COLLABORATION OR COLLISION: A TALE OF TWO LANGUAGES – JAMAICAN CREOLE AND JAMAICAN STANDARD ENGLISH

EDUEXCHANGE E-DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date of Discussion: January 10-12, 2011

Professor Beverley Bryan, a Professor of Linguistics in Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona, was the moderator for the recently concluded Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress E-Discussion, EduExchange, held between January 10 and 12. Members were invited to characterize the language situation, identify language goals and factors that prevent achievement of these goals as well as strategies for developing target language competence in primary schools. The full discussion is available on the Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress website.

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PARTICIPANTS

We received five comments for the discussion, for which we thank the following persons:

- o Kristin Fox
- o Novelette McLean Francis
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- o Cecille Young

Contributors belonged to the following organisations:

- McAuley Primary School
- University of the West Indies
- USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project
- USAID/ Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress

BACKGROUND

In recent years, it has been widely acknowledged that Jamaica is a bilingual society. The English as a mother tongue approach that ignored the reality that "we write a language we do not speak. We speak a language we do not write" was considered to be ineffective in Jamaica's learning environment (Mutabaruka cited in Devonish & Carpenter, 2007). As a result, the Language Education Policy (LEP) was developed in 2001 to simultaneously promote oral use of the Jamaican Creole (JC) in schools and facilitate the development of skills in Standard Jamaican English (SJE) (LEP, 2001).

The Jamaican classroom features students who entered the school system with SJE, JC or a mixture of both. This language situation is made even more complex by the "range of varieties that some linguists refer to as a continuum: im a nyam im dinna/im a iit im dinna/im iiting im dinna/him is eating him dinna/he is eating his dinner" However, Professor Bryan explains that despite this, "at the structural level, syntax might be different but the similarity is sufficient for speakers to communicate with each other through the different codes." (Beverley Bryan, January 10, 2011).

The concern about English language competence arises because of the "the two 'englishes'" (Shields (1989) cited by Professor Bryan). That is, the closeness of the JC to SJE makes it problematic for Jamaican students when they learn English, particularly as there is no distinction made in the classroom between the two languages. Without sufficient attention paid to promoting language awareness to enable students to make this distinction, students will continue to struggle in the Grade Four Literacy Test and Language Arts examinations as well as in the oral use of English. It is therefore clear that the issue of English language competence has implications for overall school performance and possibly future success of our children.

Interaction in a Jamaican Grade 7 class:

Teacher*:* What did I say the family is?

Student 1: Miss the family is a group of people living together and caring for each other

Student 2: Mis dis bwai tomp mi aa push di des paa mi
Translation: Miss this boy punched me and pushed the desk on me

Teacher: Last week we looked at members of the family

Student 3: Yes Miss. Mother, children, father, sister, brother

Teacher: Last week we looked at the roles of the father

Student 4: Mii tiicha/go out an werk/ an ern di moni tu bai fuud
Translation: My teacher/ go out and work/ and earn money to buy food

Teacher: Now we are going to look at the roles of the mother

Student 5: Mek shuor di fuud iz kuk/mek shuor shi pripier di chiljren far skuul
Translation: Make sure the food is cooked/ Make sure she prepares the children for school

Beverley Bryan
School of Education, UWI

FACTORS THAT IMPEDE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

The fluid nature of the Jamaican language envionment enables students "to access the content of the curriculum through the use of different strategies" (Novelette McLean Francis, January 10, 2012). However, the discussion and the scenario on the previous page suggest, students have difficulty producing "English structures", that is communicate in English language sentences(Novelette McLean Francis, January 10, 2012).

The discussion also highlighted that successful demonstration of English language competence by Jamaican students is impeded by the following factors:

o How the two languages are being used to promote learning.

o Inadequate practice of oral communication in English with opportunities for structuring and re-structuring.

o Teachers' lack of understanding of their role and low level of language awareness.

What are we doing with both languages in the classroom?

Discussants agreed that in some Jamaican classrooms there is little motivation to learn English because students believe "they can get by sufficiently using their first language" (Novelette McLean Francis, January 11, 2012). One member labeled this situation a 'learning comfort zone', which is fostered by "the view that English is already known by most if not everyone and that people simply need to 'brush up their English' when situations dictate" (Novelette McLean Francis, January 11, 2012).

