

Jamaican Creole/ Patois

History

Jamaican Creole, or locally known as Patois

Developed in the 17th century

Slaves from Africa in Jamaica were exposed to the dialectical forms of English spoken by slaveholders. The slaveholders spoke British English and Hiberno-English

Blending of African languages and European languages

Linguistic Context

U.K. English is the official language, but many speak Jamaican Creole/ Patois

U.K. English is mainly for government, media, and education

Patois is more prominent when you're speaking in informal situations

Creole perceived as inferior to English, but becoming less stigmatized. U.K.

English mainly spoken by upper class Jamaicans

Patois is heavily used for musical purposes (Ex: Reggae)

Linguistic Features

3) Grammar

Pluralization is signaled by the addition of “dem” to nouns ... (“things” is “dem ting”)

Use “unuh” as second person plural pronoun... (“let me tell you (all)” is “mek mi tell unuh”)

Possession is signaled by “fi” instead of “s” ... (“that thing is her’s” is “fi ar ting dat”)

Copula absence ... (“we are good” is “we good”)

Linguistic Features and Examples

1) Phonology

Don't use "th" - instead "t" or "d" sound ... ("ting" instead of "thing" and "dem" instead of "them")

Add h sound before words that don't require it ... ("heggs" instead of "eggs")

Consonant clusters are used to shorten phrases ... ("gwan" instead of "go on")

Linguistic Features and Examples

2) Lexicon

Words mean different things ... (Belly refers to pregnancy and ignorant refers to easily angered)

Reduplication of words (“Friedi Friedi” means timid)

Compounded nouns: (“Eye water” means tears)

Linguistic Features and Examples

3) Grammar

Pluralization is signaled by the addition of (“dem” to nouns)

Possession is signaled by (“fi” instead of “s”)

Zero copular construction (“we good” instead “we are good”)