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# **Lexical Variation in Caribbean English: Allonymy from Cognitive-Onomasiological and Ecolinguistic Perspectives**

**Tetyana Kozlova**

Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

**Liliia Bespala**

Zaporizhzhia State Medical University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

**Olga Klymenko**

Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

**Abstract**--The present paper seeks to further develop an interdisciplinary research into language variation and contact studies. Integrating cognitive-onomasiological and ecolinguistic approaches, it addresses lexical diversity in the Caribbean English. The permanent contacts between English and other local and transported languages have caused a wide range of modifications in the Caribbean English lexicon, including allonymy. Allonymy is treated as a contact-induced type of lexical variation leading to the formation of alternative names for the same referents. By tracing the sources of allonyms and disclosing cognitive mechanisms involved in their formation, this study explains the vitality of allonymic lexical items in the complex language ecology of the Caribbean region. It is argued that variation in naming processes is determined by speakers' cognitive preferences as well as their cultural vigour that manifest in multilingual and multicultural ecology.

**Keywords**---Caribbean English, conceptual structure, language contact, language ecology, operational frame.

## **Introduction**

The study of language variation has well-established traditions in linguistics and the number of research papers on variation of English has been continuously growing (Bao, 2010; Damousi, 2010; Kachru, 1986; McArthur, 1998; Mair, 2012). The recent works in this area focus on correlations between language and social change, "democratization of Englishes" [Hiltunen & Loureiro-Porto \(2020\)](#), the

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**Corresponding author:** Kozlova, T.; Email: [ethstlab@yahoo.com](mailto:ethstlab@yahoo.com)

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emergence of “new multiethnolects” of English [Cheshire et al. \(2011\)](#); [Fox & Torgersen \(2018\)](#); [Gates \(2018\)](#); [Hall \(2020\)](#); [Kerswill \(2014\)](#); [Revis \(2021\)](#), issues of linguistic variation and pragmatics [Unuabonah & Daniael \(2020\)](#), linguistic variation and language ecology ([Avramenko, 2020](#); [Ansaldo, 2009](#); [Döring & Zunino, 2014](#); [Mufwene, 2002](#)). Numerous investigations of lexical variation, namely, colonial naming practices in overseas English varieties, have provided valuable insights into changing speakers’ identities, their attitudes to the natives, “degree of cultural loyalty” [Kozlova & Bednarczuk \(2018\)](#), [Kozlova & Rudnicki \(2021\)](#) as well as application of previous linguistic and cultural experience in the new setting ([Sidnell, 2001](#); [Mühleisen, 2011](#)).

The discussions of linguistic variation in the Caribbean speech communities are characterized by the breadth of topics and approaches ([Aceto, 2009](#); [Alleyne, 1980](#); [Devonish & Carpenter, 2020](#); [Hinrichs, 2006](#); [Mair, 2012](#); [Myrick et al., 2020](#); [Hinrich & Farquharson, 2011](#); [Smith et al., 2018](#); [Youssef, 2005](#)). This relatively small and geographically isolated region is marked with a unique political, social, cultural and linguistic history that led to specific language ecology. The Caribbean was “divided by language differences brought about both by its colonial past and the rivalry between the European powers who colonized and settled the region over three centuries” ([Allsopp, 2004](#)). The development of English in the Caribbean has been significantly influenced by contacts with indigenous Amerindian languages and the West African languages brought by displaced African communities due to slavery. The Caribbean linguistic and cultural experience is well described by Mair: “The history of the Caribbean has been a painful one for most of the time, characterized by fragmentation, discontinuity, disruption and destruction of traditions which has very often led to bizarre and unexpected types of forced cultural contact. Sometimes this suffering released creative energies, which manifested themselves in various types of syncretism, the hybridization and fusion of cultures” ([Mair, 2012](#)). The interactions of diverse linguistic and cultural codes in this complex setting induced language shifts, creolization of languages and cultures with further formation of the creole continuum. All these processes are embodied in the lexical system of Caribbean English.

The present paper deals with allonymy as a special type of lexical variation in Caribbean English. According to [Allsopp & Allsopp \(2003\)](#), an allonym is “an equivalent name or term used in another territory”. Unlike synonyms, that have similar, though not identical meanings, allonyms are alternative names for the same referent. Being specific for a certain area of the Caribbean Anglophone, allonyms are of interest to contact-induced language variation studies because they reflect the character of language ecology, the manifoldness of language and cognition dynamics. The phenomenon of allonymy in Caribbean English has already been studied in lexicographic [Allsopp & Allsopp \(2003\)](#); [Allsopp \(2004\)](#) and cultural perspectives ([Tomei, 2008](#); [Masiola & Tomei, 2016](#)). In our previous works [Bespala \(2010\)](#); [Bespala & Kozlova \(2018\)](#), allonyms were discussed in the general framework of Caribbean English language worldview. However, some issues still remain unresolved. It is unclear, in particular, which cognitive mechanisms are involved in the formation of allonymy, why and how different allonyms co-exist in Caribbean English ([Clément, 1980](#); [Munnich et al., 2001](#)).

The purpose of this research is to apply a unified, cognitive and ecological, approach to allonymic instances in order to examine the mechanisms and causes of lexical variation in multilingual environment. The objectives of this research are to study the sources of allonymy, disclose cognitive mechanisms involved in the formation of allonymic lexical items, determine factors which favour allonymy in Caribbean English and assess linguistic vitality of different components of allonymic groups.

## **Methodology**

The study overviews the regional variation of Caribbean English lexical system from cognitive and ecolinguistic perspectives. Cognitive-onomasiological analysis enables to follow the stages of speakers' cognitive activity by naming processes [Grondelaers & Geeraerts \(2003\)](#); [Koch \(2008\)](#); [Smith & Heise \(1992\)](#); [Zhabotynska \(2010\)](#), reveal culture specific information and significant motivation features reflected in the lexical units. The cognitive-onomasiological approach to allonyms in the system of Caribbean English will provide understanding of how the same objects of reality are conceptualized by speech communities with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To examine that, we conducted the cognitive-onomasiological analysis using basic frame methodology. According to [Zhabotynska \(2010\)](#) all conceptual structures exposed in forms and meanings of linguistic units are organized in five operational frames: The Thing, the Possession, the Action, the Identification and the Comparison frame. Each of these frames is represented by a number of propositional schemas (qualitative, quantitative, locative, temporal etc.). The basic frames are universal and participate in structuring of any type of information. By "embodiment" of these frames in language units we observe filling of the slots of the schemas ([Garner, 2014](#); [Kravchenko, 2016](#)).

