

My Time to Speak: Four Jamaican Boys' Narratives on Jamaican Creole's Influence on Their Identities, Gendered Practices, Perceptions and Attitudes Toward English Language Learning

by
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M.Ed., University of the West Indies, 2010
B.Ed., University of the West Indies, 2008

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This dissertation presents findings from a 3-month qualitative study that examined Jamaican Creole's (JC) influence on four adolescent (14-17) working-class Jamaican boys' identities, gendered practices, and evolving attitudes toward English language learning (ELL). It embraced a social constructivist approach anchored in narrative inquiries and case studies to document the complexities of the boys' lived language experiences as dominant JC speakers in an inner-city high school. The data collected from the participants' graphic novels, interviews, video diaries, and my observations revealed that JC significantly influenced the boys' identities, gendered practices, and attitudes toward Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and ELL. First, the data show that the boys used JC extensively to engage their identities as Jamaicans and strong heterosexual boys, which granted them social and linguistic power among working-class men and boys in their communities. Further, it reveals that the boys exhibited positive attitudes toward SJE and ELL when they engaged with supportive teachers who valued their linguistic resources and the reverse was true when they had teachers who demonstrated Anglo-centric ideologies. Lastly, the boys were agentive in their ELL performance and strongly believed they were accountable for their own success. This dissertation concludes that Jamaican schools need to develop more equitable language classrooms that successfully integrate JC-speaking students' linguistic resources and engage them in practices that complement rather than oppress their authentic voices. I hope that this research will invite educators and curriculum developers to cultivate more diverse multiliterate and bilingual ELL practices that offer working-class JC-speaking youths more opportunities for success and facilitate a more critical examination of Anglo-centric language ideologies in schools that are suppressing students' voices.

Keywords: Gender, ELL, identity, working-class, Jamaican schools, success, Jamaican Creole

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband Peter, my sons Deshawn and Braeden and the Sams Peters, Joes and Johns in Jamaicans schools. May you be men of courage and honour who smile in the face of trouble, gather strength from distress and grow brave by reflection (Thomas Paine).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

“Child talk properly!” has been hurled at me so many times by the women in my family, I am surprised it is not imprinted somewhere on my forehead. In Jamaica, “talk properly” means using Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and not Jamaican Creole (JC). At a young age, I could not comprehend why I was not allowed to speak JC, which was spoken by everyone, and so I rebelled and spoke only JC. Ironically, all the women in my family who constantly reprimanded me, my grandmother, mother and aunts, were all dominant JC speakers, except for one aunt who was a customer service manager at the local bank. In a sense, one could say my PhD research journey started as a child as I seemed to have had little regard for my family’s desire for me to be an SJE speaker. If I dare say, without having any concept of what that meant at the time, I was creolo-centric, meaning I enjoyed speaking the language and thought it was an essential part of my identity. But, everywhere around me, not just at home, JC seemed to be the forbidden language. Some of my earliest childhood memories of language as a student in Jamaica were that of friends who were dominant JC speakers being punished for not speaking SJE; mind you, something they were often incapable of doing. I recall boys being at the receiving end of most of these punishments as teachers seemed impatient with their language choices. Many teachers also seemed bewildered that some boys and students like myself who were considered “bright” (exhibiting high intelligence) and read widely would not speak more SJE. They were quick to correct our JC speech, especially the basilectal form, (the form of JC closet to the African variety) which was regarded as coarse and unseemly. After moving on to what is considered a prestigious high school in my parish, there were even higher expectations of me to speak SJE,

especially coming from a rural community where residents were mostly JC speakers and not considered “highly intellectual.” I was to be the exception to that rule. I was the pride and joy of my family, especially my grandmother, who wanted nothing more than for me to show just how “bright” I was by speaking the standard variety. At that time and even now, children who spoke SJE were considered “speaky spoky,” which is putting on airs or being pretentious. For me, it was far too much work to be “speaky spoky,” particularly because I spent a lot of time hanging out with several boys in my community who would ridicule me if I spoke SJE. That said, while I did not speak much SJE in my community, I left high school with language and literacy practices that many would say set me up for academic success and got me into a “good” teachers’ college.

During those years in college, I was more driven to reproduce the Anglo-centric language (SJE) and literacy ideologies of the college and wider society. I began to somewhat change in how I interacted with family and friends. In some ways, I began to put on airs, using mostly mesolectal SJE (a language variety spoken by the middle-class) and acrolectal (the variety spoken by the elites) forms of speech. I found myself falling into the trap of seeing JC as a debased form of speech and its speakers as less sophisticated, a view that followed me to my own classroom. Fortunately, these oppressive entrenched colonial views changed significantly during my undergraduate and graduate degrees as I began to really understand the hegemonic power of SJE and the implications for young monolingual JC speakers. It was then I began to slowly free myself from the grips of language superiority that had taken hold of me as a young educator and adopt more progressive and inclusive pedagogical practices that valued all students’ language resources. I began to have conversations with students and colleagues about the educational, social, and economic value of JC to our people and did my part to dismantle hegemonic practices that have sought to suppress it. This extrication of the old self, the child

who reveled in speaking JC, led to a renewed love and appreciation for the rich, diverse forms of JC. Perhaps it is unsurprising that this new perspective and a renewed love for JC did not sit well with many of my colleagues who still ascribed to Anglo-centric language ideologies. In one of our many staffroom conversations about the use of Jamaican Creole (JC) in schools, an exasperated colleague said to me, “I have no idea why you as a teacher of English is encouraging your sons to speak Patois” (the Jamaican term for JC). In response, I reminded her Patois is my sons’ native language, and so I will always encourage them to speak it. Predictably, my response only led to further heated conversations, given the national debate at the time on boys’ performance in English A, which is the regional English exam that is usually taken by grade 11 students from 16 English-speaking Caribbean countries. In many conversations to follow, my colleagues and even family members challenged my decision to have my sons speak JC. Some colleagues told me outright that I was a part of the problem of boys not acquiring Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and I was not only undermining my sons’ future prospects but the boys I taught. Some of my critics were offended that as a teacher of English who “should be preparing our nation’s students for future employment and success,” I was promoting the very language that was supposedly hindering them. I have even had my competence as a teacher questioned because my sons ‘could not speak proper English.’

In public, I remain steadfast in my belief that JC is a beautiful language that should be given the recognition it deserves in our schools, but within I was in turmoil. I had many nightly conversations with my husband about our choices for our sons and constantly worried about how we were shaping their language identities. To be clear, I was never ambivalent about my sons speaking JC. I was more concerned about how others would perceive their language practices and the impact this might have on their evolving identities. I also began to wonder if they would

choose to use JC more than SJE as they grow older and what attitudes they might develop about English Language Learning (ELL). These concerns emerged from my experiences with my colleagues and some of the antiquated colonial views and practices I observed among those who believed that JC had no place in schools. Even though I have come to value the language and the importance of drawing on the linguistic and cultural resources of students' home language to support their success in schools, many were not of the same view. For me as a teacher, there was more than sufficient evidence that students were not benefitting from the prevailing negative views of JC. Therefore, I wanted to delve into this further to see how some students' language choices shaped their identities and how this impacted their attitudes toward English Language Learning. I also wanted to challenge current views of JC's inferiority and help teachers and students see the value of the home language in schools and in fostering positive identities among learners, especially boys. In a sense, the study emerged out of my desire to see a change in language ideologies and pedagogies and my concern for my sons and the kind of educational experiences they might have. Given my concern for my sons, I wanted to work with dominant JC speaking adolescent boys who were at the center of the national debate on boys, language, and academic performance.

Although I entered the school system believing that all students should be instructed in the standard variety and, any deviation from this was detrimental to their success, my mind has since been decolonized. I have become increasingly aware of the challenges many dominant JC speaking boys face at school and the entrenched views that have boxed them in and cast them as aggressive uncouth speakers who are problematic. It seems that too often, they are the target of redress, reshaping and molding because they do not meet the language expectations of school. I believe these practices need to be challenged in every way, and so I was compelled to engage in

research that privileges these students' voices and experiences. It is hoped stakeholders will have a better understanding of how JC influences some boys' engendered identities and the impact this has on their developing attitudes toward ELL and success in school. I believe their stories will allow for more in-depth conversations on boys' language and success in school and possibly reshape the current language policies and harmful rhetoric that are undermining some students' achievements. This dissertation, therefore, is grounded in the my desire to see a real change in language ideologies and practices in schools. I believe for this to happen all voices should be heard.

Research Context

For decades there have been global discussions on the “underperforming boy”, “at-risk youths” and other alarming headlines that seem to have created much panic that boys are chronically underachieving (Francis, 2005; Jones & Myhill, 2004; Osler & Vincent, 2003; Titus, 2004). In some ways, my research was fueled by polarizing conversations on gender and performance in schools with the underachieving boy and the high-achieving girl seemingly conforming to gender expectations, especially when talking about youths from working-class families. In this regard, high-achieving boys were seen to challenge gender norms; and the underachieving girl emerges as largely overlooked (Titus, 2004). Moreover, boys have been continuously positioned as having weaker language skills and seen as less committed readers and writers (Clarke, 2007; Figueroa, 1996, 2004). Some scholars alluded to boys' identification with a set of ‘macho’ male ideals that reject the values of education as the root of the problem (Anderson & McLean, 2014; Bucknor & James, 2014; Evans, 2001; Jones & Myhill, 2004; Mac an, 1994, 1996; Parry, 2000). However, this is obviously a more complex issue than the rejection of education and many macho males are offended with that stereotypical representation that they

do not like school as some of the participants in this research will readily attest to. In many of these conversations and scholarly work, the myriad social and linguistic practices that have continually rejected, denigrated and alienated diverse language and literacy practices of boys from working-class families are repeatedly overlooked. Historically JC-speaking boys from working-class families have been singled out as poor ELL performers and at-risk (Anderson & Mclean, 2014; Bryan, 1997, 2004a; Devonish, 2012, 2016). The boys' fluency in JC has been blamed for their supposed failures in ELL. The fact that many boys from working-class families have not historically excelled in regional English A exit exams to the same extent as girls has been used repeatedly as evidence of JC's negative impact (Clarke, 2007; CXC, 2017; Figueroa, 2004). Also, girls repeatedly outperform boys in all five literacy exams (grades one, four, six, seven, and nine) done throughout their school years (MOEYC, 2001). To some, the girls' ongoing success in these literacy tests at all stages is further evidence that boys' language choices are the problem. This view also further perpetuates the stereotype that some boys have no interest in literacy and will continue to fail at ELL. For clarity, in Jamaica, ELL includes subject titles, such as Language Arts, English A, and English Language and so throughout students' primary to high school years these titles are used interchangeably in classrooms across the country.

Despite the poor perceptions of boys' interest and performance in ELL, in my classroom experiences, I have found many boys to be engaged participants. Admittedly, some of them were reluctant to engage in conversations in SJE and preferred to write it rather than make oral presentations that required fluency. This practice, however, did not mean they were underperforming. In fact, some of my most successful students throughout my 14 years as a teacher of English in Jamaica were boys. But in my early years as a naïve, overly enthusiastic

and inexperienced teacher, I certainly bought into the idea that students from working-class families, especially boys, who were fluent JC speakers were less likely to succeed in English Language Learning. In my misguided bid to improve these students' performance in my ELL classes, I would have "English Only" days where students would have to put coins in a jar every time they used JC for that day. Needless to say, it was one of my most damaging practices that ostracized fluent JC speakers in my classroom and reinforced the stereotypes that they were lacking. Considering that more than half of the students in my classes were fluent JC speaking boys from working-class families, the impact was devastating to their morale. Some of the boys who were once engaging and jovial with me became withdrawn and seemed somewhat resentful.

While I was not able to repair those relationships, moving forward, I was more conscious of my actions and took steps to make changes. I worked hard to create a classroom environment that prized different linguistic practices and advocated for language policies that valued the bilingual /plurilingual practices of students. As Bryan (2004a) suggests, to give students an equal opportunity to succeed in the ELL classroom, teachers will have to acknowledge that they are teaching in a Creole-Speaking environment and take steps to use JC as a bridge language in schools. But many colleagues continue to view JC as a deficit and its speakers accordingly, notwithstanding decades of convincing evidence to show that inclusive language practices are beneficial to students' overall success in school (Bryan, 2004a, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Evans, 2001; Taylor, 2007). This view is highly problematic in the Jamaican context, particularly because many students, not just boys, write a language (SJE) they do not speak, and speak a language (JC) they do not write (Devonish and Carpenter, 2007a). The Ministry of Education and other entities have taken tentative steps to redress legislation and language policies to reconcile monolingual teaching practices and recognize the value of JC in schools.

However, a growing body of literature has emerged to show a continuous linguistic deficit in educational policies and practices (Evans, 2001; Jennings & Cook, 2019; Kouwenberg & Singler, 2008; Nero & Stevens, 2018). As such, despite the 2010 language policy mandate to adopt a position that recognized Jamaica as a bilingual country while retaining SJE as the official language, little has changed and the new charted plans to promote the use of JC in school has fallen quite short in implementing bilingual programmes (MOEYC, 2009). Except for a few pilot projects being conducted by the Jamaica Language Unit at the Ministry of Education's bequest, not much else has been done to integrate JC in the curriculum (Jamaica Language Unit, 2008). This lack of progress is partly due to embedded colonial practices that continue to value only English in schools. The Jamaican people have become so accustomed to having SJE as the only mode of instruction in schools, many fail to see how anything else is beneficial. Within this context, it is evident that much needs to be done to decolonize schools' language practices, promote bilingualism, change current policies and practices that undermine dominant JC-speaking boys and give students more agency in their ELL success.

Why Boys?

While it is clear that the purpose of this research paper is to create a platform for some inner-city boys to share their language experiences in and outside the classroom, it does not in any way undermine the language challenges girls are also facing. I do acknowledge that many girls are denied many educational opportunities because educators are often concerned with "fixing" the failing boy, but the intent here is far from fixing anyone. In fact, the hope is that by illuminating the language experiences of the boys, this will lead to transformative language policies and practices that are beneficial to all students. Like Blair and Sanford (2004), I too am concerned about girls being made invisible in education and wish to highlight that Jamaican

adolescent girls' language experiences are just as important as boys. Given the patriarchal structures and male privilege that exist in Jamaica, I must make it clear that my decision to focus on boys and not girls is due to my personal experiences as a parent and a teacher and not because girls' language use is less important. In my 14 years as a teacher of English in Jamaica, I observed that boys were more often the target of negative language attitudes, and so I am drawn to explore this issue. Moreover, the intent in this research is not to undercut the complexities of language and identity many girls experiences, but rather to focus on an unexplored area of boys' language choices, gendered identity, and perceptions of ELL in Jamaica. In the future, I intend to explore the intricacies of adolescent girls' language use. However, for this study the focus is on JC's influences on the gendered identities of boys from low-income families who are more likely to fluently use JC more than girls from any group or boys from higher-income families.

Research Purpose

School is not the only place that has been undermining JC speaking students' voices. While there is an abundance of research on youths and language in the Caribbean, the authentic voices, experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of marginalized youths are noticeably absent. With few studies giving priority to marginalized youths' voices in language research, there is a need to increase their empowerment and active participation. This research study intends to address the highlighted gaps in marginalized students' voices in research, particularly those of dominant JC speakers from inner-city communities who have been silenced. It will provide a platform for them to share their language experiences. The intent is to document, showcase, and examine four boys' narratives of JC's influence on their gendered identities and the impact this has on their perceptions and attitudes toward English Language Learning. Although scholarly literature in the Caribbean on language attitudes and identities show a need to develop more positive attitudes to

language diversity in schools, historically, monolingual JC speaking students have been marginalized, none more so than those from inner-city communities (Bryan 2010, Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Craig, 2006a; Kouwenberg et al., 2011, Nero & Stevens, 2018). Thus, boys from an inner-city school and two inner-city communities are privileged in this research as they are disproportionately targeted and criticized for their use of JC and performance in school. They are also frequently the center of rooted post-colonial views and practices that suggest that they are operating at a deficit as dominant JC speakers despite decades of research that challenge this (Bryan, 1997, 2004b, Craig, 2006; Nero & Stevens, 2018). In particular, given that very little research has been done to include student voices in creative and diverse art forms, this study seeks to showcase the boys' lived language experiences through graphic novels. Their graphic novels are compelling, creative and highly engaging multiliterate forms that not only illuminate their lived language experiences but offer a more pluralistic view of how language ideologies and practices inside and out of school are shaping their gendered identities (Schwartz, 2002). Through their creative works, the study intends to produce first-hand knowledge of their experiences that might reshape the language experiences of dominant JC speakers in schools and allow for more inclusive curricula.

Finally, through the boys' original creations and other data sources, the study extends multiple, multimodal opportunities for them as ELL students to express their sense of belonging, sense of agency, and overall perceptions of acceptance. It also offers opportunities for more conversations on how to represent diverse language experiences and give voice to marginalized groups with varied points of view. Further, the research seeks to provide transformative knowledge that will hopefully lead to a change of monolingual practices in schools that have characterized the learning experiences of many Jamaican students. Through the boys'

representations of their school experiences, the research hopes to inform decisions about how to make our classrooms more diverse and inclusive and suggest ways to challenge colonial-influenced, troubling discourses and ways of thinking that currently inform language policies and practices. Language, in this case, is seen as a “system of linguistic communication, particular to a group that includes spoken, written and signed modes of communication” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 2). I recognize that although my research is advocating for JC in all learning contexts, it is written in English, which in some ways, undermine my message. That said, I do not believe that Canadian English or SJE is superior in any way to JC; rather I am in a precarious situation wherein globally English is the recognized language and so I am expected to write this dissertation in English. As an international student, I am required to write a dissertation that meets Canadian standards, and this includes writing in English. However, I am still critical of English and SJE dominance in the Jamaican context and hope that through the presentation of the participants’ authentic words, I will demonstrate JC’s value in all educational contexts. As such, I am advocating for JC alongside SJE in Jamaican classrooms, where both languages are of equal value.

Research Questions

This study sought to carefully examine JC’s influence on four adolescent boys’ identities, gendered practices, and attitudes toward English language learning. For transparency in this project, the following research questions were crafted to guide the literature review, the data collection, analysis and discussion of findings in ways that showcased the boys’ lived experiences and deepened understanding of the phenomenon of their language use.

1. To what extent does their dominant use of Jamaican Creole influence Jamaican adolescent boys’ linguistic identities?
2. How has the boys’ use of Jamaican Creole impacted their gendered identities and practices?

3. How do the boys' language experiences impact their perceptions of Jamaican Creole, Standard Jamaican English, and English language learning?
4. In what ways have schools' language practices impacted the boys' success in English language learning?

In answering these research questions, this study sought to provide insights into how the four adolescent boys' use of JC has shaped their language experiences in school and the impact this has had on their identities as dominant JC-speaking working-class boys in an inner-city school. For directionality, I have divided this research into six additional chapters. Chapter two examines the literature that serves as the foundation for the theoretical ideas grounding this research. Chapter three provides details of the methodology I used to gather the data and offers my step by step description of how the study was implemented. Chapter four provides in-depth descriptions of how I engaged the data, while chapter five focuses on the discussions of the findings. Finally, chapter six provides a summary and analysis of the main findings while chapter 7 focuses on the implications of the findings, recommendations, and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Blaikie and Priest (2017) hypothesize that the theory being invoked and the paradigm from which a researcher frames his or her research work can shape not only the questions asked but also the answers discovered. With this in mind, this study draws on social constructivism, identity, language socialization, and post-colonial theories to inform research processes. The application of these theories helps to elucidate ways in which gender, identity, language, coloniality and, class intersect to generate the tenuous position of JC speaking adolescent boys in the Jamaican classroom. These theories provoke a more critical stance on ways in which post-colonial structures are diminishing the language identities of JC speaking adolescent boys. This review first examines the fundamental theoretical underpinnings of language and identity construction that form the established knowledge grounding this research. Next, it draws on historical documents, empirical research, reports and, other scholarly works to illuminate discussions on language identity, attitudes, and students' success in the Jamaican context. This research is situated in a post-colonial society, so there is much focus on post-colonial works within the Caribbean that critically examine social, educational, and language structures that might be inhibiting or enriching students' language experiences and success. One body of literature examines language development and attitude in post-colonial Jamaica, while another body of work provides insights into the intersections of gender, class, and language attitudes. The last area of literature explores gender and academic achievement in schools.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Gender, Language and Identity in Schools

Language and its role in identity formation have long been a debated issue in the Caribbean and the rest of the world. The intricacies of language and identity in a post-colonial context are best understood through an extensive examination of the theoretical knowledge on gender, identity, and language socialization. Thus, this section highlights the theoretical framework informing gender and identity as used in this research; a socio-cultural theory of language learning and post-colonial theory. These selected theoretical frameworks informed the ontological, epistemological and methodological views and decisions that were taken in this research.

Gender Theory: Narrowing the Scope

Undoubtedly, there is much divide among scholars in the fields of sociology, human development, public health, education, and other related disciplines about the definition of gender. The term gender has come to have many overlapping, even contentious meanings, and this is still evolving. Early research in the Caribbean in the field of education saw gender as a social differentiation between maleness and femaleness or masculinity and femininity (Chevannes, 1999; Evans, 1999; Reddock, 2004). Before the 1980s, the literature on the subject of gender in Jamaica was found mostly in family and men's studies and showed a preoccupation with gender as a biological function (Chevannes, 1999; Figueroa, 1996, 2004; Lewis, 1998; Miller, 1986). Then, there was a focus on biological functions as many scholarly works on gender were borne out of resistance to the representation of the working-class black man as 'irresponsible' and the subjugation of women in the Caribbean (Chevannes, 1999; Miller, 1986). By the end of the 20th century, research concerned with gender as social constructs, specifically

masculinities, emerged with full force in the Caribbean. Some of the scholarly works reflected men's experiences of masculinities, marginality and manhood (Miller, 1986; Reddock, 2004).

While Caribbean research was making the slow change in perspectives on gender, the pioneering work of Western gender theorists Judith Butler, Raewyn Connell and Jill Mathews, to name a few, heralded a swift shift in how it was perceived in the 20th century. Through their body of work, they laid the foundation for the shift in earlier notions of gender being a fixed concept of male and female to being a complex construct with multiple dimensions that are fluid and changing (Butler, 1999; Connell, 1987; Matthews, 1984). As a result of the pioneering work of the mentioned theorists, gender is now regarded as a social construct that is influenced by cultural and social practices rather than a biological definition (Butler, 1999). At present, one commonality that exists among most scholarships on the subject is the need to make more tenable distinctions between sex and gender and social construction of the self (Bourdieu, 2001; Butler, 1999; Connell, 1987, 2005a, 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Matthews, 1984;). New research now defines gender as 'in process,' the outcome of social practice or agent, subject to resistance or acceptance of hegemonic standards of identity (Connell, 2014; Vantieghem, Vermeersch, & Houtte, 2014).

These new perspectives mean that gender is now open to interpretation, and the lens through which individuals construct their identity is also open to disruption and change. This research embraces these new views of gender and sees gender as socially constructed. It is not static but shaped by historical and social contexts (Butler, 1999). As Butler explains, gender is not tied to material biological facts but is solely and completely a social construction that is open to contestation. This research adopts Butler's view of gender to allow for a more critical interrogation of some boys' gendered practices and generate nuanced discussions on language

and gender in the Jamaican context. This position is critical in the Jamaican context where there is limited room for what Kimmel and Messner (1995) describe as feminized masculinity, that is, men or boys' expressions of masculinity that do not fit into stereotypical normative masculine practices and are considered feminine. This view also aligns well with the social constructivism framework guiding this research. As Creswell (2014) advances, social constructivism is an interpretive framework in which "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" and develop their own meanings based on their life experiences (p. 37). Thus, a social constructivist perspective is important in understanding how the boys in this research make sense of their gendered identities within the contexts of their culture and society.

Gender performativity. The performative nature of gender is a central theory that also informs this research. One of the leading theorists on gender performativity, Judith Butler, positions gendered behaviors as "performative acts that constitute who we are" rather than natural reasserting acts (Butler, 1999, p. 270). In her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999), Butler argues that gender is created through performative acts that are "compelled by social sanction and taboo" (p. 271). She challenges the belief that certain gendered behaviors are natural, advancing that how one learns performance of gendered behavior is an act, "a performance that is imposed upon by normative heterosexuality" (p. 270). Butler (1999) also theorizes that individuals continually perform their gender, especially in public spaces, to demonstrate that they are compliant with cultural norms. She concludes that men and boys will continue to embrace the subjectivity of their identities through their acts of

performance because these are often demonstrations of their acclaimed masculine power attained.

Pierre Bourdieu (2001) also supports the view that men embrace the subjectivity of their gendered identities. He theorizes that “men are not born with the awareness of themselves as men, but rather society imposes this understanding on them” (p.16). Through a combination of social theory and data from quantitative surveys and interviews, Bourdieu’s empirical works show that not only does society play a determining role in shaping men’s awareness of self, but it also polices the boundaries of their identities through sanctions and rewards. This theory builds on his earlier works, where he contends our habitus helps shape how we act and think. For Bourdieu, this means, we unconsciously develop habits, social practices, and attitudes that become central parts of our identity and everyday practices.

In privileging a social constructivist interpretive framework, the research considers that participants are embracing the subjectivities of their gendered identities and so “there is no single reality, but rather multiple realities that are constructed through their lived experiences and interactions with others” (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). This theory is in keeping with Butler’s conclusions that an understanding of the performativity of gender allows for greater consideration of men’s positionality, not only in terms of their masculinity but in opposition to femininity and non-heterosexuality concepts.

Coloniality of gender. Like Butler (1999), Raewyn Connell’s works continue to show the evolving nature of gender. Her theories on gender are particularly important to this research as she goes further to explore the ‘coloniality of gender,’ a concept that was developed by feminist philosopher María Lugones, who defines it as the “analysis of racialized,

capitalist, gender oppression” (Lugones, 2010, p. 747). In explaining ‘coloniality’ Lugones (2010) note:

In using the term coloniality I mean not to name not just a classification of people in terms of coloniality of power and gender, but also the process of active reduction of people, the dehumanization that fits them for the classification, the process of subjectification, the attempt to turn the colonized into less than human beings. (p. 745)

For Lugones, colonized people need to disrupt these perceptions that continue to distort how they see gender, which she describes as an imposition that has become “interwoven into the historicity of relations” (p. 743). Connell extends on this to explicate that the coloniality of gender is particularly complicated because colonized men and women’s identity and gender relations have been significantly altered (Connell, 2014). For Connell (2014), “ the formation of masculinities needs to be considered on a historical terrain including worldwide processes of conquest and social disruption, the building of colonial societies and post-independence globalization” to really explore gender in a colonized society (p. 217). She further sees colonialization itself as a gendered act, carried out by powerful men whose destruction of colonized men and women became normalized and began to reshape gendered practices in colonized societies. In this case, gendered identities are sometimes developed in resistance and submission to colonial practices. Connell contends that these are significant contributing factors to the complexity of gender relations and masculinities in colonized societies (Connell, 2014).

Connell’s extensive works on gender identities in colonized societies continue to show that social and historical constructs can and still dictate the masculine practices of many men, and it is difficult for some to choose an alternative without being seen as deviant. Connell’s works not only offer great insights into how society influences gendered identities but it also

shows the need for more critical treatment or exploration of masculinity in the Caribbean, which has a history of men's identities etched in resistance or submission of society's expectations. In summary, this research takes the theoretical perspectives that gender is fluid, socially constructed, and continuously evolving. It is sometimes performative and is particularly complex in a colonized society where colonized men's masculine identities, as a result of European invasion, have been permanently altered. In valuing these perspectives, the intent is to challenge current discourse on boys' conformity or resistance to normalized gendered practices through the research findings. As Lugones (2010) muses, "unlike colonization, the coloniality of gender is still with us; it is what lies at the intersection of gender/class/race as central constructs of the capitalist world" (p. 746).

Reframing Identity

Identity, like gender, is a fluid construct that is not easily defined. It has been redefined continuously and reconceptualized for the last half-century that many scholars are cautious of attaching a rigid definition to it (Herzfeld, 2003; Hogg, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1995). That said, theories of identity have made significant shifts since Erikson's (1950, 1968) widely used model of development that focused on identity evolution through stages. Erikson theorized that adolescents go through stages of identity crisis that help to shape their unique ability (1968). In the 1980s, this theory of identity was reconceptualized to include "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 2). Other theorists extended on this definition in the 1990s, and later research began to look at identity as "the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 4). Contemporary theorists continued to build on Erickson's psychosocial theories of development in which he considered

the impact of external social factors on adolescents' identity and concept of self (Bandura, 2001; Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Similarly, cultural theorist Stuart Hall focuses on the social and cultural constructs at play in one's identity formation (Hall, 1990, 1993; Hall & du Gay, 1996). Hall (1996) crafts identity as a "construction, a process never completed-always in process" (Hall & du Gay, 1996 p. 2). He theorizes our identities are grounded in historical and cultural contexts that we often draw on to position ourselves in our worlds. He contends:

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not who we are or where we came from, so much as what we become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall & du Gay, 1996, p. 4)

These are important considerations in this research because an understanding of the role of language and culture on participants' representation of themselves is critical in how conclusions are drawn. Like Hall and other identity theorists, this research adopts the view that identity is multiple and contradicting and so it was necessary to consider the many ways in which participants' identities would emerge.

The concepts of self and others in identity. Although several different epistemological perspectives are evident in the above conceptualizations of identity, there are two pervading ideas among these and other definitions of identity that are considered in this research: 'self' and the contextual importance of 'other(s).' Some theorists conceptualize identity as one's conception self and place in a social grouping (Berzonsky, 2011; Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). For instance, Berzonsky (2011) posits that the concept of self is vital in identity construction as one's agency plays an active role in one's ability to mold one's own identities. That is, identity becomes a "process in which one governs and regulates the social-cognitive

strategies they need to construct, maintain and reconstruct their identities within their social constructs.” (Berzonsky, 2011, p.55). This research also considered the concept of others because it embraces a social constructivist view of identity. One of the central tenets of social constructivism is that knowledge is constructed and is “contingent on human perception and social experiences,” and how one makes sense of their world (Keengwe, Schnellert, & Kungu, 2014, p. 258). Thus, a social constructivist view of identity recognizes that while humans are active agents in their identity construction, the perception of others is also critical in their social identities. Tajfel (1981) coins social identity as having knowledge as a member of a group and knowing the status of that group when compared to others. He theorizes that individuals are motivated to act in ways that are accepted by their groups to gain membership. Other scholars agree that social groups influence what people do, how they make sense of their world, and how they see themselves, and others (Oyserman, 2007; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Contemporary theorists propose that we construct many identities to fit into different social spaces, and these identities, in turn, go through stages. For instance, Stryker and Burke (2000) theorize that individuals experience multiple levels of identities. These include personal, role, and social identities. They describe the personal identity as the individual’s construction of self, sometimes within biological constraints. At the second level the individual begins to construct their role identities, that is, “the expectations associated with their role” (p. 289). Finally, the individual moves on to construct their social identities, which speaks to what it means to be a part of a social group. Stryker and Burke (2000) contend these are all crucial stages an individual goes through in gaining clarity on their social identities. In this sense, it was anticipated that participants’ conception of self would evolve and change as they encounter multiple identities, each having a different role (Berzonsky, 2011; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Therefore, given the multiple identities the participants might have experienced in their lifetime, the research had to consider gender, social class and social value within groups and society as significant factors impacting their identities (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). These constructs are relevant in the research because gender and class play a significant role in Jamaican students' language experiences and emerging identities. Girls from all social backgrounds and boys from middle and upper-class are likely to engage their linguistic identities much differently than boys from inner-city communities.

Tactics of identity formation. Stryker's and Burke's theory on the levels of identity coalesce with Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) work on the intersubjectivity of identity in different contexts. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) hypothesize that speakers engage their identity positions through their language, which is often intersubjective. The researchers proposed four tactics speakers sometimes use to construct their identities in different environments: adequation and distinction, authentication and denaturalization, authorization, and illegitimation. The authors refer to adequation as the ways in which "individuals are positioned as alike, they need not-and in any case cannot be identical, but must be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599). They contend that just as "adequation relies on the suppression of social differences that might disrupt a seamless representation of similarity, distinction depends on the suppression of similarities that might undermine the construction of difference" (p. 600). In this case, distinction or distinguishing tactics are those

moves that create social and linguistic distance between an individual and a specific social group. The authors define authentication and denaturalization as:

The processes by which speakers make claims to realness and artifice respectively. While both relations have to do with authenticity, the first focuses on the ways in which identities are discursively verified and the second on how assumptions regarding the seamlessness of identity can be disrupted. (p. 601)

For Bucholtz and Hall (2005), tactics of denaturalization are engaged when individuals make inaccurate assumptions about the linguistic ability of another, often due to accents or other distinguishing features such as ethnicity. These tactics are particularly insightful when examining how the boys' construct their identity as JC speakers within their social groups, their communities, and the society.

Language Socialization Theory

Current theoretical approaches to language learning and socialization emphasize social contexts in children's language learning; however, this was not always the case. Before the 1960s, studies on students' language learning and acquisition focused on individual learner characteristics such as cognitive traits, motivation, and affective orientations (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008). The school of thought then was that language acquisition was innate, and as such social processes were not so important in language development, and children's "verbal resources" were not considered in research (Chomsky, 1968; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008, p. 3). This view has shifted considerably as current research on language learning and acquisition focuses on the role of socio-cultural practices and linguistic on learning processes. There is also bridging of several language disciplines. This shift in perspective is in some ways due to John

Gumperz's and Dell Hymes' influential work on communicative competence (Gumperz, 1968; Hymes, 1972). Both theorists heralded a new focus on language use in social contexts and the value of speech communities in understanding language patterns.

Social theorists Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin were also doing pioneering work on the socio-cultural perspective on language learning, which paved the way for more investigative work on the social processes impacting children's language acquisition. Vygotsky's (1978) theory that language is agentive and socially situated, laid the foundation (in education) for more focus on children's interactions with members of their communities and their ways of participating in the communicative practices of that community. In framing a socio-cultural approach to learning, Vygotsky (1978) proposed a model where learners are seen as active agents in learning through their use of language and interactions with others. He theorized that children and other speakers' social, historical, and cultural systems are key parts of their language socialization and the different language decisions they make daily in their communication with others. For Vygotsky (1978), this means language is in process, constantly changing and growing as children interact with different groups over different periods in their lives. Likewise, Mikhail Bakhtin saw language as 'in process' and dialogic. His fundamental premise is that all language is inundated with the discourse of others, which gives social meanings to our interactions (Bakhtin, 1981). He theorizes that since life is a shared event and we participate through dialogue, it is how we share traces of ourselves. He further theorizes that language is never neutral and is filled with the intentions of others and we draw on the utterances of others in constructing our own speech. In this sense, he posits, we can only perceive things from the perspective of something else, so meanings are generated through our interaction with self and others. That is, our interactions or utterances are often in relation to the anticipated

group with whom we are in dialogue. Following these theorists' influential works, language research became more pre-occupied with how children socialized 'into' particular language practices and "through language discourse to become familiar with their communities' practices." (Howard, 2014, para. 1).

Language in process: socio-cultural influences. Drawing on different emerging theories on communicative competence and language acquisition, Bambi Schiefflin's (1985) groundbreaking longitudinal study of children in Papua New Guinea (1975-1977) changed language research. After collecting this data, she collaborated with Elinor Ochs in 1984 to chart a new course in language socialization processes. They proposed that "the process of acquiring language is embedded in and constitutive of the process of becoming socialized to be a competent member of a social group and that socialization practices and ideologies impact language acquisition" (Ochs & Schiefflin, 2008, p. 5). This generated a new field of research: language socialization. The authors' early works spawned a shift from focusing on the functions of language to one that examined children's language in social and cultural contexts. Ochs and Schiefflin's theory contrasted significantly with traditional schools of theory that saw language as mental processes that occurred outside of social contexts (Chomsky, 1968). Through their pioneering work in language socialization theory, Ochs and Schiefflin forge new pathways in language research that began to consider the impact of situational and children-centered contexts on children's communicative practices. Now, "what children are told, by whom and in what language variety" are considered as essential factors in their language development (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011, p.2). Ochs and Schieffelin (2011) wrote:

Language socialization is distinctly local and situated. Thrown into social situations from birth, human beings become attuned to socioculturally saturated linguistic cues

that afford their sensibility to a fluidity of contexts. Infants not only become speakers of languages; they also become speakers of cultures. (p. 8)

Therefore, for Ochs and Schieffelin (2011), language research must consider the contexts in which novices acquire language and the implications for their communicative practices. While both authors acknowledge that “language acquisition and socialization are interdependent developmental processes,” they explain that there are still unequal language power systems where adults often control novices forms of communication in their speech communities (p. 8). For some language socialization theorists, these interactions within speech communities are important processes by which children learn language skills and patterns that are necessary for them to effectively communicate within their culture (Kramsch, 2002; Ochs and Schieffelin, 2008). In fact, at the core of a socio-cultural approach to language learning is the belief that learning occurs as people participate in socio-cultural activities within their learning communities (Norton & Toohey, 2001).

Like many contemporary scholarships, this research adopts Ochs and Schieffelin’s (2011) view that children are agentive in their language development; however their language identities are intricately tied to the social, economic, cultural, and personal beliefs of their speech communities. This research considers these theories of language socialization because as Kramsch (2002) and Norton (2000) contend, they are significant in understanding speakers’ identity and how they relate to others in different social groups. In this case, the authors theorize that adolescents’ language practices are likely to reveal the language socialization processes influencing their speech as they seek to connect or distance themselves from others. Language socialization also highlights the importance of social and linguistic capital in different situations.

Social and linguistic capital. Social and cultural capital are significant factors in children's language socialization and acquisition. This research draws extensively on Pierre Bourdieu's theory that our social networks and linguistic capital impact our social standing. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (p. 248). In sum, one is attracted to the social networks that provide the greatest capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu (1991) further contends that this capital is exchangeable and so individuals can use it to gain access to economic resources, widen networks, or increase their capital. Bourdieu's social capital theory is particularly important in this research because it explains how language ideology and power are constructed and can be legitimized across communities. For example, Bourdieu theorizes that although everyone in a social group has social capital, it can only be activated by an individual in conjunction with others in the social network to which they belong. That is, one's social network determines one's social capital. Bourdieu's work, therefore, highlights how social capital can be manipulated to create inequality among language speakers, especially in a context like Jamaica, where language segregation is practiced and students are conditioned to believe JC has no linguistic power. This theory on social and linguistic capital is especially relevant to this research as it shows how linguistic power can be wielded over masses of people to create language domination. There is still evidence of this as Caribbean research continues to show that schools have weaponized linguistic capital to legitimize one language and suppress another (Bryan, 2004a; Devonish, 2016; Kouwenberg et al., 2011; Thompson, 2017). These theories are important to the research because, historically, JC, as a form of social capital, has been delegitimized. The Englishes of the world have been promoted as the main avenues for students

to access cultural, social and economic power. The fact that I am writing a dissertation about JC in English is evidence of the far-reaching power of English in many contexts. For me to access the linguistic, social and economic power in this context, I have to use the language that gives me that power. Many JC-speaking students are in similar situations. However, this study seeks to dismantle this practice and proposes an alternative view (supported by modern research) wherein their linguistic and social capital are invited into all spaces and seen as valuable.

Post-Colonial Orientations in Language Research

Colonialism is deep-rooted, oppressive, and woven through many aspects of Caribbean people's practices. For centuries, Eurocentric ideologies and linguistic practices constrained colonized people, and generated feelings of inferiority and insignificance (Cassidy, 1971; Craig, 1971). The need to be freed from colonial influences led to the emergence of the anti-colonial movement in South Asia and Africa in the 20th century, and scholarships steeped in resistance to western ideals and practices (Ness & Cope, 2016). This scholarly resistance spread to other colonized territories and gave birth to post-colonial theory and subsequent research in the field. At that time, there was a thrust to separate colonized societies from European empires and introduce independent schools of thought that reflect the experience of the colonized people (Ness & Cope, 2016). This movement led to the emergence of post-colonial literature that documented the impact of colonial rule on colonized societies, and peoples' resistance through scholarly work and other expressive forms (Bhabha, 1994; Quijano, 2000; Smith, 2012). Although post-colonial theory is multi-layered, contentious and occurs in different ways across the globe, Festa and Carey (2009) explain that it has emerged as an "important mode of inquiry into the cultural, political, economic and literary impact of imperial expansion by European states across much of the globe" (p.3).

Contemporary scholars have agreed that the basic tenets of post-colonialism are the rethinking, resisting, and rewriting of western dominance on colonized societies (Festa & Carey, 2009). At the center of this school of thought is the need to dismantle western epistemologies, philosophies, practices, and identities that have suppressed non-western identities (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003). Post-colonial theory is still evolving and has undergone many changes in the last century as scholars grapple with its meaning in different colonized contexts. It went through a stage of exposing colonized people to the social, psychological, and cultural impacts of colonization. Then there was a thrust for cultural and political sovereignty. It later shifted its focus to cultural unity (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003). Amidst these changes, one theoretical point of view remained constant in post-colonial discourse: the need to challenge the knowledge expounded during the colonial era and generate new ways of thinking and exploring the world (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2003). In the Caribbean context, the work of Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2003) are especially useful in tracing the evolution of post-colonial scholarship in the region and its impact on the people. In the context of this research, it was necessary to consider identity and language in the context of colonialism, especially in Jamaica, which was under British rule from 1655 to its independence in 1962. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2003) argue in their book, post-colonial theory will likely remain a complex issue in West Indian societies because:

The processes of maintaining continuity or of ‘decolonizing’ the culture are much more obviously problematic. In part, this is because the process of disruption brought about by imperialism was not only more violent but also more self-consciously disruptive and divisive. (p. 26)

In the Jamaican context, research embedded in post-colonial theory is relevant because colonial structures and systems continue to play significant roles in the social, educational, economic, and cultural practices of the people. With over three centuries of ideological imposition, this research must engage the post-colonial perspective as the contestation of colonial discourse, power structures, and social hierarchies is necessary to forge new ways of engaging Creole speaking students in schools.

This contestation of colonial dominance follows the trajectory of Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha's progressive post-colonial works on the subjugation of colonized people. Their works set the stage for more purposeful dialogue and research on Caribbean people's use of language and what it means for their identity in societies dominated by colonial discourses. Fanon theorizes that colonized people have been so scarred by colonization that the acquisition of the colonial language have become an essential part of their identity and being accepted (Fanon, 1967). He surmises that to speak the language of the colonizer means accepting the collective consciousness of the black man (colonized) as lesser. He further explains that the black man puts on a white mask (pretending to be white), in his speech and other attributes so that he can escape the inferiority ascribed to him and his language and be seen as an equal participant in his society. For Fanon, the closer the black man gets to the language of the colonizer, the more he thinks he is like the colonizer. However, he contends this is illusionary because the black man will never be accepted, no matter how closely his speech mirrors the colonizer's. In this research, Fanon's theories provide an important analysis of how systems, such as schools, can perpetuate colonial practices that continue to undermine the value of colonized peoples' languages. For instance, in the Jamaican context, schools are undoubtedly sites of oppressive language practices that privilege the language of the colonizer above all else.

Fanon's (1967) work also emphasizes the complex relationship between the colonized and the colonizer as the colonized struggle to free himself of colonizing practices. As he theorized, colonized people are also responsible for the perpetuation of colonizers' practices and will have to be decolonized to escape this legacy. That is, modern post-colonial societies must transcend the imposition of colonizers' rule to regain authentic selves. In support of this view, other post-colonial theorists argue that post-colonial societies are not really freed of an oppressive colonial rule if they still seek the oppressor's acceptance. For instance, Quijano (2000) argues that the matrix of coloniality continues through the reproduction of dominant western ideologies, and even as the formal structures of colonialism have been dismantled, not much has changed. This conformity is exemplified in many Caribbean societies that still subscribe to European forms of schooling, language, and gendered practices.

To combat segregation enforced through coloniality, Bhabha (1994) proposes the hybridity of culture as an alternative. In this theory, he suggests the construction of a third space that "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p. 55). He reasons that this third space helps bridge cultural diversity in culturally divisive spaces where cultural identity is seen as homogenous. For Bhabha, this new space allows for new identities to be created.

