

Island Carib, Gender Indexicality and Language Contact

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1. The Island Carib Language

The term *Island Carib* generally refers to the indigenous language spoken in pre-contact and colonial times in the Lesser Antilles (with the exception of Trinidad) and, possibly, parts of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. Particular interest in this language has increased among linguists because Island Carib men and women used different speech forms, which can be traced back to different language families. Lexical elements that belonged to the men's speech were of Carib origin, while the words used by women derived from Arawak.¹ The largest portion of the grammatical system was common to both gender groups and of Arawak origin. Although its name suggests otherwise, Island Carib is therefore generally considered to be a member of the Arawak family, with a heavy influence from Carib.

Thanks to the work of 17th century French missionaries and travelers, Island Carib is today the best documented indigenous language of the Antilles. We owe the most extensive body of documentation to Raymond Breton, a Dominican friar who spent nearly twenty years of his life as a missionary among the Island Caribs and seems to have attained a perfect mastery of their language. He left one French (1647) and two Latin (1654, 1656) accounts on the Island of Guadeloupe, a grammar (1667), a catechism (1664), and a dictionary in two volumes (1999[1665], 1666). These writings not only offer detailed descriptions of Island Carib grammar and vocabulary but also perspicacious linguistic analysis, historical information and extremely rich ethnographic material. Given Breton's unrivaled expertise in the field, studies of Island Carib have relied mostly on his work, ignoring other valuable sources of information. The first and most original description of Island Carib language and culture, which includes insightful

1 We use the terms *Carib* and *Arawak* for the two main linguistic families of the north-eastern part of South America and the Antillean Islands.

comments on gendered differences in speech and other domains of social behavior, is given in an anonymous manuscript from the 1620s (Anonyme de Carpentras 2016[1620-27]), which recounts the experiences of a French filibuster during his eleven-month stay among the Island Caribs of Martinique in the years 1619-1620. In the second half of the 17th century, many other French missionaries and travelers commented on the Island Carib language and culture (Du Puis 2016[1652], Du Tertre 1654, 1667a, b; Pelleprat 1655, Rochefort 1658, and de la Borde 1674). All of them were intrigued by the fact that Island Carib men and women spoke differently, and some of them even advanced hypotheses on the origins of this striking phenomenon. In the present paper, we offer a new and close reading of these sources, contrasting them with each other, and with findings from archaeology and sociolinguistics. In doing this, we hope to provide a better understanding of gender indexicality and language mixing in Island Carib, and to shed light on their historical origin.

2. Gender Indexicality

Breton reports that a considerable part of the Island Carib lexicon consisted of pairs of synonyms whose members were used only by men or women. For example, men referred to ‘gourd’, ‘hog plum’ and ‘left hand’ with *matállou*, *òubou* and *ibouère*, while women used *huira*, *monben*, and *noubáana* for the same referents (Breton 1999[1665]). Thus, speakers automatically signaled their gender (understood in this context as a social category, based on the socio-cultural reshaping of biological sex differences) through lexical choices, without directly referring to it. Linguists have labeled this phenomenon as *gender indexicality*:

Gender indexicality [...] refers to the fact that a word can have its basic denotation and in addition point to (index) the gender of one or several speech-act participants (the speaker, the addressee, or both). (Rose 2015: 496)

Gender indexicality has been described according to four parameters that can also serve as a basis for typological classification (Rose 2015: 498), namely 1. focus (the speech act participants whose gender is indexed), 2. locus (the linguistic units that index gender), 3. categorical vs. statistical gender, and 4. non-referential vs. referential character. Since Haas’ (1944)

seminal paper on men's and women's speech in Koasati (Louisiana), focus has been considered to be the most central parameter for typological analysis. The specialized literature (Haas 1944: 147; Rose 2015: 498-99, 504ss; Fleming 2012: 298-99) distinguishes three types, depending on if the social indexing form points to the gender of the speaker (type 1), the addressee (type 2), or both (type 3, also referred to as relational gender indexicality). Type 1 is by far the most frequent manifestation of gender indexicality in South America, and probably also elsewhere in the world (Rose 2015). However, the place of Island Carib within this classification remains an unsolved problem. While early scholars (Adam 1877: xi; Taylor 1956) state that lexical and morphological choices signal the gender of the speaker (type 1), more recent publications have attributed them to the gender of the addressee (type 2, Hoff 1994; Fleming 2012: 298, 300, 301), or the gender of both interlocutors (type 3, Aikhenvald 2016: 143). Rose (2015: 506-507) discusses Island Carib under type 2, but ultimately classifies it as a type 1 language. According to her, gaps and inconsistencies in Breton's writings have led to insecurities and confounded interpretations. Despite the scarcity of data, she identifies Island Carib as "the best-known case of gender indexicality in the region" (2015: 526).

The loci of gender indexicality include both structural and discursive aspects of language use. Gendered differences have been reported for prosody, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and speech practices such as the use of distinct languages, linguistic varieties, styles, or communicative genres depending on gender (Rose 2015: 498; Aikhenvald 2016: 136ff). When the lexicon is the locus of gender indexicality, it is normally restricted to only a small number of items (Rose 2015: 509). For this reason, gender indexicality tends to be more pervasive and visible when instantiated in morphology and phonology, given the high recurrence of phonemes and (to a lesser degree) morphemes in natural speech (see also Rose 2015: 498). In Island Carib, gender indexicality operates on both the lexical and morphological level. Because of the extraordinarily high number of gender-specific pairs of synonyms in the lexicon, Island Carib has been recognized as an exceptional case (Fleming 2012: 300; Rose 2015: 513, 528 and section 3.1), and stands as the canonical example of gender indexicality (see already Haas 1994: 147).

The distinction between categorical and statistical gender indexicality depends on whether the use of gender indexical variants is stable, i.e. exclusive to representatives of a particular gender category or only statistically

typical for them (Rose 2015: 499-500). It has been argued that gender indexicality is always statistical, with different degrees of flexibility on the pragmatic level (Fleming 2012: 313 and Rose 2015: 500, who argue against this view). However, both views may be indistinguishable in speech communities where (as it often occurs, Fleming 2012: 299-300) social gender is perceived as a stable property of individuals. In publications on Island Carib that address the categorical — statistical distinction, it is generally classified as a language of the categorical type (e.g. in Rose 2015).

