

INGL 8007-- Language Birth and Language Death
Fall 2007

Dr. Alicia Pousada
Tues. 4:30-7:00

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Analysis of the "life cycle" of languages, beginning with birth and proceeding through change, spread, maintenance, shift, death, and revival. The causes, processes, and results of each stage are delineated, and language planning is explored as a means of regulating the cycle. Special attention is paid to the role of English in the world today and to the complicated language situation of the Caribbean; however, examples are taken from the full gamut of human language varieties.

COURSE MATERIALS: Given the wide-ranging topics covered by this course, there is no one textbook that will suffice. Students will be asked to purchase and read from a course packet of articles. In addition, students should purchase the following books, available from Amazon or Barnes & Noble online:

Crystal, David. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge University Press. ~\$16.
McWhorter, John. (2003). *The power of Babel: A natural history of language*. Harper Perennial. ~\$14.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION: Students will be required to complete the following tasks during the semester. The value assigned to each task is indicated.

1. Complete weekly readings and demonstrate comprehension via active participation in class discussions. (25%)
2. Complete a mid-term take-home exam on the basic terminology and theory presented in the course. (25%)
3. Prepare a final research paper on the life cycle of a particular variety utilized in any part of the Caribbean, with the exception of Puerto Rico, and give a brief oral presentation of the findings during the last session of the semester. (50%)

GRADING SYSTEM: A, B, C, D, F

OFFICE HOURS: The professor will be available for consultation Mon., Wed. & Fri., 12-1 and Fri., 3-4:30 in Pedreira 4. Appointments are highly recommended. Her office extension is x2035, and messages may be left with the English Department office staff at x2553. The most reliable way to contact her is by e-mail at: pousada.a@gmail.com or by phone at: 787-748-6303.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change)

Note: You should read the related readings prior to the session whenever possible so you can participate intelligently in the class discussion.

Session 1 (8/17): Introduction to course—search for historical origins of language human evolution and the genesis of language—continuity-discontinuity debate

Related readings:

Holden, C. (2004). The origin of speech. *Science Magazine*, 303 (27 February 2004):1316-1319. **Available at: Vclass.**

Aitchison, J. (1998). On discontinuing the continuity-discontinuity debate. In Hurford, J.R., Studdert-Kennedy, M. & Knight, C. (Eds.). *Approaches to the evolution of language: Social and cognitive bases*, (pp. 17-29). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Available at: Vclass.**

Session 2 (8/24): Theories regarding origin of language—gestural—interactional—musical—mirror neurons

Related readings:

Corballis, M. (1999). The gestural origins of language, *American Scientist*, 87 (2): 138. **Available at:** <http://www.americanscientist.org/template/AssetDetail/assetid/15639>

Locke, J. L. (2006). Interaction of developmental and evolutionary processes in the emergence of spoken language. In Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on the Evolution of Language, pages 184--189. **Available at: Vclass**

Mithen, S. (2006). Excerpts from *The singing Neanderthals*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. **Available at: Vclass**

Session 3 (8/31): Orientation to library research (4:30 to 6 pm in Salón de Clases del Programa de Instrucción al Usuario, second floor of Lázaro across from Sala Zenobia y Juan Ramón Jiménez)—after the library orientation, we'll walk over to the Richardson Seminar Room to discuss the resources available to you there (6:15-7 pm)

PLEASE DO NOT BE LATE OR ABSENT TO THE ORIENTATION SESSION. YOU WILL NEED THIS INFORMATION TO CARRY OUT YOUR RESEARCH FOR THIS AND FUTURE COURSES, AS WELL AS YOUR THESIS.

Session 4 (9/7): Pidgin and creole genesis--theories of creole genesis--creole exceptionalism--decreolization--social and educational implications

Related readings:

Pousada handout on definitions of pidgins and creoles formulated by different scholars. **Available at: Vclass.**

Mufwene, S. S. (2002). Pidgin and creole languages. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. **Available at:** <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/mufwene/pidginCreoleLanguage.html>

Gordon, R. G., Jr. (Ed.). (2005). Language family trees: Creole. In *Ethnologue: Languages of the world, 15th edition*. Dallas, TX: Summer Linguistic Institute International. **Available at:** http://www.ethnologue.com/show_family.asp?subid=90083

Pousada handouts on samples of pidgins/ creoles and examples of creole continuum. **Available at: Vclass.**

Thomason S.G. (2002). Which route(s) to creole genesis? *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 17 (2), 265-271. **Available at: Vclass.**

McWhorter, J. H. (2002). The rest of the story: Restoring pidginization to creole genesis theory. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 17 (1), 1-48. **Available at: Vclass.**

Session 5 (9/14): Creation and dissemination of artificial languages--rationale--process-implications for natural languages--examples (Esperanto, Interlingua, Tolkien's Elvish languages, Klingon)

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on artificial languages (chronology, criteria, Esperanto, steps in creating artificial language, etc.) **Available at: Vclass**

Jespersen, O. (1931). *Interlinguistics International Communication*. **Available at:** <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5037/IL.html>.

