

# लपतललंगुवत MANCHESTER

Report

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**Language investigation on the Jamaican Creole (Patois) in  
Moss Side, Manchester**

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## **Content**

Research question & methods recap

Changes to planned schedule

Findings: quantitative figures, findings and graphs/qualitative data showing fieldwork interviews

Personal observations and discussion evaluating findings. Comparison to other case study literature.

Appendix including images

# Language investigation on the Jamaican Creole: Patois

The main focus of our research is to discover the particular roles that the language Patois plays within different age groups in the Moss Side community. We want to expose individual attitudes and views of the language from a wide age spectrum and deduce why it has survived over the years. This will enable us to gain more knowledge regarding language maintenance of Patois in the area.

We thought Patois would be particularly interesting to study due to the social and historical ties to the language and that the social context for the Caribbean creoles was the Atlantic slave trade. We thought because the language has such personally emotive history that it could evoke more emotional responses to our research questions.

We chose the Moss Side area as its multi ethnic heritage and history denotes a very strong possibility that there will be speakers of the Patois within the community. We have set out in our fieldwork to find matured speakers who have acquired the language naturally in an innate way due to where they were born and how they were raised as well as younger speakers who have acquired the Patois as an additional language, passed down from older speakers. We want to find out the informants' historical family background to see whether they are descendant from immigrants who settled in Moss Side in around the 1940's and 50's. This will enable us see if they have been taught the language from generation down to generation or whether they have learnt the language by proximity. Another option is that certain individuals may have chosen to adopt the language due to social popularity or image, particularly amongst the younger generation of Patois speakers.

In our research plan, we could not keep Jamaican Creole consistent to a single name due to the fact that it is referred to by many different terms within literature and amongst speakers of alternative cultures. The definite description of the language seems to be down to personal preference and culture and is therefore referred to differently by different people. Upon interviewing different people who speak the language, it seems that the most popular and common way to refer to the language is 'Patwa', mainly due to the fact that when referring to it in any other term (broken English/Patois/Jamaican Creole), it caused either uncertainty, offence and debate. Non-speakers of the language also seemed to recognise the term Patwa more instantaneously than Patois or any other term. Amongst certain speakers, especially amongst the older generation, it sparked rife debate and even offence if we referred to the language as a 'Jamaican Creole'.

## **Our Fieldwork findings**

### **Qualitative Data**

The methods we used to gather information about the language in the local area were by means of questionnaire elicitation and narrative interviews to form a plausible amount of Qualitative data that we could use to compare differences in opinions, if any, between different generations. We gathered 27 individual interviews; 15 male and 12 female; filling out exactly the same questions for each. The age range we interviewed was between 16 and 62. The older women in the over 50's

church group would not state their age, but we guess some were around the age of 70. Only a small amount of people consented to being recorded and those who did have been put onto a DVD and sent to the lecturer. The recordings show the language being spoken as well as certain parts of the interview, such as repeating English sentences back in Patois.

We have separated the people we interviewed into 4 different age groups:

- Teenagers (19yrs and under) – 10 interviews
- Young adults (20yrs-30yrs) – 11 interviews
- Middle aged under 50's (31yrs-49yrs) – 4 interviews
- Over 50's (50yrs and above) - 2 interviews - as well as the over 50's women at the Church

We have done this to make it easier to discover trends when we come to the evaluation, but also so that we can assess any quantitative data more easily.

#### Results for Teenagers:

With the permission of Loreto College (which is based in Moss Side and has a high percentage of black students), we went into the common rooms at lunch time and interviewed teenagers living in the area. We found that for the younger generation their views about Patois were generally similar. The general trend we found was that Patois was used amongst peers, namely close friends as a form of informal speech. The majority of those who spoke Patois as a native language with family and friends did not speak it in places they work or to teachers. One person said this was because 'it is not the proper way to speak in an English driven society'. It was interesting to see that our results showed that the majority were encouraged by their parents to speak Patois and the main reason was that it is their parent's way of letting them 'know their roots'. People also mentioned tradition and being proud of their heritage as reasons for encouragement of acquiring the language.

