when speaking. According to Jones-Jackson, during conversations that typically involve women, speakers can opt to refer to her as ‘e (Jones-Jackson 293). The researcher finds this to be accurate. For example, during the researchers’ undergraduate matriculation in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and also being a native of the small town of Moncks Corner, South Carolina ultimately she was exposed to Gullah by the neighboring city of Charleston, South Carolina. The researcher had classmates from the Charleston area use the language. The writer also experienced individuals replacing *he* and *she* with ‘e on social media which includes a timeline with individuals that are from the Low country. Just for clarification, the Low country includes cities like Moncks Corner, Charleston, Summerville, Goose Creek, North Charleston, and other surrounding cities. Not only has the researcher been exposed to the language through friends, but she also has multiple family members who also speak like they have adopted the language. To increase understanding of the Gullah language and how speakers replace pronouns with ‘e, the writer also created several sentences of her own with Gullah vocabulary. The following are examples of what happens when gender is not recognized and are replaced with ‘e.

Example 1:

- A. My mother fed them some fried bacon.
- B. E feed’um frybakin.

Example 2:

- A. He fired them today.

B. E fiah dem teday.

Example 3:

A. Her watermelon is sticky.

B. E watuhmilyn iz ‘ticky.

The sentences represent the English and Gullah representation of how sentence formation is created with or without gender distinction.

These pronouns are personal, and they pinpoint the “who” of a sentence. For example, the following sentence has been created and translated into the Miskito language to show how subject pronouns work and to also give an idea of the vernacular.

English: Francine lives in Pearl Lagoon

Miskito: Francine iwaia ra Pearl Lagoon.

In this example, Francine is the subject because she is taking the action in the sentence. There is no other evidence of any usage of any other subject pronoun within that sentence. Even though the sentences provided an exact name of who lives in Pearl Lagoon, the name could also be substituted for ‘e to avoid being masculine and or feminine.

Possessive pronouns are words that exhibit some sort of ownership. Some of the words that exhibit possessive pronouns in English are *my, your, his, her, its, our, and their;* are just a few. In Miskito, language linguist suggests that possessive pronouns should be formed on a basis of absolute, construct state, first, second, and third personal pronouns (Heath 56). G.R. Heath, the author of who published “Notes on Miskito Grammar and on Other Indian Languages of Eastern Nicaragua” suggested that the third personal state is

formed from the construct by the prefix; the other states by inflections are either suffixed or inserted (Heath 56). Ultimately Heath was implying that adding the prefix gives the object direct ownership.

While conducting research, the writer noticed that on several instances, some scholars often reported through studies that Gullah uses substitutes for their pronouns. The object pronouns in Miskito and Gullah typically operate the same. In Miskito, the object pronouns operate from inflection. However, what is inflection and how does it apply to linguistics? Inflections are the change of form that words use to mark distinctions as well as the case, gender, number, mood, or voice (Merriam-Webster). While utilizing *Pocket Dictionary: Miskito- English-Spanish and English-Miskito-Spanish* by Hermann Berckenhagen published in Bluefields, Nicaragua in 1906 the writer stumbled across several examples of words that incorporate inflections. An example of inflections in the Miskito language would be

- A. to write- ulbaia
- B. writing- ulbanka

Through observation, the writer concluded that the suffix on the word was changed to indicate the act of writing. Through this, the morpheme *ia* was dropped and the morpheme *nka* was added to the end. Another example of this occurring was in:

- A. to move- klabala wauaia
- B. to be moving-aiauaia

This is also another example of how the suffix was changed and or dropped to alter the tense in which the word is being used.

In Gullah, there are several pronouns that are missing from the everyday language. As a result of those words being eliminated from Gullah's everyday speech, it causes users to substitute only to replace them with words that carry no gender distinction. The following sentences represent the differences in gender distinction, substitution just among a few.

- A. Lot of we went to da gym.
- B. None of we went to da market
- C. Da tunderstorm stop we from goin to Myrtle Beach taday.
- D. E know e dog hurt we yesterday.

The above sentences demonstrate what happens when one substitutes the object pronoun or any pronoun for that matter and replace it with a Gullah substitution. In sentence A, the object pronoun *us* was substituted and replaced by *we*. Sentence B and C show the exact same outcome of substituting *us* and also replacing it with *we*. However, in Sentence D, the outcome was a little different as the writer created a sentence that would replace the subject pronoun *he* with *-e* as she also replaced *us* with *we*. This sentence demonstrates how versatile the Gullah language is and also how easy it is to form effective sentences without using gender distinction. Through observation, the writer concluded that she never saw the *|e/* that is sometimes used to replace *he*, *she*, and *it* capitalized when at the beginning of a sentence. For example, in "Contemporary Gullah Speech: Some Persistent Linguistic Features" by Patricia Jones-Jackson, she began several sentences in her research that originally started with *he* and *she* which was then replaced with *e* but was never capitalized.

