

AN INVESTIGATION INTO TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF CODE-  
SWITCHING TO FACILITATE COMPREHENSION IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE-ARTS  
INSTRUCTION IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE NORTH EASTERN EDUCATIONAL  
DISTRICT

EDRS6900: Project Report  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education [Concentration in Reading]

of  
The University of the West Indies

Ambika Isaac

2011

Supervisor Mrs. Permilla Farrell

Department of Education

Faculty of Education

St. Augustine Campus

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## Chapter One

### Introduction:

#### Overview of the research project

Language is learned through use, first in the home, family and social community and then in the social context of the classroom and school ( Pinnel and Jagger p. 881- Freebody 2003).

The competency with which one is able to communicate is dependent upon one's ability to use the language or languages available to the speaker. It is at times inherent in the speaker to fulfill the need to communicate effectively to use the most natural facility of communication; this may require a necessary switch to a code that gives the speaker a more comprehensive way of expressing his knowledge. In the instance of communities of speakers where there is more than one language in use as a result of the community's development, language usage becomes even more intriguing.

Language is the primary, some would say essential, tool through which education is experienced and actualized. It provides access to all areas of learning. It is the capacity of language to reduce the concrete world to a set of linguistic signs that allows people to understand, to develop, and to manipulate concepts, and the manipulation of concepts is at the heart of education processes (Robertson 2010, p.15). This tool when effectively facilitated enables the learner to be fully engaged in the rigors of education. The language context of Trinidad can at times require that the teacher navigate between two codes that is, Standard English as prescribed by the Ministry of Education and the language used by the learners which is predominantly an English-based Creole. Hence, code-switching commonly occurs in the

Trinidadian classroom and it is used for a variety of purposes. It is present now in literature such as short stories; it is used in the generation of dialogue by students and at times teachers as they dramatize events and it is used by students mainly in their conversations amongst their classmates. The specific area of interest in this case is teachers' perception of the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension or understanding during in-class Language-Arts instruction.

This investigation into teachers' perception of the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension in the area of Language-Arts instruction in a primary school in the North Eastern educational district was conducted by the use of the theoretical framework of the ethnography of communication. The data was collected through the use of an attitudinal survey, the match guise technique, one on one interviews and focus groups, non-participant observation classroom checklists and artefacts that is, the observation of students' work after the observed lessons. This proved to produce several significant themes and issues that give some indication of teachers' perceptions of the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language- Arts instruction.

### Background to the problem

The teacher and student within the context of the classroom use the resource of the language or languages available to them to engage in the teaching and learning process. It is imperative that this particular resource be used to maximize the effectiveness of communication in the classroom and by extension the process of teaching and learning. The country of Trinidad and Tobago possesses an education system which is largely bidialectal. Craig (1979) defines this as a school system which exists 'where the natural language of children differs from the standard language aimed at by schools, but is at the same time sufficiently related to this standard language for there to be some amount of overlap at the levels of vocabulary and grammar' (164). Hence, the use of code-switching in the classroom may not be as readily evident to the teacher or the student although it may be a predominant part of the average communication process in the classroom. A code is a particular variety of a language one uses in a given situation. Wardhaugh (2002) describes it as 'a system used for communication between two or more parties' (p.100). This process is called code-switching. Apart from having linguistic competence in a second language, the code-switcher must have some level of communicative competence as well. This competence is invariably present in the school context as learners are usually more able to understand concepts when they are presented in a code that is more familiar to them, with the gradual and eventual return to the target language. This interaction of the two languages that have a great percentage of the same lexical base, with the Creole treated at times as a variation of the Standard, has sometimes allowed for an inadequacy in oral communication in the classroom.

In any given classroom in Trinidad one would find learners of diverse backgrounds. Some of these learners spend most of their days and nights in non-standard linguistic contexts,

while others have some measure of limited exposure to the Standard. In conversation, it is common for speakers who possess competence in two or more codes to make use of them as necessary. This brings one to the fact that variability exists in the language used by learners. It is perhaps necessary then to address this variability through some form of accommodation as it relates to language use and teacher and student interaction.

The school context for this study can be representative of the average Trinidadian school. The classes are not streamed; therefore most classes consist of children of mixed ability. There is a great need for both diagnostic and remedial work to enable the students to attain the necessary levels of academic achievement. Although some students are able to perform at satisfactory levels, the support systems that should be present to fully enable their attainment of levels of academic proficiency are not as evident. The school has been progressively underperforming in the area of Language-Arts with a greater percentage of standard five students attaining below the thirty percent score that is required to be placed within a secondary school. It is also the case in the instance of the National Test results where an increasing number of students continue to score below the necessary percentage. The Division of Educational Research and Evaluation (D.E.R.E.) recently published the school's performance level during the period 2005 to 2009 using an Academic Performance Index (API). A school's score or placement on the API is designed to be an indicator of a school's performance level. It is the average achievement of a school over the period 2005-2009 in the areas of numeracy and literacy. It identifies schools that are improving or in decline over the period. It was found that the school is on "academic watch". This means that there is "an inadequate number of students meeting or



exceeding standards in one or more classes or areas of learning”. The school “requires immediate attention to specific challenges faced by the school”. (D.E.R.E. 2011)

This researcher has found it necessary to engage in code-switching during Language-Arts instruction to facilitate instruction and has also observed other colleagues engaging in similar activity/ies particularly during instruction so as to allow for greater oral communication, discussion and interaction during lessons. However, they also strive to ensure that students are to some extent engaged in the use of the target language. The students are sufficiently exposed to various resource materials which has allowed for the understanding that the knowledge acquired is purposeful and relevant.

In the classroom, the teacher’s scheme of work, guides the day-to-day activity of the class. Its content is supported by the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education GORTT/IBRD Basic Education Project Primary School Syllabus (Infants I & II and Standards I & II) Language Arts (November 1999).

The new Syllabus also takes account of second language learning. In the Trinidad and Tobago context, the teaching of Standard English, which is the second language of most of our learners, must take account of the Trinidad vernacular of Trinidad Creole. Relevant strategies must be employed. The Language Arts Syllabus suggests some of the major strategies that should be used in teaching a second Language (Standard English) in the context of a first language (Trinidad Creole). (Pujadas 1999 p.ii)

This Language-Arts programme requires students to be proficient in all areas of language and reading to facilitate the use of the knowledge acquired in other areas of the curriculum. The

study of the use of code-switching in the Trinidadian classroom encompasses many areas of interest and demonstrates potential for the changing of the nature of the education system and the language or languages used in the classroom. This complex phenomenon, that is, code-switching carries within its basic tenets the multifaceted experience of language in the Trinidadian classroom. Thus, the implications for the establishing of a language policy based upon the reality of the classroom situation and not the theorized understanding of the language can be brought about by the generating of a greater awareness of language use in the classroom.

The issue of language learning and teaching has often been a contentious issue in Trinidad; mainly because Trinidad presents its own peculiar situation regarding language. One needs to first recognize and understand the specific linguistic make up of the territory and embrace the possibilities that it holds for us. It is hoped that a study of this nature will help sensitize teachers to the use of code-switching within the Trinidadian primary school classroom. Hopefully, teachers will become aware of their use of code-switching as it relates to teacher-pupil interaction and the teaching-learning process. This can also allow for the exploration of the usage of code-switching in the classroom as a means of exposing students to an environment that would be conducive to the mastery of the Standard English-through the understanding that each language system has equal value. This accommodation of language can work towards effecting change in the esteem of the students as it relates to their first language and the use of the standard.

### Statement of the Problem

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Many schools in Trinidad function within the context of the official language being Standard English while the native language of the students is an English-based Creole. This is the case in the educational district, to which the school under study belongs. This divide has been addressed by some teachers through the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during instruction. Studies into the use of the Creole in the classroom have produced many insights (notably, Robertson(1995) and Craig(2006)),but the issue of code-switching in the Trinidadian classroom has not been as extensively explored. This is even more so for the North Eastern educational district where there has been no research into the use of code-switching in the classroom. Hence, there is some merit in the investigation of such cases so as to gauge teachers' perception of this kind of accommodation and the ways in which code-switching is being used to facilitate comprehension or understanding during instruction in the Language-Arts area.

### Focus and purpose of study

The purpose of this qualitative research design is to investigate teacher's perception of the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction. The research questions are as follows:

#### Research Questions

##### Overarching Question

What are teachers' perceptions about the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension in the Language Arts instruction?

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##### Sub –questions

1. Are teachers aware of their use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction?
2. To what extent do teachers employ code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction?
3. What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction?

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The dynamic and constantly changing nature of education and specifically the delivery of material in the classroom may perhaps warrant a re-evaluation of the manner in which the teacher and learner interact. Pivotal to this interaction is the language medium used to foster an environment in which both stakeholders are fully able to or at least have a close approximate to effective communication so as to allow for the attaining of the general objectives and goals of the education system. For many persons acquainted with the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, there is no language education policy. This is only true in so far as there is no single coherent document that sets out such policy (Robertson 2010). This issue though is currently being remediated through the development and implementation of a definitive language policy for education. In the analysis of other education systems where the language situation is more clearly defined via a language policy, the issue of bilingualism is a reality in the classroom and attempts at treating with the problems that have ensued have resulted in another language situation. That is, code switching this refers “...to the smooth transitions from one code to another involving larger grammatical segments by a single speaker within a conversation” (McDonald and Robertson p. 212). In the Trinidadian context this complication is intensified by the interaction of two languages that have a great percentage of the same lexical base, with the Creole treated at times as a variation of the Standard. Hence the use of code-switching in the classroom may not be as readily evident to the teacher or the student although it may be a

predominant part of the average communication process in the classroom. In the development of this study it is necessary to define the term code-switching, consider the educational implications in the area of language instruction; review the studies done in this field and their implications for the education system.

### Defining the term Code-Switching

The terms code-switching or code-mixing, though still not as clearly delineated, point to a real phenomenon that one encounters when interacting in a bilingual or multi-lingual situation. Poplack (1980) has identified three types of code-switching, tag switching which is the “insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in the other language” (Romaine p.122). Inter-sentential code-switching is the switching between languages using entire clauses or sentence boundaries; this includes the turns taken between the speakers, the main distinction being that the speaker maintains the grammatical structures of both languages. The other type of code-switching as postulated by Poplack is intra-sentential code-switching this switching occurs within the clause or sentence boundary, also within the word boundaries thus, allowing for the attachment of inflectional morphemes from one language onto another language. All three code-switching types can occur within a single discourse as well as there can be the predominance of one type in a discourse. This gives some insight into the problematic nature of attempting to analyze code-switching—not just on the level of the discourse but more importantly as it relates to the actual structures that make up the discourse. Hence, the labeling of the particular types of code-switching that can be generated works for and against the development of studies because the occurrences of code-switching may not always be as

markedly defined, thus leaving the criticism of applying a label where code-switching does not exist as a real possibility.