Most teenagers felt that speakers of other languages within the community could not understand Patois and two people said that even their own friends, who were Jamaican and could speak the language, sometimes could not understand their parents, who spoke it in more depth. This is probably due to the fact that the younger generation pick up more on the slang aspect of the Creole due to social popularity and peer pressure. This is proven as many seem to think the language is very informal and contains a lot of slang and colloquialisms. We found that the main purpose for the use of Patois amongst teens is when they are angry/happy or joking around. When asked if they would teach Patois to children in the future, a lot of them who are encouraged by their parents to do so said they would not because it will not 'benefit their future' in an academic and educational sense. This is interesting as it shows that although they are proud of their culture and 'roots' amongst family and friends, they feel that speaking a language variety that is widely recognised by the broader English community as informal and non standard will not help their academic careers. When asked what language was most dominant in Moss Side, the majority who said Patois also said that English was least dominant, especially white English slang. This reinforces the idea that Patois is used to create a sense of street credibility: 'street cred'.

A definite factor that Jasmine picked up on, (who did a majority of the interviews), said that when interviewing the students compared to the members of the older generation, they did not take as much of an interest in the subject matter. When answering the questions, many of them seemed like

they had never thought about it before, or never really cared too much to think about the language they speak. Jasmine felt that this was because they perhaps did not know enough about the language's history and that the passion for heritage has been lost amongst the youth of today.

#### Results for Young Adults:

The majority of people from this age group were encouraged to speak Patois, although a few were neither discouraged nor encouraged. One man (aged 23) said, 'I have always been encouraged by my dad. He is a strong believer that our heritage should be remembered'. Another man of similar age also said that he was also strongly encouraged by his father and his father's father as it is the language of their culture and their identity. Most said the main situations where they use Patois is with friends and they use it in slang and 'in jest'. The example mentioned by 'Wagwan' was given quite a lot throughout our research. The main emotion Patois was associated with was anger and happily joking around. Some did use it within the workplace and quite a few said they have to use it when 'speaking to their elders' and grandparents. One woman said she uses it more with her grandparents than with her parents because it is more a way of their lives as they are older. The majority felt that Patois was the most dominant language in Moss Side, rivalled by Somalian. Nearly everyone had a different answer for what language they thought to be a minority, although English was most frequent. When asked if they would actively teach Patois to their children, few said they would. Most said there would be no need to as they would acquire it naturally. Two men said that they would encourage their children to speak it to remember their heritage and that it is good to know different languages. A vast amount said they would not teach it to children in a professional sense as it will not help them to get a job in the future, again reflecting what teenage speakers said, proving that the language of education in this country requires you to speak 'proper English' not 'broken English'. Many mentioned that there are an abundance of rude words in Patois, hence why the main use for the language seems to be when people are angry.

Many gave the answer that most people outside the culture can understand aspects of the language due to its rising popularity in music. One man said that people can sometimes understand aspects of Patois, although most words are difficult and there are some words even he does not understand. About 4 people said that English was referred to as a universal language and that Patois was not, hence why they would ring emergency services making sure they used English so they would be better understood.

One woman (aged 22) had very strong views, when asked if she finds it offensive when the language is referred to as a Creole or 'not a real language'. We quoted her saying, 'I don't find it offensive to refer to Patois as a Creole or broken English. I just believe it is people's ignorance. I do however find it offensive when people describe it as not being a real language because it is my heritage and to say people of my ethnicity can't talk properly is an insult!'. One man had the same reaction adding, 'it shows it has developed as a language to get here (Britain), in the first place'. Another man said that 'I would be offended if someone tried to show his knowledge against it. It's a part of Jamaican history- who are they to say it is not a real language- but depends who says it'. Contradicting this, a woman (aged 23) described the language as English 'but all broken and messed up- it's just a different dialect'. This is interesting as although all are similar ages, they have very different views on the connotations and historical background associated with Patois.

To conclude there seemed to be mixed opinions about what Patois actually represents to people of the Jamaican culture. Some thought of it as a real language for Jamaicans and as a way of life but others thought it was not and used it simply as slang amongst friends. This age group seemed to be greatly influenced by their parent's beliefs about the language or not influenced at all, perhaps creating their unsure attitudes. All did agree that Patois was used as means of informal communication, rarely used in a formal context. All people who spoke Patois were very proud of their mother tongue and heritage, and nearly all of them thought there should be more representation of it in the media.

