

Status Planning and Language Education Policy in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Case of Jamaica

Sarah-Lee R. Gonsalves

University of Pennsylvania

The subject of language education policy has been the source of highly contentious debates in Jamaican media, in recent years, as there have been numerous calls for and against the inclusion of Jamaican Creole in the education system. Advocates for Jamaican Creole argue that its exclusion risks the marginalization of a significant portion of the school population, while opponents of Jamaican Creole express concern about reducing the quality of education offered to students in the name of linguistic rights. Using an interpretive policy analysis approach, and by examining *de facto* language policies, a draft language policy, and newspaper articles, this paper seeks to determine the discourses informing status planning and mediating language education policy in Jamaica. The findings suggest that discourses about the evolution of post-independence Jamaican identity and notions of progress through education and literacy are the most influential.

Introduction

The subject of language education policy has been the source of highly contentious debates in Jamaican media in recent years, as there have been numerous calls for and against the inclusion of Jamaican Creole in the education system. Advocates for this approach to education, claim that an education system that does not account for creole speakers marginalizes a significant proportion of the school population (Devonish, 2018). Opponents of the inclusion of Jamaican Creole, on the other hand, express concern about reducing the quality of education offered to students in the name of linguistic rights (Tucker, 2012). Using an interpretive policy analysis approach, and by examining local language education policies and newspaper commentary on the issue, this paper seeks to determine the local discourses informing status planning and mediating language education policy in Jamaica. First, there will be a contextual overview of language and education in the Commonwealth Caribbean with a specific focus on Jamaica. Next, there will be a discussion of status planning and language policy frameworks. This will be followed by an analysis of how language education policies seek to shift the targets of language planning from an emphasis on Jamaican Standard English (JSE) to Jamaican Creole (JC) to improve local educational outcomes. Finally, the conclusion will discuss local and regional implications of the findings.

Background

Language in the Commonwealth Caribbean

According to Nero (2018), the Commonwealth Caribbean is a collection of former British colonies including Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Carriacou, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. This collective, previously known as the British West Indies, is also more commonly referred to as the English-speaking Caribbean or the Anglophone Caribbean. While English is the only official language in many of these countries, the majority language, is an English-lexified creole or vernacular. The linguistic complexity of this region is even further compounded by the existence of what some linguists have described as a creole continuum, which ranges from a basilect (the purest form of creole), a mesolect (equal parts creole and English) and an acrolect (the local standardized English; Alleyne, 1980; De Camp, 1971; Nero, 2014). The ability of local speakers to move between these points in the continuum, in different interactional contexts, has made it difficult to establish the degree to which specific varieties are used exclusively. However, the general consensus among linguists like Devonish (1986a, 1986b) and Carrington (2002) is that the language of the majority of West Indians is closer to the basilect and mesolect than the acrolect.

Language and Education

Focusing the discussion specifically on Jamaica, the local parallel of the situation described above is equally complex and contentious. In Jamaica, the largest and most populous island in the Commonwealth Caribbean, the two competing language varieties are JSE and JC, the latter known also as Patois or Patwa (Nero, 2014). The medium of instruction in Jamaican schools has been historically, and still is, English. However, since the colonial era, the opening of the education system to a more diverse student population, with the introduction of universal primary and secondary education, may have resulted in JC being more present and visible in Jamaican schools. This suggests that the current school population is markedly more linguistically diverse than it would have been during the colonial era; yet, JSE remains the medium of instruction.

Concern about the medium of instruction in post-colonial education has long been expressed by linguists such as Le Page (1968) and Fishman, Ferguson, and Das Gupta (1968), who contemplated questions of nationhood, national language and how these would manifest in local education systems. For Le Page (1968), West Indian children are neither foreign learners of nor native speakers of English, and their creole languages have phonology, grammatical, lexical, and semantic structures that differ in various degrees from English. In spite of this, the default approach to education in the Commonwealth Caribbean has been an English as a mother tongue approach. It is assumed that students speak a non-Standard form of English with phonological, syntactic, and lexical “deviations that were perceived as a problem in need of correction” (Nero, 2018, p. 208).

