

Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

Professor: Dr. James Essegbey

Office: Pugh Hall 342

Phone: (352)8462431

Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 (and by appointment)

E-mail: essegbey@ufl.edu

SSA 4930 Section 0418/ LIN 4930 Section 0913/ LIN 6932 Section 02D8

Black Englishes

AND 0034

Description

Unlike Danish which is the language spoken by the Danes or Japanese which is the language the Japanese, English is not just a language of the English, even if that is where it originates. Today, the language has spread across the globe and has been appropriated by regions such that we can talk of Australian English, Nigerian English, etc. While most of the varieties of English can be understood for the most part by every English speaker, there are restructured varieties such as Sranan spoken in Surinam that are more difficult to follow. In fact, these have developed into different languages.

Objectives

The aim of this course is to present students with varieties of Englishes spoken by Blacks in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. Students will learn about the structure of these varieties as well as the social histories which underpin them. They will be made to appreciate difficulties in using terms like dialect versus language to describe these varieties. Further, they will watch movies and interact with native speakers of these varieties with a view to identifying features that set them apart. Students will also be introduced to such concepts like “pidgins” and “creoles”. Students will also learn to distinguish between “broken English” and Pidgin or Creole English.

Course Material

Articles and book chapters have been put in the UF Automating Reserves (ARES) and can be accessed through the Course Reserves in Canvas. Next the link to some articles have been provided in the syllabus, and a few articles uploaded in Canvas. Finally, class notes are also a crucial component of the course material.

Requirements

Final grading is based on a mini dialect-project which will be conducted during Week 2 and presented on January 20. Students will also watch movies or sketch comedies from three countries in Africa and interact with speakers from these places. They will then be expected to identify 5 distinct features in the language used in the film/sketch and 10 in the speech of each of the speakers. Students are further required (in groups of 2) to prepare and give a 15-minute presentation. Fellow students will grade each presentation (5 points) and will, in turn, receive 5 points for appropriately grading ALL presentations (see below for more information on group project). There is also a final exam. The breakdown is as follows:

Dialect project	5 %
Identifying features of African varieties of English	30
Group project (for 4000-level) Individual project (for 6000)	15
Class presentation for 6000-level	5 pts
Examination (Additional materials for 6000-level students)	45/50 pts

Week 1. INTRODUCTION	
Date	Source
Jan 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction and review of syllabus and resources
Jan 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The history of English (The English Language, by David Crystal)
Week 2. VARIATION	
Jan 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'The reality of dialects.' In <i>Dialects and American English</i>. Pp 1-20

Jan 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variation in English. In <i>World Englishes</i> Pp 10-41
Jan 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dialect project
Week 3. DIALECT PROJECT	
Jan 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Luther King, Jnr. Day
Jan 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialect project
Jan 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on dialect project
Week 4. NON-NATIVE ENGLISHES	
Jan 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linguistics and the myth of nativity: comments on the controversy over 'new/non-native Englishes.' By Kanavillil Rajagopalan. In <i>Journal of Pragmatics</i> 27 (1997) 225-331
Jan 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-native Englishes on Trial'. By Ayo Bamgbose. In <i>English in Ghana</i>. Pp 9-22
Jan 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Language forms.' In <i>English in Africa, an introduction</i> by Josef Schmied. Pp 46-98
Week 5. WEST AFRICAN ENGLISH (GHANA)	
Jan 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English in Ghana: Growth, Tensions, and Trends. By Gordon Adika. In <i>IJLTIC 2012 (1)</i>, 151-166 http://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/latic/article/view/2723/2497
Feb 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The uniqueness of Ghanaian English pronunciation in West Africa. By Augustin Simo Banda. In <i>Studies in the Linguistic Sciences</i> 30:2, pp 185-198
Feb 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversation with a Ghanaian
Week 6. WEST AFRICAN ENGLISH (NIGERIA)	
Feb 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'English in the Nigerian Environment,' by Ayo Bamgbose in <i>New Englishes: A West African Perspective</i> Pp 9 – 26
Feb 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nigerian English Prosody. By Ulrike Gut. In <i>English World-Wide</i> 26:2, pp153-177
Feb 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversation with a Nigerian
Week. 7 EAST AFRICAN ENGLISH (KENYA & TANZANIA)	

Feb 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'East African Englishes' by Josef Schmied. In <i>The handbook of world Englishes</i>. Pp 188-202
Feb 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch Comedy
Feb 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with a Tanzanian
Week 8. SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH	
Feb 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African English: oppressor or liberator? By Penny Silva (Canvas)
Feb 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black South African English: where to from here? By Vivian De Klerk (Canvas)
Feb 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African movie
Week 9 PIDGINS & CREOLES	
Mar 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Pidgins and creoles: Introduction.' In <i>Modern Englishes</i>. pp 1-34
Mar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pidgin and Creole Genesis. By Joseph T. Farquharson and Bettina Migge (Canvas)
Mar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The structure of Ghanaian Pidgin English.' In <i>Ghanaian Pidgin English</i>, by J. Amoako. Pp37 - 76
Mar 5-12	Week 10 SPRING BREAK
Week 11 PIDGINS & CREOLES	
Mar 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get maf wey you get mɔf: pronunciation and identity in Ghanaian student Pidgin. By Kwaku Osei Tutu (Canvas)
Mar 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigerian Pidgin and the languages of southern Nigeria. By Nicholas Faraclas (Canvas)
Mar 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet Mother (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkp3WnUu_WQ)
Week 12 CARIBBEAN	