#### Results for Middle Aged under 50's:

Out of the four people we interviewed we had quite varied results. One of the females we interviewed (aged 48), did not speak Patois but was in contact with the language regularly. She said she could understand bits of it but not if there was a strong accent and felt that it was used informally saying 'they use it in their own groups'. We took this to mean groups of Jamaican-born and Jamaican-descendant families, as the woman described herself as Black British. The same woman also said she would not think that it would be used within the workplace due to its informality, but one male (aged 37), who is a barber, strongly disagrees. He said the main place he uses Patois was at his work in his barber shop. A lot of his customers are Jamaican and he said he uses it mainly to converse, joke around and when 'they get angry at the kids'. He was heavily encouraged to speak the language and says that when he speaks it, those who cannot speak Patois do not understand him. He felt the most dominant language in Moss Side is Patois as it is all he seems to speak. He described the language as 'a chilled language' and said there was no need for formality. When asked if he would like more media representation of the language, he was the only person out of everyone we interviewed who said they like it being within the community and that he did not want it to be open to the nation, reinforcing that the main use for Patois is to exclude others outside of Jamaican culture. When asked if he was proud of his language he said a resounding 'yes. Definitely!' He has also passed on the language to his children with great enthusiasm. He was not offended by the term 'broken English' and said this was because Patois partly is made up of English. One lady said she uses Patois mainly when she is angry or when she talks to a friend on the phone and that she would neither discourage nor encourage her children to learn the language as they have already picked up phrases from her through proximity. She said the language is not dominant in Moss Side as there are so many other languages now. She described English as 'a melting pot' and gave an example of how she was on the bus one day and not a single person spoke English – not even the bus driver. The general feeling from the middle aged group was quite mixed, but this was probably due to the lack of samples we had to analyse. 3 out of 4 people were speakers of the language but only 2 out of 4 were actively encouraged to speak the language when growing up. Due to the lack of qualitative data from this age group there is not much point in creating quantitative data from our findings.

#### Results for Over 50's:

One speaker for this age group was 52 (teacher) and the other was 62 (retired pub owner). It is unfortunate that we could not get more fieldwork data from the older generation here because it would have made our overall evaluation more reliable. Both speakers have some very interesting

views of the language and were both willing to be recorded. This also means there is not much point creating any qualitative data for this age group.

Both people spoke Patois with parents and were taught the language as it was the main language used within the home and were encouraged to use it. One of them said that English was the most dominant language in Moss Side due to the fact many black people in Moss Side are British-born and that business, media and education encourages English more than Patois. The other speaker said that Patois is the most dominant language in Moss Side because the area is made up of mainly Black Caribbeans and the area is known as a 'ghetto'. He said Patois was ghetto- a way of life. The other speaker said that Patois is a 'street thing'.

An interesting point, one of the older candidates stated, was in reference to whether there is enough media coverage. He pointed out that there are not that many books written in Patois. He questioned whether this trend had to do with the fact that it is a broken form of English, so it is seen as informal, thus not taken seriously for writing a book. Both speakers feel that there should be more representation of Patois within the media because there are no Jamaican TV channels and people know very little about it, although one does say that music has exposed the Patois more and hence made it into a universal language. He gives the example 'Raas', which was also mentioned by one of the teenagers.

Both speakers are very proud of their language because as one speaker put it, 'it is my 'inheritance''. Both speakers encouraged their children to speak the language along with other languages too, such as English. One said that '...because language is power, the potential to be multilingual will benefit you in so many ways and that it shows respect to people you talk to of another language'. This suggests that nearly all speakers of Patois are at least bilingual who live in the Moss Side area, as it seems to be felt that knowing other languages is important to have a more fulfilled way of life.

Neither of them was offended by the term 'broken English' because they feel linguistically there is not much difference between English and Patois, and therefore accept the comparison. This is interesting as the older women we had discussion with were very 'touchy' on the subject, saying it is nothing like English, 'it is our language'. Jasmine who interviewed these older speakers said there was a definite feeling that the heritage of Patois is slowly being forgotten within the black community and their passion to keep it alive is abundantly clear, as shown in the detailed interviews they provided. One even goes into great detail about his grandmother and grandfather from Maroons, Jamaica; telling us how his grandfather led a revolt from Portland to Kingston to protest about working conditions.

After visiting a local church, Our Ladies Parish, Moss Side; we set up an arrangement with the Tuesday programme co-coordinator to interview some of the Patois speakers that attended the group. However, things did not go as smoothly as we anticipated. The audience we were targeting was not as co-operative as we initially thought and were very defensive of their language. The women who were part of an over 50's dinner group did not seem to understand why and what we were researching. They kept saying they 'weren't Jamaican' and said that we were not allowed to refer to the language as Jamaican, even though they did speak Patois. They said that all they are doing is speaking English very quickly and that they simply have an alternate way of saying things in



