

# *Pidgins and Creoles in Education (PACE)* **NEWSLETTER**

Number 10

December 1999

## **WELCOME TO THE 10th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

The *PACE Newsletter* started in 1990, and now has over 170 subscribers in 27 countries. Many thanks go to all of you who have been sending in contributions over the years.

This 10th issue contains the usual reports and information about new publications, theses and conferences dealing with the use of pidgins, creoles and minority dialects in education. But in this issue, we have three special longer reports from three different countries and an article about adult literacy programs in Vanuatu using Bislama (Melanesian Pidgin).

Special thanks to all the contributors for this issue. Please pass it around and urge people to send in contributions for the next issue in 2000!

Jeff Siegel  
Linguistics  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Australia  
jsiegel@metz.une.edu.au

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

	<i>page</i>
Short reports	1
Special Reports	
French Guiana	2
St Lucia	4
Hawai'i	5
Article:	
Literacy Programs in Vanuatu	7
Publications	11
On the Web	16
Conferences	17

## **SHORT REPORTS**

### *USA*

from: Georgette Gonsalves  
308 Columbus Ave  
Boston, MA 02116 USA

Despite the general, hostile climate towards the use of languages other than English in US school classrooms, the City of Boston continues to support the role of native languages in its Transitional Bilingual Education programs. Current efforts are underway to develop learning standards in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole and Capeverdean Creole. Truly exciting! Especially for the last two languages. Of course they are spoken by significant numbers of students in the schools, grades K-12.

Starting October 1998, I will be teaching an innovative graduate course for Haitian and Capeverdean language teachers in the Boston schools. Entitled "Creoles in Education: the Role of Reading and Writing in Capeverdean and Haitian Bilingual Education". It is offered through the University of Massachusetts, Boston, supported by Dr. Donaldo Macedo and by Dr. Michel DeGraff of M.I.T.

The timely announcement in July 1998 by the Government of Cape Verde to support the officialization of a unified orthography for the Capeverdean language is most encouraging for those of us who are working for validation of creoles in the area of formal education.

Finally, the Capeverdean Creole Institute, Inc. of Boston is sponsoring the November visit of Dr. Manuel Veiga, author of the first comprehensive linguistic study of Capeverdean Creole entitled "Introdução à Gramática do Crioulo" (1995,1996). More information about the Institute can be obtained by e-mail to me: GRGET @AOL.COM or by accessing the web using keyword "Capeverdean"

A Luta Continua!

## ***Solomon Islands***

from: Fr Bernie O'Donnell  
LASI  
Box R4  
Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS  
nac@welkam.solomon.com.sb

LASI (Literacy Association of Solomon Islands) continues to conduct its literacy programs in SI Pidgin as well as other local languages. These adult literacy programs have proved very useful in getting older people able to read and at a later stage, to write, if necessary. Those who are well-motivated are able to read in 6 months with a couple of 1-1.5 hour classes every week.

In general, while English is still the official language of instruction in formal education, much education is effectively done in Pidgin. Officially in the Solomon Islands, Pidgin is looked down upon, but it is increasingly spoken, making it necessary for everyone to become more conversant in it and also to read, write and speak it accurately.

## ***Sweden***

from: Karl Erland Gadelii  
Department of Oriental and African  
Languages  
Göteborg University  
Box 200  
SE-405 30 Göteborg, SWEDEN  
gadelii@afrikan.gu.se

I do not know how relevant the stuff I am doing now is but I am still working on the grammar of Lesser Antillean French Creole and my present (and also past) endeavour is to show that this language has a grammar of its own which can neither be derived from its super- nor substratal languages. I suppose this has educational implications because it means that Lesser Antillean has to be treated as a language in its own right in the educational system.

## ***Australia***

from: Jennifer Munro  
6 Dudley St  
Rapid Creek, NT 0810  
AUSTRALIA

I have been involved in 2 main programs that involve the use of Kriol in education:

1. *Kriol literacy workshop for General Studies students of Batchelor College during the Aboriginal Languages Fortnight.*

This was held in May 1999 for 2 weeks; 23 students attended, mostly from the Roper River region of the Northern Territory. The workshop was held in Katherine. The main

aims of the workshop, which were all achieved, were: a) to introduce and develop Kriol literacy skills; b) to explore the domains and roles of Kriol literacy in Aboriginal society; and c) for each student to produce a written text based on one such role. As the linguist, I designed and delivered the course with assistance from the two lecturers and support from Diwurru-wurru-jaru Aboriginal Corporation (Katherine Language Centre). The students displayed great enthusiasm and interest and it was felt the workshop was successful both in this way and in meeting its aims.