These perspectives are specifically important to this research because it seeks to invite other gendered and language identities in schools. Language, after all, plays a dominant role in subverting colonized identities and schools are the social engineers that bring about this system in education that puts "Standard English as appropriate in situations which carry social clout, while other varieties are appropriate at the margins" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 15). The tenets of

post-colonial theory informing this research are that people need to speak in their own voices, their language and produce divergent discourses on language and identity. As Achebe contends, putting away a native language is an agenda by the colonizers to “put away different mother tongues and communicate in the language of their colonizers” (Achebe, 1990, p. 30). Like Achebe, several other post-colonial theorists have engaged in critical conversations on the issue of “putting away” their native language and the serious implications for creativity and freedoms for authors. Given the many ways I had seen post-colonial practices manifesting in schools through monolingual and purist language forms, I was intent on encouraging bilingualism, individuality and ownership in this research. Through a post-colonial frame, I was able to take a critical look at the social, cultural, and linguistic structures in place that validate the practices of SJE speakers while marginalizing dominant JC speakers. Within concepts of post-colonialism, the research confronts inequities in schools and calls for different forms of knowledge and classroom practices that validate the experiences of all students.

However, an analysis of post-colonialism would not be complete without the historical context of the development of language in Jamaica. As such, a review of historical documents and other scholarly works is done to trace the evolution of language in Jamaica and establish a framework for pervading language experiences, attitudes and identities. Through an examination of the literature, I will first explore JC’s contentious genesis, then examine how this impacts current language ideologies and finally delve into the complexities of historical, social, and linguistic constructs shaping current language practices.

Language Development and Attitudes in Jamaica: An Historical Perspective

What is in a language? Before I delve into the historical development of Jamaican Creole, I will address the contentious issue of whether or not it is a language. There is much

division in the fields of sociolinguistics, linguistics, and education as to whether or not JC qualifies as a language (Chaudenson, 2001; Devonish, 1986; Siegel, 2008). Some creolists argue Creoles are their own languages that were developed before colonial contact, while others maintain that it is through colonial contact they were created (Cassidy, 1971a, Chaudenson, 2001; Decamp, 1971; Mufwene, 2001). Cassidy (1971a), for instance, claims JC was first created as a pidgin (a language formed when two groups do not share a common language) out of a necessity for slaves and whites to communicate with each other. Fleischman (2003) theorizes the term Creole was coined in 1567 to represent people who were considered “different, not a reference to ethnicity but more those who were brought up in a different environment, eat different food and have a different outlook on life” (p. xvi). Chaudenson (2001) tackles the uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguities surrounding the origins of the word Creole by explaining that there is no indisputable definition. He, however, rejects the Eurocentric hypothesis that Creoles are substrates of European languages and instead asserts that they are independent languages. Chaudenson (2001) and Mufwene (2001) argue that Creoles are distinct, separate languages from their superstrate European counterparts with their own rich structures that should be celebrated. Contrastingly, Siegel (2008) contends, Creoles are not necessarily independent as they emerge out of contact situations wherein the superstrate (usually the language of the group in control) influences much of the lexical form of the new language. That said, Siegel goes on to point out that many Creoles have a full lexicon and a complex set of grammatical rules that are quite different from the superstrate and have a complete range of functions. He explains this further to say:

One of the fundamental notions used to define pidgin and creole is ‘simplification’-that each of these languages is somehow less complex than its lexifier, however, I prefer the

term ‘simplicity’ which describes a state rather than simplification which implies a process involving reduction of complexity. (p.2)

Siegel’s explanation serves to underscore further the challenges many creolists face in defining a Creole. However, as Eckrammer (2003) proclaims, instead of seeing Creoles as broken, “we should see it as a unique possibility for freeing cultures from colonial or post-colonial oppression by linguistic means” (p. 99). Notwithstanding these contrastive views, this research’s stance is that JC is a language. The complexities of Jamaican Creole go far beyond what I can offer in this section of the paper; however, this research considers JC to be a complex and independent language. In this sense, JC is a language learned from birth that allows its speakers to authentically communicate with each other in different speech environments to share ideas and connect with each other. For this research, it is imperative that JC is recognized as a fully formed and complex language because many of its speakers and non-speakers (SJE speakers and westerners) have adopted Anglo-centric views that continue to see it as a broken form of English. As the following sections demonstrate, these deficit views of JC have planted the seeds of inferiority that so many native JC speakers continue to experience today.

Jamaican Creole’s genesis. Since the 20th century, studies on Jamaican Creole have grown with several pioneering researchers carrying out extensive research on its historical development and impact on Jamaican identities (Cassidy, 1961, 1971b). Before this, few works offered any insights into Jamaican Creole’s development, and these were not intended as scholarly work on the language itself. Some of these insights came from the journals and early works of 17th-century planters, voyagers, and other visiting aristocrats whose documentation of their time in the Caribbean provided deficit accounts of speakers and the language. For example, the late 17th-century text *Sir Hans Sloane, A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S.*

Christopher and Jamaica between 1687-1689 provides rare insights into JC's development, but Sloane's prejudicial views of the people heavily influenced his work. Through this coloured perspective, in his role as a visiting physician in Jamaica, he described slaves as simple, unintelligent beings who took pleasure in modest things and working for their masters. Though his perspectives are flawed, his account of some events suggests that slaves and servants from Barbados and Surinam brought Creole to Jamaica in the 15th century, and the slaves, in particular, showed a deep connection to the language through their songs and dances. His work further suggests JC was associated mostly with black slaves, and although some planters' servants spoke it, others frowned on it. Sloane's work provides some context for the language attitudes that existed then and is relevant to the intended research as it offers some clarity on where some language attitudes originated and why. Sloane's work, though flawed, cannot be discounted as he spent a great deal of time travelling the island and visiting both black and white patients so he would have had many authentic interactions with the people and the language.

Another useful historical source is the early 19th-century memoir of Captain Hugh Crow (1765-1829). Hugh Crow, a captain in the Triangular Trade, wrote his memoir in 1815 in which he documented his experiences with the people and languages of the Caribbean. In his memoir, he provides details of his conversations with Africans whom he encountered and remarked on the expressive forms of the Creole. His record of the English-based Creole spoken in Jamaica for trade purposes provides one of the few intimations to the nature of trade languages of that time. Crow's work also hints at the divide in the language choices of aristocrats of Jamaican society, servants, and slaves in the 18th-century. He also recorded that Creole was not highly regarded by many. While his work is an important contribution to the knowledge of Jamaican Creole's development, his account of events is sometimes questionable, given that his executors edited his

memoir and may have likely altered data. He also wrote the memoir after retirement, which makes the authenticity of his work uncertain at some points. That said, he was described as having a remarkable memory and being very rigorous in his account of events. Crow's descriptions of his interactions with African slaves in Jamaica are relevant to this research as it provides some context on how language might have been shaping the identity of JC speakers in the past and the implications for the four boy participants in this research in the present.

Both historical works highlighted, and studies from other researchers in the Caribbean, show the rich legacy of JC, although, historically within Jamaica, it had little prestige (Alleyne, 2000; Braithwaite, 1971; Cassidy, 1961; Decamp, 1971; Devonish, 1986). For instance, Cassidy's 1961 historical study of English and Jamaican Creole in Jamaica reveals that since the arrival of the first slaves in 1513 and the birth of JC, many of its speakers have been aligned with undesirable traits of being ignorant, immoral and unfit for cultured society. In tracing JC's historical development, Cassidy's work examines the impact of language on identity formation. It shows that mulattoes (off-springs of slaves and white planters), overseers, skilled and domestic slaves' coveted contact with white native speakers of English because it increased their social and language power. Cassidy (1961) further theorized that this was the beginning of language prejudice as the more privileged Jamaicans began to distance themselves from JC and its speakers to maintain their social power. He observed that the language (SJE) of the domestic servants became a source of their identity as "better" than the field slaves as they began to associate more with the planter class. Cassidy's hypothesis is also supported by the works of several other scholars who document the domination of language prejudice in the post-emancipation era and the lingering effects on freed slaves (Arends, 1994; Ngugi Thiong, 1986).

Cassidy's work also offers much insight into JC's development but his claim that JC is a pidgin language created out of a necessity for slaves and whites to communicate, which some now regard as "broken" English, is open to much debate. As renowned creolists, Chaudenson (2000) and Mufwene (2001) state, JC, like any other, should be recognized as a distinct language from the European superstrate. Chaudenson's (2001) and Mufwene's (2001) observations are worthwhile criticisms of Cassidy's work as they highlight the need for proof that the language itself is a broken form of English and not an independent language. Cassidy also fails to explain how he views the pidgin-early creole phase of JC. For instance, was it a dialect of English, with a pidgin emerging in the plantation context, or did it remain a broken form of nonstandard English which developed into Jamaican Creole? Despite Cassidy's work being dated and the gaps that exist, it is still a valuable source on the origins of Jamaican Creole. Moreover, he brought focus to the value of JC to speakers and how it was instrumental in renewing pride among JC speakers. He was a pioneer whose work not only transformed attitudes, but schools' practices and many other Caribbean scholars have sought to continue his work (Bryan, 2004a; Lalla & D'Costa, 1990; Le Page, 1986; Wassink, 1999).

Language attitudes in Jamaica. Following Cassidy's pioneer work, many of the later language and linguistic works coming out of the Caribbean continued to look at JC's influence on speakers and prevailing negative attitudes in the 1960s and beyond. This period brought focus to language reform at a time when attempts were made to have the Jamaican black population acquire English, then considered their native tongue, through the elementary school system (Decamp, 1971; LePage, 1960; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). LePage and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) ground-breaking research work on identity documents the post-independence language identity tensions that existed in the Caribbean and became a staple for discussions on

language and identity among Creole researchers. In a longitudinal research spanning eight years, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller carried out surveys of children's (ages 10-16) use of their dialects as acts of identity and solidarity in five Caribbean territories, including Jamaica, to assess the impact of Creole on their emerging identities. The study revealed that students from all the selected countries used their local dialects (JC in Jamaica's case) to identify with particular groups, which might have been unconscious or conscious. The findings also suggested that Creole was emerging as the vehicle for students' identities.

In their research, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) highlighted the changes in attitudes towards Creole as students demonstrated renewed pride in their local dialects after their territories gained independence. The authors did, however, point out that some language stereotypes, such as Creole speakers being less intelligent, persisted. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) also emphasized the inadequacies of the language policies that existed in schools and noted that they were a hindrance to students' developing a sense of identity. The authors recommended a reassessment of current school practices to ensure that students' native languages were represented in the curriculum. Although Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) were very rigorous in their research processes, at times, their voices over-shadowed those of the children-participants. Despite the researchers' focus on students' identity in school, the students' voices were not prominent in the research. Understandably, survey questions are restrictive in privileging individual voices but it would have been worthwhile to have some personal narratives from students to gain more insights into their lived experiences as Creole speakers. This limited perspective is one of the limitations of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) study, which this research will address. I took deliberate steps to ensure the students' voices drove the

data gathering and analysis processes. In this case, the students' lived experiences were privileged in understanding how JC shaped their identities.

Research on Jamaican Creole in the 21st century shows similar trends of language prejudice and poor language policies (Anderson & McLean, 2014; Bryan, 2010). Beverley Bryan and Hubert Devonish are two of the Jamaican language researchers whose work highlight the challenges Creole-speaking students experience in classrooms. Their collection of works, spanning decades, provides robust accounts of both students' and teachers' experiences in a Creole-speaking environment with a distinct focus on creating bilingual learning environments that are beneficial to both students and teachers. Through various research projects with Creole-speaking students, Bryan challenges post-colonial practices that undermine the efforts of JC speaking students and seeks to work with stakeholders to develop more inclusive language practices. In a 2004 study, Bryan explored teacher attitudes and practice in a Creole-speaking environment to cite best practices for learners. In the study, she video recorded several primary school literacy classes from four inner-city primary schools in Kingston, Jamaica, over 3 days to gather data on teachers' language practices and the implications for students' success in literacy and ELL. The study revealed that teacher-participants were sometimes reluctant to separate themselves from some of the historical language practices that view SJE as the prestigious language and JC as a deficit. However, it also revealed that teachers were making efforts to engage students in rich spoken and written activities that promote competency in both languages and offer opportunities for interaction. The research concluded that more planning was required to meet the needs of students in the classroom who are learning in a Creole-speaking environment. The study recommended that teachers collect background information on students

and start their planning at students' language level so that they can provide sound, effective child-centered learning that is beneficial to all.

In keeping with that study, much of Bryan's work involved working with teachers on rechannelling persistent poor attitudes towards JC with the intent to foster more positive attitudes. One such project was a joint United States Agency for International Development (USAID) undertaking with Jamaicans for Educational Progress in 2012 that brought teachers, students, universities, and other stakeholders together to address issues of poor language practices, methodologies, and policies in schools. In this 3-day summit of discussions, participants examined strategies to promote students' competence in SJE and positive sense of selves as JC speakers. They also looked at ways in which educators and partners can provide structured support for students learning SJE in a Creole-speaking environment. The summit reports revealed that many of the discussants believed explicit instruction in both languages was necessary to build students' confidence and foster awareness of the distinction between the two languages. Further, discussants agreed that immersion in SJE and modelling of the language was critical to students' growth in ELL. The summit concluded that teachers would have to model more positive attitudes toward Creole speakers and devote more time to understanding the language needs of students so they can provide adequate support.

Hubert Devonish and Karen Carpenter have also done extensive work in support of bilingual education in Jamaica and generating positive attitudes towards JC and its speakers. Devonish is one of the most visible JC advocates in the Caribbean and has pioneered several bilingual research projects to support dominant JC speakers' success in school. He collaborated with Karen Carpenter on a Ministry of Education funded project in 2004, to address issues of bilingualism in the Jamaican classroom. The Bilingual Education Project (BEP), as it was

named, was implemented in three public primary schools to track grades 1-4 students' progress in a fully implemented bilingual (JC and SJE) over four years. The programme also assessed the feasibility of teaching in both languages in school. Teachers were provided training in teaching in a bilingual environment, and selected students were taught language arts and literacy in both languages. The programme provided materials, including textbooks, in JC to support students' learning. The research aims included improving students Language Arts and literacy levels and competence in content subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The research later compared the findings from the students in the BEP programme with those who were engaged in traditional forms of instruction to determine levels of improvement. The findings showed that after four years of immersion in the BEP programme, student-participants were showing higher levels of performance in National Grade Four Literacy tests than their counterparts who were involved in traditional classrooms. It also showed that participants had a 4% higher level of literacy in English than non-participants within the three selected schools and proved that it was quite feasible to implement bilingual education programs in schools. The research concluded that a bilingual approach to education in Jamaica was necessary for students' growth in English and overall academic success. The study recommended more diverse language models and policies in schools that support bilingual education, given the proven benefits.

Through their work, the above-mentioned researchers have contributed significantly to the conversation on language and identity in Jamaica and were of importance in informing many of the research processes in this research. Despite the literature on Creole and language identity, it is evident that more work is needed on the origins of Jamaican Creole; languages that influenced its formation; evolving attitudes towards JC and its growth to deepen understanding

of its impact on Jamaican adolescent boys. A more nuanced understanding of JC's formation is relevant in today's context as many Jamaicans are still struggling to understand who they are as JC speakers and where they fit in the Jamaican society and the world. There are many questions still to be answered, and given the limited historical evidence available, some questions may never be answered. That said, these questions need to be raised so Jamaican youths who are still struggling with their sense of language and identity have more opportunities to make sense of who they are as JC speakers.

The Intersections of Gender, Class and Language in Jamaica

One of the questions that have been raised by scholars and educators on many platforms is how to address issues surrounding gender and language use in Jamaican schools. In the last four decades, there has been considerable attention given to language, and gender in Jamaica. The new push in emerging literature to go beyond stereotypical assumptions about how men and women use language, brought more focus to the social and cultural factors impinging on gendered identities and language use in Jamaica. However, while there are several scholarly works on language, class and gender in Jamaica, there are few cited empirical cases that cover the intersections of all three areas of research (Chevannes, 1999; Figueroa, 1996; 2004; Lewis, 1998; Miller, 1986). A review of literature from Caribbean-based academic journals and books revealed even less integration of gender, class, and language in research studies, and even fewer studies on boys. As such, given the limited research on working-class boys' use of language in identity formation, some sections of the review focus on men's language and identity formation. These sections on men's language are just as relevant in this research as research shows that boys' language often reflects that of the men in the Jamaican context (Lewis, 2007; Bucknor & James, 2014).

The book *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities: An Introduction* edited by Rhoda Reddock (2004) offers a comprehensive review of the convolutions of Caribbean men's language and identities in a colonized context. In this collection of research studies and other scholarly works from Caribbean writers, the contributors critically examine a myriad of social and educational factors impacting gendered identities, specifically masculine identities in the region. They also offer insights into the complexities of gender in the Caribbean and the impact on young men and women. Using a combination of social theory, empirical research, autobiographies, and reflections, Caribbean scholars interrogate Caribbean masculine identities from the perspective of education, performance, peer, ethnicity, class, and other group relations. The volume is divided into four sections, with each section exploring a different aspect of masculinity. Section one theorizes Caribbean masculinities, while section two focuses on gender socialization, educational performance, and peer group relations. Section three explores class, ethnicity and notions of masculinity, while section four examines fields of literature that challenge masculine representations.

Odette Parry's (2004) discussions on some of her findings from research she did 1994-1995 (full report in Parry, 2000) is one of the more extensive empirical studies on gender and education in this book and the Caribbean. Her research has helped shaped other research in the field in the last decade, partly because of the insights it provides into youths' gendered language practices. In a study lasting over a year, Parry examined ways in which gendered identities were being forged in schools and the role this played in boys' and girls' success. The researcher collected extensive data from fourth form students in eight high schools in Jamaica, four high schools in Barbados, and three in St. Vincent. The participating institutions included rural and urban, single-sex, and coeducational schools. Of the eight Jamaican schools which took part in

the research, two were all-male schools, two were all-female schools, and four were coeducational, which allowed for a wide cross-section of views to be considered. The study yielded substantive data with a total of 110 interviews and 668 questionnaires completed. Parry and her research team observed fourth form students in their classes and carried out ethnographic-styled unstructured interviews with students, headteachers, guidance counsellors, and fourth form teachers of English A, biology, and physics. One of the main findings of the research was that both educators and students believed “boys needed to be masculine in school” (Parry, 2004, p.177). This meant doing certain subjects like technical drawing, physics, electrical technology, and speaking manly and acting within the confines of their expected gender roles. The research revealed that educators were complicit in some of the unhealthy masculine practices of boys. For example, some headteachers and counsellors admitted to “censuring” boys attitudes and behaviours they considered “effeminate,” “girlish,” or “sissy-like,” which might have encouraged homophobia (Parry, 2004, p. 179). The research cited a correlation between educators’ actions and anti-feminine attitudes that were common among male respondents who believed it was important that they did not appear “girly” in any of their choices in school, be it speech, dress or subject.

The research also suggested that girls’ desire to be with older boys or men seemed to have been contributory factors to boys’ stereotypical masculine practices as they acted in ways they thought were sexually appealing to girls. It cited this rejection of male students by their female peers as a contributory factor to some boys’ “hard,” “macho,” and “masculine” attitudes that ran contrary to the academic ethos of the school (Parry, 2004, p. 179). Some teacher respondents were also concerned that male teachers in schools were reinforcing traditional male roles that conflict with positive masculine identities. For instance, the researcher noted that male

teachers were notably absent in arts subjects, especially English, and perpetuate gender stereotypical attitudes towards the subject, such as it is for girls. It also found that boys displayed similar attitudes and avoided arts-based subjects. Parry (2004) concluded that in exploring the issue of gendered identities in schools, it is important to recognize that “masculinities and femininities are multiple and diverse and are differentially experienced by students” (p.182). She recommended more focus in schools and at home on developing positive gendered identities among all students, not just boys.

Although Parry’s (2004) research provides significant insights into the gendered perspectives of students across the Caribbean, there are a few areas that require closer scrutiny. One significant gap that stood out was the failure to highlight the differences in gendered practices among boys of different social classes. This gap is significant because not all boys from all social groups assert masculine identities in similar ways. As the author herself pointed out, “gender is diverse and experienced differently by different students,” thus it would have been worthwhile to have more demographical data on students (p. 182). For example, in Jamaica, stereotypical displays of masculine identity are not so prevalent among middle and upper-class boys in schools. A closer examination of practices among different sub-groups is needed to provide a more nuanced understanding of how some boys’ masculine practices were shaping their identity. It is important not to treat boys’ language as uniform and existing outside of the social boundaries of society. In contrast, this research considers differential masculine processes impacting boys from a working-class background to contextualize experiences.

There are scholarly works coming out of Jamaica that do distinguish gendered language practices among social groups. For example, Clarke’s (2007) multi-case ethnographic study investigated boys’ perceptions of their gendered identity. The research involving 30 boys (ages

8-10), two teachers, and 12 parents from different social backgrounds at a primary school in Jamaica, assessed the boys' perceptions of their gendered identities in school and how teachers' and parents' gender beliefs were influencing their perceptions. The research used interviews and observations to collect the data. In response to the research question, what are boys' perceptions of their gender identity, the research showed that boys believed they should act in ways that align with stereotypically gendered practices in their schools and communities. The study also showed that teachers and parents were influential in these views. It reported that working-class parents and some teachers had very traditional views about gender and gender roles. For them, boys were to display expected masculine behaviours at home and school. These included speaking, dressing, and playing within the confines of their gender and refraining from "acting like a girl" (p. 17). The study also reported that as a result, the boys' identities were tenuously intertwined with hegemonic masculine practices that they thought were necessary to assert their masculinity. The research correlates the boys' early identification of masculine dominance with parents' and teachers' gender beliefs and practices as many of the boys seemed compliant with their expected masculine behaviours. Clarke (2007) also reported that some of the boys' masculine identities seemed to be defined by parents' expectations that they would avoid perceived feminine behaviors and act like boys. Some of the boys indicated that they did not wish to be a girl. Clarke (2007) reported:

Not only do these boys identify themselves as masculine, they nearly all subscribe to the hard core brand of masculinity. They believe that boys must be "courageous", physically and emotionally "tough, rough", and shun "feminine" behaviours ("...do not behave the girl way and stoosh up yourself...and shake your bottom."). In other words, boys' gender identity is in opposition to being feminine): "don't behave like a girl"; "don't hug man";

“don’t call your mama (when in trouble)”; “don’t play with girls’ toys”; “don’t laugh like a girl”; “don’t dress like a girl”; choose masculine careers, “doctor not nurse.” (p.141)

He also observed that the boys policed the language and behaviors of their peers and would readily point out behaviour they thought was effeminate. The study further showed that although some teachers claimed to have a gender-equitable approach in their classrooms, it was observed that the expectations and treatment of boys were different from those of girls as boys were often viewed from deficit positions. Clarke (2007) concluded that parents’ and teachers’ beliefs and practices were not compatible with ensuring the boys’ success in school and their development of healthier masculine identities. Based on the results of his research, Clarke (2007) recommended a review of gender policies in education and the implementation of teacher education programmes to deepen knowledge and create greater awareness of gender issues and inclusion. He also suggested finding ways to use popular culture to shift the current negative image of manliness and have more nuanced conversations on gender and masculinity in the Jamaican context.

Clarke’s (2007) work provides useful insight into perceived views of boys’ gender roles. It also provided a platform for the participants to be actively engaged in discussions on gender roles and expectations. That said, there are some gaps in the research. First, given the large number of boys who participated in the study, it did not allow for an in-depth look at individual perspectives, as only the boys’ collective perspectives were privileged. A larger population did not allow for differing views, contradictions and a focus on boys who did not conform to parents’ and teachers’ gender expectations. Further, there is a need for greater in-depth probing into the gendered practices of the boys. The research needed a more diverse inquiry into gender practices. It seemed to have taken a linear approach in tackling gender issues, and so the focus

was on stereotypical masculine practices, while masculinized femininity or feminized masculinity were not explored. Considering that Clarke (2007) recommended more nuanced conversations on gender issues in school, closer scrutiny of the complexities of gender identities in the Jamaican context would be helpful to educate teachers and parents on ways to create awareness, and embrace and support different forms of gendered practices outside of stereotypical gender roles.

There is research within the Caribbean that addresses some of the gaps in Clarke's study. For instance, Linden Lewis' body of work on Caribbean masculinities gives focus to the multifaceted and contradictory nature of language and masculine identities in the Caribbean, especially among working-class men and boys. In several of his works on the marginalization of the Caribbean man, Lewis contends that social stratification is key to understanding language use among men in Jamaica (Lewis, 2003; 2007). His body of work documents the power of language in different contexts, citing the struggle of the working-class man whose language (JC) restricts him economically while offering great power within his community. He argues that although some men are powerful in some contexts, not all men experience power. He explains that while there are some marginalized men in the Jamaican society, there are also many powerful men; that is, men who dominate in many educational, political, and business sectors. This research situates itself within Lewis' perspectives that there are men with collective power and men who are powerless within some constructs, and so individual experiences have to be privileged to understand the subtleties of boys' experiences. Lewis (2003, 2007) also concedes that despite ongoing research on young men, masculinities, and identities, there is a wealth of information yet to be unraveled. He calls for more focus on the social, economic, linguistic, and psychological factors impinging on young men's evolving masculine identities and finding ways

to generate more positive self-images. This research recognizes that there is a need for more in-depth analysis to assess the historical, socio-cultural, and linguistic factors imposing on boys' developing gendered identities. Besides, methodologically, the research available on gender and language needs to be more dynamic in looking at the factors that determine how language performance transforms over time. However the scholarly works highlighted show that gendered identities are contentious, multifaceted, flexible, and all boys cannot be cast in one language situation as it relates to their gendered identities. There is much scope to explore different facets of working-class boys' identities and language to draw more informed conclusions.

Boys and Academic Performance in School

There has been a great deal of ongoing research on male academic underachievement in Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean over the last three decades. Academic underachievement is generally conceptualized as the difference between a student's expected achievement and his or her actual achievement (Clarke, 2005; Siegel, 1999). The last half-century has seen immense change in boys' and girls' performance in schools. Before the 1960s, academic excellence was largely male-dominated with girls having limited access to education. Then, research focused on creating equity within schools and societies with a particular interest in leveling girls' access and academic performance with that of boys (Figueroa, 2004). However, this has changed significantly in the last three decades as gender dynamics in education have undergone significant shifts. Now, girls are outperforming boys in most subject areas in Jamaican schools (Figueroa, 2004; Thompson, 2017). As such, their trajectory into tertiary education is much higher than that of boys. Consequently, the ratio of men to women in tertiary level institutions in Jamaica continues to decline with girls showing significantly higher educational outcomes (Figueroa, 2004; Thompson, 2017). Much of the Caribbean scholarly work on educational

achievements seem to be expressing deep concern for boys' lack of success in schools and the increasing trends in poor attendance and language success (Figueroa, 2004; Parry, 2000, 2004; Thompson, 2017).

One highlighted area of concern about boys' performance is that there might be too much focus on their poor performance when compared to girls, while efforts should be made to determine why fewer boys are reaching their full potential (D. Plummer, 2010). These concerns are not unique to the Jamaican context as there is just as much documented research in developed countries that show similar trends and concerns that boys are underachieving in education systems (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Francis, 2005). Although there is mounting evidence that the educational performance of boys is declining, not much research delves into the deeper meanings and dimensions behind the data on boys' underachievement. The rhetoric in many of the scholarly works read, both in the Caribbean and North America, seems to be "boys' flight from academic achievement" (D. Plummer, 2010, p. 1). Much of the Caribbean works seem preoccupied with boys' hyper-masculine practices contrasting with the academic culture of schools and the classroom no longer appealing to boys (Figueroa, 2004; Parry, 2004; D. Plummer, 2010; Thompson, 2017). One of the dominant theoretical perspectives among the literature on boys' underachievement is the issue of hegemonic masculinity in schools. However, this research challenges current notions that boys' underachievement is mostly a casualty of hegemonic masculinity. Instead, it advances the theoretical perspective that gender stereotypes, male marginalization, inequitable gender practices in school, and student-teacher relationships are significant factors in boys' success. Following the review of literature, this research seeks to advance a shift from the focus on boys as under-achievers and problematic to a more nuanced look at the issue of gender and education in an Anglophone Caribbean context. The current study

will draw on empirical research, reports and scholarly work from the Caribbean to offer more extensive insights into underlying social, educational and linguistic factors impinging on boys' success in school.

Gender equitable approaches in schools. Researchers have advanced various explanations for the differences between the academic performance of boys versus girls. One theoretical perspective that is particularly useful to this research is the view that the lack of an equitable gender approach in Jamaican schools is a factor in boys' academic performance (Clarke, 2007; Parry, 2004; Plummer, 2010). While girls' academic success and achievements should not be diminished in any way, research continues to show that there is inequity in boys' and girls' experiences in the classroom, in particular, English Language Learning (Bryan, 2004a, 2011; Clarke, 2007, Thompson, 2017). Miller (1991) and other theorists advance that the behaviours and performance of boys in Jamaican schools are unduly targeted, and this has contributed to their marginalization and poor performance (Parry, 2004; Clarke, 2007). Miller (1991) further argues that boys' poor academic performance is attributable to male marginalization in society, which emerges as a tool of social control. Miller's broad view of male marginalization is questionable in a Jamaican context, where men dominate and hold much of the power in most sectors. This research, however, recognizes that some boys are marginalized in school.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) 2011 report provides some clarity on the issue of marginalization in its documentation of boys' performance in Jamaican schools. The report documents findings from a two-day roundtable discussion with scholars and educators across Jamaica on Jamaican boys' gendered identities and success in schools. Two primary schools' gender-based intervention programmes served as the models for

discussions during the two-day seminar. The summary report cited gender stereotypes and teacher expectations as contributing factors to boys underachieving in school. It reported that gender stereotypes reinforced the idea that boys were not great ELL students, less likely to settle down and needed more social management, which contributed to poor attitudes about boys' capabilities. The findings also showed that participants thought unduly targeting boys through gender intervention programmes could be harmful to their progress in school. Instead, participants recommended more balanced approaches that included increasing male presence in schools, having male teachers as mentors, and more materials that reflected positive messages about boys and girls. The report concluded that while boys' performance is a continued concern, more efforts should be made towards improving the process of and environment for teaching and learning that benefits both boys and girls.

In another study on boys' academic performance, Thompson's (2017) reviewed performance in regional Caribbean Examination Council exams and provided compelling evidence of inequity in boys' participation in English A. The study was done in two phases. In phase one, the researcher examined the results of Jamaican students' examination grades in five subject areas in the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) over the period 2011-2016 to assess trends in boys' and girls' performance. Then, in phase 2, the researcher interviewed 160 grades 10 and 11 students' (54% female and 46% males) to determine if there were differences between boys' assessment of the learning environment and that of girls, the students' perception of student-teacher relationships and how these were impacting their confidence in learning. The sample consisted of 40 students from a rural all-boys high school, 40 students from an urban all-girls traditional school, and 40 students from a co-ed non-traditional high school. In phase one of the study, the CSEC results showed that girls' performance was

superior to boys in all five subject areas in regional exams. However, it also showed that the number of boys who participated in CSEC exams was significantly less than girls, especially in English A.

Data from Thompson's (2017) research showed that boys were underrepresented in English A. It showed that in 2011 27052 girls sat English A compared to 17519 boys across the region. Similar trends are shown throughout the years, with an average of over 6000 more girls sitting the exam each year. The girls also outperform the boys each year. Each year the girls show an average of 40% higher attainment of grade 1. Based on the results of the CSEC exams, Thompson (2017) contends that lower performance is compounded by under-representation in academic undertakings. In terms of the findings in the second phase of the research, it showed that girls had more "positive assessments of their relationships with principals and teachers than did boys" (p. 69). Further, it showed significant differences in boys' and girls' perceptions of their empowerment in schools. While 65% of girls felt empowered, only 34% of boys felt that way. The study showed a significant contrast of 6:1 of girls feeling that their teachers encouraged their self-confidence. For Thompson (2017), this was an indicator that some students felt excluded or marginalized. The findings in Thompson's (2017) research are also supportive of Miller's theory that social control in schools was marginalizing some boys. He concluded that the performance of girls and boys was relational.

Teacher-student relationships and academic performance. Teacher-student relations are also hypothesized as one of the contributing factors to the gaps in gender performance in schools (Evans, 1999; Plummer, 2010; Thompson, 2017). Hyacinth Evans' 1999 research is a substantial study on student-teacher relationships in the classroom that examined students' gendered perceptions of factors contributing to their success in school. Through a mixed-method

approach, the researcher carried out a survey of 58 schools and an ethnographic study of a small number of schools over nine months. Questionnaires were distributed to 3,719 grades 9 and 11 students in four types of secondary schools, comprehensive, technical, all age, and junior high schools. The research used interviews, questionnaires, and end-of-year results of students' performance to inform the findings. The study highlighted the nature of teacher-student interactions, the adverse effects of streaming (grouping students according to academic performance), gender coding of appropriate behaviours, and the emphasis on testing as areas of serious concern for boys' success in schools. The research also noted that teachers' bias against boys impacted their engagement in schools. It found that boys who engaged in negative interactions with teachers were more likely to attend school less frequently than girls, which affected their performance in most subject areas, including English. It also reported that teachers thought boys were over-represented in the lower streams and were more likely to have negative experiences in the education system. The study concluded that boys and girls exist in a gender-coded school environment and differ on almost every measure examined in the study. It recommended that the Ministry of Education take steps to create a gender-fair environment that ensures equity for boys and girls, as well as an environment where attention is paid to students' emotional and social well-being.

Evans' (1999) comprehensive study is critical in highlighting some of the gender disparities that exist in schools. It demonstrates that schools do not merely reflect the dominant gender ideology of the wider society but actively produce gender divisions. Overall, it illustrates the gravity of the problem of gender dichotomies in Jamaica.

Conclusion

The review of the relevant literature has uncovered some of the historical trends in pervading language attitudes in Jamaica and the impact on its people. It has also revealed that the intersections of gender, class, and language are significant to the emerging identities of JC speakers. It looked at how practices and ideologies within the society shape the education of Jamaican Creole-speaking students, and finally, it explored the literature on boys' academic performance in schools and the implications for monolingual JC speakers. While the studies have acknowledged that boys' performance in school is of great concern, overall research and reports need to address some of the underlying issues of boys' success in schools. The highlighted studies have made significant contributions to the understanding of gender in education but it is certainly worthwhile to explore further how socio-economic status impacts language attitudes in Jamaica and the implications for JC speakers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

The following chapter outlines the research methodology I used in my 3-month, qualitative study. First, I will present a brief description of the qualitative paradigm informing this research and the rationale for choosing this framework. Next, I will examine my role as the researcher within this research to create a context for how I collected the data. Then I will provide a rationale for the use of narrative inquiry and case study approaches. Finally, I will provide detailed descriptions of the research site, participants, and the data collection processes.

A Qualitative Paradigm

A qualitative paradigm was used in this research because it privileges a social constructivist approach that captures multiple perspectives, secures thick descriptions, and allows for in-depth investigation of participants' lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). A qualitative approach was better suited to this research than a quantitative approach for four main reasons: (1) it allowed for participants' authentic voices to be showcased; (2) it privileged their lived experiences; (3) it contextualized understanding within natural settings; and (4) it allowed for an in-depth understanding of participants' use of JC and how this shaped their identities. A qualitative paradigm aligned with the purposes and aims of this research. First, the primary purpose of this research was to create a platform for the voices of JC-speaking boys from inner-city communities to be heard on the issues of language and identity in Jamaica. A qualitative approach, therefore, facilitated an in-depth inquiry of the boys' narratives anchored in graphic novels and video diaries that showcased their authentic voices. It empowered the boys to share their stories and removed the silenced that has oppressed them and many marginalized groups.

Within the qualitative frame, the participants were creators of their knowledge, and their narratives allowed their voices to shine through.

Second, the research aimed to explore the collective lived experiences of the boys, and a qualitative approach recognizes that participants' perceptions of their realities are anchored in their social experiences. While a quantitative approach would have been restrictive in sharing stories and generating a more nuanced understanding of participants' lived experiences, the qualitative approach allowed me to use a wide range of data gathering strategies such as graphic novels, interviews, and observations to deepen understanding of the boys' lived realities. It also facilitated an openness in the data gathering process that allowed the boys to expand on their stories through interview responses, video diaries, and graphic novels. More importantly, this approach allowed me to understand who they were, why they acted the way they did and their feelings about certain situations, which allowed for greater transparency in the ownership of stories (Adkins, 2002; Day, 2012).

Third, another goal of this research was to have a more nuanced understanding of the boys' language use in natural settings. This understanding required extensive observations, which a qualitative paradigm supports. The qualitative approach allowed me to engage in naturalistic inquiries through observations and maintain the natural context of the boys' use of JC in and outside of school. Through qualitative lenses, I was able to examine the boys' use of language in social contexts within natural settings and explore how these impacted their gendered identities.

Finally, all the reasons highlighted above worked seamlessly to deepen my knowledge of the boys' language experiences and gendered practices. This qualitative study, done over a period of three months, allowed me ample time to be in the participants' natural settings, share in

their language learning experiences, and collaborate with them to understand the phenomenon of boys' use of JC. The three months I spent with the boys provided great insights into what they value, how they learn, and what motivates them to succeed.

To conclude, an interpretive perspective was central to the research study, as it drove the research questions, strategies, methods, and the type of data that was collected. The interpretive perspective also supports qualitative research and allowed for the analysis of social reality within social contexts. That said, a methodology is as strong as the processes the researcher uses (Riessman, 2008). And so, as a qualitative researcher, I recognized the importance of being transparent in my methods and addressing my biases as part of the research process to ensure my research meets the highest standards. To do this, I reflected on my role as the researcher and how my philosophical assumptions impacted research decisions.

Qualitative Beliefs Underpinning the Research

My decision to conduct a qualitative research for this study is grounded in my philosophical assumptions, which also influenced how I conducted the research. The following sections describe the philosophical assumptions I brought to the research and how these fit within a qualitative paradigm.

Ontological beliefs. As a qualitative researcher, I embrace the social constructivist notion that multiple realities exist, and as individuals, we co-construct our realities within our social worlds (Creswell, 2013). I believe that individuals make sense of meanings in context and so it was necessary to spend extended time with the participants to deepen my knowledge of how they perceive their world. This view also contributed significantly to my decision to conduct extensive observations, open-ended interviews, and allowed the participants to use creative, multiliterate avenues (graphic novels and video diaries) to share their stories. These sources

allowed for multiple representations. I also chose to write this study in a narrative, informal style that allows for multiple voices to be heard and give focus to each participant's story.

Axiological beliefs. It is my responsibility as a qualitative researcher to acknowledge the assumptions I bring into this research and how these inevitably impacted how I collected my data. There were two main assumptions and values underpinning this research: voice and representation. First, as a teacher of English for over 14 years in Jamaica, I entered the research with the assumption that schools should value all student voices and languages. I believe that for students to be genuinely successful in schools, teachers need to embrace bilingualism and value the language they bring into the classroom, thus the focus on JC and SJE. As a fluent Jamaican Creole speaker and advocate for bilingualism in schools, I have a deep interest in exploring and promoting Jamaican Creole's use in schools to foster more positive language identities. This view influenced my decision to have the boys write and speak freely in whatever language they chose throughout the research. I was keen to employ research methodologies and strategies that provided a platform for the boys to showcase their authentic voices, for example, their creation of graphic novels and video diaries. My intimate knowledge of hegemonic language ideologies in schools helped shaped this perspective. I recognized that dominant JC-speaking students' academic efforts are sometimes thwarted by teachers' monolingual language attitudes and this needed to change.

Second, as a JC activist and youth advocate working with at-risk youths for over a decade, I believe authentic and accurate representation is critical in conversations on gender, identity, and school success. I believe students from the margins, particularly inner-city youths, possess vast knowledge that can transform poor language policies. I am concerned by the silence they experience, and I believe if given the opportunity, they can contribute significantly to the

discussions on language, identity, and success in schools. An openness to all voices aligns well with the qualitative paradigm, which encourages researchers to value participants' ideas and perspectives and continue to learn from them throughout the process.

My positioning within the study. I was conscious of my role as a Jamaican mother of two boys, a teacher of English and an advocate of JC, and how this would impact how the data was collected and interpreted in this research. I frequently engaged in reflexivity to assess how my positioning and power within the relationship were influencing the voices to ensure that I actively minimized my input in those situations. Considering that I was the lens through which the data was gathered and interpreted, I worked rigorously through the research process to ensure I did not impose my voice on the boys' stories or silence them through misrepresentation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To limit misrepresentation, I relied heavily on the boys' perceptions of their experiences. I collaborated with them to construct meanings together, actively listened to their stories, and created an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. To echo Day (2012), reflexivity is necessary to combat the personal biases researchers take to the research processes and allows for transparency in how these might have influenced the research process. That said, while my personal story, familiarity with the local context, race, and language are similar to those of the participants, there were distinct differences in our background. For instance, as a middle class, female teacher and researcher in the boys' communities, I was a stranger and treated as one at the onset.

Despite being Jamaican, I was unfamiliar with daily life in an inner-city community and have never been in any of the communities the boys resided in. I was openly scrutinized by family and residents, which was particularly uncomfortable in the first couple of days of this research. Further, I taught at a rural high school with students from working, middle and upper-

class backgrounds whose language experiences seemed different from those of the participants. That is, my rural students spoke both JC and SJE, but the complexities of gender and JC's use did not seem so prevalent among the boys. In sum, I was viewing the boys' lived realities through distinct middle-class lenses. But, my outsider-insider status was a positive attribute to the research (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; McNess, Arthur & Crossley, 2015). From an insider's perspective, I examined the data as a mother of two boys, emerging scholar and teacher for over 14 years with intimate knowledge of language policies and practices in Jamaica and provide a more nuanced understanding of the boys' stories (Day, 2012). On the other hand, I examined their graphic works, interviews, and video diaries from the perspective of an outsider to their lived experiences, so I had a more distanced view of the data (Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002).

Ethical considerations. The ethical procedures I employed during the research were also reflective of a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to consider how their research can "open up avenues for participation in social change" (Creswell, 2014, p. 72). Thus, for this research, one of the aims was to empower the boys to be the voices of change in their schools and communities through their creative works. After the research was completed, I established a mentorship programme with the boys and created opportunities for them to share their works and success with other students. Authentic representation is central in qualitative research. Black et al.'s (2015) challenge to researchers to make children co-inquirers instead of silencing and making them invisible, weighed heavily on me during the research process. The authors contend that too often children are absent from research discussions and so challenge researchers to give more voice to them (Black et al., 2015). I felt compelled to respond to this challenge, and so I made sure to consult with the participants throughout my analysis of the data to increase accurate representations and authentic voices.

In tandem with the university's ethical procedures, I got permission from all relevant groups and participants before engaging in the research process. No contact was made with the school, principal, parents, or students before I got ethics approval from the University of Victoria. Although working with youths can sometimes be problematic, given that the boys in this research were over the age of 13, the consent process went smoothly. They were able to read and give their own consent to participate, which removed the extra layer of having parents give their consent for them to do so. The parents, however, had to give me permission to contact the child as it was frowned upon in Jamaican society for an adult of the opposite sex to meet with a child/adolescent. I also made sure my colleague scanned signed consents from both the boys and their parents to me before I established chat groups (discussed further below). I was particularly careful with the data during and after the research process, and the participants remained anonymous in all discussions and presentations.

To conclude, my view that participants are experts in their realities shaped the qualitative frame used in this research and informed my data collection processes. Through a social constructivist frame, I collaborated with participants and sought their knowledge of their lived realities to inform conversations on boys and language in the Jamaican context. And finally, I actively reflected on their stories and engaged in reflexivity to ensure their voices were prominent throughout this research. Further, I engaged in ethical data collection that valued the participants' privacy and anonymity. In the upcoming sections, I will document my research processes to demonstrate the rigour I employed to ensure the participants' voices were privileged throughout.

Research Design

In keeping with a qualitative approach, I used narrative inquiry strategies to inform the case studies of the boys' use of JC. I used a braided approach to strengthen the data collection processes and increase the reliability of the findings. As Denzin and Lincoln (2013) state, "no single method can capture the subtle variations in ongoing human experience," (p. 24). And so, in this research, the multi-method approach utilized through different data gathering techniques was used to capture the boys' competing voices, perspectives, and differing contexts while also exploring the similarities and patterns that existed. In this case, the multiple case studies of the boys' language experiences were grounded in their narratives, which provided nuanced understandings of their experiences.