The formation of allonymy cannot be explained from a cognitive perspective alone. Ecolinguistic approach is applied to disclose how ecology of the language influences its development ([Li et al., 2020](#); [Luardini et al., 2019](#); [Steffensen & Fill, 2014](#)). According to [Mufwene \(2002\)](#), in contact settings, interacting languages make concurrent contributions to the "feature pool" from which the speakers "recreate their versions of the language" that become their idiolect. The new idiolect appears to be a hybrid with influences coming from several varieties. Competition and selection of different language units from the "feature pool" are inherent in dynamics of language evolution. In light of this, ecolinguistic approach to allonymy is employed to trace competition and selection of such lexical units in the process of Caribbean English development into a regional variety ([Anwar et al., 2021](#); [Karamoy et al., 2021](#)).

For the purpose of this research we studied 586 allonymic groups (henceforth simply, AG) taken from The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage ([Allsopp & Allsopp, 2003](#)). Structural, etymological, and cognitive-onomasiological aspects of the AG were analysed. Basic frame methodology [Zhabotynska \(2010\)](#) was applied to trace the conceptual models activated by naming processes in different areas of the Caribbean Anglophone. Contextual analysis of allonyms was performed on the basis of Caribbean online mass media and was aimed to assess linguistic vitality of different allonyms in the system of Caribbean English. It is noteworthy that the

materials of regional dictionaries do not provide full understanding of relationship between allonyms in the lexical system of Caribbean English. Difference in meaning or usage of lexical units is indicated by their environment (Chen, 2016). In order to trace how allonyms coexist and compete in the system of Caribbean English, as well as to reveal factors which determine and favour linguistic vitality of different components of AG, we conducted the contextual analysis of allonyms. The research was performed on the basis of Caribbean online newspapers and blogs. Caribbean online mass media represent a platform where residents of the region negotiate and perform their identity on a daily basis with different scales of belonging – the regional, national and local. For this purpose the speakers have to select lexical means that should be used. Thus, online mass media form a valuable source of material for investigation of competition, selection and linguistic vitality of allonyms (Camp, 2020).

## Results and Discussion

Caribbean English AG can be classified according to different criteria, such as the number of components, their etymology, the presence of the allonymic dominant, i.e. the allonym with the widest geographical functioning. Regarding the number of components, we distinguish two-component and multi-component groups. For instance, *frangipani* (CarA), *jasmine* (CayI) “a small multi-branching tree; *Plumeria acutifolia*” and *buck-banana* (Guyn), *black-banana* (Jmca), *buffert*, *claret-fig* (Bdos), *dog-banana* (CayI), *fire banana* (Tbgo), *maiden-plantain* (Belz), *mataboro*, *red fig* (Trin) “a purple-skinned variety of banana; *Musa Sapientiae*”.

Multicomponent AG are more typical for Caribbean English lexical system and constitute 55 % of all AG. The dominance can be explained by the specificity of language ecology in the region. The Caribbean Anglophone includes more than 20 areas (islands and mainland states), each of them characterized by unique ethno- and sociolinguistic situation. Hence, some of AG encompass more than 20 lexical items as are allonyms denoting a plant taxonomically known as *Momordica charantia*: *cerasee* (Baha, Bdos, CayI, Jmca, TkCa), *maiden-apple* (Bdos, Nevs, StKt, StVn, ViIs), *maiden-blush* (Angu, Antg, Mrat, Trin), *maiden-bush* (Antg, Mrat, StKt), *lizard-food* (Bdos, Nevs, StKt), *ban-caraili*, *wild corilla* (Guyn, Trin), *pomme-coolie* (Dmca, Mrat), *sorosse*, *sorossi* (Baha, Belz), *wash-a-woman-bush*, *washer-woman bush* (Nevs, StKt), *carilla*, *carilli*, *coolie-pawpaw* (Gren), *circe(e)-bush*, *raculous bush*, *miraculous vine*, *sercee*, *sersey* (Bdos), *konkonm-koulie* (StLu), *popilolo*, *sorrow-seed* (Tbgo).

As a rule, allonymic groups include an item which has the largest area of functioning – the dominant, or “primary” Allsopp & Allsopp (2003), allonym. For example, the lexical item *canker-berry* functioning in six territories of the Caribbean, is the allonymic dominant in the group with other “secondary” Allsopp & Allsopp (2003), allonyms, known only by speakers of some areas of the region: *ka-berry* (Antg, BrVi), *cioorberry* (Angu). Basing on the criterion of explicitness of the allonymic dominant, all AG can be categorized as:

- AG with an explicit dominant, functioning in six or more areas of the Caribbean Anglophone (henceforth simply, CarA) – *amaryllis* (CarA), *crocus*

(Bdos, Guyn), *rain-flower* (Jmca), *snow-drop* (Bdos) “a small lily born each on a single stalk; *Zephyranthes citrina/ tubispatha*”.

- AG with an implicit dominant, functioning in less than six areas of the Caribbean Anglophone – *amber* (Belz, Jmca), *rasam* (Belz) “hardened resin, especially used in folk-medicines”.
- AG with no dominant but with components functionally restricted to specific territories of the Caribbean Anglophone – *Amerindian silk-cotton* (BrVI), *cotton* (CayI), *duppy cho-cho* (Jmca), *French cotton* (Bdos), *milky bush* (TkCa), *silk bush* (Baha).

From etymological perspective there are homogeneous and heterogeneous AG. The prevailing heterogeneous groups (59 %) include lexical items of different origin: *breadnut* (CarA) [< English], *chatyan* (Gren, StLu, Trin) [< Fr *châtaigne* ‘chestnut’], *gwenn-pen* (Dmca) [< FrCr < Fr *graine* ‘seed’ + *pain* ‘bread’], *katahar* (Guyn) [< Bhojputi < Hindi *kaṭhal* ‘jack fruit’] “a seed variety of a breadfruit; *Artocarpus altilis*”. The formation of etymologically heterogeneous AG can be explained by the influence of language ecology and the diversity of languages in contact: Amerindian languages (Arawak, Carib, Guaraní etc) mainly in Guyana, Belize, St Vincent and Grenadines, Dominica; French and French-based Creole in St Lucia, Dominica, Trinidad and Grenada; Spanish in Trinidad and Belize; Dutch and Dutch-based Creole Guyana, the USVI; Indic languages (Hindi, Bhojpuri, Tamil) in Guyana, Trinidad, Belize; African languages (Igbo, Malinke, Twi, Fante etc ) throughout the Caribbean. Numerous linguistic codes that interacted with English in the Caribbean took part in the naming processes. Foreign elements penetrated English due to language contacts, language shifts and substrate influence (Putrayasa, 2017).