### Code-Switching in language acquisition

The issue of code-switching has also been linked to second language acquisition which is critical in the carrying over of the learner from the first language into the mastery of the second language. The Input Hypothesis is Krashen's explanation of how second language acquisition takes place. The learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives the second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that *natural communicative input* is the key to designing a syllabus. This is an agreeable hypothesis and may prove to be successful in the classroom. If students use the Creole language as a starting point or teachers use it as the basis of their instruction and distinguish that the Creole and the Standard are different languages then students will be able to make distinctions and see the differences, thereby treating and learning the Standard English as a second (foreign) language.

His Affective Filter hypothesis shows that there are 'affective variables' which play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. If this is the case then it can be seen why students in the Trinidadian classroom do not do well, because their first language, their mother tongue has a

historical reputation of being stigmatized. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition of the standard. Positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place. Therefore, there must be a correlation between the first language (Creole) and second language (Standard) English in order for successful teaching and learning to take place. Thus, by using a contrastive approach to language learning both teachers and learners are able to distinguish between the two codes. "As such code-switching must be seen as a vital communication strategy" (Brandl 2008 p.15). The studies in the area of code-switching were initially regarded as an effort in futility but it soon became evident that, "the proper study of bilingualism is the interrelationship between the two languages of the bilingual, both on the level of competence and performance, if these can be distinguished." (Pride 1979.p.74). Though this statement directs the study of bilingualism, code-switching is integrally linked to this interrelationship "the key to the bilingual's competence lies in the necessity for alternating his codes, a process usually referred to as switching." (Pride 1979.p.77)

The context in which code-switching has been studied has ranged from the analysis of adults and their rationalizations for code-switching to the development of code-switching in the process of language acquisition. Studies into the socio-psychological motivations for code-switching have resulted in a wide range of data into various areas of society where code-switching is used for the purposes of expressing "social import" (Myers-Scotton p.151). The speakers' motivation for code-switching is "that they enter into conversation with similar



expectations”, the speakers’ are identified as “creative actors” and code-switching is for more than just the “conveying of referential meaning” (Myers-Scotton p.75).

#### Studies done in the area of Code-switching

A study done by Amy Paugh, on “Multilingual play Children’s code switching, role–play and agency in Dominica” has demonstrated the attitude of adults to code-switching as it relates to the use of both ‘Patwa’ and English by their children to communicate. The children’s language use and play were investigated through ethnographic research and a longitudinal language socialization study in one rural farming village in 1996-1998.(Paugh 2005). The use of Patwa was valued by adults for expressive purposes and there was the frequent code-switching between Patwa and English in the presence of the children. The adults though were opposed to the use of Patwa by their children because they felt that their children’s exposure to and use of this language would affect their acquisition of the official language, ‘English’.

This ideology is similar to that of the understanding of Trinidadian adults or more precisely parents who share the concern that the Creole is not the language that children should use or practice. In the study it was found that children used code-switching for the purposes of role–play thus, identifying with the adults and their functions using the associated language. The effectiveness of the data collection can perhaps be attributed to the methodology employed hence, allowing for the participants and the observers to enter into an almost natural environment. The findings of the study demonstrated the usage of the languages to structure play and game; the nature of the game dictated the language that would be used and the direction in which the code-switching would occur. Thus, adult activities such as weeding crops and feeding

the baby were engaged in using the Patwa and teaching games were conducted using English, but there was the switching to the Patwa to show authority in situations of disruptions. Essentially children used code-switching to negotiate meanings and rights and to assert their shifting identities and allegiances (Paugh 2005) as is the case in with Trinidadian children.

In the area of Spanish-English bilingualism a study in code-switching using four fairy tales that contained intra-sentential code-switching was done by Tyler Kimball Anderson. The matched-guise technique was employed and data was collected from two hundred and seventy – four participants who were asked to state their preferences as it related to the rating of the grammar in the literature presented. The matched guise technique was originally developed to investigate people's attitudes toward social, geographical or ethnic language varieties and to the different languages spoken in bilingual communities (e.g. Lambert 1960). The matched guise technique circumvents conscious introspection by confronting subjects with examples of the languages or varieties in question in the form of recorded text passages. The speakers are then asked to evaluate the speakers that they have heard in terms of character traits such as body height, good looks, leadership, sense of humor, intelligence, religiousness, self-confidence, dependability, entertainingness, kindness, ambition, sociability, character, and likability. If you simply ask people about these attitudes, there is a high likelihood that their answers will reflect conscious stereotypes prevalent in their community rather than their actual attitudes. It was concluded that the participants preferred grammatical code-switching to ungrammatical code-switching. The interesting thing about the study is the prevalence of literature of various genres that used code switching and the acceptance of the material as a viable option in a bilingual environment. This acceptance of code-switching can perhaps be attributed to the recognition of

both languages, in spite of the possible association of one language with more social prestige than the other. This is one of the major issues that prevent the adaptation of material to reflect the bilingual nature of Trinidad because it is the Standard that is held in high regard with the Creole or a mixture of the two being considered as inappropriate. Thus, the issue of code-switching though prevalent in Trinidad may remain an issue of interference and not be engaged as in the study done by Anderson.

An investigation of a village in the state of Maharashtra, India called Kupwar where multilingualism is a natural part of their existence was conducted by Gumperz and Wilson (1971). The study is described as “A dramatic example of just how extensively grammars of different languages can be merged (Trudgill 1984 p. 255). In the study code-switching occurs through the sustained contact between three languages; Kannada, Urdu and Marathi—each spoken by different socio-economic and religious groupings. This sustained contact has resulted in an indelible effect on the grammars of each of the languages in spite of the absence of any identifiable relatedness of the languages. Over the centuries, the three languages as spoken in Kupwar have developed a converged grammar to the extent that they all share the same grammar differing only in lexicon and morpho-phonemics (Trudgill 1984 p. 256). The accessing of the language in the education system though, is not as awkward as it would initially seem. The frequency of the use of the code-switching and the attitude towards this merging of the languages has allowed for a very different outcome. Poplack concluded that the most intimate “intra-sentential” switching represented both the highest degree of merger and the greatest degree of bilingual acquisition (Trudgill 1984 p. 257). Thus, it is possible for code-switching to be used as a positive and not as a debilitating form of communication in the community.

### Educational policies

Educational policies are an integral aspect of this study particularly because of the context in which the code-switching will be examined; that is the Trinidadian classroom. The absence of an educational policy in Trinidad as it relates to the issue of a language policy contributes towards the difficulty experienced as it relates to communication in the classroom. There is a disjoint between the possible proposed policy and actual practice. Roberts (2007) cited “The Carrington- Borely project in Trinidad in 1969 noted, among other things, a wide variety of textbooks and some incompetence among teachers in the Language Arts programme in schools in Trinidad and Tobago. This state of affairs is less acute now but not totally removed.”(p.218). Dennis R.Craig (2001) considers the problematic paradigm of the Caribbean context in which the official language and the vernacular of the populace are not only different but the sociolinguistic factors contribute towards varying attitudinal positions on the usage of the Creole in the classroom. Much of the discussion in its broad and general lines is also applicable with respect to Creole-speaking communities other than the officially English ones, communities such as the officially French ones in many parts of the world and the Dutch ones in the Caribbean and South America.(Highfield and Valdman 1980 p.246).

There is the analysis of six models for instruction, four of which were developed by Fishman and Lovas (1970) as possible alternatives to the present system which appears to ignore or invalidate the bilingual nature of the Caribbean society. The models are delineated even further with actual examples given to perhaps support the development of a language policy and the recognition of the home language as being an integral part of the development of literacy skills and ability. The data suggests that the Monolingualism is the practice of most Caribbean

countries that is, the official language is used for instruction and the home-language is completely ignored, this is the situation in many Caribbean countries. The other models range from the use of the home language as a tool of instruction with the eventual elimination of the home language that is Monoliterate bilingualism to the use of only the standard in the classroom and by extension the society. Monolingualism in the home, that is, only the home language is used to develop literacy skills and ability. Though constraints are identified it is in the application of the models over the period of two years in Seychelles that an actual progression occurs. The process is not complete but the attempts to use the models to achieve a sound language policy has merited the remark "...judging from the Seychelles case, one would say that his analysis of the various factors is both sound and pertinent."(Highfield and Valdman 1980,p.270).

Teacher attitudes toward the use of the standard, the Creole or a combination of the two as in the case of code-switching is instrumental in creating an environment in which the learner feels confident and comfortable enough to participate. This is even more specifically for the classroom making the way teachers speak not a tool used "to ostracize the pupils by the way you speak" ....but instead "make it clear to the pupils that their own speech is valuable and attractive." (Macaulay1977 p.132). Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the bi-dialectal teacher to ensure that the current attitude of the community and country does not adversely affect the learner's capacity to be expressive using perhaps the combination of languages available to the learner. In any case teacher's attitude to children's language can be very influential in shaping relationships between the child and the school and in affecting a child's attitude to education generally (Trudgill 1983 p.60). The real reflection of the effects of the teacher's attitude can be

seen in the “linguistic insecurities” developed resulting “in a child becoming unwilling to speak, inarticulate, hesitant and resentful.” (Trudgill 1983 p.62).

### Educational Implications

Brown (2001) states that, “For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies” (p. 291). He suggests that the focus on both top-down and bottom-up strategies may depend on individual needs and proficiency levels. For beginning level learners, attention to teaching bottom-up (decoding) reading processes may be needed, especially if the first language is orthographically very different from the target language. Hence, the language context allows for the emphasis to be upon the intermediate or advance levels of proficiency because of the great percentage of the same lexical base of the two codes. Conversely at the intermediate or advanced levels of proficiency, teachers may help students develop top-down strategies such as understanding discourse markers or paying attention to inferred or implied meanings in a text. Regardless of proficiency level, it is considered important for teachers to help student draw upon background knowledge to make predictions and guesses.

It is also necessary that teachers help students to develop cohesive and synthesis skills through the use of strategies such as semantic mapping, concept clustering and visual representations to see how ideas and concepts in the text relate to each other. These strategies can be introduced and practised at various phases of instruction to facilitate comprehension of the language content. For example, a semantic mapping approach and prediction confirmation

theory were used by Yu (2005, p. 64-65) in the pre-reading stage of instruction so as to promote reading comprehension, but these strategies were also useful during and after reading.

The means by which these strategies are employed in the classroom hinge upon the mediation of the language between the teacher and students. Brandl (2008) posits that students should not be discouraged from using code-switching if they do not know how to say something in the target language and if it keeps communication afloat. (p.15). Therefore, even in the development of the skills that will allow for understanding or comprehension it becomes the imperative of the teacher to manage the language usage in the class. Brandl though distinguished code switching from language behaviour where a teacher begins a sentence in one language and continues in another or constantly switches between languages as a result of lack of proficiency skills or laziness. He cited that in this instance the teacher is in fact a poor example or model of language usage.

