Jamaican Speech Forms in Ethiopia

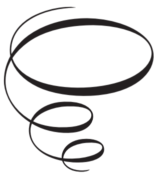
Jamaican Speech Forms in Ethiopia

The Emergence of a New Linguistic Scenario in Shashamane

By

Renato Tomei

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



Jamaican Speech Forms in Ethiopia:
The Emergence of a New Linguistic Scenario in Shashamane

By Renato Tomei

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Renato Tomei

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7152-4
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7152-5

“Any who may wish to profit himself alone from the knowledge given him, rather than serve others through the knowledge he has gained from learning, is betraying knowledge and rendering it worthless.”
—His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie the First

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures ix

List of Tables x

List of Extracts xi

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms xiii

Acknowledgements xiv

Chapter One 1
Introduction
- 1.1 Main Research Themes and Questions
- 1.2 Research Plan: Domains and Target Groups
- 1.3 Generation of Data

Chapter Two 18
Literary Review and Conceptual Frameworks
- 2.1 Language and Identity
- 2.2 Language and Group Identity: Majority vs. Minority
- 2.3 Black Linguistics
- 2.4 Music and Identity

Chapter Three 36
Theory and Methodology
- 3.1 Linguistic Policies in Ethiopia
- 3.2 The Role of English
- 3.3 WE and CarL: Progressive Recognition of JSF
- 3.4 Lexicography and Diglossia
- 3.5 The Language of Rastafarians
- 3.6 The Language of Reggae
- 3.7 CA and Transcriptions
- 3.8 Selected JSF Features
- 3.9 Specific Features of Rasta/Reggae Usage

Chapter Four 86
Collection and Presentation of Data
4.1 Shashamane: A Historical and Sociolinguistic Overview
4.2 Introducing the Domains
4.3 Composition of the Target Groups
4.4 Description of the Selected Subjects

Chapter Five 109
Data Analysis
5.1 The School: Data and Materials
5.2 The Street: Data and Materials
5.3 The Studio: Data and Materials
5.4 Other Places of Contact

Chapter Six 149
Findings and Conclusions
6.1 Language Acquisition and Choice and Identity
6.2 World Englishes and Caribbean Languages: JSF in Shashamane, Ethiopia
6.3 Majority and Minority Dynamics
6.4 The Rastafarian Movement
6.5 Reggae Music and Identity
6.6 Summary of Conclusions

References 196

Annexes 223
I. Youths of Shasha – The Movie
II. Youths of Shasha – The Musical Compilation
III. Interview with Dj P.

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Variation of role-positioning degree within the domain 'School'
2. Variation of role-positioning degree within the domain 'Street'
3. Variation of role-positioning degree within the domain 'Studio'
4. First Languages of Ethiopia (census 2007)
5. Map of studies on African Englishes (Tomei, 2011)
6. Representation of the Strevens map-branches model of WE
7. Representation of Tom McArthur circle model of WE
8. Representation of Kachru circles model of WE
9. Representation of Görlach circle model of WE - model A
10. Representation of Görlach circle model of WE - model B
11. The Jamaican Sefer (Melka Oda) area of interest for the domain 'Street'
12. Nationality of the Target group of the domain 'School'
13. Nationality of the parents of the Target group of the domain 'School'
14. Nationality of the Target group of the domain 'Street'
15. Nationality of the parents of the Target group of the domain 'Street'
16. Nationality of the Target group of the domain 'Studio'
17. Nationality of the parents of the Target group of the domain 'Studio'
18. Domains and Target Groups of the research
19. Language distribution of the three selected subjects
20. Occurrence of JSF in the domain School
21. Letter n.1 - domain School
22. Letter n.2 - domain School
23. Particular of Letter n.2 - domain School
24. Letter n.3 - domain School
25. Occurrence of JSF in the domain Street
26. Excerpts from the questionnaire submitted to STR4
27. Excerpt from the questionnaire submitted to STR4 - L.Profile
28. Code-switching in the Target group Street
29. Occurrence of JSF in the domain Studio
30. Percentages of JSF occurrence in the three different domains
31. Excerpt from the Questionnaire submitted to STR3 (2009)

