

# CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EDUCATION

## *LANGUAGE USE IN THE CLASSROOM*

(Module 6)


**Why is classroom language use an educational issue?**

**The curriculum is transacted through language.**

**Teaching and learning place demands on students ability to use language.**

**Students must *learn language, learn through language and learn about language* in every area of the school curriculum.**

**Write out a Standard English equivalent of the following utterance said by a school child.**



Miss, is just chupid he  
playing chupid. He  
well know what dey  
does do when yuh  
back turn.

# Classroom reality

- **Standard English is the official language of instruction, but not the first language of most of our students**
- **Teachers talk a lot**
- **Students have little opportunity to speak**

# Realities

- **The most common vernacular/everyday language in Trinidad and Tobago is a Creole variety of English.**
- **The vernacular and Standard English share words but there are important linguistic differences.**

**No language variety is  
'better' or 'more  
proper' than another.  
(This is a linguistic fact)**





# ATTITUDES TO CREOLE

- It is not a language
- Speakers are uneducated
- It should not be used in the classroom

# Main grammatical differences

- Sound – Phonology
- Lexical/Semantic – Words
- Morphological – Word structure
- Syntactic – Word and sentence order


# Examples

TEC	SE
fine	find
Fry fish	Fried fish
Come go ...	Come and go ...
A set of rain ...	A lot of rain



Some questions to  
consider:

What are the implications  
of having Standard English  
as the official language of  
instruction when it is not  
the first language of the  
majority of students?



Does speaking  
Creole make  
learning Standard  
English more  
difficult?



★ Some questions to consider:

- What is the impact of language differences on students' learning across the curriculum?

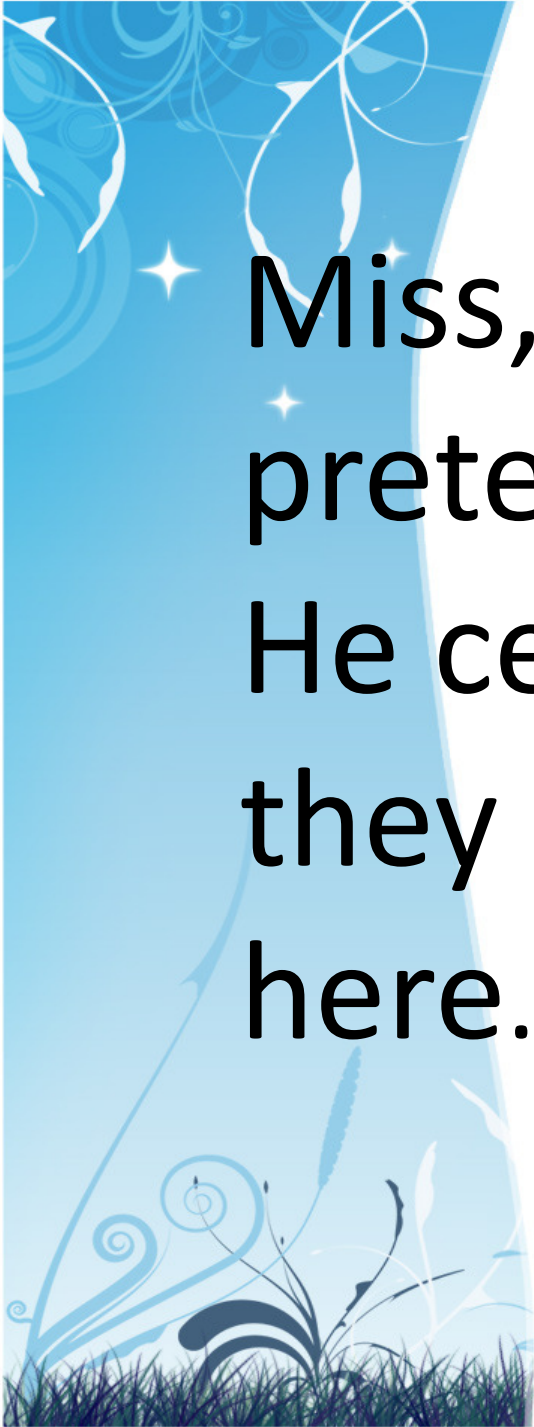
# Additional articles

- Carrington, L. Determining Language Education Policy in Caribbean Sociolinguistic Complexes.
- Nero, Shondel. Language, identity, and education of Caribbean English Speakers.
- Winford, Donald. Teacher Attitudes toward Language Varieties in a Creole Community.

# Other authors

- Denis Craig
- Ian Robertson
- Lise Winer
- Winford James
- Barbara Lalla
- Valerie Youssef
- Barbara Joseph





Miss, he is simply  
pretending to be stupid.  
He certainly knows what  
they do when you are not  
here.