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“Did you know? Did you know? Dis Trini could flow”: Mobilizing sociolinguistic resources in Trinidadian Rapso music

Abstract: The paper investigates language use in rapso, a Trinidad-based music genre which evolved in the 1970s on the basis of local calypso and call-and-response traditions and incorporated, among others, influences from US hip hop and Jamaican reggae and dancehall. Analysing the use of local and international English forms in three representative songs by performers Brother Resistance (1980s), Kindred (1990s) and 3canal (present), I show how Trinidad Creole English develops from a straightforward symbol of cultural self-assertion and local authenticity against the British colonial tradition to one element in a more complex sociolinguistic mix, which sees several varieties of standard and non-standard English competing in an increasingly globalized contemporary mediasphere. The phenomena described here thus lend themselves well to analysis in the framework of the sociolinguistics of mobile resources which Blommaert has proposed in his 2010 book *Sociolinguistics of Globalization*.