

**The University of Pittsburgh ~ Department of Linguistics**

**Colloquium Series *Presents:***

**“Phonetics of Implosives in Jamaican Creole”**

**Presented By: Shelome Gooden and Erin Donnelly**

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Creolists have long acknowledged the importance of phonology to the historical development of creole languages. For example, the presence of liquids in consonant clusters in Saramaccan can be traced to Portuguese superstrate influence (Schang 2003), while the presence of implosives and prenasalized stops in Saramaccan can be traced to its West African substrates (cf. Smith and Haabo 2007 on implosives). Similarly, voiced stops in Jamaican Creole (JC) /b, d, g/ are said to be produced as implosive stops /b̩, d̩, g̩/ when they occur word initially in stressed syllables (Devonish and Harry, 2004). This putative allophonic relationship exploits differences in airstream mechanisms, pulmonic egressive on the one hand versus glottalic ingressive and potentially represents another area of substrate influence on the phonological system of the language. However, no phonetic evidence has been provided yet which could lend empirical support to these claims. Our research addresses this gap in the current phonetic and phonological knowledge of JC.

Using data from a conservative variety of JC, we report the results of a phonetic study of the voiced stops in word initial, word medial and word final positions in stressed and unstressed syllables. The acoustic information from the JC data are compared to known voiced implosives in languages such as Igbo and Sindhi. This comparison allows us to sort out the exact phonetic quality of the JC voiced stops. We examine several acoustic-phonetic properties of the sounds such as voicing and amplitude differences during the closure portion of the articulation. Our research shows that only some phones show implosive-like qualities (e.g. amplitude increase during the closure) suggesting that the implosives articulation may at best be a variable quality.

**Friday, October 31, 2008 at 3:00p.m.**

**Room 332 ~ Cathedral of Learning**