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## Turks and Caicos Islands: Language Situation

### Editorial Team

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The Turks and Caicos Islands are two island groups in the North Atlantic Ocean, a southeastern continuation of the Bahamas. The archipelago includes more than 30 small islands, of which only eight are inhabited.

The first known inhabitants here were Taíno Indians, who were killed and forced into slavery by European settlers in the 16th century. Ownership of the territory was disputed between the French, Spanish, and British, which ended with the eventual victory of the British, although the French also ruled for some period in later history. The islands remained without a permanent population until 1678, when people arrived from Bermuda and settled there, trading in salt. Later settlers established cotton plantations, using the labor of slaves. The archipelago

became part of the Bahamas in 1799 and then became self-governing in 1848. In 1872 it was annexed to Jamaica, where it remained until 1962, when it was linked to the Bahamas. In 1973 it became an overseas territory of the United Kingdom.

The population (19 956, July 2004 estimate) is mostly of African origin (90%), descended from the slaves who were brought in the 18th century. In addition, there is a mixed European and American minority (10%). Recent years have seen the rise of the number of immigrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The official language is English. At least half of the population speaks Turks and Caicos Creole English, a creole closely related to Bahamas Creole English.

*See also:* Bahamas: Language Situation; Pidgins and Creoles: Overview.

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## Turner, Lorenzo Dow (1895–1972)

**P D Fallon**, Howard University, Washington, DC, USA

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Lorenzo Dow Turner (1890–1972) was the first African–American member of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), and is best known for his *Africanisms in the Gullah dialect* (1949), the first groundbreaking monograph on the Gullah language (Sea Island Creole English or Geechee).

Lorenzo Dow Turner was born August 21, 1890, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. (Later in life, Turner listed a birth date in 1893 or 1895, because grants were age restricted). Turner earned his bachelor's degree from Howard University in 1914 and completed his master's degree from Harvard University in 1917 (which he financed by working on steamboats in the summer). He became a professor in the

Department of English at Howard from 1917 and its Head from 1920–1928. While on Howard's faculty, he earned a doctorate in English from the University of Chicago in 1926 (Turner, 1929). Turner also co-edited an anthology of African–American literature (Cromwell, Turner, and Dykes, 1931).

Turner left Howard in 1928 to found the *Washington Sun* newspaper, but when it folded, he taught at Fisk University, where he stayed from 1929 to 1946. Turner often taught at other historically black institutions during the summers, where he was exposed to different language varieties, especially Gullah, which piqued his linguistic interest.

Turner attended the 1930 Linguistic Institute and was recruited by Hans Kurath to collect data for the *Linguistic atlas of the United States and Canada*, conducting questionnaires on Gullah and Louisiana Creole (Louisiana Creole French). Turner gained

additional training from the Linguistic Institutes of 1931 and 1934. Realizing the importance of the African substrate in these languages, he spent 1936 to 1937 at the University of London, studying phonetics with Daniel Jones and Liliias Armstrong, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, studying West African languages with Ida Ward. Not long after a research fellowship at Yale, where he studied under Edward Sapir, Turner began publishing his previous studies on Africanisms in Gullah. In part because he was African-American, Turner was able to win the trust of his linguistic consultants and was able to describe a more vernacular form of Gullah than his white colleagues could.

Turner developed an interest in African cultural survivals in Brazil, studying there from 1940 to 1941. In 1946, Turner moved to Roosevelt College in Chicago. He won a Fulbright to Africa in 1951 to 1952, where he lectured in Nigeria, and where he drove 20 000 miles, conducting research on linguistics and folklore along the way. He developed language materials in Sierra Leone Krio for the Peace Corps, along with unpublished dictionaries on Brazilian and African languages, and set up several Peace Corps programs in Africa. Turner died on February 10, 1972, leaving a tremendous wealth of unpublished material from West Africa and Brazil.

Turner's greatest contribution was to rebut the assumption that there were no African retentions in the New World, using thousands of examples from all aspects of language. Turner's (1949) book paved the way for later studies in both creoles and in African American Vernacular English.

*See also:* Armstrong, Liliias Eveline (1882–1937); Dialect Atlases; English, African American Vernacular; Gullah; Jones, Daniel (1881–1967); Kurath, Hans (1891–1992);

Pidgins and Creoles: Overview; Sapir, Edward (1884–1939); Ward, Ida Caroline (1880–1950).

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## Turner, Ralph Lilley, Sir (1888–1983)

**J C Wright**, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK

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Sir Ralph Lilley Turner (IESKBMCFBA) was serving as an officer in the Gurkha Rifles during the Palestine Campaign of 1917–1918 when he conceived the plan that was to lead to *A comparative and etymological dictionary of the Nepali language* (Turner, 1931) and to *A comparative dictionary of the Indo-Aryan languages* (Turner, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1985).

Turner was born on October 5, 1888. He was introduced to Sanskrit while still at school, studied Classics and Sanskrit with comparative philology at Cambridge, and in 1913 was appointed to teach Sanskrit in Queen's College, Benares. He was, in 1920, deputed to Benares Hindu University as a professor of Indian linguistics and, in 1922, elected to the chair of Sanskrit in London University at its new School of Oriental Studies. Thus he not only influenced and worked with the rising generation of Indian historical linguists, such as S. K. Chatterji, S. M. Katre,