

ABSTRACT

Teachers' and Students' Perception of the Relationship [Between] Teacher's Instructional Language and Students' Expression of Content

Natasha Stewart

This study investigated the perceptions of teachers and students on the relationship between instructional language and students' English language production at a secondary school in Tobago. Data were collected through interviews with 4 teachers and 16 students, as well as through observations of 9 other students during 3 classroom sessions. It was found that both the teachers and the students perceived Standard English (SE) as superior to the Creole, and felt that it should be used as the language of instruction. Conversely, the students admitted that they felt more comfortable expressing content in the Creole than in SE, and although the teachers were aware that use of the Creole in the classroom heightens interest and aids in students' understanding, they still perceived SE as the language of instruction.

Keywords: Secondary school students; Student attitudes; Secondary school teachers; Teacher attitudes; Language of instruction; Perceptions; Case studies; English language; Creole-speaking students; Tobago; Trinidad and Tobago.