However, the results of this approach have proved less than satisfactory and the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), each year, bemoans the results of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) English Language Exam:

It is clear that hundreds of students across the Caribbean have not mastered the use of Standard English. There continues to be interference from dialects and patois used throughout the region; to these have been added the slangs originating from dancehall music and the North American ghettos and abbreviations familiar to users of the messaging media of modern technology. (CXC, 2015, p. 375)

This quote, reprinted in consecutive CSEC English Language Exam reports, highlights the problematizing of dialects, creoles, and patois, which, while a widespread, regional phenomenon, is certainly not a new one. Le Page (1968, p. 432), was also one of the first to question the “very high failure rate” of West Indian students in the CSEC predecessor, the British General Certificate of Education Ordinary (GCE O) level English exam. While Le Page (1968) may have welcomed the replacement of the British examination system with the regional CSEC exams, his comments on English being the gatekeeper of social and economic mobility still ring true today: “It acts rather like a sluice gate controlling the flow of manpower into the educated roles that should provide the dynamism for the economic and cultural growth of the countries concerned” (p. 432). Many students in Jamaica who fail the CSEC English Language Exam also fail other subjects that have been taught in English, and leave school after five years of secondary education, without any qualifications to find employment or to seek further education (Christie, 2003).

Based on information available from recent subject reports, the average regional pass rate for the CSEC English Language Exam has been approximately 53%, with 75.4% of Jamaican students secured a passing grade in this exam, in 2018 (CXC, 2015; Ministry of Education Youth & Information [MOEYI], 2018). Roberts (2014), however, points out that in many Caribbean countries, less than 25% of 16–17 year olds, actually take this exam. While these pass rates may not initially seem alarming, it has also long been established that a passing grade in the CSEC exam may, in fact, belie English language competence. Craig (1997) points out that regional universities such as the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Guyana, since the 1950s and 1960s, have required all students to pass a course in the use of English, despite the fact that many students present passing grades in the secondary exit English exam, upon admission to the universities. Tertiary level English exams, required to the present day, are deemed necessary despite the fact that English has been the medium of instruction for the majority of students for their entire educational lives. The only students exempt from sitting UWI’s mandatory English language exam are those who hold a Grade 1 classification (the highest grade achievable) in the CSEC English Language Exam.

Interestingly enough, if these same students applied to universities outside the Caribbean, with any passing grade (one, two, or three) in the CSEC English Language Exam, they would not be required to take further exams to demonstrate English language competence. Students from the Commonwealth Caribbean are not required to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as part of their application to American or British universities. These students are usually considered native

English speakers since English is not only *an* official language for these countries but (in many cases) *the* official language. This prestige status afforded to English, also means that demonstrated proficiency in this variety remains a requirement for access to further education and the local workforce. Not only does English proficiency act as a barrier to education when English is the only official medium of instruction, but it also allows CSEC examinations to act as gatekeepers to economic progress and social mobility.

Language Policy and Planning Frameworks

Language and Language Policy Typology

Before moving to a discussion of language policy and planning, it is necessary to address terms describing the language used heretofore with a definition. The terms dialect, creole, variety, and vernacular have been used without distinction to describe various linguistic systems in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Fishman (1970) presents *variety* as an “objective, nonjudgmental, technical” designation used in sociolinguistics to describe “a kind of language” (p. 21), and while admitting that the use of the term language is often subjective, he differentiates variety from dialect by relating the latter to specific varieties of divergent geographic, social or religious characteristics. Stewart (1968), however, differentiates between dialect, creole and vernacular, based on the presence or absence of the following attributes: 1) Standardization: the elaboration and acceptance of a set of norms codified as correct usage by members of the speech community; 2) Autonomy: the ability to function as a discrete and independent linguistic system; 3) Historicity: whether or not the variety is believed to be the result of “normal development” over time; and 4) Vitality: use of the language by an “unisolated community of native speakers” (p. 536). In his view, a standard language has all four of these attributes, a vernacular has autonomy, historicity, and vitality; without standardization, a dialect has historicity and vitality only, and a creole merely has vitality. He further identifies the existence of an English Creole in the Jamaican context, but interestingly only discusses diglossia with reference to the Haitian case. For the purposes of this analysis, the terms creole, vernacular, and dialect will be used in accordance with their use in the local Jamaican context. While the term dialect is used to refer to the local vernacular in other Caribbean contexts (e.g., Vincentian English Dialect in Gonsalves, 2016), in the available literature, JC is classified as a true creole, and may be termed a vernacular, but is not described as a dialect or a standard variety of language.