2. *Kriol used as the language of instruction in Language Revitalisation (LR) Programs in primary schools.*

Since 1996 I have worked as a teacher-linguist on 4 LR programs, largely in the Roper River region. It has become increasingly obvious that Kriol must be employed both orally and in literacy as the language of instruction. There are 3 main benefits, and they are: a) Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants will only claim ownership over material written in Kriol and these are therefore the only ones they will use. b) It broadens the scope of the program from simply teaching a traditional language as a second language to one where Aboriginal language and culture can begin to find a place within the school. c) Children's comprehension is immediate and therefore more effective.

from: Margaret Sharpe  
33A Brown St  
Armidale, NSW 2350  
AUSTRALIA

Currently working on the final draft of the Alawa-Kriol-English triglot dictionary. Alawa people are now centred around Minyerri or Hodgson Downs in the Northern Territory. Children (whose first language is Kriol) are learning some Alawa in the school at Minyerri, aided by Jen Munro who is employed by Diwurruwurru-jaru (Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre).

## **SPECIAL REPORTS**

### **MULTILINGUAL EXPERIMENT IN FRENCH GUIANA**

by Laurence Goury

French Guiana, a French overseas *département*, presents a large multilingual situation where typologically different

languages are represented: Creole languages from two lexical bases (French and English), Amerindian languages (from three linguistic groups: Arawak, Carib and Tupi-Guarani), Hmong, Chinese, and others.

Since French is the only official language, and no official place is given to other languages, such a complex situation raises many problems, especially in the educational field.

The IRD (Institute for Research and Development - ex ORSTOM) has a Department of Social Sciences where linguists are working on **Amerindian languages** and **the English based creoles** spoken by the Maroons, both in French Guiana and Surinam. In addition to fundamental research on these languages, we try to suggest alternatives to the problems of teaching in Non-French Speaking (NFS) communities.

We are presently leading the 'bilingual mediator project' which is described below.

### The 'Bilingual Mediator Project'

The aim of this project is to take on some young people, native speakers of an Amerindian language or speakers of the Maroons' English based Creoles, and allow them to teach literacy in the mother tongue for NFS communities, [by] sharing time and experience with the teachers, and receiving a simultaneous training in linguistics and pedagogy by some qualified researchers or teachers.

#### Profile

- native speaker of one of the Amerindian or the English based Creoles from French Guiana
- qualification required: 'bachelier' (i.e. High School diploma or A level) and/or cultural experimentation
- motivation for pedagogical and cultural work among the NFS communities

*(Special permission available in some cases where age or qualification requirements are not met)*

#### Aims

easier access to literacy for NFS children and experimentation of bilingual teaching by:

- presence in the class room for literacy teaching in the mother tongue
- production of classroom materials

#### Implementation

alternatively: linguistic and pedagogical training at the IRD, and practice in the class room

1. Training: in Cayenne (IRD Center), one or

two, 2 week sessions per term.

#### Activities:

- linguistics: introduction to phonetics and phonology of the mediators' languages; reflection about existing alphabets (critics; changing); approach to comparative grammar
- pedagogy: methodology of literacy teaching and language activities
- production of classroom material (handbooks for reading training; handbooks for literacy teaching...)

#### The experiment began with a two weeks training session:

- introduction to pedagogical and linguistic questions
- discussion about writing systems
- preparation of a first reading handbook

2. Practice in the class room: into the community; under the teacher's authority, during eight to ten weeks per term:

#### Activities:

- literacy in mother tongue
- vocabulary exercises; language practice (mother tongue)
- experimentation of handbooks and class-room materials

#### Training staff

- linguistics: researchers working on the previously cited languages, based in French Guiana or in metropolitan France
- pedagogy: two teachers (training masters)
- pedagogy of writing: specialists of the CEFISEM (Organization for French as Foreign Language teaching)

This kind of experiment is nothing new in the educational field, especially in South America where different linguists of the Department have already been working, with Amerindian languages and bilingual education. But it might be something new in this specific multilingual context which we want to become not an obstacle, but an opportunity for cultural and linguistic enrichment.

Our web site is still under construction, but I will give the address when it is ready so that more people can share this fascinating experiment.

Laurence Goury  
Centre ORSTOM-Cayenne  
BP 165  
97323 Cayenne cedex  
FRENCH GUIANA  
goury@cayenne.orstom.fr  
**ST LUCIAN KWÉYÒL  
NEW TESTAMENT**

by David Frank

In St. Lucia people will sometimes say that (French) Creole is not really a language; it doesn't have any rules and couldn't be written down. I don't hear that much any more, though, because times have been changing. More and more the sentiment is spreading here, as I heard the Minister of Culture say on television last night, "Annou enjoy sa ki sa nou! Annou sélébwé sa ki sa nou!" [Let's enjoy what is ours! Let's celebrate what is ours!]