LIST OF TABLES

1. Degree of Involvement and type of participation (Spradley 1980)
2. Categories of co-existence of language varieties (Riley 2007)
3. First Languages of Ethiopia (census 2007)
4. Linguistic and Socio-cultural features, Winford (1995)
5. Extract from the first method of transcription (2009)
6. Examples of Cassidy-JLU Writing System/equivalents in SE
7. Linguistic distribution of Oromia Region (census 2007)
8. Composition of the Target Group within the domain 'School'
9. Composition of the Target Group within the domain 'Street'
10. Composition of the Target Group within the domain 'Studio'
11. Linguistic Background of the first subject: STR1
12. Linguistic Background of the second subject: STR3
13. Linguistic Background of the third subject: STR11
14. Main JSF features and their usage within the target group 'School'
15. Main JSF features and their usage within the target group 'Street'
16. Pilot Questionnaire submitted to the target group 'Street'
17. Main JSF features and their usage within the target group 'Studio'

LIST OF EXTRACTS

1. Interview to the teacher of English Language - School
2. Interview to STR1 - School
3. Interaction students/teacher - School
4. Interview to the guard - School
5. Interaction with the guard - School
6. Interaction students/guard - School
7. STU4
8. STU8
9. STU5
10. STU7
11. Repetition
12. Focus on the Lyrics
13. Code Switching and Mixing A
14. Code Switching and Mixing B
15. Language Acquisition and Choice A
16. Language Acquisition and Choice B
17. Language Acquisition and Choice C
18. Language Acquisition and Choice D
19. Language Acquisition and Choice E
20. Language Acquisition and Choice F
21. Language Acquisition and Choice G
22. Language Acquisition and Choice H
23. Language Acquisition and Choice I
24. Language Acquisition and Choice J
25. Language Acquisition and Choice K
26. Language Acquisition and Choice L
27. Language Acquisition and Choice M
28. Language Acquisition and Choice N
29. JSF in Shashamane A
30. JSF in Shashamane B
31. JSF in Shashamane C
32. JSF in Shashamane D
33. JSF in Shashamane E
34. JSF in Shashamane F
35. JSF in Shashamane G
36. JSF in Shashamane H

37. JSF in Shashamane I
38. Minority vs. Majority A
39. Minority vs. Majority B
40. Minority vs. Majority C
41. Minority vs. Majority D
42. Minority vs. Majority E
43. Minority vs. Majority F
44. The Rastafarian movement A
45. The Rastafarian movement B
46. The Rastafarian movement C
47. The Rastafarian movement D
48. The Rastafarian movement E
49. The Rastafarian movement F
50. The Rastafarian movement G
51. The Rastafarian movement H
52. The Rastafarian movement I
53. The Rastafarian movement J
54. The Rastafarian movement K
55. The Rastafarian movement L
56. Reggae Music A
57. Reggae Music B
58. Reggae Music C
59. Reggae Music D
60. Reggae Music E
61. Interview to DJ P

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AAVE	African-American Vernacular English
AE	American English
AMH	Amharic
AO	Afaan Oromo
BL	Black Linguistics
CA	Conversation Analysis
CarA	Caribbean Area
CarE	Caribbean English
CarL	Caribbean Languages
DA	Discourse Analysis
DCEU	Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage
DJE	Dictionary of Jamaican English
DT	Dread Talk
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELF	English as Lingua Franca
ENL	English as Native Language
ESL	English as Second Language
EFL	English as First Language
HIM	His Imperial Majesty
HQ	Head Quarter
JC	Jamaican Creole
JLU	Jamiekan Languij Yuunit
JRDC	Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community
JSE/JE	Jamaican (Standard) English
JSF	Jamaican Speech Forms
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NLA	Native Language Acquisition
SCL	Society for Caribbean Linguistics
SE	Standard English
SE	Standard English
TIG	Tigringna
UWI	University of the West Indies
VE	Varieties of English
WE/VWE	(Varieties of) World Englishes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be quite impossible to acknowledge all who have contributed to the present book.

I first want to thank Addis Ababa University, in particular the Department of Linguistics and Gideon Cohen, the supervisor of my doctoral thesis, whose guidance and commitment was invaluable.

I am indebted to the International University 'Stranieri' of Perugia, Italy, where I started my research fellowship years ago. This gave me the possibility of widening my research area and developing new scientific interests.

The University of the West Indies of Kingston, Jamaica, has had likewise an important role: my activities there were supported by the Institute of Caribbean Studies, the Reggae Unit and the JLU (Jamiekan Languij Yuunit). I wish to thank for their thoughtful advice and academic support Barry Chevannes, Hubert Devonish , Karen Carpenter, Carolyn Cooper, Donna Hope, Jahlani Nyaah and Gavin Walters.

