Attitudes and prestige systems among
Varieties of Kriol Language in Belize
by
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Abstract: Belize, formerly British Honduras, gained full independence from Great Britain in 1981. While there is a strong influence of English as a result of its colonial history, Belize is linguistically diverse. In an ongoing project, Jennifer Gomez Menjivar, Foreign Languages UMD, and William Salmon, Linguistics, UMD, are examining the attitude and prestige system in place among varieties of Kriol, an English-based creole. As part of their study, Drs. Menjivar and Salmon had respondents rate speakers from Belize City and Punta Gorda, two different cities in Belize, on 16 personality attributes. Will Salmon will describe their study, and Ron Regal will tell some about considerations statistical data analysis and an analysis in this study in particular.

The talk will give an introduction to one aspect of linguistics and will be particularly of interest to students potentially interested in double majors in mathematics/statistics and linguistics. Study reports on language attitudes toward varieties of Belizean Kriol in coastal Belize. We used a verbal-guise test with 82 participants, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in Punta Gorda and Belize City, and we found that the variety of Kriol spoken in Belize City is perceived along several dimensions as being of greater prestige than the variety spoken in Punta Gorda. Derivative of these findings is the potentially more interesting fact that there is more than one variety of Kriol spoken in Belize in the first place—a fact which has not been previously reported in the literature. This research is part of an ongoing project investigating the overt and covert linguistic prestige system in place with respect to Belizean Kriol. The larger project will break down attitude factors among the individual ethnic groups in Belize in a series of articles.

Thursday, October 24, 2013
3:00-4:00 PM
Chemistry 150
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