Why Narrative Inquiry?

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) cogitate "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (p. 2). A narrative inquiry approach was my first consideration for this study as I thought about the best way to describe the storied lives of participants. Several leading theorists in the field of narrative inquiry influenced my decision to use this approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). These theorists describe narrative inquiry as an opportunity to provide more nuanced, robust stories of participants' lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). This methodological perspective privileges voice, representation and collaboration, and aligned well with the social constructivist approach framing this research. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) explain that from an interpretive perspective, the researcher becomes an "interpretive and narrative bricoleur (quilt maker)" who pieces

together participants' stories to reveal something new that has been obscured (p. 8). In applying this methodological framing in my research, participants were given opportunities to present new, unobscured, contradictory experiences and perceptions that challenged the truth surrounding their language use and experiences in Jamaican schools. This re-storying of the boys' narrated lives revealed hidden complexities of inner-city boys' language practices that were obscured in the Jamaican media and the Ministry of Education's representations. This approach was particularly valuable in the Jamaican context, where historically, story-telling forms are used as powerful tools in the resistance against hegemonic colonial practices. Further, a narrative inquiry approach facilitated the use of various multimodal forms of data collection that allowed for detailed, lively, and layered descriptions of participants' experiences.

The narrative inquiry strategies, interviews, video diaries, and graphic works were also useful in extending the narrator-listener relationship between the boys and myself (Clandinin, 2006). They allowed for more conversations and listening that further built trust, which led to the revelation of more authentic, rich data (Chase, 2005). I also built on McAdams, Josselson, and Leiblich's (2006) suggestion to use narrative inquiry to respond to key "how" questions in my research. In this case, as I planned for the data gathering process, I continually asked myself how each tool will provide the information I need. For example, how will the interviews reveal data about the boys' emerging identities or how will the use of graphic works extend my understanding of their lived language experiences? Through these questions and triangulation of sources, I was able to increase the reliability of the data I collected. However, to successfully dig beneath the layers of each boy's story of language, gender, and identity, their narratives had to be anchored in multiple case studies.

Using narratives to inform case studies: A braided approach. The ontological and epistemological frames shaping this research suggest that reality is co-constructed, so the boys' narratives were critical in informing the case studies (Creswell, 2013). As I considered how to "mediate the stories into being," multiple case studies proved most useful to reveal the tensions, complexities, and solidity among the four boys' competing voices (Kim, 2015, p. 119). As Duff (2014) explains, case studies "offers both the researcher and reader a window into another person's experiences with language" (p. 237). In this case, each boy's narratives: their interviews, graphic novel, and video diaries were important in gaining insights into his unique language experiences and how these were shaping his identity and attitudes toward ELL. My decision to conduct multiple case studies was also grounded in Smith's (2012) premise that individual stories are invaluable in research that seeks to present multiple perspectives.

Further, Yin (2009a) explains that multiple case studies and multidimensional perspectives are instrumental in strengthening research findings as the researcher can cross-check data to verify solidity or contradictions with hypotheses. He also noted that multiple cases make it easier for other researchers to replicate each case study to confirm or refute hypotheses and findings. Duff and Anderson (2015) view that case studies are particularly valuable when working with L2 learners solidified my decision to conduct multiple case studies. The authors explain that multiple case studies privilege multiple voices and allow for deeper understanding of L2 learner experiences and the challenges they face. These case studies were necessary to explore each boy's language experiences as a case study for its own sake. That said, I also look at the phenomenon of their language as JC-speaking inner-city youths as a single case. This collective view was necessary for a broader discussion of the group's experiences as boys from low-income families.

The Research Site

I conducted the research at an inner-city high school, located in (old) Kingston, Jamaica and the two adjoining communities in which the participants resided. NM (renamed for anonymity) is a reasonably large, recently upgraded high school with a population of approximately 1500 hundred students and 90 teachers. The school is nestled between homes and businesses in the bustling Maxfield community and caters to grades 7-13 students. It ranks on the lower end of the academic achievement scale in the country. The school has a large population of students from working-class families and is home to many students on the lower end of the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) tracking into high school. The school's population is quite homogenous, with many of the students being monolingual JC speakers from low-income families. The adjacent communities have similar demography with mostly JC- speaking, low-income families. Members of both communities experience high levels of unemployment and struggle with limited access to good health care and other amenities (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009). As a result, many of the students are a part of PATHE (Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education), an initiative by the Jamaican government to provide economic support to families in need to boost children's attendance and participation in schools.

Population

The population for this study was 486 boys between 14 and 17 who were ELL students at an inner-city high school in Kingston, Jamaica, and 14 teachers in the Department of English. This population was targeted because it represented the demography of inner-city youths who were under scrutiny in Jamaica's national debate on boys' poor performance on English Language regional exams.

Selecting Focus Students

I was able to purposively recruit six boys and two teachers for this research with the help of a former colleague who is a teacher and football (soccer) coach at the targeted school. Purposive sampling was necessary to identify specific participants who were likely to provide the data relevant to my research questions (Oliver, 2006). I relied on my colleague's familiarity with boys and their families to find participants who met the specific criteria of being dominant JC speakers from working-class families in an inner-city community. As a teacher of electrical technology, metalwork, and coach of the school's football team, my colleague had daily contact with the age group of boys (14-17) I was targeting, and so he was able to identify the ones I needed. He knew who were dominant JC speakers because of daily interactions, and he was aware of their place of residence because he sometimes visited with parents. As a coach, he also had a close relationship with several of the boys' families and was aware of their socio-economic status. My colleague also knew all the teachers at NM and was able to identify two ELL teachers who taught the six boys and had some insights into their attitudes toward ELL and their performance. Initially, six boys were selected to participate, but only four completed the study. One boy withdrew in August 2018 after the first interview due to a family illness that hindered his participation. The second boy turned up at our initial meetings, but failed to respond to group conversations, complete tasks or showed up for any interviews. Eventually, I had to remove him from the pool of participants. This did not affect my study as I chose to work with more boys than I needed in anticipation of possible withdrawals. With my colleague's help, I was also able to find two additional boys and two teachers who met the criteria to participate in a pilot study. I tested the interview questions with participants in the pilot study and made adjustments before working with the actual participants of this research. I also tested my instructions for the video diaries and had the pilot study participants create a sample.

The Participants

Sam. Sam was a 17-year-old outspoken and confident Jamaican boy of African descent who attended NM high school. He was a grade 11 English language learner and a senior student representative. His courses included electrical technology, chemistry, and geography. He was a fluent JC speaker who sometimes used SJE. He resided in the Franklin Town inner-city community with both his parents and two siblings. At 5 feet nine inches, he towered above most of his classmates and his parents, but he was a sociable, cheerful boy who was usually surrounded by several peers.

John. John was a quiet 17-year-old grade 11 student at NM high school. He was an ELL student of African descent and a dominant JC speaker who sometimes spoke SJE. He was born and raised in a large working-class family of eight siblings and lived in a single-parent home in an inner-city community. He was a robust, tall boy who was soft-spoken, kind, and sensitive. He also shared a good relationship with his peers and his family. His courses included electrical technology, chemistry and physics.

Joe. Joe was a 16-year-old grade 10 student of African descent who attended NM high school. He was a dominant JC speaker who spoke some SJE. He lived in an inner-city community in a single-parent, working-class home with one sibling. He was a quiet and shy boy who showed a keen interest in music, especially writing songs. He was tall and sturdy and stood above his peers and mother. His courses included electrical technology, technical drawing, and Spanish.

Peter. Peter was a quiet, confident, dominant JC speaking grade 11 student at NM high school. He was a 17-year-old resident of African descent who grew up in a single-parent working-class home with seven siblings. He was medium built. He was a senior student leader

and a member of the debating club. His interests included playing football and watching anime. His majors included electrical technology, physics, and technical drawing.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the methodological, ontological, and axiological assumptions underpinning this research and demonstrated the value of conducting a qualitative research. It provided details of the narrative inquiry and case study strategies and finally outlined who the primary participants of this research were, how they were identified, and what made them ideal candidates. The descriptions of the research site and the participants provided insights into the school's demography and background information on the boys that will be useful in later discussions. These descriptions also set the stage for the upcoming discussion on my research processes, as I entered the field and engaged with the participants.

Chapter 4: The Research Process

Implementation of the Study

The following sections provide specific details about the implementation of this study. First, I provide an overview of how I entered into the field for research, then I describe my data collection processes and finally, a reflection on how I engaged the data for analysis.

Entering the Field

Getting to know the participants as people was crucial to my research and so my research processes started with establishing connections with the participants. I knew before I started the search for participants that I wanted to work with inner-city boys. I have always felt as a Jamaican woman that these youths were only made visible when the media and members of the government wanted to demonstrate all that is wrong with our society or highlight all their efforts to enlighten the ways of the poor. I felt that boys from inner-city communities had compelling stories that needed to be told in Jamaica to change the narrative on inner-city youths, language, and academic performance. I am from a rural community in Jamaica, so I was not familiar with many inner-city schools or principals. To establish contact with a school, I enlisted the help of a former colleague, as I mentioned earlier, who was teaching at an inner-city school in Kingston, and he agreed to connect me with his principal. In June 2018, he organized an online meeting with the principal for me to sensitize her to my research study and get her consent for me to recruit participants at the school. After the principal granted permission for me to contact students and teachers, I provided my colleague with the established criteria for participants.

From the population of 486 boys and 90 teachers, he recruited six boys who were dominant Jamaican Creole speakers from working-class families and two of their teachers from the Department of English. He then gave the six selected boys the information and consent letters I drafted to take home to parents. The letters informed the parents of my study and requested their consent for me to make contact with their sons via WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype in June 2018. My colleague was particularly helpful in aiding my efforts to make connections with parents as he reassured them of my intentions and often buffered conversations. Once the parents' granted their consent and provided contact details (email and phone numbers) for their child, I reached out to the boys via email to provide information about myself and the research and sought their consent to participate. After the boys agreed to participate, my colleague provided the consent forms (which I sent via email to him) for them to read, sign and return to him. This was done over the course of a week, during which time participants were encouraged to reach out to me to ask any questions at any time for further clarification.

Connecting with participants. After all the relevant paperwork was signed, I contacted the boys on WhatsApp and created a WhatsApp group. For the first couple of conversations, both in JC and SJE, we talked a little about ourselves and what we hoped to achieve from this research. I used that opportunity to explain further to the boys about what was required of them and their options to withdraw at any time. I would check in daily with the boys to establish rapport with them, but at first, conversations were a bit stilted. Over the course of a week, a few opened up a bit about their experiences at home and school, but more times than not, they directed their comments to each other in the group chat. I was satisfied with that as it meant they felt comfortable enough to have conversations within the group chat. I knew that would open doors later on, so I was patient. I continued to initiate conversations about their life experiences,

goals, aspirations, desires and language experiences at school so that they would be more comfortable meeting me in person. That said, I do not think I gained their trust until I went to Jamaica in July 2018 and was with them for about two weeks. After that time, they seemed more sincere in their interactions. In negotiating relationships within the group, I wanted them to see me as a friend and not as a teacher or researcher. I anticipated any perceived distance in the relationship might lead them to tailor information to create a particular impression, especially in this case where it involved other boys (Lapan et al., 2012). My entry into the group was not smooth, but over time my connections with the boys became less awkward, and our relationship significantly improved once I was in Jamaica.

Once in Jamaica, I spent several days with the boys at local parks, popular dining spots, and sporting facilities to ease into their group. I also spent time with their families as this was central to understanding their familial structures and social networks and the impact this might have had on their language use and emerging identities. That first couple of days I experienced many awkward moments that I will explore in later sections to demonstrate how gender played a role in those interactions. Although the data collection processes with the boys commenced in July, I did not meet with the teachers until mid-September 2018 when school resumed. Even though my colleague again established contact with the teachers in June 2018, building a relationship with them was more complicated than with the boys. After they granted their consent to participate, I reached out via email, but did not get immediate responses. I believe this was mainly due to the time of year when school was winding down and everyone was quite busy with end of year reports. I did not have any contact with the teachers over the summer break because my primary interest was in establishing relationships with the boys and getting them to openly share their stories with me before imposing on them at school. These initial stories also

helped focused my observations on their activities at school and interactions with teachers. The teachers themselves were secondary participants in the research as I wanted to make sure the boys' voices were at the forefront, so I was content with meeting them at the beginning of the school year. I also deliberately chose the summer months to start the research because the boys were out of school at that time and were more likely to have time to participate in the research, especially in creating the graphic works. I checked beforehand to make sure none of the participants were travelling for the summer. It was common in Jamaica for children from urban areas to spend summers in the countryside with family; however, conversations with the participants revealed that they were spending most of their summers at home. This allowed me more time to observe them in their natural speaking environments before doing so at school in September at the start of the school's term.

Data Collection Methods

I gathered various forms of research data throughout the study, but the boys' narratives were the heartbeats of the final story. These narratives were in the forms of graphic novels, video diaries, and interviews that explored their language experiences within and outside the contexts of school. These data sources, along with interviews with two ELL teachers and my observations formed the basis of my interpretation and analysis of the data. Data was collected from a variety of sources to ensure data triangulation.

The data collection processes occurred in two phases, but several of the collection methods occurred during both phases. Phase one was during the summer months in the boys' communities and included their creation of video diaries, graphic novels, the first interviews and daily observations in their natural home settings. Phase two took place at the boys' school and

included the second and final stages of the boys' interviews, the teachers' interviews, and daily observations of the boys in their ELL classes and informal spaces on campus.

Phase One of Data Collection

Using video diaries to initiate data collection. I decided to use video diaries to commence the data gathering process because I noticed in my early interactions with the boys that they were all comfortable recording themselves using their smartphones and sharing their videos with friends. I surmised that having them create videos to document their language experiences inside and outside of school might be less intimidating than conducting interviews at the onset. Further, the video diaries gave the boys immediate ownership and control of their narratives, which I believe set the stage for the focus on their voices that my research sought to achieve. The video diaries privileged the boys' voices, empowered them to narrate their own stories, and were substantial sources of evidence to give a first-hand account of each boy's story. Video diaries also eased the boys gently into the data gathering process as it was not intrusive, could be done in their own spaces and be used with familiar technology. Given that video diaries are rooted in an interpretive epistemology, there were many opportunities for the boys to share their experiences and views on language, gender, and identity in the Jamaican context.

Before I directed the boys to create video diaries, I spent some time explaining that the purpose of the video diaries was for each boy to reflect on some of their earlier and current language experiences and share how these were influencing current language choices. Following a narrative inquiry approach, I asked each boy to make a weekly video diary (2-5 minutes) for eight weeks (August-September 2018) to narrate and reflect on their experiences both inside and outside the classroom as it relates to their language choices, gendered identities and ELL. Given that each boy was comfortable creating videos on their phones, I did not have to demonstrate

this; however I shared a sample from one of the boys in a pilot study I did. I also provided the boys with some sample questions to guide their diary recordings. Some of these guided questions included:

1. How do you respond to negative responses to your language use?
2. Do you think you conform to gender expectations of language use at home and school? Why/Why not?
3. What are some examples of you conforming/not conforming to language expectations?
4. In what ways do you think gender expectations restrict your actions?

In the first three weeks of video recording, I reminded each boy to keep in mind their language practices, gendered identity and attitudes toward ELL when recording to increase the chances of relevant data being provided. I kept weekly checks on each boy's progress with the video diaries and collected copies of their work to determine the extent to which the content addressed the key areas of focus in the research. Where the boys seemed to have deviated from this research's focus, I provided further sample questions that would help direct their video diaries. I tried not to provide too many questions nor feedback on the boys' video diaries because I did not want to impose on the sincerity of their experiences or thoughts or feelings. However, after week three all five boys (one participant did not respond to any of the tasks) were struggling to find additional content for their video diaries. It was then I realized that eight video diary recordings were too many and suggested that they only complete four each. I also provided additional guided questions that were quite useful in yielding useful information.

That said, some of the video diaries did not yield much authentic information as the boys sometimes seemed focused on responding to the guided questions and so responses were a bit stilted. However, they still deepened my understanding of each boy's perceptions of JC and their gendered identity as well as provided an inside view to their language practices and

complemented the observations I made later on in the research study. They were also useful as the starting point for the data gathering process because they provided valuable information which I used to ease into the interviewing processes and extend on questions.

Transitioning to interviews. The boys' video diaries served as a natural pathway into the semi-structured interviews in both phases of the data gathering process. The interviews were particularly useful in providing data on the group of boys as a single study, and each boy as case studies within that study (Yin, 2009). To gather data, I video-recorded three semi-structured 10-15 minutes of individual interviews with each boy to gain insights into their JC practices and the influences on their gendered identity and perceptions and attitudes toward ELL. In **phase one** in mid-August 2018, I conducted one interview with each boy in a private room at their school and one group interview. (The principal granted us access to the school's grounds). Before conducting the interviews with the boys, I did two 15-minute pilot interviews in July 2018 with two other boys who were dominant JC speakers and one 20-minute pilot interview with a teacher of English language to determine the suitability of the questions. The pilot interviews provided feedback on the effectiveness of the interview questions and I made several necessary adjustments before the actual interviews in the study. None of the participants in the pilot interviews were selected for the research study.

In **phase two** of the interviews, at the beginning and end of September, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each boy (four at this time as the second participant had withdrawn). The first two individual and group interviews went well, but the last set of interviews at the end of September was quite short, an average of seven minutes, due to time constraints. The last interview was particularly rushed because the boys had to register for their external exams, complete a lot of paperwork and attend several senior students' meetings, which

did not allow them to dedicate as much time to the research as they did previously. We did manage to get all the interviews done, but it was evident that the quality of the data was not the same as in the early interviews. The responses in the final interviews sometimes lacked focus as the boys were highly distracted and preoccupied. To further complicate matters, the video quality of the last interviews was not as good because we had to do these recordings during regular school hours and the background was noisy. That said, the boys showed commitment to the research process and tried to accommodate me as much as possible despite the challenges.

In September 2018, I also audio-recorded one 30-minute interview with both teachers to get each teacher's perspectives on dominant JC speakers' attitudes to ELL, how current pedagogies were changing or reasserting these attitudes and the possible impact on students' success. I intended to have two separate interviews with the two teachers, but again, due to time constraints at the beginning of the school year, I was not able to do so. Eventually, I decided to interview both teachers in one sitting, given that they both had the same schedule and were available at the same time. While the teachers were willing, time did not permit for a one-hour interview as it was challenging to find a quiet place on campus that allowed that much time. We settled for a classroom that afforded us some amount of privacy and quietness, but a 35-minute window for the interview. Through several open, unguided questions, I invited the teachers to share their experiences, insights, perspectives and expectations as it relates to JC's influences on boys' gendered identities and attitudes towards ELL. I was able to create a relaxed and engaging atmosphere that allowed them to open up to me and reveal their thoughts. The friendly and non-threatening questions satisfied my line of inquiry and allowed for authentic conversations (Yin, 2009).

Creating graphic novels. The boys' creation of graphic novels was one of the principal sources of data collection in this study and occurred in both phases of the data collection. The creation of graphic novels was crucial to the data gathering process as it was a non-traditional medium for the boys to express JC's influence on their gendered identities and attitudes towards ELL. Even more importantly, creating graphic novels gave them complete autonomy and ownership over their stories. I found that when given this authorial freedom, they responded well to the activities and immersed themselves in the storytelling. The creation of the graphic novels was in keeping with Syma and Weiner's (2013) observations that graphics were becoming important tools in educational settings. This was a powerful data collection tool that allowed the boys to explore their own identities through creative forms safely. To begin this process, in July 2018, I shared samples of different graphic novels with the boys via email to give them some ideas of what was expected of them. I shared samples of popular graphic novels with teen characters such as: *Eagle Strike*, *The Last Kids on Earth*, *The Lost Boy* and *Beastly Basketball*. I then conducted two 30-minute workshops with the boys at their school at the beginning of August 2018 to teach them how to use the software Comic Life 3 (a software that allows users to create comics using their images). I bought the software for two of the boys' laptops and mine. All the boys were also able to get the software on an app on their personal phones at a lower cost, but it had limited features, so most times they shared laptops. I showed them how to manipulate the tools to create desired effects in their graphic novels as well as how to organize materials to make the creation process easier. The boys were instantly intrigued by the software, but before they could use it, we had to plan their story writing, so the graphics would reflect authentic experiences.

To plan their writing, I encouraged the boys to spend 20 minutes each week for the first two weeks in August to record their feelings, thoughts and experiences using both JC and SJE inside and outside of school. They could choose whatever medium they were comfortable using, whether it was recording their voices, sketching thoughts, writing, or any other relevant method. We then met once per week for two hours at a local park, for those two weeks, to talk through these experiences and plan their stories. In the planning sessions, we looked at character development (the boys being the central characters in each story), setting of stories and plot development. We spent quite a bit of time discussing how the boys wished to represent themselves. For instance, there were discussions on the use of shadows to represent the darkness or prejudice they sometimes experienced. After these sessions, the boys were encouraged to take photos or sketch images that would contribute to the development of their stories, panel by panel. While the final goal was for the boys to create their graphic novels, no two boys took the same pathway. Some recorded their stories on their phones then took pictures, while others let the stories evolve organically and then took pictures or drew sketches when they needed them. After the initial planning of the stories to get the boys started, I gradually ended the scaffolding process and allowed them to work independently on their stories. I told them to work on them whenever and wherever they felt inspired to do so.

The boys worked on the stories August through to the end of September 2018. The summer was ideal for the successful completion of the graphic novels because the boys had more time available. Given that three of the four boys were in their final year of high school, completing these graphics during the scheduled months for school would have been rather challenging as they were preparing for regional exit exams, which took precedence. As such, the summer months gave them more time to reflect on their experiences and tell their stories without

feeling rushed or enduring unnecessary stress to do so. I gave the boys their space to create the graphic novels as they wished. However, I asked that they sent me a copy of what they were working on twice per month, so I could see the progress of their work and provide feedback where necessary. While I gave feedback, I never interfered with their creative processes or commented on their choice of photos or sketches as I believed this was impinging on their creative freedom. That said, if I thought the graphics were deviating from the research focus, I gently pointed that out to the boys so they could consider making changes where necessary.

Phase 2

Observations. While much of the open observations took place in phase 2 at the boys' school, I was engaged in observations throughout the entire process. I recorded data using structured observational schedules and unstructured protocols. From the outset, even though I was not physically recording notes, I mentally recorded details about the boys' interactions with each other. My first recorded observations were in July and August 2018 in the boys' authentic speaking environments such as community centers, football field, or shopping plazas. This part of the observation was deliberately unstructured to allow for natural engagements with the boys. I conducted at least one hour of observation per week per boy for the eight weeks through unstructured observational protocols. I went to football matches with them, ate at local restaurants, hung out at the plaza and played games. My observation of each boy overlapped as they spent many days together doing several activities. Two of the boys were close friends before the research, but after our initial meetings, they all seemed to connect and spent quite a bit of time together. The participant observations were particularly useful in providing inside access to the phenomenon of the boys' language, which added new dimensions for understanding JC's influences on their gendered identity and attitudes towards ELL. While the boys did not see me

record notes, I immediately audio-recorded my observations to keep track of my experiences and what I observed after each visit with them.

The second phase of observations took place at the boys' school and involved more structured observational protocols. I observed each boy in three of his English language learning classes (60-minute blocks) in September and early October. As part of the case study protocol, I created an observational schedule to look for particular behaviors relating to the use of JC, demonstration of gendered identities through language, and ELL participation inside the classroom. Using an observational schedule, I recorded data from class observations while in the classroom as I was sitting at the back and students did not notice my actions as much. During these sessions, I focused on the boys' interactions with other boys, teachers, choice of language, and level of confidence in interactions.

I also observed each boy for one lunch period (45 minutes) per week for a month on the school's grounds and recreational areas to record his language practices. I kept the observations on the school's grounds very casual so as not to draw attention to the participants. I only recorded my notes at the end of each day. I later used my notes from my observations to examine the tensions between the boys' actions and their spoken words. My observations were also useful in corroborating the information participants provided in the interviews and examined how they functioned in their authentic and not so authentic speaking environments.

General Data Analysis

In this section, I describe my data analysis processes. First, I provide detailed descriptions of the open coding processes of the primary data sets. Then I explain the processes I used to deconstruct and reconstruct the data in telling the participants' stories.

Engaging the Data: Open Coding

It is through data analysis that one makes meaning of participants' words and images (Day, 2012). To make sense of the data, I went through three rounds of coding for the interviews, video diaries, graphic novels and observation notes. The first step in analyzing the data was reading and rereading the stories and narratives. To begin, I watched and listened to all the participants' interviews several times just to get a sense of their thought processes, and then I began transcribing the data. I transcribed the interviews and video diaries because participants used both Jamaican Creole and SJE during conversations, and given that Jamaican Creole doesn't have an established written form, many transcription software could not accurately record utterances. Further, I wanted to have a more intimate knowledge of the data, and personally transcribing it allowed me to look at it from all angles, which I believed increased my understanding (Creswell, 2014). After transcribing the interviews and video diaries and reading the graphic novels and my journal notes several times, I began the first rounds of coding. In observation of Seidman's (1998) suggestion, I categorized all the data through open coding and thematic analysis. I read through the transcriptions and made a note of what was of interest and identified as many themes as possible, in a sense unitizing the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Again, I did the coding myself because I believed it would allow for more accurate analysis and representation of the data, which is central to my research. To do this, I went through all the interviews and video diaries entries several times to look for recurring ideas and common threads

in the stories. I made a note of the main themes or recurring ideas and then spent several weeks poring over the data to make sense of it.

In the second round of coding, I identified segments of the data that described related phenomena and labelling these using broad categories and then narrowing the themes into nine discrete units. These units were: students' attitudes toward JC, students' attitudes toward SJE, gendered language practices, JC and identity, peer influence, language stereotypes, teacher attitudes and methodologies, boys' perceptions of their ELL success, ELL performance, and competence. This was a challenging process as Marguerite, Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) observed, it involved "examining many small pieces of information and abstracting a connection between them" (p.189). As such, I continued to do only hand-coding to deepen my understanding of the data. I enlisted the help of a Jamaican teacher to read through the data and come up with her own themes, so I could identify differences and similarities in what she was discovering. After going through her notes, I was able to finalize the codes based on perceptions, actions and language use. Although she had similar themes as mine, she only came up with 5. I went back through the themes again and noted that a few could be collapsed. So, I collapsed two of the categories: peer influence, ELL performance, and competence and removed teacher methodologies due to limited instances of these codes appearing as well as overlapping with other categories. For instance, the participants spoke more about teacher attitudes toward their language use than teacher methodology, so I removed that category. Also, peer influence was tied to gendered practices, so that separate category was not needed, and students' attitudes toward JC and SJE became one category.

In the final round of coding, I reread all the data to ensure the accuracy of codes and determined if anything was missing. I did not add any new codes or modified any in the final

round of coding. I then began to look at the main trends and themes relating to Jamaican adolescent boys' use of Jamaican Creole and how this was influencing their gendered practices, perceptions and attitudes toward English language learning. The narratives were then grouped by four themes that will be the subject of discussion in further chapters.

Reconstructing the data to tell the stories. After finalizing the themes, I began the messy process of reconstructing the data to tell the participants' stories. I considered how to deconstruct and reconstruct stories in a way that authentically represented the participants' views. This process was important given the tension in the narratives. I had to decide what belonged where, what was relevant and what was not. It was a messy process of listening, writing, thinking, questioning, and writing again (Day, 2012). In some instances, I questioned whether I was silencing the participants' voices by ignoring statements I thought were irrelevant that they might have considered very important to their story. It was challenging to silence all the questions in my head about whether I got it right or misinterpreted something. As such, the participants became central to the process of reconstructing the data and so I consulted with them throughout my analysis to ensure accurate representations. My greatest challenge in reconstructing the stories was finding a structure that made sense to a wider audience outside the Caribbean context. I had to synthesize my understanding of the narratives in a way that would convey the participants' intended meaning, which was particularly challenging as I was moving between two languages and sometimes JC expressions do not translate the same meaning in English. It was even more challenging weaving in and out of four complex stories.

At first, I considered just telling each story but decided that such a linear process was a minimalistic approach that would rob the stories of their overarching richness. I knew I had to look at each story as case studies within the context of the school as a single case study, but I

needed a way to connect the stories. As I worked through this, I decided that I needed to use the main themes as the center of discussion to pull the stories together. This process helped me to put the stories into context, instead of doing an episodic form of storytelling. I also believed the thematic discussions would help the reader to make sense of the stories and the impact on the boys' evolving identities. Notwithstanding the challenges, I was able to synthesize the analysis thematically to help the reader understand the boys' experiences and stories in the broader context of what was happening in their school and communities. For me, an understanding of participants' lived realities was crucial in my analysis. Therefore in the next section, I will share details of an early experience in the research that helped me to contextualize participants' lived realities.

Reconstructing stories: Understanding participants' lived realities. Qualitative research is premised on the notion that participants' lived experiences are at the forefront of data collection and analysis. It would be difficult to understand the participants' experiences and responses to events in their lives without understanding what shaped those experiences. As I worked on documenting stories that were not mine, I began to comprehend just how powerful stories are in helping us to deeply understand the collective experiences of others and implications for the storytellers. In this section, to elucidate the importance of understanding the collective experiences of participants, I will share a story of my first encounter with one of the participants, Peter, and his mother. Instead of writing about the deconstructive and constructive processes I used to write the stories, I have decided to share this story to put into context the complexities of collecting and constructing stories that were not mine. Although we all have stories to tell, there are distinct differences in how people think of their stories and how they are interpreted by others. These stories change as more elements are added and take on new

meanings. The aim of telling this story is to demonstrate that despite spending many months with participants and their families, their story is not my story, and their lived reality is not my lived reality. My presentations of the findings in this research are only snippets of their realities. The hope is that this story not only contextualizes the boys' lived realities but also gives readers insights into how different perspectives impinge on how stories are told.

This is the story of my first encounter with Peter and his mom that demonstrates that I am only a witness to their lived experiences and their stories that are multiple, varied, and filled with tensions.

A figure rises from the shadow of the hill, quickly outrunning the crawling traffic. As she inched closer, I could see beads of sweat dripping down her chin. She was a petite woman with a sturdy figure and a strong, determined look. For a moment everything stood still as Peter watches her wide-eyed. She turned to me with dark cold eyes.

“Who are you mam?”

I stood paralyzed for a moment, not expecting her question. “I am Tanya, the researcher...”

Dismissively she turned to her son, a giant figure next to her. He quailed a little under her intense glare, despite her small stature.

“What yuh doing bwoy, the phone just hang up and a nuh likkle call mi a call yuh back, all mi hear yuh seh yuh a meet wid woman”

[What is wrong with you boy, you hang up the phone before I was finished and I called you several times and you did not answer...all I heard you say is that you were meeting a woman].

He was obviously shaken by her anger “Mum mi did a tell yuh seh Tanya is coming to meet us today.” [Mum, I was telling you that Tanya is coming to meet us today]

The mother turning to me, “A yuh a Tanya?” [Are you Tanya?]

“Yes, I am, I am sorry for the misunderstanding. I thought Peter explained to you that I am meeting everyone to take them for lunch.”

Relaxing just a little, she turned to me “Listen lady, I don’t really know you although we talked on the phone, all mi hear mi hear mi son pon di phone di him a meet some woman, mi nuh waan mi pickney meet nuh stranger. A run mi run all di way from work to mek sure him nuh leave wid nubady.”

[Listen lady I don’t really know you, although we talked on the phone. All I heard my son say on the phone is that he is meeting some woman and I don’t want my child meeting with any stranger. I had to run all the way from work to make sure he doesn’t leave with anyone]

I stood for a moment awestruck by the woman’s veracity. “Mam I am so sorry for that. I can assure you he is in good hands. We are just going to have lunch. You can come along if you wish.”

Relief seemed to wash over her “No I am good, yuh caan be too careful nowadays. Not because yuh talk and dress nicely doan mean yuh a good person. A mother just can’t be too careful.”

[No, I am good. You can’t be too careful nowadays. It doesn’t mean that because you talk and dress nicely that you are a good person. A mother just can’t be too careful].

Feeling ashamed for causing her such distress, I once again reassured her he was safe with me. But as the car drove away, I could still see her silhouette against the sun as she watches us carefully leaving the narrow lane.

I have told this story to demonstrate that the process of recording one’s lived experiences is never easy. While I am a mother, I am not a mother of a teenage son in an inner-city community. I might never comprehend the anxiety Peter’s mother felt or experienced daily. I can never profess to know what the boys’ experiences are because they are not my experiences. I can only examine how they make sense of their experiences. So, in sharing these stories, I am a mediator of their lived experiences; I am only using this means to provide glimpses into their

worlds. That very first experience with Peter's mother completely changed how I engaged in the research process with the boys. I was conducting research but that was a real mother with real fears for her child. He was not a participant; he was her son. From a newly informed perspective, I began to contend with how I tell the boys' stories. As Plummer (2019) theorizes, "the world we live in harbours a reality puzzle of two realities: a narrative reality, mediated through the situated stories we tell about it, and an ontological reality or the real world we may ultimately never know, but which does exist" (p. 17). In this case, there are many lived language realities of many inner-city youths that were unknown to me and many Jamaicans.

So, as I move into the findings and discussions sections of this research, my aim is to delve into the stories behind the stories that problematize inner-city youths' language, gendered identity and success. A story is made up of many parts weaved together, so in telling the boys' stories, I had to show how they come together. To be able to demonstrate this, I must allow readers to step outside of the stories for a bit and see what is happening in both the school and communities. Then and only then will the stories begin to make sense. Through this strategy, a reader will understand the events the boys picked apart and wove back into stories. Therefore, in organizing the analysis of findings and discussions in the forthcoming chapters, I decided to have a big picture section before delving into each theme. This "big picture" allowed me to look at the school or community as a single case for the phenomenon of language ideologies and practices and then moved on to the individual stories within that context. This meant, for each theme, there was a big picture of what is going on in that context and then a deeper look at how the boys' stories connected to and contradicted events in the school or community. Here, my intent is not to provide an irreducible description of events as this is relatively impossible given the multitude

of intricate stories that are occurring at the same time. Instead, the intent is to provide greater context to deepen understanding of the forthcoming narratives and discussions.

Chapter 5: Research Findings and Discussions

Introduction

*“Stories cannot live alone; they cry out for action, stories shape power; power shapes stories”
(Plummer, 2019 p.19).*

To echo Paulo Freire’s (1985) potent words, “a book reflects its author’s confrontation with the world” (p. 3). In this chapter, I invite readers into the four boys’ realities through their stories as they confront their language world. Each reader will have an opportunity to critically engage with the boys’ narratives alongside my interpretive commentary as I explore the main themes emerging from the data. To allow directionality with the findings, I will organize these by four main categories: 1) language inadequacies and inequities in school; 2) linguistic power and identity; 3) Jamaican Creole (JC) and masculine identities; and 4) accountability for students’ ELL success. Each section seeks to delineate and explore the language ideologies, attitudes, and practices revealed through the four boys’ narratives and interviews, along with insights gained from the two teachers’ interviews and my reflections.

Each thematic section is prefaced with a contextual explanation of the community and school influences that impact these boys as an illustration of the environment within which the experiences of the boys were constructed. I start with a general assessment of the language attitudes in the boys’ school, and communities to provide context for their experiences. This is followed by an examination of the boys’ narratives and interviews to unearth their experiences with language in their communities and school. Finally, the reviewed literature on language, identity, and gendered practices in chapter 2 of this research is used to examine how the boys’ linguistic and gendered language experiences were shaping their identities as JC-speaking boys.

Language Attitudes: Overcoming Inadequacies and Inequities

The big picture of language attitudes in society, school and community. In 1844, Fran Cass, in a letter to the editor in a Caribbean newspaper, wrote: “Creole is the refuge of ignorance and the less you know, the greater aptitude you have for talking Negro” (Fran Cass, 1844 as cited in Breen, 1970, p. 185). One hundred and sixty-four years later similar sentiments are expressed in response to linguistic scholar, Silvia Kouwenberg’s, letter to the editor challenging the then Prime Minister, Bruce Golding’s, comments that JC did not offer students much hope for success. One critic of Dr. Kouwenberg’s comments wrote:

Patwa keeps our people in a perpetual state of infancy throughout their lives. That may well serve the purpose of those who benefit from our ‘dumb-downed’ society of illiterate morons, but it does not help our Jamaican people advance to the next level. It keeps our people in hopeless poverty, stupid beyond imagination, ‘dumb as a farm animal.’ We can be 2.7 million strong or we can be 2.7 million reasons to wear a condom. (Kouwenberg, et. al., 2011, p. 396).

Be it 1844 or 2011, language continues to be a site of struggle and tension in Jamaica as competing, and conflicting voices consider JC’s place. It is evident that time has not dissipated charged responses to the language in school or community. But this barely grazes the surface of the intense and complex debates surrounding language in the country. Presently there is much public outrage due to renewed demands to grant JC equal status to SJE (*The Jamaica Gleaner* archives, 2019). Many critics of JC contend that it serves no real purpose in formal contexts, advancing arguments that no other country has made its creole an official language, an erroneous claim given that Haiti, Aruba, Curacao and several other countries’ Creoles are recognized as

official languages. Such critics also claim that JC is incompatible with economic modernization (*The Jamaica Gleaner* archives, 2017).

Despite the claims of JC critics, many scholars, amidst backlash, continue to advocate for equal status for JC, demonstrating through empirical research that it facilitates access to SJE, aids communicative competence, improves literacy among students and prepares them to meet global demands (Bryan, 2004a; Devonish, 2012, 2016; Kouwenberg et al., 2011; Jamaica Language Unit (JLU), 2007, 2008). Some members of the general public also support the call to recognize Jamaica as a bilingual society through equal status. One writer asserts that “Jamaican Creole belongs in the homes, in the schools, onstage, on TV and radio, in the newspaper, and the boardrooms, because it is our language” (Letter to the editor, *The Jamaica Gleaner*, October 2, 2017). However, despite research and some public support, there is still much resistance to the use of JC in school. Another critical newspaper contributor wrote:

What is disturbing is our children are now exposed to the Patwa rubbish we have creeping into our newspapers; our population is on the road to creeping semi-literacy, let us save Jamaica from this rubbish. (Letter to the editor, *The Jamaica Gleaner*, October 23, 2017)

NM high school was undoubtedly a site for the reproduction of some of the negative views toward JC shared above, and the encompassing inadequacies some JC-speaking students might have experienced. Some students at NM appeared to struggle with their use of SJE. However, as research shows, the issue seemed not to be with JC-speaking students’ ability to learn SJE, but rather an education system that continues to provide instruction only in their second language despite myriad research repeatedly showing that this correlates to high illiteracy rates (Bryan, 2004a; Kouwenberg et al., 2011; JLU, 2007, 2008). As previously mentioned, NM has a large

JC speaking population. As such, some of the students seemed to be at a distinct disadvantage writing in a language they did not speak (SJE) (MoEY& C, 2001). However, it seems one of the most significant challenges for students might have been attending a school that did not value their authentic language. There was evidence that prevailing negative attitudes towards JC in Jamaican society might have been impacting school's practices, as will be demonstrated later in the boys' narratives.

The boys' communities also seemed to be affected by the negative attitudes toward JC within society. While residents seemed proud to speak JC in their communities, some appeared ambivalent about its use in schools. As supported in the literature, my conversations with the boys' families revealed that some of them were culturally attached to JC and wished to preserve it, but did not wish for it to be used in instructions in schools for fear of social stagnation for their children (JLU, 2007, 2008; McCourtie, 1998; Wassink, 1999). They further hinted that their children might be at a disadvantage in the future if JC became a part of their learning experiences. Their ambivalence seemed reasonable in a country like Jamaica, where prevailing classist language practices sometimes impact students' success (Wassink, 1999).

I have shared these language contexts in the society, school and the boys' communities to highlight some of the views regarding JC's use in schools that might have generated some of the conflicts, inadequacies, and inequities the boys experienced as dominant JC speakers. I will commence this section of the findings and discussions with Sam's narratives to explore some of the contradictions and conflicts he experienced as a JC-speaking student.

The Boys: Unravelling Personal Stories

Sam: Who yuh fi tell mi talk propa [Who are you to tell me speak properly].

Research on teacher attitudes and perception of JC has revealed that some teachers are often very

critical of JC-speaking students' ways of speaking (Bryan, 1999, 2010; Devonish, 2012; Nero & Stevens, 2018). This practice seems to be primarily due to purist notions that only SJE should be used in school and it is the "proper" language (Britton, 2017). This also seemed to be one of the permeating views at NM as I observed teachers correcting several dominant JC speaking students' utterances both in and outside the classroom. Foreseeably, language inadequacies and inequities arose as one of the main themes from the data. These language inadequacies and inequities manifested in the boys' narratives in three main ways: 1) they believed teachers' language rejection planted seeds of inadequacy in students; 2) JC speakers were "mediocre"; and SJE offered students opportunities for future academic endeavours that JC did not.

Planting the seed of language inadequacies among students. Sam was one of the first boys who spoke out about some of the negative language experiences he had had in school and the feelings of inadequacies those experiences evoked in him as a young boy. The following page from his graphic novel depicts one such encounter of language prejudice he experienced that seemed to have had a lasting effect on him.



Fig 1- An Illustration of Sam's Graphic Novel Page

In this depiction, a teacher stops a student walking in the hallway (Sam revealed that this is him) to find out why he is out of class. The student proceeds to let the teacher know that he is on his way to get a pen. Throughout this encounter, he spoke JC, which seemed to displease the teacher. She asks him to speak in SJE, suggesting that he was not appropriately raised by his mother, who should have trained him to speak English. The boy is hurt by her comments, but maintains his composure and firmly tells the teacher his mother is quite happy with how she raised him and how he speaks. This page from Sam's graphic novel sets the stage for the conversation on inadequacies and inequities he appeared to have experienced in school. By denigrating Sam's use of JC, the depicted teacher seemed not only to be devaluing his home language but also suggesting that he might be lacking. In this illustration, Sam seemed to be confronting systemic language inequities in schools as he underscored a connection between the language prejudice he experienced and language practices that privileged one language over another.

Sam's experience is validated by several research studies that suggest that too many teachers continue to reproduce negative attitudes towards nonstandard varieties, like JC, which have undermined English language learners' experiences (Dixon, 2013; Nero & Stevens, 2018; Rickford, 2000, 2006). For instance, Simmonds-McDonald (2006) research with a cohort of 35 second year St. Lucian student-teachers showed that they were ambivalent about the use of the local Creole, Kweyol, in schools. She reported that "40% of respondents thought students should not be allowed to speak it, while 43% disagreed and another 17% were undecided" (p. 68). Britton's (2017) research with Caribbean Creole speakers in four New York schools showed similar results as he reported that several Caribbean teachers and students in those classrooms did not think school was the place for students to use any of their Creoles. One Jamaican

participant in the research, an adolescent boy named Romaine, revealed that he would be surprised if Jamaican Creole was a part of the curriculum as he thought it was not a language that would offer critical discussions in classes or be taken seriously. The research further revealed that many of the teacher participants shared this view also and thought standard English was the proper, desirable, and useful language for students' success (Britton, 2017).

Further, in their review of attitudes towards Creoles, Wigglesworth, Billington and Loakes' (2013) stressed that many Creole-speaking students are discouraged from speaking their native tongue in schools, and not much is done to incorporate their local languages. They further argue that Creole-speaking children often have positive language views when they interact with teachers who are positive about their language. On the other hand, they also emphasize that some students' low self-esteem and negative attitudes toward their home language is sometimes conditioned by negative feedback from teachers (Wigglesworth, Billington and Loakes, 2013). The authors concluded that teachers need to display positive attitudes toward Creole languages because they played an essential part in students' developing attitudes toward these languages.

In later unrecorded conversations about his graphic novel page, Sam indicated that the illustrated scene depicted an experience he had years ago, but one that lingered with him. He expressed that "*Mi will neva figet that woman enuh, bwoy mi did hate her*" [I will never forget that woman. I really hated her]. Through this narrative, he was able to capture the linguistic biases that seemed to exist in the school while demonstrating his defiance of such attitudes. He shared these thoughts about his encounter with the teacher, saying:

It mek mi very angry enuh miss. How students weh talk JC ago feel good bout themselves if teacha a go tell dem dem parents nuh raise dem properly cause a how them talk?"
 [This made me very angry, Miss. How can students who are JC speakers feel good about themselves if teachers are going to tell them their parents did not raise them well because they are JC speakers?].

