

Megan Ford  
Sandra Castro  
Dr Thao  
LING 392  
9, May 2019

### Language analysis project

In this project we collaborate and collect language samples from a field-based project in action, from a speaker whose native language is not English. The language samples were obtained from a subject participant from Martinique, a caribbean island. This participant is called Caitlin Joseph. She was born in March 1999 in Fort-de-France, Martinique. Her mother tongue is French and Creole. She also knows Spanish and English as second languages. She started learning English in primary school and she has been living in the US since January 2019.

We collected a significant sample of her speech from an interview we made and recorded. The language sample contain 50 sentence utterances in length. This is in addition to the speech of the interview. Then, we transcribed the sentence utterances into regular English spelling. We numbered each of our subject participant's sentences as #1, #2, #3... for easy transcription. We used phonetic transcriptions for segments, which depart radically from the expected pronunciation.

We also provided an analysis of the data by applying the various elements of structural linguistics, grammatical and sociolinguistics aspects, which were language acquisition presented throughout the course. Our analysis was based on the sample of the language data that we collected. We also analyzed the data in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

Here is the transcribed interview:

**I. Tell us a little bit about your country.**

- 1) I come from Martinique
- 2) which is a Caribbean country and is a small island  
[territory] [wɪr]
- 3) It's a french department so wɪ french there
- 4) and we speak creole too which is another national language

**II. What do you miss the most from there?**

- 5) Um my family, all my family and the foods and the sea because I'm a sea person

**III. Which country do you like better? Why?**

- 6) Um my country because it's warm there and I can go to the beach and .. yeah...

**IV. How did you meet your boyfriend?**

- 7) Uh we met at the basketball game ... and ... yeah

**V. What do you like the most about your best friend?**

- 8) Uh she is like me but she is more... like
- 9) we are really different so it's kind of like we complete each other

**VI. Tell us what do you do on a normal day here at school.**

10) Going to class take a nap and then going back to class

[tru:]

11) and um that's it **You don't eat?** Yeah, that's too

**VII. What's the city you've visited you liked the most? When did you travel there?**

[fell]

12) Uh I really fall in love with Barcelona I visited it twice

[liked]

13) And I like the food, the people and everyone there

14) Uh the last time was I think three four years ago uhum

**VIII. What's the American city you like the most? When did you travel there?**

15) Uh Santa Monica I guess for the Spring Break so one week ago

16) And I really love like the vibes there uhum

**IX. Do you like cooking? How often do you cook?**

17) Yeah I cook everyday, unfortunately

**X. What's your favourite food? Do you know how to make it? If so, how is it made?**

[hæv]

[can]

18) I af too much food that I like so I don't think I will pick one, I can't pick one

[aɪ]

[hɑːrd]

[say]

19) Uh Im don't know.. It's hards... let's go lasagna

[sɔs] [the meat]

20) Yeah. Uh well you need pasta you need to make a white sous and meats too

21) if you want like lasagna with meats and then you just like

[layers]

[layer of]

22) doing it like stairs you put one pasta one meats one white sauce and you do this again

**XI. Where is your favorite place to go shopping?**

23) Uh my favorite place to go shopping like used to be Miami, in the outlet

[Its]

because itz tax free.

24) Amazing, and you can buy a lot of things.

[in] [children's] [Its]

25) Especially because I am so tiny. I can buy at the child's section, so itz cheaper.

**XII. What style of clothes do you like to wear the most? What is the most comfortable?**

26) Um, I don't like clothes that are too tight.

27) Like, I need to breathe and move like I want so yeah.

[fashionable]

28) Those kinds of clothes that are like fashion but are still comfortable.

**XIII. Where your is your favorite place to eat here? Where is your favorite place to eat in France?**

[here]

[Bubba Gump's]

29) I don't really eat out there, but last time I ate out was Bubu gum.

30) And it was really good

[ðæts]

31) Thatz a hard question.

[Its]

32) I think itz a Caribbean restaurant in Paris, because itz like home.

**XIV. What are you studying? How do you like it?**

[earning]

33) I am an engineer student, to be an engineer manager. So i'm making a double degree.

34) But, here i'm just computer science.

[but]

35) I don't like it at all, because we didn't choose our classes and so we have to take them.

36) And I have to take a programming class, and I don't really love programming.

37) Not a match.

**XV. What do you plan on doing on doing with your degree in France?**

[hoʊp]

38) Uhm, I don't know but I ope I can work in aviation.

[department]

39) For the government, but in the aviation part.

**XVI. Do you see yourself ever living in the United States for a long period of time?**

40) Uh no, If I had the possibility to go home I would definitely take it.

[here]

41) No, not for a long period of time because I don't feel like I can fit there.

42) And I cannot and i'm not feeling secure here.

[insecure]

43) Kinda feeling secure with all the gunshots and stuff.

44) For this semester or two semesters it is good or working for a year, but not all of my life.

**XVII. If you could talk to anyone (dead or alive) who would it be?**

[talk]

45) Um, I talked to my family everyday.

46) I would pick my mom.

47) I don't know I talk to people I like everyday so.

48) Like a celebrity?

49) If I could talk to a celebrity I would chose the President of the United States.

50) I would tell him how I think.