Many of our Creole speaking children believe indeed that they are speaking English and often fail to perceive the structural differences between the two languages relying solely on vocabulary for comprehension. This has necessitated the need for perception of the targeted structure which should involve explicit instruction in contrasting the two language structures as an introductory activity prior to teaching a particular English structure. This activity will generate the condition necessary to receive the new structure as such, new and different.

This should be followed by reception of the target. In this phase learners should be immersed in samples of the target in various contexts such as poems, stories, other forms of literature. They should be allowed to use both auditory and visual modes in individual as well as group activities. The aim should be to have learners internalizing the target.

Internalization of the target is deemed to have been achieved when learners can creatively use the targeted structure in written or oral expressions. Therefore opportunities should be provided for this to happen.

Cecille Young
McAuley Primary School

However, "learning another language requires input. If there is no differentiation, then the opportunities for noting and marking salient English input and for reinforcement are lost." (Beverley Bryan, January 11, 2012). This lack of differentiation between the two languages contributes to many Creole speaking students' belief that "they are speaking English and often fail to perceive the structural differences between the two languages relying solely on vocabulary for comprehension" (Cecille Young, January 12, 2012). "Thus, with co-existence and communication, there is no motivation to learn another language" (Beverley Bryan, January 11, 2012)

Discussants also agreed that the role of teachers and their level of language awareness of the linguistic reality they are working with are important. Therefore teachers require:

- o **Acceptance and acknowledgement of Jamaican Creole as the first language of some students**

- o Knowledge of the two languages as separate distinct codes;

- o Understanding of "language by ear" as different from "language by eye"; and

- o Understanding of second language acquisition generally and literacy acquisition in a second language where the 2 languages are closely related. (Beverley Bryan, January 11, 2012)

> I believe that deliberate second language teaching through carefully crafted English and literacy programmes, constant modeling of English Language use and general immersion will assist the teacher greatly in meeting the specified goals. Language and literacy programmes need to go beyond what is normal and acceptable in a bid to target specific areas deemed to be challenging in our particular bilingual situation. Equally important to the need to help students achieve English competence, is the need to appreciate the diversity of our language situation in the society and in the classroom and to work effectively with this situation on a daily basis in order to achieve results. This means that English Language teaching cannot be relegated to a programme, no matter how carefully crafted, but must be constantly adapted in order to make it relevant to the specific needs of the students in any given place or time.
>
> Novelette McLean Francis
> USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project

STRATEGIES

It is noted that because SJE and JC "share many lexical items (and the number increases with some varieties of JC which are closer to the English pole on the continuum)", the Jamaican context "is not wholly a second language learning situation but a partial one" (Cecille Young, January 12, 2012).

The Approach: Full Bilingual Programme versus Transitional Bilingual Programme

Full bilingual programme refers to "programs in which both languages" are "maintained right throughout the entire education process, and were given equal roles and functions" (Devonish & Carpenter, 2010). On the other hand, transitional bilingual education involves incorporating the native language for instruction in the beginning to facilitate understanding and after a few years, switching to English only instruction. Bryan (2004) noted that the Language Education Policy adopted by the Ministry of Education "recognizes 'transitional bilingualism' as a legitimate early language learning strategy", which "means teachers are encouraged, in the early period in school, to use whatever language is needed so that the child can understand them" (p. 89).

According to Professor Bryan Jamaica's "linguistic and sociolinguistic context would not support the introduction of a full bilingual programme." She also noted that Dennis Craig's "idea of a transitional bilingual programme came from of his recognition that Creole speaking children needed 'continuity of cognitive growth'. They needed the opportunity to continue to use their mother tongue in school to develop critical and problem-solving skills that might be hindered with the abrupt transfer to formal literacy in English ("language by eye") on entry to school." (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012).

Good practices: How do we promote English language competence?

"Good practices can be found, but cannot always be simply replicated" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012). To effectively improve students' English language competence, English language teaching should be constantly adapted to meet the needs of students. This requires that teachers answer the following questions:

- o "What are the specific language realities of my rural or urban students?
- o Have my students made any movement along the language continuum before or since I have begun to interact with them?
- o Is my school in a secluded language environment?
- o Are the language needs of my students individual or fairly uniform?
- o What are the specific language features coming out of my students' written and verbal productions?"