The findings revealed that allonymic dominants are mostly formed on native English stems: *sweet broom* (CarA), *balyé-dou* (Dmca, Gren) [<Fr Cr < Fr *balai doux*] “an erect weed; *Scoparia dulcis*”; *cold* (CarA) VS *fwedi* (Dmca, StLu) [Fr Cr < Fr *froidure* “cold”]. However, there are also loans of African and Amerindian origin, or their etymological hybrids. Cf.:

- *calalu* (CarA) [< Malinke *colilu*], *spinach* (CarA) [< Eng *spinach*] VS *bhaji* (Guyn, Trin) [< Hindi *bhaajii*], *calalu-bush* (Tbgo, Trin) [<Malinke + Eng], *zèbaj* (StLu) [< Fr Cr < Fr *des herbage(s)*], *zépina* (Dmca) [< Fr Cr < Fr *des épinards*] “any of number of plants with edible succulent leaves which are cooked as green vegetables”.
- *ajoupa* (Dmca, StLu, Tbgo, Trin) [< Carib *ajouppa* ‘appentis’] VS *adobe* (*house*) [< Sp *adobe* ‘a brick’], *cabbage-house*, *takeda* [< (?) Sp *taquear* ‘to pack tight’/ Eng *stockade* ] (Belz), *mud-house* (Guyn);
- *obeah-man* (CarA) [< African *obeah* + Eng *man*] VS *scientist* (Guyn, Gren, Jmca, Nevs), *papa-do-good* (Gren).

Allonymic dominants of Amerindian origin are predominantly names of Caribbean endemics: *mammee* (CarA) [< Amerind *mami*] VS *apricot* (StLu) VS *zabwiko* (Dmca, StLu) [< FrCr < Fr *des abricots*] “a large spherical fruit; *Mammea Americana*”; *agouti* (CarA) [< Guaraní *acuti*] VS *Indian rabbit* (Belz) “a rabbit-like rodent; *Dasyprocta agouti*”.

The status of these items may be due to the fact that they are the earliest names of the Caribbean flora and fauna, hence acknowledged as authentic and correct names. Dominants of African origin are represented mainly by names of dishes, cultural objects, folklore characters, i.e. African cultural heritage brought to the Caribbean:

- *Asham* (Antg, Brbu, Gren, Jmca) [< Twi *o-siam* “parched and ground corn”], *chilibibi* (StVn, Tbgo, Trin), *corn-sham* (Belz, Gren), *brown-George* (Jmca), *chili* (StVn), *coction*, *kaksham* (Jmca), *parch-corn* (Belz), *sansam* (Trin), *sham-sham* (StVn) “a confection made of corn”;
- *Anancy* (CarA) [< Twi], *Compè Zayen* (Dmca, Gren, StLu) [< Fr Cr < Fr] “the cunning rascal and hero of a countless number of folk-tales”.

Homogenous AG (41 % of all) fall into two subgroups. The first one includes AG whose members are formed exclusively with English stems, e. g. *golden-shower* (Bdos), *cat’s claw creeper* (Trin) “a massive parasitic climber; *Macfaduena unguis-cati*”. The second subgroup of AG consist of borrowings from a single source: *lougawou* (Dmca, Gren, Grns, StLu, Trin) [FrCr < Fr *loup-garou* “werewolf”], *gajé* (StLu) [< Fr Cr < Fr *gager* “to lay a bet; to hire (a servant)”] “a legendary evil male figure that can change his shape into that of a vicious beast”. The analysis has shown that allonyms in Caribbean English are formed on the basis of propositions of various frames.

### The thing frame

- Qualitative schema [X is such – quality] – *greens* (CarA) “green, leafy vegetables” [X (vegetable) is such – *green*], *bitters* (CarA) “a name applied to a number of plants used to provide bitter infusions” [X (plant) is such – *bitter*].
- Quantitative schema [X is that many – quantity] – *millions* (CarA) “a species of freshwater fish (from their massive swarming)” [X (fish) is that many – *millions*].
- Locative schema [X is there – place] – *nowherian* (Gren, Guyn, Jmca, Tbgo, Trin) “a person who is not connected with any church” [X (a person) is there – *nowhere*].
- Temporal schema [X exists then – time] – *four-o’clock* (Antg, Baha, Bdos, Gren, Jmca, Trin) “a wild plant that bears bell-like flowers that open about 4 o’clock” [X (plant) exists then – *at four o’clock*].

### The action frame

- The state / process schema [X – agent acts] – *trembler* (ECar) “a woodland bird; *Cinclotherthia ruficauda*” [X – agent (bird) acts – *trembles*].
- The contact action schema [X – agent acts upon Y – patient/ affected] – *cassava-squeezer* (CarA) “an elongated, basket-work cylinder, used for squeezing the juice from grated cassava” [X – agent *squeezes* Y – affected – *cassava*].
- The causative schema [X – causer makes Y – factitive] – *oil-leaf (tree)* (Bdos) “a robust shrub; it yields oil” [X – causer – *leaf* makes factitive – *oil*].

### The possession frame

- The part-whole schema [X – whole has Y – part] – *mouthar* (Bdos, Gren, Guyn, Tbgo, Trin) “a dangerously talkative person” [X – whole (person) has a part – *mouth*].
- The inclusion schema [X – container has Y – content] – *cow-heel soup* (Gren, Guyn, StVn, Tbgo, Trin) “a thick soup with the ankle and hoof of the cow” [X – container – *soup* has content – *cow heel*].
- The ownership schema [X – owner has Y – owned] – *child-father* (Bdos, Guyn) “the acknowledged father of the child to whose mother he is not married” [owner – *father* has owned – *child*].