Through the languages of Miskito and Gullah, the writer studied the phonological features of each English-based Creole. Readers that are unfamiliar with linguistics will ponder about phonological features and why are they important to the development of a language. Phonological features capture the sounds in the vocabulary of each language. When studying the phonological features, linguists study these issues by focusing on each section of syllables of a word. For example, in Gullah *beehibe* which means *beehive* has two syllables.

While studying phonology, one may look for similar sounds within the words of a designated language. The writer focused on the characteristics of the initial, medial and final stage of phonology. Each of the mentioned categories captures the stress of each syllable during those stages. Of phonology, the initial stage captures the beginning of a word while medial captures the middle and last but not least, final places emphasis on the sounds heard at the end. As an example, when pronouncing *beehibe*; the word appears to be low, however, at the middle of the word the sound elevates and sound decreases towards the end. The information provided above was used to capture the three stages of word development in Miskito and Gullah vocabulary. As an example, the following words have been written in each language and translated into English using the English-Miskito-Spanish Dictionary and a Gullah vocabulary list through research.

The following words were taken from the *Pocket Dictionary: Miskito-English-Spanish and English-Miskito-Spanish* by Hermann Berkenhagen are written in Miskito accompanied by the English translation:

A. adbans- advance

- B. smalkaia- to advise
- C. dakni- bay
- D. bamna- because
- E. siappia- billow
- F. papaskra- builder
- G. chen- chain
- A. yu wala- next day
- B. mawan- face
- C. pat- fault

The ten words listed above exhibit what the writer personally selected to represent the phonology features of Miskito. Through observation, the writer concluded that the words, within the language follow the strict rules of Miskito phonological features.

While compiling the list of Miskito vocabulary, the writer verbally repeated each word several times. By repeating the words, she was able to count the number of syllables that were in each word. For example, *bamna* is divided into two syllables. This exercise was performed several times before being able to report the number of syllables found in each word.

The number of syllables ranged from one to four syllables with the number of syllables having a range of two syllables per the words listed above.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis**

The key to understanding vernaculars comes from dialect variation. Many components play a role in dialect variation. Dialect variation may depend on circumstances such as gender, social class, ethnicity, tone, and undoubtedly location (Fasold; Connor-Linton 311). Throughout this study, languages from Central America and North America were evaluated to determine what components categorize the languages as the same or different. Some language variations sought out during this study were lexical and phonological.

Lexical and phonological issues are key components to understanding how languages and dialects are formed along with gender and ethnicity. To determine that gender is a component in the usage of the language, one would have to evaluate the way in which males and females communicate. However, throughout this research, there is no evidence that males and females speak differently. In Chapter three, there were numerous instances of gender variation that occurred in Gullah and Miskito. Neither of the languages recognized gender distinction. Words like *he* or *she* may be replaced with */e/*. The lack of gender distinction in Gullah is due to the overwhelming influence from West African languages. However, in Miskito, the gender distinction is only acceptable if the words are not *I* or *me*.

Ethnicity-based variation in Gullah is based solely on adapting to the culture and area in which the language was developed in order to frequently use. According to Mufwene, author of “The Ecology of Gullah’s Survival”, implied that one can only remain loyal in the area in which the language was originated. The researcher concurs that the claim is true based on experience with individuals from areas like the coast of Charleston. Migrating from their environment and become acquainted and comfortable in another area, they tend to stray away from their culture. An example of this can be someone moving from Georgia to California.

Lexical variation is the differences in the use of words from region to region. For example, when commanding someone to turn the water on in the sink, individuals in the South refer to it as a *spigot* and individuals in the North refer to it as a *faucet*. This is an example of regional dialects is a way a group of people form their words, sentences, accents depend primarily on the location. Lexical variation is very common in the United States.

In the United States, lexical variation is determined through the differences in the words used to describe objects in regions such as the Northeast, Midwest, South and West. Often lexical variation can lead to others determining where an individual is from based on word choice alone.

A phonological variation occurs when letters are different but are pronounced the same and often accompanied by an accent. Examples of phonological variation were extremely difficult to identify due to the Gullah and Miskito belonging to different cultures and also different regions. Identifying the presence of phonological variation created opposition for the writer not being familiar with Miskito, other than being exposed to it during her excursion in Nicaragua in 2014.