(Novelette McLean Francis, January 11, 2012)

Based on her research on good practices in the Jamaican classroom, Professor Bryan advanced four principles that can be applied to any lesson or set of activities. These principles are:

Immersion

She defined immersion teaching as "the exclusive use of the target language in a classroom of second language learners" (Bryan 2004 p. 91). The teacher considers the question "how much access to input [content and processes] the classroom provides" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012). For example, "in a literature class, they might include such as read alouds shared reading, echo reading, daily reading etc" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012).

Practice

This principle does not simply refer to repetition. "Practice must be sufficient so that the task can be performed without hesitation, because the learner understands what they are required to do" (Bryan, 2004, p.92). Professor Bryan noted that "the teacher might want to consider the opportunities offered for authentic practice of different kinds and in varying contexts that are distributed in time and executed with increasing complexity" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012).

Structured support

This principle requires teachers to "check on how the planned language activities scaffold, guide and supports the learners" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012).

Contrasts: Separating the two languages

This principle involves providing students "an opportunity to separate the two languages, to see them as distinct codes" (Bryan 2004, p. 93). This requires the teacher to ask the fundamental questions:
- o "Does the lesson planned help the learners to notice differences, keep the languages separate and thus make sense of variable input?"
- o Does the lesson planned "draw on the students' own language to do that, by maximizing their intuitions about language?" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012).

The discussion also identified the following strategies:

- o Explicit instruction in contrasting the two language structures as an introductory activity prior to teaching a particular English structure (Cecille Young, January 12, 2012);
- o The provision of timetabled periods when students would be allowed to talk freely in JC with oral activities that allow for higher level thinking e.g. listening comprehension and time tabled period when students "use English, developing a communicative understanding of English as something more that phonic exercises and grammatical items" (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012);
- o The immersion of learners in samples of the target in various contexts such as poems, stories, other forms of literature;
  - ▪ The Book Flood Approach (Beverley Bryan, January 12, 2012)
- o "Constant modeling of English language use" (Novelette McLean Francis, January 11, 2012);
- o Improvement of teachers' language awareness by ensuring language and literacy training programmes deliberately prepares them for the challenging realities of the Jamaican classroom (Novelette McLean Francis, January 11, 2012).

These strategies would enhance the Jamaican students' capacity to notice when SJE or JC is being used. From the discussion, it can be inferred that a critical part of the process of improving Jamaican students' English language competence is increased access to accurate use of the language and opportunities to practice the language. However, discussants also noted that in Jamaica's bilingual context, "the diversity of our language situation in the society and in the classroom" should be appreciated as teachers and students "work effectively with this situation on a daily basis in order to achieve results" (Novelette McLean Francis, January 12, 2012). Professor Bryan explains that "literature is very, very important in the primary classroom. Language educators such as Velma Pollard and even Craig have given us some content ideas about how we can use the Jamaican language - in the use of folk and traditional literature; the use of poetry, songs, stories, rhymes and riddles. Cultural content energises and motivates students to pay attention to language- if so guided by the language aware teacher who has that explicit knowledge."

RELATED RESOURCES

Bryan, B. (2010) *Between two Grammars: Research and practice for language learning and teaching in the Creole environment* **. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers**

Between Two Grammars: Research and Practice for Language Learning and Teaching in a Creole-speaking Environment builds on earlier works in the field of language learning and teaching and brings new ideas about language teaching in a Creole-speaking environment. Using Jamaica as the example, the history of education is examined with a view to explaining some of the current attitudes to schooling and the objections to accepting Jamaican Creole (Patois/Patwa) as a necessary part of the consciousness of the classroom teacher. Readers are encouraged to embrace creative methodologies by making use of whatever resources might be available to a specific classroom and class. Particularly useful is the broadening of the meaning of text beyond expository readings, and

literature to a variety of material not usually accepted in conservative classrooms. Constructed with an understanding of the unique requirements for language teaching in the Caribbean, whilst integrating theory and practice, Dr Bryan s recommendations in Between Two Grammars are the result of years of research within the fields of sociolinguistics, language education, Caribbean history and teacher education. Educators, whether in training or in practice; and education policymakers will find Between Two Grammars not only an enriching presentation of the nature of language debates in the Caribbean but also an empowering tool for improved language teaching practice.