When gender indexicality operates in personal deictic expressions, especially 1st and 2nd personal pronouns, the marking of gender can be indexical and referential at the same time (Rose 2015: 500). This referential type of gender indexicality (as opposed to non-referential forms, where the participant whose gender is indexed is not part of the expression's denotation) can also be found in Island Carib (see sections 3.2. and 3.3.).

Although gender indexicality seems to be rare in the world's languages, it is comparatively more frequent in South America (Fleming 2012: 296-297; Rose 2015: 497). According to Rose (2015, esp. 502ss.), 41 South American languages show some kind of gender indexicality, among them several members of the Arawak and the Cariban linguistic families (see also Aikhenvald 2012: 365ff, 2016). However, evidence that certain language families or linguistic areas are particularly prone to gender indexicality is rather weak, and the phenomenon does not seem to be heritable or diffusible (see the discussion in Rose 2015: 502-504). It may be assumed, thus, that the emergence and maintenance of gender-related socio-indexicality is the product of historically contingent extra-linguistic constellations, rather than an arbitrary feature of linguistic systems. As we will argue in section 4, the Island Carib case seems to support this assumption.

3. The Manifestation of Gender Indexicality in Island Carib

3.1. Focus

From the historical sources, it becomes clear that gender indexicality in Island Carib was basically speaker-focal (i.e., type 1). Consider, for example, the first reference to this phenomenon in the account of the anonymous French filibuster:

Au reste, un enfant qui veut apprendre leur langue, il faut qu'il en apprenne deux à la fois. À savoir celle des hommes et celle des femmes [...]. Et ainsi les hommes nomment la lune *nouna*, et les femmes *cati*; pour dire "bonjour mon fils", les hommes disent "*maboiqua immourou*", et les femmes "*mabiorgnora hi*"; pour dire "viens là", les hommes disent "*accabou ouou*", et les femmes "*acquietios*" et ainsi des autres. (Anonyme de Carpentras 2016 [1620-1627]: 122-123)

That linguistic choices depend upon the gender of the speaker regardless of the gender of the addressee is expressed even more clearly in the following paragraph, where the filibuster reports Island Carib men's and women's different linguistic reactions to the French men's slenderness:

Ils montraient à leurs gestes d'en être fort étonnés, répétant toujours ces mots, qui sont d'étonnement, "cai, cai, cai", et les femmes "bibì, bibì, bibì". (Anonyme de Carpentras 2016[1620-1627]: 125)²

While the addressee remains the same (a group of French men in both cases), the form of the exclamation changes according to the gender of the speaker. Virtually all subsequent references to gendered speech behavior in Island Carib further confirm that the focus of gender indexicality was the speaker. Consider, for example, the following statement by Rochefort:

Voicy quelques unes des propriétez les plus particulieres à leur Langue. Et premierement, les hommes ont beaucoup d'expressions qui leur sont propres, que les femmes entendent bien, mais qu'elles ne prononcent jamais: Et les femmes ont aussi leurs mots & leurs frases, dont les hommes n'usent point, à moins que de se faire moquer. De là vient qu'en une bonne partie de leur entretien, on diroit que les femmes ont un autre langage que les hommes; comme on le pourra reconnoitre en notre Vocabulaire, par la difference des fassons de parler dont les hommes & les femmes se servent pour exprimer une même chose. (Rochefort 1658: 394)

Breton implicitly corroborates this view on abundant occasions in his grammar and dictionaries, when he contrasts pairs of synonyms using expressions such as "les hommes / les femmes nomment / disent / appellent / usent de / se servent de", without even mentioning possible addressees (see Breton 1999[1665] and Breton 1877[1667]).

2 See also Breton 1665: 42: "Bibi bibi, c'est le cayeu des hommes ou l'exclamation des femmes: ha! mon Dieu!".

If the speaker-focal nature of Island Carib is so clearly reflected in the historical sources, why did Hoff (1994), Fleming (2012) and Aikhenvald (2016) classify it as a type 2 or type 3 language respectively? We believe that this is largely due to Hoff's 1994 contribution with the programmatic but misleading title "Island Carib, an Arawakan language which incorporated a lexical register of Cariban origin, used to address men". This publication is based on only two short text passages — namely, a paragraph from Du Puis' *Relation de l'établissement d'une colonie française dans la Gardeloupe* (1652), and one sentence from Breton's *Brevis Relatio*, also known as *Relatio A* (1654). In this document, written in Latin, Breton states that "it would be ridiculous to employ the men's language *in speaking to* women and vice-versa" (our emphasis)³. Du Puis is more explicit on this subject:

[...] les femmes ont un langage tout différent de celui des hommes et, comme ce serait un crime entre elles de parler autrement quand elles ne sont pas obligées de converser parmi les hommes, aussi elles se moquent des hommes qui se servent de leur façon de parler. (Du Puis 2016[1652]: 199)⁴

These text passages are, to our knowledge, the only direct references to the addressee's gender as a parameter for linguistic choices in the whole colonial documentation. Even on a close reading of all sources available to us, we could only identify one more passage from Breton's work that allows for an addressee-focal interpretation of gender indexicality in Island Carib, namely the entry *chilatibou* 'Es-tu venue?' from his 1665 dictionary (1999[1665]: 79). Breton explains that this expression is used by women to greet other women when they arrive home. However, this situation is directly related to women's experience in Island Carib society, because men and women lived in separate houses (Boomert 2011: 297). In a similar vein, Island Carib women used a particular expression when lamenting the dead of their mother (Breton 1877[1667]: 71-72), for which Breton doesn't give any equivalent in men's speech. Thus, rather than reflecting grammaticalized relational gender indexicality, these phrases were conventionalized expressions for communicative settings where the speaker's and

3 The original text states: "ridiculumque inter eos cum mulieribus mascula lingua loqui et vice versa", Breton 1978[1654]: 133. The English translation is taken from Hoff 1994: 164; see also Aikhenvald 2016: 143.

4 Du Tertre (1654: 463) copied this passage.

the addressee's genders automatically coincided, because only women were present for sociocultural reasons (see also Rose 2015: 510-511).