These comments are revealing in many ways because they indicate what might have been contributing factors to his assertive use of JC, his resistance to those who challenged his use of it, and his sometimes negative perceptions of SJE speakers. The fact that the depicted negative incident with the teacher took place several years before, and he still vividly remembered it is indicative of the long-term impact of poor teacher-student language interactions. Several studies also documented similar students experiences and went on to make a correlation between creole speaking students' poor language experiences in school and their developing negative attitudes towards ELL (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007a; Ferguson, 2006; Francis, 2005; Yousseff, 2002, 2004). Some of these studies also indicate that teachers' rejection of JC continues to happen in Jamaican schools despite research evidence to show that students need positive language engagement to foster their confidence in school (Bryan, 2004a, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010). The same research community has advocated for students' use of their first language in school to improve their learning experiences. However, Sam's graphic novel page proves that the contrary was happening in some instances at NM and poor teacher attitudes toward JC-speaking students were a problem.

Overcoming language inferiority and inequities. Grainger (2013) argues that sometimes educators allow their assumptions about students from low-income homes to colour their judgment and interactions with them. For Sam, in his shared encounter with the teacher, it might have seemed as if his use of JC was being used to judge his linguistic and even intellectual capabilities. The depicted teacher's actions are not that surprising as some studies have shown that it is common for some teachers to discourage minority language practices in school (Britton, 2017, K. Bryan, 2012). The teacher involved in the incident with Sam might have also felt justified in her response to him, given the rhetoric on JC's use in school coming from the

Jamaican leadership at that time. For example, in an interview, the then Prime Minister of Jamaica, Bruce Golding, when asked about using JC in schools to aid monolingual speakers, made this remark: “Using Patois would be akin to saying we have failed to impart our accepted language of English, so we are giving up” (Hill, 2011, p. 2). His remark would have suggested to both teachers and students alike that JC and its speakers were symbols of failure in schools and the wider society. These words likely had far-reaching implications for some dominant JC-speaking students’ experiences at that time. This negative attitude towards JC can be highly problematic for many dominant JC speakers like Sam, whose language seems to have no place in formal settings like school. It is also possible that such occurrences can lead to negative views of ELL and teachers of the subject.

However, Sam was quick to point out to me that while he had experienced negative views of ELL and teachers, that was not the case with his present teacher, whom he liked very much. As expressed in the extract below, he thought Mrs. Jacob had a very positive attitude about students’ use of JC in school and he was having quite a different language experience in her classroom. He made these comments in the second interview:

Sam: You done know seh a patois the ting set. Patois! [You done know miss, Patois is the way to go.]

Tanya: Just patois, in your English Language classes? To the teacher? Among your classmates?

Sam: For instance. She (Mrs. Jacob) will ask me specific questions and specific things and she will tell you when she want it inna (in) English. But other from that she allow you to speak di (the) patois. Cause she speak it too and she a Jamaican.

Tanya: Do you think that that negatively impacts your learning English in any way?

Sam: No no.

Tanya: No! so you are happy that the teacher is making use of Jamaican creole in the English A classroom?

Sam: Yep, quite contented with that.

It can be deduced from this conversation that Sam was motivated to be in his English A class because his teacher valued his language, and he felt comfortable with her. This is in stark contrast to the encounter he depicted on the graphic page above. The positive experiences with his English A teacher might have been the reason Sam advocated for JC's inclusion in school and less pressure on students to speak only SJE. In the extracts below, he encourages ELL teachers to be more open to JC-speaking students' language choices and demonstrate more positive language attitudes in their classrooms:

Tanya: Are you comfortable using SJE in schools, do you think you are pressured at school to speak it?

Sam: Only by some English teachers.

Tanya: How do you feel about that?

Sam: For them to stop pressure us, stop pressure people to speak English.

Tanya: Do you think it is important to develop mastery of the two languages?

Sam: Yeah, you can naturally learn that enuh miss, you don't have to force it, for instance I am a person that loves the JC, but mi caan [I can't] text in a creole so mi learn the SJE after a time, plus by reading we can learn the SE, even in Jamaican textbooks we don't see the JC in the text books, we see SE so we are eventually learning it

He extended on this, saying:

The only thing as Jamaican people, if you are fellow Jamaican, please do not force other Jamaicans to speak SJE.

These two examples show Sam's commitment to generating more positive attitudes toward JC. By imploring fellow Jamaicans and those with authority not to force young people to speak SJE, he was somewhat advocating for change. As he explained, he believed that in time students would naturally learn SJE because it was a part of their everyday experience, so there was no

need for anyone to force them to do so. What probably can be inferred here is that forcing him to speak SJE would have likely led to his resistance to it. From a post-colonial perspective, Sam's comments would suggest that students were being encouraged to participate in language cleansing, a practice that is typical of many colonized societies. Fanon (1967) theorizes that a shift to speaking only the language of the colonizer is akin to language cleansing, which emerges out of a need to attain the prestige retained for speakers of European descent. Alleyne's (1994, 2000) works also show that cleansing of JC is typical in Jamaica as one moves up the social ladder. Thus, it is unsurprising that some teachers (many of whom are middle class), would "force" their students to speak SJE as Sam indicated.

Recognizing SJE's value. Notwithstanding any of the above, Sam did show an awareness of the value of SJE in his future prospects. He expressed this in one of his interviews, saying: "*Mi know mi need the English ...mi nuh have a problem with English enuh becah mi like mi English class an mi know seh fi get a job mi need it.*" [I know I need English. I don't have a problem with English because I like my English class and I know I need it to get a job].

This comment indicates that he recognized society's requirements for SJE in securing employment. The fact that he stated that he liked English would also suggest that his issue might not have been with the subject itself, but more so with some teachers' approach to SJE and JC in schools, as he indicated earlier.

In summary, Sam's negative and positive language experiences in school seemed to be shaping his attitude toward SJE and ELL. His negative experiences triggered resentment and resistance, while his positive experiences encouraged him to embrace ELL and his teacher's methodologies. Sam's experiences were similar to the other boys, but some distinct differences will be explored in upcoming sections.

Peter: Mi affi speak the English fi measure up [I have to speak English to measure up]. Peter, like Sam, had negative language experiences, but he was less resistant to SJE. This is highlighted in his narratives, which revealed two distinct contrastive findings: 1) He struggled with feelings of inadequacies as a JC speaker and his perceived superiority of SJE, and 2) he believed he needed SJE to attain success.

Experiencing language inadequacies. Research shows that historically students from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to have negative language experiences in school and feelings of inadequacies than other social groups (Dixon, 2013; Grainger, 2013; Wigglesworth, Billington & Loakes, 2013). As such, it was unsurprising that Peter revealed feelings of inadequacies as a JC speaker in our first interview. This extract evidences some of the feelings of inadequacy he seemed to have been experiencing:

Peter: Because English is one of the most important languages throughout the world and we as students in school usually talk to people in high standards so basically we need to use English more often than creole, so yeah.

Tanya: So when you say you say you talk to people in high standards what do you mean by that?

Peter: Most of them talk in Standard English, most of them.

Tanya: But who are the people in high standards you are talking about?

Peter: Like teachers, principal and most time we go pon [on] competition with different schools, with different schools like Wolmers, Queens and them top top schools deh, basically all those students speak SE so we have to speak it.

Tanya: So you think you have to speak the English to measure up to them.

Peter: Yeah.

Tanya: Do you feel though they ever looked down on you because of the school you attend or because of how you speak?

Peter: Yeah.

In this extract, Peter highlighted that English was an important language for him to acquire and when he spoke to people in “high standards” he felt he needed to speak it so they would not look down on him for speaking JC. Throughout our interview, he continued to refer to SJE speakers as people in “high standard” suggesting some insecurities on his part and a need to measure up. Hall (2013) justifies Peter’s feelings of inadequacies as she contends that they are shaped by his habitus, that is, the “historically grounded, socially constituted knowledge, beliefs and attitudes comprising our various social identities, predisposing us to act and think and feel in particular ways.” (p. 32). For Peter, his feelings of inadequacy were a reflection of his society. The “historically grounded” view he was exposed to as an inner-city youth in Jamaica was that SJE was the superior language. The “socially constituted knowledge” was that SJE offered success and the pervading beliefs and attitudes were that its speakers were more intellectual than JC speakers (Alleyne, 1971; Britton, 2017; Christie, 1995; Henry, 2016; Wassink, 1999). Thus, it is conceivable that he would have experienced conflicting thoughts about “measuring up” as a dominant JC speaker. Peter’s experiences is also an example of him being socialized into SJE practices in the hopes of maintaining his “in group” status.

Peter’s insecurities seemed to extend further to an admiration for SJE speakers and sometimes a somewhat derisive view of some JC speakers as exemplified in these comments in the group interview. He said:

Nah, alright it depends, it depends on the person, if the person know your standards dem nah no[they don’t have] a problem, but if you talk to some average people, mediocre person basically dem a go [they are going to] laugh, alright because dem nuh [they are not] use to it (SJE) basically dem ago [they are going to] laugh.

This extract illustrates Peter's sometimes poor perception of JC speakers as he referred to them as "average" and "mediocre" even though he is a JC speaker. This self-contradictory perspective speaks to the language complexities Peter seemed to have been experiencing. For example, he saw himself as a proud Jamaican (as I will explore in the next theme); however, he failed to see the contradictions in referring to fellow speakers as "mediocre." Here, he was attaching the very labels he seemed to be trying to escape as a fellow JC speaker. In a similar vein, Tylor's (2007) observations of classroom teachers using JC in instruction showed that students were sometimes uncomfortable with teachers using JC. The researcher reported that during one of her observations of "Bettina's" class, where she was instructing students in JC, one student remarked to another "a ow she a taak so" [why is she talking like that?] (p. 229). The students were evidently perplexed by the teacher's use of language as they expected her to use the standard variety and seemed to believe that the teacher was not as competent if she was teaching in JC.

Becoming aware of the causal relationship between SJE and students' success.

Several key findings have emerged from some studies that show that social class was a good predictor of language attitudes. In Jamaica's case, speakers of mesolectal and acrolectal varieties of SJE were seen as more likely to be successful (Jamaica Language Unit, 2008; McCourtie, 1998; Wassink, 1999). These ingrained views that SJE offers all the social and economic opportunities seemed to weigh heavily on Peter because he believed he needed it to be successful. Several pages from his graphic novel revealed his internal stresses about his use of SJE and the pressures to be successful in school. In the following panel, he shared his internal turmoil as he tried to balance the demands of home and school and his fears of not measuring up as a student.



Fig. 2 An Illustration of Peter's Graphic Novel Page

In figure 2, Peter illustrated the pressures that came with being a boy from the inner-city in school. The speaker (likely Peter) seems to feel he is being judged because of how he speaks and where he was from and so he feels he has to continually prove himself. He tries to break through the stereotypes of inner-city youths as unsuccessful and lazy by working hard and encouraging his friends to do the same. Perhaps what is most compelling about this panel is the insight into the emotions of a student who might have been experiencing challenges as a JC-speaking student within the education system and feeling that he was not good enough. Peter's thoughts and actions are understandable. Scholarships on language attitudes in Jamaica continue to show that many Jamaican children are being taught at an early age, especially those from low-income communities, that SJE speakers and successful ELL students are more likely to lead successful lives (Jennings & Cook, 2019). Moore (2004) and Rickford (2006) warn that such views reflect a dominant ideology of language that automatically sees a causal relationship between linguistic competence and social success.

Moore's and Rickford's theory is further supported in these remarks Peter made during the group interview when he suggested that educated Jamaicans were recognizable by their use of SJE, and such speakers were likely to be more successful. He said:

Peter: All right, you go see all right. If 10 people a walk and you can look pon [on] one person and know that person stand out, yeah that is how it go, so basically if somebody can look pon [on] dem [them] basically look pon [on] and say alright that person is educated, basically them stand out of the crowd as successful.

Tanya: But what makes that person stand out as educated as you say?

Peter: What they achieve.

Tanya: But how will I know that person has achieved?

Peter: How they speak.

Tanya: So is it that you are expecting the person who is educated and I am using your words...to speak Standard Jamaican English?

Peter: Yes.

This extract is evidence that Peter equates his success with his use of SJE. Implicit in his reasoning is the recurring view that an SJE speaker is likely more educated than a JC speaker and so more likely to be successful. For Peter, it seems, success and “standing out” were equated with speaking SJE. Despite pushback from the other boys about his comments that an SJE speaker stands out as more educated, Peter remained steadfast in his views. As is exemplified in this exchange in the group interview, he refused to concede that language choice did not necessarily indicate one’s intellect:

Sam: No that a wah him seh enuh, mi nuh think that [No, that is what he said, I don’t think that].

Tanya: Yeah I am just saying his words, I am not saying, because I know that is not how everyone feels, I am just using his words, that the idea, and once again we are using perception, we are talking about perceptions we don’t necessarily mean that is always the reality, the perception that if you speak a certain way you are more educated that is what you are suggesting.

Peter: Yes, Yes.

Tanya: Or you stand out a certain way. You seem to disagree now Sam?

Sam: Yeah, even if yuh speak a certain way that nuh mean seh yuh dunce, weh mi a say still. [Yes, what I am saying is that even if you speak a certain way that doesn’t mean you are a dunce].

As he indicated, Peter was committed to his views that SJE speakers were more “educated” and of “higher standards.” His views are not uncommon. Grainger (2003) explains that it is typical for some students from working-class families to grow up thinking that one of the main ways they will be successful in their adult lives, that is getting a good job, buying a house, owning a

car, is if they have competence in the standard variety of the language. Thus, those children are more likely to associate their success with their ability to speak the standard variety of English.

Peter also indicated in the second interview that he preferred SJE as the mode of instruction in schools because it granted him more access to the world and allowed him to be better prepared for a global society. He shared this:

Tanya: So JC is the language you are comfortable with, would you want to see more of it in schools?

Peter: I would not say want to see more(JC) because when it comes on to school, like if, when it comes on to school now if we use English more it able us to write better in the English language and able us to go out in the open world and speak it, so no like I would not like to see it more, but it just is our birth language and it just more comfortable.

Tanya: Right, so how do you feel about teachers using it (JC) in schools, would you want to see them use it in schools or would you prefer if they just have SJE as the mode of instruction in schools?

Peter: Yeah just English as the mode of instruction in schools.

A reading of the available literature on attitudes toward Creoles makes it apparent that such attitudes, as Peter expressed here, are actually quite complex. Wassink (1999) contends that this “complexity arises when, as a non-standard language variety, JC carries both positive and negative social meaning for members of a community” (p. 59). Peter’s contradictions about valuing JC as students’ birth language but not wanting it as a part of the classroom instruction is not unusual. As I have established, several community members expressed similar sentiments and this has also been documented in research (Britton, 2017; K. Bryan, 2012; Jamaica Language Unit, 2008; Wassink, 1999). Wassink’s (1999) research with 51 Jamaican adults (employed, unemployed, teachers, students, educated, uneducated) in a semi-rural community revealed that many perceived SJE as “good” and the non-standard varieties as “bad” (p. 58). Some respondents did not want JC in schools. One respondent stated that “intelligent Jamaicans

can do without it (JC)” (p. 70). Such positions are entrenched in post-colonial nations in which the language of the dominant culture has been regarded as more sophisticated. Wassink’s (1999) research also found that Creole speakers experienced many dilemmas about their use of language as they considered the social and economic benefits of each. For example, Peter’s dilemma of advocating fewer restrictions on JC in school, but not wanting it as a part of the instructional process while attributing success to SJE speakers, is evidence that he was weighing the social and economic benefits of language use. Britton’s (2017) research findings with Caribbean Creole English speakers further validates Peter’s dilemma. It revealed that some youths and parents were not supportive of policy changes that recognized any Creole variety as a language, given the stigma that was still attached to those varieties.

In light of these findings and the social context in which Peter lived, it is feasible that he would have experienced some trepidations about the use of JC in schools while having more positive attitudes toward ELL and SJE given his views that these offered more opportunities for success. However, as Peter has proven through his narratives, language attitudes are complex in the Jamaican context as both JC and SJE represent positive and negative social, economic and, cultural meanings for speakers. Peter’s experiences, however, are not as unique as John’s and Joe’s narratives showed similar trends.

John: If mi fi leave the inner-city mi need fi use English [If I am to leave the inner-city, I need to use English. Positive perceptions of SJE and its speakers seem to have also contributed to John’s feelings of inadequacies as a JC speaker. John’s narratives were similar to Peter’s as he too seemed to be experiencing some of the same language complexities of “measuring up” to dominant SJE speakers. However, John’s views and actions distinctly

diverged from Sam's and Peter's in that he focused more on the mobility SJE offered him outside of his inner-city community.

Escaping the negative views of JC speakers. John, like Peter, seemed concerned about how he might be perceived as a JC speaker. Thus, he might have been motivated to speak SJE so he could escape the stigma of being an inner-city JC speaking boy. For example, in our third interview, John indicated that as an inner-city youth, he needed to speak more SJE “with people of higher class to get out of the inner-city.” This implied that the inner-city and his use of JC did not offer him many avenues for success. He made these comments, stating:

John: Miss I am a very independent child so I don't really mek [let] that (not being able to speak SJE well) force me to stick to one language miss, as a matter of fact, it introduce me to English more often, because as an inner-city person you have to talk with people of a higher class to get out of the inner-city so it forces you to use English more.

Tanya: So are you thinking then that SJE is one way to escape that that I am going to use stigma even though I don't want to, but that stigma that is attached to inner-city youths?

John: Yes miss.

It can be deduced from these comments that John was keen on escaping the stigma of his community. His reference to talking more with “people of higher class” as a means to escape the inner-city suggests that he was also making connections between his language choice and future success. Le Page (1986) substantiates this to explain that sometimes speakers' linguistic behaviour depends upon seeing language primarily not in its communicative functions but as a vehicle for social mobility. In John's case, he was weighing the social and economic value of engaging more people of the upper-class through his use of SJE. His remarks suggest that he was concerned that being only a JC speaker would not afford him the same opportunities. His anxiety about speaking SJE with such groups is also not misplaced. It has been widely documented in Jamaica that some upper-class (wealthy, powerful and SJE-speaking) Jamaicans frowned upon

the use of JC in any setting and would have been content with its limited use in Jamaican society (*The Gleaner archives*, 2017, 2018, 2019). Further, there were several documented stories of inner-city youths being denied work opportunities because of the stigma attached to their language use and place of residence (*The Gleaner archives*, 2010-2019). A few of the articles entitled: *Discriminatory Employment Practices*, *Reliving the Pains of Inner-city Life*, and *Inner-city Youth Empowered* documented the struggles of some inner-city youths to access employment outside of their communities. These articles outline employers' practices of rejecting applicants from inner-city areas and the assumptions that are made that they lack the language competence to function in some workplace settings or were unskilled and untrustworthy. In the article, *Discriminatory Employment Practices*, graduates from the Tivoli Gardens community (an inner-city community in Kingston, Jamaica) reported that they were unable to get jobs despite their qualifications and cited their addresses as a deterrent to employers. Some residents suggested removing addresses from employment applications to minimize discrimination. It can be presumed that the address of the residents might also be tied to employers' perception of their language capabilities. That is, because it is typically assumed that residents in inner-city communities are dominant JC speakers, it is plausible that employers might be rejecting applicants based on similar perceptions.

These documented language and social inequities probably accounted for why John, like Peter, seemed concerned about meeting others' language expectations, especially their teachers. In his first interview, John indicated that he was careful about using JC with some of his teachers because they rejected its use in school and were unfriendly to JC-speaking students. He shared these insights during our conversation:

Tanya: so when talking to a teacher you use SJE, why do you think you make the switch when say compared to speaking to a friend?

John: For one, they are more higher, so it is better to speak to dem [them] at their level than to speak at a way that they look down on you.

Tanya: You think they look down on you when use creole?

John: Some teachers.

Tanya: Some teachers?

John: They are not really...some teachers dem nuh really fren yuh up dem nuh hear yuh speak to dem in creole [some teachers are not really friendly with you when they hear you speak to them in Creole].

Tanya: What do you mean when you say “some teachers that don’t fren yuh up” [are not friendly with you].

John: Some teachers don’t act natural with you, they just come to school to work they don’t expect you to come and use creole with them.

Tanya: Ok, so they don’t have any kind of bond with you.

John: With some students.

Tanya: So are you saying the closer the relationship with the teacher the easier it is to use JC and you are more likely to use it the with those teachers.

John: Yes.

This extract is further evidence that John struggled with being valued as a JC speaker, and as such he would have been motivated to acquire SJE. It is evident here that John saw some teachers as “higher” speakers who “looked down” on JC speakers. Like, Peter, he seemed to think it was necessary to speak SJE with these teachers so that he could connect better with them. What is perhaps omitted in John’s comments might be his desire to not only make connections with some teachers but to appear intellectually capable to them. Nero (2001) contends that John’s insecure feelings are justifiable in a country like Jamaica where language has been and continues to be one of the greatest social markers of status, often determined by how well one speaks SJE. Nero (2010) further noted that speakers are still being linguistically streamlined as

they were in the past, wherein upper and middle-class citizens are assumed to be fluent SJE speakers and working-class citizens are assumed to be fluent JC speakers (Nero, 2001, 2009). As I have established, these classifications usually come with assumptions about the speakers' intellectual capability. Here, it seems these assumptions might have had an impact on John as he seemed motivated to learn more SJE and proved his competence.

Extracting SJE's value. John had further reason to be motivated to be a good ELL student and SJE speaker. For example, in his first interview, he mentioned that he would be lauded in his community for being a “good SJE speaker” as is illustrated in the exchange below:

Tanya: Do you speak it (SJE) in your community?

John: Yeah in my community, if you can speak SJE, yeah they give you props for it.

Tanya: They give you some props for that?

John: Yeah dem seh [they say] at least somebody from my lane can do, can speak SE

Tanya: So that makes you feel good, so how do you feel though if you go out there and you speak a little English and a man might say boy yuh good that you are going school and a talk your English?

John: It is good enuh [you know] because most of the youths dem inna [in] my lane dem drop out a school early, so dem affi [they have] go out to work early so dem nuh [they don't] get a chance to learn SE so for me to learn and speak SE dem nuh have nuh [they don't have a] problem with it.

Here, John expressed some pride in being able to be one of the few youths in his community who could speak SJE. For him, this was evidence that he was among the more “intelligent” youths of the community. Given the discussions in the sections on identity, it is likely that this pride came from the older men and women as the boys themselves have indicated that some young men and boys were not so tolerant of SJE speakers in their midst. This again speaks to the contradictory views of SJE among some community members wherein they might

be proud of a boy who speaks SJE well, but if he speaks it too much among them they might think he was being pretentious (Britton, 2017).

In summary, irrespective of the conflicts in perspective John experienced, he had a positive attitude toward SJE and felt a sense of pride in using it. He appeared conscious of how he might be perceived in different contexts and so worked towards creating a more positive view of himself as an SJE speaker. He had some preoccupation with communicating with upper-class groups (wealthy, powerful, and influential SJE speakers), which probably stemmed from some of his insecurities as a JC speaker from a low-income family and inner-city community. However, he was working to overcome those feelings. That said, it seems John's motives to speak SJE went beyond just social acceptance to a focus on the economic and academic benefits to him in the future. Joe also had similar motives.

Joe: A nuh like mi have a choice mi a go need SJE [It is not like I have a choice, I am going to need SJE]. When I explored the issue of pervading negative views of JC speakers and overcoming inadequacies, there seemed not to be much contrast in the boys' experiences. Like the other boys, Joe experienced inadequacies as a JC speaker in school and believed that SJE provided more opportunities for success. As a result of the similarities in experiences, I will use Joe's narratives to build on the experiences shared by the other boys.

Overcoming inadequacies as a JC speaker. To build on what the other boys shared in their narratives, Joe too expressed some frustrations and inadequacies as a JC speaker in school. On one of his graphic novel pages, indicated below, he depicted an incident in a classroom wherein a boy (likely Joe himself) struggled to keep up in the class but became rather frustrated when the teacher insisted that he spoke SJE. Eventually, the frustrated boy walked out of the class.

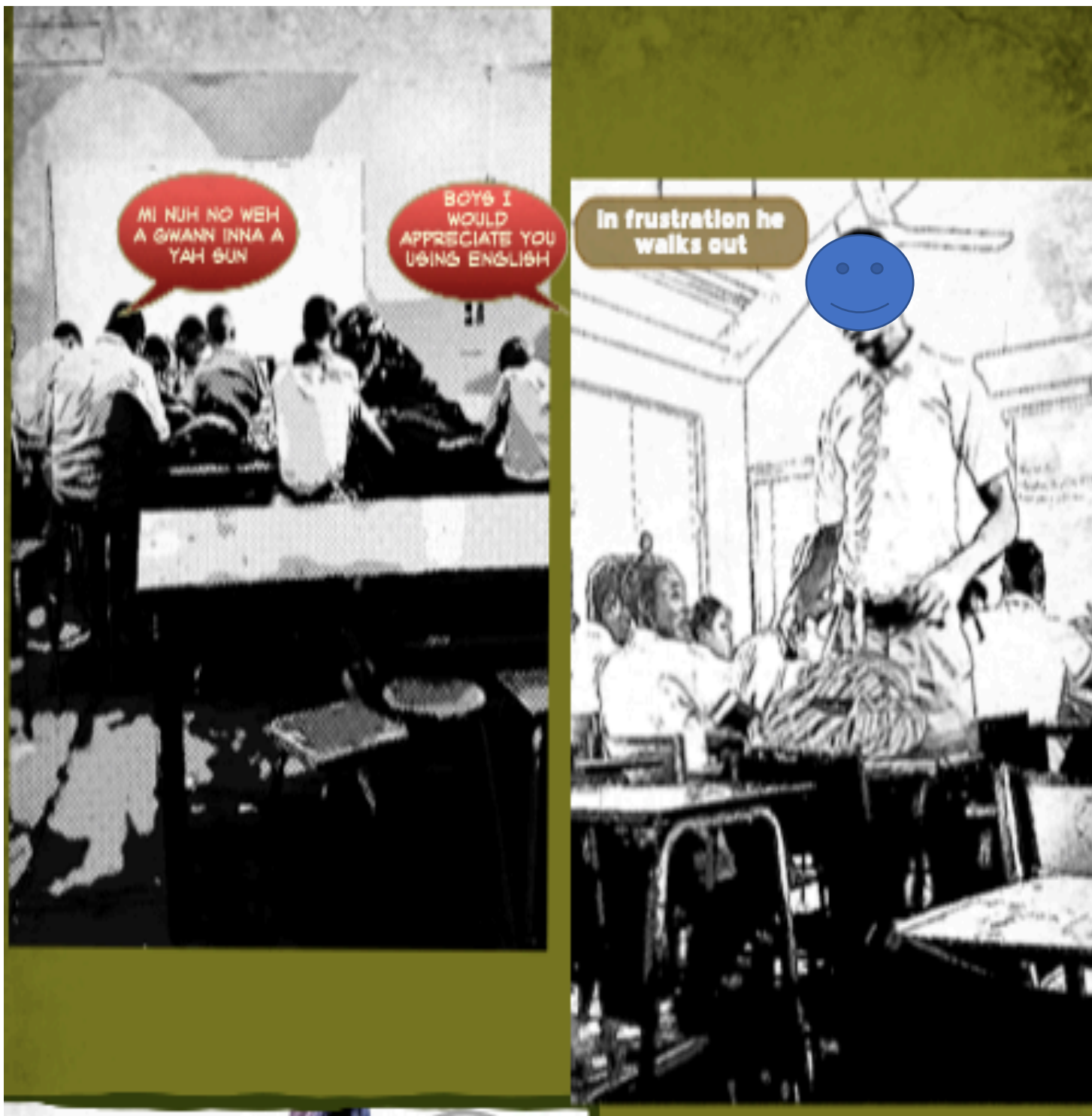


Fig. 3 An Illustration of Joe's Graphic Novel Page

In this depiction, it is evident that the speaker (Joe) struggled to feel at ease in the classroom due to the teacher's insistence on monolingual practices. Farr and Song (2011) posit that this can be problematic for some students as they need to feel that they are being treated equally in their classroom. It is also evident that the teacher's intolerance of language diversity in that ELL class had an adverse effect on Joe who felt oppressed and rebelled by walking out. In later unrecorded conversations about his graphic novel, Joe divulged that the depicted image was from an earlier encounter in grade 8, commenting "*When I didn't like English classes.*" When I probed him further about this he said he felt at that time, he said: "*The teacha di too speaky spoky and act like wi nah nuh sense because win nuh answa everything inna English*" [The teacher was too pretentious and acted like we were stupid because we didn't answer all the questions in English]. Joe seemed particularly discontented that she made him felt stupid for not responding in SJE in her class. Farr and Song (2011) again contend this can have devastating consequences for students' participation in the classroom. In examining attitudes toward different language varieties in US classrooms, the authors assert:

A (standard) English-only policy adopted for the schooling of students whose multilingual realities challenge the notion of a monolingual standard not only deprives such students of learning opportunities, including developing (and becoming literate in) their home languages, but it also furthers an ideology of contempt toward subordinate languages and dialects – and their speakers. (Farr & Song, 2011, p.659)

This reasoning validates Joe's discontent at being taught from a deficit position because he was not a fluent SJE speaker and his subsequent feelings of resentment towards the teacher. In

support of this view, Ogbu (2008) observes that when students like Joe have such negative language experiences in a classroom, these can reduce their motivation in school and increase the likelihood that they will become hostile to school in general.

However, like Sam and Peter, Joe admitted that his attitude towards ELL had changed significantly over time and he liked being in his current English A class. He shared that the “*Di teacha cool man*” [the teacher is cool], which seemed to have positively changed his attitude towards English language learning. When pressed about what “cool” meant, he explained that she “*nuh have no problem with students using JC and she nuh judgemental*” [didn’t have a problem with students using JC and she was not judgemental]. In our second interview, he explained that he was comfortable in his English A class because his current teacher had a positive attitude towards JC, unlike his earlier experiences with teachers who engaged in monolingual classroom practices. He expressed these thoughts:

Tanya: So how do you feel about the subject (English A)?

Joe: Miss mi feel comfortable with the teacher and the subject itself because mi need it later on in life to get job [inaudible].

Tanya: So in your class though, in your English A class, are you allowed to use JC in the class?

Joe: Yes miss.

Tanya: You are, your teacher give you permission to do so?

Joe: Miss you can use it without consent. She doesn’t have a problem with it. She uses it herself.

I also observed that Joe, though very reserved, seemed more confident in his English A class when sharing. Gee (2004) and Degraff (2004, 2005) theorize that a positive change in language attitude, such as the one Joe experienced, is possible when students are given opportunities to

learn the academic language alongside their home language. That is, the literacy practices of the students are included in the learning process. This seems to be the case for Joe, given that during my observations of his English A class, he didn't appear uncomfortable sharing with his teacher, although he was usually a quiet student. It can be deduced that his confidence and positive attitude towards the subject stemmed from his positive experiences with the teacher. Joe's positive response to the subject and the teacher also supports Nero and Stevens' (2018) theory that teachers' methodologies and ideologies that privilege both languages can positively influence students' outcomes. As such, the authors advocate for a shift in teaching practices that first require "structural and attitudinal changes to teacher training that engage students' bilingual competence for learning and boost their confidence in the classroom" (Nero & Stevens, 2018, p. 2).

Extracting SJE's value. There was also further evidence that Joe was developing a more positive attitude towards SJE and saw it as a language of success. In the third interview, he expressed his love for SJE as a language that offered more opportunities for success than JC, saying:

Joe: Boy mi love it (SJE) still enuh because at the end of the day it can get far in life, miss JC nice to use around your friends dem enuh but when yuh go into an interview yuh caan use JC miss yuh affi use SE to get the job [Boy I love it still you know because at the end of the day it can get me far in my life, miss JC is nice to use around your friends you know but when you go into an interview you can't use JC, you have to use SJE to get the job.]

Tanya: Do you think that your use of JC impacts your success in life anyway?

Joe: No really enuh[you know] miss, miss yuh [you] see mi[I] use it to socialize. English will give yuh [you] the success miss.

Tanya: Ok so you think JC does not provide much opportunity for success?

Joe: No Miss.

Here, it seems Joe's expressed love for SJE is linked to his view that it would contribute to his success after school. Like Peter and John, he also seemed to believe that JC would not provide those avenues to his success. However, as he indicated, his use of JC did not impede his future success in any way, which shows his desire to maintain his use of JC. Based on these comments, it seems Joe's unease, like Sam's, might not have been with learning ELL, but more with some teachers' monolingual approach that might have been better suited to native English speakers. Bryan (2004b) cautions against a monolingual approach as she maintains that one of the significant language challenges in schools is teachers teaching Creole-speaking students English as a mother tongue rather than as a second language as it is for them. She asserts that SJE needs to be taught as a second language to facilitate students' development in both languages and their eventual success.

For Joe and the other boys, it seems a monolingual approach in classrooms and teachers' poor attitudes towards JC and JC speakers were particularly impactful in fostering poor attitudes toward SJE. Despite these negative experiences, Joe and the other boys seemed to have positive views of JC still, while recognizing the social and economic possibilities in acquiring SJE. Some of their teachers seemed to encourage these attitudes, as is demonstrated in the next section.

The Teachers: Fostering a Culture of Positive Attitudes Toward JC

It has long been established that many JC speaking students have been taught from deficit positions in some Jamaican classrooms (Bryan, 2004b; Craig, 2006a; Devonish, 2017; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Nero, 2006; Nero & Ahmad, 2014). There is also a long history of students being subjected to correctionist and eradicationist pedagogies that seek to remove JC from their vocabulary in the English classroom (Britton, 2017; Devonish, 1986; Nero, 2006; Simmonds-McDonald, 2004). However, the two teachers interviewed in this study, Mrs. Jacob and Mrs.

Hansel, did not appear to engage in such practices. In this section, I draw on their knowledge in the classroom as teachers who interacted daily with the boys to provide valuable insights into how poor language attitudes might have been impacting the boys. The teachers' interview revealed two key findings: 1) both embraced the use of JC in their ELL classes; and 2) they both believed generating positive language attitudes can build students' confidence in the classroom.

Embracing JC in pedagogy. Both Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel (pseudonyms) responded positively to the idea of productively engaging their students in the use of JC in their classrooms. Mrs. Hansel was a middle-class, bilingual teacher of African descent in her early thirties with high fluency in SJE and a sophisticated presence. She grew up in a middle-income urban community with parents who encouraged monolingual SJE practices, but she preferred speaking both languages. Mrs. Hansel was an experienced graduate trained teacher of language and literature who had extensive knowledge about teaching in a Creole-speaking environment. She was stern but warm with her students. Mrs. Jacob was also a middle-class, dominant SJE-speaking bilingual teacher of English from an urban community who was trained to teach in a Creole-speaking environment. She was an experienced trained graduate teacher in her mid-thirties of African descent who was outgoing and warm towards her students. Although both Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacobs were dominant SJE speakers from middle-class backgrounds, they embraced JC and fostered a culture of language diversity among students in their classrooms. This is evident in the extracts below, where both vocalized the need for teachers to demonstrate more positive attitudes toward JC speaking students. Mrs. Hansel commented that it was important that teachers did not make students feel embarrassed for speaking JC. She said:

We don't shun them or make them feel embarrassed when using the dialect, right sometimes we use it as an opportunity for them to understand function and form. For example, where it is suitable for us to say it, how best it can be used. So, we model that for them, but we try not to let them feel less than. The students typically speak the JC

because that is the language they use at home. This is what they are comfortable with, we understand that and so we try not to use the target language as a deterrent.

Mrs. Jacob supported this as she advocated for more openness and positivity when working with dominant JC-speaking students in the classroom, saying:

Our environment forces us to be open to it (JC) because when I just started teaching here to be honest, I realized that many of the children when they are communicating cannot use SJE. They could not understand what you are saying. They did not get it literally. So, those who predominantly speak the JC are sometimes reluctant to participate especially if their fellow peers make more an effort to use the SJE, but you work to help them.

From this discourse, it appeared that Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob were making pedagogical and curricular changes to subvert some of the negative attitudes towards JC and its speakers in their classrooms. They both advocated for a positive approach in teaching JC-speaking students, and a willingness to work alongside students, model the target language, and help them make the transition between the two languages. These shifting perspectives of valuing students' use of JC in ELL classrooms and helping them to transition between JC and SJE might have likely contributed to some of the observed positive behaviours in their classrooms. For instance, I noted on my first visit to each of the teacher's classroom that many of the students responded positively towards them and seemed to have an interest in learning the subject. Both teachers' classroom practices of using both languages alongside each other, was evidence that they were responding to scholarship within Jamaica. That is, scholarly works that have repeatedly called for pedagogical shifts from negative attitudes towards students' use of JC to more positive integration of the language in teaching (Britton, 2017; K. Bryan, 2012; Bryan, 2004a; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Nero, 2000; Pratt-Johnson, 2006; Wassink, 1999). This approach is strongly supported in Devonish and Carpenter's (2007a) research project assessing the impact of a four year long Bilingual Education Project (BEP) in several Jamaican primary schools. The project,

mandated by the Ministry of Education (MOE), examined how a bilingual approach to learning impacted teachers' attitudes to JC and students' learning. The study reported improvement in teachers' attitudes and BEP students' performance throughout the project. The researchers' also reported that the project was successful in meeting one of its objectives, which was for teachers, through their practice, to make a shift from seeing JC as a problem to one that offers students great opportunities. The report did establish the need for changes in teaching methodologies to reflect students' language in the classroom and provide more opportunities for students' success.

In unrecorded conversations, both teachers and I spoke about the trends of having teachers of English being resistant to JC in the classroom, to which Mrs. Jacob noted: "*It is not helpful to students to have such an attitude.*" Craig (2006) supports this view as well as he contends that a pedagogical approach that privileges one language over the other only serves the purpose of frustrating students, which might result in even greater academic failures. He further advances a need for consistency in theoretical and methodological practices that values students' home language to increase their success (Craig, 2006). Evans' (2001) study with six groups of grade seven high school students and their Language Arts teachers also found that a poor attitude toward JC had a negative impact on students, while positive attitudes generated positive results. In the project dubbed "Operational English" teachers were encouraged to "place value on both Creole and Standard English," and the results showed that students had increased self confidence and willingness to speak SJE in classes (p. 11). Evans (2001) reported that at the end of the year students showed "marked differences in behaviour and attitude." She noted some students no longer laughed at those who tried to speak SJE and they grew more respectful and supportive of each others' language (both SJE and JC) use. Her overall conclusion was that students had a "better sense of self and a more healthier attitude to SJE" (p. 135). Evans (2001) encourage

teachers to demonstrate positive language attitudes in their classrooms and balance their language approaches. Bryan (2004a) also implored teachers of English to engage in positive language practices because they were central to the process of change in language attitudes through classroom discourses that can significantly impact students' emerging attitudes and practices. Mrs. Hansel offered similar evidence of this as she too noted the importance of the discourse in the English classroom in stimulating a positive attitude towards the subject.

Mobilizing JC to generate positive classroom experiences. Both Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel showed particular interest in connecting with students using their natural language. In the interview, Mrs. Hansel pointed out the importance of not “frowning” on students' language and generating positive classroom environments. She said:

Yes, so we like to motivate our students. It makes a big difference if we don't frown at the JC because we understand that we have to always try preserve our culture because it is a part of our culture. But we also understand that English is a global language so we try to get the students to understand the dynamism of both. There is a time and a place for both, so our aim is to get the students to feel comfortable using both, to be able to manipulate both. And our students as I mentioned earlier, takes no exceptions to learning SJE.

This extract illustrates Mrs. Hansel's positive attitude towards JC and her desire to expose her students to the value of both languages in her classroom. She showed an awareness of the need to value JC as a part of students' culture while engaging them in SJE to prepare them for a globalized world. Degraff's (2005, 2009) scholarly work on Haitian Creole in Haitian schools also recommended the integration of both languages in language classrooms. Degraff (2010) contends that, pedagogically, this integration was necessary to remove the “linguistic apartheid” that existed in some schools (para. 6). He further recommended that “French be taught as a foreign language for Haitians, with Creole as the language of instruction, that way all academic subjects could be adequately taught” (para 8). Mrs. Hansel seemed to embrace Degraff's (2010) recommendations. For example, although she was a sophisticated fluent SJE speaker, she did not

impose her language practice on students in her interactions with them. Although she was fluent in SJE, whenever she spoke with her students in and outside of her classroom, she fluidly moved between the two languages. While she seemed to hold herself to a high standard in her use of SJE, she did not seem to impose the same views on her students. I did not observe her verbally reprimanding students for using JC. Instead, she often spoke in JC. This was a deviation from the monolingual, purist ideologies some students might have been exposed to in some Jamaican ELL classrooms. Contrastingly, Taylor's (2007) research shows that this is not as easy or even comfortable for some teachers, especially those from middle-class backgrounds. In her study on teachers' use of JC in instruction, one participant shared this:

I was excited about it. I still am excited about it but when it came to putting it in practice it was very difficult. ...I was trying to talk Jamaican and I realized that you know because of my own background and because I was trained. As you know when you go before the children you have to watch your language and all of that and be good in English (Taylor, 2007, p.228).

In this scenario, the teacher also expressed that students' thought she sounded funny. In this case, one of the challenges for teachers in using JC in their instruction is that students might perceive them as "strange." This is partly due to the way children have been acculturated to expect their teachers to assert their authority through their command of SJE. Thus, as some of the boys have also expressed, it is not surprising that some students do prefer their teachers use only SJE.

Mrs. Jacob also encouraged JC in her class to boost students' confidence and generate positive relationships. She seemed to have a warmth about her that encouraged her students to be themselves, including speaking their natural language. In our interview, she noted that it was important that students accessed their language in her classroom, saying, "You have to make sure

they (students) have access, (to their language), even if you are using SJE you have to code-switch, you have to break it down for them.” Here Mrs. Jacob demonstrated her commitment to supporting students’ language in her classroom and deepening understanding. Her positivity seemed to have had an impact on students. I noticed that they seemed comfortable using JC with her and would often share jokes with her. In her class, the students seemed more self-assured, eager to converse with her, and had positive views of self, language and the subject. Evans (2001) research offered similar observations. As mentioned, the research showed that students were more confident speakers when they were immersed in positive language environments. In the end, both Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel seemed to hold similar views about students’ use of JC in their classrooms. They both seemed to deviate from deficit views of JC and its speakers and were willing to embrace pedagogical practices that valued language diversity in the classroom. They shifted from practices that discouraged JC in their classrooms, and provided more avenues for students to actively participate in classes using their language, which ultimately gave them some power in classroom discourse. Several teachers in Taylor’s (2007) research also demonstrated a commitment to JC in their instructions. One teacher, Audrey, stated that JC was her choice of language in her classroom because it liberates her and her students. Unlike Bettina in the study, who showed discomfort in using JC in her classes, Audrey was at home using it. She stated, “with Jamaican Creole I am comfortable, I am so comfortable that I wish they would have an English teacher in the school and say Audrey you are responsible for teaching in Jamaican Creole, that’s the way I feel about it” (p. 229). These narratives from Taylor’s (2007) research confirm that there are contradicting experiences and views of JC in the classroom, but some teachers are embracing it in their practice.

To conclude, the four boys' narratives and the teachers' interview revealed three key findings: 1) the boys developed feelings of inadequacies as JC speakers when poor attitudes were shown toward their language; 2) they believed SJE offered more opportunities for economic and academic success than JC; and 3) ELL teachers' positive attitude towards JC and its speakers seemed to generate a positive attitude toward the subject among the boys. The findings further highlighted the value of engaging students in both languages in the classroom to support their growth. This sets the stage for the evaluation of the theme of language and power among the four boys, as I will discuss in the next section.

Language and Power: Constructing Linguistic Identities

The big picture of linguistic power in school and community. Language as a form of communication continues to be one of the main ways to access power in any society and is a powerful tool for many who use it to make others feel powerless (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2009; Kramsch, 2004; Plummer, 2019; Norton, 2013; Scott, 2015). For the boys, they lived and interacted in a language dichotomy with the power of their language determined by the societal constructs that defined their communities and school environments. Thus, the emergence of linguistic power as one of the main themes was anticipated. I use the term power to refer to the socially constructed relationships among individuals, institutions, and communities that assign values to the languages produced (Degraff, 2005; Giroux, 2009). In the Jamaican context, the elites, usually SJE speakers, hold language power, and as such SJE is granted linguistic, social and economic capital. As Bourdieu (1991) observes, linguistic power is grounded in the assumption that the cultural, economic, social and symbolic values ascribed to particular language varieties in a society determine which varieties emerge as a symbol of power or

powerlessness. This practice often means that one linguistic variety (SJE) acquires the status of standard language and has great linguistic capital and others (JC) are relegated to poor statuses.