On October 10, the St. Lucian Kwéyòl New Testament (Tèstèman Nèf-la) was made available to the public, after about a dozen years in the making. The publisher is the Bible Society in the East Caribbean. SIL is now joining the Folk Research Centre in spreading Creole literacy around the island. We have a booklet called *Mannyè Ou Sa Li Ek Ekwi Kwéyòl* (English title: *A Guide to Reading and Writing St. Lucian Creole*), and we are going around the island teaching transitional literacy classes to those who can speak Creole but so far can only read English. In addition, we have developed a complete primer with 80 lessons for adult Creole speakers who never acquired literacy, to teach them how to read and write in their mother tongue.

St. Lucian Creole has been basically a purely oral language, but as more and more is being written, including folktales, oral history, government notices, and the Bible, people are becoming more and more interested in learning to read it.

Below are some quotes from the Launching of the St. Lucian Kwéyòl New Testament:

The Hon. Damian Greaves, Minister of Culture and Ecclesiastical Affairs:

What we are seeing today is of historical importance, linguistically-speaking, because we are seeing a language that was once seen as something that we should not respect come to full maturity on this particular occasion. If the New Testament can now be translated into Creole, then nothing can stop the onward march and progress of our Creole language. When we have the Bible now being translated into the language of the people, one cannot overstate the power and might that can emanate from such an exercise. I want to express to all of you who have contributed to this most important and significant event the hearty gratitude of the government and people of St. Lucia. This is an exercise which will have our people to understand the Bible even better. And perhaps now there is a need for us to emphasise the importance of teaching our people to read and write our Creole language.

Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor General of St. Lucia:

Fwè ek sè, mwen asiwé tout jan Sent Lisi té kay édé mwen wimésye tout sé moun-an ki twavay asou twavay twadouksyon Bib sala. Lawout-la te lonng, twavay-la pa té fasil, mé jòdi nou ka wé ki sa twavay épi dédikasyon sa pwodwi. Twavay-la sé sa nou, Tèstèman Nèf-la sé sa nou. Mwen ka envité tout moun pou anbwassé twavay sala. Li pawol di Dyé an lanng nou, an lanng jan Sent Lisi. Mwen asiwé i ni adan moun ki jòdi-a pa sa li ek ékwi Kwéyòl-la, mé mwen asiwé sa sé on bagay ki kay ankouwajé'w apwann li épi ékwi Kwéyòl-la." ["Brothers and sisters, I am sure all Saint Lucians would help me thank all those people who worked on this translation of the Bible. The path was long, the work was not easy, but today we can see what this work and dedication can produce. The work is ours, the New Testament is ours. I invite everyone to embrace this work. Read the word of God in our language, in the language of the St. Lucian people. I am sure there are a lot of people today who cannot read and write the Creole, but I am sure this is something that will encourage you to learn to read and write the Creole."]

Monsignor Theophilus Joseph, Vicar General of the Castries Cathedral:

Apwézan tan-an vini pou nou jan Sent Lisi wéyalizé enpôtans, pa jos an langaj, me enpôtans nou, kon on pép. Atjwélman nou pa sa jos palé Kwéyòl-la, nou sa li Kwéyòl-la. Pwenmyé twadouksyon-an sé on twadouksyon ki enpôtan, épi an légliz Katòlik nou kay fè tout sa nou pé pou enkouwajé sé pép nou, pa jos pou achte on liv, mé pou apwann li Kwéyòl-la, paski sé lanng manman nou tout." ["Now the time has come for us people of St. Lucia to realize the importance, not just of language, but the importance of us, as a people. Now we cannot just speak Creole, we can read the Creole. The first translation is a translation that is important, and in the Catholic Church we will do all we can to encourage our people, not just to buy one of these books, but also to learn to read the Creole, because it is the mother tongue of all of us."]

June King-Frederick, Executive Director of the Folk Research Centre:

It gives me great pleasure to stand here this afternoon and to receive this translation of the New Testament in Kwéyòl. Our country is a bilingual country. Lanng manman nou sé Kwéyòl. [Our mother tongue is Creole.] The Folk Research Centre started about twenty-six years ago, and it started because of one little man named Monsignor Patrick Anthony. He realised there was a majority of people in our country who were being ostracised because of the fact that their first language was Creole. Because of the fact that they had no voice, and because of the fact that they were treated with such contempt, the rich Creole culture in which those people lived was in danger of dying. Therefore the Folk

Research Centre was formed so that we could ensure that we preserved the culture of our people, and, of course, the language. This New Testament makes me feel very proud because we are saying to the people of the Creole culture that you are equal to everybody else. Your language is an acceptable language internationally. It is not now only an oral language. We are now working towards making sure it is a written language. And ladies and gentlemen, I am going to implore you, our programme within the next three years it to teach the language, to make sure people read and write it. What we at the Folk Research Centre are saying is, it is not *either* English *or* Creole, it is *both* English *and* Creole, and therefore they should be treated equally.