Returning to Du Puis' and Breton's remarks on the addressee as the focus of gender indexicality in Island Carib, it is important to note that both the *Relation de l'établissement d'une colonie française dans la Gardeloupe* (1652) and the *Brevis relatio* (1654) are directly based on Breton's *Relation de l'Isle de la Guadeloupe* (1647), which was possibly a joint effort by the group of French missionaries, and written as a report for the Superior of the Dominican order (Hulme/Whitehead 1992: 107; Verrand 2001: 24; Société d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe 1978: 21-22). The corresponding passage in the original text is fully compatible with the view that gender indexicality in Island Carib was speaker-focal:

[...] ils ont diverses sortes de langages. Les hommes ont le leur et les femmes un autre, et encor un autre pour les harangues et traittés de conséquence. (Breton 1978[1647]: 55)

While the *Relatio A* is generally considered to be a simple summary of the 1647 French version, it is entirely possible that Breton also drew on Du Puis' account, especially because Breton's Latin description of gender indexicality appears as a condensation of Du Puis'. Given the overall picture that emerges from the colonial sources, we should therefore consider the reference to addressee-focal uses of gender indexical forms in Du Puis (1652) and Breton (1654) as erroneous information. The overwhelming evidence suggests that Island Carib indexed the gender of the speaker, not the addressee.

3.2. Locus

The main locus of gender indexicality in Island Carib was the lexicon. Breton's dictionaries and Rochefort's *Vocabulaire Caraïbe* (1658: 515-527) are filled with pairs of synonyms whose members are attributed to men or women respectively. Consider the following examples:

Un homme, ou un masle, H. *Ouëkelli*; ou pluriel, *Ouëkliem*, F. *Eyéri*; au pluriel, *Eyérium* (Rochefort 1658: 518) ; *Homme*, ouekélli, f. eyeri (Breton 1666: 204).

Soleil, H. *Huyeyou*, F. *Káchi*. Lune, H. *Nonum*, ce qui signifie aussi la terre, F. *Káti* (Rochefort 1658: 526) ; *Soleil*, huéyu, F. *cáchi* (Breton 1666: 365) ; *lune*, *nónum*, f. *cáti*. (Breton 1666: 230)

In the vast majority of cases, the members of these pairs have different etymological origins: Carib for the men's variants (compare, for the above examples, Kalina⁵ *wokyry* 'man', *weju* 'sun', and *nuno* 'moon'), and Arawak for the women's variants⁶. The split ancestry brings Island Carib (particularly the men's speech) close to a type of language that is referred to as (*Bilingual*) *Mixed Language* in the literature, i.e. "a language whose grammatical and lexical subsystems cannot all be traced back primarily to a single sources language" (Thomason 2003: 21).

Gender indexicality is most widespread in nouns, but it can also be observed in verbs, adjectives, adverbs and interjections (see also Taylor 1977: 98). According to de Goeje (1939; see also Taylor/Hoff 1980: 302) 22% of the lexical items given in Breton's *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-François* were restricted to men and 15% to women; the remaining 63% were common to both groups. Interestingly, the proportion of gender indexing items was particularly high in the basic vocabulary: among Island Carib equivalents for the 100 fundamental concepts of the Swadesh list, Taylor (1956: 411) counts only 41 entries with a common expression for both men and women, against 59 entries with a gender split (see also Hoff 1994: 167; Rose 2015: 509, and the above examples). As a whole, it is not an exaggeration to say that gender indexicality was an all-pervasive characteristic of colonial Island Carib lexicon, to an extent that goes far beyond other known cases (cf. also the languages discussed in Rose 2015).

In addition to the lexicon, gender indexicality seems to have had a secondary locus in morphology. Breton states that men and women used different personal prefixes:

n. & *b.* sont les deux premières personnes au langage des femmes : car si on leur demande, *cat'oucouchourou tóra*, de qui est elle mere, elles répondront, *noucouchourou*, *boucouchourou kia*, c'est ma mere, c'est ta mere, &c. Les hommes vsent d'vn autre mot, & de deux autres lettres, scauoir, *i.* & *a.* ils disent *ichánnum*, ma

5 With Kalina, we refer to a language of the Carib family spoken until today in the Orinoco area, which is believed to have contributed the Carib element to Island Carib.

6 *Ouekeli*, *bueiou* and *nouno*, the forms given by Pelleprat (1655) for 17th century Kalina, are even closer to the Island Carib male variants.

mere, *achánum*, ta mere. [...] Les femmes se seruent au singulier de l'*n* pour pronom possessif comme *noucouchili*, mon Pere, & à la premiere personne du pluriel de cette diction *oua*, comme *ouácouchili*, nostre Pere, *ouácouchilium*, nos Peres : les hommes se seruent d'un *k* pour les noms, & mesme pour les verbes imperatifs. (Breton 1877[1667]: 12-13)

Gender indexing variants existed also for the negation prefix (*m-* for women, *p-* for men, 1877[1667]: 54-55; see also Taylor/Hoff 1980: 303; Hoff 1994: 163), and for a morpheme Breton identifies as a preposition (*cb-* for men, *kêta* for women, 1877[1667]: 71), which may actually be a causative (Taylor 1977: 97) or a marker of transitivity (Taylor/Hoff 1980: 303). Breton also makes a vague reference to gender indexicality in temporal-aspectual morphology⁷. As in the lexicon, male-indexing forms are from Carib (Kalina *y-* '1st sg', *a-* '2nd sg', *ky-* 1st & 2nd sg ('you and I'), Courtz 2008: 63; 445; *-pa* 'negative adjectivization / postpositionalization' or *-pyn* 'negative adjectivization/postpositionalization, adnominal form', Courtz 2008: 447).

From the examples used in the dictionaries and the grammar, it becomes clear that the affixes Breton attributes to women were actually not restricted to one gender group alone but could be used by men and women alike. Even in direct quotations of men's utterances, men-only morphemes are far from being systematically employed (see also Taylor 1954: 29; 1977: 96). If they are used at all, they appear exclusively in combination with male-indexing lexemes of Carib origin. The following list of gender-indexical synonyms for kinship relationships, taken from Rochefort's and Breton's work, illustrates the overlap between lexical and morphological gender indexicality in male-indexing forms:

7 "Çaga, se prend quelquefois pour la terminaison de l'imparfait et veut dire ce que dire **éleboüe**, chez les hommes [...]", Breton 1999[1665]: 51). However, *éleboüe* is not presented or used as being men-only elsewhere (Breton's comments in 1999[1665], esp. 101, and 1877[1667], esp. 41).