Attending international conferences (India, Jamaica, Barbados, Hong Kong, South-Africa and Turkey) gave me the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with prominent linguists and scholars like John Rickford, Jeanette Allsopp, Lise Winer, Velma Pollard, Sylvia Kouwenberg, John Widdowson, Barbara Seidelhofer, Andy Kirpatrick, Jennifer Jenkins, Rajendra Chetty, Prabhakara Rao, Luc Van Doorslaer and Rajend Mesthrie.

All my gratitude to the community of Shashamane at large: from the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community and its School Centre to Habtamu Hailemikael the town mayor.

All my love goes to my brethrens and sistrens in Italy, Ethiopia and Jamaica, in particular Jah Flippins, pioneer of the Repatriation movement: I would not have been able to complete this work without his teachings, his understanding of life and his visions of the future Shashamane.

I would like to thank my parents, my sister and my whole family for all their love and encouragement and their unfailing support. To my father and my mother who raised me with the love of knowledge and guided me step by step.

Lastly, my debt of gratitude goes to Sam Baker, Amanda Millar and the collaborative team of Cambridge Scholars Publishers for all their assistance.

To all, BETAM AMESEGNALLOW.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Main Research Themes and Questions

Much work has been done to define the influences that metropolitan languages such as Latin or English have had on the languages of their colonies due to contact, conquest and colonization. Conversely, little attention has been paid to the influence that the languages of colonized peoples have exerted on other languages through migration and contact during the course of history.

This study is intended to add to the growing body of work that focuses on the influence of Caribbean languages on various societies in different areas of the world. More specifically it examines the use of Jamaican speech forms (JSF) in the community of Shashamane, Ethiopia.

250km from the metropolitan centre of Addis Ababa, this township, with its adjacent compounds, has been receiving a migratory influx from the Caribbean area (especially Jamaica) which began in the late fifties and has maintained a constant rate, save for one interruption due to a political contingency.[1]

At present, there is a well-established international community of Rastafarians, which has existed since the 1950s.[2] Members of this community currently interact using mainly Jamaican speech forms (JSF), although not all of them are native Jamaican speakers.[3]

As a result of the establishment of this community, the language situation within the Ethiopian town of Shashamane has changed. Jamaicans settling in Shashamane underwent language preservation processes that linked them to their faith and country of origin, while the Ethiopian

---

[1] See section 4.1.

[2] See Bonacci (2000: 196). This exhaustive survey and other works on the community are referred to in chapter four and notes on Shashamane community.

[3] In this research the term 'Jamaican' is intended to also include those non-Jamaican members of the Rastafarian group who use Jamaican speech forms in daily interactions within their community and outside of it.

residents of Shashamane adopted new speech forms. This fostered a new form of identification among local Ethiopians and a sense of belonging to the Rastafarian movement and its origins in Jamaica.

To date, there have been no studies on the linguistic impact of the Repatriation movement in Shashamane.[4] This book aims to address this issue and compensate for its current lack of recognition by analysing the speech forms of the enclave of the Shashamane community and making clear the strong link with the consequent process of identity formation.[5]

There are five major themes which are constantly referred to throughout the book and constitute the core elements of its concluding section:

Language acquisition/choice and identity
World Englishes and Caribbean languages
Majority and minority dynamics
The Rastafarian movement
Music and identity

During the description and the analysis of data, each theme has been addressed and discussed in terms of:

Influencing factors
Reinforcing circumstances
Significance
Change

Research Questions

Question 1: How are Ethiopians within the community exposed to JSF?

This question represents the major issue in understanding the structural dynamics of the multilingual interactional background of the target group, and the point of departure in terms of technical observation. The main

[4] Rastafarianism and its language and beliefs are discussed in section 3.5.
[5] Roger Hewitt (1986, 1990, 1992), in his pioneering analysis of the Caribbean and London Jamaican language, calls for new categories and labels, such as 'polyculture' and others, for the use of Caribbean languages by other groups. In his analysis, youth identity and Rastafarianism are emblematic and alternative to a stable notion of ethnicity. A means of expression becomes a symbol of collective identity (1992, 27-41). This has a major implication in the case of music, as it correlates with issues emerging from our study. See chapters three and four.

point here is to identify and analyze those communicative situations and domains where contact takes place, determining exposure to Jamaican speech forms. Contact may begin at school, which is the first place where children stay together and socialize.

Since Shashamane is a highly diverse environment, the school is a likely place to find mixed classes of children from different ethnic groups speaking different languages. They feel free to communicate using all the available languages.

Analysis must consider the possible key elements in the acquisition process, including:

- The children of the incoming community (Jamaicans and Rastafarians, in general)
- The families of these children
- The teachers and school staff

Prior observation and description of the above types of respondents is essential in order to move on to the second question of the research.

