

## ABSTRACT

A study of language awareness, language attitudes and competence in written standard English among second year students at excellence high school in Barbados

**Chloe Samantha Walker**

This study sought to determine the level of language awareness among second year students at Excellence High School<sup>1</sup> in Barbados, and to discover their attitudes toward Standard English and Bajan Dialect. It also sought to determine whether there was a relationship between the students' level of language awareness and their written competence in Standard English. To answer these research questions, a correlational research design was employed. Data was collected using two surveys both in the form of questionnaires, and two sets of writing samples. The results showed that the students exhibit moderate levels of language awareness. More specifically, they showed low levels of active language awareness and high levels of passive language awareness. Secondly, the students held ambivalent feelings toward Bajan Dialect, positive feelings toward Standard English and viewed Standard English as superior to Bajan. Thirdly, the findings were inconclusive concerning the relationship between the students' level of language awareness and their written competence in Standard English, indicating a complex relationship between the two variables. The data suggests that there may be critical point at which the relationship between language awareness and competence exist, however, beyond that point the relationship is weak. Further research is therefore necessary in order to elucidate the nature and extent of this relationship.

**Keywords:** Language awareness, Mother tongue, Vernacular, Education, Language attitudes, Competence, Standard English, Dialect, West Indies, Caribbean

<sup>1</sup> The name of the school has been changed