Men's speech	Women's speech
<i>nioumoulikou</i> (R), <i>noumoulicou</i> (B) 'my relative' cf. Kalina <i>yjomory</i> 'a relative of mine', probably in a honorific form ⁸	<i>nitoucke</i> (R), <i>nitoúcae</i> (B)
<i>youmáan</i> (R), <i>iouman</i> (B) 'my father' cf. Kalina <i>yjumy</i> 'my father'	<i>noukóulichili</i> (R), <i>noucouchili</i> (B)
<i>itámoulou</i> (R), <i>támoucou</i> , <i>itamoulou</i> (B) 'my grandfather' cf. Kalina <i>ytamuru</i> 'my grandfather'	<i>nárgouti</i> (R), <i>nárgouti</i> (B)
<i>yáo</i> (R), <i>iao</i> (B) 'maternal uncle' cf. Kalina <i>yjowo</i> 'my uncle'	<i>akátobou</i> (R), <i>acátobou</i> (B)
<i>imoulou</i> (R) 'my son', <i>ímoulou</i> 'my nephew' cf. Kalina <i>ymuru</i> 'my son'	<i>niráheu</i> (R, B)
<i>ibiri</i> (R), <i>ibiri</i> (B) 'my (younger) brother' <i>ypiry</i> 'my (younger) brother'	<i>namouléem</i> (R), <i>námouleem</i> (B)
<i>ichánum</i> (R), <i>ichanum</i> , <i>icha</i> (B) 'my mother' cf. Kalina <i>ysano</i> 'my mother'	<i>noukouchourou</i> (R), <i>noucouchourou</i> (B)
<i>innouti</i> (R), <i>inouti</i> (B), 'my grand-mother' cf. Kalina <i>ynoty</i> 'my grandmother'	<i>naguette</i> (R), <i>naguette</i> (B)
<i>hibáli</i> , <i>nibágnem</i> (R), <i>ibáli</i> , <i>ibagnem</i> (B) 'my grandchild', 'my grandchildren' cf. Kalina <i>ypary</i> 'my grandchild'	<i>nilliguini</i> (B)
<i>niananti</i> (R) 'my daughter', <i>iananti</i> (B) 'my sister' cf. Kalina <i>enauty</i> 'my sister'	<i>nirabeu</i> (R) 'my daughter', <i>nitou</i> 'my sister'

8 Cf. also *ibalimoucou* and *yparimi* / *yparimikon*. According to Courtz (2008: 60), *-kon* is a pluralizing suffix that can be used in politely speaking about or addressing in-laws.

<i>ibámouï</i> (R), <i>ibamoüi</i> (B) ‘my brother-in-law, my male cousin’ ⁹ cf. Kalina <i>ypamy</i> ‘my brother-in-law’	<i>nikeliri</i> (R), <i>nikêliri</i> (B)
<i>youëlleri</i> (R), <i>niouëlleri</i> (B) ‘my female cousin’ cf. Kalina <i>yjeruty</i> ‘my (potential) sister-in-law’ ¹⁰ [term of address]	<i>youëllou</i> (R) cf. Kalina <i>jeru</i> (see left)
<i>nioüelle</i> (B) ‘male cousin’ probably related to <i>nioüelleri</i> and <i>youëllou</i>	<i>níगतou</i> (B)
<i>iapatáganum</i> (B) ‘cousin’ cf. Kalina <i>takano</i> ‘potential spouse’	<i>níगतou</i> ‘cousin’
<i>imenouti</i> (R), <i>iménouti</i> , <i>niménouti</i> (B) ‘mother-in-law’ cf. Kalina <i>yme-noty</i> ‘my mother-in-law’ (literally: ‘grandmother of my children’)	<i>noucouchorou rónarou</i> (B)
<i>ibalimoucou</i> (B) ‘son-in-law’ cf. Kalina <i>yparimy</i> ‘my son-in-law’ and its honorific form <i>yparimykon</i>	<i>nitignon</i> , <i>nitan</i> , <i>niti</i> (B)

It appears that the *i*-prefix is restricted to copies from Kalina, most of them belonging to male speech, while the *n*-prefix can be combined freely with items of either gender indexical value and from either etymological origin (cf. especially *nioumoulikou* / *noumoulicou* and *nioüelle*, and the alternations between *iananti* and *niananti*, *youëlleri* and *niouëlleri*, *iménouti* and *niménouti*; see also the examples in Taylor 1946: 195-199, as well as Taylor 1977: 96).

Interestingly, Breton and Rochefort mention a few more kinship terms with the *i*-prefix that do not seem to show gender restrictions (cf. *iloi* ‘older brother’ (B), *iboüikêliri* (B) ‘older brother’), or that belonged to the women’s speech (*youëllou* (see above) and *ibátomon* (B) ‘nephew’). However, those

9 The coincidence between the meanings ‘cousin’ and ‘brother or sister-in-law’ directly reflects Island Carib marriage practices (Taylor 1946).

10 Kalinan has two suffixes for possessed nouns *-ry* and *-ty* (Courtz 2008: 56). This is the only example where Island Carib and Kalina expressions use different manifestations of this suffix.

terms are still copies from Kalina (cf. *yru* ‘my older brother’, *yri(ry)* ‘my younger brother’¹¹, and *ypatymyn* ‘my (marriageable) nephew’). Thus, etymological origin seems to correlate more directly with the use of the *i*-prefix than the indexing of male gender.