Johnson (2013) categorizes different language policies in how they are situated with respect to genesis, means and goals, documentation, and legal codification. In terms of their genesis or provenance, he describes policies as being *top-down*—developed by an authority (e.g., government) and passed down to the speech community for implementation—or *bottom-up*—developed “for and by the community that it impacts” (p. 10). In relation to their means and goals, policies may be overt/explicit—outlined openly and clearly in spoken or written discourse—or they may be covert/implicit—“intentionally” obscure at a “collusive (macro)” or “subversive (micro)” level (p. 10). Finally, language policies may be legally codified—*de jure* or *de facto*—produced at speech community level irrespective of the existence of *de jure* policies.

The terms *language-in-education policy*, *language education policy*, and *education language policy* are most frequently used in the literature on the medium of instruction and language and education. Menken and García (2010) distinguish between language-in-education policy—top-down policy concerned with the use of language varieties in schools, and language education policy—bottom-up, intentional policy describing how a particular school will treat language varieties. Shohamy (2006) describes language education policy (LEP) as “a mechanism used to create *de facto* language practices in educational institutions, especially in centralized educational systems” (p. 76). In her view, LEPs are tools for implementing national language policy agendas and are usually top-down and implemented at the school level by teachers with little agency. Conversely, Menken and García (2010) assert that not all policies about language and education are top-down. They argue that, in spite of the level of the centralization of an educational system, or the how explicit or implicit policies regarding language and education are: “at each level of an educational system, from the national ministry or department of education to the classroom, language education policies are interpreted, negotiated, and ultimately (re)constructed in the process of implementation” (Menken & García 2010, p. 1). This view is also reflected by Ricento and Hornberger (1996), who describe language policy using the metaphor of a multilayered onion, comprised of various agents, levels, and processes, which all influence language policy and practice. The authors indicate that, in some cases, educators may implement policies aligned with broader social attitudes rather than specific top-down or bottom-up policies as a consequence of their own socialization into the society in question. This paper uses the term language education policy and defines it as attempts to determine which languages should be taught in schools, at what age instruction should begin, how long instruction should last, who should teach and learn, and by using which materials and methods (Shohamy, 2006). However, unlike Shohamy’s (2006) strict interpretation of policy as a purely top-down apparatus, the analysis here is concerned with identifying the discourses shaping the drafting and implementation of LEPs and acknowledges the agentive potential of actors at all levels of the policymaking process.

Language Planning: Status vs. Corpus vs. Acquisition

Tracing the history of language planning development and scholarship, Johnson (2013) identifies Kloss (1969) as the first to distinguish between corpus and status planning, with the latter attempting to determine how to map functions of language onto particular languages in a given community. Johnson (2013) further elaborates how Haugen (1983) expands on this initial distinction by outlining: 1) selection, 2) codification, 3) implementation and 4) elaboration, as language planning steps, with selection and implementation constituting status planning and codification and elaboration forming the bases of corpus planning. Citing Fishman (1979), Johnson (2013) affirms the existence of an intricate relationship between corpus and status planning and also reiterates that it does not seem plausible or effective to have one without the other. Jaffe (2011) further claims that “status planning constitutes an ideological framework for corpus planning” (p. 20). Cooper (1989), adding a further level of complexity to the issue, asserts that status and acquisition planning can be differentiated in relation to their ability to manage verbal resources with the former regulating the “demand for verbal resources” and the latter regulating

“the distribution of verbal resources” (p. 120). Johnson (2013) cites Cooper’s (1989) addition of acquisition planning to describe efforts aimed at multiplying the users of a language through direct instruction to the existing status–corpus distinction as giving legitimacy to language education policy as an essential part of the field of language policy and planning.