#### Language usage in the classroom.

Craig (1999) developed a potential working document, Teaching English to Speakers of a Related Variety (TESORV), which may target the unique problems of West Indian students. It incorporates all the areas of language namely; listening, speaking, writing, and finally reading skills in a methodical way, and is processed in an Augmented Language Experience Approach (ALEA). The Trinidad and Tobago Reading Scheme of Work was modified to reflect this approach and the TESORV was recommended for the secondary level with details provided as it related to the use of the programme. The results of this intervention have not been examined

through studies into its effect. The thrust though is the “acceptance of Creole languages as a springboard from which students can acquire Standard English. (Peters 2007 p.174 as cited in the Proceedings of the 2007 Biennial Cross-Campus Conference in Education, 23–26 April, 2007)

In this programme Craig (1999, 2006) has provided explicit and detailed guidelines for English teaching in the Anglophone Caribbean as described by Youssef and Drayton as cited in the Proceedings of the 2007 Biennial Cross-Campus Conference in Education, 23–26 April, 2007 p.315.

“These texts provide practical language units which supply the reference material that teachers need at both linguistic and pedagogical levels but, simultaneously, they also provide a means of teaching based on language awareness being inculcated in the students, and motivation towards the Standard being established thereby:

Motivation can only develop if it is based on a perception of language contrasts, and an acceptance by students that English has to be used by persons, including themselves, who happen to be placed in certain situations, and who have to function in certain roles (1999, p. 42)”.

His approach promotes the development of early language awareness in children; a contrastive approach to the teaching of the two codes that is, the Standard and the Creole. A definitive and deferential policy on the teaching of language as it relates to the structure of the Standard but in relation to the levels of awareness of language usage. Therefore, the language policy and usage becomes contingent on the basic awareness the individuals involved in the teaching and learning process. The most provocative aspect of this approach is the purporting that the vernacular in



this case the English –based Creole can be used primarily to establish literacy while the Standard is used secondly. He advanced that this may circumvent the issue of having the Standard being engaged as a completely foreign language. Hence, there is the gradual use of the Standard as the language of instruction with the inclusion of the vernacular through class activities to validate the home code.

This inclusion of the two codes within the classroom is not as apparent or seen as a potential solution to the issues of language acquisition or usage. Peters (2007) in the paper “Teaching Standard English in the Trinidadian Classroom Thirty Years After the Carrington-Borely Report: A Survey of Recent Trends and Influences” p.152 surveys the attitudes toward the Creole in the classroom in the post-1980 period up to the present. The disclaimer that some of these positions may have changed is made and that the presentation is really a chronological account of the attitudes of academics and or educators. Hence, Youseff 1995, is quoted as stating

I can think of ways in which it [dialect] could be used, particularly from upper primary level one, but since as a people we have not yet developed the skills to handle it in conjunction with Standard English, a choice has to be made, and I am forced to conclude that neither at primary, secondary, nor even at first-degree level is there room at present for dialect in our education system. ( p. 9)

This position as evidenced in the prior paragraph has been altered somewhat as Craig offered a plausible and practical means of treating with what can be described as a bilingual context.

Ragbir (2002) saw this initial exclusion or the attempts at inclusion as leading to an inevitable utilitarian purpose for the Standard while the Creole remains the medium for communication. “Since it is so easy to gravitate to Creole, we condemn ourselves to being a nation mainly of Creole speakers with a basic working knowledge of the more generally effective and intellectually sophisticated Standard English” (p. 10). This though is not seen as an end but a means by which learning occurs. Hence, the students move from the known to the unknown in the learning of language as they would in any other circumstance of learning. James posited that though the Creole interferes with the learning of English both languages can be kept intact during the learning process. “But, as is well-known, old and new models can co-exist and take value from one another!” (James, 2002b)—Sharon Phillip-Peters p.171. This management of languages and codes within a community has been explored and analyzed by researchers as they consider the meaningfulness of such interactions and its impact upon the users of the languages or codes.

### Ethnography of Communication

Language is one of the ways in which one can communicate ideas to present one’s ‘knowing’ in a personal and real way. It is the means by which one’s reality is understood. Haralambos, M.& Holborn, M.(2004). The ease with which one is able to express these ideas is dependent upon one’s competency in the language being used; hence, it may become necessary to switch to a code that gives the speaker a more comprehensive way of expressing his knowledge. This competence is invariably present in the school context as learners are usually more able to understand concepts when they are presented in a code that is more familiar to them, with the gradual and eventual return to the target language. This interaction of the two

languages that have a great percentage of the same lexical base, with the Creole treated at times as a variation of the Standard, has sometimes allowed for an inadequacy in oral communication in the classroom. *Ethnography of communication (EOC)*

Saville-Troike (2003) proposed that the concept of communicative competence must be embedded in the notion of cultural competence, or the total set of knowledge and skills which speakers bring into a situation.( p.18). These skills or the total set of knowledge within the context of the classroom is underscored by the language of the students and their ability to navigate between their native language and the language prescribed for the classroom. Saville continued by describing aspects of culture that are relevant to communication one aspect of this being “the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking”, this is transmitted to students by teachers. Hence, the facility of code-switching within the context of the classroom can be surmised as a valid attempt to meet the needs of both teachers and students within the classroom as it relates to understanding during the teaching and learning process. This is of particular interest in the tradition of ethnography and even more so in the specific area of the ethnography of communication.

#### Reasons for code-switching from an ethnographic point of view.

Several reasons for code-switching were presented by Saville-Troike (2003) among them are; for official business situations, for the effect of humour, to exclude others, to avoid the making of social distinctions and even to assert one’s heritage or cultural background.

Switching may occur because of real lexical need, sometimes because formulaic expressions in one language cannot be satisfactorily translated into the second, sometimes

because the speaker knows the desired expression only in one language, and sometimes because access to one of the languages is diminished (perhaps in the process of language attrition)( p.56)

It is here that the issue of comprehension or facilitating comprehension through code-switching can be identified as one of the reasons for code-switching. The ethnographer within his cultural context while investigating the perceptions of members of a specific language community by “combining observation and self- knowledge, can plumb the depths and explore the subtle interconnections of meaning in ways that the outsider could attain only with some difficulty” (Saville-Troike 2003 p.90).

Hence, much like Hymes (1977) as cited in Flood et al (2003) the researcher through the use the ethnography of communication is guided to consider the perspective from which he is considering the study that is, is it a social life issue or a language issue. In this instance it is the imperative of the researcher to consider both as paramount to the development of the learning process as it relates to language development in the classroom and beyond. Erickson (1977),for example, argued that ethnographic work is “holistic”, not because of the size of the social unit, but because of the units of analysis analytically as wholes ,whether that whole be a community, a school system ...or the beginning of one lesson in a single classroom (as cited in Flood 2005,p.167). Hence, the exploration of teachers’ perceptions of code-switching and the analysis of the data to aptly present the findings of this exploration can be most appropriately placed within the tradition of ethnography and more specifically the ethnography of communication.

### Conclusion

Language and language learning is integral to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the education system. The language context of most Caribbean countries not withstanding Trinidad is complex because “the natural language of children differs from the standard language aimed at by schools.” This view as posited by Craig (1979) has been revisited and many advances have been made to address this issue. Also the theories as purported by bilingualism offer a practical solution so as to facilitate communication between students and teachers. Hence, the language policy (even though it is in its formative stage) visa vie the use of the Standard and the Creole within the classroom and more specifically in the teaching of Language Arts may bring greater clarity as to the ways in which to manage language usage in the classroom. It is at this juncture that code-switching can be considered as a means of communication in the classroom. Teachers’ perceptions of this phenomenon as it relates to language instruction in the classroom for the purposes of facilitating comprehension can be explored.

## Chapter three

### Focus and purpose of study

The purpose of this qualitative research design is to investigate teacher's perception of the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction.

Question to be operationalized:

3. What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction?

### Methodology for data collection

#### Research Design and Type of Study (Rationale for the approach)

This research used the ethnographic tradition to attempt to ascertain teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction. To gauge teachers attitude towards code-switching in the classroom, the theoretical framework of Ethnography of Communication (EOC) aided in exploring the experience of language in this particular language community. The researcher gained some insight into the meaning or the essence of the experiences as it relates to the switching between the Creole and Standard English in the classroom. It was also essential that a prolonged period of observation of the participants in their natural settings be done to verify the views that they may have expressed. In ethnographic research observing and documenting interactions between students and teachers in their daily life conditions and patterns may show the effect culture has on the usage of both codes and more specifically the switching between the two codes. Ethnographic research can further aid in an analysis and examination of the collected data.

“Ethnography of communication conceptualizes communication as a continuous flow of information, rather than as a segmented exchange of messages” (p.44) in their book *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, communication scholars Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor (2002) explain “This is an apt description of the interaction that occurs between the teacher and student during instruction within the context of a classroom”. According to Deborah Cameron (2001), EOC can be thought of as the application of ethnographic methods to the communication patterns of a group. Littlejohn & Foss (2005) recall that Dell Hymes suggested that “cultures communicate in different ways, but all forms of communication require a shared code, communicators who know and use the code, a channel, a setting, a message form, a topic, and an event created by transmission of the message”(p.312)

This may be used to enhance communication with group members, make sense of group members’ decisions, and distinguish groups from one another, among other things. "ECO studies," according to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), "produce highly detailed analysis of communication codes and their moment-to-moment functions in various contexts. EOC can be used as a means by which to study the interactions among members of a specific culture or, what Gerry Philipsen (1975) calls a "speech community." Speech communities create and establish their own speaking codes/norms. Philipsen (1975) explains that “each community has its own cultural values about speaking and these are linked to judgments of situational appropriateness” (p. 13).

As a researcher observing the interactions of teachers and students particularly in the area of language, a substantial period of inquiry is necessary. This is more so as it relates to the issue of teachers’ perception of language use in the classroom. This researcher will attempt to

describe and interpret human phenomena, often in the words of selected individuals (the participants). This is consistent with the “qualitative” or “naturalistic” paradigm (Heath,1997) The ethnographic tradition facilitates the use of focus groups, one-to-one interviews and non-participant observation in accumulating comprehensive and in-depth data. It is essential that a prolonged period of observation of the participants in their natural settings be done to verify the views that they may have expressed.

#### Participants (Sample)

In this research, purposive sampling was used to select three Standard four teachers at the school. These teachers were chosen because, at this level they are required to engage students more intrinsically in the area of language instruction and prepare students for the Secondary Entrance Assessment. “Learning could be facilitated and accelerated once the concept could be grasped, manipulated and explored. Indeed, for the more abstract concepts this is that much more obvious. Consequently, the students' control of the language of education is critical to their achievement” (Robertson 2010).

Each of the participants has attained a Teachers’ Diploma in teacher training. Therefore, they have been exposed to relevant strategies that need to be employed in Language–Arts instruction. The language programs that they have prepared for their classes are aligned with the established syllabus used for their class levels as required by the Ministry of Education. Two of the three participants are currently pursuing their first degree in education, as a result of this they have also been required to engage in language courses which may also allow for a greater awareness of language usage in the classroom.