At NM, SJE was the symbol of power, and JC was the symbol of powerlessness. Teachers seemed to pride themselves on using SJE and often strongly urged students to do so as well. Further, students with greater access to SJE were selected as student leaders and touted as the models to be emulated. During school assemblies, these students were given immense responsibilities of leading general assemblies, guiding other students, and participating in council meetings, among other things. In this case, these students become the elite members of the school who then engage in what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as symbolic domination. My intent here is not to undermine the work of these students, rather it is to underscore the currency SJE had in NM high school. I observed that it appeared indefensible for student leaders to speak JC, especially in an assembly, as this was usually followed by laughter. But as Britton (2017) notes, the standard language often derives its power from its association with the financial, cultural and academic elites and so even though over 90% of students spoke JC at NM, administrators and teachers spoke SJE, so it was considered the more powerful language. In this case, SJE had the linguistic, financial, social, and academic power in this school.

The opposite existed for the surrounding communities where the boys resided. There was little to no English used, and residents were quite confident in using JC. In fact, the use of English was not particularly encouraged as it was seen as being “stush” (pretentious). In these communities, JC had much power, and speakers were respected for their ability to keep it “real” (talking in their natural tongue). Consequently, the boys lived in two distinct language realities. In the following sections, I draw on an experience I had with them and their narratives to explore their diverse, varied experiences within the two above-mentioned language contexts.

Confronting Two Languages

This research continues to reinforce the view that stories are multiple, varied, contentious, and plural. To unravel the plurality of the stories within this research, I will first draw on an early experience with all the boys to demonstrate the conflicts that can arise when two language varieties collide and there is a struggle for linguistic power. In my epilogue to the boys' shared narratives, I offer parts of my own story with them to create a context for how language is and continues to be sources of power in interactions. Through this story, I am introducing the reader to the nuances of interactions between myself, a perceived non-JC speaker, and the four boys who engaged in subtle linguistic tactics to authenticate my linguistic ability as a JC speaker. As Plummer (2019) posits, narratives on their own means nothing, they require human agency, action, empathy, and performance to bring them to life. So, I am bringing these narratives to life, so they can take on new meanings for readers. The following story demonstrates the challenges I faced entering into the boys' world and securing my place as an authentic JC speaker.

Tanya: Please let me in. *For the first meeting with the boys, my husband drove, partly because I was unfamiliar with the area and more so because he was outright scared at the idea of me driving into an inner-city community by myself. I did point out to him that he was reacting to stereotypes about inner-cities, but I was somewhat relieved when he insisted on driving as I was not looking forward to going into a strange community by myself. We picked up the boys in their communities and headed to the national park in the capital, Kingston. In the car, I attempted to initiate conversations with the boys by asking them about their day, but they responded with single words in SJE. However, I noticed whenever my husband spoke to them, they would respond to him at length and in JC. So, I started conversations in JC, but these were*

also met with monosyllabic responses in SJE. Incidentally, my husband and I spoke about the possibilities of this taking place prior to meeting the boys as I anticipated that they would interact more with him, being that he is a man. At that time, I had encouraged him to engage the boys in conversations as much as possible to reduce the awkward moments. So, for the rest of the journey, the boys conversed freely with my husband, while I made a few comments now and then. This was a new situation for me as I was usually talkative and was accustomed to leading conversations.

As I listened keenly to how they interacted with my husband, I considered the implications of being a middle-class woman conducting research with a group of boys from the inner-city about their language. It might have seemed to them that as a woman in academia, I would be judgemental of how they speak. That said, I was still puzzled about their language attitude towards me since my husband was clearly educated and well-spoken, but never seemed to be a threat to their language choices.

As I pondered my entry into the group, I figured power was with Sam, not just language power but group power. He seemed to hold much power within the group and often dictated language choices, so I figured he offered the best opportunity for the group to welcome me. Sam seemed aware of his power and was not afraid to show this. He had a dominant personality that seemed to draw the other boys to him and they followed his lead, whether consciously or unconsciously. In a sense, it seems he was controlling the conversations and the tone of the meeting. So, I made it my priority to engage him as much as possible using JC, since it was the language of currency in the group. While we relaxed in the park, my husband went to get lunch, and the boys talked with each other, noticeably ignoring me. I sought Sam out and began to share childhood memories with him. As I shared fond memories of playing with the boys, he

seemed surprised, but warmed up to me a bit. He said, “Wait you miss, a tomboy a weh yuh a say, so tell mi some a di ting dem weh yuh used to do, yuh eva dust out none a di boy dem a play bouncy or marble?” “Yuh can climb tree good, yuh go dung a river too?” [Wait you miss, so tell me some of the things you used to do with the boys. Were you any good at bouncy (a game with rubber bands) or marble? Can you really climb a tree? Did you go to the river?]. To his queries, I replied, “Of course mi did a big playa, coulda rax off eny a di bwoy dem, dem nuh mess wid me enuh.” “Mi even mek some a dem bawl..lawks mi neva nice at all [laughter.] [Of course I was a really good player, I could beat any of the boys and they knew not to mess with me, I even taunted some of them when I won, I wasn’t nice at all].

The conversations got better from there, but I never deluded myself into thinking I had won him over, as throughout our conversation, he deliberately used basilectal creole with me to see if I was pretending to speak fluent JC. In between, he threw in quite a bit of local slangs, and I got the sense he was testing me. Nevertheless, whatever I said and did seem to appease him, and he was a lot friendlier. Eventually, the boys followed his lead and began sharing with me some of their fondest memories growing up. I spoke of days cooking at the riverside, bird hunting with the boys and playing marbles. I could see the look of wonder in their eyes as they reconciled the image of the woman in front of them with that of a girl besting the boys at marbles. I shared jokes about falling out of trees and getting into trouble for sneaking off with the boys to pick apples, catch crabs, or simply being mischievous. From there on, everything changed.

As I reflect on this narration, I realize I earned the boys respect when I spoke JC and talked about my childhood. As they became more comfortable with me, the dynamics of our conversations changed. I noticed they spoke fluent JC and seemed less threatened by my presence. It seemed, in those moments when I spoke basilectal JC, I shared their language power.

From their perspective, it seemed, I had authenticated myself as a genuine Jamaican. From this experience, I learned two things: language choice had a significant impact on how impressions are formed, and the user of the more dominant language in a group is perceived as more credible than the user of a powerless language variety (Bourdieu, 1991; Plummer, 2019). I was the powerless speaker in the boys' group because I was not perceived as possessing the language of currency. Their perceived contrast in language varieties led to tensions in my relationship with them, and I had to work hard to resolve these. The boys were aware that they had the linguistic power in our relationship, and they would wield that power when necessary. I also learned early in my interactions with the boys that I would have to consider how their actions might be a reflection of linguistic hierarchies that have marginalized them because of their gender, class, and even race.

In later unrecorded conversations, Sam revealed to me that in that initial meeting, they were testing me to see if "I was a faker". When I questioned him about his actions at that time he told me: "Wi affi mek yuh know seh a we in charge, wi have enough people a try control how wi talk" [We had to let you know we were in charge, we have enough people trying to control how we speak]. This exchange indicated that the boys felt they needed to assert their power in our interactions so that I wouldn't forget that I was not in charge. Their reaction might have been triggered by the knowledge that I was a teacher, and they associated my profession with their interactions with some of their own teachers who, as I illustrated above, insisted that they spoke and interacted using SJE. This story also exemplifies the constant shifts in language power and underscores that the boys are agentive in their linguistic identities. As I dig into their narratives, I want the reader to know that these boys are in control of their narratives, and as the upcoming

sections will illustrate, they used tactics of language authentication to assert their linguistic power as JC speakers.

The Boys: Unravelling Personal Stories

Sam: Mi a Jamaican Creole speaker to di bone. For the boys, language power was continuously shifting and was an implied social exchange that was “constantly being renegotiated as symbolic resources change their value” (Norton, 2013, p. 47). From the outset of this research, Sam positioned himself as a dominant JC speaker who was aware that there was power in his language choices. His narratives revealed three important findings of his experiences of linguistic power and powerlessness in different environments: 1) his linguistic identity was closely tied to his identity as a Jamaican; 2) he experienced linguistic power as JC speaker in social settings, but powerlessness as an SJE speaker in his school; and 3) he believed schools’ policies that restricted students’ authentic language was confining to students’ power in school.

JC and Sam’s linguistic identity. Sam was a vocal student, and from the first interview, he asserted himself as a dominant Jamaican Creole speaker whose identity as a Jamaican was tied to his use of JC, saying:

I would have to defend my creole still ... In every circumstance or in every way... why shouldn't I... firstly of all... if it is a real Jamaican mi a speak to me know seh you understand the language why are you going to tell me not to speak it?” [If it is a real Jamaican I am talking to, I know you understand the language, so why are you going to tell me not to speak it].

In this interview extract, Sam is establishing that he is a proud JC speaker who wants to express himself freely in his native language. As supported in the literature, here, he is actively constructing his identity as a JC speaker and purposely aligning himself with being a “real” Jamaican (Berzonsky, 2011). Sam’s statement exemplifies Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) theory

that we use our interactions to indicate our identities and relationships with others. The authors propose that individuals co-construct identities and express these identities through interaction using tactics of intersubjectivity to ally themselves with or distance themselves from specific social groups or individuals. In this case, Sam seemed to be distancing himself from anyone (likely teachers and administrators) who might question his use of JC, alluding to the idea that a “real Jamaican” should speak JC. This stance by Sam is in keeping with the research of Bulcholtz and Hall (2005), who explicate that it is common for some speakers to engage in tactics of distinction, wherein they underscore ways in which they are markedly different from other speakers to highlight their linguistic differences. For Sam, it seems, it was un-Jamaican not to speak JC or to question others’ choices to do so. His comments suggest that his identity as a Jamaican was inextricably linked to his use of JC. In this sense, he was engaging Bulcholtz and Hall’s (2005) processes of authentication and denaturalization. This meant he was authenticating himself as a genuine JC speaker while rejecting others’ perceived dissonance with the language. He showed further evidence of JC’s connection to his linguistic identity, suggesting:

To be honest enuh miss, yuh see Jamrock [term of endearment for Jamaica], not only Jamrock because even if mi go [if I go to] America, US, Canada, all over the world mi woulda [I would] still use the JC mi nah tell no lie [I am not lying], for instance Friday I was speaking to someone and they say that anywhere you went to you would have people dying to hear the JC, like every word him speak, the person just want tell him to speak it.

Again, for Sam, there seems to be a sense of pride in using JC and the collective power that comes from representing himself as a JC speaker. Here he seemed to be authenticating himself as JC speaker and supporting that cause due to the real or perceived idea that “foreigners” enjoy listening to JC from an “authentic Jamaican”. Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) research investigating Caribbean high school students’ use of Creoles as acts of identity also showed that Jamaican participants were using JC as a vehicle for their emerging identities as Jamaicans. In this case,

Sam's use of JC was his act of identity. Through his "acts" he reaffirmed his construction of self, which then extended to his identity with his community of speakers. Sam's process of aligning with a language was his way of constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing his identity within his social and linguistic constructs (Jenkins, 2004).

Linguistic power and powerlessness. Sam was aware that JC offered him linguistic power in some situations while rendering him powerless in other settings. Thus, it seemed he worked to extend situations that granted him that power. For instance, I observed that he was at ease and confident when speaking with his peers in JC and often could be found in social situations engaging with friends. Sam's fluency in JC granted him linguistic power and with power came domination (Bourdieu, 1991). As the speaker of the more powerful language, Sam has accessibility to share meaning in this form that granted him capital (Bourdieu, 1991). As I shared in earlier sections, Sam was a confident boy who showed leadership qualities and was outgoing. So conceivably, he would want to retain social and linguistic capital and would be perplexed about being in language situations that required him to speak SJE fluently. While Sam appeared confident in his use of JC and believed that it offered him much power and freedom, he also showed acute awareness of how SJE can be confining to him. In one of his pages from his graphic novel, shown below, he alluded to the linguistic restraint and powerlessness SJE represented to him as he struggled to be recognized as a capable JC-speaking student.

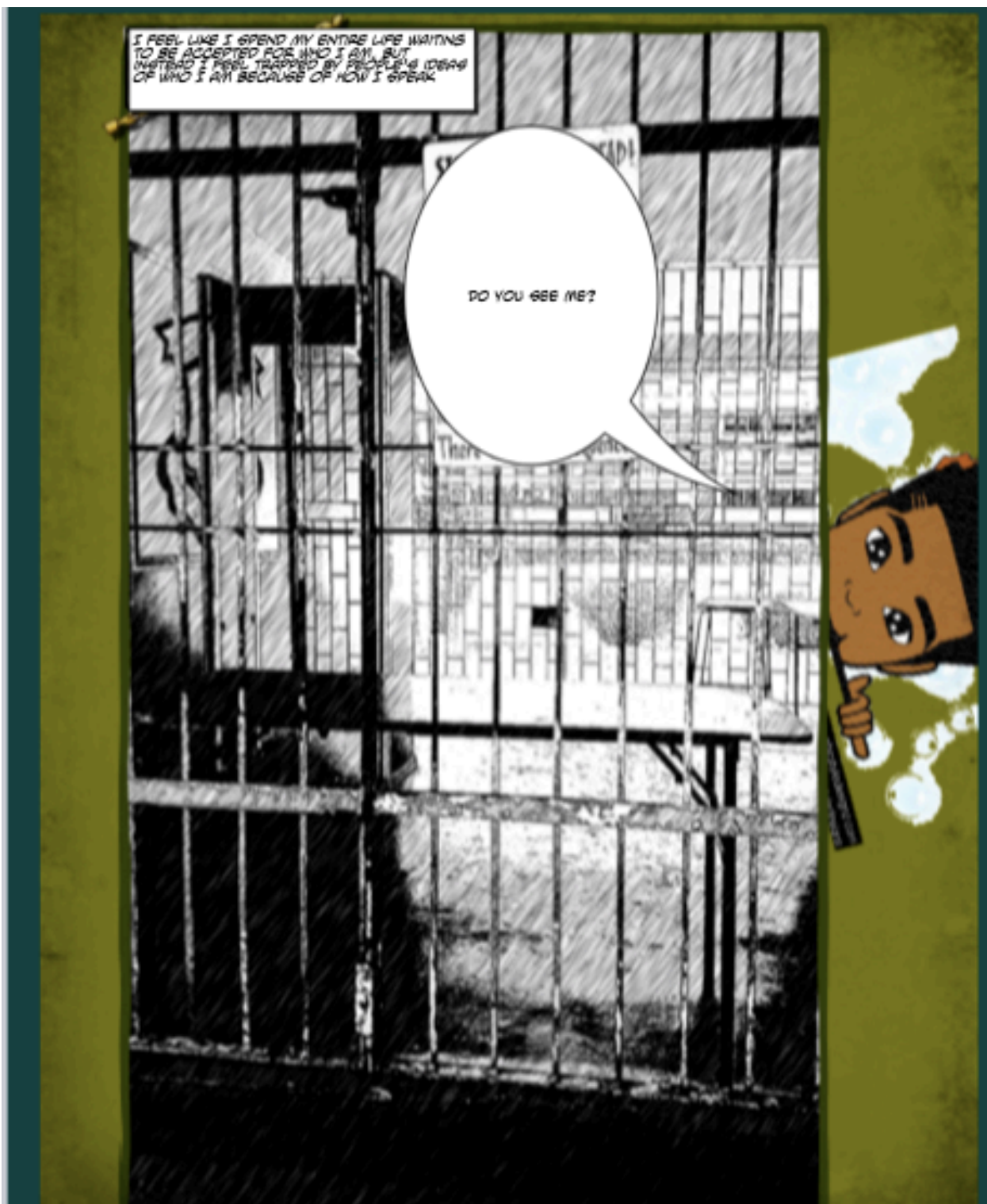


Fig. 4 An Illustration of Sam's Graphic Novel Page

Figure 4 depicts a page from Sam's graphic novel of a boy peeking out from behind metal bars to ask the question, "Do you see me?" On this page, Sam wrote, "I feel like I spend my entire life waiting to be accepted for who I am, but instead, I feel trapped by people's idea of who I am because of how I speak." Sam moved on in his graphic novel to link this image to the confinement and invisibility he felt as a student in school when he was required to speak SJE. This revelation indicates that he was experiencing some conflict being in a space where he felt he could not be his authentic self as a JC speaker. In follow-up unrecorded conversations with me, Sam expressed that "*SJE a hold mi back, mi not myself when mi a use it*" [SJE is holding me back, I am not myself when I am using it]. This suggests that he might have been experiencing issues of identity and loss of power in situations that required him to use SJE in an academic context. Sam, like many Jamaican students that predominantly speaks JC, is expected to interact in SJE, the only language of instruction in schools. In a context where members of some social groups acquire valued linguistic capital in the same manner that one acquires financial or economic capital, the school is the marketplace for the reinforcement of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1985, 1991). Thus, for Sam to acquire linguistic capital in this setting, he needed to use the required currency, SJE. As Bourdieu (1991) theorized, where he cannot or does not have access to this valued linguistic capital, he may be socially devalued. Therefore, in Sam's case, he believed that he lacked the linguistic capital to command power in situations where SJE was the dominant language and was thus devalued. To re-establish his dominance, it is conceivable that Sam sought out situations that offered him more linguistic power.

School as a site of linguistic powerlessness. In further support of the linguistic powerlessness he experienced in school, Sam revealed this to me in an unrecorded follow up conversation: "*Mi choose fi use di bars inna di graphic novel enuh miss because sometimes*

school a like a prison mi deh, dem waan tell mi how fi talk, behave and control everything” [I choose to use the bars in the graphic novel because sometimes school feels like a prison, they (teachers and administrators) want to control how I talk and behave]. It seems Sam’s focus on the metal bars was an examination of the ways school suppressed his linguistic freedom, a freedom he seemed to enjoy when speaking JC. In some ways, he seemed to be battling the linguistic structures of the school. Norton (2013) offers some insights on students’ linguistic conflicts in schools as she rationalizes that conflicts will exist when students are agentive in their language development. Norton (2013) however notes:

If we agree that diverse identity positions offer learners a range of positions from which to speak, listen, write or read, the challenge for language educators is to explore which identity positions offer the greatest opportunity for social engagement and interaction.

(p.16)

In response to the possible conflicts that might arise between students’ identity positions and institutional practices, Norton (2013) suggests more open discourses on students’ language identities in the classroom to minimize language conflicts. She further expounds that for this shift to take place, teachers, educators and policymakers will have to continue working together.

Sam also revealed in unrecorded follow-up conversations with me, that his question “Do you see me?” on the illustrated graphic novel page was to get teachers to think about “*how dem mek students feel when dem force dem fi talk SJE all di time.*” [how they make students feel when they force them to speak SJE]. It seems Sam’s intent might have been to provoke conversations on students’ voices in the classroom and the powerlessness some experienced speaking SJE. He alluded further to this in the first interview, saying:

I would honestly prefer if they actually change that [use more JC than SJE], why I say that like it’s like 97% of the population in Jamaica use the JC, but why do you force that

upon your population to speak SJE, not only SJE but Standard English, SE was not, I wouldn't say it was made for us, it was made for who now...the British.

Here, Sam is questioning schools' practices that require students to speak SJE, a language he believed wasn't created for them. He indicated his preference for JC that was the natural language of the population.

In summary, Sam's narratives showed a deep connection between JC and his identity. He embraced JC as a means of engaging his linguistic power and remaining true to himself. This idea of identity and its relationship to language was not unique to Sam as it was further illustrated in the examination of the narratives of the other boys and provided as a suitable starting point for an analysis of patterns and contradictions in their stories of language and identity.

Peter: I know my place. Peter, like Sam, was conscious of language power in his speech environments. Like Sam, his narratives also revealed that JC was closely tied to his linguistic identity. However, there were distinctive differences in how he engaged his linguistic power. Unlike Sam, he maximized his linguistic and social power through his use of both JC and SJE.

Identifying as a JC speaker. Peter also identified as a JC speaker. Throughout his narratives, he seemed motivated to identify himself as a JC speaker who "knew his place" within his various environmental constructs and social groups. This motivation was particularly evident in his graphic novel. He used powerful images to align himself with JC and its speakers, as is illustrated in the graphic novel page below.



Fig. 5 An Illustration of Peter's Graphic Novel Page

In Figure 5 of Peter's graphic novel illustration, he appeared to be aligning his social and linguistic identity with his friends and fellow JC speakers who were not judgemental of his use of JC. He was also pushing back against stereotypes that JC-speaking boys, like himself, were aggressive speakers. He also seemed to be engaging in what Tajfel (1979) explains as the three stages of socialization; first, he seemed to be categorizing people into social groups, that is, boys like himself and those who seemed to disapprove of JC speakers. Then he identified the linguistic and social group he fitted into (JC speakers) and aligned himself with those speakers. Finally, and again in keeping with Tajfel's three stages, Peter also engaged in comparisons that asserted his place with that particular group. For instance, his depiction of the binoculars in panel 4 alludes to his separation from scrutineers who might have disapproved of JC. He seemed to be comparing such individuals to his fellow JC speakers who are non-judgemental. In a sense, Peter seemed to be finding his place among speakers and reaffirming his identity as a JC speaker. This might also explain why he, like Sam, seemed to be using distinguishing tactics to separate himself from speakers who might think JC speakers were aggressive.

Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) theory that developing identities usually acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and social factors further supports this research's claim that Peter was using his social relations with other JC speakers to separate himself from non-Jamaican Creole speakers. For Bulcholtz and Hall (2005), it is not overly simplistic as similarities and differences but includes other overlapping relations of genuineness, pretense, and authority. For example, I observed that some of Peter's interactions with his teachers when he was using SJE seemed ingenuine, somewhat forced, and did not have the authority he probably intended. On the other hand, he was a fluent JC speaker who had a flair

with the language that often brought smiles to his peers' faces. He exhibited great ease in his interactions and was confident, commanding, and legitimate. It can be presumed that Peter might have been experiencing more authentic and genuine experiences when using JC with peers than SJE with teachers. Notwithstanding this, Peter did embrace his use of SJE in some circumstances to maximize his linguistic power, as will be explored in the next section.

Maximizing linguistic and social power. While Peter seemed to be a proud JC speaker, his narratives showed that he understood the power of language in different situations and was willing to alter his language choices according to his environment to increase his linguistic power. He used this to capitalize on and increase his power in his community and at school. For example, I noticed that when Peter interacted with the men and women in his community, he did so in basilectal JC. He also did the same with his peers. He greeted many boys with “wah gwaan parrie” a common Jamaican expression that shows comradery and friendship. This behaviour was in direct contrast to his interactions within academic environments, both at his school and in visiting other high schools where SJE was perceived as a high linguistic currency. This code-switching technique was initially indicated in his first interview. Here, Peter underscored the importance of leveraging both languages to maintain good social relationships and solidifying his place in his community and school, saying:

Like if you a go step to dem now (community members) and say good morning, good morning sir and dem sumn deh, you ago step in and seh weh yuh a do Charlie, so basically if you are around them and a use SE dem not even ago look pon uh, because dem ago seh a weh dah bredda yah a deal with, yuh seet.” [If you are greeting someone (from the community) and say good morning you don't do it like that you greet them in creole, so basically if you are around them and use SJE they won't acknowledge you].

This extract exemplifies Peter's understanding that different languages are required in different contexts. Here, he underscored that he did not greet community members in SJE because they would not acknowledge him as SJE did not have the same type of currency as JC in

his community. By using the accepted language, Peter was letting his community members know he was one of them, just as I did with the boys in our initial meeting. Like me, he was claiming membership in the group, and when he chose to use JC, he was also demonstrating that he could fit into that group of speakers as well (Hogg, 2003). This observed behaviour is supported in Hogg' (2003) observation that speakers rely on their social networks to access and mobilize their power. In sum, Peter's community members' positive language responses activated his linguistic and social capital in that space.

Peter seemed equally aware of the power of SJE in other situations and also leveraged its use to augment his linguistic and social capital. For instance, in his first and subsequent interviews, he talked about using SJE when visiting perceived prestigious traditional schools so that he did not appear uneducated. He said:

Most time we go pon competition with different schools, with different schools like Wolmers, Queens and them top top schools deh, basically all those students speak SJE so we have to speak it. [Many times when we compete against other schools like Wolmers (considered a top traditional school in Jamaica) where students mostly speak SJE, the Queen's School (an all-female high school) and other top schools, we have to speak SJE because all those students speak SJE].

He went further to say:

You affi remember each school have different culture, like NMH now everybody feel comfortable using creole so when a man see a man and seh yow wah gwaan Wayne, you seh ehhh, but other school now yuh she, hi John, hi wayne, it is like that, so basically being at their school you have to react to, it is like that, so basically you have to speak the language they speak, just that's it." [You have to remember each school has its own culture, like at NMH everyone feels comfortable using JC. When you see a friend and greet him, he expects you to use JC. But if you visit another school where students mostly use SJE you have to react to that, so basically you have to speak the language they speak.]

Peter's comments in both recorded conversations highlighted his awareness that SJE and JC were beneficial to him in specific settings and served as a means of authenticating himself in some school environments. In both conversations, Peter highlighted that he used JC when he was

at NM, but SJE when he visited other traditional high schools. This calculated choice of language demonstrates Peter's awareness of using the right language in the right place and at the right time. Therefore, where SJE held the highest linguistic currency, he adapted to this speech environment to optimize his linguistic power and elevate his status as an SJE speaker. In this context, he might have been motivated to speak SJE because, as Caribbean literature suggests, SJE has been weaponized in some schools to distinguish students who perform poorly academically from "good" students (Bryan, 2004a; Devonish, 2016; Nero, 1997). Further, he was showing an awareness of Bulcholz and Hall's (2005) adequation and distinction theory, wherein he identified behaviours that were sufficiently similar to his and acted on these for interactional purposes. For example, he mentioned in the excerpts above that he greeted his friends at NM using JC because that was the language they were familiar with and comfortable using. In this case, he identified that his friends' use of JC was similar to his and so acted on this for ease in his interactions with them. That said, while Peter showed that he understood what was required of him linguistically to fit into some groups, it did not mean he saw himself as the same as the people in those groups. For example, even though he spoke SJE with students from traditional high schools, he did not see himself as one of them as he referred to them as students from "top top schools", which suggested they were out of his linguistic and social reach.

Peter's self-reported interactions using SJE also implied that he just needed to claim enough trappings of SJE to produce it in some situations and have some power in those instances, but not necessarily to acquire it as a daily means of communication. For example, during classroom observations, I noticed that he attempted to speak SJE with teachers that he might have thought would applaud his use of it, such as his teacher of English. On the other hand, whenever he spoke to his electrical technology teacher, he used only JC, which had better

currency with that teacher. Other than Peter's highlighted attempts to speak SJE to fit into some settings, he seemed confident in his identity as a JC speaking boy and remained steadfast in his use of it. He showed an awareness of the value of adapting to different linguistic environments to temporarily fit in without losing a sense of who he was as a JC speaker. John, however, was not as confident as a JC speaker.

John: Let me make up my mind. Although Peter and Sam were self-assured in their identities as JC speakers, John was more conflicted and expressed complex and contradictory beliefs about JC and SJE. His narratives revealed two important contrastive findings: 1) he was conflicted about his identity as JC speaker; and 2) he desired to be recognized as an SJE speaker even if he was not fluent in it.

Battling contrastive linguistic identities. Like many Jamaicans, John appeared to struggle with the low prestige assigned to JC and seemed to have wanted to prove that he was above that low status (Britton, 2017; Degraff, 2009; Nero, 2006; Pratt-Johnson, 2006). He appeared to be experiencing self-contradictions as he wanted to associate with SJE, a language of high status in Jamaica but was fearful of losing his status as a genuine JC speaker as exemplified in his comments in the first interview. He said:

Miss, for me I would say I am different from most of them (JC speakers) miss, I grew up using Standard English, it is when I got to primary school I start using patois miss, but I am 96.5% all for using JC.

This extract illustrates John's internal conflict as he sought to highlight that he was not an original JC speaker but one who later assumed that identity. He extended this to say he grew up speaking SJE, but lost competence in the language when he started primary school. It seems, from the outset, John was distinguishing himself from the other boys in this research who were exposed to JC at an early age so that he would appear to be more of an SJE speaker and likely fit

in more with that group of speakers. However, his comment contrasted with my observations of him using basilectal JC in many instances and even telling me in an unrecorded conversation that “*Mi love JC bad.*” But post-colonial language research shows that John’s conflicted and complex language practices are standard in a post-colonial context where students are schooled to value only the language of the colonizer (Cassidy, 1961; Devonish, 1986, 2012; McGill, 2005; Quijano, 2000; Wassink, 1999). Wassink’s (1999) research on language attitudes among working-class and professional groups in Jamaica showed that some participants experienced the very same contradictions John had as they would sometimes distance themselves from JC speakers to access and maintain SJE power. The research findings showed that some participants believe their use of JC would reflect negatively on them, especially the participants over age 40. The researcher reported that males 20-25 were more connected to JC and wanted to speak and hear it. However, they too experienced some conflicts about JC’s place in some contexts.

That said, while John was in some instances distancing himself from JC, the contrast existed in his social groups, where he seemed to distance himself from SJE. For instance, in his one-on-one interviews, he proudly claimed early exposure to SJE and his intent to speak it, yet in the group interview, he was more reluctant to identify with SJE. This interview extract shows his conflicting actions as he distanced himself from SJE speakers:

Sam: Jamaican Creole it is a part of our culture can’t be any other way.

Joe: Yes miss because you are Jamaican miss if yuh nuh speak creole yuh a nuh real Jamaican miss [If you don’t speak creole, you are not a real Jamaican].

John: Dem people deh don’t fit fi deh inna Jamaica miss [Those people don’t belong in Jamaica miss] (SJE speakers who discourage students from speaking JC).

Tanya: Why, why do you say that?

John: Because miss, as a Jamaican it is natural to use Creole miss, so if you ago seh creole nuh natural inna Jamaica miss then no dem nuh belong inna Jamaica. [As a

Jamaican, it is natural to use Creole, but if you think it's unnatural to speak it then you don't belong in Jamaica].

In this exchange that involved the other boys, John seemed to be aligning himself with JC speakers and was critical of SJE speakers. His comments reflected those of the other boys who also subscribed to a Creole-centric ideology that celebrated JC practices and rejected non-JC speakers as authentic Jamaicans. John's comments seemed to contradict his earlier associations with SJE. However, his ambiguity might also be due to his need to authenticate himself in his social group with the boys (Hall & du Gay, 1996). Stuart Hall (1996) explains this to say that in framing identity, it is more a "process of becoming" wherein we become conscious of how we have been represented and how we represent ourselves (p. 4). In this case, in framing his identity, John was conscious of how he represented himself to the others while still contemplating how collectively the boys (a group of JC speakers) were represented. This might have accounted for his ambivalence wherein he wanted to make a good impression on the boys but he was aware that in the Jamaican context, traditionally, JC-speaking boys were not presented in a positive light. In this case, as Anderson (2016) contends, internal socialization is taking place as John is conscious about his language choices with the other boys and so he is regulating his use of JC to ensure he is conforming to their expectations. Anderson (2016) goes further to suggest that speakers in a community will engage in internal socialization as there is an awareness of the rules and practices of the group and they will want to make sure they are fitting in with the group.

In an unrecorded conversation, he admitted this to me, commenting, *"I feel a bit different from the boys sometimes because I enjoy speaking SJE, but this is not something I am willing to tell them."* In these situations, John was aware of the social power of being a dominant JC speaker and did not wish to jeopardize that in his interactions with the boys. However, on one of

his graphic novel pages, shown below, he indicated that this was not easy as he sometimes felt that he was “trying too hard to fit in.”



Fig. 6- An Illustration of John's Graphic Novel Page

On this graphic novel page, John seemed to grapple with his place among the boys. While he laughed and talked with them, his internal dialogue was questioning the authenticity of his actions. Whether it was intentional or not, John seemed to be casting himself in shadows while his peers were in the light. This shadow could have been a reflection of his struggle with language, while the light represented his friends' freedom in expressing themselves. This page illustrates just how challenging it might have been for him to be fit in seamlessly when he was not as comfortable using either language. Notwithstanding this, the page indicated that, like Sam and Peter, he was demonstrating some awareness of adequation and distinction in group settings and using this to gauge his interactions (Bulcholz & Hall, 2005).

Establishing an SJE identity to acquire language power. John, unlike Sam, was invested in the targeted language and possibly saw it as a means to acquire a wide range of symbolic resources, namely language and education. These will, in turn, increase the value of his cultural capital and social power (Bourdieu, 1991). Although he was conflicted about his use of SJE, he continued to speak it in different situations to increase his social value. For example, whenever he spoke extensively with me in individual interviews, he used SJE as is demonstrated in this interview extract below:

Tanya: Do you think though, putting aside the voice and the tone and all of that, do you think speaking JC makes boys more masculine or more of a boy or a man if you speak it.

John: No, I don't think so.

Tanya: Why is that?

John: It is not about you speaking it or not, it is the way you behave, which is more likely to determine if you are a boy or a man or acting childish, it is your body language that determines this, not your voice. It also depends on where you are located, it depends also on who you are around, and where you are.

This extract epitomizes John's ability to organize his responses using mesolectal SJE language features competently. His speech was considered mesolectal because there were a few instances of codeswitching. In these responses, he continuously used SJE to respond to questions and demonstrated some control in the use of the language. To build on Peter's suggestions, it is likely John's use of SJE gave him linguistic capital in this situation as he could match my (a woman in academia) use of it. Without him vocalizing it, it seemed John might have thought it necessary to use SJE with me since I was perceived to be in higher authority. Thus, for John, matching my linguistic competence in SJE was an investment in my social community. In this sense, he was demonstrating that he could still fit in with SJE speakers even if he was no longer a fluent speaker. But as is shown in the interview extract below, in group settings, John used basilectal JC, which had more power in that context. This extract exemplifies his shift to basilectal JC when speaking to the other boys:

John: Becah some a di time yuh go roun dem and a try speak it, dem get irritated because dem nuh know some a di words dem yuh a use [Sometimes when you are around JC speakers, they might get irritated when you use unfamiliar SJE words].

Joe: Persons hear yuh a speak it and tek it as offense [Some people can take offense at you speak SJE to them].

John: Becah dem nuh understand most di the words weh yuh seh suh dem a go tek offense [If they don't understand most the words you use, they will take it as an offense].

Peter: Yeah, cah cah some a di time when yuh speak SE round certain people it mek dem feel like yow yuh a try mek dem waan seh dem dunce yeah sometime. [Yes, because sometimes when you speak SJE around some people it might make them feel as if you are trying to make them appear dunce (dimwitted)].

In this exchange, John used more JC features in his expressions and was adapting to the speech patterns of the other boys. He demonstrated the value of adapting his language in different contexts to maximize his power. As Vygotsky (1978) theorized, John's language was in process;

constantly changing as he interacted with different groups. In this case, his social and cultural systems were influencing his language choices. John's actions also supports Bakhtin's theory that our language is partly someone else's as we take our cues from our speech environments. John is doing just this, as he adopted his speech to fit into the social contexts of the group.

To conclude, in many ways, John seemed to be doing his best to function in two language worlds, one that saw SJE speakers as intelligent and successful and another that saw them as pretentious and oppressive (Britton, 2017; Nero & Stevens, 2018). For John, functioning in these spaces might have been challenging as he probably was not his authentic self in either setting. Thus, it is likely he will continue to experience conflict as he reconciles his love for two languages.

Joe: I need Jamaican Creole. Joe's narratives were similar to the other three boys in two significant ways: 1) JC seemed to be an integral part of his Jamaican identity; and 2) he maximized his use of SJE and JC to increase his social and linguistic power. However, unlike the other boys, Joe's language identity seemed driven by his self-doubt and need to be accepted by them.

JC and Joe's linguistic identity. Joe, too, saw JC as a vital part of his linguistic identity. In the third interview, he said:

Miss yuh a try bruk out something that is a part of us you can't do that miss, like you a try build a table you can't do so without the right materials.

[Miss it is difficult to get rid of something that is a part of us, it is like you are building a table but you can't do so without the right materials].

In this extract, Joe is reinforcing that JC is a part of him, something that cannot be taken away or changed. He went further to state that JC was the raw material he took to the learning process and teachers disregarding it was akin to saying he was irrelevant. His comment was a powerful representation of the powerlessness he might have been experiencing in school and his

commitment to JC that offered more linguistic power. Like the other boys, he also alternated his language choices in different settings. He explained his language choices in the first interview, saying:

I am most comfortable using JC at school and home because I am around my parents and my friends ...when I am around strangers I use SE... JC at school is more easier, some friends not going to get with the programme when you are speaking English so you have to speak JC around them, if you speak SE around them you ago feel one way miss.

This extract exemplifies that Joe was aware that JC offered power in social and personal relationships while SJE was necessary with more distanced unfamiliar situations.

However, while he showed an awareness of the need to make language choices that were beneficial to him in different contexts, unlike the other boys, his language choices seemed driven by his insecurities. For example, on one of his graphic novel pages, shown below, he illustrated his fears of “needing” the boys for his social success and mustering the courage to speak up when they sometimes made fun of him.



Fig. 7- An Illustration of Joe's Graphic Novel Page

In this depiction, the character (Joe) is bothered by the boys jibing but tries to ignore it. He is fighting an internal battle as he tries to be natural around them. It is particularly interesting the way he is in shadows in the first panel, then in the second panel, everyone else seems to fade into the background as he contemplates his options. These shifting panels might have been Joe's way of showcasing his struggle to break through the boys' linguistic and social hold on him. I also observed that Joe seemed somewhat anxious in conversations with the boys and would follow their lead. That is, whatever the language choice or topic of conversation in the groups he adapted. He did not initiate conversations or change language varieties, as some of the other boys might have done from time to time. Joe's actions support Norton's (2013) theory that language investment and identity are critical for language speakers who are still developing a sense of self. In Joe's case, he would have been motivated to maintain and extend on his relationships with the other boys, despite his discomfort with their taunts.

In summary, Joe's narratives of linguistic power were similar to the boys, although his motives seemed different. He struggled to find his place among the boys, and as a result, his language became the tool to fit into the group. Even though JC was a tool of shared identity and belonging among all the boys, it seemed of greater importance to Joe to assert his social place.

The Teachers: Shifting Pedagogies

The teachers were in an ideal position to provide an external assessment of the boys' developing language identities. They were aware of the issues surrounding the use of SJE and JC, and they have had more direct contact with the students outside of an observational setting, which means that their contribution is valuable in this regard. This section, therefore, reviews the teachers' views and beliefs about language attitudes and provides their insights into how this affects the boys in question.

Disrupting school's linguistic practices. At NM, like many Jamaican schools, SJE-speaking students had access to social and academic powers that some dominant JC-speaking students did not. In other words, the linguistic capital of the SJE speaker is far more valuable than the linguistic capital of the average Jamaican Creole speaker (Evans, 2001). This is so because many Jamaican educators and administrators are dominant SJE speakers who sometimes hold purist language ideologies that privilege SJE (Britton, 2017). Despite teaching in a school environment that was dominated by an ideology that SJE was the superior language that should be enforced in the classroom, Mrs. Jacob's and Mrs. Hansel's practices differed. Their interview revealed two key contrastive findings: 1) they believed monolingual language practices disempower students and undermined their abilities and opportunities for success in English language learning; and 2) they also believed encouraging students' authentic language in the classroom fosters good classroom relationships.

In the interview, Mrs. Hansel stressed the need to have students feel empowered in schools by encouraging bilingual practices, saying:

This (JC) is what they are comfortable with; we understand that and so we try not to use the target language as a deterrent. We are to be mindful of how we get them to speak the Standard English because some of them will just shut down and not communicate with you, and that will defeat the purpose of learning. So, what we try to do we try to use the Language Experience Approach (LEA) where we allow them to first speak in creole say what they need to say and then we guide them. We model what they are to say in SE and give them an opportunity to transfer from one language to the next.

In this extract, Mrs. Hansel highlights the importance of adopting a bilingual approach in her classroom that empowers dominant JC speaking students and supports their ELL growth. Her comments suggest that she was open to creating bridges between SJE and JC that would enhance students' experiences in her classroom. In a sense, Mrs. Hansel was valuing the linguistic capital students took to her classroom, JC, and exposing them to further capital. She seemed particularly

sensitive to the plight of dominant JC speakers in her class and was willing to engage them in ways that empowered them to participate in language learning experiences. For example, I noticed in my observations of two of her English A classes that whenever a JC-speaking student struggled to use SJE to explain a concept, she adopted a bilingual approach. She first encouraged the student to share in JC, then she helped the student to transition to SJE.

In follow-up conversations with Mrs. Hansel, she explained that she valued a language experience approach because she believed *“it empowers students in the classroom and gives them voice and control in how they speak at school, which will likely increase participation.”* However, her comment in the interview that she “allowed” her students to speak JC suggests that she was still using the language of power. This comment contradicts her shared intent to empower students, given that her word choice “allowed” insinuates her control, while if she had used words like “support” or “encourage,” these would have indicated that students still had language power in her classroom. That said, she showed herself to be comfortable using either language variety, which seemed to build solidarity with the students. As a teacher of English, she did recognize the power of SJE in advancing her career and those of her students, and as such encouraging bilingualism.

Building positive JC identities in the classroom. Like Mrs. Hansel, Mrs. Jacob did not subscribe to hegemonic Anglo-centric language ideologies. Instead, she encouraged her students’ use of JC in her classroom to generate more positive language identities and make learning more meaningful. She made these remarks in our interview, saying:

You find that they have not perfected the use of the target language. However, most students generally make an effort. Right, you find that when they are in a more relaxed atmosphere even in the classroom, you know that sometimes in the classroom it is not as formal depending on the time of day the activity is being done ahm those who prefer to use the JC to communicate, sometimes you will see that they speak a little slowly because even when even though they are using the creole they are trying to find the best version of

the creole to express themselves while they are sharing with their classmates. So, I don't necessarily see it as a bad thing because you realize that they have a willingness to learn. Some of them understand that they have a challenge, will come to you and will express to you that they have a weakness and they want you to assist them.

In this extract, Mrs. Jacob pointed out that creating a relaxed, welcoming classroom that was open to students' various language forms encouraged them to seek help and work to overcome their challenges. Mrs. Jacob's ability and willingness to connect linguistically with students seemed to contribute to the positive relationship I observed in her classroom. I observed that students sought her out to assist them, and they seemed comfortable and safe to share their concerns with her. She also seemed invested in bridging the gaps between the two languages in the classroom to support students' growth. Her pedagogical practices seemed in some ways linked to her bilingual identity as she appeared more sensitive to the needs of students and willing to draw on her JC linguistic resources to more effectively engage them and help them to navigate SJE. For instance, in one of her English A classes, I noticed that when students did not understand the concepts of pathos and logos that she had explained in SJE, she provided vivid examples in JC to concretize it for them. I noticed positive responses from students when she took that approach, and they seemed to grasp the content better. This finding of positive student response to a bilingual approach is also reflective of experiences in other classrooms. In a recent report in a newspaper article in Jamaica, Shyrel-Ann Dean, a former high school teacher at a non-traditional high school, linked her use of JC in her classes to her students' "great" success in English A (The Loop, November 10, 2019). She reported that her students struggled for many years in her English A classes because she was insistent on using traditional (SJE) methods of communicating with her students. Mrs. Dean shared that she only used the Queen's English with her classes and found that she was not connecting better with her students. After getting poor CSEC results from her students whom she described as "smart" she finally decided to adopt a

new approach. Mrs. Dean reported that she used mostly JC with students to explain concepts and was quite happy with the “upward trajectory in their relationship and students’ improved performance” (p. 2). She also remarked on her satisfaction with students’ performance on CSEC with many receiving Grade 1 (The Loop, November 10, 2019). This report supports the teachers’ view that their use of JC to explain concepts to students might positively impact their success in ELL or English A

Both Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel showed particular interest in connecting with students using their natural language. In the interview, Mrs. Hansel pointed out the importance of not “frowning” on students’ native language, saying,

Yes, so we like to motivate our students. It makes a big difference we don’t frown at the JC because we understand that we have to always try preserve our culture because it is a part of our culture.