Bryan, B. (2004a). Reconciling Contradictions and Moving for Change: Towards a Language Education Policy for Jamaica'. In M. Brown (Ed.), *Transforming the Educational Landscape through Curriculum Change* **(p. 163-187). Kingston: Institute of Education, University of the West Indies, Mona.**

The Language Education Policy was approved by the Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture in 2001. The purpose of the paper is to trace the path to the coalescence of ideas found in the 2001 document, and to focus on the evolution of the agreed 'set of principles' over the years, considering their history as incipient policy and practice of the Anglophone Caribbean, in this case Jamaica. The author looks at those policies, in whatever form they have existed, changed and re-formed in light of changing attitudes towards language use at all levels of society; to see the extent to which policy has mirrored, forged or followed the society's views about what must be done with language varieties available in Jamaica, in a bid to grow and develop as a nation.

Bryan, B. (2004b). Language and literacy in a Creole-speaking environment: A study of primary schools in Jamaica. *Language, Culture and Curriculum***, 17(2), 87-96**

Jamaica is a Creole-speaking environment, where children enter school with a range of varieties, some of which are closely related to English. The expectation is that they will learn English in school. The appropriate language teaching approach, it is argued, is not English as a mother tongue, English as a Second Language or English as a Foreign Language. The paper explores the most appropriate principles and practice for this setting, based on a study of good practice in a selected number of primary schools. The principles of: (1) Immersion; (2) Practice; (3) Scaffolding; and (4) Contrasts are highlighted as particularly relevant. It is hoped that the discussion will be useful to teachers working with Jamaican children in other settings, and will also have relevance for all those who teach children with a language variety different from that of the school.

Carrington, L (2001). *The Status of Creole in the Caribbean***. In P. Christie (Ed.). Due Respect.(pp. 24-36). Mona: The University of the West Indies Press.**

Provides a brief overview of the status of Creoles in the Caribbean at the end of the twentieth century and looks at some of the issues raised. Discusses the use of Creoles in government and politics, in the education sector, and as they relate to writing systems, technical support, the print media, the performing arts, literary publishing, radio, television and the music industry.

Cassidy, F., & Le Page, R.B. (2002). *Dictionary of Jamaican English***. Mona: UWI Press.**

This is the second edition of the authoritative Dictionary of Jamaican English, first published in 1967. This edition includes a greatly extended supplement and offers a systematic indexing of the extent to which the lexis is shared with other Caribbean countries: Surinam, Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, Nicaragua and Belize. The method and plan of the Dictionary are basically those of the Oxford English Dictionary, but oral sources have been extensively tapped in addition to detailed coverage of literature published in or about Jamaica since 1655. A great deal of care has been taken to trace the etymologies not only of English, Scots and Irish but also of African, Portuguese and

Spanish, French, Amerindian, general sea-faring and other words. The Dictionary is thus a mine of information about the Caribbean and its dialects, about the history of English and its dialects, about Creole languages and about general linguistic processes.

Christie, P. (2003). *Language in Jamaica*. **Kingston: Arawak.**

The book offers description and assessment of the Jamaican language situation. Its simple style is designed to enhance its appeal to the average reader. Topics specifically discussed include the functions of English and Creole (Patois) in the society and attitudes to these varieties, the origins, development and present state of English in Jamaica, the role of language in education and various proposals for taking Creole into account in classroom teaching. Although the main focus is on the Jamaican situation, this is also set within the framework of English worldwide and of developments outside Jamaica involving the use of Creole.

Craig, D (2006) *Teaching Language and Literacy to Caribbean Students: From Vernacular to Standard English*. **Kingston: Ian Randle Publications**

In many parts of the world there are situations where the majority of the people speak a vernacular with which it coexists but nevertheless share the majority of a common vocabulary. Such is the case in the Caribbean where childhood speakers of English-based Creole languages have significant difficulty in acquiring Standard English and literacy in English. However, pedagogical approaches to the plight of such children have not achieved a generally accepted theoretical position and have lacked consistency over the years resulting in a high level educational failure in the children.

This book uses the Kingston-speaking Caribbean as a case study in its presentation of a rational theoretical framework for classroom procedures in language and literacy teaching. It provides suggestions for the kind of detailed syllabi that need to be implemented at the primary, immediate post-primary and the secondary levels of schooling but goes beyond that with end of chapter notes, questions and even suggestions for practical study and research activities.