Identification of speech community for final research project due—1 paragraph

Session 6 (9/21): Language change—language variation—dialect differentiation—effect of historical forces and changes

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on historical linguistics and language contact. **Available at: Vclass**

McWhorter, J. (2003). *The power of Babel*. NY: Perennial. Chapters 1-3 and Epilogue.

Session 7 (9/28): Language spread—reasons—mechanisms—results—special case of English today (English as a world language, development of world Englishes)

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on spread of English, Kachru's model of new Englishes, references on World Englishes. **Available at: Vclass**

McWhorter, J. (2003). *The power of Babel*. NY: Perennial. Ch. 5.

Higgins, C. (2003). 'Ownership' of English in the Outer Circle: An alternative to the NS-NNS dichotomy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37 (4), 615-644. **Available at: Vclass**

Worldview, Chicago Public Radio, Sept. 11, 2006. Audio file, 52 minutes. Jerome McDonald interviews Nicholas Ostler, David Crystal, and Vivian de Klerk on the spread and change of English worldwide. **Available at: Vclass**

Optional: Schneider, E. (2003). The dynamics of new Englishes: From identity construction to dialect birth. *Language* 79 (2), 233-281. **Available in Richardson Seminar Room.**

Preliminary bibliography for final paper due—use APA format

Session 8 (10/5): Language maintenance and shift--ways speech communities maintain language varieties (diglossia)--case studies of language shift around the world--how shift can lead to death

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on diglossia and polyglossia, language maintenance and shift, threat of language extinction, factors that determine vitality of endangered languages. **Available at: Vclass**

Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1- 2.

Language Attrition Research Archive (LARA) bibliographies on first and second language attrition, language shift and death, language relearning. **Available at:** <http://w3.byuh.edu/academics/lang/attritionbiblio/index.htm> .

Take-home exams given out. Due next session.

NOTE: NO CLASS ON 10/12—DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Session 9 (10/19): Language death --attrition in speech repertoire of individual--death or obsolescence of language variety--different types of death and their causes—process--outcomes and implications--analysis of “dead” languages in seeking language origins or explaining language change

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on language obsolescence and language revitalization **Available at: Vclass**

Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3-4.

McWhorter, J. (2003). *The power of Babel*. NY: Perennial. Ch. 4

Take-home exams collected.

Session 10 (10/26): Language revival--efforts to protect languages in danger of extinction and revive moribund or dead languages--success stories and failures

Related readings:

Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 5.

Graddol, D. (2004). The future of language. *Science*, 303, 1329-1331.

Pousada references on language revival/revitalization/renewal. **Available at: Vclass**

Optional: Grenoble, L. A. & Whaley, L. J. (1998). Toward a typology of language endangerment. In Grenoble, L. A. & Whaley, L. J. (Eds.). *Endangered languages: Current issues and future prospects* (pp. 22-54). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Available in Richardson Seminar Room.**

Preliminary outline of final paper due.

Session 11 (11/2): Language planning: Altering the life cycle--general theory and practice (definition, process, types, models for language planning)

Related readings:

Pousada handouts on models of language planning of different scholars and generalizations about language planning **Available at: Vclass**

McWhorter, J. (2003). *The power of Babel*. NY: Perennial. Ch. 6

[Hawaiian]

Warschauer, M. (2001). Language, identity, and the Internet. *Mots Plureils*, 19.
Available at: <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1901mw.html>

[Mayan]

England, N. C. (1998). Mayan efforts toward language preservation. In Grenoble, L. A. & Whaley, L. J. (Eds.). *Endangered languages: Current issues and future prospects* (pp. 99-116). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Available at: Vclass**

[Singapore]

Kuo, E. C. Y. & Jernudd, B. H. (1993). Balancing macro- and micro-sociolinguistic perspectives in language management: The case of Singapore. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 17 (1), 1-21. **Available at: Vclass**

Sessions 12 (11/9) & 13 (11/16): Efforts in the Caribbean region and their outcomes (colonial language policies, modern day challenges)

Related readings:

Langworthy, G. (2002). Language planning in a trans-national speech community. In Burnaby, B. & Reyhner, J. (eds.). *Indigenous languages across the community* (pp. 41-48). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University, Center for Excellence in Education. **Available at:** http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/ILAC/ILAC_5.pdf [Garifuna]

Severing, R. (2004). Language planning and language policy in Curaçao: The Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma. Presentation at Seventh Annual Eastern Caribbean Island Conference, Nov. 3-7, 2004, H.S. Lavity Stout Community College, Tortola. **Available at: Vclass**

St.-Hilaire, A. (1999). Language planning and development in the Caribbean: Multi-ethnic Suriname. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 23 (3), 211-231.

NOTE: NO CLASS ON 11/23—THANKSGIVING RECESS

Sessions 14 (11/30) & 15 (12/7): Student presentations on the life cycles of specific Caribbean speech communities

Final papers due last day of class--12/7