*The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is pleased to offer the following research project for the summer of 2015.  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.*

## Project Title:  JAMAICAN CREOLE LANGUAGE PROJECT: AN EXAMINATION OF CODE-MIXING

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### Project Description

Current clinical and educational approaches to child language in the United States (U.S.) are largely based on the characteristics of monolingual English speakers. However, clinicians and teachers are increasingly being asked to make decisions about treatment in children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, including bilingual children (Davis, 2007). Without specific knowledge of bilingual speech-language profiles, a disproportionate number of CLD children are under- or over-referred for treatment.  Of particular concern is the prevalence of *code-mixing* (i.e., overlapping use of native and second languages) in bilingual populations. Children's use of code-mixing reflects communicative competence and is influenced by contextual factors, but is often misidentified by monolingual clinicians and teachers as communication delay or impairment (Genesee et al., 1995). Thus, the lack of clear and scientifically valid standards for bilingual populations is a ***significant contributor to educational and healthcare disparities in the U.S. population***

The purpose of this research project is to document code-mixing rates and patterns in a sample of CLD children who are speakers of Jamaican Creole, an English-based creole, and Standard English. This population of speakers represents the third largest Caribbean-born immigrant group in the U.S, yet there is little clinically-applicable information available about their speech and language profiles. We are interested in documenting code-mixing rates and patterns across expressive language tasks (i.e., formal/prompt and informal/spontaneous) to establish stability and unique features in children's code-mixing. This is the first study to document Jamaican preschoolers' code-mixing rates and patterns. The following research questions will be addressed:

<u>Research Questions</u>
1. What code mixing patterns are evidenced in 3-to-6 year old children's expressive language in prompted (formal) and spontaneous (informal) tasks)?
2. *What code-mixing rates are evidenced in 3- to 6-year old children's spontaneous expressive language productions?

*In keeping with current research code-mixing rates will be documented in spontaneous tasks only*

**Participants:** The data utilized in this project were collected in Jamaica from a sample of 90+ 3- to 6- year old bilingual Jamaican preschoolers who attended similar schools in urban settings in Kingston, Jamaica. We have data on expressive language across tasks, in addition to information on overall development based on parent and teacher report and on direct child evaluations of nonverbal cognition, oral motor, emergent literacy, pragmatics, and receptive language.

**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 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
  - Collaborate with the Jamaican Language Unit as part of training program
- 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 English and Jamaican Creole)
  - Establish code-mixing patterns for formal and informal expressive language tasks for grammar and vocabulary
  - Calculate code-mixing rates for identified patterns based on a corpus of 50-utterances (complete and intelligible) collected from each participant
- Complete preliminary interpretations
- 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)