This makes Teaching Language & Literacy ideally suited to be used as a textbook for intending as well as practising teachers of language and literacy, as well as language education students generally at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Although the book focuses on the English-speaking Caribbean it will have relevance in similar vernacular situations where English is an 'official' language, most notably in parts of North American and Britain where there are significant migrant populations from the Caribbean but also in African-American communities of the USA where 'Black English' is the everyday norm of speech.

Devonish, H. & Carpenter, K. (2010). Swimming against the tide: Jamaican Creole in education. In B. Migge, I. Leglise and A. Bartens (Eds.), *Creole in education: An appraisal of current programmes and projects (p. 167 - 182)*. **Philadelphia : John Benjamins Publishing Company**

In implementing its Bilingual Education Project (BEP), involving the use of Jamaican Creole and English, the Jamaica Language Unit (JLU) has sought to meet the criteria set out by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture in Jamaica for teaching in the home language (MOEYC, 2001). The Ministry and the general public needed to be convinced that the pilot BEP did not (1) do academic harm to the children involved (2) has produced an improvement in the children's competence in English, and (3) has produced improved results in the bilingually taught content subjects. This paper is a midstream evaluation of the success indicators, focusing on the children's performance in standardized tests in both Jamaican and English, and other content subjects.

Devonish, H. & Carpenter, K. (2007).Towards full bilingualism in education: The Jamaican Bilingual Primary Education Project. *Social and Economic Studies*, 56 (1&2), p. 277 – 303.

This paper examines the attempts to address the rights of the speakers of Creole vernacular language varieties within the mainstream education system with a focus on the Caribbean. In particular the paper describes the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture (MOEYC) approved Bilingual Education Project (BEP) currently piloted in Jamaica. The BEP and more recent research exploring the outlook of the general public towards the use of Jamaican challenge accepted notions of language attitudes towards speakers of vernacular languages and learning and teaching of literacy skills at the primary school level. The results show that children in grades one and two of a government primary school acquire literacy in both Jamaican and English simultaneously and can readily distinguish between the two language varieties both orally and in writing. The objectives to teaching in Jamaican raised in the past , such as a lack of public acceptance and a lack of a standard writing system need revisiting given both the success of the BEP and the shift in public opinion.

Evans, H. (2001) *Inside Jamaican Schools.* **Kingston: UWI Press.**

This book is about what happens in schools and classrooms. It focuses on the experiences of students and teachers, and draws on research that I have conducted, as well as on research carried out by some of my students in Jamaica over the past twelve years. The research is distinctive in that it used qualitative methods of data collection. This method, also known as ethnography, relies on participant observation and interviewing, and aims at understanding peoples' lives, perspectives, and ways of thinking. This approach to studying schools provides an up-close view of what takes place in schools and gives a picture of the social reality of schools - the experiences and perspectives of teachers, students, principals, and parents.

My focus in the volume is on some types of schools and some groups of students. The book begins with a description of the different types of schools in Jamaica, but focuses on the ones that are disadvantaged or are attended by students from the poorer classes. It describes in more detail these schools and these students and examines the ways in which their experiences are influenced by economic, social, and cultural factors. The book falls within the tradition of sociological ethnography in education, using research data from Jamaican schools. It attempts to describe schools and classrooms and events that occur within them, while at the same time presenting a theoretical sociological analysis of those events. As such, it fills a need for a book on education that describes and investigates specific aspects of schools and analyses these events from a theoretical sociological perspective. Such a book does not now exist.

Jettka, D. (2010). *The language situation of Jamaica: Language Education Policy in the tension between Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Patwa***. Retrieved from** http://www.daniel **jettka.de/pdf/JETTKA-The_language_situation_of_Jamaica.pdf**

This essay is an introduction to language policy for the Jamaican educational system. The widely experienced incomplete achievement of language and literacy skills by Jamaican students with regard to the official language Standard Jamaican English, leads to the concern and intervention of organisations from the political and academic field.

In order to deal with this issue, the specific nature and evolution of Jamaica as a creole society is presented in section 2. The conquest of Jamaica by the English and the massive and rapid import of African slaves beginning in

the middle of the 16th century, can be seen as the most striking factors for the socio-cultural and linguistic evolution of Jamaica.