At the same time, the perfect parallelism between the Island Carib kinship terms beginning with *i*- and their Kalina equivalents is absolutely striking (compare the examples given in the table). We assume that personal prefixes from Kalina were introduced into the autochthonous Arawak language from the Lesser Antilles by using lexical roots in their possessed form, as whole constituents — a pattern that has often been documented for lexical copying or code switching in contact situations that involve Amerindian languages of the agglutinative type¹². Although the Kalina fragments may still have been analyzable for Island Carib speakers, those affixes never became fully productive in Island Carib, and their selection remained determined by lexical (or, diachronically speaking, etymological) constraints, rather than by the productive use of morphology as a means of indexing gender. This analysis is consistent with the comparatively superficial, almost casual, treatment of male-indexing morphology in the *Grammaire Caraïbe* (see also Taylor 1977: 96 and Hoff 1994) and the *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-François* (note, for example, the absence of any reference to gender indexicality in the entry on the prefix *K* (page 161)). In addition, gender-specific morphology is not mentioned by any other 17th century author and in his description of person marking in Island Carib, Rochefort only gives common speech affixes:

La premiere personne se marque ordinairement par une N. au commencement du mot: Nichic, ma teste. La seconde par un B. Bichic, ta teste. Et la troisième par une L. Lichic, sa teste. (Rochefort 1658: 395-396)

11 Combined here with *kêliri* ‘brother-in-law, male cousin’ from the women’s speech.

12 This phenomenon is abundantly documented in early documents from the colonial Caribbean, and in lexical copies from Amerindian into European languages. Compare, for example, the prefixed and suffixed forms of Carib and Arawak words that European voyagers such as Robert Dudley, Captain Wyatt, or Vazquez de Espinosa recorded in the early colonial Caribbean (Taylor 1977: 15ff), or fossilized personal prefixes in copies from Caribbean indigenous languages into Spanish (e.g. Span. *datihao* and *guatiao* ‘friend, ally’, which contain the prefixes **da*- ‘1Sg’ and **wa*- ‘1Pl’, Jansen 2015).

Given that Rochefort still contrasts *n-* and *i-* in pairs of synonyms, e.g. in kinship terminology (see the examples above), he might have attributed this alternation to the lexicon rather than to productive morphology. The predominance of lexical over gender indexical considerations can also explain the retention of *i-* in words of Carib origin that lost their social indexical value or were transferred to the women's repertoire (cf. *íloi*, *iboüítékéliri*, *youëllou* and *ibátomon*).

In contrast to Kalina morphemes, Arawak morphemes could be used productively on the whole lexical inventory, and by speakers of either gender. We have thus to consider them as common speech forms, without any gender-specific semiotic value. Since the *n-*forms could always replace the *i-*forms, only male, not female, gender could be indexed in morphology, and morphological gender indexicality was rather statistical than categorical.

3.3. Further Aspects of Gender Indexicality in Island Carib

Given that 17th century authors agree in saying that using the wrong speech forms was a serious violation of social norms, we assume that gender indexicality was (near) categorical in the lexicon. Rochefort is particularly explicit on this point (see also Du Puis 2016[1652]: 199; DuTertre 1654: 463; Breton 1978[1654]: 133):

[...] les hommes ont beaucoup d'expressions qui leur sont propres, que les femmes entendent bien, mais qu'elles ne prononcent jamais: Et les femmes ont aussi leurs mots & les frases, dont les hommes n'usent point, à moins que de se faire moquer. (Rochefort 1658: 394)

Probably as a consequence of a strong antagonism and hierarchy between genders (see section 4), these restrictions were tantamount to a linguistic taboo for women, while they were only a question of prestige for men. In the male-only 1st and 1st & 2nd person pronouns (*i-* and *k-*), there was an overlap between referential and indexical expressions of the speaker's gender.

4. Origins and Development of Island Carib Gender Indexicality

4.1. *The Invasion and Mixed Marriage Explanation*

Considering the etymologically based pattern and the absence of gender indexicality in neighboring or genetically related languages¹³, it is obvious that Island Carib did neither inherit gender indexicality from Arawak nor copy it from Kalina. Rather, it was newly created by the Island Caribs themselves in pre-contact-times. In any attempt at understanding its origins, the almost perfect match between etymological origin and gender indexical value is a key element (also Hoff 1994: 166).

According to the traditional view, Kalina-speaking menfolk from the north-eastern part of South America conquered the Lesser Antilles, where an Arawak language was spoken at the time. Having killed all male inhabitants, the conquerors would marry the islander women and found a new, bicultural community with them. A social and linguistic order would emerge where women and children used the autochthonous Arawak language, and the men spoke Kalina. Because of the crucial role of women in raising children, the men's language would be downgraded within a few generations to the status of a second language and then gradually decay, beginning with the grammatical system. However, pronounced antagonism between genders and the high prestige of male activities, such as trade and warfare, would prevent it from dying out completely, so that parts of its lexicon and morphology would eventually be preserved in the men's speech. This scenario is directly based on the oral history of the Island Caribs as reported by 17th century French chroniclers. Consider, for example, the first account (to our knowledge) of the alleged Kalina invasion in the historical sources:

Bien qu'il y ait diuerses opinions sur l'origine des Caraïbes, & sur leur alliance avec les Galibis¹⁴ : celle-cy neantmoins est la plus vray-semblable : que les

13 According to Rose (2015), only two Arawak languages besides Island Carib and its modern descendent Garifuna show gender indexicality (Maipure and Mojeño), but its loci are different from Island Carib. Colonial sources do not contain any reference to the existence of gender indexicality in other indigenous languages of the Antilles. There are a few gender indexical items in Kalina kinship terminology, but the Island Carib pattern is completely independent from this.

14 Term used in French colonial documents to refer to the ethnic group known today as Kalina.

Galibis, peuple du continent fort nombreux, & fort considerable, faisant la guerre, il y a plusieurs siecles, aux Ignéri, anciens habitants des Isles, eurent sur eux de si grands auantages, qu'ils tuerent tous les hommes, & les enfans masles ; & conseruerent les femmes, & les filles, selon la coustume des Sauuages de ces contrées ; ausquelles ils donnerent pour maris des ieunes hommes de leur nation : d'où il est arriué que comme les maris parloient la language des Galibis, & les femmes celles des Ignéri, les Caraïbes qui en sont descendus se seruent de deux langues ; l'une qui est propre aux hommes, & l'autre particuliere aux femmes (Pelleprat 1655, I: 68; see also Rochefort 1658: 394-395; de la Borde 1674: 4; DuTertre 1654: 361-62; Breton 1999[1665]: 115-116).