Cooper (1989) explores the question of functions of language serving as targets of status planning, by using Stewart’s (1968) functions of language to guide his discussion. Here, I outline eight functions of language as discussed by Cooper (1989), which will serve as a central element of this analysis: 1) Official: deemed legally suitable for political and cultural activities nationwide and is usually codified by law. 2) Wider communication: used as a medium of communication across the nation. 3) International: used as a major medium of communication with citizens of other countries for diplomatic, relations, foreign trade, tourism, and so forth. 4) Education: the medium of instruction in schools regionally and nationally. 5) Group: the medium of communication among members of a cultural or ethnic group to express group membership. 6) School subject: taught as a subject in secondary or tertiary education. 7) Mass Media: the medium of communication in the media. 8) Work: the medium of transacting business in the private and public sectors. Stewart (1968) excludes some functions (such as official and wider communication) from being mapped onto a single language, but following Cooper (1989) and considering that there are only two main varieties in Jamaica (JC and JSE), this distinction is not made here. The forthcoming analysis will seek to examine the ways in which both official and *de facto* Jamaican language education policies attempt to map multiple functions onto both JC and JSE in order to identify the main discourses mediating Jamaican language education policy.

Orientations to Language

Another element essential to this analysis will be Ruiz’s (1984) orientations to language: *language as a resource*, *language as a problem*, and *language as a right*. He describes an orientation as “a complex of dispositions toward language and their role in society” and further asserts that these orientations “are related to language attitudes in that they constitute the framework in which attitudes are formed: they help to delimit the range of acceptable attitudes toward language and to make certain attitudes legitimate” (p. 16). According to Ruiz (1990), a resource orientation views language as a “social resource” and calls for minority languages to be preserved, managed, and developed to reduce “social conflict” (p. 17). A language as a problem orientation, advocates for the replacing of local languages with more dominant ones, as local languages are thought, by some to be linked to disadvantage and poverty. A language as a right orientation is viewed as the resistance response to problem orientations and seeks to ensure freedom from linguistic discrimination. To these, Borjian (2014) includes a fourth orientation: *Language as an instrument*. She admits that there are commonalities with the language as a problem and a resource orientations, but notes that the classification of orientations depends on the language being promoted. An instrumentalist orientation may view specific language varieties as problems if they are deemed cost-inefficient to use or as a resource if they have economic power that can be leveraged by speakers. Borjian (2014) explains that an instrumentalist orientation, unlike a resource orientation, takes an economic

perspective and advocates for language to be planted, manipulated, and learned for economic gains. From this perspective, multilingualism is seen as a problem, because it is not considered cost-effective; however, bilingualism may be valued if the second language has economic power. Borjian (2014) further declares that this orientation is most implicated in developing countries that may be subject to policy mandates by influential organizations, such as UNESCO and the World Bank. It is possible that Jamaica's status as a developing country and its complex history with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have resulted in these organizations exerting supranational influence on local discourses surrounding language education policy (Budhoo, 1994; McAfee, 1994).

Methodology: Interpretive Policy Analysis

To determine the discourses mediating language education policy and status planning in Jamaica, the 2001 draft of language policy from the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture (MOEYC), *de facto* language education policies as identified by Nero (2014), and newspaper commentary will be analyzed using interpretive policy analysis (IPA). Policy analysis has traditionally required technical or expert forms of knowledge to draft policies, delineate implementation procedures or evaluate projected outcomes, but such approaches operate on a limited definition of what constitutes policy action and who is a policy actor. IPA, alternatively, expands the "realm of activity policymakers need to have evaluated, systematically, rigorously and methodically, which centers not only on values but also on other forms of human meaning, including beliefs and feelings" (Yanow, 2000, p. 22). IPA offers a more nuanced evaluation of policies with a primacy on local knowledge, and its influence on policy interpretation and recontextualization. IPA has been employed in a wide variety of fields, from urban management and governance to education policy, showing its inherent versatility and power as an analytical tool (Canavero, 2007; Richman, 2010; Travaline, 2012; Watanabe, 2011). Moore and Wiley (2015) advocate the use of IPA in language policy research for a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the socio-political factors influencing the drafting of LEPs, their interpretations, implementations, and impact on target populations. Such an operationalization of IPA can be seen in the investigation of the impact of the Native American Languages Act of 1990/1992 (Warhol, 2011). In her IPA, Warhol reveals that the strict separation of top-down and bottom-up policy implementation is blurred in practice, and she underscores the need for ongoing consultations before, during, and after "official policy-making activities" (p. 295). In post-colonial contexts such as Jamaica, contemporary understandings of local knowledge and how they influence policy interpretation and implementation are most needed. In the highly politicized and combative debates about Jamaican LEPs, IPA may reveal various perspectives, give voice to policy actors at all levels and possibly suggest ways that policy amendment or reform can reconcile opposing views.