Section 3 will present the current situation, alongside with a discussion on its appropriate linguistic description. It will become clear that there is no straightforward description of Jamaica in traditional structuralist terms, e.g. as bilingual or diglossic society. Rather, the Jamaican language situation is characterised by the use of a wide range of flexible registers or varieties, depending on socio-cultural and individual factors. This is complicated by the close relationship of Jamaican Patwa and Standard Jamaican English, though they are classified as individual languages.

The theoretical and methodological difficulties are reflected by the educational system. The complexity of the explicit separation of Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Patwa is widely recognised as a crucial point for the problematic achievement of English in school (cf. section 4). Therefore, in 2001 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture set up a Language Education Policy, in order to cope with the state of affairs in class (section 4.1). The policy mainly promotes the basic oral use of Patwa and the improvement of teaching methods and material for English. In response to the policy, the Jamaican Language Unit (University of the West Indies, Mona) started the Bilingual Education Project, examining the applicability of bilingual education in Jamaican schools. While the project seems to be successful, certain factors emerge, above all the financial situation of the state, which are in conflict with the introduction of bilingual education. In the conclusion (section 5) this discussion will be reconsidered.

McCourtie, L., (1998) The Politics of Creole Language Education in Jamaica: 1891–1921 and the 1990s. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 19 (2)

The underachievement of ethnic minorities has been the subject of much reflection and action by educators and researchers world-wide. This two-part study uses archival and empirical research to focus on the acquisition of English by another group, speakers of Jamaican Creole: a unique typology which can neither be categorised as foreign-language nor mother-tongue teaching. Both English and Creole share a common lexis, but Creole speakers need expert help in acquiring the phonology, morphology and syntax of English. In Part I, archival/historical data drawn primarily from the Annual Reports of 'Her Majesty's Inspectors' for a part of the colonial period, 1891-1921, highlight the systemic failure of pupils to acquire English in elementary schools. But in Part II, an investigation which the author conducted in the 1990s in 'secondary' schools in postcolonial independent Jamaica finds a similar cycle of underachievement among Creole speakers. The inference to be drawn is that successive generations of these language learners have left schools, in the words of Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988: 1), as an 'undereducated underclass'. The paper analyses the issues which have bedevilled the education of Creole speakers in both centuries. Then, it outlines new political initiatives designed to effect change and redress the inequities of the past before the twenty-first century begins.

Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture.(2001). *Language Education Policy.* **Kingston: Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture. Retrieved from http://www.moeyc.gov.jm/policies/languagepolicy.pdf**

The unsatisfactory performance of students in language and literacy at all levels of the Jamaican educational system, and its accompanying effects on language competence and on the potential for human development in the wider society, have perpetually been matters of concern. In an attempt, once again, to provide solutions while responding appropriately to developing trends in the Caribbean region and beyond, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEY&C) has chosen to commence by formulating a national policy on language education.

Although Jamaica is described as a bilingual country with Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) being the two languages in operation, the fluid nature of language usage between these languages, as well as the

peculiar nature of the linguistic relationship they share, creates difficulties for the majority of Creole speakers learning English. The magnitude of the difficulties is confirmed in a survey of learners' performance between 1998 and 2000 which shows that despite interventions by the MOEY&C, an average of 50% of learners consistently fail to achieve established passing levels, girls out-performing boys at every stage.

Informed by reviews of research on policy options, and on language and literacy acquisition in second language learning environments, the MOEY&C has adopted a policy position, which recognizes Jamaica as a bilingual country. It retains SJE as the official language and advocates the policy option which promotes oral use of the home language in schools, while facilitating the development of skills in SJE. Within this option, emphasis is placed on the employment of bilingual teaching strategies, particularly at the early primary level and again at the early secondary level where numerous language and literacy needs are also manifested.

The government of Jamaica, through the MOEY&C, will provide the human, material and institutional resources for policy implementation. Teacher training programmes should adequately prepare teachers for delivering language and literacy instruction to varying ability levels in primary and secondary schools. Language and literacy learning in schools should involve the awareness and cooperation of the school boards, learners, parents and communities. Special provision should be made for learners with exceptionalities. Spanish, in the meantime, should be regarded as the official foreign language.

Pollard, V. (1993). *From Jamaican Creole to Standard English: A Handbook for Teachers.* **NY: Caribbean Research Centre.**

This publication is part of the effort to guide teachers in devising innovative strategies to help students in their search for competence in Standard English. It is not only a prerequisite for success in the Jamaican situation, but equally so for the United States and the international community.