You shouldn't get the idea from the wonderful things that were said at the Launching of the Kwéyòl NT that St. Lucian Creole is being accepted here now in a revolutionary way. We in St. Lucia are way behind Haiti, Curaçao and Seychelles in terms of the official acceptance and use of the Creole language, and I don't know that we will ever reach that point here. The situation here looks better and better all the time, but it is still very slow-going.

We have a Creole publication house here called An Tjé Nou (In Our Hearts) that is another exciting development in the past couple of years. It is the vision of a well-known author of ESL books, Michael Walker, living in St. Lucia in his retirement. We have made a partnership with him, as we produce Creole materials and they publish our materials as well as others they produce themselves. The bad news is that the public and government response, while good, has not been enough to keep this from being a tremendous drain financially, and the future of this publishing house is in serious doubt.

In addition to coordinating the translation of the Kwéyòl New Testament, published by the Bible Society in the East Caribbean, we have produced other Creole books that we published ourselves. Here are the three most popular ones still in print:

*Jou Lavi Nou* (Days of Our Lives), 1989, 41 pages: A collection of 14 stories told by St. Lucians, written in Creole.

*Sé Kon Sa I Fèt* (That's How It Happened), 1989, 46 pages: A collection of 12 stories told by St. Lucians, written in Creole.

*Mwen Vin Wakonté Sa Ba'w* (I've Come to Tell This to You), 1991, 90 pages: An alphabet storybook, with an animal story told by Evans Leon for each letter of the Creole alphabet.

In addition to the transitional primer called *Mannyè Ou Sa Li Ek Ekwi Kwéyòl* (How You Can Read and Write Creole), designed to

be used as the textbook in a Creole literacy class, we have a complete primer, still in draft, comprised of 80 lessons, also designed to be used in a classroom situation, for illiterate adult Creole speakers. I have given away all my draft copies of the latter and can't tell you right now how many pages it is, but it is quite comprehensive. It is in the hands of St. Lucia's Ministry of Education right now, and we understand that they have plans to implement a program with that resource as the foundation.

Also we have in draft a unique textbook entitled *Latè-a, Soley-la, Epi Sé Plannet-la* (The Earth, the Sun, and the Planets), approx. 25 pages, which is supposed to be published by An Tjé Nou. This is the first textbook written in St. Lucian Creole that focuses on anything other than the language itself.

David Frank  
Box 1030  
Castries, SAINT LUCIA  
West Indies)  
david\_frank@sil.org

[Thanks go to Michelle Winn for help with preparing this report. *Ed.*]

## NEWS FROM DA PIDGIN COUP IN HAWAI'I

by Diana Eades

In Hawai'i negative and misinformed attitudes to the local creole language are pervasive. Like pidgin and creole languages around the world, Pidgin (aka Hawai'i Creole English or Hawai'i English Creole) has been denigrated since its origins earlier this century. In 1921, curriculum materials for teachers in Hawai'i published in the *Hawai'i Educational Review* included this statement by an anonymous author: "Tell [children] that the Pidgin English which they speak is not good English; that it is not spoken by good Americans... ." Show the children, the author continues, that "Pidgin English implies a sense of inferiority."

In 1987 a public controversy arose when the Board of Education attempted to mandate against the use of Pidgin in school. In discussing this unsuccessful attempt, and the public outcry which resulted in a weaker position (encouraging teachers to model Standard English), Sato (1991) points out that this was the first time that Pidgin had received widespread public support and recognition. Perhaps it is not surprising that Pidgin has received such support, as it is spoken by a majority of people in the state of Hawai'i, and is recognized by linguists as a legitimate

language, and local writers as an important local language. Yet despite all of this, there remains considerable resentment and misunderstanding about Pidgin among all sectors of society, including educators and legislators.

Now again in 1999, public attention is focused on issues surrounding Pidgin and education. It began in September, when the Chairman of the Hawai'i State Board of Education, Mitsugi Nakashima, made a statement implicating Pidgin in the poor results by the students of Hawai'i on national standardized writing tests. "I see writing as an encoding process and coding what one thinks, and if your thinking is not in standard English, it's hard for you to write in Standard English," he said. He also said that Standard English should be the norm in every classroom, because "If you speak Pidgin, then you think Pidgin, and you write Pidgin" (*Honolulu Advertiser* 29 September 1999).

The Chairman's statement sparked off a renewed public debate about Pidgin and education, with the newspapers carrying numerous letters about Pidgin, mostly negative and misinformed. Readers of this newsletter can no doubt imagine the kinds of prejudice that are held by a wide range of the population towards this creole language. An accountant alleged that "Any child today who grows up speaking pidgin English will never get a good job and never be able to afford a house" (*The Honolulu Advertiser* October 6, 1999). Another person is quoted on the same page as saying: "Pidgin has degenerated to a gutter language. Pidgin doesn't work anymore".