English. Due to this we could not get them to fill out the questionnaires or do an individual interview. We could just observe what they said about the language and their opinions and views. They suggested to us that the language was an impossible thing to pinpoint and research, due to the fact it is spoken by different groups of people from all over the Caribbean and that everyone has a different 'twang', meaning everyone speaks it differently. They said they could tell where each other was from in the Caribbean due to their accent and there were women in the group who were from Barbados and Trinidad as well as Jamaica and they had all originally come from the Caribbean and were not born in England. They spoke to each other in Patois and said that the main reason that they 'spoke like this' was that it was just the way they speak because its where they come from and also a good way of excluding white people from their conversation. One woman we spoke to, and have recorded was telling us about the younger speakers of Patwa she has encountered and she said they were speaking the language so white people did not know what they were talking about. We also quoted one older woman saying, 'don't want the white people to understand we speak patois'. This shows that the older generation, in this case, seem to be using their language as a device to isolate others socially and this has had an effect on the younger generation. This then suggests that in the society they live there is a definite culture divide even within the Catholic religion. There were also white members of the group who said they can not understand what the people from the Caribbean were saying a lot of the time and that they were too worried about offending them if they asked them what they were saying to each other.

The older women were very hard to follow when they were debating, and we felt that we even caused an argument amongst members of the group as they were all from different places. One lady even said she spoke broken French and was adamant she did not speak any broken English- although we heard her doing so to another woman sitting right next to her. The same lady also said that she was never taught to write Patois and she would write exactly the same as we would in English. One lady told us a lot about her grandmother, who she picked up certain aspects of the language through hearing it. She mentions her 'grandmother's time' frequently, which we felt referred to the time when black people were still being treated as an inferior race and she said that the language was more prominent amongst people living in the areas in the Caribbean decades ago, when her grandmother was alive; than amongst people living in the Moss Side area now. Although she said she was never actively taught it seemed to have significantly influenced the way she spoke to her friends. This shows that the views about Patois are now more relaxed and used more for general conversation amongst speakers of the language. A book written by a speaker of Patois, who referred to the Jamaican Creole as Patwa, has been extremely useful to make reference to as he states that 'Creole languages have also been defined as the languages of the slave trying, unsuccessfully, to speak the language of the master'<sup>1</sup>. It does seem that the language is now used for more secretive purpose than in the past, but research we have done that is shown later on in the text will contradict this theory; showing maybe the sole purpose of the Patwa is to exclude outsiders. We found that in religion for all age groups the main language used in Church is Patois because of songs but also the fact the people attending church are mostly black.

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan Dalphinis: Caribbean & African Languages - Pg 85, (last paragraph).

There has been speculation that the Patois is a form of broken English, probably due to the grammatical and phonetic similarities to English. In the table below there are examples of English translations of Patois phrases and words:

**Table 1**

<b>Patois form</b>	<b>English form</b>
dem	Them,us, they, the
Lub	Love
Howdi	Hello
tenke	Thanks
Great sumting	Excellent
Hole hepe a people	Crowd
A transport	Bus, car, train, ferry, plane
Si don dear	Sit down here

We were referred by a member the Powerhouse library in Moss Side to a man called 'Washington' who would tell us more about the grammatical features of the language. He states, 'Patois has a lack of adjectives making it harder to describe certain things as well as tense and sense of time'. The table above shows that there is abundant 'h and th- dropping' e.g. in 'dem'. Repetitions of sounds are used to show emphasis: e.g. 'ki-ki' to show in English that something is very funny and makes you laugh. Collective nouns are used to describe one general thing that would describe different things in English, e.g. 'a transport' would refer to all types of transport and the language does not specify what exactly. Washington said to express tenses you need to juxtapose Standard English into Patwa hence why it may be referred to as broken English.

In our questionnaire we had a section at the end where respondents had to translate two lines of a poem written in Patois into English. Not everyone gave consent to be recorded but many wrote how they read the poem in English. The different translations are noted below.

Line one: *wah mek dem haffi chobble wi likkle twang?*

English translations for this:

***Let them take the language and do one***

***What make them have we little***

***Why do they have to mess with our language?***

***What makes them have problem with a little slang?***

***What makes them have to trouble with little chat/small talk***

***Why do you talk in your proper accents?***

***What makes them have trouble with little talk***

***What makes them think they can try trouble me with their formal English?***

***What make them have to with little English***

***Why you botherin me with your posh jibber jabber?***

line two: *mek dem nuh tek dem propa inglish an galang?*

English translations for this:

