

Workshop
Language Attitude Research in the Caribbean

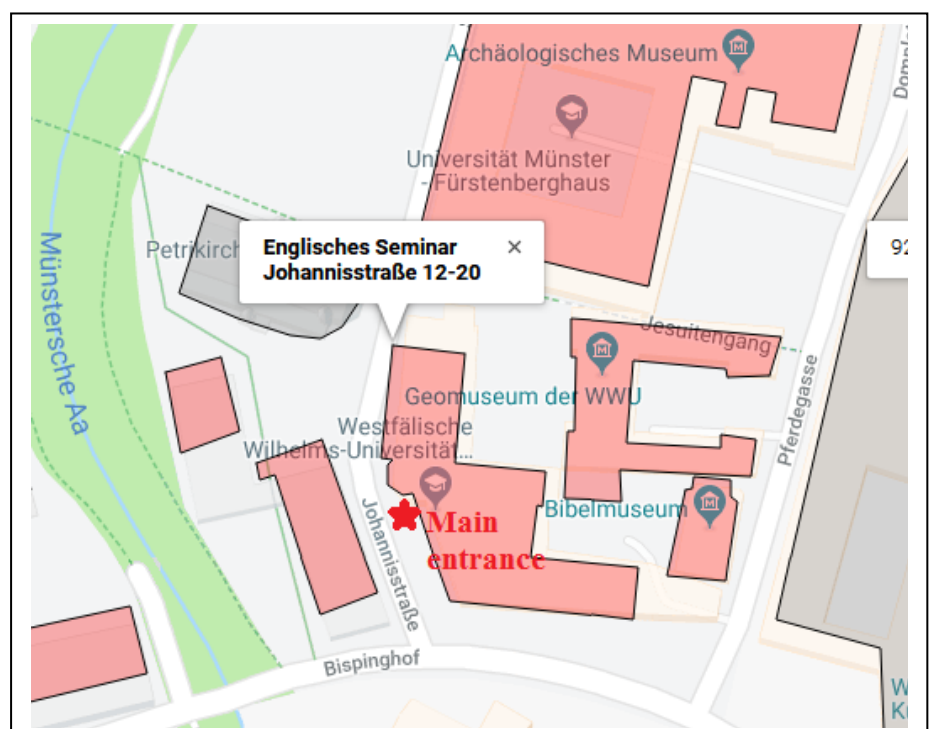
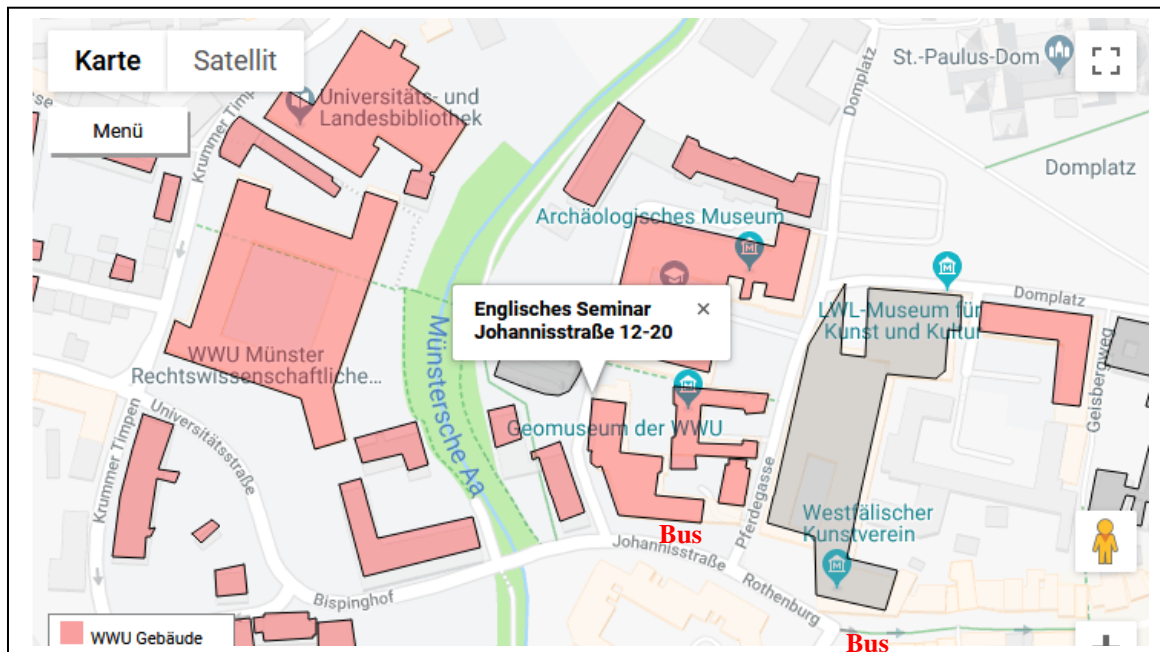
December 14, 2018 | Münster