But other letters to the Editor reveal more positive attitudes, and call for a serious investigation of the cause of low national test scores for Hawaii's students. A high school student wrote: "I disagree that pidgin English is the cause of low test scores. I myself don't speak pidgin English and I still don't do well because I don't apply myself" (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 1 November 1999). A community college professor wrote: "The perennial debate about the use of pidgin English in the classroom diverts the attention away from the real issues and solutions concerning our students' weak writing skills... So can we stop talking about pidgin English and start talking about class size, workload, and the enforcement of the Department of Education writing standards that are forever being reinvented" (*Honolulu Advertiser* 8 October 1999).

In November the state Governor, Ben

Cayetano weighed in to the debate, saying: "The only time we should be using Pidgin English in the public schools is when they're studying Pidgin itself, from a historical or cultural point of view.... They should never use Pidgin in the public schools" (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 20 November 1999).

The BOE Chairman's statement was the catalyst for a group known as "Da Pidgin Coup" to prepare a position paper on Pidgin and education. Da Pidgin Coup comprises mainly University of Hawai'i faculty and students in the Department of English as a Second Language, who have been meeting regularly since Fall 1998 to work on aspects of Pidgin. The main focus of the group is on linguistic, applied linguistic and educational linguistic issues in Pidgin and similar stigmatized language varieties.

Our position paper, titled "Pidgin and Education", is intended to form the basis of our discussions with education officials and teachers, and our public education efforts. Our aim is to provide well-researched advice about the complex relationship between Pidgin and English, and the issues involved in discussing the role of Pidgin in education.

Da Pidgin Coup strongly questions assumptions and conclusions such as those of the Education Chairman and the State Governor, and a number of related statements being made about Pidgin. The introduction to our position paper says (p 3): "There is no dispute as to the importance of students learning Standard Written English, but there is *no* evidence that Pidgin speakers are less capable of learning to write, or that Pidgin can not be used to facilitate learning. The notions that spoken or written Pidgin is inferior "Broken English" and that children who use it are deficient, are not only unjustified and biased, but also wrong."

In preparing the position paper, we drew on research around the world to present information and discussion on the following main points:

- 1) an explanation of the origins and development of Pidgin, and its linguistic status as a creole language,
- 2) a history of attitudes to Pidgin, showing how negative terms to describe Pidgin have a powerful history in shaping island attitudes towards the language and its speakers,
- 3) the concept of Standard English, rebutting the notion that it is the best language, and showing the relevance of Lippi-Green's (1997) language subordination model to Pidgin in Hawai'i,
- 4) why researchers in the fields of education and language support the important role of language varieties such as Pidgin in the learning process,

- 5) why writing is a 'foreign language for everyone', and why there is no good reason to assert that Pidgin speakers are held back in their writing development by their Pidgin language,
- 6) the myth that Pidgin is English, providing some examples to illustrate features of Pidgin,
- 7) issues central to current concerns over Pidgin and testing, arguing that the relationship between Pidgin and English is too complex to suggest that we can raise students' test scores simply by eradicating Pidgin, and
- 8) recommendations about the important role that Pidgin plays in the learning process.

The paper is written in non-technical language for the most part, in the hope that it will be accessible to a wide range of people in Hawai'i who are concerned about Pidgin. In order to keep the paper to a reasonable length, our treatment of each issue is necessarily brief. Each of the 8 main sections each starts with a myth and reality, followed by explanation and selected references. Interested PACE readers may read this paper on the web at:

<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/esl/langnet/>  
(website of the Language Varieties Network).

The position paper is intended to be the basis for our dialogue with state education officials, as well as for a number of public awareness activities which we are planning. We are well aware that our discussions with educators will not get very far unless we are also providing widespread public information about Pidgin. Watch this space next year for an up-date on developments.

*References:*

- Lippi-Green, Rosina. 1997. *English with an Accent*. London: Routledge.
- Sato, Charlene J. 1991. Sociolinguistic Variation and Language Attitudes in Hawaii. In J. Cheshire (Ed.), *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Diana Eades  
Dept of ESL  
University of Hawai'i  
1890 East-West Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA  
eades@hawaii.edu

## ARTICLE

### ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS IN BISLAMA

by Claire Ngwira

"Why are there so many dropouts from your literacy class?"

"We need glasses – none of us can see to read!"

#### *Introduction*

The central focus for my thesis research was implementation of adult literacy projects. Language policies and literacy models were described, discussed and compared with the actual management of two adult literacy projects in Vanuatu, which have been set up by the two non-governmental organisations, World Vision and Baha'i Faith. These two Melanesian literacy projects visited by the



Niuples Village literacy class

author, unlike most previous donor aid in Vanuatu, were Melanesians training Melanesians in their own locality or village, using Bislama [the local dialect of Melanesian Pidgin] and the vernacular. Called grassroots

literacy, such participatory projects may be assuming a paradigm for educational successes. The following review focuses on language policies and language models within a Melanesian context. The conclusion

identifies two key factors for successful grassroots literacy provision.