This extract illustrates Mrs. Hansel’s openness to the students’ language and the need to demonstrate to them that she valued it. In the end, both teachers seemed to hold similar views about students’ use of JC in their classrooms. They both seemed to deviate from deficit views of JC and its speakers and were willing to embrace pedagogical practices that valued language diversity in the classroom and modelled their views with their own language use. They seemed to have shifted from practices that disinvite JC speakers and provide more avenues for students to actively participate in classes using their language, which ultimately gave them some power in classroom discourse.

Notwithstanding the above, Mrs. Hansel exhibited some contradictions in the interview as she suggested that SJE was a way for the boys to elevate “their status in the community,” stating:

We are trying to get them to believe they are capable of excelling, they are capable of..... the principal for example always tell the boys we are as good as any and we are better

than most. Now that sounds very ambitious to say that we are better than most, now I understand the part about being as good as any, but we believe that and we get the boys to aspire to speak the SE as a way of elevating their status in their community and in their classroom.

Mrs. Hansel's suggestion that the boys needed SJE to "elevate their status in their community and classroom" seems contradictory to her efforts to have them feel confident as JC speakers.

While Mrs. Hansel seemed to have positive views of JC and JC speaking students, sharing that SJE will elevate students' status is the antithesis to developing a positive self-image. Her statement suggests that JC is an anomaly, and that seems to go against her observed practices of inclusion in her classes. However, her expressed contradiction is not so unusual. Bryan (2004b) explains that for some teachers within a post-colonial school system, language is just as ambivalent for them as it is for students. Bryan (2004b) hypothesizes that for some teachers, JC is a "language owned by the individual, but disowned by the social structures that control and decide the official discourse" (p. 652). Consequently, she reasoned, some teachers might experience conflict in supporting students' language choices or falling in line with societal demands to exclude JC.

Taylor's (2007) research also showed that some teachers were experiencing conflicts in their speech environments. For example, "Bettina" was concerned that her use of JC was a dissonance from her usual speech practices and would generate disapproval from SJE speakers who would think she was not capable of speaking SJE. Taylor reported that Bettina seemed self-conscious about this and would revert to SJE whenever she had visitors to her classroom. It might have been that Bettina thought she would be judged harshly for using JC in her instruction, even though she was open to doing so. The fact that several of the boys mentioned that they needed to speak SJE to measure up to SJE speakers suggests that they might have had similar

experiences in their lives that would have led to them thinking that their home language was not good enough. In this case, teachers have to be careful that they do not plant seeds of inferiority within students, especially in NM's context, where most of the students are JC speakers. Although, Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel were aware of students' need to feel confident as JC speakers and took steps to encourage this, they sometimes fell short in how they engaged students in discussions on issues of language and identity.

To conclude, the narratives of the boys and the teachers' interviews revealed that linguistic power was significant in the boys' emerging language identities. All the boys revealed that JC was important to their identity as Jamaicans and they needed it to engage their linguistic power. Some of the boys indicated that SJE was just as essential in accessing power. Finally, all participants seemed to believe that students' natural language provided the most significant linguistic power in most situations. In the next section, I move on to explore how language practices were impacting the boys' gendered behaviours.

Jamaican Creole and Masculine Identities: No Girly Talk Around Here

“Language does not simply mirror gender, it helps constitute it” (Keisling, 2007, p. 32)

The big picture of gendered practices in community and school. Research in the last three decades has shown that almost every area of language is connected to gender in some way (Johnson, 1997; Plummer, 2019). Thus, it was unsurprising that a link between the boys' use of JC and their gendered identities emerged as one of the main themes in this study. In Jamaica, discourses on gendered identities, particularly masculinities, have become common-place as the supposed erosion of men's masculine identities becomes the subject of many media, with calls for more nuanced discussions of gender (The Gleaner archives, 2016-2019; The Jamaica Observer archives, 2016-2019). Some of the articles: *Patriarchy, Religion and Jamaica's Toxic*

Masculinity, Men and Masculinity at Serious Threat, and *Jamaican Masculinity: Construction and Consequences* highlighted the need for communities and families to provide more avenues for young men to develop positive masculine identities. Research also shows growing concerns that some young men are engaging in unhealthy masculine practices, such as aggressive homophobic acts, anti-feminine behaviours and tough speech to assert their manhood (Bucknor & James, 2014; Lewis, 2007, 2010; Nurse, 2004; Parry, 2004; Reddock, 2004). However, these concerns seem to be subtly directed towards men and boys from working-class homes, especially inner-city youths whose practices are often used as examples or models of unhealthy masculine practices (Crawford, 2010). Much blame for the young men's unhealthy masculine practices are ascribed to dancehall, a popular form of music in Jamaica, that glorifies "gyalification" (one man being with several women), sexual prowess, misogyny, and violence against effeminate men (Cooper, 2004; Crawford, 2010). The musicians, who are often dominant JC speakers from low-income communities, are seen as having a significant impact on some boys' language and gendered practices. Some critics of dancehall and inner-city boys' language practices have been calling for interventions to correct their practices and set them on the right path to success. For example, a *Jamaica Observer* (2013) article entitled *The Power and Downside of Dancehall Music* called for the rescue of Jamaican boys from the clutches of influential dancehall artistes who were perpetuating dangerous criminal, anti-feminine and homophobic behaviours. These highlighted concerns, albeit sometimes misinformed and laden with personal agendas, are supported in several research studies on gendered practices in Jamaica that indicate working-class men and boys are most at-risk to engage in hegemonic masculinities to assert manhood (Bucknor & James, 2014; Lewis, 2003; Nurse, 2004; Parry, 2004; Reddock, 2004).

Despite the public debate on gendered practices in inner-city communities, in the boys' communities, I noticed in my field observations that some of the men did not appear overly concerned about their practices. I observed some men reprimanding their sons for appearing soft, such as complaining about feeling tired or not being able to complete a task. In other instances, I overheard boys being told to "talk like a man," which seemed to equate to speaking JC. This is another example of the boys being socialized into JC practices through language. It seemed that one of the expected masculine behaviours was that men and boys would speak JC. Bourdieu (2001) theorizes that this practice of encouraging boys to speak in a particular manner is the time when they become conscious of themselves and their gendered subjectivity. Through social research, Bourdieu (2001) explains that communities and families play a significant role in shaping men's awareness of self and their gendered practices. He extends on this to say that often men will act in ways that are socially acceptable in peer groups, families and their communities. This practice seemed to be the case for the boys as some of them were evidently modelling the practices of the men in the communities. I noticed some men would only use JC when corresponding with other men, and there seemed to be some unspoken agreement that that was the expected behaviour. Chevannes (2001) and Bucknor and James (2014) theorize that some men's rejection of SJE goes back to historical perceptions that SJE is the effeminate and soft language of the colonizer, while JC is the language of the slaves and symbolizes the toughness of "real men." For instance, Bucknor and James (2014) explain that men's speech through JC is a demonstration of the acclaimed masculine power they attained in their resistance to SJE. There was supporting evidence of Chevannes' (2001) and Bucknor's and James' (2014) theory in both communities as I observed that many of the men avoided SJE. There was a high level of masculine showmanship in the men's use of JC as they engaged in flamboyant

(sometimes sexist and homophobic) public displays of the language, it seems, to separate themselves from the “chi chi” (men who were considered homosexuals) who often spoke SJE. However, I anticipated many of these observed behaviours, given the Jamaican context, where language is embedded in gendered identities and is often used to police gendered behaviours (Bucknor & James, 2014; Lewis, 2007; Plummer, 2014).

The boys’ gendered language practices in school mirrored their communities. These included engaging in tough speech, using basilectal JC with other boys and avoiding utterances that were perceived as effeminate. To be clear, I observed these mirrored practices only in social spaces, such as the courtyard, cafeteria, and playfields, not in formal classrooms. At NM, most of the teachers and administrators did not appear to share the view that boys needed to speak JC to appear manly. In fact, many teachers seemed to openly discourage such practices, and boys were encouraged during general assemblies to refrain from labelling perceived effeminate (seemed mostly SJE speaking) boys as “fishy”: a derogative term for boys or men who appear more effeminate in mannerism. That said, the presumed effeminate boy seemed to be frowned upon by some members of the school community, including teachers and administrators. Without it being explicitly stated, it seems the expectation was that boys would act like stereotypical boys. In some ways, the institution was constructing normative definitions of masculinity, which Connell (2005a) cautions can lead to hegemonic practices. For Connell (2005a), it is not the most common form of masculinity that contributes to the oppression of women and non-conforming men but rather the socially authorized form, as is seen in some schools. With Connell’s words in mind, much of the forthcoming analysis and discussions of the boys’ gendered language practices are grounded in social constructionism, wherein I examine the social and cultural processes impacting their actions. In these discussions, masculine language practices refer to the

dominant use of basilectal JC to communicate with other boys, overtly tough speech and avoidance of perceived feminine speech. There are many other ways in which the boys demonstrated their gendered identities, notably their dress, mannerism, athleticism, and assertiveness, but the forthcoming analysis and discussion will focus on their highlighted language practices.

Sam: Man fi talk Patois [Men are to speak JC]. The boys' gendered language practices were similar to those of the men and boys in their communities as they too engaged in heteronormative and sometimes hegemonic masculine language practices to construct their identity. Their gendered practices manifested in three main ways: dominant basilectal use of JC, avoidance of perceived feminine language practices, and group posturing (performing expected gendered behaviours for other boys).

JC's influence on Sam's gendered identity. The issue of boys' expected language behaviours was a hotly debated topic among the boys during the weeks of interviews and observations for this research. Many of the discussions seemed rooted in historical and socially structured meanings of gendered identities that seemed to have been infused and shaped some of their daily language practices. Sam, as anticipated, was very vocal about JC's powerful influence on his gendered identity and practices. For him, there was a particular focus on JC's impact on his masculine identity. The following excerpt from his first interview illustrates the engagement of his masculinity through JC:

Tanya: What does it mean to be masculine?

Sam: You have to behave like a man, yuh affi [you have to] walk straight, for instance if you come a Jamaica now, most people (men) who talk SJE come in like dem [they are] lean [gay].

Tanya: Here in Jamaica, even di man dem weh talk SJE? [Here in Jamaica, even the men who speak SJE?].

Sam: Yeah it come in like dem lean or dem have a little attitude to dem which man nuh suppose to have attitude to them if yuh know what I mean. [Yeah it is like they are gay or have some kind of attitude which a man is not supposed to have if you know what I mean].

Tanya: Mi nuh know what yuh mean, you tell me what you mean by attitude [I don't know what you mean, tell me what you mean by attitude].

Sam: For instance, if you talk to a girl most time they subconsciously move them head, now when all a man a talk to you and him subconsciously move him head, English yuh nuh, why you a move yuh head, not only sometimes when yuh see how dem walk miss. [For instance whenever you talk to a girl they seem to subconsciously move their heads, now when you are talking to a man and he subconsciously moves his head, talking in English, why is he moving his head, not only that sometimes when you see how they[men] walk miss].

Sam's discourse in this extract reveals two things about his thought processes: 1) his limiting view of language and gender functions and 2) the impact his own experiences had on his attitude towards JC and SJE. First, it appears Sam saw JC as the only linguistic means of asserting masculine identity in Jamaica as he suggested that any man or boy who spoke too much SJE was suspiciously "lean." He also seems to be engaging a working-class hegemonic view that a dominant JC-speaking man is more likely heterosexual than a dominant SJE-speaking man. His view, in some ways, replicated and reinforced much of the discourse on gender and language among working-class men in his community and the broader society that a heterosexual man is usually a dominant JC speaker. Here, I am using discourses because, as Kiesling (2007) suggests, "discourse encompasses not only ideas, concepts and values of a society, but also the institutions and practices that are intimately tied to and are mutually reinforcing of those ideas" (p. 657). For Sam, it seems his masculine identity was embedded in his identity as the tough inner-city boy and his strong opposition to femininity through his continuous juxtaposition of femininity and masculinity in his discourse. For example, his reference to "lean" men as those who exhibited

what he surmised as “girly” actions through movements of the head serve to highlight how the feminine and masculine dichotomy were prevalent in his thinking. His views didn’t seem to leave much room for feminized masculinities or masculinized feminity. For him, it seems one was either feminine or masculine, a view that was common among the men in his community. In Evans’ (1999) extensive study on gendered practices in Jamaicans schools, the field notes described the boys as “ giving trouble in class, using bad words and being hyperactive” (p. 25). The report hinted that these behaviours were expected. The research also reported that boys imitated each other’s rude behaviours, and tend to not deviate from the group’s practices. Parry’s (2004) research with headmasters, teachers, and fourth form students from eight high schools in Jamaica showed that many students, like Sam, believed boys needed to act masculine in school. The study revealed that teachers, students, and administrators actually expected boys to act in ways that were typically expected of them.

These findings are standard practices among many schools that might have likely impacted some students’ language practices. For example, I observed that Sam seemed conscious of his use of JC among other boys and would often use the basilectal form in a deep baritone when communicating with them. Sam also seemed to avoid what he told me was “girly talk,” which he explained as gossiping or small talk about other students and other trivial matters. Judith Butler’s (1999) notions of performative genders fit well into Sam’s narrative. For instance, she explains that responses, such as Sam demonstrated above, are acts of gender that men are expected to perform to maintain the appearance of normative heterosexuality. She goes on to elucidate that those acts are social constructions of how men should behave, which compels many to perform their assigned gender in ways that conform to dominant practice (Butler, 1999). Sam’s comments further align with Butler’s hypothesis. For example, his view that boys who

talked with “attitude” (making snappy comeback comments in a conversation usually accompanied by sometimes exaggerated movements of the head) were being “girly,” implied a reactive need to have them perform their expected gender roles in their speech. For him, it seems such “girly” actions contradicted ideal masculine practices of being tough in speech and mannerism, and the men or boys who did not meet these ideals of speaking JC and limiting body movements during their speech were on the periphery. Given Sam’s responses, Connell (2005b) would speculate he is engaging in hegemonic masculinity. That is, through his exclusion of seemingly “girly” boys and references to men who speak SJE as gay, he was reinforcing dominant ideologies of stereotypical masculine behaviours that marginalized other boys. His responses would suggest he was heavily invested in hegemonic masculinity because he spoke in ways he thought were expected of men.

Resisting feminine speech and tone to assert masculinity. There was evidence that Sam’s gendered identity seemed rooted in his resistance to feminine speech, notably boys sounding “girly.” His resistance to perceived ‘girly’ speech and actions was evident in his graphic novel. Sam’s graphic novel page below illustrates his discontent with boys not adhering to the stereotypical gendered behaviours.



Fig. 8- An illustration of Sam's Graphic Novel Page

On this page of his graphic novel, a voice off screen (likely Sam) expresses discontent with a boy speaking “girly.” In this imagery, there is a fence separating the boy from the speaker, which seems almost symbolic of the segregation in masculine language practices between the speaker and the “girly” boy whose speech seems to irritate him. In an unrecorded conversation, Sam admitted that the speaker off-screen was a representation of him. He went on to say that “he just didn’t like boys acting like girls.” When pressed about what it meant to “act like a girl,” he responded, “talk like a girl, gossip like a girl and being highy toighty (refined speech that might seem pretentious). Sam’s negative response to the boy’s perceived girly speech was unsurprising. Anderson and McLean (2014) reported similar trends in men’s reactions to other men whose speech seemed effeminate. Drawing on interviews with 16 working and lower middle-class men that McLean conducted in 2010, the authors reported that the men appeared to cling to lexical demonstrations of Jamaican masculinity and went to great lengths to avoid using certain words they associated with femininity or homosexuality (Anderson & McLean, 2014). They reported that participants believed not using the expected language meant “you are not masculine enough” and “di man dem a go [the men are going to] start question if you actually straight” (p.26).

Sam went further to challenge the ‘soft’ speech of boys and demonstrated how his speech was different from theirs. In his second interview, he shared these thoughts:

Tanya: So you are aware how to behave as a boy so you behave a particular way. So what happens to boys who don’t behave the way you are speaking about?

Sam: Sumn wrang [Something is wrong].

Tanya: Wah wrong wid dem? [What is wrong with them?].

Sam: No man, dem one way you seet miss, dem path nuh straight [No man, they are a particular way, you see their path is not right, they are not straight].

Tanya: So do you think a boy coming to you to have conversations in English, you think he is not straight?

Sam: No it depends, how him tone set. To me you can distinguish between a female and a male tone, so it depends.

Tanya: So if you have boys who are soft-spoken and him come to you a talk SJE weh yuh a seh now, you a say him nuh straight. [So if you have boys who are soft-spoken who come to you and speak SJE, are you saying they are not straight].

Sam: But how him born soft?

Tanya: How him born soft? You have some boys...

Sam: No man that a him parents fault now dem caan grow the boy child like him have a split between him leg. [No that's his parents' fault, they can't raise a boy like he has a split between his leg (a girl)].

Again, Sam appears to have an essentialist view of masculinity and his gendered identity. He suggested that something was wrong with boys who were soft and effeminate in their speech. Parry's (2004) research also showed that students, teachers and administrators believed that some boys' effeminate behaviour was considered abnormal. In fact, the teachers and administrators admitted to censoring and discouraging behaviours they considered girlish. The fact that Sam continues to expect boys to speak in a particular manner and be mindful of their tone suggests that his masculinity is constructed in opposition to femininity. Johnson (1997) best explains Sam's preoccupation with the masculine-feminine dichotomy in her reasoning when she states that masculinity is constructed partly in opposition to femininity, and "the very omnipresence of the feminine means that those men who have a stake in hegemonic masculinity must constantly reassert their symbolic opposition to femininity to confirm their own sense of masculinity" (p. 22). Chevannes (2001) and West (2010) also contend that some men's preoccupation with softness and toughness, as epitomized in Sam's speech above, are anticipated in working-class constructs, where masculinity is focused on toughness and anti-femininity. Clarke's (2007) research showed similar revelations:

The boys in this study have clearly identified themselves as masculine. They seem to understand that there are advantages in being male. Some of these advantages include dominating play spaces and girls. Girls are not allowed to walk across areas being used by boys for playing. In addition, boys do not allow girls to participate in their games. This latter is driven by the fact that many boys perceive girls as “lesser beings”: they are “fragile”, “immature”, and “cry easily” (boys’ actual words) and therefore are unable to keep up with the rigours of “male” games “I don’t want girls to play cause the ball (cricket ball) goin’ to hit the(and) they always want to cry or scream. (p. 141)

The researcher further noted conformity in appearance, demeanor, and speech were important in school and in their communities. Thus, the boys did their best to conform and not be alienated. Clarke’s findings further highlight the conflicts some working-class boys face wherein they are aware that some of their actions are domineering, but fear social alienation if they behave otherwise. For example, I noticed that Sam alienated some of the boys who were SJE speakers and might have been considered softer in mannerisms. In some ways, Connell (1987) theorize Sam’s displays of masculinity are reaffirming dominant gender regimes that made it difficult for perceived effeminate boys to feel included in social circles, like hanging out at the school’s pavilion during lunch or playing football. In this case, the formal classroom became one of the few places for the perceived effeminate boy to be successful in school.

Conforming to gender expectations. Throughout his narratives, it seems Sam was conscious not to appear complicit in any deviation from heteronormative masculine practices. For example, in the first interview, he seemed particularly perturbed when I asked him what he did “to appear masculine.” The excerpt below illustrates his discontent with my statement:

Tanya: Alright for you then, let's talk about you now, for you now, what makes you masculine, what are the things you must do to appear masculine?

Sam: No man miss not to appear masculine, to be masculine.

Tanya: To be masculine, what are some of the things you have to do to be masculine?

Sam: Walk straight, talk straight and behave straight.

In this exchange, Sam was swift to point out to me that he didn't "appear" to be masculine; he was. It seems by asking him what was required of him to appear masculine, I was unintentionally challenging his daily demonstrative masculine acts of speaking basilectal JC, using slangs and avoiding feminine speech. My question might have suggested that his actions were questionable, and for him, there was nothing doubtful about his masculine practices. His remarks also demonstrate a hegemonic perspective that to be masculine is to be heterosexual. This was a recurring view in Sam's utterances, which might have accounted for his need to prove his heterosexuality through his engagement of JC. I also observed that whenever the boys who hang out in the cafeteria and schoolyard spoke to Sam, they did so in JC and with deeper tones. It can be assumed that these boys did not wish to be excluded from his group.

There was also evidence that he was policing the behaviour of other boys through their language and tone. This claim is validated in his comments below as we continued the conversation about soft-spoken boys:

Tanya: No no but I am saying to you that some boys might just be soft-spoken

Sam: No man

Tanya: So are you saying that is a no no, boys should not be soft-spoken

Sam: No me nuh believe it, for instance mi nah go tell nuh lie mi notice weh yuh a say because our Jamaica generation now, the male generation nuh grow as hard as dem used to be. For instance mi nah tell nuh lie when mi used to give trouble mi get two buff and go siddung, but nowadays the youth a give trouble di mother only a seh "stop it" then if yuh a get baby treatment yuh nuh mus behave like that.

[I don't believe that, for instance I am not going to lie, this generation of Jamaicans are not growing as tough as the ones before. For instance when I used to give trouble my mother slap me and tell me to sit down, but now when other youths give their mother trouble, the mother only tells them to stop it. So if boys are being treated like babies they will behave like babies.]

Tanya: Ok so, alright in your instance I know you are with your mom. I know you are with both parents.

Sam: No mother mostly.

Tanya: Ok so you are with your mother a lot. Do you think mothers being a little softer on boys contributed to that or it doesn't matter if it is the mother or father it is being softer in general?

Sam: Being softer in general.

Tanya: Do you think men are harder on boys than women to be manly?

Sam: Yes.

I have quoted at length here to demonstrate Sam's dissatisfaction with how he thought boys were being raised. His rhetoric confirms his disapproval of soft boys as he argued for stricter ways of raising boys, so they were not too "soft." In observance of Sam's behaviour, Plummer (2014) advances that it is quite common for both boys and girls to police each other's gendered behaviours. Thus, it is unsurprising that Sam, coming from a working-class background, might share similar views. He was undoubtedly policing some of the boys' behaviour as he seemed opposed to soft-spoken boys being seen as masculine. In a sense, in his regulation of what was masculine and non-masculine, he generated certain qualifiers to meet that expectation. These qualifiers included not being soft-spoken and speaking JC, which seemed to have greatly influenced his use of JC.

In sum, Sam demonstrated stereotypical masculine practices and attitudes and was resistant to gendered behaviours that did not conform to his gender expectations. Through his narratives, he demonstrated that he must speak basilectal JC to assert his masculinity and resist

perceived effeminate language behaviours. Even though some of the other boys shared some of Sam's views, there were distinct differences in their behaviours and attitudes. John, in particular, shared contrasting views and behaviours.

John: Yuh nuh really affi speak JC to be manly[You don't really have to speak JC to be manly]. While Sam seemed secured in his convictions that a man or boy needed to speak JC to be masculine, John, on the other hand, did not seem to share many of Sam's views about language and gendered identity. But he did seem to be experiencing some contradictions about his use of JC and how it influenced his gendered identity. His narratives revealed two main findings: his desire to maintain his use of SJE while engaging JC to perform his expected gendered behaviours, and his acts of defiance against gender stereotypes in language use.

JC and John's gendered identity. John, unlike Sam, seemed not to believe JC was a critical part of engaging his gendered identity. However, this seemed to be the case when he was not among the other boys or in a group setting. In group settings, he seemed more conflicted about his use of JC and SJE as is exemplified in this interaction he described with his brothers:

Tanya: So tell me though, which language are you most comfortable using at home?

John: Patois.

Tanya: Why is that so?

John: Because I have three brothers, it is very dangerous.

Tanya: Very dangerous how?

John: If you use Standard English, they jeer you and if you stop they will tell you to continue and sometimes they will video you.

Tanya: They video you, is it that they think it is funny when you are speaking SE?

John: Yes, when they video you, they keep it to themselves, they don't share it with anyone, but they just video it to make fun of you.

Tanya: How do you feel when they make fun of you using it?

John: No way, I just get my revenge.

Tanya: How do you get your revenge?

John: When they use Standard English I video them [laughter]

Even though John laughed at this particular event, his words might have betrayed his true feelings. There were apparent contradictions in his words as he suggested that it was “dangerous” to use SJE with his brothers, yet he didn’t “feel any way” when they jeered him. The word “dangerous” did not suggest John’s brothers would physically harm him, but rather the danger was to his masculine identity. The fact that John experienced so much discomfort around his brothers when he spoke SJE suggests that they might have been using language in some ways to police his masculinity. Clarke (2007) research also showed that many of the boys policed the language of their peers, which resulted in some boys feeling pressured to act in expected ways. In John’s case, although he said he was unaffected by his brothers’ prank (videoing him and laughing), his reaction implied otherwise. Given that he chose to respond to his brothers’ taunting by pulling the same prank suggests he felt a need to assert his masculinity to prove to his brothers that he was no different from them. It might have been as Butler (1999) suggests that John was reasserting his gendered identity through his performative acts that were somewhat compelled by his brothers’ actions. John’s reaction also aligns with Connell’s (2014) theory that gender is always in process and subjected to resistance or acceptance. In John’s case, it seems to be both. That is, if he had failed to respond to his brothers’ challenges of his masculinity, he was failing to resist their suggestion that he did not measure up to their expected gendered behaviours. In this case, he was accepting his brothers’ practice, but there was still subtle

resistance in his conformity. What is noticeably absent in the scenario John described above was any reference to his sisters or mother as it related to his use of JC. While he believed it was “dangerous” to speak SJE with his brothers, there was no mention of his sisters or mother, which suggests there might not have been an issue with him using SJE with them. In a follow-up conversation in the first interview, I did ask John if he used SJE with his mother and sisters, to which he responded:

John: Yes

Tanya: But do you think it is a bit strange that persons may think it is funny that boys are using SJE at home?

John: No it is not strange.

Tanya: But you are comfortable using the SJE at home except in the presence of your brothers?

John: Yes [laughs]

So, for John, it seems his use of SJE was only questioned when he was among boys or men. His concerns about using SJE in the presence of other men in some ways align with Bourdieu’s (2001) theory that boys become conscious of their gendered self through imposed societal practices, more specifically their local speech community. Bourdieu (2001) surmises that some boys’ language performance is often an indication that they are embracing the subjectivity of their gendered identities in society. This seems to be the case for John as his decision to use JC among some men, including his brothers, appeared to be his way of showing them that he was embracing his masculine gendered identity.

Conforming to hegemonic masculine language practices. Throughout this study, John seemed aware that his resistance to the dominant masculine language attributes of his community or the group of boys he hangs out with would have had consequences for him. For example, I

observed him on several occasions engaging in conversations with boys in his community, and though he appeared a bit uneasy in some of these instances he did his best to follow through with expected behaviours. The following interaction I observed between him and another boy from his community exemplifies his discomfort with seemingly expected gendered practices:

Boy: Yow John wah a gwaan. [Hey John, what's up?]

John: Nutten much jus deh yah a easy. [Not much, just taking it easy]

Boy fist and shoulder pumped John. John awkwardly returned the gesture.

John looked at his phone as if he needed to be somewhere.

Boy: Yuh affi guh someweh? [Do you have to be somewhere?]

John: No man.

Boy: Wi a go hang pon di ends later and meet up some girls, weh yuh seh bout that?

[We plan to hang out later and meet some girls, what you think about that?]

John hesitated.

John: Mi caan tonight enuh, mi have whole heap a school work fi do. [I can't tonight, I have lots of school work to do].

Boy: School work, yuh a real claffy! [school work, you are a real joke].

This exchange suggests John might not have been as comfortable with all the stereotypical displays of manliness in his community as he had indicated. Some of these typical displays included the fist-pump greeting, the use of basilectal JC, hanging out to meet girls, and not visibly showing perceived effeminate qualities. John exhibited his discomfort in several ways, through the awkward greeting, glancing at his phone, and his reluctance to divulge that he wanted to go home to do his homework. In some ways, this was non-conformity in his community, where it appeared some men believed it was important for boys to show their

masculinity in overt ways and would have likely impacted his social success. For instance, I observed some of the young men engaged in continuous cat calls to girls, followed by exaggerated claims of their sexual prowess to attain social success within their community. Connell (1995) contends that behaviours such as these within patriarchal contexts like John's community are essential in maintaining male dominance.

There were also other occasions when John appeared to succumb to the pressures of acting like a boy. Although he claimed: "*Mi nuh feel pressure to act like a boy*", on one occasion, I observed the contrast in his interactions with a group of boys in his class. On that particular day, I was in the office of the electrical technology teacher, where I spent most of my days because I felt comfortable there, when I overheard John in a loud conversation with some boys. Many boys usually hang out in that room as it seemed to be their safe space on campus, so it wasn't unusual to overhear many raucous conversations. However, on this particular day, I poked my head out because I recognized John's voice, and this conversation was particularly raucous. The boys were talking about girls they liked and the things they got up to over the weekend. I could see John in the center quite animated, telling a story about some of the things he did and his interest in a particular girl. His actions at that time seemed to contradict his claims that he did not feel pressured to act manly sometimes. He almost seemed to be a different person. There was a bit of boldness and showmanship to his actions that seemed uncharacteristic of him. For example his vivid demonstrations of his interaction with the girl and the continuous fist pumping with the other boys who were cheering him on. Keisling (2007) addresses this complexity when he states that boys and men often feel pressured in groups to prove they are just like everyone else. In this respect, John's manliness is constructed for the other boys (Bourdieu 2001). It might have been that John was doing what was required to gain and maintain status

within the group. It is also plausible that he was being himself in a different setting, although it might have appeared to be a contrastive behaviour to me. It is also likely that just as John seemed to be performing his language duties to gain power, so too, he might have been performing his masculine duties to maintain shared power within the social group of boys in that classroom. That meant not just using JC but fully engaging in whatever conversations that might be representative of masculine practices. In fairness to John, he was not the only one exhibiting this kind of behaviour; all the boys seemed to be putting on a show for each other, some times in different ways.

Resisting gender stereotypes. Notwithstanding his conformity to gendered practices in some instances, John's views diverged from his community's and Sam's views when it came to what it meant to be masculine. In all three interviews, he iterated the following view: "*You have to have responsible behaviour and respectful behaviour, and a very calm behaviour when dealing with certain situations, that is what I think it means to be a man.*" John was clear from the outset that to be masculine meant being responsible and respectful. In follow up interviews, I noticed the other boys, including Sam, adopted some of his perspectives. In an unrecorded conversation at the end of the three months of research, I asked him if his brothers were still teasing him and he told me, "*No mi find a way to deal with it, mi balance how mi use JC and SJE at home. Mi use just JC wid dem suh dem nuh tease mi.*" [No I have found a way to deal with it, I balance my use of JC and SJE at home, I use just JC with them so that they do not tease me]. His response embodies Matthew's (1984) early theory that gender is open to interpretation and the lens through which individuals construct their identity is also open to disruption and change. For John, he was disrupting how his brothers perceive language and gender roles in that he continued to use SJE despite their obvious view that it was not masculine.

Further, he was vocal about boys being allowed to be themselves. It seems he was not afraid to stand up for boys whom he thought were being bullied for not meeting stereotypical masculine language ideals. The following page from his graphic novel provides an example of him supporting a bullied boy:



Fig. 9- An illustration of John's Graphic Novel Page

As depicted on this graphic novel page, a boy is jeering another boy for attempting to speak SJE when another (likely John) chastises him for doing so. Parry (1995), Evans (2001) and Clarke (2007) also observed in research with boys that it was commonplace to have some boys ridicule others for using SJE. They hypothesized that such practice might have been linked to some of the boys' resistance to SJE. While I did not necessarily observe much taunting during my time at NM, it seems to have been an issue given its appearance in John's graphic novel. It was not only the taunting that bothered John, but he also seemed perturbed that some parents bully their sons for seemingly not meeting stereotypical ideas of masculinity. He shared his disapproval of such behaviours in one of his interviews:

John: Some of them (boys) may be pressured by their father figures. I know this one person who has a squeaky voice his father always beat him to change his voice, not physically beat him but shout after him. Sometimes embarrassing him in large crowds.

Tanya: Do you think it is terrible though that someone is treated that way because of his...

John: Squeaky voice, yeah because that's the way his voice is, he can't change it, you should just work with him

Tanya: Do you think that defines who he is as a boy?

John: No

This exchange demonstrates the compassion that John felt for boys he thought were being alienated because they appeared to be lacking some predefined feature of masculinity. He showed sympathy for the young man who was being bullied by his father and seemed opposed to the harsh treatment of the boy. He also showed great insights by highlighting that the boy cannot change who he was, and his father should support him regardless of how he sounds. This conversation also reveals John's divergence from Sam's view that soft-spoken boys were "girly." John differed with this as he rejects the notion that a boy's squeaky voice made him less

masculine. Reddock (2004) theorizes that boys like John and Sam highlight the “multidimensional construct of masculinity,” wherein they perceive masculinity in contradictory ways (p. ix). While Sam seems to view boys with “girly” or “squeaky” voices as less masculine, John believed it had nothing to do with their masculinity. John seems to understand that while collectively boys were powerful, individually, some were powerless and so he was quick to defend those being treated poorly (Ramirez, 2004). This might have been because John was in a dual position where he could experience both masculine power and powerlessness. For example, he had stereotypical masculine features being tall, dark, and weighing about 160 lbs that could gain him power in his masculine community. On the other hand, he was also a bit soft-spoken, which could have made him powerless in other situations. In short, as Ramirez (2004) explains, the power of masculinity is constructed and unevenly manifested in relationships among men and boys. This is something John seemed to be trying to reconcile.

To conclude, John did not necessarily see JC as the means to engage his masculine identity and rejected heteronormative practices that perpetuated that thinking. However, he exhibited conflicting behaviours as sometimes he conformed to expected gendered practices while on other occasions, he resisted such practices. Peter’s narratives also demonstrated conflicting thoughts and practices.

Peter: Man affi tan strong an know himself [A man has to be strong and know himself]. Keisling (2007) theorizes that often men and boys’ ways of thinking about masculinity are naturalized into a community’s behaviour, and at some point, all are expected to conform to those ideas. Peter appeared to be one of those boys who were conforming to his community’s gendered language practices. His narratives revealed that he was engaging his gendered identity

in two main ways: 1) similar to Sam, through his use of JC among boys and men; and 2) his rejection of perceived feminine language practices.

JC and Peter's gendered identity. Peter, like Sam, seemed to believe his use of JC was necessary for engaging his gendered identity in his community. In the group interview, he highlighted his vigilance in monitoring his speech among other boys and men to ensure he was conforming to expected practices, saying:

Peter: Like inna my community you have some group a guys you seet. [Like in my community you have some groups of guys you see it].

Sam: Oh you a talk the real thugs dem. [Oh you are talking about the real thugs].

Peter: Yeah so basically if you are around them and a use SJE dem not even ago look pon yuh, because dem ago seh a weh dah bredda yah a deal with, yuh seet [they are going to say what is this brother (boy) dealing with].

Sam: Yeah.

Peter: So basically yuh have fi know when fi speak it and who fi speak it to.

Tanya: Alright so location, location, location very important when using it.

Peter: Yeah like seh yuh a show off pon dem so dem just react and seh yow bad man it just better yuh just move from yah so or something like that [yeah it is like they think you are showing off on them and might say to you bad man just move from here or something like that]. Suh Location [so location].

From this conversation, it can be deduced that the choice of language (JC or SJE) was significant in how and where Peter communicated with other boys or men. His monitoring of his speech among other boys and men was his internal socialization processes at work. That is, he had his own system of language control that allowed him to participate in language exchanges on his terms (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). Throughout our conversations on gendered identity, I noticed whenever the boys, including Peter, spoke about being mindful about where and when they spoke SJE or JC it was only in reference to other men or boys. Again, like John, Peter made no

mention of experiencing any discomfort with using SJE among girls. However, like the other boys, he seemed concerned about using SJE among the “real thugs,” who might not appreciate his language choices. It was anticipated that among the “real thugs” he would be expected to use JC because of the hypermasculine views and practices that might have existed. Cameron (2006) surmises that the boys might be concerned because they are always under pressure to constitute themselves as masculine linguistically and, as such, they have to avoid forms of talk or language that might be considered feminine. This seems to be the case for Peter as he wanted to avoid any awkwardness that might be triggered by his use of SJE among the men. His utterance “*Yow bad man it just better yuh just move from yah so or something like that*” implies that Peter feared that kind of rejection. Of note, “bad man” is being used to refer to a fellow youth from the area or sort of comradery or connection with that particular person, not a reference to an actual bad person. The fact that Peter was so mindful of where and when he used SJE suggests that he was being complicit in the language patterns within his community. This confirms that language socialization was an important factor in how he constructed his gendered identity. Likely he did not want to be seen as a deviant. This finding supports the view presented in this research that gender is a social construction because Peter seems to be constructing his masculine identity to align with his social environments (Butler, 1999; Connell, 2005; Plummer, 2014).

Rejecting perceived femininity. Through his narratives, Peter showed that his avoidance of perceived feminine practices such as using SJE and being soft in mannerisms was necessary for some settings to maintain his status as a strong boy. For instance, he seemed to believe that whenever he needed to assert himself as a student leader, he must avoid appearing soft in front of other students. In the first interview, he shared these insights:

Tanya: So do you think you have privileges as a boy in school, or even as a boy?

Peter: Yes, I have lots of privilege in school.

Tanya: What is your privilege?

Peter: One, alright mi nuh waan say [laughs] put it in this way, alright we have more leadership than the females cah basically in the school everybody mostly react to the boys, a boy in leadership has more standards to control the school, but the females kinda soft so dem nuh, our school is a rough school so dem nah go really listen to the female that much, so we have more privilege, yeah [One, alright I don't want to say this, put it this way alright we have more leadership than females because basically in the school everybody will listen to the boys, a boy in leadership has more standards to control the school, but the females are kind of soft so they don't; our school is rough so they are not going to listen to the female that much, so we have more privilege yeah]

Here, Peter is suggesting that a boy commands more respect and is a better leader than a girl because she might be “soft” in the type of environment in which she had to operate. His reference to softness alludes to the ideology that women are softer by nature in speech and mannerism, while men are tough. Ramirez (2004) argues that such masculine ideologies are discursive constructions, which are dominant in developing societies, such as Jamaica, structured on “asymmetrical gender and power relations” (p. ix). He goes further to state that these established asymmetrical relationships are established when the masculine domain is privileged with the subsequent subordination and devaluation of the feminine domain. It was evident that the masculine domain was prevalent in NM. For example, I observed that, as a student leader, Peter only used JC when instructing students to get to their classes. I figured there was more to his utterance that “females kinda soft” so I questioned him about it further. In an unrecorded conversation, I asked him why he only used JC when giving instructions and he responded, “miss, man caan softie softie, that nah get you noweh.” [a man cannot be soft, that won't get him anywhere]. I went on to ask him if he thought using SJE would get the same reaction from the boys and he laughed. He remarked, “*you mussi mad miss at this school, boy dem wi think yuh soft.*” [you must be crazy miss at this school, the boys will think you are soft]. In this exchange,

Peter was implying that if he used SJE when directing the boys to go to classes they would think him “soft” and he would not get the desired effect, implying that the girls might have been acting “soft” because they were not getting the same respect or results as he did. Plummer (2014) supports this view stating that some boys believed soft language and tone were for sissies, thus many chose to be tough in their speech to protect their manhood.

That said, Peter’s utterances and actions that were shared above somewhat contradict some of his earlier statements when he mentioned: “*people shouldn’t think JC speakers are aggressive.*” A sentiment he also expressed in his graphic novel in figure 10.



Fig. 10- An illustration of Peter's Graphic Novel Page

In this depiction, in the first panel, the speaker (likely Peter himself) seems to be shouldering the burden of being perceived as a “tough” boy from the inner-city. In the next panel, the speaker challenges the stereotype that boys from the inner-city are aggressive in their interactions and makes the point that some boys’ playfulness is often mistaken as aggression. This page suggests Peter’s desire not to be seen as aggressive in his speech and mannerisms. However, in his conversation with me, he was suggesting that it was best to be perceived as “tough” by the younger boys to get them to behave in school. In this case, he was aligning his “tough” masculine image with his use of JC. But this practice was not unique to Peter. I also observed that whenever the vice-principal, a man, wanted to get the students to adhere to his requests or commands, he would use JC. In many ways, it seems both Peter and the vice principal were engaging their masculine authority through JC. JC appears to represent strength and power to them. Lewis (2003) contends that Peter and the vice principal’s actions are indicators that patriarchy is ever-present and continually exerts power on individual boys and men through the strength of masculine norms. In this sense, linguistic hegemonic masculine practices served to keep Peter and the vice principal in positions of power. Hence, it is possible this practice will become a goal for other boys who will likely continue to reproduce and propagate similar behaviours.

To conclude, Peter exhibited similar practices as Sam as he too used JC and avoidance of perceived effeminate practices to engage his gendered identity. He was conscious of his community’s expectations of gendered behaviours and so acted in ways that conformed to those practices. Joe showed similar practices, with one significant difference, which will be discussed in the next section.

Joe: Man a man, him fi straight. Nurse (2004) writes, “men are in constant fear of being viewed as wimps, sissies or homosexuals” (p. 8). Joe seemed to exhibit this very fear, because his narratives showed a preoccupation with heterosexual practices. Like some of the other boys, he used JC among boys and engaged in anti-feminine speech, however, his narratives extended further to show a fixation on asserting his masculinity through homophobic rhetoric.

Building on other narratives. Joe, like the other boys, used JC to engage his gendered identity and seemed to believe a deep baritone was important in establishing himself as a boy. Given the similarities with the other boys’ narratives, I will briefly share some of Joe’s narratives that build on the ideas outlined in previous sections. Then I will move on to discuss the significant differences between Joe’s and the other boys’ stories. First, Joe (like Sam and Peter) reiterated the importance of speaking JC in a deep baritone to assert his position as a boy. When I asked him in the first interview how he expressed his identity as a boy, he said:

Yuh caan too talk JC in squeaky squeaky voice like a girl enuh yuh have to have a deep baritone yuh know. [You can’t talk in a squeaky voice like a girl, you have to have a deep baritone].

Again, like Sam and Peter, Joe was aligning his identity as a boy with speaking JC in a deep baritone. It seems, through hegemonic practice in their communities, a deep baritone has been normalized as a form of masculinity, and so Joe, like some of the other boys, have used it to marginalize the boy who might be soft-spoken. In this case, as Connell (1995) argues, Joe has constructed and represented subordinate masculinity as effeminate in that a boy with a “squeaky” voice’ sounds like a girl. Connell (1995) goes further to suggest that this construction of a subordinate masculine identity becomes necessary in some groups to distinguish perceived effeminate practices from hegemonic forms and reaffirm dominant ways of displaying

masculinity. Thus, within this context, Joe seemed to be aligning himself with the dominant gendered practices that have been constructed within his society. For Joe, how a boy spoke was important in demonstrating his ability to be masculine. Again, this underscores how his construction of masculinity co-exists with the construction of femininity. These views generated some tensions between him and John who had very different perspectives. For instance, even though on the surface they seemed to get along, I noticed that they did not spend much one on one time together and in some group conversations John would chastise Joe for some of his insensitive comments about boys Joe referred to as “girly.” However, Joe’s views on what it meant to be masculine did not change much throughout the research process, as he shared these thoughts at the end of the last interview:

Tanya: And what do you say defines a boy or a man or what do you still think defines a boy or a man?

Joe: Your masculinity, how you act, talk a certain way miss, miss yuh caan [you can't] a talk like you a some girl yuh understand weh mi a she [You understand what I am saying].

Here, it is evident that Joe still believed that it was important for a boy to sound manly to be seen as masculine. But that was not necessarily the case for all the boys. As indicated, John sometimes seemed resistant to prevailing codes of gender that required outward displays of masculinity. Chevannes (1999) advocates such resistance, noting that current patterns of gender socialization are highly problematic for youths from working-class families. He theorized that this sometimes leads to unhealthy views of masculinity, as is exemplified in Joe’s narratives in the upcoming section.