Question 2: How should JSF be analyzed, described or categorized?

The priority here is to define the speech forms markedly Jamaican within the multilinguistic setting of Shashamane as it is now, 60 years after the first wave of new-comers from the Caribbean and the rest of the world.

This is an essential part of the study which will establish whether the predominant language speech forms used by the target group are exclusively Jamaican (JSF) and not, for example, Bajan, Afro-American, British or Ethiopian English. The current literature on Caribbean languages is the point of reference.[6] One of the features of Creole languages, and a factor always present in the research, is the concept of a 'codified orthography'.[7]

---

[6] The terms 'Jamaican' and 'Caribbean' are intended to refer to linguistic differences. See section on terminology in chapter three.

[7] It is beyond the scope of the present research at this point to give a detailed account of the social and historical conditions that gave rise to Creoles. The common origin and continuity of the creolization process, however, relies on oral sources and not upon written documentation. One of the major issues is how to transcribe oral sources and oral repertoires, especially when faced with major issues such as the translation of the Holy Scripture. In some cases linguists have adopted a largely phonemic system, which has not been adopted by the general public (Sand, 1999: 37). The role of the Jamaican Language Unit, University of the

Question 3: What is the selected subjects' competence in Jamaican speech forms and how do they choose to use this competence?

If it is crucial to understand where and how these young adults begin their acquisition processes of Jamaican speech forms (JSF) and identify the specific linguistic features they are exposed to; a further step must be taken in investigating their related linguistic competence and how they apply or use it.

Considering the absence of a structured or institutionalized local teaching system for the Jamaican language, it seems unquestionable that the learning of this language in Shashamane can only be possible through informal contact and interaction with native speakers. In any case, it is not a systematic process. A directly implied consequence could be that the young males of the target group simply learn or pick up what they need to learn in order to make their communication more efficient and effective, and because it appeals to them. If this is the case, the Shashamane usage of Jamaican speech forms could bring this phenomenon into the wider debate on the international role of English and its varieties, and its use as *lingua franca*.[8] Within the complex frame of this research, linguistic consciousness and awareness could also represent functional components in determining language choice and usage with reference to minority and majority groups.

In terms of quantity, Jamaicans represent the largest group within the Rastafarian community of Shashamane, even if not the majority of Shashamane itself. Consequently, the local spread and predominance of their language is not a result of their predominance in numerical terms: there must be something more to it, which leads us to the next question of the research. [9]

West Indies, and its linguists and lexicographers has been crucial. See following chapters. Consequently the problems in method and reference that soon arose were related to vernacular literacy and the Jamaican Creole writing system and the transcription conventions for recorded data.

[8] Reference to English in its national standards and varieties has been accommodated within the umbrella term 'English as lingua franca', substituting in part the concept of an International English or Standard English.

[9] All the more so as Ethiopia has been historically considered culturally impermeable and ideologically unconquerable to exterior penetration, geographically protected and living through the centuries with its choice of isolationism, and not an easy target for fashions and fads. The representation of Ethiopia and its inaccessible monasteries, stone-carved churches and devotional sites has inspired European and British travel narratives dating back to the fifteenth century with accounts of the Catholic missionaries (Francisco Lobo, Francisco Alvarez, Remedius Prutky, etc.), to the lay British narratives by James Bruce in the

Question 4: What is the role and impact of identity in determining language competence and choice?

Identity is a multifaceted concept. It may relate to different areas, from philosophy to mathematics; it may be cultural, ethnic, religious, national, linguistic, or economic. In this book, the most salient aspects are connected with the identity formation process as defined by the conceptual frameworks.[10] More specifically, the concept of identity is investigated and analyzed here in its linguistic and socio-cultural aspects. If, within the young members of the native community, the phenomenon of imitation of Jamaican/Rastafarian speech forms is registered, a strong identification with this group in terms of behavior, values and beliefs could be a direct consequence. Yet, it could also be the other way round; the inverse situation is a possible scenario. Clearly, this linguistic choice and determination has cultural, spiritual, and social implications; language is, therefore, code-switching, used not only to interact and communicate. It is also used to define and assert a sense of prestige in terms of individual personality, thus building and shaping identity. Moreover, the Repatriation movement from Jamaica to Africa can be seen as a means to foster linguistic identity as the cultural and spiritual power of Repatriation interfaces with the question of language and liberation.[11] In this view, the new generations of Shashamane could represent a channel, a vehicle to relocate Jamaican words with African origin to Africa, the place where they belong and where they came from. This process may evidence a circular linguistic flow, from Africa back to Africa.