### *Language Policies*

In Melanesia, it is now national policy, either formally or de facto, for pidgins to be the unifying national languages rather than the languages of colonisation (Crowley, 1990:33). In Vanuatu, the official government language policies, drawn up on the eve of independence, made Bislama the new national language; the official languages Bislama, English and French and the principle languages of education English and French (Thomas, 1990:240,241). Papua New Guinea language policy states that each individual has the right to Tok Ples [the indigenous vernacular], a national lingua franca, e.g. Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu and/or English and the medium of education should be English. In the Solomon Islands, however, government policy states that English is to be the national language (Jourdan, 1990:167) following the recommendation made by 1972 British Solomon Islands Protectorate education Conference that English be the language of instruction in schools. Pijin is not mentioned, in spite of its wide use. In fact, vernacular and Pijin are so widely used it became obvious there would be difficulties in implementation. Thus, the following recommendation with regard to the teaching medium in schools is:

Where the teacher finds that children meet difficulties in understanding, he should use the vernacular. When pupils find it difficult to ask questions in English the vernacular can be used again. (BSIP, 1972, cited in Jourdan, 1990:169,170)

Language policies are made with perceived future gains in mind. These can be any combination of personal, social, cultural, religious, economic and political gains, which are variable, according to who the policy makers are and for whom they are making the policy. However, Luke, McHoul and Mey say "language planning can be compared to a linguistic analysis without a social context" (1990:38). To provide a real example of this, in Vanuatu a policy may have been created to have Bislama as the unifying language, but, if Anglophones and Francophones wish to continue their segregation, then no amount of official Bislama unification will prevent them manifesting their separation in spoken Bislama. They will liberally anglicise it or include French in it in some way (Crowley, 1990:20). A broader example is the fact that Melanesian vernaculars and pidgins survived throughout the one hundred and fifty years of

English-only, German-only, French-only regulations. R.K. Johnson (1977:459) states: "Pidgin, the real success story amongst the languages of Papua New Guinea, was condemned outright by almost every language planner, who was consulted or who offered an opinion on the subject until very recently. It flourished in spite of them."

### *Language of Education*

In most schools in Melanesia, the language of education is a colonial language. This means that students are educated in a new language different from their home or community language. Gee (1992:40) explains that to acquire a new discourse involves:

risk in terms of gaining a new identity and possibly losing or undermining old ones; it also involves the vulnerability of "looking incompetent" while engaged in guided participation in the zone between what one can only do with others and what one can do alone...

If the real apprentices do not trust the teachers who will socialise them into the new Discourse, no real development can take place. (Delpit, 1986; 1988, Erikson 1987 cited in J. Gee, 1992:40)

It may be that a village school teacher is able to achieve educational outcomes more successfully using the vernacular or community lingua franca in the classroom rather than the language of the language policy, if it be a colonial language such as English or French. The degree of success for use of different mediums in education may be difficult to analyse, but a conclusion drawn by Gee is that entire education systems perpetuating failures should be examined more closely (1992:41). Humanistic attempts to understand and assist indigenous forms are often, in terms of power, structurally identical with previous attempts to control and eliminate them (Luke, McHoul and Mey, 1990:38). It appears crucial therefore to look carefully at paradigms used when making and implementing policy.

### *Literacy Models*

Historically, literacy has been linked to state formation or nation building - a thread running between people for trade and cultural exchange, urbanisation and economic expansion (Lind & Johnson 1990:39). Those who remain illiterate are often rural groups from multilingual areas, or regionally, without the need to be part of a bigger state or nation (ibid.). This was clearly illustrated in the Melanesian literacy projects visited by the researcher.

