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history of Belize; 2. Ethnolinguistic composition and census data; 2.1 Amerindians; 2.2 Creoles (Europeans, Africans, Miskitos); 2.3 Garifuna (Black Caribs); 2.4 Mestizos; 2.5 Other groups; 3. The language situation; 3.1 Language policy and education; 3.2 English and the Creole continuum; 3.2.1 Putative origins of Creole; 3.2.2 Lectal range; 4. Focus on the Stann Creek district  
4.1 Placencia and Seine Bight; 4.2 Samples of Belizean texts; 4.2.1 Text 1: Basilect; 4.2.2 Text 2: Mesolect in Creole/Carib interaction; 4.2.3 Text 3: Acrolect; 4.3 Garifuna; 4.3.1 Phonological features of Garifuna; 4.3.2 Morphological features of Garifuna; 4.3.3 Carib women's language; 5. Conclusion; Endnotes; Chapter 3. Creole Acrolects as Innovations; Abstract; 1. Radical creoles, postcreoles, and decreolization; 1.1 The radical creole hypothesis; 1.2 The postcreole hypothesis; 1.3 Problems with radical creoles and postcreoles; 1.4 A dynamic view of lectal development  
1.5 Decreolization as acquisition; 2. Acrolects and standard dialects: Social aspects; 2.1 Acrolect and standard defined; 2.2 The label "English" in Belize; 2.3 British and American values in Belize; 2.4 Range of linguistic choices and attitudes; 2.4.1 Language attitudes and gender; 2.4.2 Language attitudes and ethnicity; 2.4.3 Acrolects as psychosocial entities; 3. Acrolects and standards: Linguistic aspects; 3.1 Acrolectal texts; 3.1.1 Text 8: Local food (Peter, 40; Creole, Belize-City); 3.1.2 Text 9: Dugu (a Black Carib variant of voodoo) (Mark, 16; Garifuna, Punta-Gorda)  
3.2 Linguistic strategies in acrolects; 3.3 Linguistic features; 3.3.1 Phonological features; 3.3.2 Morphological features; 3.3.3 Syntactic features; 3.3.4 Effects of basilectal influence in acrolects; 4. Conclusion; Endnotes; Chapter 4. The Interaction of Syntax and Pragmatics in Acrolects: Topic Marking; Abstract; 1. Syntax and discourse features; 1.1 The theoretical interpretation of topics; 1.2 Topic; 1.3 Topic and focus; 2. Types of topic strategies; 2.1 Topic fronting; 2.2 Topic repetition; 2.3 Topic presentation; 2.3.1 Cleft, pseudo-cleft, and existential structures; 2.3.2 Presentative particles

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## Sommario/riassunto

Although there is a substantial amount of linguistic research on standard language acquisition, little attention has been given to the mechanisms underlying second dialect acquisition. Using a combination of function-based grammar and sociolinguistic methodology to analyze topic marking strategies, the unguided acquisition of a standard by speakers of nonstandard varieties is examined in two distinct linguistic and geographical situations: in a Caribbean creole situation (Belize), with special attention to the acquisition of acrolects by native speakers of basilects.

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