Central for IPA is an understanding of how a policy is interpreted by various parties to the debate. According to Yanow (2000), the process of responding to this question involves five steps: 1) Identification of artifacts (language, objects, acts) that carry meaning for policy issue; 2) Identification of communities of meaning—"groups of people who may have shared understandings of policy and language and" who can be differentiated from other groups with different understandings

(policymakers, implementing agency personnel, affected citizens); 3) Identification of the specific meanings or discourses communicated through artifacts; 4) Identification of points of conflict and their conceptual sources (affective, cognitive and moral) that reflect different interpretations by communities; and 5) Elucidate implications of diverse interpretations for the policy and negotiation or mediation to address divergences (p. 22).

The following analysis will employ all five of these steps organized into three phases, as outlined in Figure 1. In Phase 1, artifacts and communities of meaning for LEP in Jamaica are identified. This is followed by a document analysis of Nero's (2014) *de facto* LEPs, the draft MOYEC LEP, and newspaper articles to identify the discourses communicated through artifacts in Phase 2. Finally, in Phase 3, points of conflict arising from these discourses are discussed, and implications for mediation and negotiation highlighted.

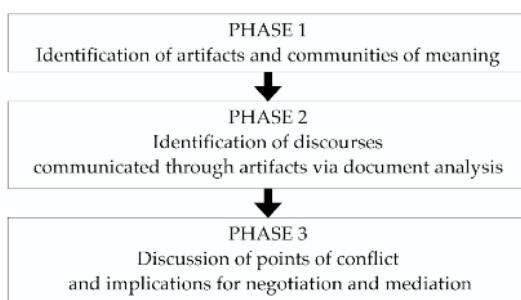


Figure 1. Three phase analysis for Jamaican IPA

Analysis

Phase 1

The first phase identifies the 2001 draft MOYEC LEP, Nero's *de facto* Jamaican LEPs, and newspaper articles from local newspapers *The Jamaica Observer* and *The Gleaner* as artifacts, and locates policymakers, implementing agency personnel, and affected citizens or clients as communities of meaning following Yanow (2000). These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Jamaican LEP IPA Phase 1

Artifacts	Communities of meaning
2001 draft MOYEC LEP	Policymakers
Nero's <i>de facto</i> Jamaican LEPs	Implementing agency personnel
Newspaper articles	Wider society / citizens

Phase 2

De Facto LEPs and the 2001 draft MOEYC LEP

Following Phase 1, in the first part of this phase, the draft LEP and Nero's (2014) *de facto* LEPs will be examined via document analysis to identify specific discourses deemed influential in the local debate. There have been various policy statements since the colonial era that promoted the instruction of English in Jamaica, and many local and regional curricula and assessments reflect a historical policy position. The acquisition of English is perhaps the most prominently articulated educational goal in the region. Additionally, reports on development in the Commonwealth Caribbean highlight low levels of literacy and numeracy as urgent concerns (Inter-American Development Bank & Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 2008). Interestingly, recent revisions of curricula and assessments now include references to creoles and vernaculars. The CXC English language and English literature exams allow the use of vernaculars when citing from or composing dialogues for narratives, but the instructions explicitly state that all other uses of language must be restricted to Standard English (CXC, 2015).