### The identification frame

- The classification schema [X – identified is Y – classifier] – *ground* (CarA) “an area of land assigned to slaves to grow their own food” [X – identified is classifier – *ground*].

### The comparison frame

- The identity schema [X – compared (primary class) is Y – correlate (secondary class/ function)] – *can-cup* (Antg) “a can used for domestic purposes” [X – compared – *can* is Y – correlate (function) – *cup*].
- The similarity schema [X – compared is as Y – correlate] – *plum* (Antg, Mrat, StVn) “a red or purple fruit; *Spondias purpurea*” [X – compared (fruit) is as Y – correlate – *plum*].
- The likeness schema [X – compared is as if Y – correlate] – *Spanish needle* (Jmca) “an erect weed; *Bidens pilosa*” [X – compared (plant) is as if Y – correlate – *Spanish needle*].

A number of allonyms are formed by integration of several propositions of the same or different frames. For instance, the Identification frame and the Thing frame:

- “The classification + qualitative schema” [X – identified is Y – classifier; Y is such – quality] – [X is *pepper*; *pepper* is such – *hot*].
- “The classification + locative schema” [X – identified is Y – classifier; Y is there] – *tropic bird* (CarA) “a large ocean bird; *Phaeton aethereus*” [X is a *bird*; the bird is there – (near the) *tropics*].
- “The classification + temporal schema” [X – identified is Y – classifier; Y is then] – *August flower* (Guyn) [X (plant) is a *flower*; the *flower* is then – in *August*] etc.

Cross-frame integration occurs between such frames:

- The Identification and the Thing frames – *sweet grass* “a coarse grass; *Vetiveria zizanioides*” [X is *grass*; *the grass* is *sweet*], and other names of plants and their fruit (*blue-vine*, *sour-grass*, *broad-bean*, *common-bean*, *red-bean*, *black banana*, *red fig* etc), ichtyonyms (*blackfish*, *blue-fish*, *red-fish*) zoonyms and names of insects (*night-bat*, *six-o'clock bee(tle)*, *night-lizard*) etc.

- The Identification and the Comparison frames – *lavender-grass* (Guyn, StVn) “a coarse grass; *Vetiveria zizanioides*” [X is *grass*; the *grass* is as *lavender* (from the fragrance)], and other phytonyms (*birch-tree*, *barrel-cactus*, *candle-bush*, *finger-pepper*, *flame-tree*, *needle-grass*), names of fruit (*belly-pumpkin*, *egg-fruit*, *eggplant*, *ink-berry*, *rock-fig*, *vegetable brain*), fish and sea fauna (*catfish*, *cow-fish*, *devil-fish*, *ghost-crab*), birds and animals (*micry-bat*, *rat-bat*, *sparrow-hawk*) etc.
- The Identification and the Possessive frames – *skin-fish* “any fish that has no scales” [X is a *fish*; the fish has *skin*], and other ichthyonyms (*bone-fish*), phytonyms (*bean-tree*), names of dishes (*nut cake*) etc.
- The Identification and the Action frames – *pain-killer bush* (BrVI, Guyn, Mrat, Nevs, USVI), *pain-bush* (Tbgo) “a small bushy tree; its leaves are used as a relief for pain” [X is a *bush*; the bush *kills pain*], and other phytonyms (*pain-killer fruit*, *scratcher-bush*, *shine-bush*) names of insects (*running-ant*) etc.
- The Comparison and the Thing frames – *black-willow* “an erect tree with abundant, shiny leaves; *Capparis cynophallophora*” [X is as a *willow*; the *willow* is *black*], and other floristic names (*bay-geranium*, *big-plum*, *Chinese Christmas-tree*, *clammy-cherry*, *garden-cherry*, *French thyme*, *Irish moss*, *Mexican poppy*, *red-birch*, *red-cedar*, *white cedar* etc).
- The Comparison and the Action frames – *crab-dog* “a small greyish animal; it feeds on crabs” [X is as a *dog*; *the dog eats crabs*], and other zoonyms (*chicken-hawk*, *pea-dove*), names of fruit (*hog-apple*, *monkey-apple*) etc.
- The Possessive and the Thing frames – *big-eye* “a fish with big eyes” [X-fish has a part – *an eye*; *the eye is big*], and also names of insects (*slippery back*, *hard-back*), ethnonyms (*blue-foot*, *brown-skin*, *cob-skin*, *red-leg*) and other anthroponyms (*big-eye*, *big-mouth*, *fast-mouth*, *long-belly*, *long-eye*, *long-guts*, *long-head*, *long-hearted*, *long-mouth*, *sweet-skin*) etc.
- The Possessive and the Comparison frames – *cherry-nut* (Angu, BrVI, Mrat) “a small fruit carrying a nut” [X is as a *cherry*; *the cherry has a nut*], and also names of dishes (*blood-pudding*, *coffee-tea*, *fish-tea*, *ginger-tea*, *bitters-tea*, *herb-tea*, *rice-pudding*) etc.
- The Possessive and the Action frames – *cow-bean* “a shrub with pods containing seeds (plant used as a fodder)” [X plant has *a bean*; *a cow eats the bean*], and also phytonyms *honey-bee flower*, *grudge-pea* etc.

To elucidate the similarities and differences in conceptualization and naming processes as they were performed by different speech communities, we conducted comparative analysis of allonyms that function in six Caribbean areas with different language ecologies: Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and St Lucia. In each of the studied areas, the largest number of allonyms turned out to be formed on the basis of the Comparison frame schemas: Barbados – 25 %, Dominica – 29 %, Guyana – 22 %, Jamaica – 19 %, Trinidad – 21 %, St Lucia – 32 % (of the total number of the allonyms functioning in the area). Activation of comparative schemas by naming of the Caribbean reality is influenced by the previous cultural and cognitive experience of the settlers. The experience gained in native natural and cultural environment was extrapolated to the new setting. As Döring & Zunino (2013) noted, “in the island of the Indies, there are many old European names given to new American species framing them metaphorically in well-known continental terms”. The objects of new reality are compared to the already known ones, both to the members of the same category and to the objects of different categories.