Engaging masculine identity through homophobic rhetoric. For Joe, there was an overt focus on heterosexuality and homophobic rhetoric in engaging his gendered identity in his

narratives. Connell (1992) proposes that opposition to homosexuality is one of the building blocks in constructing masculinity, so it was unsurprising when Joe used homophobic rhetoric to reassert his masculine identity. Many of our conversations on language and gendered identities became a convoluted mix of homophobic and anti-feminine speech that revealed a complex web of masculine ideals that Joe might have been exposed to in his social environs. The following extract provides an example of Joe's engagement of his masculine identity through resistance to femininity and homosexuality and the we-they (masculine-effeminate boys) dichotomy that manifested:

Joe: Yes miss, if you don't speak a certain way, if you speak a certain way like your voice squeaky miss dem say you have girl ways and if you behave a certain way miss for instance if you talk a certain way a school miss dem a go seh yuh funny and dem ting deh miss. [they are going to say you are funny].

Tanya: And when yuh seh [you say] funny, what do you mean what are you referring to when you say funny?

Joe: Homosexuality. For the record, I am not homosexual. I love all ladies.

Tanya: I don't think anyone thinks you are, so ahmmm back to language now, do you think boys are expected to speak a particular way let's talk JC and SE for instance. Do you think there is any pressure on you to use one over the other as a boy?

Joe: Not really enuh miss from you know inna yuhself seh you straight like a arrow yuh nah affi worry weh a next person think enuh. [Not really you know miss, from you know yourself, you are straight like an arrow you don't have to worry about what another person thinks].

In this extract, Joe seemed overly focused on asserting his identity as heterosexual and distancing himself from boys who appeared “funny” (gay) because their practices were not reflective of expected gendered behaviours. He seemed to have a real desire to assert himself as a heterosexual boy, even though that was not being challenged. In some ways, he was resisting the notion of homosexuality by reasserting that he was “not homosexual,” and he “loved all ladies,”

and a boy must know himself and remain “straight.” These epithets seem to suggest a hegemonic way of thinking that heterosexuality is the hallmark of masculinity. Anderson and McLean (2014) noted similar ways of thinking and practices among Jamaican men as they reported that homophobia seemed to be the “nucleus of hegemonic masculinity” in Jamaica that was being used to prohibit entry of stigmatized effeminate men or boys to some social groups (p. 19). The authors go on to state that men and boys are “aware that in order to prove their masculinity, they must prove their heterosexuality” (Anderson & Maclean, 2014, p. 20). There is much evidence of this in Joe’s comments as he went on to assert that he was “straight like an arrow.” Through his discourse, the perceived gay boy seemed not to have a place in his world. Connell (1992, 2005) contends that this subjectification of others through difference (stigmatization, stereotyping) that Joe is exemplifying is fundamental to his constitution of hegemonic masculinity. In this case, Joe seemed eager to establish that he was not homosexual, as he might have perceived this as emasculating and the direct opposite of a real man.

Joe also seemed to gain masculine power through his pronouncements of being “straight”, which seemed to have been an important part of his construction of masculine identity. For example, in the group interview, I noticed whenever any of the boys made references to sexual orientation and their masculine identities, Joe would follow their comments with words like “straight, straight mi seh.” This seemed to be a sort of reaffirmation of his heterosexuality, which was never questioned. Joe’s need to reassert that he was “straight” when talking about language and gendered behaviours seem indicative of his need to establish his masculine identity as anti-gay. Cameron (2006) refers to this as an explicit performative strategy in which the speaker is putting heterosexual masculinity on display to reassert gendered position. In this case, she theorizes men in all-male groups often feel the need to “unambiguously display

their sexual orientation” (Cameron, 2006, p. 73). Joe telling me, “For the record, I am not homosexual, I love all ladies” in response to a question about boys’ language expectations strengthens the position that he was constructing his masculine identity directly in opposition to homosexuality. For him, it seems homosexuality becomes the antithesis of masculinity. Nurse (2004) corroborates this as he advances that, for many Caribbean men, homosexuality is the forbidden taboo, threatening masculine order, so their instinctive reaction is to distance themselves from it.

Joe’s overt focus on heterosexuality as a defining feature of his masculinity remained a constant feature of his narratives. The extract below is an example of the views he held at the end of this research.

Tanya: As we sort of wrap up and get back to our final question. I want you to think back about the discussions we have had the last couple of weeks. Have your views about boys and language and masculine or gendered identities changed in any way in how you see it?

Joe: No miss, no miss yuh have to talk up miss, man walk straight and talk straight yuh caan go round corner.

As the extract exemplifies, Joe still believed that being straight was crucial in engaging his identity as a boy. In sum, while Joe showed some similarities with the other boys in their use of JC to engage their gendered identities, he diverged significantly in his overt focus on expressing his masculinity in direct opposition to homosexuality. On the other hand, the teachers’ interview seemed to contradict all of the boys’ views and gendered practices in many ways. This was probably due to the different ways in which the boys were engaging their masculine identities in their classrooms and their communities.

The Teachers: Reality Versus Perception

Contrastive views on gender and language practices. The teachers' perspectives on language and gendered identities contrasted with most of the boys. Mrs. Hansel's comments in the following extract highlight the contrast between her perspectives and the boys' actual practices. She said:

Well, in many schools some boys are averse to speak the SJE because they think it makes them sissies. In our school, we don't have that problem. The boys, if they are able to, they like to communicate using the SJE because they don't want to continue to see themselves as a product of the garrison (a community ruled by a don/gang leader).

Mrs. Hansel's statement clearly contradicts the utterances and practices of the boys as evidenced by earlier discussions. Mrs. Hansel seems to believe that the boys of her school, NM, were not averse to SJE or thought it made them sissies. However, the evidence shows that the contrary existed in many respects. First, except for John, all the boys indicated that in some ways that they think boys who used too much SJE seemed a bit girly. Sam was definitely opposed to the idea of a boy using too much SJE and Peter and Joe were preoccupied with soft-spoken boys' deviance from masculinity through their voices. Second, most of the boys indicated that using SJE in their communities, what Mrs. Hansel referred to as "garrison," would have been threatening to the masculine identity they wished to display among the men. This suggests the teachers might have been somewhat uninformed and naïve to the boys' lived realities. This divergence in views is also significant in highlighting the distinctions between the boys' behaviours in their communities and school. For instance, while there was a desire among the boys "not to be a product of the garrison" as Mrs. Hansel highlighted, the need to fit into the masculine ideals of their communities seemed to have trumped other concerns. Anderson and McLean (2014) substantiate this as they reported in their research that language, in particular JC, was a "primary tool for the performance of the Jamaican masculine self" among working-class young men (p.

25). They further revealed that JC had become a part of the masculine identity of the men that they seemed compelled to maintain this identity.

Mrs. Hansel also seems to believe gender-based classes (separating boys and girls) would increase boys' use of SJE and participation in class, which also contradicts the boys' narratives.

She further suggested that this would minimize girls' domination in English A classes, saying:

One of the things that I think can be done is to use up the gender-based classes. When boys are placed in a group by themselves, they tend to be more confident, they tend to be more confident and more driven. But when they are placed in groups with girls, as I said earlier, girls are more vocal, they are motivated, so they will clamor for the teacher's attention and given that the teacher has a certain amount of time to complete the syllabus, the teacher is going to allow the girls to set the pace of the class and so the boys are going to become complacent because now they are going to be overshadowed, you understand, so putting them in gender-based classes will help this situation..

Here, Mrs. Hansel is suggesting that boys were more confident SJE speakers among each other as girls sometimes dominate conversations and overshadow them, and so gender-based classes might be helpful to combat this. Again, this view is contrastive to the narratives shared so far. The boys' narratives show that they were less likely to use SJE when among other boys as they were more concerned about how they might be perceived by other boys.

Mrs. Jacob also thought boys were not really opposed to SJE, but she was not fully supportive of Mrs. Hansel's view that gender-based classrooms would help boys to be more confident learners. Instead, she cautioned that too many boys in one classroom could be distracting to learning efforts as they would become more conscious of their language choices, which corroborates the evidence presented so far. She went further to say,

And eliminate the [inaudible] because when they are together they become competitive too and too many of them in the same environment creates a distraction. So if you can limit the group to no more than 20 boys, you will get better results.

In this extract, Mrs. Jacob was concerned that linguistic patterns would be altered when the boys were together. This is the case so far based on the boys' narratives.

The teachers' shared comments show that although they thought the boys were not averse to SJE and did not engage in stereotypically gendered language practices, the contrary existed. The boys' self-reported narratives showed that they were sometimes engaged in hegemonic, hypermasculine, homophobic, and anti-feminine behaviours that rejected SJE. Again, this contradiction between the teachers' perceptions and the boys' realities demonstrates that the teachers were unaware of the significant differences in how the boys engaged their masculine identities in their communities and expectations put on them in different aspects of society. However, this disjuncture between the teachers' expectations and students' lived realities is a challenge for many teachers, not just Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel. I was also lacking in this regard when I was caught off-guard by John's display of hypermasculine behaviour when he described an encounter with a girl to his peers. I thought his behaviour was uncharacteristic of him, yet it was more likely I might have been naïve in my perceptions of him. Whatever the case, it reinforces the point that it is sometimes challenging for teachers to understand their students' lived experiences outside of the classroom.

To conclude, basilectal use of JC, resistance to femininity, and conformity to dominant masculine practices in their communities were avenues for the boys to construct their gendered identities which were reinforced in their daily interactions. All of the boys, except for John, seemed to believe JC was an important part of their identity as boys, and as such engaged its use to reassert their gendered positions. Some of the boys' narratives showed that language and gender socialization impacted their actions as they often engaged in anti-feminine practices and speech that were reflective of the dominant masculine culture in their communities. John,

however, rejected anti-feminine practices by embracing the soft-spoken boy as masculine and advocating for less hegemonic masculine practices that excluded some boys. While there were some common threads in the boys' gendered practices, it was evident they had distinct ways of seeing their world and responding to gendered expectations and ideologies. It is these unique attributes that have contributed to their individual success in ELL that will be explored in upcoming sessions.

Students' Success and ELL: Accountability in the Classroom

The big picture of boys' use of JC and ELL performance at NM . In Jamaica, students' use of JC in schools is often viewed as non-attainment of literacy skills (Evans, 1999). That is, JC-speaking students are assessed as not meeting the language requirement of school, and little effort is being made to distinguish between the two language varieties in the assessment tools used to measure their progress (Evans, 1999, 2001; Craig, 2006; Nero & Stevens, 2018). For instance, all grade 11 students are expected to sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) English A exam, which is a prerequisite for college for those who plan to attend. This exam models the UK based General Certificate of Education (GCE) English exam, and tests students in four key areas of writing: summary, comprehension, short story or descriptive and argumentative. For each section, students are expected to model competent use of SJE to acquire a passing grade. The problem with this is that students' JC expressions are usually marked as non-standard expressions and awarded low scores. This is problematic in several ways. First, many dominant JC speaking students are learning SJE as native speakers would instead of learning it as a second language (Bryan, 2004a). Consequently, many of these students are not able to transition from one language to the other. Further, many students from working-class families in Jamaica enter the school system with JC as their dominant language.

These students are more likely to find SJE challenging more so than students from middle-class backgrounds who are exposed to it at an early age (Bryan, 2004b, 2011; Craig, 2006). As such, even initial literacy for many students is offered in a language that is foreign to them, presenting them with an early educational hurdle which they may never effectively negotiate (Siegel, 1997). This contrast between home and school language is often problematic for dominant JC speaking students because they are expected to learn in a language they do not speak at home. Besides, teachers who are not trained in teaching Creole-speaking children or in a bilingual environment may not recognize the difficulties these students experience in the ELL classroom (Bryan, 2004; 2010). However, at present, some educators and critics of JC in schools seem less concerned about these factors and more preoccupied with some boys' lack of performance in ELL, with much blame being attributed to their use of JC (*The Jamaica Observer Archives*, 2013). In an article entitled, *We Need to Rescue our Boys*, one critic called for more significant efforts to tackle the issue of boys' under-achievement in schools, especially in CSEC English A, and remove the gendered language barriers that were preventing the boys from achieving success in school.

At the community level, passing the English A exam seemed to represent the highest accomplishment for many parents, and as such there was a great push for children to do well in the subject. Despite the very obvious setback that many of these children were barely competent SJE speakers, parents, and the wider society seemed to discard this fact, especially during exam season. At the time of my visit, many parents were anxiously awaiting the CSEC results, just as they probably did for the grade four literacy test, the grade six achievement test and the grade nine literacy tests. Students seemed to move from one stage of testing to the next without

considering whether or not they were learning SJE or simply learning to pass tests to go to college or enter into the work force (Lambert, 2016).

NM was undeniably the core of unhealthy assessment practices that usually classified JC-speaking students' performance as unsatisfactory or not yet competent (Evans, 2001; Jennings & Cook, 2019). In assessing students' literacy performance in school, it seems that little or no regard is given to diverse literacies, but rather the student's ability to write in SJE (Milner & Milner, 2003). Students' home language (JC) is not privileged in these tests, and any well-intentioned Jamaican teacher will tell you "the children just need to learn to write in English." As it was in the community, NM touted success in CSEC English A as the ultimate accomplishment for students. A pass meant attaining grades 1-3, with grade 1 demonstrating outstanding performance. In mid-September 2018, NM students were being recommended by their classroom teachers to sit the CSEC English A exam based on their academic performance in the last school year. The teachers decided if students met the requirements, and if they did, would sign recommendation forms and students would pay the required examination fees. At NM, while there was some discussion on teacher methodology and limited resources, there seemed to be more focus on what boys were not doing, and why they were failing and undeserving of being recommended. Boys seemed to be the focus because statistically, girls outperformed them in all literacy tests and major English A exams.

Some research in Jamaica highlights five key areas of concern for boys' underperformance: teacher-student interactions; emphasis on testing; negative effects of streaming boys; gender stereotypes and teacher expectations (Evans, 2004; Jennings, 2019; Parry, 2004; USAID, 2011). However, despite these research findings, the boys in this research maintained that students were accountable for their own success. As will be demonstrated in the

forthcoming sections, all of the boys believed that being accountable to oneself and working hard were the most important factors in their success in ELL and ultimate success in school. While success has many definitions in different situations, the boys saw success as their ability to actively participate in ELL classes, do well on assessments (internal and external) and competently use SJE in different situations. Although this is a constricting definition that is typical in a post-colonial setting, I am compelled to adopt it, given the boys' interpretation. Throughout their narratives, the boys advanced three factors significant to their success: developing agency in their learning and success in English A/ELL, maintaining the identity of a successful student, and overcoming the stereotypes of the underperforming inner-city youth. Given the significant overlap in the boys' narratives surrounding their agency in English A success, the value of maintaining their identities as successful inner-city students and overcoming the stereotype of the underperforming inner-city boy, I will group their narratives on these issues to avoid repetition.

Collective Stories: Agency and accountability in English A success. Research across the globe shows that non-standard dialect speaking minorities fall behind their standard English-speaking peers in school achievement, but the discriminatory nature of their language and literacy education is rarely questioned (Dixon, 2013; Mufwene, 2008; Siegel, 1997, 2000). Despite these concerns, the boys' narratives suggest that them being agentive in their learning was the most significant factor in their ELL success. For instance, Sam, like the other boys, experienced some challenges in his ELL classes, but he believed he was responsible for his own success and so he committed the required time and effort to achieve good grades. For Sam, agency was critical to students' ELL success, and the decisions they made mattered to their

ultimate success or failure. He expressed that JC-speaking students simply need to work harder to be successful in ELL, saying:

Not only our schools enuh that is the thing mi realize with the government sometimes dem blame the results (CSEC) pon other things weh nuh necessary none at all, that dem drop in some rules to me a foolishness. Some rules weh a foolishness. But all dem affi think bout enuh it depends pon who waan to do the work from who nuh want do it yuh affi do the work. From birth some a we nuh strong at academics yuh done know the brain nuh too too smart fi that... but yuh can do it. [Not only our schools you know, that is the thing I notice with the government. Sometimes they blame the results (CSEC) on other things, which is not necessary. Then they put in foolish rules... foolish rules. All they need to think about is that it depends on who wants to do the work, if you don't want to do it, nothing can be done, you have to put in the work. From birth some of us are not so strong at academics, we are just not that smart, but it can be done if you put in the work.]

Here, Sam was advancing that students were ultimately responsible for their success in school, and so their failure should not be attributed to other factors outside of their efforts. He underscored that even if some students were not academically inclined, they could still achieve success in school. He went further to suggest that some students were not as driven as they could be, and this might have been impacting their performance in school. All the boys believed that students had agency in their ELL success and boys especially needed to dedicate more time to their studies. For example, Peter said:

No man mek mi tell yuh nuff man jus nuh jus nuh feel like fi do nothing, nuff man nuh feel fi go nuh class and nutten But Like, fi like fi di girl dem now dem a go waan go class, youth dem now but nuff man waan just waan kick back and jus go school and seh look girls and seh hmmm hmmm one and two baby [sing] and that just, alright just the mindset. So basically it only a small percent of boys who actually have interest in their school work [[No man let me tell you this, some boys just don't feel like they should do anything in class and many do not even attend classes or do anything when they do. But for the girls, they want to go to their classes, but some of the boys they just want to kick back or just go to school to check out girls and then get them pregnant, that's just their mindset, so basically it is only a small percent of boys who actually have an interest in their school work].

Joe extended on this to say:

Miss sometimes it is not traditional high school a weh you do at the school... a nuh the name of the school..a weh yuh do''[it is not the traditional high school you attend it is your output of work, it is not the name of the school, it is the work you do].

While John demonstrated commitment to his work, saying:

I suffer from migraines, but I don't let it stop me from doing my school work. I usually reach out to the teachers to help me, so I can catch up because it is important to me to do well, but some boys don't think that way.

As evidenced in the boys' utterances, they believed students have to be committed to their school work to achieve success; however, they thought many boys were lacking in this regard. Adiba (2004) reasons that students, like these boys, who see success in school as only dependent on their efforts, are usually internally motivated (an internal drive to be successful in school). That is, they are more likely to believe their success is due to their efforts (internal attributions) more so than external factors (Adiba, 2004). These views are also supported in Bouchaib, Ahmadou, & Abdelkader's (2018) research with ELLs, which showed that motivation was a positive attribute that aided in students' success. The researchers reported that students who placed the responsibility of their success on external factors that they could not control seemed not to have made the same efforts as those students who placed their success in their own hands. This was clearly the case for these boys who were keen on placing their success in their own hands. In further support of this claim, Jennings and Cook's (2019) research on the value Jamaican secondary students attached to their education showed that students from non-traditional schools and working-class backgrounds, similar to the boys, valued their education more than their counterparts in traditional high schools. The authors attributed this finding to working-class contexts, where parents impress upon their children the value of getting an education to escape their circumstances. In such cases, education was valued for instrumental purposes of getting a job and living a better life. This claim might also explain why the boys in this research appeared

so motivated to do well. Adiba (2004) intimates that this level of personal attribution to their success will likely result in them experiencing more success in school.

Some of the boys' comments also allude to the poor image of some inner-city boys as being lazy and uninterested in learning. As evidenced in Peter's utterances, he believed some boys were not as committed to their success in ELL and school, and he went further to compare boys' level of interest in school to that of girls whom he believed were more committed and focused on doing well. Figueroa (2004), citing similar examples of boys' lack of interest and participation in ELL classes, contends that male underperformance in the arts is rooted in some boys' rejection of English. He argues that their rejection of SJE "as a refined, softer feminine form of communication" has directly resulted in their poor participation and performance in ELL (p. 153). He further maintains that these factors put boys at a disadvantage in the arts and suggests that schools and homes work together to make boys more accountable for their actions. Figueroa's (2004) call for greater accountability aligns with the boys' view that all boys should be responsible for their success. Nonetheless, the actions of the boys in this research contrast significantly with the boys Figueroa (2004) is referencing. The boys in this research all demonstrated a keen interest in ELL, so it is likely that results are not uniformed across school environments, leading to differing outcomes to that of Figueroa's study.

Further, there are merits to Figueroa's (2004) arguments and these boy's reasoning that some boys are not applying themselves. However, several other research studies in Jamaica continue to show that several external factors in the teaching-learning environment are contributing to boys' low success rates in ELL (Evans, 1999, 2001; Thompson, 2017). For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) commissioned research headed by Dr. Hyacinth Evans (1999) that surveyed 3917 secondary students from grades 9-11 (four of the

selected high schools were in Jamaica) between August 1997 and April 1998 found heavy bias against boys in the classroom. The report showed that boys were often placed in lower streams, reprimanded more heavily, and more likely to have negative experiences with teachers. For example, in the research the girl participants made these utterances: “sometimes boys get harsher punishment for the same thing; sometimes teachers rough up the boys; boys’ give more trouble” (p. 31). The boy participants also made similar utterances lamenting their unfair treatment: “they always blame boys for trouble making; girls are not easily punished” (p. 31). The research went further to show that these negative experiences often impact boys’ attendance to school, participation, and ultimate success. Evan’s study demonstrate that some boys do face gender biases in school that impact their performance.

Moreover several Jamaican ESL theorists have advanced that students’ limited access to SJE might be contributing to their under-performance in ELL (Bryan, 2004, 2010; Devonish, 2012; Milner & Milner, 2003). The boys did not share this view. For instance, Sam stressed that some students’ unwillingness to work in ELL and English A classes was the contributing factor to their failure and not their lack of access to SJE. For him, his dominant use of JC did not adversely affect his English language learning, and he was vocally opposed to anyone who would suggest this. In the group interview, he said:

Sam: Suh yuh think seh because we speak patwa wi a fail ELL a dat yuh a seh [So they think because we speak patois we are failing, is that what they are saying?]

Tanya: Not necessarily to say you fail, but contributing to it because the discussion now is that because students are mostly using the creole it is contributing to their ...

Sam: No.

Tanya: Suh (so) you use it for socialization, so you don’t think students’ ahm use of it is contributing in any way to their success or failure in ELL?

Sam: No a your problem if yuh nuh study [No it is your problem if you do not study].

Tanya: A your problem if yuh nuh study... [It is your problem if you do not study].

Sam: Don't blame it on patwa.

As indicated in this conversation, Sam reasserted his position that JC was not a factor in students' success or failure but more so the effort they put into studying.

Peter shared similar views to Sam's, saying:

Basically the reason why most boys fail English is because they do not study the language if you don't study the language you cannot pass the language cah basically you have actually career people out there of high standards who actually use stand.. ahm creole and SE and yet still they are not still in that position, so basically you cannot use that as an example to say we are failing English, the reason we are failing English is because we are not studying English if you don't know the language then basically you are not going to pass the subject.

However, contrary to the views expressed by Sam and Peter that boys just needed to study English A more to be successful in the course, Bryan's (2012) joint research study with USAID proved otherwise. The study assessed the challenges Creole-speaking students faced in ELL classrooms and revealed that students' immersion in SJE and modelling of the language were critical to their growth in ELL. This claim is also supported by several language theorists who believe language immersion that allows students to interact with the language in natural contexts aid in their acquisition of the target language (Bakhtin, 1981, Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008; Norton, 2013). For instance, Ochs and Schieffelin (2008) discourage static, unnatural learning situations focused on grammatical rules in isolation of interactional contexts, and instead encourage full authentic immersion in the target language. So, in contrast to some of the boys' beliefs, learning SJE is more complicated than just studying, rather it requires full immersion to foster understanding and boost performance. Although, as the upcoming section demonstrates, the value the boys placed on their identity as successful students likely explains their views that students are accountable for their success.

Engaging an identity as a successful ELL inner-city student. My observations of the boys' practices revealed that they were highly motivated students who were determined to be successful in school. Several factors seemed to have contributed to the boys' ELL success: interest, effort and practice (Bouchaib, Ahmadou & Abdelkader, 2018). For instance, they showed interest in the subject, put in the necessary work, and practiced writing in the language as much as they could, which seemed to have contributed significantly to their success in ELL. For example, I observed that they would sometimes stay after school to catch up on work or sought the help of their teachers. They also often used the WhatsApp chat group I created to connect about their work and ask me or someone else for clarification on any topic they found a bit difficult. I also observed that they were never late or absent from school during the time of my research and seemed to be the kind of students who were eager to work. In sum, they were deeply invested in their success and was willing to do the required work as is reflected in their good English A scores below:

English A Scores	Term 1 (Sept-Dec, 2017)	Term 2 (January-March, 2018)	Term 3 (April-June, 2018)
Sam	76	78	80
John	67	75	81
Peter	65	74	78
Joe	63	71	75

Table 1: The Four Boys' English A Test Scores September 2017- June, 2018

As is indicated in table 2, all four boys consistently performed reasonably well in English A over the course of a school year. They showed an average of 70-75 on English A test scores over this period, with Sam and John recording the highest scores. The results also showed that all the boys showed a consistent increase in their scores for the 2017-2018 school year.

The boys' construction of their student identity seemed based on the premise that they were intellectually capable of greater success than many would think, and this seemed to keep them desirous of achieving more. For all the boys, it seemed, their identities as successful students were important to them in challenging stereotypes about inner-city students, and so they were preoccupied with achieving good grades. In an unrecorded conversation, Peter admitted their focus on external grades, commenting: "*We nuh [don't] remember some of what we learn every year, but as long as we get good grades we good.*" Peter's comment demonstrated a fixation on good grades that is typical in many Jamaican schools. This might have also been a reflection of the practices at his school because I observed at NM that there was an overt focus on students' grades and meeting CSEC requirements. Again, this was not unique to NM, as it is quite common for teachers to take work exercise verbatim from course texts, and for most classroom activities to be symbolic of the particular exam students are to sit (Lambert, 2016). In his text, *The Diploma Disease*, Dore (1976) warns that this excessive reliance on the selection process, often through tests, as evidence of students' attainment can be detrimental to their overall success. Dore (1976) advocates a shift in such practice as he believes it only serves to limit further opportunities for many students as education becomes a process of accumulating qualifications. Lambert (2016) also cautions against teaching to test as he believes it undermines students' efforts in school and perpetuates a cycle of limiting opportunities for students who do not do well on tests.

Frankly, the boys' good academic performance might have been an exception to the rule as several studies continue to show working-class boys struggling in school (Bleach, 1998; Epstein, Elwood, Hey & Maw, 1998; Francis, 2005; Thompson, 2017; USAID, 2011). For instance, the USAID (2011) report showed that some boys' progress in schools continues to be

of concern as there was evidence that gender stereotypes were impacting their performance. The report drew on findings from a two-day round-table with teachers across Jamaica that showed that some teachers were still engaging in harmful gender bias practices that cast boys as poor ELL students, incapable of settling down and needing more social management. Nonetheless, the boys were not as concerned. Rather they seemed more preoccupied with escaping the stigma of the underperforming inner-city boy, as is demonstrated in the next section.

Overcoming the stereotype of the underperforming inner-city boy. Much of the debate surrounding boys' failure in English A is often directed at the working-class youth. The boys were aware of this and so might have been motivated to escape the negative label of the lazy, uninterested inner-city youth who was less likely to succeed. While they all shared a desire to escape the stigma of the failing inner-city boy, they responded to this in different ways. For instance, Sam and Peter were annoyed with fellow inner-city youths whom they thought were living up to the stereotypes of inner-city boys. Sam shared his discontent in the group interview, saying:

Sam: A weh him call him, a weh him come from we mi seh miss Tivoli and you can clearly see how him behave, clearly see how him behave, a that a thing enuh miss, to me the government actually honest when dem seh enuh sometimes a di area weh yuh come from really, but you have one and two gems enuh, but the area yuh come from most of that area produce mostly rubbish, so mi understand sometime try fi hide it yuh seen [what's his name, he is from Tivoli and you can clearly see how he behaves, clearly see how he behaves, that's the thing the government is being honest when they say sometimes it is the area you are from, but you have one or two gems, but that area (Tivoli) produces mostly rubbish, so I understand if they try to hide it]

Tanya: But wouldn't someone take offense to you referring to kids coming out of these areas, I don't want to say rubbish, but you know what I mean, coming out and not making the most... wouldn't you say the circumstances at times really define some of the the the

Sam: Circumstances, yuh a talk circumstances, now like if dem nah nuh light nuh water, nor nuh food Zeen that rough, but [Circumstances, you are talking about circumstances, now if they don't have electricity, water or food that is rough, but]

Tanya: But you are saying that is not the case, that these are kids who make the conscious decision to behave a certain way

Sam: Some of them make a conscious decision to be this way no interest in school

Peter added his discontent with inner-city boys, making this comment during one of my observation sessions in his class when he saw a group of boys on the corridors during scheduled class sessions:

See the bad man them deh weh yuh fi get inna a yuh study miss. Dem deh man dem nuh come yah fi do nothing.” [See the bad boys you need to get in your study miss, those boys don’t come to school to do anything] *I looked out to see a group of boys on the corridor who were unperturbed by his comments.*

In these extracts, Sam and Peter were upset with boys whom they believed were living up to the stereotypes of the uninterested inner-city student. They were evidently exposed to the same negative discourses regarding inner-city boys’ academic abilities and achievement, and these might have contributed to their apparent bitterness towards boys whom they believed were making the conscious choice not to do well. Sam’s reference to the Tivoli area as producing “rubbish” students was echoing the very stereotype he experienced and contradicted his views throughout this research that inner-city youths were capable of academic success as anyone else. It might be that Sam, who was a hard-working student, was conscious about overcoming the stereotypes of the underperforming inner-city boy. He might have he felt he needed to disassociate himself from students whose practices aligned with the poor image of inner-city youths. For him, it seems, these students were unsuccessful because they failed to apply themselves, and so they lived up to the stereotypes of inner-city youths and gave credence to the government’s rationale that children from these areas are not working hard. Contrary to the boys’ beliefs, both Evan’s (1999) and Clarke’s (2007) research exploring gender disparities in schools offered different explanations for some boys’ reluctance to participate in school. For example,

both research findings revealed that boys who had negative interactions with teachers in school were more likely to avoid those situations, which sometimes meant skipping classes. Their research further showed that some boys' negative views of school correlated with their low participation and success in school. Clarke (2007) reported that although teachers shared that they believed boys learned differently and liked a hands-on, outside the classroom style of teaching, "no provisions was made to accommodate this male learning style" (p. 145). The research also noted that the boys were not held accountable for turning in assignments, and not much one on one time was dedicated to helping boys who could not read. Clarke (2007) note that these were factors impacting some boys' success in school.

Unlike, Sam's and Peter's harsh view of some boys' performance, John and Joe, were aware that not everyone was capable of achieving the same success and so were sympathetic toward inner-city youths who were struggling in school. For instance, while John acknowledged that some students skipped classes, which might have contributed to their failure in English A, he pointed out that some also failed because they did not understand the content, saying:

Others (some boys) they skull [skip] the classes, they go to the classes one and two times when they go to the classes the teacher might say yeah they have the potential, but not realizing that they don't have all the notes, so they still end up signing them miss, so when they go into the exams they don't really understand most of it miss, so that's one of the main reason they fail.

In this excerpt, John is establishing that there was more to some boys' failure than just skipping classes. He admitted that some boys needed to attend classes and put greater effort into their work. But he also seemed to be advocating for greater support for these boys as he hinted that it might be difficult for them to pass if they don't understand the content. He was also suggesting that teachers sometimes recommended some boys to sit the external exam based on the potential they might have seen, however, some of those students might not have been adequately

monitored in their preparation for those exams. This claim alluded to poor teacher accountability and methodology impinging on ELL students' success. In a similar vein, Jennings and Cook (2019) concluded in their research that some students' low value of their education is partly due to some teachers' "lack of concern for their needs and interests" (p. 74). The research findings showed that students needed additional support in their learning to be successful. It might have been that the students John mentioned were attributing their poor outcomes to external factors, but it was also possible they were not given the needed support to be successful. One common thread in these studies was the call for change in teaching methodology. For example, Bouchaib, Ahmadou and Abdelkader's (2018) study showed that "teachers' influence and classroom atmosphere" were significant in students' ELL success, and so the researchers call on teachers to create more supportive learner-centered supportive learning environments (p. 100).

Joe also expressed a concern that inner-city youths were unfairly targeted as poor academic performers and so encouraged fellow NM students to remain focused. He shared these thoughts in our final interview:

Tanya: The conversations that we have been having over the last couple of weeks suggest that you are highly intellectual boys, so how would you feel if someone misjudge your level of intelligence because of the school you attend or anything else that might be misleading?

Joe: Mi tell everyone not to feel discouraged enuh, if yuh know weh you know yuh nah go care weh somebody else think cah a wah go benefit you at the end of the day enuh so nah do it fi benefit them enuh yuh a do it fi benefit yuh miss, memba seh a nuh di school yuh school, is what yuh do [I would tell everyone not to be discouraged, if you know what you know you shouldn't care what others think because it is what is benefiting you in the end, so do it to benefit you, remember it is not the school you attend but the work you put in].

Here, Joe was encouraging students to work hard. He reiterated that students' output was crucial to their success and not the particular school they attend. Joe probably felt the way he did because, in Jamaica, it is quite common for parents to send their teenaged children to high

schools that are many miles away from home, so they can attend a traditional school. Unlike many developed countries, Jamaica does not place students in catchment schools; rather parents select the school they wish their child/children to attend. In this selection process, recently upgraded high schools like NM and technical schools are usually shunned as low performing and less likely to offer students pathways to success. Although the Ministry of Education, along with related agencies, has undertaken several initiatives to promote and inform the public on the importance of technical education in upgraded high schools, many Jamaicans continue to have a poor perception of these schools (Pimpa, 2007). Gamerdinger (2006) observes that many youths and their parents perceive schools like NM as a place for low academic achievers and dropouts. It probably does not help that each year the Ministry of Education ranks schools based on CSEC performance and inner-city schools like NM continuously rank in the bottom 10% of lowest-performing schools. Of the 160 high schools ranked in 2019, NM ranked 114. This ranking is considered an improvement, considering the trends that showed that most of the inner-city schools in Kingston were ranked among the bottom ten schools. However, despite NM's improved ranking and the school's advancements in robotics and other innovative areas, students were still perceived as low achievers. So, given this context, it is understandable why Joe would be concerned about how the perception of NM might be impacting students' views of their own abilities.

Notwithstanding the boys' shared narratives, my observations of Mrs. Hansel's and Mrs. Jacob's English A classes at NM both refute and support some of the stereotypes of the underperforming inner-city boy. For example, my second observation of Mrs. Hansel's grade 11 English A class, showed a successful classroom where boys were thriving. Mrs. Hansel's grade 11 class had all the hallmarks of a typical classroom where desks and chairs were neatly

organized in rows and students were ready to work when she showed up. This class had a population of 21 girls and 12 boys, and they were all keen workers. Although the boys were a bit quiet in the class and the girls dominated the conversations, they were all equally engaged and keen on completing their work. On the other hand, my observation of her grade 10 class showed a different scenario. Her grade 10 class comprised of mostly boys whose behaviour contrasted significantly with those of the boys in her grade 11 class. Some students wandered in quite late with a stern warning from her and there were many more side conversations than observed in the other class. Some of the boys were often disruptive with distracting outbursts. Even Mrs. Hansel seemed a bit different. She appeared more jaded and was involved in less complex conversations with this class and appeared to be struggling to maintain their attention. There was certainly evidence that the students, specifically the boys, were not working at their optimum in that class. I am sure there were myriad factors that contributed to the contrasting behaviours in the two classes but considering my limited time with the class, it was difficult to speculate on these. That said, while walking back to the staffroom with Mrs. Hansel, I asked her about the class. In that unrecorded conversation, she mentioned that this was *“one of the more challenging lower streamed groups that required more efforts on her part to get settled and working.”* She mentioned that some days were *“tough as the boys were not very motivated and would rather waste time.”* It was unclear if Mrs. Hansel’s approach had anything to do with their lack of engagement, or if other factors were impacting their participation. Whatever factors might have been contributing to the grade 10 boys’ lack of interest, it did play into the stereotype of the uninterested and lazy inner-city boy. However, the grade 11 boys’ conduct dispelled that notion.

To conclude, all of the boys have demonstrated that they needed to be agentive in their success in ELLand school. While they have different ways of achieving their goals, the

underlying thread in their narratives was that they had to put in the hard work. The boys' views diverged on how to perceive the underperforming inner-city youth, with Sam and Peter expressing some bitterness and disappointment with some boys' disinterest. John and Joe, however, were more sympathetic to the plight of some boys and had a more positive outlook. They suggested greater teacher support and encouraging students' positive views of self and school as solutions to help the underperforming student.

The Teachers: Support and Relatability are Key to Boys' Success

Although the boys did not focus much on external factors impacting some boys' ELL performance, the teachers considered these significant in students' success. Their interview revealed two dominant external factors impacting some boys' low performance in ELL and English A: 1) teacher-student relationships; and 2) poor work ethics.

Teacher-student relationship. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2008) theorize that the disconnect between students and teachers in some instances can lead to students' disconnect from the learning itself and ultimate failure. This was apparently an important factor in students' success because all the boys mentioned that their relationship with their current teacher changed their attitudes toward ELL and contributed significantly to their success in the class. For instance, John credited his ELL success to the efforts of his teachers who supported his growth, saying: "their efforts to help and support me motivated me to do well." Both Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob shared this perspective. Mrs. Jacob underscored the value of establishing a good relationship with ELL students, especially the boys, saying:

I think boys like when you are relatable if they think there is a disconnect then they will not make an effort. The truth is when boys do well, half the time is because they like you. It doesn't mean that they are in love with you, but they have to like you. When they like you they really make an effort to do well.

Mrs. Hansel extended on this to say:

So teachers need to be personable, teachers also need to be consistent. When there is a lapse in structure, boys operate in a structured way, so the teacher must have structure with them in terms of discipline. You need to be firm, but gentle, if there are lapses, and inconsistencies then the boys are not going to perform. They must operate within certain guidelines, teachers must be personable, teachers must be consistent, and lessons must be student-centered. Boys must be constantly engaged because if they are not constantly engaged, they tend to be lost because boys are very hands-on. They like to take the kinesthetic approach and because we know they are very hands-on, we must keep them engaged constantly.

In this extract, both teachers are advocating a personable approach to teaching that engages the boys in the learning process and encourages them to do their best. Mrs. Jacob pointed out that if students find the teacher relatable, they will feel connected and ultimately make an effort to do well in the subject. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2008) also theorize that relational engagement is vital in ELL classrooms. The authors define relational engagement as the “extent to which students feel connected to their teachers, peers and others in their school” (p 43). They surmise that students who develop good relationships with their teachers are more likely to experience success in school. The boys themselves indicate in earlier sections that the closer they felt to their teachers, the more inclined they were to work hard. Research also shows that the student-teacher relationship is important in ELL classrooms (Adiba, 2004; Bouchaib, Ahmadou, & Abdelkader, 2018). For example, Bouchaib, Ahmadou, and Abdelkader’s (2018) research with secondary ELL students in Morocco showed a correlation between positive teacher-student relationship and positive student outcome. The research showed that teachers’ rapport with students impacted their attitude towards the subject and their performance. For instance, in the research, students reported that they liked the subject (ELL) when the teachers encouraged them to work hard and support them.

I also observed that poor teacher-student relationship was a factor in students' ELL success at NM. For example, overall, Mrs. Hansel seemed to have good relationships with most of her students, but this seemed to be missing in her grade 10 class, where some boys seemed a bit disengaged. This seemed to have negatively impacted the class dynamics as the students were not as interested in learning as her grade 11 class. As I shared in an earlier section, she seemed to be struggling to keep them engaged and productive during the observed lessons. This observed behaviour does support Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova's (2008) theory that a lack of intentional, academic, and relational engagement can negatively impact ELLs. For Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2008), when "students are connecting to what they are learning, how they are learning it, and who they are learning it with" this can positively impact their success in school (p.42). This academic and relational engagement might have been lacking in the described scenario in Mrs. Hansel's class. My observations showed that some students were not only lacking intentional academic engagement but showed reluctance to engage in writing, a factor the teachers highlighted as contributing to some students' poor performance.

Poor work ethics and English A success. Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob expressed concerns that many boys were not achieving the same level of success as the four boys in this research, citing some boys' reluctance to write and sports as contributing factors to their poor performance. In our conversations on students' poor performance and boys' limited participation in CSEC English A at NM, they offered these reasons:

Tanya: Ok just an observation of your classroom. I noticed that you have a smaller number of boys for grade 11's but not tens and for the grade 11s they are now preparing for the CSEC or the City & Guilds exams. What do you think though contributes to you having a smaller number of boys in your grade 11 class, if you are preparing them for CSEC?

Mrs. Hansel: Right, so when it comes to exam preparedness, you find that the number for boys (recommended for the exam) are smaller, because of their experiences, their reluctance to write and as I said the way they are socialized from childhood.

Mrs. Jacob: May I interject there too, I think one thing that contributes too is the fact that we have less boys being signed up for external exams where EL is considered. The fact is many of them get distracted by sports, right. While you find that a girl might fight to catch up, boys tend not to want to play catch up. So if they get distracted by sports and they find that the subject is one of importance, they are struggling to maintain a particular grade or to understand a particular concept, it causes them to pull away from the subject.

From this conversation, it can be deduced that both Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob believed several external factors contributed to some boys' poor performance in English A and ELL. First, Mrs. Hansel highlighted boys' reluctance to write and poor language socialization as likely factors, while Mrs. Jacob suggested that their participation in sporting activities was contributing to their poor performance. These views are supported in some Jamaican research findings that indicate that students' exposure to poor language socialization, practices, and types of assessment are some of the main contributing factors to their ELL success (Brown-Blake, 2007; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Evans, 2001; Taylor, 2007). That said, both teachers notably did not mention gender disparities in their classroom as factors to the boys' success, even though this is cited as one of the main factors impacting Jamaican boys' success. (Clarke, 2007; Evans, 1999; Thompson, 2017). For instance, Mrs. Hansel's action of recommending fewer boys to sit the CSEC exam might have seemed biased, but whether intentional or not, she ignored or was oblivious to this fact. Her naivety to the situation was evident when she said:

We are cognisant of the whole marginalization issue so we try to strike a balance. Given that the classes which are say top-performing classes are predominantly female then we only have a few boys and so the attention is not necessarily taken away from the girls because there are few boys.

Here, Mrs. Hansel is admitting that top classes are predominantly girls, which begs the question of why is this so? Her revelation highlighted how she might have unintentionally underestimated the potential of some boys. Even though she underscored that she was balanced in how she approached students, her suggestion that her CSEC English A class was mostly girls (21 girls and 12 boys) certainly did not demonstrate a balanced approach. This practice of under-recommending boys for CSEC to boost success has been reported in many schools despite research discouraging it (Lambert, 2016; Thompson, 2017).

Thompson's (2017) research showed that of the 40662 students recommended to sit English A in 2016 in Jamaica, 22893 were girls while only 17679 were boys. The previous years also showed similar trends in the number of girls sitting the exam being significantly higher than boys. Given this context, it is anticipated that the data will continue to show girls as outperforming boys. The intent here is not to undermine girls' commitment to their work and their success. Instead it is to demonstrate that the process of selection of students who get to sit the exam might have been skewed. For example, Nero and Stevens (2018) reported that teachers seemed to have low expectations of students who were perceived as slow learners, (typically dominant JC speakers) and such students were given low-level tasks. They reported that "low streams were observed to be heavy with JC speakers from poor backgrounds and were routinely given low academic tasks, a practice that also reproduced linguistic and academic hierarchies by restricting cognitively challenging tasks only to high stream students" (p. 18). My observations at NM showed similar practices. For example, in Mrs. Jacob's grade 11 class, where students were considered a high stream, they were involved in complex discussions on pathos and logos in argumentative writing. Students explored these in samples of writing and practice providing their own examples. However, when I observed her grade 10 class ranked in a lower stream,

students were involved in less complex tasks, even though they were covering somewhat similar content. It would appear that dominant JC-speaking boys were placed in lower streams in the school. Admittedly, I did not converse with these boys, so I could not speak to their intellectual capability, but my observation did suggest that school practices of streaming students might have been undermining the efforts of some of these students. Evan's (2001) research with students struggling with learner identities in classrooms showed similar observations of streaming and low teacher expectations. The study revealed that some students from working-class families felt teachers had lowered expectations of them, and this sometimes influenced their output. It also showed that in some instances, teachers' low expectations had a contrasting effect as some students claimed they were even more motivated to do well.

In sum, while the teachers might have overlooked the issue of boys' under-representation in CSEC English A and other teacher factors impinging on boys' success, they showed great concern for the boys' underperformance and appeared invested in methodological changes to achieve their goal of optimum students participation and success.