***Why they bothering talking in their posh accents***

***Me them no take them proper English and go along***

***Leave our language alone and go away***

***Make them think its proper English and go on***

***Let them take their proper English and go along/away***

***You need to take that language and get out of my face!***

***Make them take the proper English and go away***

***I think they can take their English and leave us alone!***

***Make them no take them proper English and go along***

***Take your language and do one!***

These findings show that written Patois is interpreted differently by speakers, as no one gave the exact same answer. This proves even more the problems with written Patois and how it could cause misinterpretation. This makes it clearer why Patois is mainly a spoken form because the utterances depend on the situation and context of the time of speech. This finding made us realise and understand more about what the older women were trying to tell us in the church. Patois cannot be defined as a set language as it depends on who is speaking it and where. An old woman in the church explained to us that when a Patois speaker offers another speaker a 'cup of tea' it could mean any form of liquid, whether it be ovaltine, coffee, hot chocolate or warm milk, showing the vague use of collective nouns in Patois. She said it sounds very odd to someone who is not familiar with the language, but it is just a way of life and speech for many residents in the Moss Side area. Many people who we have met, who are in regular contact with the language, say this language has no rules, but this is what makes it special and different.

Most people, who spoke Patois and who we interviewed, believed 'Patwa' deserved to be noted as a language on its own as it comes from the Caribbean and many feel it was not created through means of cooperation with the English.

When referring to Patois as 'broken English' to one of our older speakers, 47, who was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, he enlightened us to the negative connotations that some speakers associate with this definition. He said that some feel the Patois was entitled to be named as a language, independent to English, because of the negativity towards English slave masters historically, and the fact that the language was created as a form of resistance against their captors; not as a lingua franca to converse with them. This led us on to research in more depth why this language would be seen as a resistance against slavery. In the same book, written by Dalphinis, we found that due to the many forests in St Lucia, where the Patwa originated from, running away and escaping enslavement was a reasonable strategy to avoid slavery. Runaway slaves- (*neg mawon*); said to live in the forests were called 'Maroons' and because there was such a high volume of 'Maroon culture' in St. Lucia it is suggested that the Patwa owed as much, if not more, to the slaves than to the masters. Dalphinis states that 'as a common language of the St. Lucian slaves it must have been an extremely important means of communication for the runaways and for the

perpetuation of runaway culture<sup>2</sup>. Here we see that there is suggestion that the language blossomed not through means of communication between slave and master but through means of creating a separate identity and culture for many runaway slaves entirely independent of plantations. He goes on to say that bands of slaves, living in the forest away from plantation society, are likely to have contributed other dimensions to the development of Patwa, than those of plantation society, where the culture of the masters was paramount, both in minds of the plantation slaves and those of their masters.

Washington, who has helped others research and write dissertations/studies on Patwa, told us some additional and very interesting information about the local community and Manchester Police force. He said that the police had to eventually recruit speakers of the language, or at least people from the Jamaican culture who could understand Patois when people were reporting crimes etc. He said the white police were confused and couldn't follow what Patois speakers were saying when they reported crimes or witness reports. Washington said this was a problem generally over Manchester with all different languages, but highlights the fact that in Moss Side the Patois problem was more prominent. To complement this, the questionnaire's overall responses were that speakers of Patois would ring the emergency services i.e. police/ambulance using English as it is the language of the country; however a few did say they would probably use Patois as they would be panicking and as we found, Patois seems to be used a lot subconsciously to express emotions. It is a difficult question to answer as you may act differently when put in a difficult situation, and not be conscious of what language you use. To try and research what he told us, we went onto the Greater Manchester police website to try and see if there was any information on this. All we could find was a small section about translators, which is similar to what Washington told us, but not exactly as he said they wanted police men who spoke the language to be available in the area, not language translators. He also related what he told us about Patois in the police force to the language of gang life. He said that nowadays Patois is very much a street thing and the youngsters around Moss Side purposely adopt the language as it is seen as cool slang and prestigious amongst the younger social groups. One man we interviewed (27) said the language was definitely 'sought after'.

We sent a letter to local police to see if they could help us but we did not receive a reply. This will be shown in the appendix.

### **Patois in the Media and Code Switching**

Patois has been apparent in the media for some years now. In urban music, also described as 'Black' music, words, phrases and grammar used in Patois are constantly being used in hip hop musicians' lyrics. The popular British Asian Hip Hop artist M.I.A, is an example of the language usage in music. Her first single 'Galang' features Jamaican Patois in its chorus. It shows the commercialisation of the language as it is being used by a worldwide artist. Our fieldwork shows that there is a Jamaican influence in the Moss Side society as several college students explained that their non-Jamaican peers use some forms of Patois in their speech. This, however, has taken on the description a part of youth slang, rather than Patois.