### Methods of Data Analysis

The data for analysis was collected through six interview sessions of at least twenty minutes each, three out of these six sessions took the form of an augmented matched guise. Participants were required to state or describe their perceptions of the material an audio- recording presented to them. The recording consisted of three samples of varying degrees of code-switching. The first sample had very little Standard English, the second sample had an equal use of both codes and the last sample had very little Creole. The recordings were each approximately four minutes long, which made the entire audio recording approximately twelve minutes long. The participants were required to listen to and complete a language use guide that was provided.

There were also two focus group sessions for teachers. The group consisted of three primary school teachers that is, the standard four teachers of the school. This semi-structured interview protocol was another source of data. The second focus group was the last data collection process used and became an amalgamation of the previous data collection processes in that the participants were given the opportunity to clarify and or complete any ideas they had previously expressed. The transcriptions from the audio tapings of semi-structured interview were transcribed and the data coded to present the various themes that arose out of the sessions. Twelve non-participant classroom observations were done, the non-participant classroom observations were also critical in substantiating the comments made by participants. The data collected from the one-on-one interview and focus group was coded to ascertain any common themes or issues present in the transcripts.

### Triangulation

Stake defined triangulation as a “working to substantiate an interpretation or to clarify its different meanings” (p. 173). Although there is no single approach to triangulation, its purpose remained quite clear. Triangulation is based on the premise that no one source of information is sufficient. Therefore, multiple sources of data collection and analysis were essential to this research study. The use of an attitudinal survey, non-participant observation, the observation of artifacts that is the students’ work, the interviews and the focus groups allowed for the triangulation of multiple data sources, which made possible, fuller understandings of the patterns within and across the data. It was important to remember though that findings from different data sources may yield conflicting information and other inconsistencies regarding reading practices. Patton (2002) affirmed that inconsistencies can be “illuminative and important” (p. 556).

### Interpretations and Analysis - Patterns

This qualitative data analysis process involved examining data to identify patterns, themes inconsistencies and unstated or unavailable information. It was important to have systematic analysis of the patterns within the data so as to attain a full interpretation of the data collected. Patton, 2002, p. 437 posited that it was important to recognize that “vagaries, uncertainties and ambiguities were also part of the pattern. In this study, the given information from each of the participant’s interview was matched with the class practice that was obtained through the observation checklist. A second review of the interviews allowed for the reduction of the data and a consolidation of the categorized codes into themes. This case-by-case analysis gave support for building layers of analysis based upon cross-case patterns found through the

data. Thick description of what occurred is “the bedrock” (Patton, 2002, p. 438) or the foundation of this study.

The initial stage of analysis involved looking at individual classrooms for the patterns of Language-Arts instruction within each and the related perceptions as gleaned from the teachers. All the observations and transcripts were read and were recorded in black ink for first impression of the perceptions of teachers. These were identified and then all were re-read again to consolidate this first iteration into an emerging theme. The repetition of this process for a second time allowed for the first impressions of the perceptions of each teacher and so a theme was created from the data. Each participant had a colour-coded folder to hold the observations and transcripts. This aided in the ease with which the data for each teacher could be accessed.

### Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

#### Limitations to the study

Every study has a set of limitations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), or “potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (Creswell, 2005, p. 198). A limitation is an uncontrollable threat to the internal validity of a study. Explicitly stating the research limitations is vital in order to allow other researchers to replicate the study or expand on a study (Creswell, 2005). Additionally, by explicitly stating the limitations of the research, a researcher can help other researchers “judge to what extent the findings can or cannot be generalized to other people and situations” (Creswell, 2005, p. 198).

Time constraints of the term require less time than may be ideal for an ethnographic study which is traditionally conducted over a much longer time period. By engaging in observation and discussion for only a few hours for four weeks, there were bound to be aspects

of perceptions of language use or more precisely code-switching in the language arts area during the observations that may have been overlooked. Participants may have been apprehensive about disclosing their feelings about language usage and actual practice in the classroom this may also limit what was revealed. They may have been guarded in their practice and discussions, especially in the initial interactions. All participants in the study were volunteers who were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The literature in this particular area of study is primarily based in the use of very different codes or languages. Finally the literature is also quite dated and limited.

Another possible limitation of the observations included the typical behavior by the observed because there is the awareness of being observed, this is commonly known as the observer's paradox. The observer's paradox that is, the effect of the presence of the observer within the classroom may have changed the dynamics within the classroom. This is even more so when one considers the area under study. As evidenced by the literature previously presented language and language usage can alter as a result of a change in context. The problem of teachers reacting or responding differently because they are being observed is well documented, and one method suggested for combating this effect is to observe over an extensive period of time. The research design was developed to observe four lessons in each classroom in order to generate useful information about teacher perception of code-switching in language instruction. According to Patton (2002), the length of time is dependent upon the purpose of the study and the ability to answer the research question.

Researcher bias was a possible limitation of this study. Trustworthiness is an important concept in this qualitative inquiry and there is a need to strive for objectivity in observations and interviews. The keen interest in this particular area proved to be both an advantage and

disadvantage. It was necessary then to be as accurate and unbiased as humanly possible in presenting the data based on the analysis and interpretation of the patterns identified from the data. The use of member checking proved to be instrumental in achieving this goal as participants were able to validate, refute but most importantly ensure that what was recorded as their perceptions was the closest approximation of it.

### Delimitations to the study

Delimitations refer to “what the researcher is not going to do” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In scholarly research, the goals of the research outlines what the researcher intends to do; without the delimitations, the reader will have difficulties in understanding the boundaries of the research. In order to constrain the scope of the study and make it more manageable, researchers should outline in the delimitations – the factors, constructs, and/or variables – that were intentionally left out of the study. Delimitations impact the external validity or generalizability of the results of the study. The study was restricted to one primary school in the North-Eastern district therefore, findings cannot be generalized. Participation in the study was also delimited to only teachers of the upper school and their respective classes. Generalization to other educational programs or similar programs offered in private institutions may not be warranted because of the specificity of the study. Multiple teams were not observed, even though such comparisons might be valuable, in order to allow more depth of understanding regarding the group of focus. Additionally, structured interviews were not used in order to minimize obtrusiveness and any other influence on the focus group members.

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis and Outcomes

#### Methods of Data Collection

This study used four methods to collect data; these were the focus groups, interviews, observation and examination of artifacts in the school. This technique of using different methods says Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), attempts to, “map out or explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint”, and provides much validation particularly in qualitative research.

The participants along with seven other members of staff were asked to complete an attitudinal survey which consisted of fifteen loaded statements about language and language use in the classroom (See Appendix B). This was constructed by the researcher as an extension and adaptation of the matched guise technique which is used to investigate people’s attitudes toward social, geographical or ethnic language varieties and to the different languages spoken in bilingual communities (e.g. Lambert 1960). It was used to begin the process of describing the participants’ attitude towards code-switching in the classroom during Language-Arts instruction. The loaded statements of the attitudinal survey were used to glean from participants their real perceptions of language usage without the hindrance of attempting to meet the prescribed stereotypes of society (Lambert 1960). It consisted of two pages; this initially helped to elicit from the participants important issues about language in a non-intrusive way. The data from the other members of staff was also recorded to ascertain some general understandings of the school context but the focus was primarily placed on the three participants.

The semi-structured interview type was the interview type used primarily because of the nature of the issue under consideration it permitted the exploration of the topic in-depth. Two face to face interviews from each of the participants allowed for latitude in the breadth of relevance (Freebody, 2003). There was also two focus group sessions which entailed the interaction of all the participants using a set protocol that consisted of both questions and prompts (See Appendix C). Hence, the researcher was allowed greater flexibility in regards to the probing of the informants in order to make them clarify or elaborate on unclear or unexpected responses. One of the two interview sessions was used to have participants listen, describe and respond to the audio recordings of a student using varying degrees of code-switching their perceptions of the material presented to them was recorded (See Appendix D). The other interview session was conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendix E). Participants' real reflections of their perceptions and experiences using their own language were elicited by these means. Key questions were used to act as a guide during the semi-structured interview but this method allowed for the adjustment in the line of questioning based on the responses of the interviewees.

#### Non –Participant Observation Checklist

This method of data collection allowed for the recording of the frequency of the use of code-switching in the classroom and the observation of the teachers and their actual pedagogical practice corroborated the data from the interviews and focus groups. Therefore, the checklist was used to ascertain the frequency of the use of code-switching and the verbal and non-verbal responses by the participants and their students (See Appendix F). This was done over a scheduled period of four weeks with one visit to each of the classrooms per week. The respective classes that is, both teachers and students were also observed for the purposes of

corroborating data from the focus group and one on one interviews. Student produced material after instruction was observed, that is, the artefacts of the classes. The observation of student-produced material after the Language-Arts area of instruction also provided another perspective and that would contribute to rich and in-depth data.

### Ethical Considerations

Permission was sought from the Principal and participants as they were given a general outline of how the study would be conducted in regards to their input and the demands that would be made upon their time and facilities. The requirements of two semi structured interviews and two focus groups sessions and also the observation of the respective classes weekly over the period of a month were agreed upon (See Appendix A). It was decided that the scheduling would be done at the convenience of the teachers, therefore a detailed schedule of specific dates and times was not developed, but teachers did facilitate the process on a week to week basis. Participants were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity in regards to the matters discussed during these sessions. It was agreed upon that each participant would be referred to as Teacher One, Teacher Two and Teacher Three respectively. Participants were also informed that details of the research project would be provided to participants. There was also extensive access to the research site so there was the possibility of researcher's bias.



## Analysis of Data

### Findings and Results

The attitudinal survey was given to ten of the sixteen members of staff; this was inclusive of the three participants targeted for the study. In this way the language context of the school could be established and a sense of what obtains in the classes before and after the participants have had their students gained by these means. It was used as a nonintrusive way of having teachers begin to consider their thoughts about language use in the classroom and their practice as a result of it. This particular data collection process was done through a sample of convenience this is not withstanding the already previously determined sampling process for the purposive sample of the three standard four teachers. The following is the presentation of results of the attitudinal survey:

a) To be considered educated, one should speak Standard English with average or above average proficiency.

Five of the respondents agreed with the statement with the other five being divided into two respondents strongly agreeing and two disagreeing. There was only one respondent who strongly disagreed.

b) Standard English is needed to replace the Trinidadian Creole to help with worldwide communication.

Seven of the respondents agreed with this statement, one strongly agreed and two of the respondents disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

c) Standard English is the only language that should be taught and used in the classroom.

Five respondents disagreed with this statement, three strongly disagreed and the two other respondents each strongly agreed and agreed respectively.

d) There is no difference between Standard English and the Trinidadian Creole.

Eight of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement and the two other respondents each disagreed and agreed respectively.

e) It would be a terrible thing to lose the Trinidadian Creole.