To conclude, irrespective of the teachers' views that poor teacher-student relationships and students' poor work ethics were significant factors in some boys' underperformance in school, the boys themselves did not share these views. In contrast, they expressed that students were accountable for their success in English A and ultimately school. The boys' own success as English A students might likely have influenced their perspective that students were always agentive in their success despite the highlighted research in the Caribbean that demonstrated the challenges some working-class boys face in ELL classrooms. John and Joe, however, recognized that not all students will achieve academic success and so advocated for more teacher support for ELL students, especially boys, in inner-city schools. They believed these boys were most at-risk

for failure because of low perceptions of their ability and their susceptibility to stereotypes about inner-city youths. The boys and teachers diverged on how to perceive underperforming inner-city boys. Nevertheless, the common thread among the narratives was that some inner-city youths would continue to be low academic performers if they did not make significant changes in their attitudes toward learning, became more agentive in their success and teacher methodologies remained disconnected from students' actual classroom needs.

Chapter 6: Summary and Analysis of Findings

Overview

The purpose of this research is to investigate how adolescent boys' use of JC was impacting their identities, gendered practices, perceptions, and attitudes toward English language learning and their success. This study revealed four significant emerging themes: (1) the boys' linguistic identities are complex and grounded in working-class values, and practices that worked together to shape who they are; (2) heteronormative working-class constructs significantly influence boys' policing other boys in fierce, harsh, sometimes homophobic ways; (3) teachers are unaware of the complexities that their students are dealing with as they make assumptions and teach (to the best of their abilities) in ways for them to learn SJE and envision middle-class lives; and (4) working-class boys are agentic in their ELL success. In the upcoming sections, I focus on connecting the findings and emerging ideas in this research to the highlighted research questions (see page 11). I will first provide an overview of the emerging ideas and then connect these to the research questions and finally extend my analysis to determine the extent to which the data answered the research questions.

Complex Identities in Working-Class Constructs

The issue of identity was significant throughout this research because the participants (the boys) consistently engaged their identities as working-class inner-city JC-speaking boys to solidify their place in their school, communities, and their society. In this respect, location, positions and, working-class constructs were significant in their identity formations, practices and perspectives of their world. In response to RQ 1, to what extent does their dominant use of Jamaican Creole influence Jamaican adolescent boys' linguistic identities?, the data revealed three significant findings. The boys' national identity as Jamaicans was closely tied to their use

of JC, their language choices indexed their specific identities in specific contexts and they chose linguistic identities that best served them in varying contexts (classroom versus social interactions). To contextualize the discussion in this section, I will draw on the findings in chapter 5 and make connections to RQ 1 to extend my analysis and deepen understandings of the complexities of the boys' identities in working-class constructs.

First and foremost, the boys' narratives suggest that their use of JC was embedded in their identities as Jamaicans and so they constructed identities that were important in asserting this position. For them, their use of JC was their way of revealing their individual, social and ethnic solidarity as working-class Jamaicans and maintaining their close relationships with their family and friends. As was common in their communities, collectively, the boys held language ideologies that celebrated JC as a positive and important part of their communal and national identities. In their narratives, the boys often framed JC as possessing cultural, social and linguistic wealth. Like many community members, they exhibited a strong commitment to maintaining their identities as JC speakers and thought it was unfathomable that a Jamaican did not or would not speak JC. They also believed it was unpatriotic to be a Jamaican and not speak JC or denigrate low-income working-class residents for doing so. Further, they strongly believed that JC connects them in meaningful ways to their inner-city communities, friends, and family. In a sense, JC was a refuge from Anglo-centric practices that silenced them in classrooms (Britton, 2017). That meant that they used mostly basilectal JC among friends, family and community members. As Norton (2013) theorized, some of the boys were not "invested in language practices of their classrooms and school where there were unequal power relationships" but they were committed to exploiting JC and SJE in situations that offered them linguistic and social power (p. 7).

There was also much evidence that the boys constructed and perceived their identities as both multiple and multi-dimensional (Oyseran, 2007). The data suggests that they constructed different identities in response to various contexts and that there were different dimensions to these identities that sometimes overlapped and intersected with one another. For instance, as Hall (1996) theorized, the boys constructed their linguistic identities in response to how they were perceived by others. That is, they constructed their linguistic identities based on negative and positive responses from speakers in their environment. For example, although all the boys were proud JC speakers, they all (except Sam) assumed an SJE identity at different times in their weekly interactions. They did this because it generated positive feedback from their teachers, administrators, and other middle-class professionals and allowed them to temporarily fit into that group of speakers. In these contexts, they assessed that JC identities were marginalized and so chose to speak SJE that offered them greater linguistic capital given its dominance. For the boys, location was particularly important in how they constructed these identities. They were conscious of the power SJE offered them in formal contexts such as school, competitive academic events, and professional gatherings and so they made a deliberate choice to speak SJE in these settings. In this sense, their identity choices were the result of context-based identity standards imposed by their school and communities and their human agency in responding to these situations.

Finally, the data suggest that the boys constructed identities that they felt were important in building and maintaining their roles in their families, friendships, and peer groups. They chose identity options that best suited them in different contexts. The boys would use SJE as the language to mark them as intelligent in schools and other settings and code-switched to JC when necessary to align with the identity of a proud JC speaker at home and with friends. This

conclusion aligns with Fairclough's (1992) theory that linguistic choices usually link to more extensive social processes, relationship, and power. In this sense, the boys entered their social relationships with partly formed identities, but these changed depending on their linguistic demands and contexts. Notwithstanding this, or perhaps because of the power SJE wielded over them in school, or what its speakers sometimes represented, some of the boys did not see themselves establishing long-lasting relationships with SJE. On the other hand, they all seemed emotionally and intimately connected to JC and will likely continue to speak it.

Policing Linguistic Behaviours to Ensure Conformity to Heteronormative Gendered Practices

The boys' narratives revealed that their gendered identities and practices were socially constructed as they adopted their behaviours to fit into different gendered contexts. This was also their way of complying with working-class constructs of masculinity and maintaining social power in their communities and among peers. However, the boys' gendered language practices are anything but simple, considering that they lived in a post-colonial context where black working-class masculine identities and JC have been sometimes constructed as primal, debased, and infantile (Lewis, 2007). Within these constructs, the boys knowingly and unknowingly engaged in masculine language practices that had historically and culturally stigmatized JC-speaking boys and men. For them, this is especially challenging as they experienced conflicts with self and society, and wanting to be perceived as smart, responsible boys who needed SJE to succeed. However, they are trapped by heteronormative working-class masculine ideals that require them to speak only JC in social situations in their communities. Thus, for these boys, their masculine language practices were particularly unavoidable, given that JC was a significant part of how they were expected to engage their identities as boys in working-class contexts.

In this section, I will draw on the revelations about the boys' heteronormative gendered practices to extend the discussion in response to RQ 2, which reads: how has the boys' use of JC impacted their gendered identities and practices? In response to RQ 2, the data revealed three main findings: some of the boys actively policed the gendered language practices of other boys to ensure compliance with expected masculine practices in working-class constructs; they used basilectal JC extensively to engage their gendered identities as strong working-class heterosexual boys, especially among other working-class men; and there were significant differences in how they constructed their gendered language identities in formal and social settings at school and in their communities.

There was much evidence that the boys were policing the gendered language practices of each other. This practice was most evident in situations in which the boys engaged in lengthy group conversations, such as the group interview. During these discourses, they engaged in a lot of posturing and bravado with each other, with a measured use of their basilectal JC to ensure they were complying with social and masculine expectations. Of note, these linguistic practices were significantly different when the boys were in one on one sessions with me. That is, the boys were less conscious of their use of JC and other masculine practices in one on one settings, which indicates that their policing of masculine language practices was limited to each other in group settings. Their narratives and my observations showed that except for John, in group settings they were quite harsh toward other boys who did not fit into the stereotypical working-class frames of masculinity. For instance, they made derisive comments and excluded perceived effeminate boys from their social group activities such as playing football, hanging out at the pavilion or the school's courtyard. These actions support Butler's (1999) theory that social affirmations are important in dictating gendered behaviours. In this case, the boys, in living up to

working-class constructs of masculinity, were dictating how other boys should behave. Similar to Anderson and Mclean's (2014) research findings, some of the boys were often engaged in masculine linguistic practices that lived up to the stereotypes of a "real" tough inner-city boy. In these situations with perceived effeminate boys, it seems, deviation from acceptable masculine linguistic practices threatened their construction of gendered self. One plausible explanation for such behaviours is that perceived effeminate boys' linguistic practices in social situations were at odds with the expected working-class constructs of linguistic masculinity.

The findings also suggest that the boys extensively used basilectal JC to engage their identities as strong working-class heterosexual boys so that they would fit into their peer groups and communities. They engaged in various forms of masculine language practices that coincided with stereotypical views of manliness in some working-class communities such as: speaking only JC among other men, engaging in tough, anti-feminine speech, and anti-homosexual speech. Although the boys expressed that respect, patience, and responsibility were important constructs of masculinity, these views contrasted significantly with their actions and speech patterns that revealed their preoccupation with using JC to assert their gendered identities. For instance, except for John, collectively, the boys deemed dominant SJE-speaking men (in working-class constructs) as effeminate and reasserted that men needed to speak JC to appear masculine. Through their speech, they discursively constructed their masculine identity in opposition to their use of SJE in social contexts in their school and communities, which meant they used JC in all situations with men and boys from the inner-city. Sam, in particular, displayed an essentialist view of masculinity that rejected SJE as un-masculine. What was most significant in this discourse on identity location was that the boys spoke SJE without inhibition among girls and the women in their families, but were vehemently opposed to doing so among other men. Again, this

practice reinforces Butler's (1999) and Bourdieu's (2001) theory that men construct their masculine identities for and with men, thus performing their expected gendered roles within working-constructs. Even though the boys apparently valued SJE in different formal contexts such as schools, they actively avoided using it among other boys.

Finally, the boys' use of JC was also demonstrations of their acclaimed masculine power in social contexts among their peers and so their gendered language practices were distinctly different in different settings. For instance, the boys' narratives and my observations showed that in social situations with peers and in their communities, they rejected SJE and sometimes engaged in misogynist, anti-feminine, homophobic language practices; however, this practice was not prevalent in formal classrooms or in the presence of their teachers. For instance, except for John, in social settings, the boys were often complicit in patriarchal practices that marginalized subordinate masculinities such as the soft-spoken expressive dominant SJE-speaking boy who didn't display enough masculine toughness to measure up to their standards. Through their dialogue, these soft-spoken expressive boys were cast as weak, soft and lacking the proper upbringing to act like men.

In sum, the boys drew on JC and other linguistic resources to construct their gendered identity and distanced themselves from SJE in instances where they believed their masculinity might be challenged. They embraced stereotypical working-class constructs of gender in their bid to maintain their social power and their roles within their peer groups and their families.

Teachers' Limited Understanding of Students' Lived Experiences

Although negative perceptions of JC are gradually shifting in some schools, such attitudes remain a major obstacle to JC-speaking students' success in schools because JC is not seen as a legitimate tool of instruction in educational institutions (Bryan, 2004b; Craig, 2006;

Taylor, 2007). While the two teachers in this study held positive views of JC and its speakers, the boys experienced contrasting language experiences in school that negatively and positively impacted their perception of JC, SJE, and ELL. Through their narratives, they revealed their conflicting and contentious attitudes toward JC, SJE and ELL as they move through phases of joy, resentment, resistance, and acceptance. They experienced many struggles with self as they were aware of the real opportunities for success that SJE offered but were resistant to the powerlessness it constituted in school settings where their use of JC was often rejected.

In this section, I will extend the discussion on the two teachers' limited understanding of some students' lived experiences to examine the extent to which the boys' language experiences impacted their attitudes towards JC, SJE and ELL. I will demonstrate that although both teachers worked assiduously to create a positive bilingual ELL classroom for students, they were unaware of the boys' daily language practices, the marginalities they faced, and was somewhat naïve in thinking that they really liked speaking SJE. For instance, both teachers seemed to believe that the boys had mostly positive language experiences in school and so they liked ELL. However, the boys' narratives showed that they experienced multiple marginalities as inner-city students in school and so really disliked ELL and only developed a liking for it after their positive interactions with the two teachers in this study. For example, the findings showed that the boys' early language experiences negatively impacted their perception of JC, SJE and their attitudes toward ELL in two main ways. They developed language (JC) inferiority complexes and feeling of inadequacies as JC speakers, and they experienced multiple marginalities within their school communities as JC-speaking boys from the inner-city. These experiences influenced their thinking that SJE offered better academic and economic opportunities while JC limited access to these opportunities. On the other hand, in response to RQ 3, how do the boys' language

experiences impact their perception of Jamaican Creole, Standard Jamaican English, and English language learning? The findings showed that unlike the past, the boys' current teachers' positive attitudes toward JC and JC-speaking students strongly correlated with their positive attitudes toward JC, SJE and ELL.

Although the two teachers did their best to support the boys and help them acquire SJE, the boys' narratives demonstrated that their teachers had a limited understanding of their lived language and gendered realities and sometimes made assumptions about their practices. For instance, the boys shared stories of language inequities and inadequacies in ELL classes significantly contrasted with the teachers who believed they were eager ELL learners who were open to SJE. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary that suggested that the four boys experienced significant language prejudice as JC speakers that generated negative attitudes toward ELL in their early years in high school, the teachers had a positive outlook of students' experiences at NM. For instance, within the boys' discourses on their language experiences impacting their perceptions of JC and SJE and their attitudes toward ELL, several recurring sub-themes grounded their stories. First, they expressed regular feelings of inadequacy and inferiority as JC speakers, which generated conflicting thoughts about JC and its speakers. Although the boys were proud JC speakers, on several occasions, a few of them hinted that some JC speakers were mediocre or lacking intellect. It is highly likely their negative language experiences might have led to their associations between Jamaican Creole and low social status. As various post-colonial literature has documented, the boys were not immune to entrenched inferiority ascribed to JC and its speakers (Degraff, 2005, 2009; Fanon, 1967; Hall & du Gay, 1996). For instance, as Fanon (1967) theorized, some of the boys struggled to overcome the imposition of colonized rule that dictated SJE, and its speakers were superior to JC and its speakers. Their narratives

demonstrated that colonized inequitable language perspectives were shaping their experiences, perceptions of and attitudes toward JC and SJE. For example, they all indicated that their school was sometimes the site of rejection and deficit discourses surrounding JC that left its mark of inferiority on them. That is, while the boys' current teachers were supportive, they had experiences of former teachers telling them they lacked intellect because they were dominant JC speakers or they were less likely to succeed. These experiences left indelible linguistic scars, as was evident in John's and Peter's expressed insecurities as JC speakers who needed to measure up to SJE speakers as well as Joe's constant feelings of inadequacy and Sam's sometimes outright resentment of SJE speakers. So, in this sense, the teachers were unaware of the boys' lived realities. It might have been because of their own practices; they assumed other teachers were doing the same, or they did not wish to present the school in a bad light.

That said, similar to Britton's (2017) findings with Creole-speaking youths, the boys' narratives showed that despite internalizing their negative language experiences in different ways, they eventually became resistant to pervading negative views of JC and reasserted themselves as proud speakers. The data also indicated that as a result of the boys' school experiences that undervalued JC, at some point or another, they all believed that JC offered limited academic or economic future and so its use should be minimized in instruction. Ochs and Schieffelin (2011) theorize that the boys' interactions with their speech communities are important processes by which they learn what language skills will enable their competent functioning in different contexts. In this case, through their school's speech community, they are learning to value SJE more than JC. In response to the dominant discourses in school, they saw SJE as the legitimate language of schools that would lead to academic success and social mobility. Therefore they wanted it to remain the only language of instruction in schools. But

these revelations only highlighted the conflicts and tensions that existed in the boys' language worlds. For instance, they all wanted the freedom to be JC speakers in their school but they were also pragmatic about the benefits of acquiring SJE and the implications for their future success.

These conflicting thoughts were further heightened by diverging demands from school and community that impacted how they felt about the standard language (SJE) in relation to their home language (JC). This again contrasted with the teachers' perspectives wherein they thought all the boys were eager to acquire SJE, although the data shows that they struggled with this as they tried to balance a strong social identity with a strong academic identity. Even though the teachers thought the boys were comfortable using SJE, the data shows that they policed each other's language in group settings. They were often resistant to SJE and engaged in language practices that could have been antithetical to their ELL success if they were not highly motivated students. The teachers were also unaware of the boys' lived masculine language practices in working-class constructs that rejected SJE. This was evident in their repeated claims that the boys were open to speaking SJE in all contexts and were always kind and sensitive boys, which was highly contrastive with their behaviours shared in the previous sections. Although the boys were generally kind and sensitive, especially to the women in their environs, within working-class constructs, they were not always kind in their speech to dominant SJE-speaking boys. Their teachers seemed unaware of the expectations placed upon them within their communities and the immense pressure they were under to act in linguistically and socially acceptable ways that conformed to working-class contexts of gendered behaviours.

For some of the boys, it was a real internal struggle between the academic opportunities SJE offered for success and the social power JC offered. As Cassidy (1961) and Decamp (1971) indicated in their reports of JC's emergence, the boys sometimes wanted to distance themselves

from JC to gain academic and economic power to transcend the class barriers of the inner-city. However, they were unwilling give up their social power. But in contrast to Wallace's (2009) theory, they did not appear to be rushing to switch language camps to SJE as he suggested some Creole speakers are likely to do. That is, while the boys all acknowledged the value of SJE, they differed in their attitudes toward its use. For instance, Sam was resigned to the fact that he needed SJE but was discontented with the restrictions it placed on him as a JC speaker. Some of his resistance to SJE was triggered by his negative experiences as a JC-speaking inner-city youth who was sometimes perceived as not as intelligent as his counterparts in other schools. The other boys, however, seemed to have more positive and optimistic attitudes toward SJE. For example, Peter and Joe began to embrace their other identities as emerging SJE speakers, and John was eager to begin his journeys as an aspiring SJE speaker to change his academic and economic pathways. One thing that remained constant amid the boys' shifting identities was that their desire to acquire SJE was motivated by their need to elevate their social, academic and economic status and escape the stigmas attached to inner-city youths' language and success.

On the other hand, the research findings confirmed that teachers' attitudes toward JC-speaking students and JC in classrooms indexed students' attitudes toward the teacher and the subject. Similar to Evans' (2001) and Devonish and Carpenter's (2007) research findings, this research showed that the boys developed positive attitudes toward ELL subsequent to having teachers who demonstrated positive attitudes toward JC-speaking students and JC in their classrooms. The reversed also existed. That is, the boys also showed a strong dislike for ELL and teachers who denigrated their use of JC or prohibited its use in their classrooms. For instance, all four boys indicated that at some point in their lives as students that they resented teachers who told them not to speak JC. However, they all indicated shifting perspectives, commenting that

they liked their current English A teachers because they were “cool” and unrestrictive about students’ use of JC. The two teachers also shared their support for more positive bilingual approaches in ELL classrooms and joined many Jamaican scholars in the call to challenge teachers’ post-colonial linguistic practices that undermined the efforts of JC-speaking students (Britton, 2017; Bryan, 2004a; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Taylor, 2007). Like many of these theorists, the teachers called for shifts in deficit teaching of JC-speaking students and encouraged teachers to embrace JC more in ELL classrooms to foster students’ confidence, engagement, and success. So, despite their limited understanding of the students’ lived realities, the teachers championed their efforts and continued to support their learning in ways that might help them to transcend their social boundaries.

ELL Success and Students’ Agency

Despite the continuous discourse on the vulnerability of boys in schools, male marginalization, and the impact on their academic performance, one main surprising finding emerging from the data is that the boys were agentive and accountable for their own success in ELL and school. In response to RQ 4, in what ways have school’s language practices impacted boys’ success in English language learning? The findings showed that the boys did not believe their school’s language practices were significantly impacting their ELL success, although some of my observations revealed shortcomings in the school’s and teachers’ practices that could have been impacting students’ success. Despite these concerns, the boys’ narratives indicated three prevailing reasons for their ELL success: they were agentive in their accomplishments by working hard in school; they valued their identities as successful students and did what was necessary to maintain that image; and they were driven by their desire to overcome the stereotype of the under-performing inner-city boy.

From the outset, the boys were clear that their ELL success and ultimate success in school was not dependent on the actions of others. Although they acknowledged that it was important to have a good relationship with their teachers, and the teachers' approach to ELL and JC-speaking students' influenced their attitude towards ELL, in the end, they still believed they were responsible for their own success. Collectively, the boys thought it was irresponsible to leave their success up to someone else. They strongly believed the onus was on them to stay after school to catch up on work, get help when needed, and study hard to be successful. It is possible that some of the boys' negative experiences with adults in their environments pushed them to attribute their success to internal rather than external factors. For example, all of the boys at some point in their education interacted with a teacher who thought they were incapable of success or didn't put in the required work to support them. This mistrust in some adults might have resulted in their view that their success should come from within and not be attributed to outside factors.

The boys' drive to succeed was also linked to their identities as successful students. For instance, they all seemed committed to maintaining their images as academically successful inner-city boys and so developed a compulsion to maintain consistently good grades. Their success in some ways blinded them to the struggle of other boys and so some of them were particularly discontented with underperforming boys despite Jamaican research showing disparities in the treatment of working-class inner-city boys in classrooms (Evans, 1999, 2001; Parry, 2000; Thompson, 2017; USAID, 2011). For example, Sam and Peter were particularly displeased with boys whom they thought were squandering their educational opportunities by skipping classes and showing little interest in learning. John and Joe, however, were more sympathetic to these boys' situations and encouraged more support for them.

What was most significant was that all the boys seemed driven to escape the stigmas of the uninterested, lazy, underperforming inner-city boy. Given the negative discourse surrounding inner-city youths, it was unsurprising the boys felt so strongly about proving themselves as capable, successful, and engaged ELL students. For some of them, this meant distancing themselves from other inner-city boys they perceived as lazy and uninterested. Although several research findings in the Caribbean, such as Evans (1999) and Clarke's (2007) research show that some boys' low participation in schools correlated with poor teacher interactions and bias against them, some of the boys in this research were insistent that these boys chose not to be successful. For example, Sam and Peter believed that these boys failed to apply themselves, and as such, gave credence to negative perceptions of them. Again, John and Joe did not share their sentiments. Instead, they seemed to believe that teacher methodology and low expectations of inner-city youths were partly to be blamed for their failures.

The interview with their teachers, on the other hand, indicated that they believed school language practices significantly impacted ELL students' success. While the boys seemed to believe it was their efforts that led to their success in ELL, their teachers seemed to believe that there were other significant outside factors. They believed that teachers' engagement of their native language in learning, shifting methodologies and teacher-student rapport were essential. Despite the boys' reasoning, there was much evidence to support the teachers' arguments. For example, the boys themselves indicated that their current teachers' willingness to include JC in instruction to engage them and the great rapport they had with them motivated them to do well. They also indicated they hated ELL when they had unpleasant teachers. In this case, then it can be argued that there was a correlation between their success and teacher input, even if they did not acknowledge it. For instance, if their current teachers were resistant to JC, unrelatable and

poor at language integration, it is likely they would have had different attitudes towards ELL and outcomes. This is not to say that students cannot be successful in spite of poor teacher practice. Instead, I am making a case that the boys' learning might have been diminished if they had poor teachers, which is in keeping with their expressed experiences. Mrs. Jacob and Mrs. Hansel exhibited areas for improvements as ELL teachers. Nonetheless, they were effective teachers who embraced bilingual practices in their classrooms, shared a great rapport with their students and were open to pedagogical changes. They sometimes fell short in how they engaged students in discussions on issues of linguistic identity and taught from a place of power in some cases. However, their efforts to create safe language spaces for their students seemed to have positively impacted the boys' ELL experiences and their success.

To conclude, these research findings have shown that whether the boys were engaging their identities as JC speakers, strong inner-city boys or academically successful students, there were socially constructed factors impacting their decisions. While they were agentive in their construction of identities, their location, working-class constructs, family, teachers, and peers helped shaped their response to linguistic, social and academic environments. These social constructs ultimately shaped their characters as proud, successful, resilient JC-speaking boys from the inner-city. What was clear was that they did not lack the linguistic and academic ability to access SJE as they hoped to do. However, their internal struggle with self and language seemed to be their most significant hurdle in accessing the real opportunities for change in their world. They were, in some ways, trapped by communal thinking that required them to act in linguistical and gendered appropriate ways that were socially accepted. Despite the tensions with self and practice, they often succumbed to these linguistic and gendered practices and ways of thinking that might become more challenging as they move on to further academic and economic

opportunities. Ultimately, the boys will have to free themselves of the mental, gendered, social and linguistic battles they are fighting to achieve the real success they seek. For them, this is excelling in school, being fluent SJE speakers, moving on to college, and transitioning to middle-class social status. Whatever future path they might take, their shared narratives have serious implications for educators, teacher education programmes, researchers, and policymakers. I will explore these implications in the final chapter.

Chapter 7: Implications of Research Findings and Recommendations

Overview

Several important instructional and research implications arose from this study concerning JC's influence on adolescent boys' identities, gendered practices, and perceptions and attitudes toward ELL. The implications from this study highlight the need for real change and more in-depth understanding of the complexities of students' lives from schools, teachers, teacher-training institutions, language researchers and policymakers to address the shortcomings in ELL classrooms and cultivate more open, diverse and adaptive teaching and research strategies that will positively impact students' outcomes.

Implications for Educators (Schools)

First and foremost, the boys' narratives showed that their linguistic identities were multi-dimensional and as such, schools need to develop frameworks that allow for multiple linguistic identities to co-exist. Given that some of the boys' were conflicted about adopting an SJE identity along with JC, there is a great need for schools to be flexible in students' language choices and consider the influence dominant discourses might have on their identity construction processes. Schools need to demonstrate to students that they value both languages, and there is a space for both identities to co-exist. As suggested in the literature, students need to see a wider range of identity options in schools to develop confidence in their own emerging identities whether as JC or SJE speakers (Bulcholz, 2003, 2004; Bulcholz & Hall, 2005; Hall & Gay, 1996; LePage & Tarbouret-Keller, 1985). Considering Stryker's (2000) theory that identities exist in hierarchies of salience, and so speakers are often compelled to adopt higher identity options whether they like these or not, schools need to develop linguistic cultures that demonstrate no

hierarchy, that is all languages are equally valued. Although the boys' narratives suggested that their identity saliency was not necessarily hierarchical, but influenced by their community and peer groups, they still showed their desire to feel valued as both JC and SJE speakers. The boys might have seemed opposed to SJE and ELL at times, but the data showed that this was due to how it was used to disempower them, and their opposition was not necessarily to the language or subject but rather the conveyors. Thus, to minimize students' resistance to a language that is viewed as an imposition, schools, teachers, and teacher education programmes will have to find ways to seamlessly integrate both languages in instruction so that one is not perceived as more prominent than the other.

Implications for Practitioners (Teachers)

The boys mentioned that they endured negative and denigrated remarks about their location, language ability, and capability as students from an adult. This demonstrates that teachers and other practitioners in working-class students' environments have the power to empower students by affirming their differences, or they can marginalize them by delegitimizing their language and experiences. The boys' narratives have also demonstrated that attempts to erase JC from their school's language practices will only diminish their sense of identity as Jamaicans and their linguistic attachment to the language. This will weaken their confidence as SJE speakers and ELLs, which is counter-productive. Therefore the implication is that teachers need to develop bilingual language strategies that bolster students' linguistic competence and confidence and effectively help them transition from JC to SJE. The multimodal literacy approach implemented in this study proved to be an effective approach for scaffolding ELLs. It allowed them to successfully participate in cognitively demanding instruction and tasks. Students will benefit when they are afforded opportunities to conceptualize meaning through a variety of

modes. While language-based communication is essential, additional communicational resources, such as graphic novels, can expand and enhance students' ELL experience.

There is also a need for a third space in language classrooms that allow students to move freely between the two languages in formal instructions, which can provide more significant opportunities for the JC-speaking students to thrive. It was evident JC was nourishing to the boys' identities and so encouraging this language variety in the classroom will likely boost their success. The boys themselves suggested that JC was integral in some classrooms to provide explanations to students who were struggling as well as allow for meaningful connections with the content.

Further, the boys' narratives indicated that they shared a close relationship with teachers who displayed positive attitudes toward JC-speaking students, and they felt empowered in those teachers' classes. Thus, the implications are that teacher attitudes impact student-teacher relationships and students' attitudes toward ELL. So, teachers need to work more to nurture teacher-student relationships in the classrooms and demonstrate to students that they are invested in their success, so students can feel more confident about their own ability to succeed.

As it relates to the boys' gendered identities, there is an obvious disconnect between teachers' expectations and the boys' actual practices. In this case, teachers seemed to have a limited understanding of the boys' gendered language practices, thus highlighting a critical gap in their ability to support them or encourage more positive masculine identities. It is difficult for teachers to change what they do not fully understand, which underscores the need for deeper understandings of students' community practices to adequately offer them alternative solutions.

Implications for Teacher Education

The findings suggest that teacher education programmes are failing to educate teachers to teach in a Creole-speaking environment. Here I will adopt Britton's (2017) suggestion that all teachers should be introduced to at least one foundational socio-linguistic research or course to improve their ability to teach in these environments. This exposure can provide teachers with the resources they need to mobilize students' linguistic resources in their classrooms. This will also allow teachers to reconsider the Anglo-centric ideologies that dominate instructions in schools and generate multiliterate and bilingual ways of incorporating JC-speaking students' language and literacy practices. As Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob demonstrated, exposure to socio-linguistic studies shifted their pedagogical identities and practices, which proved beneficial to their students.

Implications for Scholars

This research achieved one of its main purposes of highlighting a population of students who have traditionally been silent in research and conversations on language, identity, and students' ELL performance in Jamaica. In doing so, it highlighted the need for research to provide a platform for marginalized students' authentic voices to be heard and consider the contexts in which students are constructing their linguistic and gendered identities. In addition to the usual interviews and observational techniques, this research encouraged a more multi-literate diverse approach to collecting data. More of this approach is needed to increase the inclusivity of all voices and enhance conceptualization and understanding of the phenomena of inner-city youths' language experiences. A multi-literate approach is particularly beneficial as few studies in the Caribbean have used this to capture students' authentic voices and experiences in research. My research has shown that this allows for rich, multi-dimensional descriptions of lived

experiences and challenges some students face in the ELL classrooms. Finally, it is useful to consider diverse methodological frameworks that could possibly account for the many ways in which students' language experiences intersected with their construction of self, class, gender and, academic success.

Implications for Policymakers

Language policy decisions need to reflect deeper understandings of Creole-speaking students' language practices to improve their education. There is a definite need for language programmes and policies that are geared toward Creole-speaking students and not just the one size fit all approach that has been adopted by many teachers. Students should have access to a culturally responsive curriculum that caters to their language needs in the classroom and allow them to learn in authentic environments. Thus, the curriculum should facilitate authentic use of students' language, not just grammar exercises in translating, but real immersion in both languages that allow them to see the value of each in the classroom. Although Jamaica's 2001 language policy describes Jamaica as a bilingual society and acknowledges the challenges JC-speaking students face in the classroom, not much has changed in programme implementation., This research findings have shown that policies are not transitioning into practice, because there is still a considerable gap in students' oral language and schools' language practices, which needs to be addressed. There is a need for real change in the English curriculum to a bilingual focus on language teaching and learning and practical demonstrations for teachers on how to make the transition in their classes. As this research and several highlighted studies have shown, language programmes that facilitate bilingual education are highly beneficial to students (Bryan, 2012; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Evans, 2001; Taylor, 2007). Further, policymaking decisions should involve all stakeholders, most importantly the students, whom these decisions

are impacting. Policy decisions cannot remain oblivious to students' lived realities. One of the ways to make real change is to bring students into conversations on language. The boys' shared narratives are a powerful reminder of the value of inviting students' voices in conversations, an approach that policymakers should adopt.

Recommendations

Drawing on the findings from this research, I am advancing six key recommendations to successfully encourage JC-speaking students' identities in ELL classrooms and foster positive attitudes towards ELL: 1) give saliency to all languages in the ELL classroom; 2) support strong JC identities in schools; 3) adopt bilingual approaches in ELL teaching; 4) employ multi-literate strategies in ELL instruction to engage youth voices and active participation; 5) create mentorship programmes in schools that allow teachers to have a better understanding of boys' gendered practices and model positive alternative behaviours, and; 6) strengthen professional development around language ideologies in schools

Giving saliency to all languages in the ELL classroom. First and foremost, schools need to give saliency to all language identities in schools. This research findings show that schools are the sites of deficit language ideologies and discourses, and so I am strongly recommending that schools develop language practices that embrace and affirm all language identities. As it is continually encouraged in the Caribbean literature on identity, if schools embrace multiple language identities, this can contribute to students' positive view of self and foster feelings of being valued members of their school communities.

Fostering strong Jamaican Creole identities in the classroom. The findings from this research and many other scholarships strongly support the call for language practices and attitudes that value JC-speaking students' voices in learning. This research joins with many

others in the Caribbean to advocate for the incorporation of Creole-centric ideologies, identities and home language in the formal curriculum. Schools must nurture students' national identities because this research has shown that dismissal of their identities can lead to feelings of resentment toward staff, school, and ELL. JC-speaking students need to witness more overt celebrations of Creole-centric identities, and solidarity among speakers of both languages to help them develop more positive identities as JC speakers.

Adopting a bilingual approach. There is substantive research in Jamaica and the rest of the world that have proven that bilingual approaches in ELL classrooms are highly beneficial to students' cognitive development, adaptability and success (Bryan, 2004a; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007a; Evans, 2001; Taylor, 2007). This research findings have also shown that a bilingual approach in Jamaican ELL classrooms is useful in boosting students' confidence and generating positive attitudes toward learning. Therefore, in support of other research, I am strongly recommending bilingual ELL language classrooms that recognize and seamlessly incorporate JC in instruction. A bilingual classroom will deconstruct language hierarchies that delegitimize JC, and encourage students to participate in the teaching-learning process comfortably. As Mrs. Hansel and Mrs. Jacob demonstrated in their ELL classes, a welcoming and open attitude to different language varieties goes a far way in easing students' fears about speaking in class or being ridiculed for not using the standard variety. A bilingual approach will empower all students' voices and generate more positive views of self and language.

Employing multiple literacies in instruction to engage youth voices and active participation. The boys' creation of graphic novels shows that they engaged multiple literacies each day. They showed interest in music, art, graphics, among other creative influences, which reinforce the need to incorporate multi-literacies in curriculum design and implementation.

Teachers will have to develop frameworks that allow for multi-literacies inside and outside of the classroom. This research recommends using popular forms of students' literacies immersed in JC such as music, poetry, and graphic novels to supplement the curriculum in ways that can lead to deeper engagement and more effective teaching and learning. This integration has to be done in meaningful ways, so that students see that their literacies are important to their learning, rather than a source of entertainment in the classroom. There is also an apparent disconnect between students' literacies and ELL practices. Therefore, I recommend that policymakers, curriculum developers, and teachers create avenues for students to engage other rich forms of expressions through their native tongue in the curriculum. This will require full integration of multiliterate sources rather than supplements to traditional forms of teaching that values output rather than the immersive process of learning. The inclusion of a multimodal bilingual approach can provide spaces within the classroom community where all students can experience feelings of success, competency, and enjoyment.

Strengthening professional development around language ideologies in schools. I also recommend that schools create professional development groups, not just ELL teachers, but all teachers, and look at how the languages of youths can be used to facilitate learning. They should use this opportunity to understand their own language practices, the linguistic profile of their students, their own ideologies, and beliefs and crucially explore how these might be impacting students. These practices will help to reduce linguistic prejudices in classrooms that are significantly impacting JC-speaking students.

Mentorship for change in gendered practices. This research findings have revealed that some boys from inner-city areas are disproportionately at-risk for engaging in hyper-masculine behaviors that are socially reinforced in their communities. Some of these behaviours

have become a trademark, and not many opportunities are provided for young men to engage in alternative positive masculine practices. Thus, I am recommending that schools and communities work together to develop mentorship programmes wherein teachers and other community members serve as mentors to boys. These mentorship programmes will pair the boys with entrepreneurs, skilled labourers, professionals, and teachers in their school and community and will highlight positive masculine practices such as being respectful of all despite class, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. The intent would be to expose the boys to other models of masculinity, for example, the electrician who is also a pastor and father volunteering in his community to help at the women's shelter and with the youth soccer team. Adoption of these recommendations will be useful in reshaping inner-city boys' language and gendered experiences in the classroom and allow for more open, diverse, and bilingual ways of engaging them.

Significance of Research

In the absence of substantial research on inner-city youths' JC practices and the impact on their linguistic identities, gendered practices, perceptions, and attitudes toward ELL, this research made three significant contributions to language education research. First, it showcased four boys' language experiences, which offered great insights into ways in which antiquated language ideologies and practices were shaping dominant JC-speaking working-class students' identities and school experiences. Further, it used the boys' narratives to illustrate the impact of prevailing monolingual, inequitable, oppressive, and gender biased language practices on some boys. These narratives were also used to challenge ideologies, policies and practices that were undermining their school experiences and success.

Second, this study contributed the boys' creative and multi-literate narratives as evidence of the vast untapped potential of many JC speaking students. It initiated a dialogue on ways in which schools can generate more innovative and inclusive multiliterate ELL strategies and policies to address the gaps in home and school languages in Jamaican classrooms to enhance students' experiences.

The aim is to encourage teachers to engage in more multiliterate practices in their classrooms, generate more positive conversations about inner-city boys, and possibly reshape some of the stereotypical perceptions of JC and its speakers.

Finally, the research study addressed current shortcomings in the representation of marginalized voices by expanding on different interpretations of gendered identity and language value. By providing a platform for the boys to share their stories, the study is contributing authentic and multiple voices in spaces that are usually reserved for SJE speakers in Jamaica. In doing so, it seeks to empower other youths to speak up as well as encourage educators to have a real dialogue with marginalized students about their school experiences.

Future Research

This study provided many insights into the language experiences of inner-city boys in an inner-city school in Jamaica, but there is much more that is still unknown. Few studies on inner-city JC-speaking youths currently exist in Jamaica, and so there is always a need for further research in this area. There is a need for more intensive case studies and narrative inquiries that privilege marginalized youth voices to deepen understanding of the impact of social, economic, linguistic, and cultural factors on their success. There is also need for research that examines how teachers' language and literacy practices and ideologies are impacting students and how students can be agentive in transforming their learning experiences.

Because many Jamaican schools are focused on traditional means of instruction and testing, there is an urgent need for research on how to engage students' multiple literacies in and outside their classrooms to foster more positive in-school language and literacy practices. This can be supported by further research on how multiliterate bilingual approaches impact JC-speaking students' participation in ELL classrooms. As an expansion of this study, which focused on the language experiences of boys in an urban school, future research considerations should consider different contexts such as students' language experiences in rural schools and possibly a comparative study of students' experiences in rural and urban settings. It would be particularly useful to explore girls' use of language and their identity formations in schools in both urban and rural schools. A yearlong comparative study of JC-speaking boys and girls' experiences in the secondary English A/ELL classroom might also be beneficial to teachers and curriculum developers. Additionally, this study highlights that there is a huge gap between some boys' lived gendered language experiences and their teachers' perceptions of their practices. Therefore, a qualitative study on this phenomenon might be useful to offer teachers solutions on how to minimize this gap with a view to improving the relationships between boys and teachers in schools.

Finally, this study highlighted gaps in teachers' ability to teach in a Creole-speaking environment, and so further research on teacher training in a Creole-speaking environment would be highly beneficial to teacher education programmes. This will help universities and colleges to assess the effectiveness of their programmes in preparing teacher candidates to teach in a Creole-speaking environment and implement new strategies where necessary to achieve this. This research findings showed that the teachers in this study who were exposed to socio-linguistic training and teaching in a Creole-speaking environment implemented learned concepts

into their practice, which resulted in higher positive outcomes for students. Therefore, future research on teacher preparation to teach in a Creole-speaking environment is necessary to provide more knowledge on how to meet the needs of Creole-speaking students in the classroom.

Concluding Remarks

At the onset of this study, I sought to create platforms for marginalized students' voices to be a part of the conversation on youths' language choices, experiences, and their ELL success. I was driven by the possibility of creating bilingual classroom environments where JC-speaking youths' linguistic resources, knowledge, and skills become a viable part of Jamaican ELL classrooms. I hope that these research findings will prompt educators and curriculum developers to create more equitable ELL classroom environments where JC-speaking students have opportunities to successfully integrate their linguistic repertoires in acquiring the target language. In this case, JC-speaking students have opportunities to acquire the target language in ways that complement rather than oppress their language variety. The boys' narratives have shown that they did not lack the capability to transition from JC to SJE. Instead, they struggled with self to reconcile the feelings of language inadequacies and inequities they experienced in school and their desire to access SJE without losing solidarity with their communities. I hope that JC-speaking students, like Sam and John, no longer have to experience denigration and rejection from educators because of the language they speak and their social status. I also hope students like Joe and Peter do not continue to experience feelings of inadequacies and inferiority as JC speakers.

To conclude, this study's findings have exposed post-colonial language ideologies that have suppressed working-class, marginalized JC-speaking students' voices in schools in Jamaica. These powerful words from Sam who said, “ *Not becah mi speak patwa nuh mean seh mi a*

dunce cah mi smart, yuh just nuh see dat becah yuh mek assumptions bout weh mi can do” [Not because I speak JC means I am a dunce, I am smart, however, you can’t see that because you choose to make assumptions about my abilities] should resonate with all educators entering an ELL class. His words are my affirmations that supportive, open and inclusive multiliterate bilingual learning environments that respect and embrace students’ native languages are critical to their growth in the ELL classroom.

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Appendix A: Ethics Certificate of Approval



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Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Tanya Manning-Lewis	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER: 18-166 Minimal Risk Review - Delegated
UVic STATUS: Ph.D. Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 23-Jun-18
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDUC	APPROVED ON: 22-Jun-18
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kathy Sanford	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 21-Jun-19
PROJECT TITLE: My time to speak: Jamaican boys' narratives on Jamaican Creole's influence on their gendered identities, perceptions of and attitudes toward English Language Learning	
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None	
DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.</p>	
 <hr/> <p>Dr. Rachael Scarth Associate Vice-President, Research Operations</p>	

Certificate Issued On: 22-Jun-18

18-166 Manning-Lewis, Tanya

Appendix B: Sample Observation Schedule

General Observations: Day 1 NM

1. Participants' interactions with other boys

Interaction among boys are usually quite loud or boisterous, but tones down a bit when addressing a girl or a teacher. Little attempt is made to use SJE.

Boys greeting other boys:

'what happen mi patee'

'Yow dawg'

'Up deh'

Quite a few slang terms to address each other.

2. Participants' interactions with other community members

3. Participants' level of confidence in interactions

The school cafeteria

Boys seem comfortable in their social groups. There are some awkward silences whenever an adult joins in conversations.. There is a quite a bit of loud banter among the boys. There is some posturing as the they tease each other.

Some occasions there is rough playing among them. While this is observed among the younger boys, not so much the older boys.

4. Displays of gendered behaviour

The boys stay together during recess periods. They gather in small groups. There are few groups that include both genders. There are many light hearted conversations. Some use of expletives and some loud teasing, but mostly in good jest. Today, a boy asked if I was the teacher for the day. I replied ' no'

He then said 'oh because electrical technology is not for women' when I said I teach English, he was like that is what I thought miss. (Note: The perception that gender determines choice of subject area to teach.)

In electrical technology room:

Soft spoken boy ' Mi caan bother wid di stress fi find classroom'

Teacher and other boys smirk. Yuh need to clean up yuh act. (It was noticeable that this boys displays some effeminate behaviours, but he was not speaking English.)

BELL

Boys enter electrical technology room.

Incident: A boy gets upset with another who suggests he is not 'straight'

Boy ' mi look like mi f... man which led to an outburst by a few other boys. Yow a di biggest disrespect that.

This seem to encourage the disrespected boy to lash out at his accuser. (NOTE: It might have been that if the boy had made that comment outside of the presence of the other boys...it might have been a different response.)

There is some sense of male bravado among the boys. The only times they seem to remove their shirts from their pants is when they are among other boys. Students wear uniforms. There seem to be much adherence to the school's rules in terms of dress code. The violations that occur do so in small groups.

5. Correlation between language choice and gendered behavior