The similarity schema is actualized in *marrow* (CarA), *gourd* (BrVi) “a green, smooth-skinned vegetable; *Lagenaria vulgaris*” [X - compared (vegetable) is as Y - correlate - *marrow/ gourd*] and other floral names with such components as *basil*, *dandelion*, *nettle*, *sage*; names of fruit and vegetables such as *gooseberry*, *mulberry*, *apple*; names of birds such as *carrion-crow*, *crane*, *pigeon*, *dove* etc. The likeness schemas are exploited in *fat-pork* “a small round fruit, having white, spongy, sharp-tasting pulp with a thin uneven skin” [X - compared (fruit) is as if Y - correlate - *pork fat*] as well as in floral names such as *Adam’s needle*, *angel’s trumpet*, *arrow*, *bridal-wreath*, *candlestick*; names of fruit such as *bullock’s heart*, *crab-eye*, *donkey-eye*; names of fish such as *cobbler*, *hind*, *king*; and in metaphoric transfers to human domain, for instance, *hag*, *hen*, *hound*, *setting-hen* etc.

Cognitive-onomasiological analysis has also revealed that allonyms are created due to the integration of similarity and likeness schemas. The similarity schema is usually responsible for the categorical attribute of the referent, while the likeness schema actualizes differential attribute which enables the speaker to distinguish the referent from other objects of the same category: *pork-fat-apple* [X - compared (fruit) is as Y - correlate - *apple*; *apple* is as if *pork fat*], and also *rose-apple*, *star-apple*, *plum-rose* etc. The second most productive onomasiological model is created by the integration of propositions of the Identification frame with the Thing frame schemas. Such cross-frame integration enables the presence of categorical and specific attributes in the forms of lexical items: *white yam* “a variety of yam” [X is *yam* (classification); *yam* is such - *white* (quality)].

Etymologically homogeneous AG arise due to both linguistic and cognitive factors. The linguistic factors come into action when allonyms are formed by actualization of one and the same conceptual model, the slots of which are filled with different language means, for instance, by synonymic items in the integration of the likeness and the locative schemas (*sea-cat* (ECar) and *sea-puss* (Jmca) “a small octopus” [X-compared is as if Y - correlate - *a cat/ puss*; Y - a *cat/ puss* is there - in the *sea*]) or in the integration of the classification and the qualitative schemas (*crazy-ants* (Gren, Mrat, StVn) and *mad-ants* (Jmca) [X - identified is Y - classifier - *ant*; *ant* is such - *crazy/ mad*]).

The linguistic factors also include the tendency towards shortening of lexical items and the influence of folk etymology. Such allonymic pairs appeared as a result of shortening *cut-down* (Bdos, Guyn) and *cuttie* (Guyn) “a beer-bottle of rum”; *bachelor* (Guyn, Trin) and *bachie* (USVI) “a room where a man lives alone”, whereas folk etymology caused the emergence of the allonyms *inflammation-bush* (CarA), *information-bush* (Guyn, Mrat, StKt) “any of two or more herbs, an infusion of which is taken as a treatment for coughs”. The dominant *inflammation-bush* refers to the contact action schema [X - *bush* acts upon Y - *inflammation*]. Apparently, the allonym *information-bush* is formed by the corruption of *inflammation* due to the reduction of the consonant cluster *infla* > *infa* > *info* (Allsopp & Allsopp, 2003).

Homogenous AG formed by borrowings include etymological doublets, which arise as variations in phonetic assimilation of loan words in different areas of the Caribbean, for example, *catacou* (Antg, Baha, USVI), *cutacoo* (Jmca), *cotacoo* (USVI) [< Twi *kotokú* “bag”]. The processes of assimilation can be influenced by other

linguistic systems which acted as medium of borrowing. It can be instanced by the allonyms *zandoli* (Dmca, StLu, Trin), *anole* (Gren, StLu) “the common tree lizard; *Anolis aeneus/ richardi*”. Carib name *anaoli* “a grey lizard” was borrowed into Caribbean English twice via French and French Creole. The direct borrowing *anole* underwent minimum changes in form, while assimilation of the indirect one in French and French Creole significantly affected the form of the allonym: Fr *des anolis* [dezanoli] “lizards” > Fr Cr > *zandoli* (with misplaced juncture and epenthetic insertion of *-d-*) (Allsopp & Allsopp, 2003).

Creole influence also explains the emergence of *barcadere* (Belz, Cayl, Jmca), *bakadé* (Trin) “a pier or wharf” [< Sp *embarcadero* ‘pier’]. The allonym *bakadé* appeared as a reduction of the consonantal cluster and retains the diacritic mark as an element of French Creole spelling. In *djablès* (Dmca, StKt, StLu, Tbgo, Trin), *ladjablès* (Gren, StLu, Tbgo, Trin) and *adjablès* (Dmca) [<Fr *la diablesse* “she-devil”], the last two forms result from the fusion of the article *la* with the noun by metanalysis (Allsopp & Allsopp, 2003). Cognitive factors come into play when naming of one and the same object involves different conceptual frames, different schemas within the same conceptual frame, and different motivating attributes by the same conceptual schemas.

Activation of different frames can be instanced by AG denoting a deep-water fish known taxonomically as *Lutjanidae: snapper* (CarA) [X acts – *snaps*] (the Action frame); *red-fish* (Bdos, Mrat, StVn) [X is *fish*; *fish* is such – *red*] (the integration of the Identification and the Thing frames). The reason for this case of allonymy is that in different acts of naming speakers focused on different features of the referent. In case of *snapper*, the speakers were more interested in the behavior of the fish, while in case of *red-fish*, they decided to specify the categorical attribute of the referent (‘fish’) and its specific feature (‘red’). The dominant character of the allonym *snapper* is probably connected with the fact that the attribute ‘action’ was preferred by the speakers. The evidence of this fact is reflected in some contexts: “*snappers lay eggs and hide from predators in the reefs*” (Jamaican Observer 18.09.2019).

Formation of allonyms on different schemas of the same frame can be exemplified by *running ant* and *sugar ant*. Both allonyms result from the activation of the Action frame. However, *running ant* represents activation of the process schema [X-identified is Y- classifier – *ant*; *ant* acts – *runs*], whereas *sugar ant* is based on the contact action schema [X-identified is Y- classifier *ant*; *ant* carries/ eats *sugar*]. Hence, in different naming acts speakers focus on either the intransitive acts of the agent (*ant runs*) or its transitive acts directed on another object of reality (*ant carries/ eats sugar*). In other cases, allonyms appear to be formed on the basis of one schema with its slots filled differently because of the specific choice of differential attribute in each naming act. The allonyms *cow-fish* (Baha, Gren, Mrat, StLu) and *box-fish* (Baha, Guyn, TkCa) “a fish squarish in shape, with two horns” reflect the conceptual model “classification + metaphor” [X - identified is Y - classifier; Y - compared is as if Z - correlate]. The classificatory slot is filled equally for both allonyms [X is *fish*], but the correlates were chosen differently [Y – *fish* is as if (1) *cow*, (2) *box*]. This variation is connected with speakers’ focusing on different motivating attributes of the referent, i.e. a specific part (‘horns’ like a cow has) or the shape of body (‘square’ as if a box).

