

# Jamaican creole essay



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English is the official language of Jamaica. However most Jamaicans  
communicate in a different language called Jamaican Creole. Creole means-  
a language, which comes into being through contact between two or more  
languages. English is a compulsory subject in Jamaican schools, it is often  
required of students to write essays, books reports, short stories, ect, and to  
speak to their teachers in English.

Being a student and a fluent speaker of Jamaican Creole, I often interfuse  
Creole with English when trying to speak and write English. As a student of  
Holy Childhood High School, I am often required by teachers to write and  
speak English. Therefore, I deemed it fit to explore the topic; Writing the  
Wrong: An examination of Jamaican Creole and its impact on the speaking  
and writing of English in Holy Childhood High School. The topic will expose  
the actual effect it has on schoolwork. Writing the Wrong: An examination of  
Jamaican Creole and its impact on the speaking and writing of English in Holy  
Childhood High School. The topic seeks to explore how the speaking of  
Jamaican Creole on a daily basis, can affect the speaking and writing of  
English in the school setting.

I decided to research this particular topic because it will help to show me the  
importance of English and the power of Jamaican Creole. During the heyday  
of sugar, between 1700-1834, increasing numbers of Africans were imported  
to work on the large plantations. Conflict of identity emerged in the 18th

century when many whites firmly identified with Jamaica and did not want to be called Englishmen. This is the period thought to be most responsible for the forming of Jamaican language, which we now call Jamaican Creole.

Jamaican Creole continues to be unacceptable for the official language of Jamaica even though it is the language most Jamaicans use to communicate with each other.

In past years, linguists have argued that Jamaican Creole is not a language it is just a form of speaking improper English. However avid speakers of Jamaican Creole would argue that it is a language, it should be taught in schools and it should become the official language of the country to embrace the true culture of Jamaica. However avid speakers of English in Jamaica did not like the idea of using Creole for formal setting, such as the politicians speaking Creole in the house of parliament and they did not like the idea of seeing traffic signs reading “ nuh park ya so” or “ ungle one way”. They were also displeased with the idea of news anchors reading the news in strictly Creole.

On the other hand, English is the language taught at schools. Creole is not being embrace by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture. Therefore, students who speak Creole are forced to write and speak English especially in school. My finding on the matter is that students who speak Creole often interfuse Creole with English when writing and speaking.

They find it sometimes difficult to speak strictly Standard English only and they often find themselves spelling English words like Creole. They would often spell “ thing” as “ ting” or nothing as noting . During my research,

some students were reluctant to speak on the matter because they did not want to disclose if they had problems when it comes to writing and speaking English. It seems to me that they were embarrassed to say it if they did interfuse English with Creole. I consider my source reliable because it is coming from individuals who have studied languages as a profession, and have majored in Jamaican Creole therefore they should know an abundance about Jamaican Creole and English.

Similarly, students who speak Creole should know if it influences the way they speak and write English on a daily basis. Therefore, the information stated is valid. In conclusion, Jamaican Creole has a great impact on the speaking and writing of English in Holy childhood high school. As it contributes to students getting their assignment filled with grammatical error because of the use of Creole in an English paper, this can lead to them obtaining a low grade. It also contributes to them being corrected by a teacher to speak properly, which is English, when talking to him or her.

March 3, 2000 Cooper fires at Green Paper DR.

CAROLYN Cooper, Lecturer in the Department of English, UWI, has criticised the Green Paper on Education for what she says is its failure to address the use of Jamaican creole in schools. She said an omission of the document which aims at stimulating public discussion, is its silence on the desirability of every child having a right to instruction in his or her own mother tongue. This is an issue that is internationally recognised..

. but when it's one of our Caribbean creole, we don't see them seriously as languages," she said while addressing a teachers' forum on the Green Paper

put on by the People's National Party at the Hilton Kingston Hotel on Wednesday. “ And so (we) do not understand the profound sense of alienation that a student can feel in the classroom when knowledge is being imparted in a language that the student does not understand,” she said. There has been a fierce debate over many years between people who want to place greater emphasis on using Jamaican creole in schools as the language of instruction and those who argue that doing so would impede the ability of children to master the English language.

Dr. Cooper was part of a panel which included, Education Minister Senator Burchell Whiteman and educator Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen. She told the group of some 30 teachers that the country needed to develop a language policy that caters to Jamaicans speaking both English and creole.

We need to have a language policy which, when the child goes to primary school, he is tested and if the child speaks English you can have one stream. If the child speaks Jamaican only, you can have another stream,” Dr. Cooper said. She argued that even though the Green Paper spoke to the issue of all children having the ability to learn, it did not give serious attention to the language with which they are familiar.

In his response to Dr. Cooper, Senator Whiteman said the issue of the language policy has been on the agenda for some time and it was still being looked at. According to him, the present planning for the Primary Education programme has, as part its agenda, the assessment of a language policy. He said he was ready to be guided by the professionals in the field on whether

to teach English as a second language and employ Jamaican creole as the language of instruction.

“ What I do know is that it (creole) is the language of introduction, it is the language of instruction when the students first come in to school. ” • Letters to the Editor • [email protected] com • Copyright © The Gleaner Co. Ltd.