Three of the respondents strongly agreed and the other seven agreed with this statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

f) It is not necessary for Trinidadian children to learn anything other than their own dialect of Trinidadian Creole in school.

Six of the respondents disagreed with this statement and the other four strongly disagreed with this statement. None of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

g) Trinidadian Creole enhances the curriculum by enriching the language background of the children.

Two respondents strongly agreed with this statement while the other eight agreed with this statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

h) Trinidadian Creole expresses some things better than Standard English.

Six respondents strongly agreed with this statement and the four others agreed. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

i) Trinidadian Creole has logic of its own, comparable to that of any other language.

Five of the respondents strongly agreed and the other five agreed with this statement.

j) Acceptance of Trinidadian Creole by teachers would lead to a lowering of standards in school.

The distribution of responses to this statement was the most distributed. One respondent strongly agreed, two agreed, four disagreed and three strongly disagreed with this statement.

k) Trinidadian children can't learn unless the Trinidadian Creole is used as the medium of instruction in the schools.

Three respondents agreed with this statement. Six respondents disagreed and one respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.

l) Trinidadian children should be allowed to choose their own language of communication in the school from an early age and should not be directed by the teacher.

Seven respondents disagreed, two strongly agreed but one respondent agreed with this statement.

m) Switching between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning has its place in the classroom.

There was an even balance in the responses of the respondents, five respondents strongly agreed and five agreed with this statement.

n) It is important that teachers switch between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning.

Four respondents strongly agreed and six agreed with this statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

o) It is important that students switch between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning.

Seven respondents agreed with this statement and three respondents strongly agreed with this statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

If there were any other areas of language diversity and language usage within the classroom that were not addressed please state, describe and express your views:

One respondent expressed her views on language use. The following is presented as an exact replication of her response: Trinidadian Creole and Standard English tend to be a bit close and so one may think he/she is speaking the Standard English when in fact it is the Trinidadian Creole. It is therefore important especially on the part of the teacher he/she is mindful of his/her language use.

The distinction between the Standard and the Creole was evident to the teachers as even in completing the cover page of the survey which contained basic bio-data they readily stated that they were proficient in both Standard English and the Creole. The results of the survey suggested that most teachers recognized the importance of being proficient in Standard English but they also perceived the value in using the Creole in the classroom to enhance the curriculum. The nature of its use though as perceived by teachers was varying in that some teachers felt that its use in the classroom may result in a lowering of standards in schools while others also

perceived that it was necessary for the purposes of instruction. On the issue of code-switching though, all teachers were in agreement that there was some merit in its use in the classroom.

#### Language use (Matched Guise)

The matched guise highlighted the perceptions of the three teachers/ participants as it related to the use of three different students use of language. The first sample was that of a student using predominantly the Creole to talk about the school year in review and the many activities that occurred over the time period. The student was encouraged to speak freely and use language that she would be most comfortable with. The second sample was a mixture of the Creole and Standard to re-tell the story of ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’. The student was asked to retell her version of the story. The third sample was that of a student using the Standard to report on a school activity. It was the oral presentation given at the end of a creative –writing lesson. Each of the samples was obtained through the recording of a classroom activity. Therefore, they were used to gauge the teachers’ perceptions of the language used by the speakers who can be representative of their students. It also may have generated a greater awareness of their language use during instruction in the classroom.

The response to the first prompt was the same for all three teachers. The asterisk represents the selection made by the participants. Each of the participants accurately described/labeled the language sample.

1. What code do you believe the speaker is using?

	Standard English	Creole	Mixture of Standard and Creole
Sample One		*	
Sample Two			*
Sample Three	*		

2. Please award a mark out of ten for the given text

	Teacher One	Teacher Two	Teacher Three	Average Score
Sample One	3	4	5	4
Sample Two	5	7	7	5.6
Sample Three	8	8	7	7.6

The teachers score for each of the samples and the average score demonstrated that the score increased with the greater use of the Standard by the speaker. This gave some indication as to

the teacher’s perception of the speaker’s language use or the value that was placed on the material that each participant heard. This is indicative of the associated status that is prescribed to the Standard as was the case in the study of “Multilingual play Children’s code switching, role–play and agency in Dominica” (Paugh.2005). The adults favoured the use of the standard by their children because it was the official language of education.

3. Using a scale form 1—5 assess this speaker’s intelligence

1 poor          2 average          3 good          4 very good          5 excellent

	Teacher One	Teacher Two	Teacher Three	Average Score
Sample One	3	3	4	3.3
Sample Two	4	4	4	4
Sample three	4	4	4	4

The teachers score for each of the samples and the average score demonstrated that the difference in the scores were minimal. This gave some indication that the teacher’s perception of the speaker’s intelligence was not dependent on the speaker’s language use. This was perhaps contrary to Ragbir (2002) as cited in Phillip-Peters (2008) who described the Standard as being “the more generally effective and intellectually sophisticated Standard English” (p. 10).

4. How do you feel about the student's overall language competence?

Write a short profile of what you think.

Sample One.

Teachers one and two responded similarly by stating that they felt that the student was able to communicate her ideas but that she required instruction in the proper use of the standard to appropriately reproduce the story that she told. Teacher three stated that the student gave an accurate oral account of the story. Hence each of the teachers recognized the student's language competence in the Creole.

Sample Two.

Teacher one stated that the student exhibited greater competence in the Creole than in the Standard in spite of the fact that the sample was a combination of the two codes. Conversely teacher two and three each stated that the student exhibited average competence in both codes.

Sample Three

The three teachers all stated that the student exhibited above average competence in the Standard.



5. Describe the language used as acceptable (A) or unacceptable (UA)

	In your classroom			During your language instruction			In a text used in your classroom		
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
Sample one	A	A	A	UA	UA	A	UA	UA	UA
Sample two	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	UA	A
Sample Three	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

The responses to the use of each of the samples within a particular context were consistent as each of the teachers found the use of the Creole (Sample one) in texts used in the classroom as unacceptable. One teacher though found that it was acceptable to be used during language instruction. The responses for the other uses were also consistent that is, in the use of code-switching (Sample two) and the Standard (Sample three) during language instruction and in texts used in the classroom. One teacher though did consider it unacceptable to use code-switching in texts used in the classroom.

### Data Analysis for the One on One interview and focus groups.

The data collected from the one-on-one interview and focus groups were coded to ascertain any common themes or issues present in the transcripts. The first meeting of the participants was through the focus group which allowed for the development of an initial understanding of the participants thoughts about language use during Language-Arts instruction. The second focus group which was used as the last session for the participants facilitated the consolidation and clarification of thoughts as presented by the participants. There was the generation of common codes which developed into themes as each of these sessions occurred. This data was also substantiated for the most part by the use of the other data collection methods.

The data generated from the one on one interviews and the focus groups allowed for the exploration of the perceptions of the individual and collective grouping of the participants. The themes developed out of the one on one interviews and the focus groups were ‘correctness of language’, ‘the purpose of each of the codes’, ‘students can express themselves’, ‘refining of the Creole’, ‘code-switching and facilitating learning’. There were also other noteworthy perceptions that were not identifiable by a pattern or even consensus among the teachers but it added to the understanding of teachers’ perception of the use of code-switching for language instruction. Therefore, it was also necessary to note what code switching meant for the student as it was perceived by the teachers. The other data collected over the time period was summarized or tabulated to present the perceptions of the participants.

The theme of ‘correctness of language’ that is the Standard was delineated through the repeated references from interview sessions to “formal language” (See Appendix G). The very term standard implies rules, fixed and predictable (Barrie, Barrel, Gordon, Hammet and Mayer

(eds.) 2004). The data suggested that the social status of the Standard makes it the more favorable means of discourse in the classroom and by extension the language of the world. This was also attested to in the matched guise as teachers scored the Standard considerably higher than the other two samples. Phillip-Peters (2008) in her analysis of the trends and influences presented varying and changing thoughts on the ways in which to treat with this particular theme. Postmodernist theories suggest that perhaps it is necessary to challenge this prescribed thinking of the use of the Standard. The favoring of the Standard may also be because the forms of national assessment in our country which requires that the standard be used, several references were made as well to justify the need to practise the standard for this reason (See Appendix G).

The other discernable theme was that of ‘the purpose of each of the codes’. Hence, both the Standard and the Creole each have their situational and contextual purposes, the student and teachers recognized that at times it was necessary to switch between the two codes to allow for effective communication. The theory of code-switching in language acquisition as purported by Krashen(1981) supports this perception as it was deemed necessary that the learner exercise levels of competency as he moves from the language that is known to the language being learnt. The Creole was described as the home language of the students and it was stated that there was merit in its use. It was described as “supplementing” instruction for the purpose of understanding the content being presented. It was the collective consensus of the group that the Creole was effective in facilitating communication in the earlier interactions of the class that is at the beginning of the academic year. This is another indication that there is in fact some credence in the use of code-switching in language acquisition. Hence, teachers noted a considerable change in students’ language use and conceded that there was a greater percentage of code-switching in the later part of the academic year. (See Appendix H)

Teachers when they were asked about their feelings or perceptions about having to manage the two languages within the classroom readily offered the understanding that it is a necessity within the classroom. In the first focus group teachers identified ways in which their own teachers had managed the language use within their classroom and suggested that they did in fact model the strategy or strategies. In the second focus group though, two of the teachers discussed their affinity for the use of a greater percentage of the Creole and the Standard respectively even though they both admitted to the need for code-switching. Hence, the use of the codes and their perceptions of it hinged upon their personal preference for a particular code (See Appendix I). It was noted that this affinity affected the ways in which they switched codes. This was also substantiated by the matched guise for the first one on one interview session as teachers deemed more acceptable the use of a more balanced form of code-switching. Hence, each of the codes had its purpose.

Another focus of the teachers in the teaching and learning process became evident in their response to the use of only the Creole or only the Standard to aid in instruction. The inability of students to 'express themselves' was identified as a pertinent issue, so much so that it was felt that students are usually silenced because of the teachers attitude towards the use of any code other than the Standard English in the classroom(See Appendix J). Though this may be considered another purpose for code-switching it may be pertinent to consider this issue in isolation. In the process of discussing the use of the codes and code-switching the teachers each recognized the importance of the students using the language or languages available to them to engage in the learning process. Hence, the function of language as an outlet through which the individual is able to represent the self is perhaps a valid assumption.

The other theme developed out of the data was the perception that there could be a ‘refining of the Creole’. Teacher One in his attempts to manage the language use in the classroom described his balance in the use of the Creole as being along the Creole continuum. Hence, his use of the Creole was based upon movement towards the middle of this Creole continuum that is, away from the “Basilect” which is considered to be the least prestigious or the lowest form of the Creole, to the “Mesolect” which is perceived as being more prestigious. It was a critical condition for the use of the Creole and by extension the code switching present in language instruction (See Appendix K). The two other teachers also indirectly stated this as their perception as well when discussing their students’ use of the Creole in the classroom. The matched guise used to ascertain the teachers’ perception of language use by the student also indicated that there was this perception of refining the Creole.

