

ABSTRACT

Investigating Acceptability in Barbadian Language

Korah Leverne Belgrave

This dissertation focuses on the problem of determining acceptability in the language of the educated Barbadian. It goes beyond previous research to examine the acceptability of items at the level of phonology and morpho-syntax and lexicon, as well criteria used in determining acceptability. The problem is taken to be one of determining not only the status accorded to certain lexical items but also to particular morphological and syntactic structures. The evaluative judgements made of accents used within the Barbadian community are also examined. The study investigates the problem of acceptability through the use of (1) the "matched guise" technique, (2) the Operation Test, and (3) the Judgement Test. Findings indicate that educated Barbadians do conceive of acceptability in terms of a hierarchy and this hierarchy is based on context of use as well notions of "educatedness". This has implications especially for teachers and broadcast journalists, as well as for all those who ply their trade in the use of words, in terms of making choices that correlate with what the educated community considers "educated usage".

Keywords: Korah Leverne Belgrave; acceptability, Barbadian Language; accents; dialects; linguistics;