---

late eighteenth century, and Francis Burton in the late nineteenth century.

[10] See more in section 2.1.

[11] Hubert Devonish takes a passionate stance in favour of the Jamaican language. His call is for 'Liberation', in line with theological movements, and for countering 'invisibility' (reference to Afro-American literature) with the advocacy of language rights. There are roughly 20 Caribbean English-lexicon languages spoken in Caribbean countries where English is the official language. In his 'Language Advocacy and 'Conquest' Diglossia in the 'Anglophone' Caribbean', he further stresses that English came to the Caribbean as a language of conquest, followed some 400 years later by the struggle to free it during the period in which many of the Caribbean countries achieved political independence. Yet the Caribbean Englishes 'remained invisible in the discourse on the question of national standard language. They were not even deemed to exist as languages. In these circumstances, using Caribbean varieties of English to express the newly developing national identities was the only option thought to be available' (Devonish 2003: 160). See also Diglossia in sections 3.3 and 3.4 on Jamaican Language, and further reference notes on this theme.

In order to define how identity impacts JSF competence and choice, the focus of this investigation is on how Rastafarians and their community are perceived by young Ethiopians in terms of cultural traditions, and what factors are relevant in determining the adoption of their language. This leads to another central factor of the research that acts as a catalyst in influencing linguistic attitudes and behaviours of young Ethiopians in Shashamane: music. The interaction between music and identity formation represents one of the main key elements in codifying and analyzing JSF choice and performance within the target group of the research.[12]

1.2 Research Plan: Domains and Target Groups

Before detailing the plan for this work, a few introductory observations are needed to put the focus on specific features of the topic. A direct implication of the research question mainly relies on the observation of specific linguistic features, such as language contact, language acquisition and choice, and code-switching.[13] Regarding the latter, it has been largely demonstrated that such phenomena can occur at different levels: from long pieces of interaction, rituals of address and greetings, stretches of conversation in turn-taking form to short strings of utterances, loan words, pragmatic particles, interjections and exclamatory remarks.[14]

---

[12] This will be further dealt with in separate sections and the conclusive section of this chapter, linking to chapter two and the sections on the language of Rastafarianism (3.5), and the language of Reggae and dancehall in Jamaica (3.6). In chapters three and four, reference is made to the influence of the language of Hip-Hop, its global spread, i.e. 'global pop and local language', and the language of Reggae and its becoming a lingua franca transcending boundaries, one of the recurrent issues of this research.

[13] With specific reference to Question 2: the challenge is to keep sight of the passage of the culture through a space. In this sense we refer to the metaphor of crossroads, where distant cultures and music intermingle within the dynamic tension of attaching to 'roots', and new models of root where a new language is spoken. So the street-corner and the crossroad are at once physical and cultural space, as Les Back observed (Back 1995, now in Harris and Rampton 2003: 328-333).

[14] Beginning in the late 1980s, and with the new digital era, code-switching has refined techniques of data gathering and data storing. The massive diasporic movements to the westernized world have attracted the attention of discourse analysts. Conversely, in the Caribbean countries, an unprecedented 'visibility' of new varieties of English (Lingua Franca English or Anglophone-based Caribbean lexicon), challenged by new forms of interaction and communication (social platforms, blogs, FB, Tweets, post-its, etc.), has stimulated new research on code-

A reasonable assumption deriving from the specific multilingual context of Shashamane is that code-switching and mixing do not simply occur on a solely bi-lingual level and linguistic interaction with the diverse Ethiopian languages used by the youths in that area is performed naturally.

Code-switching and Code-mixing

Definitions of code and language switching and mixing largely depend on authors. In this book the term 'code' is understood as a neutral umbrella term for languages, dialects, styles and registers. Recent studies consider code-switching and mixing as disciplines of their own, although based on and derived from bilingualism and/or multilingualism and contact interaction. Code-switching and mixing have been fragmented with various sub-disciplines, but are essentially the study of how plurilingual speakers mix their languages in their daily lives. Terminological discussion highlights different angles and perspectives. Some two decades ago it was noted that 'efforts to distinguish code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are doomed'. Composed of the term 'code' originally taken from the field of communication technology, 'switching' refers to alternation between the different varieties of language people speak. In recent years Australian linguist Michael Clyne (2003: 75) suggested the term code-switching for the transference of lexical items through stretches of speech, but for changing completely into another language or crossing over, he uses the term 'transversion'. Blommaert (1998) even suggests that code-switching could be a variety of its own.