The main focus of the inquiry that is the perceptions about ‘code-switching’ was referred to directly by Teacher Two. (See Appendix L) Each interview elucidated though that code-switching occurred even though the participants were unaware of the technical terminology for it. The effectiveness of the strategy was discussed with the main tenet being that the necessary manipulation of the codes was permissible when the language in use was unable to fulfill its purpose that is, the communication of concepts for the purpose of teaching and learning. Hence, there was that common thread even across themes in the data. The matched guise also substantiated this premise as teachers perceived the use of code switching as being more acceptable than that of the use of only the Creole.

The attitude of the teachers in navigating between the two codes was distinctly different. Teacher One in the one on one interview expressed a sense of frustration at having to heavily

rely on code-switching as opposed to using only the Standard in the classroom. Teacher Two and Three expressed ambivalence about this navigation between the codes and used instead their personal preference for either of the codes to determine the nature of the switching of the codes during language instruction. They all agreed though that it was necessary to code switch as a means of scaffolding for the students to facilitate learning in any area of study. This was concurrent with themes that were developed in the data.

The teachers as models of language use in the classroom as posited by Saville-Troike(2003) provide “the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking”. Another theme that came out of the data was the perception by teachers that their modeling affected the language of the students. The non-participant classroom observation permitted the generation of the ‘facilitating learning’. It was in congruence with the field note observations that the issue of code-switching presents other pertinent educational considerations. Here the primary focus was upon the use of code-switching in the classroom, as in the practice of it. The students both responded to and also agitated against the use of either codes that is, Standard English or the Creole, in isolation. The switching between the two codes provided the middle ground necessary for the acquisition of knowledge and the understanding of the concepts presented. The students were also noted as putting this particular means of communication into practice as all the participants noted a change in their students language use (See Appendix M).

There were also areas of discussion through the questions and prompts used in the one on one interviews that presented no discernable patterns but are noteworthy. The prompt used about a student feeling that the teacher was in fact “dumbing” down the lesson caused very different reactions in each of the teachers (See Appendix N). Thus, though teachers used code-switching

they were unaware of the possibility that students may prefer the use of the Standard only as a means of instruction in the classroom. The subsequent questioning about the use of either of the codes in isolation though further emphasized the perception that a combination of the two codes was in fact more effective during the teaching and learning process. This was even more so as it applied to language instruction. The ‘Teaching English to Speakers of a Related Variety’ (TESORV) as developed by Craig (1999) and used in the Trinidad and Tobago Reading Scheme of Work reflects this contrastive or comparative use of both the Creole and Standard to develop language awareness in the classroom.

#### Summary of Non Participant Observation of lessons

Four observations were conducted at each teacher’s convenience with the exception of one teacher who was observed for only three sessions. Teachers were asked to identify times convenient for observation during their scheduled classroom Language –Arts time. These observations were scheduled once a week during a four week period. Field notes were taken for each observation, by primarily using the non-participant observation checklist (See Appendix E). They were written during each observation time to capture the natural setting of daily routines in each classroom as a direct source of data. The summary of the field notes for each of the teachers are as follows:

#### Teacher One

The teacher used code-switching primarily for the purpose of class-management consistently throughout each of the lessons. The variation in its use in specific language areas came with the area of language under consideration. In discussing the teacher’s perceptions of code-switching the teacher was very careful to note the importance of using the target language

so as to be an appropriate model in the classroom. The initial observations may have been skewed due to the presence of the observer in the classroom that is, the observer's paradox. The language usage though by the students was evident enough to allow for the eventual confirmation of the teacher's perception and position on language usage *visa vie* code-switching in the classroom.

The lessons observed were grammar, punctuation and study skills, the scheduled fourth lesson was not observed due to extenuating circumstances. The teacher's attitude towards code-switching or even the use of the Creole in the classroom was one of accommodation. Hence communication in the classroom was sustained by using the codes available to both the teacher and students. The other major purpose for the use of code-switching in the classroom was to allow for clarification on the part of both the teacher and student. There was considerably less code-switching or the use of the Creole during the grammar lesson.

#### Teacher Two

This teacher used code-switching primarily for the purpose of clarification consistently throughout each of the lessons. There was some variation in its use in specific language areas. In discussing the teacher's perceptions of code-switching the teacher was also very careful to note the importance of using the target language so as to be an appropriate model in the classroom. The attitude of the teacher to the use of only the Creole within the classroom though was not as consistent but it depended upon the context within which the Creole was being used. The issue of the observer's paradox was not as evident and again the language usage though by the students was evident enough to allow for the eventual confirmation of the teacher's perception and position on language usage *vis-à-vis* code-switching in the classroom.



A grammar, study skills and two creative writing lessons were observed. The teacher's attitude towards code-switching or even the use of the Creole in the classroom was less accommodating. Communication in the classroom was sustained but there was more of an effort to use of the Standard as well as the switching of codes by both the teacher and students. The other major purpose for the use of code-switching in the classroom was to allow for conversation amongst the students. There was considerably more code-switching or the use of the Creole during the creative – writing lessons, this especially so during the early stages of the writing process.

#### Teacher Three

This teacher used code-switching for several purposes over the period of observation but primarily for instruction, class management and clarification. In discussing the teacher's perceptions of code-switching the teacher was perhaps more liberal in which code should be used in the classroom and to what extent. The students' response to the teacher indicated a confirmation of the teacher's perception and the position on language usage *visa vies* code-switching in the classroom. The initial observations may have been skewed due to the presence of the observer in the classroom that is, the observer's paradox.

The lessons observed were two grammar, a punctuation and a creative –writing lessons. The teacher used a contrastive approach to the teaching of the grammar by indentifying the differences between the two codes. The purpose may have been to ensure that students have an even greater awareness of the differences between the two codes and the ways in which they

each work. The teacher also engaged the students in the refining of what was said to the point that it could be considered acceptable by the class.

It can be noted that each teacher was consistent in his or her use of the Creole and Standard in the classroom for the purposes that they stated. There was a significantly high level of code-switching as well throughout the Language- Arts lessons. It was observed that it was used for actual instruction but also in the other areas that were identified in the non-participant observation checklist. There was though the use of code-switching particularly during the creative –writing by all three teachers. The students used code-switching as well to present their ideas. The teachers accurately described the strategies that they used to help students to move towards the Standard by “talking out” possible options before writing the suggestion given by the student (s). It was also noted that the other Language –Arts areas particularly in the area of grammar there was a greater emphasis on the use of the Standard. The teachers described this Language -Arts area as being the most heavily weighted in terms of the use of the Standard. The observations of the lessons showed that this was consistent with the perceptions presented by the teachers in both the one-on one interviews and he focus groups.

Another aspect of the non-participant observation checklist was the unobtrusive observation of students work to ascertain whether or not there was actual comprehension as a result of the language use that is, code-switching in the class. The students’ work provided another source of verification for the management of language within the classroom particularly as it related to the teachers’ perception of their response to the accommodation being used. The students by their responses to their teachers firstly gave the indication that the language use in the Language –Arts lessons was in accordance with the descriptions given by their teachers.

Through observation it was also evident that there was a natural rapport between the teachers and students as described by the teachers.

The written exercises that were produced after the lessons presented another aspect that was not directly addressed in this study. It is suggested that students oral competency in a language can exceed the actual production of the language in its written form. The students in their interaction during the lesson demonstrated an understanding of the concepts presented as the teachers attempted to manage their language use so as to facilitate learning. The individual written work showed that there was considerable work to be done to bring students to the mastery of the Standard. It was indicative though that there is some merit in the teachers' perception that students need to feel comfortable enough in their language use of the standard through the language context provided by the teachers so as to continue to express themselves. Hence, the increase in the use of code-switching by the students as a result of the modeling of the teachers can prove to be more beneficial for both teachers and students. The ethnography of communication as conceptualized by Lindlof and Taylor (2002) regarded the "continuous flow of information" through shared codes as necessary within the context of the classroom. The eventual transition to more of the Standard in the process of code-switching to the use of only the standard because of the modeling of the teacher can also possibly occur.

## Chapter five

### Recap of the study

### Research Problem

This study focused on teachers' perception of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction. Many researchers and stakeholders have considered language usage in the classrooms that is, with the understanding that the official language of the education system in Trinidad is Standard English while the native language of the students is an English-based Creole. These studies into the use of the Creole in the classroom have produced many insights (notably, Robertson (1995), Craig (2006)), and Peters (2008). The perceptions of teachers in regards to the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension in the Trinidadian classroom have not been as extensively explored. In the process of this study it was also discovered that there is in fact a Language policy document in developmental stages by the Seamless Education Project Unit (2010).

### Focus and purpose of study

The purpose of this qualitative research design was to investigate teacher's perception of the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction. The disparity between the language of the education system and the language of the students has been addressed by some teachers through the use of both codes within the classroom that is, code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during instruction. It is the teachers' perceptions of this kind of accommodation and the ways in which code-switching is being used to facilitate comprehension or understanding during instruction in the Language-Arts area that

was investigated. This was of some significance since such an investigation had not been conducted in the educational district and more specifically in the school that was under study.

The research question was as follows:

What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language Arts instruction?

#### Restatement of Findings/Results.

The data provided a response to the question that was developed in the effort to address the inquiry of teachers' perception of the use of code-switching during Language –Arts instruction to facilitate comprehension. The teachers as it related to code-switching, the use of either of the codes in isolation by both teachers and students gave considerable insight into their thoughts about the language context of their classes. It was found that there was in fact an appreciation for the use of either of the codes or code-switching as teachers through various forms of data collection identified the purpose for the use of the Standard and Creole. On the issue of code-switching there were varying levels of awareness of this means of communicating to scaffold learning. It was evident as well that there was indeed an established community of speakers as both students and teachers moderated their language use within the context of the class.

The attitudinal survey and the matched guise used were effective in allowing teachers to express their attitude towards the use of the different codes that is, the Creole and Standard English in the classroom with some degree of anonymity. It was informative in that teachers were able to consider their perceptions of the languages in a conscious way and immediately

record these thoughts. Hence, there was the opportunity for teachers to use both the loaded statements and the audio recordings as catalysts to tap into a sense of their more in-depth thoughts about code-switching and its use to facilitate Language-Arts instruction. The participants perceived the differences between the two codes and attributed value to each of the codes under consideration. The divergence came in the actual degree of use in the classroom. The one on one interview and focus groups provided the opportunity to discuss these thoughts and their actual practice in the classroom. The themes or main issues arising out of the data suggested that as it relates to the phenomenon of language, it is in fact a highly personalized and aggressively guarded thing. It is as described by Haralambos, M.& Holborn, M.(2004) as the means by which one's reality is understood. The risk of adding to this milieu by imposing one's own biases was great. Hence, even in the analysis of the data attempts were made to avoid statements of judgment in regards to the teachers' attitudes towards language.