Venue

Room 202 (second floor)
English Department
WWU Münster

Johannisstr. 12 – 20
48143 Münster, Germany

Closest bus stop: Aegidiimarkt /
LWL



Program

| Slot | Topic |
|-------------|---|
| 09.00-09.30 | Welcome and introduction Philipp Meer and Michael Westphal |
| 09.30-10.00 | Interactive get-together of all participants, with coffee |
| 10.00-12.00 | Presentations I (30 minutes for each presentation: 15-20min talk, 10-15 min Q&A) |
| 10.00-10.30 | Language use and attitudes in Barbados Christine Stuka (Gießen) |
| 10.30-11.00 | Attitudes and Perceptions in St. Kitts Mirjam Schmalz (Zurich) |
| 11.00-11.30 | Attitudes toward different accents of Standard English in Grenadian schools Eva Hänsel (Münster) |
| 11.30-12.00 | Language attitudes in The Bahamas Alexander Laube (Munich) |
| 12.00-13.30 | Lunch |
| 13.30-15.00 | Presentations II (30 minutes for each presentation: 15-20min talk, 10-15 min Q&A) |
| 13.30-14.00 | Language attitudes towards linguistic variation on Jamaican Radio Michael Westphal (Münster) |
| 14.00-14.30 | Trinidadian secondary school students' attitudes toward accents of Standard English Philipp Meer (Münster) |
| 14.30-15.00 | The perception of varieties of Dutch in Surinam: a pilot study Thale Schmitz & Gunther De Vogelaer (Münster) |
| 15.00-15.30 | Coffee, snacks, and cake |
| 15.30-17.00 | Final discussion |
| | 1. Summary of results (pan-Caribbean similarities and differences; the changing status of Creoles; the English/Creole dichotomy; endo- vs. exonormativity in the Caribbean; what is Standard English in the anglophone Caribbean?) <i>moderated by</i> Guyanne Wilson (Bochum) & Ryan Durgasingh (Münster) |
| | 2. Recurring problems in the analysis: pool of research instruments ? |
| | 3. Future research and cooperation ? Workshop II? |
| | 4. Potential output from the workshop: options and discussion |
| 17.00-[...] | Christmas Market get-together and dinner |

Talks and abstracts

Language use and attitudes in Barbados

Christine Stuka (Gießen)

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My focus is on English in Barbados (phonology, language use & attitudes), I use an online questionnaire + interview data. My questionnaire covers different aspects such as exonormative orientation (BrE, AmE, JamE), evaluation of the local standard, language use according to domain/interlocutor/topic, attitudes and circulating stereotypes.

Attitudes and Perceptions in St. Kitts

Mirjam Schmalz (Zurich)

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St. Kitts forms part of the island state of St. Kitts and Nevis and was the first island to be settled by the English in the region in 1623, and many other locations followed from there (Parkvall 2000: 123). Furthermore, the early mobility of the island's inhabitants resulted in a dispersion of features to other parts in the region (Baker 1998: 347) and the historical impact of the variety is undisputed (Huber 1999). Nevertheless, no great focus was laid on the varieties spoken in St. Kitts or the attitudes present on the island so far.

The level of mobility is still high in present day St. Kitts with patterns of migration due to education, work or connecting family ties. Thus, the island lends itself well for the research on perceptions and attitudes towards local and non-local language varieties. In a first attempt to describe the locally present language attitudes and perceptions different perceptual tasks were completed by 80 participants (ratings of sound files and map drawing tasks), which are complemented by 7 sociolinguistic interviews, including meta-comments on language and perceptions. The perceptual tasks focused on the perceptions and attitudes towards both endonormative varieties, i.e. Jamaican English and Kittitian English and exonormative varieties, i.e. British English and U.S. English. Interestingly, the local variety was evaluated the most negatively, while the exonormative varieties received significantly more positive evaluations. This suggests slightly different trends than those shown in other attitudinal studies in more populous and better researched varieties such as the Bahamas or Trinidad (see Hackert 2016).