The majority of scholars, from the 19th century to modern times, have held this explanation to be valid in general, among them Adam (1879), Brinton (1871), de Goeje (1909, 1939), Taylor (1954, 1977), Boomert (1984), Cassá (1992), Cooper (1997), Farr (1999), Santos Granero (2002), Robiou Lamarche (2003) and Aikhenvald (2012, 2016), sometimes with slight modifications. According to Taylor/Hoff (1980) and Hoff (1994: 163-164; 1995: 38-39), Island Carib does not derive directly from Kalina, but from a Carib based pidgin used in pre-conquest times among indigenous peoples on the north-eastern coast of South America, that was later expanded with Arawak morphology. Again, Highfield (1997: 156; see also Allaire 1980: 243-244) claims that the historical basis of Island Carib was not Arawak, but Kalina, and that Arawak women were kidnapped by Kalina men for reasons of exogamy. Whatever historical scenario is painted, most researchers have agreed that the Island Caribs are relatively recent immigrants on the Lesser Antilles, and that the birth of their language and culture goes back to an act of aggression by Carib speaking men from the mainland taking control of Arawak speaking women from the islands in order to found a new community where gender differences matched up with the use of different languages. Only in relatively recent times has this view been qualified within new approaches in Caribbean archaeology, which highlight the importance of political and economic alliances and the continuous mobility of persons, goods and ideas in the Caribbean area since prehistorical times (e.g. Boomert 2011: 302; Whitehead 1995: 93; see below).

A legend is not necessarily a true report of historical events (also Allaire 1980: 239), and some doubts can be raised on the veracity of the invasion reports (also Forbes 2011: 56ff). In an article that seems to have remained completely unnoticed by scholars of Caribbean prehistory and linguistics (perhaps because it is written in German), Kramer (1997: 22-24) draws

attention to striking parallels between the 17th century French sources and Herodotus' account on the birth of the Sauromatian nation out of marriages between Scythian men and Amazons. Given that variations of this story also appear in Italian Renaissance literature (Kramer 1997: 26-27) to explain the linguistic outcomes of Romanization, it seems not unlikely to us that what French historical sources hold as an ancient piece of Island Carib's oral tradition is actually a projection of a European *topos* of the formation of new languages onto the "New World"¹⁵.

Actually, historical sources prior to 1655 make no reference to invasion and mixed marriage when commenting on possible reasons for gender differences in the Island Carib language. The anonymous filibuster tells us that the speakers took them for granted as a natural thing, which does not require any explanation beyond the physical differences between men and women itself:

[...] leur demandant la raison, ils répondaient que la différence de leur langage provenait de ce qu'ils avaient leurs natures¹⁶ différentes. (Anonyme de Carpentras 2016[1620-27]: 122)

In the late 1640s and early 1650s, Breton (1978[1947]: 52) and Du Puis (2016[1652]: 197) concordantly reported that the Island Caribs considered themselves to be descendants of the Galibi from the South American mainland, but that they were unable to explain how, when and why their ancestors arrived on the islands. No mention is made of invasion, mixed marriages or kidnapping. There seem to have been some rumors among French settlers about the displacement of an earlier population, but Island Caribs themselves firmly reject this idea:

C'est la croyance de plusieurs François qu'il y avoit d'autres habitans dans ces Iles devans les Karaïbes desquelles ils ont été chassés. [...] Nos Karaïbes pourtant disent par une tradition certaine parmy eux, qu'ils sont les premiers

15 This *topos* doesn't seem to have lost any of its relevance in modern linguistics, since ethnically mixed households are still considered as a basis for the formation of Mixed Languages (compare the "language intertwining model" by Bakker/Mous (1994), or the assumption of the existence of "mixed marriage languages" as a particular type of mixed languages (Croft 2003: 57-60). Languages often discussed in this context are Michif and Copper Island Aleut.

16 This term has to be understood here in the sense of 'genitals'.

habitans des Iles [...]. (Breton 1978[1947]: 52-53; see also 1978[1654]: 133 and Du Puis 2016[1652]: 197)

In 1655, Pelleprat (quoted above) pointed out that the invasion account was only one of several origin stories circulating at the time. From the end of the 1650s on, however, Rochefort and other French authors (including Breton, as the best authority in Island Carib culture) took it to be a genuine part of oral history. It may actually be the case that the Island Caribs themselves adopted this story as a consequence of intensive contact and transculturation processes after the beginning of French colonization (1635) and the peace agreement (1641)¹⁷.

Findings from and ongoing discussions on Caribbean archaeology speak in favor of this view. No unambiguous archeological evidence exists for a military invasion on the Lesser Antilles, and resemblances in material culture between the mainland and the islands can perfectly be explained in terms of gradual incorporation of Carib cultural items into the islander's culture (Allaire 1980; 2003: 217-18; Davis/Goodwin 1990; Forbes 2011: 61; Boomert 2011). On the whole, archaeologists have been moving away from explaining demographic and cultural change in the Antilles in terms of separate migration events, in order to adopt a more dynamic view that conceptualizes the Caribbean space as a series or as overlapping interaction spheres and emphasizes diffusion, agency and communication networks. As Hofman and Hoogland point out,

[p]eople, goods and ideas moved at high speed through the Caribbean at various moments in time during which cultural boundaries between communities were doubtless being constantly shifted and negotiated, adopted and rejected. Some social networks were created, adopted and rapidly abandoned; others persisted for thousands of years. The mechanisms underlying this complex of contacts are often difficult to grasp but they are certainly diverse, dynamic and multi-linear. (Hofman/Hoogland 2011: 30; see also Boomert 2000, Hofman/Boomert/Bright/Hoogland/Knippenberg/Samson 2011; Hofman/Mol/Hoogland/Valcárcel Rojas 2014)

17 See also Hulme/Whitehead 1992: 45, as well as Farr 1999, on the possible impact of colonization on Island Carib identity construction, as reflected in differences between the anonymous filibuster's manuscript and later colonial sources.