In her ethnographic study in three Jamaican schools, Nero (2014) identified *de facto* language policies such as the framing of JC as a problem to be corrected and /or eradicated from the classroom. This policy was present across the schools in the study, even among those with a high percentage of JC speakers, where teachers admitted to resorting to the use of JC in the classroom to help students "get it" (p. 238). Responding to local and regional concerns about the English proficiency of students, the MOEYC, in 2001, drafted a language education policy. This policy represents a pioneering attempt in the postcolonial era to develop a national "comprehensive blueprint" (p. 226) to inform language and literacy practice. According to the document, its main aim is to address:

The unsatisfactory performance of students in language and literacy at all levels of the Jamaican educational system, and its accompanying effects on language competence and on the potential for human development in the wider society. (MOEYC, 2001, p. 4)

It seeks to provide guidelines for the use of both JC and JSE in Jamaican schools and defines itself as:

A set of principles agreed on by stakeholders, enabling decision making about language and literacy issues in the formal education system at all levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and the teacher education segment of the tertiary level. (MOEYC, 2001, p. 6)

From this definition, it appears that the policy seeks to be extensive by including all levels of formal education and is presented as representing a consensus among education stakeholders. It is interesting then that the teachers in Nero's (2014) study reported not being aware of the existence of this policy. The policy document names a list of policy developers and includes a single member of the National Association of Teachers of English, outnumbered by ministry officials. This may imply that teacher input was relatively minimal.

Guided by the work of Craig (2006), the document outlines six possible language education policy options for the Jamaican context and articulates a decision to “recognise the Jamaican situation as bilingual, English as the official language and Jamaican Creole as the most widely used in the population” (MOEYC, 2001; p. 23). The document further explains that Jamaican language learners need to develop “positive attitudes” (p. 24) to the languages they speak and should be able to differentiate between JC and JSE to acquire competence in JSE. The suggested path to such competence is increased exposure to English and guidance from linguistically aware teachers who foster an appreciation of creole and furnish opportunities for its use in culturally relevant songs, poems, and stories.

Newspaper articles

In the second half of Phase 2, the focus now shifts to conversations about language and education in the wider Jamaican society. Some of the most vociferous and interesting debates on language education policy can easily be accessed in local media. A document analysis was also carried out on five articles from October and November 2018 selected from *The Gleaner* and *Jamaica Observer* newspapers, two of the most popular news outlets, to provide a snapshot of these debates. The articles were accessed from online archives and show records of these debates dating as far back as the year 2000. Articles in the form of editorials, letters to the editor, weekly columns, and news reports highlight the intensity of the debate, one that includes local academics, cabinet members, members of the opposition, law professionals, teachers, and other concerned citizens. This was an especially contentious time in Jamaica, as the Ministry of Education was forced to delay the implementation of a new primary exit assessment due to public protests about the poor results from a mock exam, designed to pilot the assessment. Shadow minister for education, Ronald Thwaites, initiated this particular round of debate, with an article in *The Gleaner*, in which he argues that the “Jamaican language problem” needs to be resolved before a new assessment could be implemented (Thwaites, 2018; p. 1). Citing reports of student language deficiencies from the local Primary Exit Profile (PEP) mock exam, and the CXC, he further argues that delaying the implementation of a new assessment by a few months would be insufficient to address the problematic and deeply rooted attitudes and instructional styles prevalent in the education system. He proposes discussions on adapting the education system to recognize the language of the majority and the need to develop a command of English.

Thwaites’ comments had quite an impact in the media. They sparked a response from the editorial board of *The Gleaner*, who supported his position while reminding readers that, in his tenure as a member of cabinet, Thwaites was not inclined to broach the bilingual education issue, when he had reiterated that English and nothing else was the language of employment, professionalism, and instruction (The Gleaner, 2018). Thwaites’ statements also garnered support from local academics like Moyston (2018), who agreed that changing an assessment without revising the curriculum would indeed be a disastrous endeavor. Moyston goes on to place the blame for the current state of affairs in education, equally on the government, opposition politicians, and the Jamaican Teachers’ Association (JTA). Reiterating that the work of educational transformation rests, not with the

education ministry, but with the JTA, Moyston questions inaction on the part of the body, who, in her view, should have had the foresight to organize workshops for teachers to prepare for the new assessment. Central to her argument is the belief that there can be no meaningful change in the education system, whether through new assessments or new language education policy, without the participation of teachers. She proposes recognizing JC officially as the only effective policy response and concludes by reminding politicians that neglect of language is, by extension, neglect of its speakers, who are a vast majority of the population.