Mar 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examining Caribbean English Creole Continua. By Donald Winford. In <i>World Englishes</i>, Vol 16 (2), pp 233-279
Mar 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Jamaican grammar'. In <i>Jamaican talk</i> by Frederic G. Cassidy Pp 49 - 73
Mar 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamaican Movie
Week 13 SURINAMESE CREOLES	
Mar 28	'The context of creole formation in Surinam.' In <i>Creole formation as language contact</i> . Pp 27-35
Mar 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verb semantics and argument structure in the Gbe and Sranan. By James Essegbey. In Pieter Muysken and Norval Smith (eds.), <i>Surviving the middle passage: the West Africa-Surinam Sprachbund</i>, pp175-206 (Canvas)
Apr 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language and survival: will Sranan Tongo, Suriname' lingua franca, become the official language? In <i>Caribbean Quarterly: A Journal of Caribbean Culture</i>, Volume 28, 1982. Issue 4 (Canvas)
Week 14 GULLAH	
Apr 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mellifluous Gullah language. In <i>Gullah Culture in America</i> by Wilbur Ross. Pp 125-148
Mar 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On decreolization and language death in Gullah. By Patricia Jones-Jackson (Canvas)
Apr 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie: <i>Family across the sea</i>. Columbia, SC: South Carolina ETV, c1990; San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel [distributor]
Week 15 AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH	
Apr 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'African American English' by Lisa Green. In <i>Language in the USA</i>. Pp 76-91
Apr 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Black American English.' By Arthur Spears. In <i>Anthropology for the nineties</i>. Pp 96-113

Apr 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ebonics controversy. By Robert L. Williams. In Journal of Black Psychology, 1997
Week 16 PRESENTATION & TEST	
Apr 18	Presentation of Project Work
Apr 20	Examination

Examination (45 pts for 6000-level & 50 pts for 4000-level)

There will be ONLY ONE written examination on **Wednesday April 20, 12:50 am – 1:40 pm**. This will involve questions requiring short answers and will cover all the topics covered in class.

Dialect project (5 points)

Students are expected to ask ONE person who is NOT familiar with the technical definition of dialect the following questions:

- What is a dialect?
- Do you speak a dialect?
- Name 3 dialects in the United States and their distinctive properties.

Note that students are not expected to ask leading questions. They should limit the questions to the two given above and determine whether the responses fall into any of the myths we discuss in class. The interviews should be recorded and played in class (Each student has 5 minutes MAX to do the presentation). The distribution of the points is as follows

Interview (as evidenced by recording)	2
Sticking to the 5 minute time allotted	1
Determining correctly whether a response falls into the category of a myth	2

Identifying features of African varieties of English (30 pts)

Students will also watch movies or sketch comedies from three countries in Africa and interact with speakers from these places. They will then be expected to identify 5 distinct features in the language used in the film/sketch and 10 in the speech of each of the speakers. They will be awarded up to 10 points for identifying the appropriate features in each of the languages.

Group Project (15 points)

Students will work on a 20-minute presentation which they will present in class. The presentation will be on one Black English variety which they themselves will choose and it should contain material that has not been presented by your professor. The subject matter should touch on at least one of the following:

- Is the variety a creole and, if so, what makes it a creole?

- Is the variety a pidgin and, if so, what makes it pidgin?
- Is the variety a dialect of Standard English or a different language?
- Would you characterize the variety as broken English and why?

Each presentation should reference THREE PUBLICATIONS that are not in the syllabus. These should be provided at the end of the presentation (be it a Word document or Powerpoint presentation). The presentation should be submitted at the course site in Canvas using Turnitin so that it is checked for plagiarism.

The professor will grade the presentations for content (10), clarity (3), and references cited in the work (2).

Class presentation on chapter (5 pts)

6000-level students will select from one of specific chapters to prepare a presentation which they will deliver in class for 5 pts.

Grading Scale

93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 (B); 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); 67-69 (D+); 63-66 (D); 60-62 (D-); 59 or below (E)

A grade of Incomplete (I) will not be issued under any circumstance.

Grading Policy

Information on current UF grading policy can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students with disabilities

The University of Florida provides high-quality services to students with disabilities, and you are encouraged to take advantage of them. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should 1) Register with and provide documentation to Disability Resources (352-392-8565), and 2) Bring a letter to the instructor from Disability Resources indicating that you need academic accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class.

Attendance and make up

Information on students who are qualified to take the course can be found at the site below:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

No points are given for attendance. However, I do not post my presentation slides on Canvas. Therefore, students need to show up in class to take notes. A student who misses class for a justifiable reason can reach out to me to discuss a topic that she/he missed.

Honor/Conduct Code

An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. As a University of Florida student, one is expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student's duty to report observed academic honesty violations. Violations of the Honor Code and academic dishonesty will be sanctioned.

Face-to-Face requirements

We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