Code-switching is very popular when using Patois in Moss Side, as many of the interviewees tended to switch to Patois when portraying a certain feeling or attitude. It is also heard on the local radio

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<sup>2</sup> Pages 25 – 26 Important when explaining other factors that have influenced the language.

station 'Peacefm.co.uk'. As we listened to it for a few hours, we noted phrases such as, 'wah you wan', 'ear' and, 'nuff said' mixed with British English.

Code-switching is an important identity marker in bilingual populations. It is clear that it is an aspect of many Jamaicans across the country, and may be seen as the 'cool' thing to do due to its predominance in 'cool' music, hence why many youths are influenced by it. From our analysis of the students from Loreto College, they are in agreement that Patois is being used by young people, who were not of Jamaican decent. When being interviewed, many of the participants made the point of Patois words, phrases and grammar being widespread to different social groups and ethnicities.

### **Quantitative Data**

We thought that another way to compare and portray some of our findings would be to create numerical data, i.e. percentages, showing the different views from the different age groups.

#### **Results from teenagers (19yrs and under) – based on 10 interviews:**

- 60% of people are encouraged by their parents to speak Patois. 40% are discouraged.
- 90% of people feel that Patois is informal and it is used for informal purposes.
- 50% of people use Patois with their peers whilst 10% use a mixture of the two, and 40% use just English.
- 80% of people felt that Patois is the most dominant language in the Moss Side area.

#### **Results from young adults (20yrs-30yrs) – based on 11 interviews**

- 70% of Patois speakers in this age group felt that their language was of local prestige. The other 30% thought it to be English.
- 90% of people in this age group felt that Patois is informal and used for informal purposes.
- 80% of people in this age group use a mixture of Patois and English at work, at home and with friends, while the other 20% use English alone.
- 60% of people thought that Patois was the most dominant language in Moss Side. The other 40% thought it was either Somalian or English.

### **Evaluation**

The book by Dalphinis begins by stating that the social context of Patwa is one of African resistance, re-adaptation and perpetuation of African culture in the teeth of an attempt to enforce European culture upon captured Africans. We could apply this to the speakers that we interviewed in Moss Side in a way, as people we interviewed seemed to be very proud of their heritage and thought of the Patois to be more prestigious to them over English. The fact the language has been used by speakers to purposely exclude others shows there is a definite culture divide within the area we did our fieldwork. Although there were a few anomalies in our data, there was a general trend between the age groups. Older speakers seemed to want to pass down the language to children to keep their culture 'alive'. At the same time, we also felt they were maintaining the language, as a way of

rebelling against the wider society, by creating a community similar to their ancestors; outsiders can be easily excluded, to highlight the fact they are different in both culture and speech and have every right to be who they are with their families and friends. We felt the younger speakers were influenced by the elders, as well as by each other, to use the language, not only to maintain their culture, but also to fit in with peer groups, as the version of Patois slang they use is seen as the 'street language'.

Although we found that Patois is used frequently in an informal way it is not 'frowned' upon between the older and younger members of the community who speak it; i.e. one will never hear an older speaker of Patois to reprimand a younger speaker for using an informal tone. It is the norm for it to be used informally, emphatically and also to exaggerate emotions. This is in contrast to colloquial English, as it is massively frowned upon and most parents, (from our personal experiences), considered to be an unsuitable or socially unacceptable speech. We found that the older generation wanted to encourage the younger speakers to learn the language and make them aware of their heritage, as many of the people we interviewed in their teens and 20's said they spoke it a lot with grandparents.

Our findings indicate that younger people preferred to use Patois informally and not in educational or occupational locations. From this, it is evident that when younger speakers of Patois speak to other speakers of Patois they feel comfortable; however they do not feel fully at ease speaking Patois in more formal situations which results in them code-switching to English. These findings support the findings of Li Wei who documented the usage of Chinese and English within three generations of one family. Chinese in Li's study was seen as a marker of heritage and culture and mainly spoke by children, when having a conversation with their parents or grandparents (Li 1994). As our results illustrate, many Patois speakers felt that their parents had taught them Patois to "show them their roots" which supports Li's opinion that in his study of Chinese and English in Clevedon, language was a way of retaining culture and identity.

With many younger speakers using Patois exclusively informally and to share jokes and such, this supports the view that "children acquire more complex networks as they get older and move from parent-orientated networks to peer ones" (Myers-Scotton 2006: 100) resulting in their heritage language being lost in some way or another. In other words, as children (who have been brought up speaking a language such as Patois in the family) get older and start mixing and socialising with a wider range of people, they start to speak the way the people they are mixing with speak. For instance, the Myers-Scotton's study on the Chinese community in Tyneside shows that the "shift from Chinese dominant to English dominant usage within three generations is evident" (2006: 100). This documents the way in which 3<sup>rd</sup> generation children from Cantonese speaking families have now more or less adopted English as their L1 and Cantonese as their L2. This change is down to peer groups preferring English or English-Cantonese, and from our study, with Patois speakers going to college and working in an English dominant environment, they code switch and adopt English over Patois in the same way the peer networks in Myers-Scotton's study favour English over Cantonese.