The member of parliament's comment also drew criticisms of educators. Steer (2018) did not refute the claim that language is a problem for Jamaican students, but placed the blame on the poor language skills of teachers, a decline in reading practice among students and argued that literacy in JSE should take precedence since it would also facilitate literacy in JC. Expressing doubts about the efficacy of JC literacy to foster literacy in JSE, he supports his arguments with anecdotal evidence from his own childhood. By his account, expert teachers were able to help JC-speaking students through increased exposure to English and achieve a level of proficiency with both JC and JSE, which he describes as bilingualism. Devonish (2018), of the local Jamaican Language Unit at the UWI Mona campus, and a prolific contributor to these debates, in his response, warns against the transformation of the language education policy debate into a partisan issue. He emphasizes that language is a right, not a tool for currying political favor, and outlines the way forward as dialogue on national language policy and language education policy. He sees this as necessary, so that the services of the government, regardless of the political party in power, can be accessible to all citizens regardless of the language they speak. He also expresses a desire to see JC promoted as a symbol of national identity.

From the preceding deliberations, two discourses central to the mediation of Jamaican LEP can be identified. The first, the evolution of post-independence Jamaican identity, includes a spectrum of evaluative attitudes to languages, including what Roberts (2014) refers to as "social and academic snobbery" (p. 87). This could also be seen in Steer's (2018) condemnation of the English language skills of teachers and the problematization of JC, prevalent in both the *de facto* and MOEYC LEPs previously discussed. Broadber (2014) names Jamaica as one of the countries in the CC with the most "marked and vibrant sociolinguistic change" (p. 209) owing to the opening up of public spaces, such as radio talk show programs by so-called educated Jamaicans, who make affordances for participants to communicate in the language of their choice. MP Thwaites' documented attitude shift towards the use of JC in the education system is also evidence of such a sociolinguistic shift. Roberts (2014) highlights an obvious, but largely ignored, contradiction present in most Caribbean societies, which pride themselves on being pluralist, when in fact they, "advocate for cultural and social uniformity through language education" (p. 83). Christie (2003) also supports this evaluation, as she explains that many Jamaicans are avid fans of poetry written in JC but still associate creole use with a lack of intelligence and low educational achievement.

A second discourse, notions of progress through education and literacy, includes the reliance on assessment as the major driving force of education policy, and the prestige afforded to JSE by choosing it as the medium of instruction. Additionally, the standard language ideology inherently imbibed in the actions

of teachers in Nero (2014) and the widely held belief that English competence will allow students to experience social mobility and economic prosperity are also expressed in this discourse.

Phase 3

It is possible to highlight various orientations to language in the abovementioned artifacts and discourses. These classifications are highlighted in Table 2. *De facto* language education policies frame JC as a problem while promoting an instrumentalist view of English.

Table 2

Orientations of language based on policy artifacts

<i>De facto</i> policies	Jamaican LEP	Media Debates
Language as instrument	Language as instrument	Language as instrument
Language as problem	Language as problem	Language as problem
	Language as resource	Language as resource
		Language as right

These orientations are reflected in the MOEYC LEP, which also includes a contradictory reframing of JC as a resource, through its attempt to recognize Jamaica as a bilingual state. Finally, the wider participation in the media debates reflects all four orientations. The language as a problem and language as instrument orientations are most prevalent across all artifacts and communities of meaning with teachers focusing on language correction strategies, the ministry of education reiterating the effect of English language competence on human development potential, and Thwaites' (2018) reference to the "Jamaican language problem" (p. 1).

Functions of language as targets of status planning

Considering Stewart's (1968) functions of language as targets of status planning, the proposal could be made that *de facto* LEPs seek to promote JSE as being more valuable while relegating JC to fewer functions or roles in society. On the other hand, the MOEYC LEP could be seen as an attempt to redistribute the functions of language more equally to both varieties. This comparison is represented in Table 3.