The analysis of heterogeneous AG has proved that allonyms of different etymology are often formed on the basis of the same conceptual models. For example, a number of Caribbean fruit names are formed by the Comparative frame [X-compared is as Y-correlate], where the correlate slots are filled in with the names of fruit typical for European flora: “apple” – *rose-apple* (CarA) VS *pomme-rose* (Dmca) [< Fr *pomme* “apple”] “a rounded fruit; *Syzygium/ Jujenia jambos*”. In names of Caribbean fauna, the correlate slots are also filled analogically: *carrion-crow* (Guyn, Jmca), *crow* (Baha, Guyn), *John crow* (Belz, Jmca) VS *corbeau* (Gren, Trin) [< Fr *corbeau* “crow”] “a vulture; *Coragyps atratus*”. Such correlations in the strategies of naming in the Caribbean Anglo- and Francophone can be explained by the similarity of native natural environments of the English and the French. As a result, typical representatives of the categories ‘fruit’ and ‘birds’ maybe appear to be common for the English- and French-speaking worldviews.

Composite allonyms usually have partial analogies in their onomasiological structures. For example, allonyms created on the basis of the Comparative and the Thing frames, models “similarity + quality”, “similarity + location”, “similarity + likeness”: *wild cucumber* (Bdos, BrVI, Gren, Jmca) [X - comparative – fruit is as Y – correlate – *cucumber*; the cucumber is such – *wild*], *ti-kokom* (StLu) (< Fr Cr < Fr *petit concombre* “little cucumber”) [X - comparative – fruit is as Y-correlate – *cucumber*; cucumber is such – *small*]; *bell-apple* (Guyn, Nevs, StVn, Trin, BrVI, USVI) [X – fruit is as Y – *apple*; Y - apple is as if Z - *bell* ], *golden-apple* (Jmca) [X - comparative – fruit is as Y-correlate – *an apple*; *the apple* is such – *golden*], *pomme-(de)-liane* (Dmca, StLu, Trin) [X - comparative – fruit is as Y-correlate – apple; apple is there – on liana].

In such models, similarities arise in the slots which are responsible for categorical attributes of referents: the slots ‘correlate’ of similarity scheme [X - comparative – fruit is as Y-correlate – *apple/ pomme*], where the object is identified as a round solid fruit, similar to apple; [X - comparative – fruit is as Y-correlate – *cucumber/ concombre*], where the object is conceptualized as an elongated fruit. Thus, the category of the referent is equally identified by both English-speaking and French-speaking community. The slots which represent specific attribute of the object (qualitative, locative, likeness slots) are filled in differently. We can assume that each speech community focused on specific differential features of the object, the features that distinguished it from other members of the same category: ‘form’, ‘size’, ‘colour’, ‘location’ etc.

There are also heterogeneous AG whose members are formed by the same conceptual models with all slots filled identically: *Malacca-apple* (Antg, Guyn), *Malay-apple* (Belz), *pomme-malac* (Trin), *pommerac* (Bdos, Dmca, Trin) [< Fr *pomme de Malacca* “Malaysian apple”] “a soft fruit (of Malaysian origin ; *Passiflora laurifolia*” [X (fruit) is as an *apple*; the apple is *Malaysian*]; *seed-under-leaf* (StVn, Tbgo, Trin) and *gwenn-anba-fey* (Dmca, Gren, Trin) [< Fr *grain en bas feuille* “seed below leaf”] “a variety of green weed; *Phyllanthus amarus/ tenellus*” – model “part-whole + location” [X - whole (plant) has a part – *seed*; *seed* is there – *under leaf*]; *bird-pepper* (CarA) and *piman-zwanzo* (Dmca) [< Fr Cr < Fr *piment* “pepper” + *oiseau* ‘bird’] “a small pointed cylindrical pepper” – model “classification + contact action” [X - identified (plant) is Y-classifier – *pepper*; agent – bird acts upon affected –

*pepper*]. Such correspondences in onomasiological structures of etymologically different allonyms can be attributed to the universality of cognitive processes: the referents were identically categorized and conceptualized, and hence named similarly by speakers of different languages. Taking into consideration language ecology of the Caribbean, it is more likely that such analogies are the result of semantic translation or calquing.

According to ecolinguistic principles, allonyms form a “feature pool” of lexical units from which Caribbean English speakers “draw” elements that become a part of their idiolects. The allonyms regularly selected from the “feature pool” can become a part of the regional standard language variety, which is still in the process of its formation. As lexical system tends to get rid of the elements which are excessive, allonyms need to compete and find their specific niche in Caribbean English. It is important to study competition and selection of allonyms in Caribbean English lexical system and determine factors which provide linguistic vitality of such lexical units.

The contextual analysis has shown that linguistic vitality of allonyms is ensured by distribution of functions among components of AG. While the dominant allonym can be used in acrolectal forms of English, the usage of secondary allonyms can be limited to mesolect or basilect: *birth-paper* (CarA), *age-paper* (Belz, Jmca), *born-paper* (Guyn), *kaaj* (Trin, Guyn) “birth certificate”. The dominant component of this group *birth-paper* (CarA) functions throughout the Caribbean as an informal synonym of the General English word *birth certificate*. The allonymic dominant *birth-paper* is widely used in regional online mass media:

- *What struck me that this was the real birth paper is the fact that the person who supplied the registration information was noted to be Angus Griffiths, her grandfather (Jamaica Gleaner 24.12.2020);*
- *The Guardian, in ‘75, reported a massive birth-paper scam, where illegal documents were provided for the immigrants (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 17.07.2013);*
- *Birth papers are lost somewhere in the region (StarBroek News 17.08.2017).*

Secondary allonym *age-paper* is labeled in the dictionary [Allsopp & Allsopp \(2003\)](#), as historic. In modern Caribbean online sources, it is used in the meaning “birth certificate”. However, the item functions mainly in mesolectal forms of speech: “*Nuh matta wha gwaan, no matter how mi travel the world, nuh matter wha mi do inna the world, mi age paper mark Sturge Town, St Ann,*” *Shabba Ranks told The Gleaner*” (Jamaica Gleaner 17.07.12). In acrolect, it occurs only occasionally and is used in writing with quotation marks and explanation of meaning. It brings evidence that this lexical item is not common in formal register: “*Jamaicans often joke about ‘age paper’ (birth certificate), but the barriers and challenges those without one face on a daily basis are no laughing matter.*” The allonym *born-paper* (Guyn) is labeled in [Allsopp & Allsopp \(2003\)](#), as erroneous or disapproved. This lexical item was not found in analyzed contexts.