The data collected from the interview and focus groups generated several themes and allowed for other areas of interest to be considered. Thus, the teacher as a 'model for language learning' was not directly treated with, teachers acknowledged in some way their own part in the development of the students' proficiency. They recognized that the actual transmission of the Standard itself was facilitated through both codes but more specifically through the navigating between the two codes that is code-switching. The themes of 'correctness of language', 'purpose for each of the codes', 'students can express themselves', 'code-switching', 'refining of the Creole' and 'facilitating learning'. There were links between main themes which gave credence to the understanding that the phenomenon of code-switching as a means of facilitating comprehension during Language –Arts instruction.

The attitude of the teachers was substantiated through the classroom observations. There was evidence that teachers accommodated students through the use of code-switching. Each teacher attempted to engage the students by using the Standard and the Creole at times in isolation and also code-switching to facilitate language instruction. 'Facilitating learning' took precedent over the language being used to engage students. The students' response to the teachers may have influenced to some extent the teacher's choice of code and even the choice to switch between the two codes. It is at this point that it should be recognized that a more extensive regimen of observations both participant and non-participant observation may have yielded a more comprehensive analysis of the actual language context in the classroom. The teachers' perceptions though were sufficiently gauged and corroborated.

The generation of a project to apply the qualitative methodology of the ethnography of communication was both interesting and challenging. The sensitivity of the issue of teachers' thoughts about language use required a combination of data collection methods that would allow the participants to share their actual thoughts in an almost natural setting. The investigation into code-switching by using the school under study gave some insight into the language situation in the classroom. There is the active use of code-switching to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction. The positive re-enforcement by teachers of students' use of the two codes within the context of the classroom is evident as well as the accommodating attitude of the teachers. It must be recognized that this was actually a very limited inquiry therefore general or blanket statements cannot be made but it proved to be an enriching experience.

In the primary school system several things are considered as the natural responsibility of the teacher, the language experience is usually constant. The teachers are generalists in that

they are required to teach all subject areas, the language experience then is constant and applicable to all subjects but more so during Language-Arts instruction. The ways in which teachers provide this instruction and their perceptions about it is then quite intriguing as it relates to the learning process. The use of the Standard and the Creole has always held some appeal. Therefore an inquiry into this area allowed for the mixing of a genuine interest with the investigation and presentation of this research project.

### Recommendations

The specific focus for the research project that is, the perceptions of teachers as it relates to use of code-switching during Language-Arts instruction does not allow for generalizations about the issue because the results are limited to one educational district and school. This though does not preclude the possibility of making recommendations as it relates to the use of code-switching during Language-Arts instruction to facilitate learning. Therefore, coming out of this limited investigation it can be proposed that:

Research needs to be conducted in this area of study throughout the educational districts to ascertain teachers' perceptions about language use vis-à-vis code-switching during Language-Arts instruction. The results of these studies may prove to be informative and instrumental in enhancing the teaching and learning process as it relates to Language- Arts instruction. The theories of language acquisition and second language acquisition (Krashen 1981) and (Brandl 2008) as developed and discussed provide support for studies into language use and their possible benefits.



A greater awareness of the language use by both the teachers and students in the classroom particularly during instruction is necessary. The Language and Language Education Policy which is at present a work in progress by the Seamless Education Project Unit (2010) suggests as much. Though in this instance there was the understanding that the Standard and the Creole are separate languages this was not always the case.

Teachers are in fact models for language use; Myers-Scotton (1993) identified the “social import” that motivates the speaker to switch codes. Hence, as teachers place value on the two codes and on code-switching can the students. It may be necessary therefore to have teachers re-oriented in actual pedagogical practice that facilitate a more effective use of the languages within the classroom, so that the learning and teaching process is even more meaningful. The use of the contrastive approach which entails the direct comparisons of the languages so as to allow for a clearer understanding of their differences may be useful. The Augmented Language Experience Approach as generated by Craig (1999) is another option that directly recognizes the use of the Creole in the classroom as a springboard for language development in the classroom.

It can also be advanced that teachers develop a working language use document specifically tailored for their school. This can be generated out of the developing Language use policy that is being developed at present. This can perhaps permit for an easier transition as students move from one class to another, within the context of a primary school. This document may be more manageable as opposed to a secondary school context.

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Appendix A

Letter to the Principal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

I am currently completing my Master's Degree in Education (Reading)

I intend to investigate teacher's perception of the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction. To conclude my research findings, I need the assistance of the school and staff.

I request permission to conduct my research at your school. This letter also serves to inform you that all the information gathered from study will be used solely for research purposes and that anonymity of all is guaranteed.

I trust that you will kindly grant me the consent in conducting my research.

Thanking you in anticipation of your kind co-operation

Sincerely,

---

Ambika Isaac



I, \_\_\_\_\_ give permission for Ms. Isaac to conduct her research

at my school, \_\_\_\_\_.

Letter to the Participants

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

I am currently completing my Master's Degree in Education (Reading)

I intend to investigate teacher's perception of the use of code-switching so as to facilitate comprehension during Language-Arts instruction. I would be grateful if you supplied me with the information as this is vital to the completion of my project.

This would entail your availability for two face to face interviews and two focus group sessions and the observation of at least four Language-Arts lessons.

This letter also serves to inform you that all the information gathered from study will be used solely for research purposes and that anonymity of all and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Thanking you in anticipation of your kind co-operation

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Ambika Isaac

I, \_\_\_\_\_ will participate in the above mentioned activities to assist Ms Isaac in conducting her research.

## Appendix B

## Attitudinal Survey

Thank you for participating in this study. This survey is one of the instruments being used to collect data for a research project which seeks to examine the attitudes of teachers toward language diversity and language usage within the classroom.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at:-

Please check the appropriate response for the following:

Age: 20- 30 (\_\_\_) 30- 40 (\_\_\_) 40- 50 (\_\_\_) 50- 60 (\_\_\_)

Sex: Male (\_\_\_) Female (\_\_\_)

Teaching experience: 10- 15 (\_\_\_) 15- 20 (\_\_\_) 20- 25(\_\_\_)

25- 30 (\_\_\_) 30- 35(\_\_\_) 35- 40 (\_\_\_)

You have average or above average proficiency in the following languages:

Standard English (\_\_\_) Trinidadian Creole (\_\_\_) Spanish (\_\_\_) French (\_\_\_)

Other (\_\_\_) Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following statements and check the one response that most closely reflects your attitude.

*a) To be considered educated, one should speak Standard English with average or above average proficiency.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*b) Standard English is needed to replace the Trinidadian Creole to help with worldwide communication.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*c) Standard English is the only language that should be taught and used in the classroom.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*d) There is no difference between Standard English and the Trinidadian Creole.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*e) It would be a terrible thing to lose the Trinidadian Creole.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*f) It is not necessary for Trinidadian children to learn anything other than their own dialect of Trinidadian Creole in school.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*g) Trinidadian Creole enhances the curriculum by enriching the language background of the children.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*h) Trinidadian Creole expresses some things better than Standard English.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*i) Trinidadian Creole has logic of its own, comparable to that of any other language.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*j) Acceptance of Trinidadian Creole by teachers would lead to a lowering of standards in school.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*k) Trinidadian children can't learn unless the Trinidadian Creole is used as the medium of instruction in the schools.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*l) Trinidadian children should be allowed to choose their own language of communication in the school from an early age and should not be directed by the teacher.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*m) Switching between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning has its place in the classroom.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*n) It is important that teachers switch between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*o) It is important that students switch between the Trinidadian Creole and the Standard English to facilitate student learning.*

1. Strongly Agree (\_\_\_) 2. Agree (\_\_\_) 3. Disagree (\_\_\_) 4. Strongly Disagree (\_\_\_)

*Is there any other areas of language diversity and language usage within the classroom that were not addressed please state, describe and express your views:*

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## Appendix C

### Focus group questions and prompts

How do you manage your language use in the classroom during language instruction? Is there the use of only one code that is the Creole or Standard or is there a mixture of the two?

When you say the standard what do you mean?

Is it important that we model language use in the classroom?

So then it was used to help with .....what do you think or how do you feel about this?

So you see the role for the two languages in the classroom. What should the two different languages be used for?

What do you feel about having to adjust or more specifically manage your language use in the class during language instruction?

How do you feel about the children having this balance or even imbalance in their language use?

What do you think your students might think about your switching codes or languages in the classroom?

Appendix D

Language use

1. What code do you believe the speaker is using

	Standard English	Creole	Mixture of Standard and Creole
Sample One			
Sample Two			
Sample three			

2. Please award a mark out of ten for the given text

Sample One	
Sample Two	
Sample three	

3. Using a scale form 1—5 assess this speaker’s intelligence

1 poor      2 average      3 good      4 very good      5 excellent

Sample One	
Sample Two	
Sample three	

4. How do you feel about the student’s overall language competence?

Write a short profile of what you think.

Sample one

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Sample two

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Sample three



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5. Describe the language used as acceptable or unacceptable

	In your classroom	During your language instruction	In a text used in your classroom
Sample one			
Sample two			
Sample Three			

Appendix E

Participant Observation Checklist-

Lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Often-more than five times during the lesson

Sometimes-less than five times during the lesson

1. The teacher uses Standard English for

Instruction	Clarification	Class management	Other -Conversation

2. The teacher uses the Creole for

Instruction	Clarification	Class management	Other

3. The teacher uses the code-switching for

Instruction	Clarification	Class Management	Other-Conversation

4. The teacher's attitude towards the use of Creole by the students is

Positive	Negative	Comments

5. The teacher's attitude towards the use of the Standard English by students is

Positive	Negative	Comments

6. The teacher's attitude towards the use of the code-switching by students is

Positive	Negative	Comments

7. The student uses Standard English for

Responses	Asking questions	Class disruptions	Other

8. The student uses the Creole for

Responses	Asking questions	Class disruptions	Other -Conversations

9. The student uses code-switching for

Responses	Asking questions	Class disruptions	Other-Conversation

10. The student's attitude towards the use of Creole by the teacher is

Positive	Negative	Comments

11. The student's attitude towards the use of the Standard English by the teacher is

Positive	Negative	Comments

12. The student's attitude towards the use of the code-switching by the teacher is

Positive	Negative	Comments

Other Observations:

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## Appendix F

One-on-One interview questions and prompts:

How would you describe the language context of your class?

Do you use a balance of the two codes or do you favour one over the other while teaching language?

When do you use the Standard in the classroom?

How is the Creole used in the classroom?

How do you feel / What do you think about having to do this balancing of the languages in the classroom?

How do the students use the standard in the classroom?

I recall being at a conference and one of the speakers lamented that he had to use the language of the oppressor to speak at the said forum.

How do students feel about your use of the standard in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

A student expressed the view that it was disrespectful that teachers use the creole to teach it means that they are dumbing down the lesson. She felt that her teacher was saying that they were not smart enough to understand the standard.

How do students feel about your use of the Creole in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

Have you found that there is a greater balance now of the languages now that you have had them for almost a year?