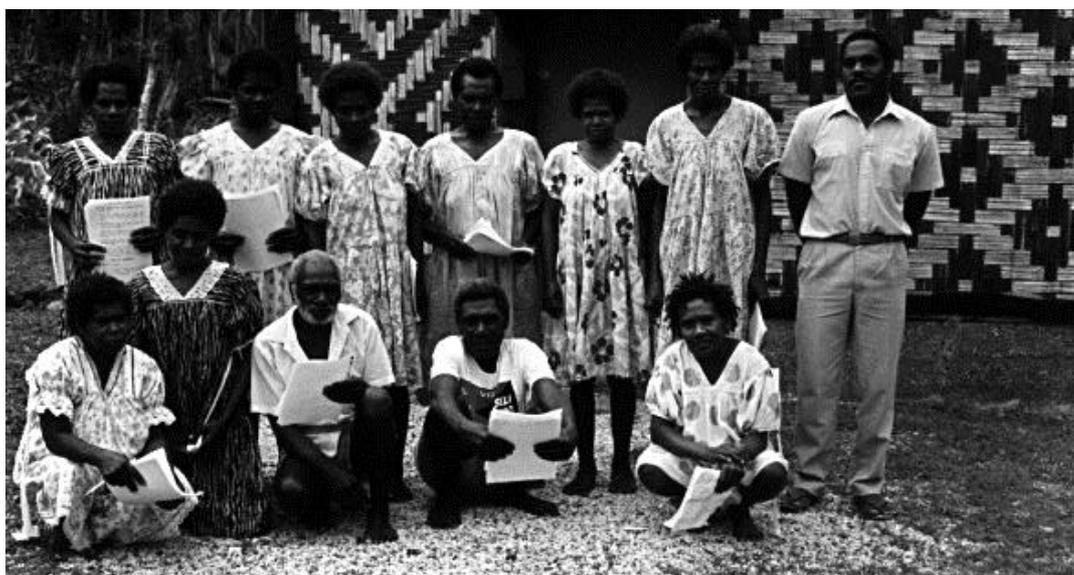
Writing used to be for specialists only, with 90% of the world being excluded, but the 14th century invention of the printing press made it technically possible to spread control, or for revolution and freedom. Access to knowledge and proficiency in literacy to more people. From then on, the printed word was used for either power or for literacy has often been linked to particular types of education, for example, religious education or education for war, such as naval training. That models and strategies for literacy have been guided by what appeared to be priorities at the time suggests that aims and objectives of literacy programmes should be examined carefully in relation to the development of emerging new priorities.

The historical process of literacy provision has shown distinct areas of development, starting with Fundamental Education where basic reading and writing skills are taught in no particular context and literacy is seen as a separate entity from the participants' lives. It employs a top-down approach. Functional Literacy, in an effort to include context, also

unwittingly employs a top-down approach, thus, preventing much real growth. It shows evidence of limited success yet continues to be used and reassessed. The Conscientisation Model (Freire) attempts to alter all previously existing paradigms and initiate revolutions in literacy education. This continues to be developed with some success. In 1989, UNESCO issued a call for "Education for All" at the world conference in Jontein, Thailand, and campaigns to remedy the huge percentage of worldwide illiteracy are still in existence.

Frank Laubach was a Christian missionary, focusing on the teaching of literacy. In his classic book "Thirty Years with the Silent Billion", Laubach describes his literacy model in the form of letters home and a fully-detailed personal journal of his thirty years travelling the world, teaching literacy to the "silent billion". It exists as a most remarkable story of the early mass literacy programmes on a worldwide scale. He constantly reinforced the need to use informal and idiomatic language of high interest and intelligibility in order to retain motivation, stressing how it was crucial that the literacy process be drawn from the learners' prior knowledge, and, most importantly, be drawn only from their culture. This is illustrated perfectly in the opening paragraphs of the first-ever-printed page of Maranaw, the language of the Moros in the Philippines:

This is the beginning of a story in the Moro language, to be distributed around the four sides of Lake Lanao. All Moros feel delighted because this paper is being started. The leading datos (chiefs) will furnish stories for



Nuvi Village literacy class

the newspaper, telling of the famous ancestors of early days, and the events in Mecca and other important places. Our paper will also be helpful for business. It will tell the price of rice, corn, beans, various kinds of cloth and thread, of silk and woven hemp, of lumber, brass, silver and gold articles and betel nuts. (Laubach, 1960:29)

Laubach worked tirelessly to reverse the more commonly accepted practice of imposing the colonial teacher's knowledge, culture and power on the students, which would have merely been a continuation of the oppressive and tyrannical rule Moros had first from the Spanish and then the Americans (Laubach, 1960:25).