Status planning, discourses, and language education policy

Stewart's (1968) functions of language can be seen as attributed to JC or JSE or both, through status planning using Nero's (2014) *de facto* LEPs and the draft MOEYC LEP in Table 3 (Kloss, 1969). However, the question then becomes: Can successful status planning take place without corpus planning or acquisition planning? Fishman (1979) would perhaps see this as impractical. The unsuccessful attempt of the *de facto* policies to singlehandedly expunge JC from the classroom, could be seen as continually preventing the codification and elaboration of JSE as the only official Jamaican language variety, hence the reason the English as a

mother tongue approach has also failed for the majority of students. Cooper's (1989) assertion that status planning is the regulation of the demand for verbal resources may not completely hold true in the Jamaican context, regardless of which of LEP proves more influential, since Jamaican elites are a minority, not the majority and the power to evaluate and distribute language varieties may itself be redistributed as post-independence Jamaican identity continues to evolve.

Table 3

Functions of Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican Creole by the de facto and draft language education policies

<i>De facto</i> language policies		Jamaican LEP	
JSE	JC	JSE	JC
Official	Wider Communication	Official	Wider Communication
Group	Group	Group	Group
Mass Media	Mass Media		
International		International	
Education (MOI)		Education (MOI)	Education (MOI)
School Subject		School Subject	
Work		Work	

Blommaert (2006) qualifies identity as being achieved or inhabited—when claimed by an individual or group, or ascribed or attributed—when imposed by others, but it is unclear which characterization would best describe the Jamaican and wider Commonwealth Caribbean context. Did the countries in this region inhabit or achieve a monolingual Anglophone linguistic identity, ascribed during the colonial era, upon independence, or is a necessary reflection on the provenance of conventional linguistic identity across the region still pending? Adding another level of complexity, many sovereign countries in this region are still Commonwealth realms, and the Queen of England still serves as the Head of State. Are countries like Jamaica “nations organized around coercion” (Blommaert, 2006, p. 239) rather than ideological consent or (more appropriately) simply commonwealth states? Le Page (1964) and Fishman et al. (1964) expressed great concern about post-independence national language policy and language education policy, but perhaps, some fifty-five years on, the language problem is and has always been a problem of the ascription of linguistic identity.

Deeply embedded in this discourse about past and present linguistic identity are notions of progress through education and literacy. This second discourse, which centers primarily on English, as the vehicle of progress, social mobility, and economic prosperity can be identified at all levels of language policy implementation in Jamaica. The MOEYC LEP was rejected in parliament as some MPs refused to accept the idea of a bilingual Jamaica and instead wished to focus resources on English language instruction. Devonish (2016) reports that one MP expressed concern that such a pronouncement would put Jamaican students wanting to attend universities

abroad at a disadvantage, since “unlike those benighted countries in Africa and the Pacific, thank God, we speak English in Jamaica” (p. 1).

The choice of politicians to focus on resources for English language instruction can be seen as an attempt to cater to the same marginalized population most impacted by the educational status quo. However, Ricento (2015) cautions that “individual access to English does not correlate with poverty reduction that is class-related in low-income countries” (p. 30). Taking an instrumentalist orientation, others such as Brutt-Griffler (2002) argue for access to English, over mother-tongue instruction, to disrupt social and economic segregation. Pennycook (2004), on the other hand, calls for the separation of arguments for English as a tool of poverty alleviation from arguments for individual rights to English instruction. In the Jamaican context, it remains to be seen if the resolution of the alleged language problems through language education policy can singlehandedly deliver the much needed, much desired, transformation of the education system as purported by some commentators.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, it is possible to identify discourses about both the evolution of post-independence Jamaican identity as well as notions of progress through education and literacy by considering the perspectives that dominate the ongoing LEP debate in Jamaica. It is also clear that status planning and any subsequent LEPs that do not adequately account for all language varieties may fail to make a meaningful impact in education, as corpus and acquisition planning would also be inhibited. While Jamaica has been at the center of this analysis, and the context in which most research concerning these ideas has been carried out, it may not be long before similar debates begin in other countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean. This is especially so as recent research has begun exploring the question of *de facto* and official language policies in the Eastern Caribbean and the USAID Early Learners’ Program is also in the process of attempting status planning and language education policy development in that corner of the region (Gonsalves, 2016, 2019; Prescod, 2015; Simmons-McDonald, 2014).

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Sarah-Lee R. Gonsalves (sgons@upenn.edu) is a PhD student in Educational Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests are language policy and planning and literacy in English-creole speaking contexts.

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