From this perspective, the Lesser Antilles appear as a “buffer zone” between the continental and the island worlds, with the Island Carib as intermediaries (already Davis/Goodwin 1990, especially 44-45; Allaire 2003: 222; Hofman/Mol/Hoogland/Valcárcel Rojas 2014: 595). As we will explain in the following section, we think that continuous exchanges within pan-regional networks, including permanent or temporary movement of people, provide a more realistic explanation for the amount and nature of Kalina copies in Island Carib than one discrete and abrupt migration event that would have produced a male ethnic and linguistic “diaspora”.

4.2. *Towards a Sociolinguistic Account on the Origin of Island Carib Gender Indexicality*

There is overwhelming documentary and archaeological evidence to show that the Island Carib maintained political alliances and intensive trading contacts with the Kalina people on the South American mainland (see above and the numerous references to Island Carib men’s mainland expeditions in Breton’s 1665 dictionary¹⁸). Bilingualism, pidginization and cross-linguistic influences are expectable by-products of such interethnic exchanges, and these phenomena have actually been reported in the literature (Taylor/Hoff 1980: 308-309 on a Kalina based trade pidgin used in the colonial Cayenne area; Hoff 1995: 38-39; 1994: 165; Wilson 2007: 148; Whitehead 2002; Santos Granero 2002). What needs special explanation is thus not the mere existence of Kalina copies in Island Carib, but their high amount and gender-indexical value.

As research on language contact has shown (for example Matras 2009: 152), the most prevalent reasons for copying linguistic material from another language are the need to fill lexical gaps, and to claim for oneself different kinds of positive social associations (prestige) attached to the model code. Perceived gaps in the autochthonous language may have motivated the

18 Compare, for example, the entries “aintoúmali, naïnoúmali, voyage de terre ferme” (p. 12), “aláoca, aller en terre ferme” (p. 14), “machagamainronti larikini baloüe oni lihuebécali-ouágo chiric, il ne manque pas d’aller tous les ans en terre ferme” (p. 62); “Iain-toumali, voyage en terre ferme” (p. 181); “ountium, ils vont en terre ferme”, “oüalíncou, l’équipage d’une Pirogue qui va en terre ferme” (p. 202) ; see also “*Tácaoiüa*, pierre verte [...] . Les femmes des Sauvages les pendent à leur col, comme un de leur plus précieux bijoux qu’elles reçoivent des hommes qui leur apportent de terre ferme [...]” . (p. 223).

adoption of Kalina terms for materials and products that Island Carib men obtained on their expeditions to the mainland among them precious woods (Breton 1999[1665]: 127), tar (Breton 1999[1665]: 175, and green jasper (Breton 1999[1665]: 233)¹⁹, as well as for animal and plant species that were not endemic on the Lesser Antilles but introduced by trade, either alive or converted into some kind of product²⁰. However, the lexical gap explanation does not hold for the high amount of Kalina copies in the basic vocabulary, especially since they have direct Arawak synonyms from which they only differ in their gender-indexical value. Social factors have to be considered here, especially the emergence of a new, hybrid ethnic identity — a phenomenon that has often been evoked in contact linguistics as a trigger for the formation of Mixed Languages (Thomason 2003; Croft 2003).

We think that the social values attached within Island Carib society to mainland Carib culture and language made it attractive for Island Carib men to copy words from Kalina, as a means of displaying a prestigious ethnic (and also male) identity. Contemporary French observers repeatedly stated that the Island Caribs ascribed to themselves a Carib cultural identity, were close in their cultural manifestations to the Galibi, and hated the Arawak people from the mainland²¹ as their worst enemies (Breton 1999[1665]: 115-116; Rochefort 1658: 328; 349-50; DuTertre 1667b: 361-62; De la Borde 1674: 521). In modern times, archaeologists have highlighted the “strong Guiana pattern of their [i.e. the Island Carib’s] Amazonian type of culture” (Allaire 2003: 217), with regard to political organization, settlement, kinship and material culture Allaire 1980: 243; 1997: 181; Hofman/Hoogland 2011: 22; Boomert 2000. The cultural proximity between Island Caribs and Kalina has been attributed to a reorientation away from typically Arawak cultural patterns to Carib ones in relatively recent times, and may have to do with changes in political alliances (compare

19 Cf. *máne* ‘gomme noire de terre ferme’ and Kalina *mani* ‘kind of resin, black colouring matter’ and *tácaoüa* ‘pierre verte’ and Kalina *takuwa* ‘red polishing stone’.

20 Cf. “cóannê, c’est un gros oiseau de terre ferme” (88); “couchiboulou, écurueil; il n’y en a qu’en terre ferme” (91); “coulaou, perroquet de terre ferme” (93); “couyáli, ara de terre ferme” (95); “Mábiritou, ou Aoüálle [...], animal de terre ferme” (172); “malachi, poule de terre ferme” (173), “oucou, poule de terre ferme” (208), and their Kalina equivalents *kysipuru* ‘squirrel’, *kujari* ‘green-winged macaw’, *aware* ‘opossum’, *marái* ‘marail guan’ (see also *malassi* ‘faisan’ in Pelleprat 1665: 101), *woko* ‘black curassow’.

21 These people are generally called *allouages* in the historical sources, a name that refers to the contemporary Lokono people.

Santos Granero's (2002) hypothesis according to which the Island Caribs abandoned their inherited "Arawak ethos" to adopt a more aggressive and militant "Carib ethos"). It is perfectly plausible within this scenario that the Island Carib developed a hybrid ethnic identity, and started to use copies from Kalina as an act of identity. However, the gendered pattern of the adoption of Kalina elements still requires an explanation. We think that it is related to a strong gender antagonism and a strict division of work and other activities in Island Carib society.