Another strong point which resulted from our investigations was the fact that the older speakers felt that Patois was a big part of their culture and identity, with one elder speaker referring to Patois as "my inheritance". This is a very widespread view amongst older speakers of minority languages and including Patois as shown above. Tsunoda states "Language connects the people with their

ancestors and land and constitutes irreplaceable knowledge” (Tsunoda 2006: 137), which we feel is the case here with Patois speakers. The elder people are very proud to speak Patois and it holds a sense of pride and identity for them which they can show in everyday life by speaking ‘their’ language of Patois. Tsunoda also implies that “there is a belief that people own their language which points to the need to distinguish between language owners and speakers (Evans 2001:251)”. We could adapt this belief to our own study by saying the elder people could act as the “owners” of the Patois language and that the younger speakers, namely those under the age of 20, are merely the “speakers” of Patois.

Another study similar to ours was carried out by Cecelia Davidson and Richard G. Schwartz. In this study they explored bilingualism between Standard English and Jamaican Patois to gain insight into the semantic lexicon. They specifically focussed their investigation on whether there is extinction, replacement, or extension of the Patois meanings with linguistically shared words. They also looked for any patterns in responses from social groups, for example, educational, age, gender, or the length of time that the subject had lived in the country. In addition, they kept an eye out for any links by grammatical class membership of the stimuli. The results suggested modification of the compound in Patois and coordinate categorization model of the lexicon of bilinguals.

Speakers of Jamaican Creoles, of more sophisticated Creole English, of English ‘with a Jamaican accent’ and ‘expatriates, English, American and other languages’, use to close correspond to the Black, Coloured, White and British Isles races Census classifications, until around the 1020’s. Foner (1979:171) said the middle aged migrants tend to have fewer family ties in Britain and will have left most of their close kin and other contacts in the old country, whereas the youngest migrant cohort and certainly the British born ‘second generation’ have most of their family and friendship ties in Britain. Therefore their experience of the Patois language will differ with age.

### **Problems Encountered**

We encountered a few problems with our fieldwork in the way that not all of our original scheduled interviews happened. We managed to overcome this by arranging more interviews overall. The main problem is that because we went to a college and one of the people in our group, Jasmine, already had friends who spoke the language, most of our interviews were from people aged 16 – 29. We could have done with more interviews with older people but some were just not willing, although it was more of the older generation that agreed to do recordings. We did not want to ask the women in the church their actual age for fear they would get offended as they were already annoyed enough by us saying ‘Jamaican Creole’. From the few people we did interview who were older, and from our encounter in the Church, we were still able to gather enough information to draw comparisons. We had arranged a meeting with the library in Moss Side where people of all ages from the community were meant to talk about language in the area. Unluckily it got cancelled last minute and could only be rescheduled after the assignment deadline. We had a lot of trouble getting replies from educational institutions as well. We contacted schools in the local area to gather information, but none of them replied.

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Local Radio Station in Moss Side: <<http://www.peacefm.org.uk/>> [accessed 8<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010]



## **Appendix**

### Questionnaire used for individual Interviews:

Questionnaire: Fieldwork

#### Interviewed Individual:

Age: E.g. 47

Gender: E.g. Female

Ethnic Origin: E.g. Jamaican

Parents Ethnic Origin: E.g. Nigerian/Jamaican

Any information on historical family background: E.g. emigration to England in 1970's.

Occupation: E.g. working with what ages and where.

(Note Code switching if individual describes doing so in a particular domain)

<b>Interviewed Individual's place of language use</b>	<b>Language Used in Particular Domain</b>
Home (i.e. with next of kin, children, spouse, parents etc.)	E.g. Patois/Patwa
Workplace (i.e. boss, colleges)	E.g. English
Educational institution (i.e. teachers)	E.g. English
Among peers (best friends, neighbours etc.)	E.g. Patwa/English
Hobbies/Recreational Activities (i.e. Clubs, choir group)	E.g. English
Towards strangers/services (i.e. shop assistants, doctors)	E.g. English
Religion (i.e. In Church to address peers, or Church Leader)	E.g. Patois/English