### Analysis

For Morphology; “The study of the form of words”, we found a few examples of our subject using words incorrectly and there affecting the morphology of the sentence. Our first example was in sentence #12, “I really fall in love with Barcelona I visited it twice”. Our second example is in sentence #13, “And I like the food, the people and everyone there.” where she should have put “liked” she used “like” which was the wrong tense. Our third example is within sentence #25, “Especially because I am so tiny. I can buy at the child’s section, so itz cheaper.” instead of saying ‘Children’, she said child’s. Our fourth example is in sentence #28, “Those kinds of clothes that are like fashion but are still comfortable.”, she incorrectly changed the morphology of the word fashionable in this sentence. Our fifth example is in the sentence #39, “For the government, but in the aviation part”, this seems to be a morphology mistake as the correct word is “department” and she could be using “part” as an abbreviation for “department”. Or this could be a semantics report, to which we will explain in the semantics section of this paper. Our sixth example is in sentence #43, “Kinda feeling secure with all the gunshots and stuff”, our subject used the word “secure” instead of using the word “insecure”. This is an example of incorrect morphology as she dropped the morpheme of the word that allowed the sentence to make sense. Our last example comes from sentence #45, “Uhm, I talked to my family everyday” as this sentence is in present tense, “talked” should be replaced with the present tense word “talk”. By adding the morpheme of -ed she changed the word to the incorrect tense creating a grammatical error.



For phonology; “The system of contrastive relationships among the speech sounds that constitute the fundamental components of a language” our subject made mistakes with a few words. Our first example is from sentence #3, she tries to say we’re but she drops the r sound and she says just we. In sentence #11, “and... That’s it. **You don’t eat?** Yeah, that’s too”, in the audio you can hear our participant saying too instead of true, but what she really meant to say was “true”. This is an example of a phonology mistake as she mispronounced a word. Our next example is from sentence #23, “My favorite place to go shopping used to be Miami, in the outlet because its tax free”, our participant had trouble saying “it’s” and would instead pronounce the s as a z. She repeated this mistake multiple times and is evident in sentences #25 and #32. In sentence #29, “I don’t really eat out there, but last time I ate out was Bubu gum”. Instead of pronouncing each word of Bubba Gump’s with its ending she dropped them. Next, we found a phonetical mistake in sentence #38, “Um, I don’t know but I ope I can work in aviation.”. She dropped the “h” for the word hope. We found the same mistake in sentence #18 with the word “have”. We can infer from our studies in linguistics that, our participant made these mistakes as they are the common way of speaking in French or Creole. It is probable that those languages either lack same letter, pronounce them differently or drop the letter when they are followed by other specific letters.

For Semantics that is defined as the branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning, the subject had some mistakes using the right meaning of words. Our first example is in sentence #3 “It’s a french department so we’re french there”. She uses the word “department” with the meaning of “territory” (an area of) land, or sometimes sea, that is considered as belonging to or connected with a particular country) that is the word she should had used. The

next example is in sentences #19 when she says “let’s go lasagna” that does not make sense, when what she wanted to say was “let’s say”. In sentence #22 the subject uses the word “stairs” that means a set of steps that lead from one level of a building to another, but what she really means is “layers”, a level of material, such as a type of rock or gas, that is different from the material above or below it, or a thin sheet of a substance. Our next example is in sentence #25 when she uses “at” instead of “in”. The choice of type of word is the correct one (a preposition), but not the meaning of it. We see that this mistake is repeated in sentence #29 and #41. In sentence #33 the subject says “I’m making a double degree” that does not make much sense in English, but maybe it does in French. That is probably why she used it when she should have said “earning”, that make more sense in English. Finally, the example in sentence #39 has been already analyzed as a morphological mistake, but we can also see a mistakes in terms of meaning. She said “part” that means some but not all of a thing when she should have said “department”, meaning a part of an organization such as a school, business, or government that deals with a particular area of study or work.

At last we analyse syntax, the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. The mistake we found is repeated the most are filler words. A filler word is an apparently meaningless word, phrase, or sound that marks a pause or hesitation in speech. Some of the common filler words that we found are um, uh, uhum, yeah and like in sentences #5, #6, #7, #8, #11, #12, #14, #15, #16, #19, #20, #21, #26, #27, #28, and so on. We observe a pattern because she uses regularly um and uh at the beginning of her sentences. The use of filler words gives the subject the time to think her answer. Another example of mistake regarding to syntax is found in sentence #18. The subject uses “will” but the correct verb she

should have used is “can”. The next mistake we found was in sentence #22 when the subject says “one pasta one meats one white sauce”. This sentence is not correct because she is missing “layer of” before each uncountable nouns. Therefore, the correct sentence should be “one layer of pasta, one layer of meat and one layer of white sauce”. To end, we are going to analyze the mistake in sentence #35. She says “and so we” that makes the sentence syntactically incorrect. To make it correct she should have said “but we”.

In conclusion, we found our participant had made mistakes that we assume are in association with the French or Creole language. We noticed the dropping of various letters, in similar words. We assume this comes from similar words in her maternal languages that typically drop the letter when in consecution with specific letters. Furthermore, we found she often would use filler words, which is very typical for someone speaking a new language. One learning a new language uses the filler words to help allow themselves more time while responding to a question or just plain talking. We also noticed she would say some phrases incorrectly, we believe this is due to how these common phrases are said in her maternal language or due to her just forgetting what the phrase is correctly. Overall, we were able to use what we learned throughout our studies in Linguistics to our video recording of our participant, and were able to relate her mistakes with knowledge to either Morphology, Phonetics, Semantics or Syntax.