

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
FOR UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 1, 2014

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is pleased to offer the following research project for the summer of 2014. Interested students are urged to contact the faculty member(s) directing the project that most interests them. By contacting the faculty member, you can discover more about the project, learn what your responsibilities will be and, if possible, develop a timetable for the twelve-week research period.

JAMAICAN CREOLE LANGUAGE PROJECT: EXAMINING BILINGUAL EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE PRACTICES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Project Description

Speech-Language pathologists (SLPs) are frequently responsible for clinical outcomes in children whose native languages and cultures are outside the monolingual English-speaking population, but a lack of information about typical development in these children means they may be inappropriately diagnosed and treated. The proposed project is one part of a larger research study that examines typical bilingual speech and language development in Jamaican children, who are greater than 90% African-decent, living in the United States and in Jamaica. These children have a command of Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC), making them bilingual speakers. Our **central hypothesis** is that bilingual development of SJE and JC expressive language skills follows a predictable pattern that is influenced by socio-cultural factors that are contextual in nature, such as parental education, socioeconomic status, and percentage of home language use. This hypothesis is based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) bio-psycho-social framework, the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health – Children and Youth* (ICF-CY; WHO, 2007) that inter-relationships exist between children's development and contextual factors. This project is funded by the Vice-President for Research Start-up funds to Dr. Washington and is associated with an Education Abroad Program Experience to Jamaica for undergraduate and graduate students in CSD. This program is funded through cost-sharing provided by the College of Allied Health Sciences, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, participating students, and UC International.

Project Purpose

The primary aim of this WISE associated project is to investigate the bilingual development of expressive language skills in Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) for young Jamaican children.

Research Questions

1. Do 3-to-5-year old Jamaican children use a different grammatical structure when they speak SJE versus JC?
2. Do 3-to-5-year old Jamaican children use different vocabulary when they speak SJE versus JC?

Methodology: The data utilized in this project represent were previously collected on sample of approximately 80 3- to 5- year old typically developing Jamaican preschoolers. These preschoolers, who are speakers of SJE and JC, attended similar schools in urban settings in Kingston, Jamaica. Following parental consent and child assent, each preschooler completed an assessment of his/her expressive language abilities (in addition to other aspects of speech, language, cognition and hearing) in an authentic environment at the child's school that mirrored the classroom setting. This assessment was divided into two sessions. One session was conducted in SJE with an English-speaking speech-language pathologist. Children received the instruction "Remember, I want you to talk to me in SJE". The other session was conducted in JC with a Jamaican-speaking speech-language pathologist. Children received the instruction "Remember, I want to you talk to me in JC". Counterbalancing in assessments for the order of administration (i.e., SJE preceding JC and JC preceding SJE) was addressed. The assessment sessions were video- and audio-recorded.

Project Elements for WISE scholar:

- Complete IRB procedures to be added to the already approved study protocol (IRB #2013-6345)
- Complete training sessions on data analysis, organization, scoring, transcription, interpretation, and entry for data collection related to –Standard Jamaican English
- Complete training sessions on the Jamaican Creole language, including orthography and oral language. This training session will facilitate data analysis, organization, scoring, transcription, interpretation, and entry for data collection
- Organize and enter data from parent, teacher, and speech-language pathologists' measures
- Organize and enter all child data on demographic measures
- For each language (i.e., Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole)
 - Review all video-recorded data - organize and score (using pre-established score sheets) for the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Preschool (CELF-P2) subtests:
 - *Expressive Vocabulary* (focus = vocabulary)
 - *Word Structure* (focus = morphosyntactic structure and complexity)
 - Review all video-recorded data for the Spontaneous Language Sample:
 - Transcribe all utterances from a 10-minute language sample collected during play with a speech-language pathologist
 - Select 50-utterances according to pre-set criteria
 - Score 50 utterances for morphosyntactic structure and complexity
- Generate preliminary analyses
- Conduct follow-up parent interviews (by phone) regarding children's development
- Support manuscript and abstract preparations

Background Characteristics of WISE scholar:

- Communication Sciences and Disorders background
- CITI training completed (-can be completed during the first few weeks of the program)