

Interview with Gloria & others (Woodlawns Centre) by Dunraven Students

S = student

E = elder

S: So like, this is now about the way you spoke. Was there like, any slang, you used or terminology that you wouldn't say in a formal conversation, that you might say to your friends. Like, you'd use – what sort of language would you use when just talking to your friends?

E: Well, we spoke in the proper English, but not everybody spoke in proper English. There were slangs. For example, we say 'here' and back home, you know, some who're not grammatically inclined would say 'ya', 'come 'ya'. But it's really 'come here'. We call it 'broken' – which we call 'broken language'.

E: Any other slangs? Patois. Patois, we call it. Like you say 'me da come' (?). 'I'm coming', in English. You know, some of these kids adopt bad principles.

E: Yes.

E: 'Weh'. Instead of saying 'where'.

E: But, um, you cannot speak like that to your parents. Mostly when we were on our own we might use patois language, like saying, instead of saying 'what are you doing?' you say 'wha' ya do?'. You know, just like that. Broken English. You just break it up. Instead of saying 'come here', you say 'come ya'.

Teacher: What did your parents say to you about speaking like that?

E: Well, they would give us a good smack.

E: A clip round the head.

E: yes, yes.

E: My parents were English speaking and if you tried to speak patois, we used to when we were young, we call it 'gypsy' as well, you know, but if you tried to speak that way in front of them you'd get told off or a clip round the ear, you know.

E: And English was properly taught in schools. You had to speak properly in schools.