Clear cut definitions and distinctions between code-switching and code-mixing seem to be subject to variation: some linguists differentiate by using code-switching where the two codes maintain their monolingual characteristics, and code-mixing where there is some convergence between the two (Muysken, 2000). This may create some grey areas, as there can be overlapping levels.

---

switching and code-mixing. Units may vary from intrasentential, intersentential, interjections and pragmatic particles. There are diverse ascribed functions (conversational, discursive, pragmatic, interactional, etc.) and sub-functions (alignment, turn-taking, repair, etc.), possibly overlapping and graded in intensity, as power-wielding or globally determined. This research relies on Discourse Analysis (DA) and Conversational Analysis (CA): read further for more references. It relies also on the more detailed analysis of varieties of English in Hip-Hop and Reggae lyrics (notably from Alim, Ibrahim, Pennycook, Mitchell, Berger and Carroll, Cutler, Higgins, etc.). See full references in chapters three and four.

In this book the use of the term code-switching refers to the definition of Gardner-Chloros, i.e. a general term 'covering all outcomes of contact between the two varieties, whether or not there is evidence of convergence',[15] and it has adopted the distinction proposed by Bokamba (1988), which uses code-mixing for alternation within the sentence and code-switching for further extended alternations.

While competence in terms of language performance can be assessed through various channels[16] and expressed in many different ways, the focus here might again be on what has been herein defined as JSF (Jamaican speech forms), and in particular on how their performance and agency are functional in role-construction and positioning of identity.

This book describes the unprecedented observation of a very peculiar and unpredictable linguistic phenomenon within the community of Shashamane. Since I first identified the existence of this linguistic scenario, I started making preliminary evaluations regarding the possibility of analyzing and describing it (2008). While the work was in progress, significant expansion in materials took place (2010). I implemented various adjustments in method and integrations and structured the database to codify the transcripts. The first phase of the research unexpectedly highlighted questions of identity and religion and the dynamics of representation of a new minority group influencing the native local population.[17]

---

[15] Gardner-Chloros:2009, 13.

[16] Recently, studies have been conducted on language contact situations of convergence and divergence in theoretical and typological aspects, on the importance of speech innovations (Braunmüller and House, 2009), and on loan phonology and the nativization of loan words, as in Calabrese and Wetzels (2009). Grammar structures, specialized lexicography, intonation, pronunciation, and stretches of conversation are some of the many elements to take into consideration when carrying out such research. Donald Winford arranges socio-cultural features such as prestige and literary heritage (1985: 347). [As we expand into our research, we will see that musical tradition permutes, subverts or adds to oral traditions. In the case of Reggae it is heritage and emulation for the younger generations. See later sections.] In the light of an ever increasing multilingualism in diasporic contexts, the traditional bilingual models and two-paired linguistic analysis call for more structured approaches to multilingualism, as in Aronin and Singleton (2012).

[17] As Riley noted: 'Code-switching can index or change the identities of participants so radically that it can be used to redefine a communicative situation in its entirety' (2008: 117).

Consequently, the research relies upon observation and description of the interactional frames of relevance, social contexts and aggregation settings where the contact and influence under scrutiny arise, grow and develop.

In order to give visibility to and operate using a distinction between all the ranges of different situations, motivations and features of language choice and performance, three distinct domains have been defined and selected as primary sources for observation and data gathering.

1. The school

The local JRDC School is a community-based institution built and administrated by one of the first groups of Rastafarians of Jamaican origin. At the present moment, almost 90% of JRDC students are Ethiopians. This is the context where the first contact between the local population and new generations from the repatriated community of Rastafarians actually takes place.

This is also the main reason why, in order to register the phenomenon of influence and impact of Jamaican speech forms on local linguistic trends, the JRDC School is considered the most favourable domain for the research.

2. The street

To be able to trace the initial phase of contact in terms of time and space within a more definite and stabilized context following primary school, the research subsequently moves to the place of highly spontaneous contact represented by the *streets* of Shashamane. Contact here, far from being considered forced or guided as in the case of the school, is voluntary and based on the personal choices that make youths gather on the street and experience life together.[18]

---

[18] Donna Hope, in the preface to *Inna di Dancehall: Popular Culture and the Politics of Identity in Jamaica*, referring to the street and circulation of music, hints at the variety of the configuration of the street: ‘I spent countless hours hanging out at locations where dancehall culture created a vibrant background and foundation for the ‘livity’ and interaction of the people who patronized these places. These included *hair salons, cosmetology shops, videographer haunts, nightclubs, session, stage show, bars, barbershop and street corners’* (2006: x, emphasis added). The distinction to be made here is between the Hip-Hop metropolitan culture within a diasporic place, and the creative family and neighbourhood warmth typical of the microcosm of the Jamaican ‘street’, as reproduced in Shashamane. See also section 4.2.