Throughout the research process, it was evident that culture played a major role in the development and maintaining of both languages. An example of culture and language intertwining are the slaves who relocated to the coast of Georgia and South Carolina and established a vernacular that was created to keep them connected while working in the fields. As a result, speakers of the Gullah language were able to preserve a legacy for future generations.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Phonology**

<b>Features</b>	<b>Creole A</b>	<b>Creole B</b>
Syllabic	+	+
Consonantal	+	+
Sonorant	-	+
Anterior	-	+
Coronal	-	+
Back	-	-

High	-	+
Low	+	-
Nasal	-	+
Voice	-	-
Continuant	+	+
Round	+	-
Strident	-	+
Lateral	+	+
Delayed Release	+	-

Phonology is the study of how vernaculars arrange sound patterns. The study of sound patterns not only evaluate how words are spoken but also the movement and position of the tongue and mouth which is processed by the brain. The phonology table shows a comparison of Creole A (Gullah) and Creole B (Miskito). The researcher used this table to determine if one or both languages have all, some, or none of these particular features of phonology. To compare the features of phonology, the researcher used (-) for negative which means the feature is not available and (+) for positive meaning those distinctive features were available in that language. The features included in the table of phonology are:

#### A. Syllabic

B. Consonantal

C. Sonorant

D. Anterior

E. Coronal

F. Back

G. High

H. Low

I. Nasal

J. Voice

K. Continuant

A. Round

B. Strident

C. Lateral

D. Delayed Release

The functions of these features above range from vocabulary being articulated with the tip or blade of the tongue to vibration of vocal folds. In an effort to determine if one or both of these features occur in Gullah and Miskito, the researcher selected five vocabulary words from each vernacular. After the process, each Gullah and Miskito word were spoken multiple times in an effort to determine if the pronunciation of these words followed the rules of the distinctive features. The following vocabulary words are identified as (G) for Gullah and (M) for Miskito.

A. Apun (G)

B. Baa'buh (G)

- C. B'gin (G)
- D. Cawnfiel' (G)
- E. Cep'm (G)
- F. Buswan (M)
- G. Dadaukra (M)
- H. Diran (M)
- I. Kaikai (M)
- J. Lallapini (M)

Following the completion of the exercise, it should be noted that based on the vocabulary chosen, seven of the distinctive features are present in both vernaculars'.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Syntax**

<b>Features</b>	<b>Creole A</b>	<b>Creole B</b>
Noun	+	+
Verb	+	-
Determiner	-	-
Preposition	+	-
Pronoun	+	+
Auxiliary	-	-

Adverb	+	-
Adjective	+	+
Conjunctions	-	-
Subject	+	+

In linguistics, the syntax is comprised of parts of speech that follow rules used to determine the arrangement of words that each language follows to produce sentences and phrases. There can be many combinations of how sentences are arranged in Gullah and Miskito. For example, does the order include subject, verb, and a pronoun or is there another distinctive order. The features included in Syntax are:

- A. Nouns
- B. Verbs
- C. Determiner
- D. Preposition

- E. Pronoun
- F. Auxiliary
- G. Adverb
- H. Adjective
- I. Conjunctions
- J. Subject

The researcher developed sample sentences in Gullah to determine the order in which the words are used. The sample sentences listed below are used from previous chapters, but to find the arrangement of words used to form sentences and phrases. The following sentences are reflective of everyday sentences in the Gullah vernacular located on the coast of South Carolina.

- A. E fiah dem teday.
- B. E feed um frybakin.

After completing the table, it is visible that Gullah and Miskito have at least four features of syntax in common, however, each language also lacks a determiner, auxiliary, conjunctions, and subjects in their vernacular. However, it is still unclear if the syntax of a language can be formed in different sequences.

For further research, the syntax would be much easier to determine if the writer had the opportunity to collect writing samples from the native speakers of each vernacular. The writing samples would help determine patterns. Examining patterns would allow the researcher to determine how many ways can a sentence start and end in Miskito and Gullah.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusion**

The History, Formation, and Usage of Miskito and Gullah show two languages can be derived from the same lexifier and be completely different. Throughout this study, it was determined that some of the listed distinctive features for Syntax and Phonology are different among Gullah and Miskito. As a result of this study, it was determined that Gullah has six of the syntax features that are accompanied by seven phonology features. The study also determined that Miskito contains three syntax features and 10 phonology features. Not only are the characteristics different, but the vernacular influences that help with the

development of each language is also different but with small similarities of not recognizing gender distinction, regional dialects, and influences from African languages.

One distinctive feature of Gullah language is that it is influenced by several West African languages which present a connection with Jamaican Creole according to Jones-Jackson. Not only are the influences through other languages substantial in Gullah and Miskito, some features are very distinctive based on the cultures in which they belong. For example, the creation of Gullah not only assisted slaves with communicating while on the plantation but, the development of the language also impacted the community by being known as the inventors of the Sweetgrass baskets that were developed by heirs of slaves that moved to the coast according to *Gullah Traditions of the South Carolina Coast*.

Reflecting on the similarities and differences of the languages, the researcher concluded that the Miskito language utilizes more phonology features than Gullah. As a result of this, the uniqueness of the language can be recognized when spoken. In Gullah, speakers replace letters in words often which changes the phonology. However, there are some exceptions with gender distinction.