The allonym *kagaj* is a borrowing from Hindu [< Bhojpuri< Hindu *kaagaj* / *kaagaz* “paper, document”]. Originally the loanword was used in reference to Indic culture which is marked by the specific subject label [Indic] in ([Allsopp & Allsopp, 2003](#)).

In its adaptation to the recipient culture, the loanword looks for its niche and undergoes the semantic extension: *kagaj* acquired new meanings “paper money; money” and “a newspaper”. As mentioned in Allsopp & Allsopp (2003), the allonym *kagaj* is used by non-Indic speakers as jocular. The results of the contextual analysis have shown that *kagaj* is occasionally used in the sense “any document” in online sources of Guyana. It is either followed by a gloss or quoted: “*Punjabi men are known to marry Guyanese women for kagaj (papers)*” (Guyana Community Discussion Forums). This indicates that the loanword is not accepted in formal communication. However, the contexts prove that *kagaj* has lost its sole association with Indic culture and is used in reference to Guyanese national culture:

*This moment of graduation (the receipt of “kagaj”) must not mean the end of your relationships with your school and the Institute of Creative Arts. It must mark a new moment of your engagement with creativity and arts education and training in Guyana (Guyana Folk 30.09.2014).*

Differentiation of functions is seen in AG with the dominant allonym *ackee* (CarA) “a pear-shaped fruit; *Blinghia sapida*”. *Ackee* (CarA) was borrowed into English in 1778 from African languages where it denoted the same fruit [*< Kru ā-kee, Twi āṅkye* “a kind of wild cashew tree and its fruit; *Blinghia sapida*] (Cassidy & Page, 2002). In Allsopp & Allsopp (2003), it is registered that in Jamaican English the lexeme *ackee* coexists with two secondary allonyms: *ackee-apple*, *vegetable brain* (Cassidy & Le Page 2002). The allonym *ackee-apple* is an etymological hybrid formed in the result of integration of the identification and the similarity schemas [X-fruit is *ackee*; the fruit is as Y - *apple*]. The fruit of African origin was compared to the prototypical European fruit. The allonym *vegetable-brain* is formed by the native English resources in the similarity and the likeness schemas [X – fruit is as *vegetable*; vegetable is as if Y - *brain*] due to the resemblance of the flesh of the fruit to the brain.

Context analysis has shown that the above-mentioned allonyms have different functions. The allonymic dominant *ackee* is widely used in Jamaican online newspapers and blogs to denote the fruit and the tree which bears it (*ackee tree*): “*The botanical name of Jamaica's national fruit, the ackee is Blighia sapida*” (Jamaica Gleaner 09.10.2012); “*If you are lucky to have ackee trees bearing now, you may be wondering what to do with the surplus... .*” (Jamaica Gleaner 29.04.2010). The analyzed contexts have also shown that *ackee* is regarded as a national Jamaican fruit, and the dish cooked from it (*ackee and saltfish*) is a part of national cuisine. Two other allonyms (*ackee-apple*, *vegetable brain*) occasionally occur in Jamaican online sources. Allonym *ackee-apple* refers to the fruit only, and *vegetable brain* is used to refer mainly to the edible part of *ackee*:

- *The ackee is the national fruit of Jamaica, and ackee & saltfish is the national dish. Outside of Jamaica, the ackee is not widely consumed (Jamaicans.com);*
- *The ackee fruit is bright red. The edible parts, sometimes called Vegetable Brains, is the aril, which looks like a small brain, or scrambled eggs, with a delicate flavor. It is best known in the Jamaican dish Saltfish and Ackee (Jamaican Foodie).*

Linguistic vitality of the allonym *ackee* is ensured by its authenticity, as this loanword is the original name of the fruit brought from Africa, so it is regarded as the most accurate phytonym. The allonym *vegetable brain* has found its niche in the system of Caribbean English as the term for an edible part of the fruit. We can suppose, that *ackee-apple* is likely to be displaced by its allonyms as an excessive component of the AG. A similar type of relationship is found among the allonyms *avocado(-pear)*, *pear* (CarA), *alligator-pear* (CarA), *zabòka* (Dmca, Gren, StLu, StVn, Trin), *butter-pear* (Belz) “a rough-skinned variety of avocado. The allonymic dominant *avocado* is borrowed from Aztec *ahuacatl*, the authentic name of the fruit. The allonyms *pear*, *avocado-pear* and *butter-pear* are based on the similarity schema [X-fruit is like Y-*pear*] and its integration with schemas of other frames:

- The similarity + the identification - *avocado-pear* [X is avocado; avocado is as Y - *pear*].
- The similarity + the inclusion schema - *butter-pear* [X - fruit is like *pear*; X has content - Y - *butter*].

The allonym *alligator-pear* is the result of corruption and folk etymology of *avocado-pear*, and *zabòka* is a loanword which entered English via French Creole [< Fr Cr < Fr *des avocats*]. The contextual analysis has shown that allonymic dominant *avocado* is widely used throughout the Caribbean. We can assume that linguistic vitality of the term is reinforced by the fact that it is a part of “Internationally Accepted English” (the term used by Allsopp & Allsopp (2003)), as well as an internationalism found in many languages. However, allonyms *avocado-pear* and *pear* also display a high level of linguistic vitality in Jamaican English as they occur regularly in online mass media: “*Fats and oils - butter, margarine, avocado (pear), ackee, coconut, etc. Fats - come mainly from margarine, ackee, pear, butter, etc.*” (Jamaica Gleaner 27.03.2010).