According to the anonymous filibuster, language was only just one facet of gendered differences in social behavior among the Island Caribs of Guadeloupe:

Et cette diversité n'est pas seulement au langage, mais en beaucoup d'autres superstitions, les hommes s'abstenant de s'asseoir au sièges qui sont faits pour les femmes et les femmes de ceux qui sont faits pour les hommes, et s'assoient plutôt à terre. Comme aussi, ils ne s'entraident point les uns les autres, quoi qu'ils sont bien empêchés quelquefois à faire leurs besognes [...] (Anonyme de Carpentras 2016[1620-27]: 123)

To the author's great astonishment, the male and the female spheres of life were strictly separated, and men would never engage in female daily activities or vice versa (Anonyme de Carpentras 1620-27: 123; see also Breton 1978[1647: 54; 71-72], Du Puis 2016[1652]: 201, 210-211 and De la Borde 1674). This reflects a strong antagonism between genders in Island Carib society, which pervaded everyday behavior, including linguistic practices. Against the backdrop of the above quotation from Anonyme de Carpentras (2016[1620-27]: 122), we can even assume that biological sex, social gender and language use were linked to each other to the point of forming an inseparable unity. The high relevance of gender distinctions in social life, together with the non-distinction in folk consciousness between social and biological gender, seems to be a typical situation of speech communities that pick out gender as a relevant semiotic object and develop categorical gender indexicality (Fleming 2012: 299-301). Island Carib nomenclature for different shapes of pottery vessels provide a telling example for the connection between division of work between genders, acculturation to Kalina culture, and the outcomes of language contact: Vessel types associated with male activities generally have mainland equivalents and Kalina names, while vessels used in female activities often belong to traditional

inventories of pottery and carry names of Arawak origin (Boomert 2011, esp. 295).

Among the prestigious occupations reserved for men were trading expeditions to the mainland²² and warfare (together with the Kalina against the *allouages*) — thus, activities during which islanders would typically come into contact with Kalina speakers. For this reason, the Kalina language did not only index a prestigious culture, probably admired for its aggressive masculinity, but was also directly associated with a uniquely male experience.

Against this backdrop, the most likely scenario is that on the occasion of these encounters, Island Carib men became bilingual to a certain degree (with Kalina or some pidginized form of it). They then started to incorporate fragments from Kalina in their Arawak language when speaking to their male fellows — as acts of identity towards Kalina culture and out of “a sort of *machismo* as the language of a more prestigious nation” (Taylor 1977: 98), but also as a means of reaffirming a male ingroup identity that emerged from the shared experience of the mainland expeditions. The agglutinative type of both Kalina and their native Arawak language obliged them to insert whole constituents, i.d. lexical roots together with their affixes, a pattern that has been extensively documented for copying and code-switching involving American indigenous languages (see the discussion in section 3.2, and the literature on the formation of Michif, e.g. Thomason 2003: 25, 27). This explains the presence of “fossilized” Kalina morphemes in Island Carib male speech (Taylor/Hoff 1980, especially 304), and the emergence of pronominal morphology as a secondary site for Island Carib gender indexicality (see section 3). Given the importance of ingroup communication in this process, it seems to be no coincidence that the men retained precisely the personal prefixes used in Kalina for the 1st person singular and the 1st and 2nd person singular (that means, a form meaning ‘you and I’, which includes the addressee in the speaker’s group; Courtz 2008: 63; 445), because these affixes pragmatically allowed for the display of a shared identity between the speaker and the addressee as Carib or Carib-affine men²³.

22 Women were only allowed sporadically on these expeditions and had to remain discretely in the background (Du Puis 2016[1652]: 2011).

23 Compare also the conservation of the honorific plural morpheme *-kon* in *ibalimoucou*, cf. section 3.2.

It was probably the emergence of a new, ethnically hybrid ingroup identity, different from *both* female island Arawak and mainland Kalina identity, that motivated the creation of an etymologically mixed male speech register. At least, this is what we can deduce from research on other Mixed Languages:

For all their linguistic diversity, bilingual mixed languages all share a common function: they serve as a, or the, symbol of in-group cultural identity (Thomason 2003: 34; also Croft 2003: 59).

Despite the strong ties between the mainland and the island populations, Island Carib's cultural identification with Kalina was only partial — otherwise, they could simply have shifted to the Kalina language.

5. Conclusions

We think that a careful and close reading of the historical sources against the backdrop of findings from archaeological and sociolinguistic research has brought us closer to a better understanding of the nature and historical origins of gender indexicality in Island Carib.

Abstracting from two isolated comments that probably resulted from errors, 17th century French sources clearly describe gender-indexical variation in Island Carib as depending solely on the gender of the speaker. Therefore, Island Carib belongs to type 1 according to Haas' typology of gender indexicality. Lexicon was the most important locus of gender indexicality, to an extent that goes far beyond what has been observed in other languages. Morphology was only a secondary locus: only a few affixes could be used as additional indexes of male gender on lexemes that were already male-indexing in themselves, and this was not even a necessary choice. While signaling gender seemed to be (nearly) categorical and obligatory in the lexicon, it was only optionally and redundantly indexed in morphology. Strikingly, gender indexical values directly coincided with etymological origin, male-indexing forms being of Carib and female-indexing forms of Arawak origin.

The etymological split links Island Carib to a group of languages that linguists refer to as (Bilingual) Mixed languages, and is a key element in reconstructing the sociolinguistic processes from which the men's speech arose. As a consequence of changing economic and political alliances,

the Island Carib became culturally orientated towards the Kalina people, whom they admired for, among other things, their aggressive masculinity. A pronounced gender awareness and prestige imbalance between male and female activities in Island Carib society gave rise to the need to linguistically index gender categories. At the same time, the unequal distribution of bilingualism, with only Island Carib men coming into contact with Kalina speakers through prestigious male activities, provided the men with the possibility to do so by using Kalina elements as markers of both gender and ethnic identity. In this manner, they created a mixed speech register suitable for expressing an ethnically hybrid male identity that distinguished them from both mainland Kalina people and Island Carib women. This analysis argues against the traditionally held view that language mixing in Island Carib goes back to a single and spectacular migration event, and highlights the importance of continuous interethnic exchanges within the eastern Caribbean interaction sphere. Its results also challenge the hypothesis advanced by Fleming (2012), according to which kinship semantics is the historical source of gender indexicality in American indigenous languages. Rather, they let us suspect that the increased emphasis on antagonistic gender roles found in many South American indigenous societies (Boomert 2000, especially 392-93) may provide favorable conditions for the relatively frequent occurrence of gender indexicality in this world region. However, the Island Carib case illustrates that the actual manifestations of gender indexicality in individual languages are unpredictable, reflecting the needs and agency of speakers in ever-changing sociolinguistic settings.

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