Roberts, P. (1994). Integrating creole into Caribbean classrooms. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 15* **(1), 47-62.**

Education through the medium of creole languages fits admirably into literacy projects and minimal education for agrarian communities or communities with little realistic hope of moving on to an international stage, but education from the secondary level onward bestows greatest economic benefits in today's 'global village' when conducted in an international language. This is as much so in countries with creole languages as it is in Europe.

The most appropriate approach to language use in Caribbean classrooms which minimizes discrimination against individuals and groups is an integrative one. This approach respects the varying functions of language in Caribbean societies, it recognises the outward-looking nature of these societies, and it promotes creative work in the vernacular as a base for the development of more positive attitudes towards it. Moreover, it proposes that in addition to their teaching duties, teachers should be constantly involved in self-development as teachers and in the development of language models for their pupils. The integrative approach envisages a gradual change in attitudes to native varieties of language and consequently a reduction of language difficulties in formal education.

Shields, K. (1989), 'Standard English in Jamaica: A Case of Competing Models.', *English World-Wide: A Journal of Varieties of English* **10 (1) , 41 - 53 .**

Simmons-McDonald, H. (2004) Trends in teaching standard varieties to Creole and Vernacular speakers
Annual Review of Applied Linguistics 24, 187- 208

This chapter discusses some approaches used to teach a standard variety to creole and vernacular speakers. It focuses attention on issues related to the use of creoles and vernaculars in instruction to help creole speakers develop literacy in a second language. Research has shown that literacy development, academic skills, and learning strategies transfer from the first language to the second and that literacy in the first language is a crucial base for literacy development in the second language. Advocacy for vernacular literacy as a means of facilitating the learning of a standard language differs in situations where creole has the same lexical base as the second (standard) language as opposed to situations in which the creole has a different lexical base than the second language. The policy literature as well as that describing approaches to second language learning by creole and creole-influenced vernacular speakers is discussed primarily with relevance to the Caribbean region. The chapter then surveys the literature describing approaches used in similar contexts elsewhere. Outcomes resulting from the implementation of specific policies and approaches in the contexts presented, to the extent that such outcomes have been documented, are also explored.

Whyte-Williams, W. P. (2008). *"Wah yu sey miss?". A study of the Jamaican Creole speaking students at Mount Winston: A rural elementary school in Jamaica West Indies.* **(Doctorial Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Database.**

This study examines how kindergarteners through grade three (K-3) students, all speakers of the JC, negotiate two languages in their first years of school in southern Trelawny, Jamaica. The study explores how teachers' pedagogical practices and patterns of discourse in the classroom, can enhance or constrain students' learning and language development.

The study describes five discourse patterns that emerge in the data: repeating, rephrasing, code-switching, monitoring and prompting. These patterns are explored to gain an understanding of how students are positioned as language learners.

A major focus is on the stigma associated with the JC. While there is a shift in its recognition as a cultural language, current policy and pedagogy position students as poor speakers of English, rather than English Language Learners.

The study documents language ideologies: one views JC as an impediment and one as a resource for learning. Nevertheless, both teachers understand JC and accept its use to some extent.

Assumptions underlying this study include the linguistic equality among all languages and dialects, the recognition of Jamaica as a bilingual country, and the implied position of rural Jamaican students as English learners. Discussion from a multiple disciplinary approach highlights Jamaica historically as a colonized society.

Ethnographic approach to data collection and discourse analysis style were employed. Participant observation provided an opportunity for documentation of speech interactions between teachers and students. The study revealed that: (1) Creole was used, however, rote learning did not allow for much variation. (2) Open-ended questions supported learning and language development. (3) Topics which were relevant to students' experiences supported conceptual understanding and language learning. (4) Close-ended questions constrained learning and diminished the opportunities for language practice. (5) Use of the native language supported students' learning. (6) Code switching was an effective strategy that supported the construction of knowledge and language learning.

Both languages have the potential for supporting learning. It is prudent for Teacher Training institutions, The Ministry of Education, Education officers, school administrators, PTA's, teachers, parents and all educational

agencies to form linkages to address this critical factor that has potential for fostering competencies and promoting improved linguistic skills of Jamaicans.'