References

- Baker, Philip. 1998. Investigating the origin and diffusion of shared features among the Atlantic English Creoles. In Philip Baker & Adrienne Bruyn (eds.), *St Kitts and the Atlantic Creoles*. London: Westminster Press, 315–364.
- Hackert, Stephanie. 2016. "Standards of English in the Caribbean: History, attitudes, functions, features." In Elena Seoane & Cristina Suárez-Gómez, eds. *World Englishes: New Theoretical and Methodological Considerations*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 85-112.
- Huber, Magnus. 1999. Atlantic English Creoles and the Lower Guinea Coast: A Case Against Afrogenesis. In Magnus Huber & Mikael Parkvall (eds.), *Spreading the word. The issue of diffusion among the Atlantic creoles*. London: Westminster, 81–110.
- Parkvall, Mikael. 2000. *Out of Africa. African influences in Atlantic Creoles*. London: Battlebridge Publications

Attitudes toward different accents of Standard English in Grenadian schools

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The study aims at determining which accents are preferred in the Grenadian education system. It focuses on students' attitudes toward different teacher accents. Students' attitudes are elicited by means of a verbal guise survey. Recordings of eight teachers from Grenada, Trinidad, Jamaica, the US, and the UK are rated by Grenadian students according to different criteria related to standardness and appropriateness in the educational context.

Language attitudes in The Bahamas

Alexander Laube (Munich)

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The study investigates language attitudes in The Bahamas, addressing the current status of the local creole in society as well as the question of attitudinal indicators of possible endonormative reorientation and stabilization. At the heart of the study is a verbal guise test which investigates covert language attitudes among educated Bahamians (mostly current and former university students) in informal settings. The results show that the situation in The Bahamas mirrors what we find for other creole-speaking Caribbean countries in that Bahamian Creole appears to be "the language of solidarity, national identity, emotion and humour, and Standard the language of education, religion, and officialdom" (Youssef 2004: 44). Additionally, the study finds that standard Bahamian English outranks the two metropolitan standards with regard to traditional "status" traits, suggesting some degree of endonormativity.

Language attitudes toward linguistic variation on Jamaican Radio

Michael Westphal (Münster)

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This study analyzes Jamaicans' language attitudes toward linguistic variation on Jamaican radio using a mixed methodology and focusing on two distinct genres, newscasts and talk shows. In a survey study, 187 Jamaican university students answered direct questions about their language preferences in the radio and rated the language use in authentic newscast and talk show samples which represent linguistic variation in these two genres. This quantitative approach was combined with thirty-two qualitative interviews with student and non-student groups on their language attitudes in the context of radio. Furthermore, I conducted six interviews with radio staff and speech trainers on language-ideological norms of production.

Most of the informants as well as the radio staff have a strong awareness of when the use of Jamaican Creole is appropriate and when it is not: Jamaican Creole is stigmatized in newscasts while the informants are open toward linguistic variation in talk shows. In this more dialogic genre Jamaican Creole is mainly valued for its liveliness and solidarity qualities but when hosts use too much creole the informants downrate them with regard to competence. Despite this widely shared ideological distinction between Jamaican Creole and Standard English, quite some individuals hold strongly positive attitudes toward Jamaican Creole and wish for a stronger presence of Jamaican Creole in formal genres.

Trinidadian secondary school students' attitudes toward accents of Standard English

Philipp Meer (Münster)

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In the anglophone Caribbean, tendencies of endonormative reorientation have been observed in the development of local standards of English. Situated in the school context, this study adds a language attitude perspective on the question of whether and to what extent an endonormative standard of English is emerging in the island of Trinidad. In an accent rating study, 485 secondary students were asked to evaluate the accents of Trinidadian, other anglophone Caribbean, American, and British teachers and to identify their countries of origin. The results indicate that the respondents' norm orientation is multidimensional and includes exo- and endonormative influences: first, there is a general coexistence of different standards since no standard serves as a superordinate norm. Second, there is no clear-cut distinction between exo- and endonormative accents, but fine-grained differences in the ratings: British and American voices received slightly higher ratings than local ones, but an American-influenced Trinidadian voice was also highly appreciated. These findings provide some new perspectives for evolutionary models of World Englishes and new insights for the discussion of standards in Trinidad, the wider anglophone Caribbean, and other small postcolonial speech communities where different local and global norms interact.

The perception of varieties of Dutch in Surinam: a pilot study

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Even though it is acknowledged that Surinamese Dutch shows a number of characteristics differing from Dutch as spoken in the Low Countries, also on the level of the standard language, it has not been investigated to what extent endonormative tendencies are really observed in Surinam, and what the dynamics of such tendencies would be. Our talk will present the results of a speaker evaluation experiment tackling this question, in which Surinamese students were asked to rate different varieties of Dutch and Surinamese Dutch on a number of scales.

We look forward to welcoming you all in Münster!