

Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

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

Black Englishes

AND 0034 (11:45-12:35)

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: The materials for the course are class notes, articles in journals, book chapters. Some of the articles are available for download at your course site in CANVAS while others are posted at ARES.

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. Syllabus

Fri, Aug 23. The history of English (The English Language, by David Crystal)

Week 2. Variation

Mon, Aug 26. 'The reality of dialects.' In *Dialects and American English*. Pp 1-20 (**Course Reserves**)

Wed, Aug 28. Variation in English. In *World Englishes* Pp 10-41

Fri, Aug 30. The dialect project

Week 3.

Mon, Sept 2. Labor Day. No classes

Wed, Sept 4. Report on dialect project

Fri, Sept 6. Report on dialect project

Week 4. Non-native Englishes

Mon, Sept 9. Linguistics and the myth of nativity: comments on the controversy over 'new/non-native Englishes.' By Kanavillil Rajagopalan. In *Journal of Pragmatics* 27 (1997) 225-331

Wed, Sept 11. Non-native Englishes on Trial'. By Ayo Bamgbose. In *English in Ghana*. Pp 9-22
(Course Reserves)

Fri, Sept 13. 'Language forms.' In *English in Africa, an introduction* by Josef Schmied. Pp 46-98
(Course Reserves)

Week 5. West African English (Ghanaian English)

Mon, Sept 16. English in Ghana: Growth, Tensions, and Trends. By Gordon Adika. In *IJLTIC 2012 (1)*, 151-166 (<http://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/latic/article/view/2723/2497>)

Wed, Sept 18. The uniqueness of Ghanaian English pronunciation in West Africa. By Augustin Simo Banda. In *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 30:2, pp 185-198

Fri, Sept 20. Conversation with a Ghanaian

Week 6. West African English (Nigerian English)

Mon, Sept 23. 'English in the Nigerian Environment,' by Ayo Bamgbose in *New Englishes: A West African Perspective* Pp 9 – 26

Wed, Sept 25. Nigerian English Prosody. By Ulrike Gut. In *English World-Wide* 26:2, pp153-177

Fri, Sept 27. Conversation with a Nigerian

Week 7. East African English

Mon, Sept 30. 'East African Englishes' by Josef Schmied. In *The handbook of world Englishes*. Pp 188-202 **(Course Reserves)**

Wed, Oct 2. Sketch Comedy

Fri, Oct 4. Conversation with a Kenyan

Week 8. South African English

Mon, Oct 7. South African English: oppressor or liberator? By Penny Silva **(Canvas)**

Wed, Oct 9. Black South African English: where to from here? By Vivian De Klerk **(Canvas)**

Fri, Oct 11. Conversation with a South African

Week 9. Pidgins and creoles

Mon, Oct 14. Pidgins and creoles: Vol 1 by John Holm. Pp 1-12 (**Course Reserves**)

The socio-historical background of creoles. By Jacques Arends. In *Pidgins and creoles: an introduction*. Edited by Jacques Arends, Pieter Muysken and Norval Smith. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp15-24. (**Course Reserves**)

Wed, Oct 16. Pidgin and Creole Genesis. By Joseph T. Farquharson and Bettina Migge (**Canvas**)

Fri, Oct 18. 'The structure of Ghanaian Pidgin English.' In *Ghanaian Pidgin English*, by J. Amoako. Pp37 – 76 (**Course Reserves**)

Week 10. Pidgins and creoles

Mon, Oct 21. Nigerian Pidgin and the languages of southern Nigeria. By Nicholas Faraclas

Wed, Oct 23. A comparison of the varieties of West African Pidgin English by Lothar Peter and Hans-Georg Wolf

Fri, Oct 25. Sweet Mother

Week 11. Creole

Mon, Oct 28. Re-examining Caribbean English Creole Continua. By Donald Winford. In *World Englishes*, Vol 16 (2), pp 233-279

Wed, Oct 30. Jamaican creole by Otelemate G Harry

Fri, Nov 1. Watch Bob Marley movie

Week 12.

Mon, Nov 4. 'The context of creole formation in Surinam.' In *Creole formation as language contact*. Pp 27-35

Wed, Nov 6. Verb semantics and argument structure in the Gbe and Sranan. By James Essegbey. In Pieter Muysken and Norval Smith (eds.), *Surviving the middle passage: the West Africa-Surinam Sprachbund*, pp175-206 (**Canvas**)

Fri, Nov 8. Language and survival: will Sranan Tongo, Suriname' lingua franca, become the official language? In *Caribbean Quarterly: A Journal of Caribbean Culture*, Volume 28, 1982. Issue 4 (**Course Reserves**)

Week 13.

Mon, Nov 11. Veteran's Day, No classes

Wed, Nov 13. The mellifluous Gullah language. In *Gullah Culture in America* by Wilbur Ross. Pp 125-148

Fri, Nov 15. On decreolization and language death in Gullah. By Patricia Jones-Jackson (**Canvas**)

Week 14.

Mon, Nov 18. 'African American English' by Lisa Green. In *Language in the USA*. Pp 76-91 (**Course Reserves**)

Wed, Nov 20. 'Black American English.' By Arthur Spears. In *Anthropology for the nineties*. Pp 96-113 (**Course Reserves**)

Fri, Nov 22. The Ebonics controversy. By Robert L. Williams. In *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1997

Week 15. Thanksgiving Break

Week 16. Group Project Presentations

Mon, Dec 2

Wed, Dec 4

Final exam