

Title: Cajun English Vernacular in Entertainment Media
Presenter: Venus Vu, Pasadena City College
Mentor: Derek Milne

The Cajun English Vernacular, or CajEV, is a variety of Southern American English dialects with its distinct regional differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation heavily influenced by the French language. Previously the English dialect of bilingual Cajuns (Acadian descendants), as French has been lost over the generations, today most speakers of Cajun English (CE) are monolingual. The assimilation of English into French-speaking communities led to a change of Cajun identity and French was criticized and associated with impropriety and unintelligence. The stigma surrounding Louisiana French and Cajuns made them the butt of jokes and were humiliated for their speech patterns and phonology. The media entertainment industry has played a role by playing into this stereotype and creating characters with parodied Cajun accents for humorous effect. Additionally, Cajun English is not subjected to a singular race but remains racialized by Standard American English speakers, consequently racialized minorities must maintain a higher level of orderliness than White Cajuns. Here we will examine four characters present in different films and a TV show and identify linguistic patterns and the characteristics associated with them. With this analysis between the two, we can find a correlation between the stigmatization of the Cajun English Vernacular and racialization structured within creating a linguistic hierarchy.

Works Cited

- Cockerham, Sean. "Louisiana French: L'Heritage at Risk." *The Seattle Times*, The Seattle Times, 2012, www.seattletimes.com/life/lifestyle/louisiana-french-lheritage-at-risk/.
- Dubois, Sylvie, and Barbara M. Horvath. "Let's about Dat: Interdental Fricatives in Cajun English." Stanford, Cambridge University Press, 1999, web.stanford.edu/~eckert/Institute2011/Readings/DuboisHorvath1998.pdf.
- Hill, Jane H. "Language, Race, and White Public Space." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 100, no. 3, 1998, pp. 680–689. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/682046.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina. "Teaching Children How to Discriminate." *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*, 2014, pp. 101–129.