The allonym *zabòka* is mainly used in Trinidad as an informal name of the fruit: “*i doh even like zaboka or peewah*” (TriniTuner.com). We can assume that linguistic vitality of this allonym is owing to its etymological ties with the original name of the fruit. It is used by Trinidadian online mass media mainly to appeal to local addressee. Otherwise, it is followed by the dominant allonym as a gloss: “*Zaboca (avocado) season was one of favourite times of the year some of those wonderful pears we call Zaboca.*” (CaribbeanPot.com). Some allonyms, which usage was originally limited to a single territory of the Caribbean, have extended their functioning:

- *Bad-talk* (CarA), *mové-lang/ mauvais-langue* (StLu, Tbgo, Trin), *malpalé* (Dmca, StLu), *bad-mouth* (Baha), *count* (Gren), *ill-speak* (Tbgo) “to speak maliciously intending to cause discredit, disadvantage or harm”,
- *Bad-talk n* (CarA), *mové-lang / mauvais-langue* (StLu, Tbgo, Trin), *scasm* (Crcu, Nevs), *bad-mouth* (Guyn), *bad-tongue* (USVI) “malicious gossip or injurious half-truths”.

The allonymic dominant *bad-talk*, a calque from African languages *bad-talk* < Yoruba *ṣọṣọ buruku* “to say evil word about somebody”, is widely used in different areas of the Caribbean:

- *Don't bad-talk young people, invest in them* (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 15.10.2012).
- *School was supposed to cure the disease of bad talking* (Jamaica Gleaner 11.09.2011).
- *Guys who habitually bad-talked females* (St. Lucia Star 12.12.2011);
- *They are unlikely to "bad-talk" the PMs in their absences* (The Sun (Dominica) 29.05.2018).

The use of the secondary allonym *bad-mouth* “to speak maliciously intending to cause discredit, disadvantage or harm” is limited to the English of the Bahamas. According to [Allsopp & Allsopp \(2003\)](#), on the rest of the Caribbean territories it is used in the meaning “a supposed ability or tendency to bring about misfortune by speaking about it”. The noun *bad-mouth*, marked as a secondary allonym of *bad-talk* “malicious gossip”, functions in Guyana. The results of contextual analysis indicate that the verb *bad-mouth* is presently used in the meaning “to speak maliciously intending to cause discredit, disadvantage or harm” by English speakers of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia:

- *You bad-mouth the same Government from which you have been “borrowing* (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 08.06.2011).
- *Bad-mouthing and name-calling suggest we lack the facts to back up our positions* (St. Lucia Star 10.01.2011).

The same is true for the noun *bad-mouth*, which is used in various areas of the Caribbean.

- *This government is not going to be pulled by every cry, every criticism, and every bad mouth* (Jamaica Gleaner 12.08.2018).
- *A victim of bad-mind, bad-mouth, closure and abandonment, under the UNC, before it can surface as a new idea to solve the intractable diversification problem* (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 11.10.2012).

We can assume that secondary allonym *bad-mouth* competes with the primary allonym *bad-talk*. The contextual occurrences of allonyms may exhibit their concentration when two or more allonyms are proximated to explain or reinforce the idea. For example, in Trinidad and St Lucia the loan word *mauvais-langue* [< French Creole < French *mauvais langue*] occurs with the allonyms *bad-talk*, *bad-mouth*, *ill-speak*:

- *It is rarely accompanied however with the "mauvais-langue" and bad-mouthing that many times accompany similar shifts in T&T* (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 18.06.2014);
- *Our ability for mauvais langue– To ill-speak someone. To gossip about someone, or to spread any “rakes” about them. Mauvais langue reaches its pinnacle in the political culture of the country* (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian 30.12.2008);
- *The electorate is in for nothing substantial but the same old mepwis (bad-talking) and mauvais-lang (bad-mouthing) political sound bites* (St. Lucia Star 28.06.2011).

Such allonymic concentration employed in online mass media provides an adequate appeal to the national (Trinidadian, St. Lucian etc) reader and to the regional (Caribbean) audience. Also, it provides an opportunity to negotiate different scales of belonging (local/ national/ regional).

### **Conclusion**

Specific ecology of English language in the Caribbean, namely, its coexistence and interaction with numerous linguistic codes, the processes of language shift and creolization, have stimulated the development of allonymy. Etymological sources of allonymy are determined by language ecology of a particular area of the region. Although both native names and loans can enjoy extended functioning as allonymic dominants, those of African and Amerindian origin appear to be less common and confined to the names of Caribbean endemics. Allonyms of other origin (French, Spanish, Dutch, Hindu) function as strong regionalisms in particular Caribbean territories.

Cognitive-onomasiological analysis of allonyms has shown that naming strategies in different areas of the Caribbean follow the same patterns. The prevalence of the Comparison frame schemas in the processes of naming suggest the importance of speakers' previous cultural and cognitive experience in cognizing new settings. The Caribbean realia are compared to those already cognized by the speakers. The sameness established between the compared items or categories leads to the similarity schema, whereas their differences result in the activation of the likeness schema. It seems that speakers find it necessary to verbalize specific features and manifest the names of the category the referents belong to. This is achieved through cross-frame integration of the Identification and the Thing frame schemas.

The degree of linguistic vitality varies for the members of allonymic groups and agrees with the distribution of functions between allonyms and their dominants. Functional differences provide allonyms with their niche in the complex and competitive system of the Caribbean environment. Further research should be done to investigate usage and functions of allonyms in various types of Caribbean English discourse.

### **Territorial abbreviations used**

Angu –	Anguilla
Antg –	Antigua
Baha –	Bahamas
Bdos –	Barbados
Belz –	Belize
Berm –	Bermuda
Brbu –	Barbuda
BrVI –	British Virgin
CayI –	Cayman Islands
CarA –	Caribbean area
Crcu –	Carriacou
Dmca –	Dominica
ECar –	East Caribbean

Gren –	Grenada
Grns –	Grenadines
Guyn –	Guyana
Jmca –	Jamaica
Mrat –	Montserrat
Nevs –	Nevis
StKt –	Saint Kitts
StLu –	Saint Lucia
StVn –	Saint Vincent
Tbgo –	Tobago
TkCa –	Turks and Caicos islands
Trin –	Trinidad
USVI –	United States Virgin Islands
Vils –	Virgin Islands

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