Looked at from this perspective, the street, featuring a total integration and blending of local and non-local young adults, offers the perfect conditions to sketch out the dynamics of acquisition and the proportion of influence of Jamaican speech.

3. The music studio

Considering the absence of a physical space exclusively devoted to music, in the body of this text the label *studio* has been adopted to refer to those situations where artistic and musical skills trigger, develop, and are enacted and ultimately performed by young adults within the multiethnic community of Shashamane. This represents the most complex and, at the same time, the most interesting context, considering that contact between local and non-local youths is wholly interest-based.

Language choice and performance are realistically performed and enacted within the frame of a naturally creative impulse, individually driven and strongly personally motivated. It is a climactic moment, when young artists feel the surge of fusion of their linguistic skills and blend it into their music, being both original and at the same time inspired by Reggae or Hip-Hop models. This is what further enables them to play their roles as artists, and what confers ‘power’ within the group.

Each of the three domains described above presents peculiarities and specific features, thus allowing us to make clear distinctions and select the target groups of the research:

- In the school, the identified target is a class of 18 students featuring a numerical predominance of Ethiopian participants (15 born in Ethiopia, three outside; 11 have parents with non-Ethiopian origins);
- On the street, the identified target is a group of 11 young adults featuring a numerical predominance of Ethiopian participants (all born in Ethiopia; three have parents with non-Ethiopian origins);
- In the studio, the identified target is a group of 11 young adults featuring a numerical predominance of non-Ethiopian participants (five born in Ethiopia, six outside; eight have parents with non-Ethiopian origins).

In consideration of the aim of the research, the observation and description of linguistic features, such as choice and performance, focuses on the Ethiopian participants in each of the three different domains.

Consequently, three subjects were selected as key informants and represent the focus of the descriptive analysis part of the research. They

clearly represent a much larger set that can be estimated at approximately 80–100.

1.3 Generation of Data

The first source for the generation of data is represented by direct observation and recording of language choice and use at large within the selected domains and target groups.

This is in the form of structured and unstructured interviews, formal and informal interactions and song and lyric composition, but also playing games, quarrelling and fighting.[19]

In order to verify the direct observation and registration of the described data, other methods which were able to directly transcode responses into numerical data were the alternatives used. Questionnaires and written texts in particular provided primary information and statistic observation of a large number of participants without being too time-consuming. This method was primarily adopted in the case of the school, where the context already offered suitable conditions for the submission of written texts. A totally different approach, however, had to be adopted for the street and studio, where the production of written texts could be taking place during the course of several different practical activities, such as composing songs or planning a radio program.

In order to deeply penetrate all the settings and ensure the research has a high degree of reliability, I had to adopt different strategies and communication techniques according to the situation and the identity-role I played in each very specific context. Furthermore, as Peter Patrick notes: 'Simple membership in the local speech community, however, does not eliminate all problems of data-collection. Being a positioned subject means that one acts always within a set of social relations; the *insider* is no more neutral or objective than the *outsider*, but rather has a different knowledge and experiences, ambitions and biases'.[20]

---

[19] For a more detailed description, see the section on methodology.

[20] Patrick 1999: 66-67. As to the role of the 'investigator as near-native speaker', actually, a great deal of research on Caribbean Creoles is based on data gathered by non-native speakers. In his outline on field methods, avowedly Labovian-inspired, Patrick recognizes his status of social outsider, white, who could talk like an insider. I must say that my positioning in terms of competence, penetration and acceptance varied, depending on the different domains, at times even overlapping, and then increased in the course of five years. In Patrick's words: 'A fieldworker's social identity, ability to speak the language, and relation to members of the local community are important influences on their elicitation of vernacular speech.

I am a member of the international Rastafarian movement and, furthermore, an international Reggae artist using Jamaican speech forms in my song lyrics and while performing on stage.

I visited Shashamane for spiritual purposes long before my academic interests were well defined; I could consequently present myself to the community not just as an academic researcher and an external observer, but also, and primarily, as a Rastafarian coming from abroad. My initial contact with the community had already occurred during the elaboration of my former thesis (2003–2004), while the current research and planning aimed at a doctoral dissertation had started some five years ago (2008). The contextual environment, that is, the community itself within families and people's homes, always made for intense emotional and intellectual participation. I had already met some members of the community, and some parents who had given me feedback and support during my stays in different periods that fitted in with my timetables.