Reflecting on what was done, the researcher would change a few components of the study. The researcher would focus more on the interaction with residents within the Pearl Lagoon community. This would allow the researcher to gain a better understanding about the mannerisms of speakers of the Miskito vernacular. The next step to distinguishing more differences and similarities among Gullah and Miskito would be to expand this study. Some ways to expand this study would be:

- A. Socioeconomic influence on the language;

B. Differences in the level of education among speakers of Miskito and Gullah.

### **Works Cited**

- Berkenhagen, Hermann. *Pocket Dictionary. Miskito-English-Spanish and English-Miskito-Spanish*. Bethlehem, PA: Printed by Times Pub., 1906. Print.
- Bickerton, Derek. *Dynamics of a Creole System*. London: Cambridge UP, 1975. Print.
- Cassidy, Frederic G. "English Language Studies in the Caribbean." *American Speech* 34.3 (1959): 163-71. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Feb. 2015.
- "Central America and Caribbean: Nicaragua." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 09 Feb. 2015.
- Conzemius, Eduard. "Notes on the Miskito and Sumu Languages of Eastern Nicaragua and Honduras." *International Journal of American Linguistics* 5.1 (1929): 57-115. *JSTOR*. Web. 24 Oct. 2015.

- Dillard, J. L. *Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States*. New York: Random House, 1972. Print.
- "Easy Miskito 1 - We Are Miskito." *YouTube*. YouTube, 10 June 2015. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.
- Edwards, Walter F., and Donald Winford. *Verb Phrase Patterns in Black English and Creole*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991. Print.
- Elliott, A. M. "The Nahuatl-Spanish Dialect of Nicaragua." *The American Journal of Philology* 5.1 (1884): 54-67. *JSTOR*. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- Fasold, Ralph W., and Jeff Connor-Linton. *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- Gonzales, Ambrose E. "Gullah Words." *Gullah Tours*. N.p., 17 June 2011. Web. 17 Oct. 2015.
- "Gullah Geechee Storyteller Preserves a Painful Past." *YouTube*. YouTube, 24 Nov. 2014. Web. 20 Jan. 2016.
- "Gullah Traditions of the South Carolina Coast." *YouTube*. YouTube, 10 Mar. 2015. Web. 20 Jan. 2016.
- "Gullah Traditions of the South Carolina Coast." *YouTube*. YouTube, 10 Mar. 2015. Web. 20 Jan. 2016.
- Heath, G. R. "Miskito Glossary, with Ethnographic Commentary." *International Journal of American Linguistics* 16.1 (1950): 20-34. *JSTOR*. Web. 09 Sept. 2015.
- "Inflection." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2016.
- Jamieson, Mark. "Linguistic Innovation and Relationship Terminology in the Pearl Lagoon Basin of Nicaragua." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4.4 (1998): 713-30. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

McArthur, Tom. "Caribbean English Creole." *Encyclopedia.com*. Oxford University Press, 01 Jan. 1998. Web. 11 Jan. 2015.

"A Story Told in the Traditional Gullah Language at African American Heritage Day." *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Feb. 2013. Web. 20 Jan. 2016.

Thomas, Cyrus. "Provisional List of Linguistic Families, Languages, and Dialects of Mexico and Central America." *American Anthropologist* 4.2 (1902): 207-16. *JSTOR*. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.

Turner, Lorenzo Dow. *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. New York: Arno, 1969. Print

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Referenced Words and Definitions**

The followings are words and definitions that help explain the background of Linguistics. Some of the referenced words and definitions in this study are as follows:

- A. Dialect- the linguistic variety without standardization or published literature (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 499).
- B. Language- the variety acknowledged to have social and political importance generally not mutually intelligible with other languages (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 505).

- C. Diachronic Linguistic- the discipline of linguistics which seeks to explain how languages change over time (Connor- Linton; Fasold, 505).
- D. Phonology- the study of speech sounds as physical objects Connor-Linton; Fasold, 510).
- E. Creole- language from contact between different languages, often in situations of unequal power between the groups of speakers who use the language (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 498).
- F. Syntax- a rule-governed combination of words into phrases and sentences (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 516).
- G. Morphology- a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the analysis of internal word structure (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 508).
- H. Official Language- the language used to carry out practical functions of a state (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 509).
- I. Linguistic relatively- a hypothesis that language is believed to influence how individuals think about what they talk about (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 506).
- J. Semantics-The field of linguistics which studies the literal meaning; the study of those aspects of meaning which are determined within the linguistic system (Connor-Linton; Fasold, 514).

These words along with some other important words will play a major role in comparing the languages and dialect among Nicaraguans and will periodically be referenced throughout the study.