The Jamaican Creole It guh thru hard hard time Long drain out nites Traveling from de mountains to de sea, Neva de less, it maintain its form The curve of every word So different, but yet so clear The natives often speak it. It is their language. De foreignars love it. Dem find it difficult fi undastan Neva de less, love fi hear dis beautiful language Dem a wonda bout where it come from an' how them can undastan it.

All the Caribbean countries have their own version of Creole From low speeds to high speeds All of which are unique in their own way However, one stands out of the bunch and that is the Jamaican Creole. A Misunderstanding Kim: Hey, what's up? (Gleefully, approaching Terry sitting on the concrete bench under the big oak tree, which shades her from the sun. ) Terry: Noting mi deh yah. (Sadly, sitting with her back bend for there was no support on the bench for her back. ) Kim: Did you do Communication Studies Home Work. (Now sitting beside Terry look straight ahead at the field's freshly cut grass) Terry: Well mi tried a likkle ting.

(Still sad with a bit of uncertainty in her voice) Kim: Me too. (Confidently) Terry: Kim you know mi just realize something. Still sad looking at the paved ground. ) Kim: What? (Taking her eye off the field to look at Terry's face, this gave no clue as to what she had realized) Terry: Well we an you a fren fi so

long an' you so speaky spoky an' mi chat so bad. (Angrily looking at Kim in her eyes.

) Kim: Its not my fault you talk that way. ( Bitterly, starring at Terry's face)

Terry: I did not seh dat but mi just did a seh too me self if some a it cant rub off on me. ( Speaking loudly and upset. ) Kim: I can teach you to how speak Standard English.

Terry: Sure mi woulda glad fi the lesson. Now smiling at the words of comfort and sympathy) The bell rang for them to lead to their classroom. They both got up and headed toward their class just a second away from the tree.

Teacher: Class please take out the home work. Teacher: Terry please read what you have written.

(Sitting at her table looking over her square glasses in the register book. )

Terry: Sure Sir, Di dawg jump over de fence and de feet went before de tail.

(The class erupted in laughter, like a volcano waiting to pour it lava on the face of the earth. ) Teacher: It is clear you did not understand what the words defense, defeat, and detail mean.

That is not the correct format to use the words. (Looks up at Terry unpleased) Kim please read what you have written. Kim: The defense department gave detail of the defeat of the bears. (Confidently) Teacher: Very good Kim, You clearly understood the words. (Smiling at Kim showing her that she was pleased) Terry: Kim, how you get it right, and a di same word dem mi use. (Looking at Kim puzzled.

) Kim: It's because you used them in Creole and not Standard English.

(Speaking clearly so Terry could understand. ) Terry: Lawd mi needs help.

Kim: Don't worry I will help you.

(Willing)Rationale After doing an in depth investigation on Jamaican Creole, I realized how different it is from all the other Caribbean's Creole, this inspired me to write a poem. A poem can have more than one meaning; the words used may seem to mean one thing but indicate another meaning based on reader's interpretation of the poem. The poem seeks to relate to persons of all different age groups, but it is intended for Jamaicans. I want them to be able to read this poem and realize how beautiful their language is, and be able to appreciate it.

However, the drama was inspired by everyday situations. It is about two friends, one who speaks Standard English, and the other who speaks Creole. They received homework to make a complete sentence using the words defense, defeat, and detail. Terry who spoke Creole misunderstood the words for Creole, which made her get the sentence incorrect. This piece is intended to relate to students, mainly to students who speak Jamaican Creole, to be able understand that there is a time and a place for it. The drama displays the impact Jamaican Creole has on the writing of Standard English.

This critical analysis is about the drama A Misunderstanding written by Rosann Guthrie. In the drama, the major characters Kim and Terry spoke to each other casually. This form of register is suitable because the writer implied that they were well acquainted with each other they were friends.



This is evident by the way they greeted each other for example: Kim say to Terry ' Hey what's up,' Terry's reply was ' Noting mi deh yah.

' The writer chose an appropriate setting for this type of register; they were outside under the tree in the schoolyard this gave way for them to talk freely using ellipsis without being warned to speak properly. However, both characters communicated to each other using two different languages. Kim spoke acrolect Standard English; Terry on the other hand spoke basilect Jamaican Creole. Though both characters spoke different languages, it was clear that they both understood each other. Therefore, both characters spoke conventional languages. The writer's use of dialectal variation in the drama displayed that both characters came from different backgrounds.

Kim who spoke Standard English would most be likely from the urban background ' uptown' where most avid speakers of Standard English came from. Terry on the other hand who spoke Jamaican Creole would most likely be from the rural ' downtown' background where most avid speakers of Jamaican Creole are from. In the drama both character displayed attitude towards the use of the Creole language. Kim disliked the way Terry talked by saying ' It's not my fault you talk that way.

' Referring to the language like that, it was clear she did not like it and was ashamed of it. However, Terry lacked confidence in her mother tongue not knowing when it was appropriate to use it. She interfuse English words for Creole, this made her wanting to switch and start speaking Standard English. The writer's use of communicative behaviors was effective.

The characters communicated with each other with movement for example Kim taking her eyes off the field to concentrate on Terry's facial expression, and vocalic for example the way Terry spoke when she was sad the tone of her voice was low. Therefore, the communication behaviour between both characters was visible.