It was obvious that, in order to be able to observe and record interactions within the target groups without risking any negative reactions, I had to establish a deep and friendly relationship, based on a day-by-day observation.

I realized that the type of observation I was about to conduct was that of a participant observer.

Malinowski was the first to describe this research method in 1922, underlining how participant observation 'grasps the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world'.[21]

Clearly, the description of this method and its history are far beyond the scope of my present research. I consequently decided to adopt the definition provided by DeWalt and DeWalt in their *Participant Observation: A Guide For Fieldworkers*:

> 'For us, participant observation is one of several methods that fit into the general category of qualitative research. Qualitative research has as its goal an understanding of the nature of phenomena, and is not necessarily interested in assessing the magnitude and distribution of phenomena (i.e. quantifying it). Participant observation is just one of a number of methods that are employed to achieve this kind of understanding. Other qualitative

---

These factors help one select the community and gain entrance to it, and guide the subsequent course of the fieldwork itself. Every investigator is a positioned subject […] by virtue of personal characteristics, history, and knowledge; one may exploit the strengths, and partially compensate for the weakness, of one's position through careful selection of data-collection techniques and instruments' (Patrick, 1999: 66).

[21] Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge &KeganPaul.

methods include structured and semi-structured interviewing, pure observation, and the collection and analysis of texts. The method of participant observation is a way to collect data in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied.'[22]

This methodological approach has been applied to various scientific fields, such as social sciences, ethnography, anthropology and psychology.

It is noticeable that the majority of these disciplines developed due to western studies of non-western cultures. This is very significant, and it suggests that the less familiar you are with a specific context, the more you will be able to describe it from a scientific point of view.

Consequently, following the distinctions used by J.P. Spradley, I decided to adopt a model of moderate participation in order to avoid a methodological danger: jeopardizing the necessary neutral position of an objective observer.

DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT	TYPE OF PARTICIPATION
High	Complete
	Active
	Moderate
Low	Passive
(No involvement)	Non-participation

Table n.1: Degrees of involvement and types of participation (Spradley 1980)

As Spradley points out:

'Moderate participation occurs when the ethnographer seeks to maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation.'[23]

This type of observation seems to be the more appropriate in the specific context of my research: considering my position in the community, I could gain greater understanding of phenomena from the point of view not only of an observer but also of a participant among participants.

[22] DeWalt, K. M., DeWalt, B. R. (2011) *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press (p.2).

[23] Spradley, James P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt College Publishers. p. 60.

According to Howell, there are four different stages of participant observation:[24]

1. Establishing a rapport or getting to know the people;
2. Immersing oneself in the field;
3. Recording data and observations;
4. Consolidating the information gathered.

During the fieldwork, especially during interviews and recordings, I assumed different identities, not only determined by my multi-functional role, but also as a speaker of different languages.

In the case of the school, volunteering and teaching the Italian language was one possible way of contacting and approaching the students in their institutional settings and, at the same time, being accepted and respected by the whole community. It was different on the street, where my aim was to achieve total acceptance by the group of elders, children, young adults and all the diverse linguistic communities within Shashamane. Here, the identities I had to assume were mainly that of a Rastaman visiting the Holy Land and that of an artist coming from a western country, rather than an academic or a volunteer in Shashamane.

Within the musical context (the studio), the range of possibilities for gaining the necessary respect and at the same time familiarity narrows. Here, the target group being composed of singers and musicians, the only possible option was being accepted and acknowledged as an artist, and even more than that: as an international and well-known artist. Consequently, my role had to be adjusted again to fit into this specific category; it seemed much more convenient, engaging and challenging to present myself as a famous singer, rather than a Rastaman or a teacher. Largely due to my skills as a performing artist and the international recognition of my musical activity, I found myself in the perfect position to stimulate and tutor the youths in their compositions and recordings. This built to absolute confidence and trust in my person, making personal and private conversation available and adding free and spontaneous narratives to interviews.

The interactional space varied and extended from the three domains under scrutiny (i.e. school, street and studio) to other places of permanent and stable social aggregation and contact. Consequently, my roles had to be adapted to a compromising dichotomy, which required code-shifting and code-overlapping. This also implies a particular attention and focus on

---

[24] Howell, Joseph T. (1972). *Hard Living on Clay Street: Portraits of Blue Collar Families*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc. (p. 394).