### Open Ended Questions

- Were you encouraged to speak Patois or discouraged from doing so? (And reasons why).
- In what situations are you more likely to use Patois and for what purpose?
- Can speakers of other languages in the community understand certain aspects of Patois? (If so state which parts and in which contexts).
- What is the main language you use to speak to your children?
- What is the main language you use to speak to your friends?
- What is the language you use in church?
- What language would you speak when ringing the emergency services?
- What language would you speak in your local grocery store?
- What language do you feel is most dominant in the Moss Side area?
- Would you say Patois is used informally or formally?
- What language do you feel is a minority language in the Moss Side area?
- Do you feel the language you speak as your mother tongue is of local prestige?
- Do you feel that there should be more representation of your language within the media in this community, for example, within radio broadcasting?
- Would you encourage/discourage your children to speak Patois? (And reasons why).
- Are you proud of the language you speak?
- Do you find it offensive when Patois is referred to as 'broken English?'/Creole or when described as not being a real language?

To be recorded: (via mobile phone or on camera, then to be put on computer).

Just generally record speakers of Patwa preferably on camera, with their consent, saying different sentences then explaining what each one meant.

- Repeat this English sentence as closely as possible in Patois:

1. 'I don't want anything to eat'.
2. 'Stretch out your hand'.
3. 'The little woman'.

- Repeat these sentences into English as closely as possible by speech:

(from the poem called patois bodderashun by Simone Hudson).

*wah            mek            dem            haffi            chobble            wi            likkle            twang?*  
*mek dem nuh tek dem propa inglish an galang?*

Photos showing the Catholic Church where me and Daniel went to interview the 'over 50's' dinner group.



Here are a few photographs of some of the people we interviewed during our fieldwork research.



**Information about Washington Alcott who the library in Moss Side recommended us speak to:**

Name - Washington Alcott

Age - 47 years

Ethnicity - Jamaican (African Caribbean)

Origin of Parents - Jamaica

Qualification details MSc - Environmental Science, (UM) MSc - Computer Science, (MMU)

BSc 2.1 - Geography (MMU) and Teaching Certificate

Current job -Teacher and Freelance Researcher

Place of birth - St Elizabeth, Jamaica

**Letter of referral form Powerhouse Library:**

Dear Ms Beddows

Further to your public question, which was referred to me in my capacity as Executive Member for Culture & Leisure.

After contacting Councillor Roy Walters, Labour Member for the Moss Side Ward, he advises me that he is not aware of any school or college in Manchester teaching Jamaican creole. However, Councillor Walters has suggested that you may wish to speak with a gentleman called Washington whose contact details are telephone number (xxxx) or by email at (xxxx). Washington will then be able to put you in contact with someone who knows this language.

Furthermore, Councillor Walters could arrange with members from the West Indian Sports Club for you to talk to some of the Jamaican people there. If you would like to accept this offer, Councillor Walters can be contacted by email at (xxx).

I have also liaised with Neil MacInnes, Head of Library and Information who advises that a member of the Library and Information Service team will contact you directly to arrange a meeting at The Powerhouse to discuss areas of mutual interest and future collaboration. If you should need to contact Neil MacInnes for any reason, his contact details are telephone number (xxx) or email at (xxxx)

I do hope that you find this information useful.

Regards.

Councillor Mike Amesbury, Executive Member for Culture & Leisure  
& Labour Member for the Fallowfield Ward  
Executive Members' Office, Manchester City Council, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA  
Tel: (xxxxx) Fax: (xxx)  
Email: (xxxx)

**Letter to police station in Moss Side area** (that unfortunately did not get a reply).

I am an English Language student at the University of Manchester and as part of my course I am writing a research case study on language in the Moss Side area.

As part of my research I need to gather all sorts of different information about language in the neighbouring area, focusing mainly on the Patwa language (Jamaican creole) that is spoken by many residents of Moss Side. I am looking into how this language is used within the community and the emergency services.

I heard that GMP have had to recruit speakers of Patwa into the police force so that witnesses to crimes etc. who speak Patwa can be translated and understood by the police.

I have also heard that this language is very much associated with 'gang life' and used as specialist jargon amongst youths in Moss Side.

Is there any information you could provide me with to get a better idea of how the police force has coped with the variation of language types in Moss Side and any personal experience with this language?

I understand you probably have far more important and heavier issues to deal with than languages spoken in Moss Side, but any help or info you could give me, whether it be just a quick email back or allow me to come into the station to speak with somebody who knows the area well would be fantastic!

- Or maybe you have a speaker of Patwa in the police who is from Moss Side??

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this query and I anxiously await any kind of reply!