Can you give me an average idea of the balance of the languages in these areas of language instruction?

## Appendix G

## Theme of 'correctness of language'

## One on One interview with Teacher One

R -Do you use a balance of the two codes or do you favour one over the other while teaching language?

Teacher One- I believe that we need to make communication possible in the classroom, so it's important to meet the students where they are and bring them to a higher level of language use in the classroom. Because I usually try to have students express themselves and then we work together to get it to the standard. But for my part there is a lot of switching between the codes to accommodate the students.

R-So then when do you use the Standard in the classroom?

Teacher One- I use the Standard for discussions and generally in the classroom, but mainly for clarification of material, the idea is that the students have the language modelled for them.

R- How is the Creole used in the classroom?

Teacher One- The Creole is used less extensively but mainly to allow for a continuous flow of communication.

R-How do you feel about having to do this balancing of the languages in the classroom?

Teacher One- It's a bit frustrating because the standard is unknown to the students. But the good thing is that they get to express themselves.

First -Focus group

R: T 1 how do you feel about having to adjust or more specifically manage your language use in the class during language instruction.

T1: language use in whatever form is just fine but we have to remember that we are preparing children who eventually will go into the world of work, they need to know that formal language, at the end of primary school I want to know that they have learnt of the standard English



## Appendix H

Theme of 'the purpose of each of the codes'

One on One Interview with Teacher Three

R-Do you use a balance of the two codes or do you favour one over the other while teaching language?

Teacher Three -It should be the standard only but here in ....., in ..... Yes Creole.

R-Why sir?

Teacher Three - Personally for me being a speaker of the language I will be able to express myself deeper. I'll be able to make a point across known that having to use a vocabulary that others may be able to understand. It's the speaking of .....nese.

R-Okay we are going specifically to language instruction.

R- When do you use the Standard in the classroom?

Teacher Three -It depends on the content that has to be taught like I would start with using probably the standard English to discuss it and based on the reaction and the type of answers ah getting and if I realize that the children not understanding well then modify with some level Creole to get the point . It all depends on their reaction during the lesson.

R-How is the Creole used in the classroom?

Teacher Three -Depends on the topic, it depends on what you want them to say....what I do sometimes you have them say what they want to say and then have them start to modify it and

use standard and it will be even be done in a discussion where its brought out against the class and other people could criticisms or make changes or adapt what they feel the person is trying to say. So they put the information out there and

Exactly as I said it is used based on the content. If I do something, teach something and they don't seem to understand but by the responses I will explain it again. This time using more of the Creole to explain what I meant by. The Creole will be used to supplement the explanation given.

It is used in a comparative way to show students the difference between the two codes. The differences are discussed. It is also used to supplement

## Appendix I

## Teacher modeling and preference for a particular code

## First Focus group.

R: So how do you feel about having to manage this language use in the classroom? And this is not just for T2 or T3 but all comments are welcomed.

T1: I don't think we should use the Creole only in the instruction and then use the standard in the writing. It has to be more than just that, the children also have to practice speaking it as well and even thinking in the standard. ....you see when we look at the classroom it is small, the world is a global village we need the standard English to fill that need in the international world but we need the creole to maintain our identity as Trinidadians and Tobagonians so I am not going to give up my accent for nothing in the world but you need a command of the standard for classroom work so if there is an area where we can merge or use take for example we use it a lot for art drama for our creative ideas ,festivals .

R: T3 what do you think or how do you feel about this?

T3: One seems like a stone's throw away from the other .....not everybody will [ ] understand the Creole or the Standard only, so when there is a bit of both children get to move from what they know into what they have to practice. I want to go right back home to explain what I am saying when you want to describe a hunter we would use the term hunter man or fisher man let's look at hunter man, not every village will use that particular form of dialect or adjective especially in the more refined areas with ah heavy mix of the standard they would use the hunter but still there will be some expressions that are just purely Creole.

R: Alright but how do you feel about having to manage this balance or work between the two languages to get your language instruction done? I recall I once had a French tutor who insisted

that only French be spoken in class to force us to use the language as we were supposed to, it may have been because she didn't quite get our expressions here.

T3: well as a native speaker it's not as taxing but it is challenging in that the students are expected to speak and write the standard...but to do so they also need to be able to just express their ideas as well...and there are some children who are not as able yet to use the standard.

T2: yes it's true some of them really don't command the standard at all. For me I look at it as children having a greater opportunity to use the languages that are available to them...they get to have their own voice and as a teacher or even as a class sometimes we get to alter that voice a little to bring it to more of an acceptable form.

## Appendix J

‘Students can express themselves’

Second Focus group.

R: This brings me to the next question. How do you feel about the children having this balance or even imbalance in their language use?

T2: Well it was the way that I learnt, so seeing the children do it or try to gives me a little hope that they will not just stick to the language they use at home or amongst their friends. But they do have a sense though of when to use what when they are in class. They recognize even which one to use when they are talking to specific people.

R: okay does anybody else has another view

T3: I am thinking that its one of the easiest ways for students to be able to say what they need to without feeling that much out of place in the classroom.... It isn't as bad as trying to learn a completely different language so it's our job as T1 said to help them to know when to use what and yes to recognize too the difference between the two. I recall a student saying to me that in Trinidad we can say that but when we are writing others must be able to understand what we are saying.

R: So then our aim is comprehension by our students when we are doing language instruction. What do you think your students might think about your switching codes or languages in the classroom?

T2: I think my students appreciate that I can use their home language, we recently had a reading session and I was using the KWL strategy. The children taught me a few things that I didn't know about porcupines but they needed to use whatever language that was available to them to

talk about it. They were really excited and amazed that I knew what they were talking about.

The writing on the board was a little different but the message was there.

R: Yes they really do talk a lot when they have some interest in the particular subject area.

## Appendix K

## Theme of 'refining of the Creole'

## One on one interview with Teacher One

R-How do students feel about your use of the Creole in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

Teacher one -What I try to do is not use the real Basilect but get more of a Mesolect area of using the Creole. I try not to use the green verbs or terms that are really Creole. I think the students feel more comfortable, it's the way they communicate and it's familiar too.

R-Have you found that there is a greater balance now of the languages now that you have had them for almost a year?

Teacher one -Yes there is that greater awareness of the languages now....in fact another teacher commented on the noticeable change in their language use. There is also ( a story of the village sports is told ) the students recognized that the announcer was using tiger- war when it should have been

tug- of -war.... They asked how the announcer could say such a thing. We spoke about the fact that now that they were educated or becoming so, they should have been able to correct the word being used. It became a joke in class actually.

Actually I have found too that the Creole is getting less like the extreme it used to be. You use terms in the class and children don't know it anymore

R-Yes there is the theory that the Creole is being de-creolised.

Teacher one -Its funny it's becoming that different.

First Focus group

T 1: As you rightly say there are different levels of language use in the classroom. If I am teaching I would like to use a standard that is acceptable, a standard of the Creole that is acceptable in the classroom, one that I am thinking would be acceptable in the classroom...so as not to add to the interference the children would normally add but at the same point in time convey whatever it is that I want them to do in an acceptable manner..... what I deem an acceptable way.

T 3: Well I usually try to have an awareness of firstly the particular area of language that I'm doing and then from there I try to encourage the students by giving them opportunities to respond orally in a way that they are most comfortable with....and then we work on bringing it closer to the standard because they are reminded that ultimately they are required to use the standard when writing anyway



## Appendix L

## Theme of 'code-switching'

## One on One Interview with Teacher Two

R-How do students feel about your use of the Creole in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

Teacher Two- As a teacher I think it's a code-switching thing well it's a natural thing I don't even think we as teachers even think about it or even realize that we are switching. Remember the Creole is our natural language when you teach the standard.... we teach them a whole different language remember the first language is what they would know more of and use all the time.

## First Focus Group

R: So it is important that we model language use in the classroom?

T1: yes model... but shouldn't it be model of the standard because um the end result of it is that you will not really want the children to have other problems.... when we speak to the children we don't always pronounce our words and endings and things like that. There is also another problem which would be the spelling but generally in the classroom you want children to understand what you are saying I think that has to take precedent first but you know we have to be careful so when I say that I am thinking along that line of communication.

R: anybody else has any other or further comment

T2: I think my thought generally start in the Creole concepts would generally for me come in the Creole because I grew up in an environment where it was not put down we had something called the classroom language and the playfield language.

R: so you had a positive attitude towards the creole

T2: we learnt to switch so our teachers would tell us about the topic.... think about it and then we were allowed to think about it in our own language then now we would use the classroom language to express the thing

R: So then it was used to help with comprehension

T2: .....and composition because I remember vividly that composition was first expressed in the mother tongue and then we go on. We grow to appreciate the product, the written language- the standard so we would write it.....

T3: Okay in the comprehension of instructions , because it is better for them to understand in the creole so when we are introducing a topic we break it down in their language initially we say well you walking down the road and you speak the creole so that they will understand but you will switch to the standard

## Appendix M

## Theme of 'facilitating learning'

## Second Focus Group.

R-Have you found that there is a greater balance now of the languages now that you have had them for almost a year?

T2 I would say they mix more because they are making more of an effort to use what they are taught. It's not they disregard the Creole entirely but they will try to mix it in so you will hear the, if you taught a pattern or something you will actually hear them try to grasp it in the natural context .....There is a greater mix especially when students are taught a structure they try to practice the structures.

T3 Well my children they prefer the Creole and once you start to.... they could do the other one. They could speak the standard to an extent but what most of them tend to do in the standard is to get the verbs and the nouns wrong .... The singulars....he and he are them kinda thing right. So they have an idea how to use but they personally prefer the Creole but I think they should use both

The mixing a little more nothing significant but they mixing more and they more understanding now when you ask them what you trying to say or say it again. They use to say it and still saying it the same way. Now they would know what they saying and we have to adjust less.

T1 I recall having another teacher say to me that the students' language use had changed and that they were more able to express themselves in the standard but I still see it as more of a combination of the two.

## Appendix N

## Response to the 'dumbing down of the lesson prompt'

## One on One Interview with Teacher One

R-A student expressed the view that it was disrespectful that teachers use the creole to teach it means that they are dumbing down the lesson. She felt that her teacher was saying that they were not smart enough to understand the standard. ( The same prompt was used for each of the teachers)

R-How do students feel about your use of the Creole in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

Teacher One-I never saw it like that but I felt that it was more of a getting the students to speak in the classroom.... Its better that they feel free to speak than just shut up and not speak at all.

## One on One Interview with Teacher Two

R-How do students feel about your use of the Creole in the classroom? Are there students that are adverse to its use?

Teacher Two- Some students feel comfortable about how we speak but they know that we need to learn but I have never encountered a child that feels that strongly about the Creole they adhere to the rules of grammar as far as possible. But no one is offended that they feel that they have to change their language. No negative attitude some self correcting but because of the level they are at, they are more aware of the rules of grammar