#### *Two Key Factors for Literacy Provision*

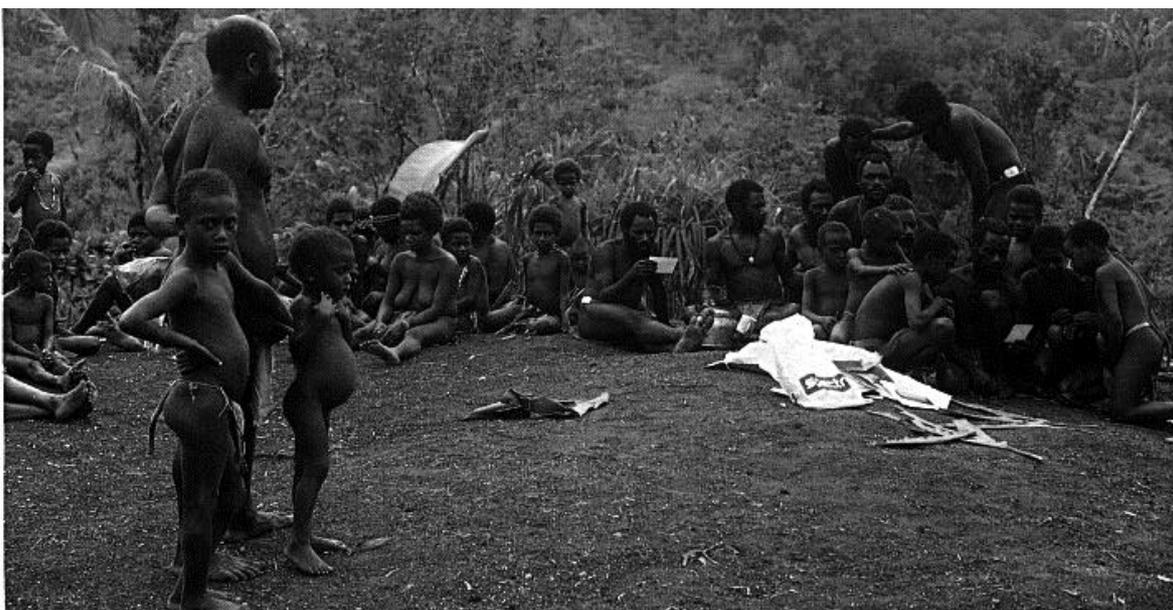
Current advice on the setting-up of grassroots literacy projects at international/national/local levels includes two key factors, which were strongly evident in the two grassroots projects observed by the researcher in Vanuatu. One is the need to consider the character of the participants, in order to establish ways for them to assume development of their own programmes suitable for their own needs. The other is recognition of the importance of a literacy worker, preferably from within the culture of the participants, to be the intermediary between the literacy provider and the village literacy class.

The intermediary, called "area supervisor" in both the World Vision and Baha'i projects, negotiated with village chiefs when presenting the grassroots approach and its possible advantages. Each village literacy programme

gathered momentum largely through the stamina, commitment and dedication of individual area supervisors. They took the process slowly, spending time with the people, learning to fit in with the local customs, and, assisted by the chief, were able to identify potential local teachers who were trained to teach literacy programmes suitable for their particular village. Literacy project management in Port Vila constantly emphasised that "quick-fixes" be avoided – that human resources within the village be sought, rather than buildings and teachers from outside.

Evidence of a gap between the theoretical grassroots model intended for the participants and the actual implementation of the projects was observed in the Vanuatu literacy projects. The grassroots model appeared to be acting within a transition period for ni-Vanuatu – between literacy and illiteracy, and, between the ways of colonial rule and the ways of independence. Ni-Vanuatu had been subject to the European model of formal education, and thus, the methods and approaches used in classes at times reflected practices that might be associated with colonial education. This is not to say that such practices are ineffective or inappropriate. Indeed it is possible that they take on a new significance under changed ownership.

A transition period requires flexibility in the development of the grassroots process, and it is possibly too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches adopted in such projects until the transition phase is over.



Santo Bush villagers preparing for a Baha'i study class

For each age, models are developed to cope with the changing perceptions of effective learning. It is always hoped and often believed that the current model is the "right one". There is a need, however, for literacy models to be constantly reassessed, inasmuch as priority aims identified for literacy models constantly evolve.

The two grassroots adult literacy programmes observed in Melanesia showed distinct elements of success, appearing not to marginalise the participants, rather centralise them and their cultural milieu in a way that growth and direction was derived from the village level rather than from the financial provider or initiator of the programmes. This grassroots model appears to be an emerging and successful model for Vanuatu.

### References

- BSIP. 1972. British Solomon Islands Protectorate education conference recommendations.
- Delpit, L.D. 1986. Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive educator. *Harvard Education Review* 56(4), 379-385.
- Freire, P. & Macedo, D. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- Gee, J. 1992. Socio-cultural approaches to literacy (literacies). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 12, 31-48.
- Johnson, R.K. 1977. Administration and language policy in Papua New Guinea. In S.A. Wurm (Ed.), *New Guinea Area Languages and Language Study. Language, Culture, Society, and the Modern World*, Fascicle 1.3 (pp.429-459). Canberra: Australian National University (Pacific Linguistic Series C-40).
- Jourdan, C. (1990). Solomons Pijin: An unrecognised national language. In R. Baldouf Jr. & A. Luke (Eds.), *Language Planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific* (pp.166-181). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- Laubach, F. 1960. *Thirty Years with the Silent Billion*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Lind, A. & Johnson, A. 1990. Adult literacy in the Third World: A review of Objectives and Strategies. Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), ERIC Microfiche: ED 339819
- Luke, A.; McHoul, A.W. & Mey, J.L. 1990. On the limits of language planning: Class, state and power. In R. Baldouf Jr. & A. Luke (Eds.), *Language Planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific* (pp.25-44). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- Thomas, A. 1990. Language Planning in Vanuatu. In R. Baldouf Jr. & A. Luke (Eds.), *Language Planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific* (pp.234-257). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Claire Ngwira

31 Kelvin Rd  
N.E. Valley  
Dunedin, NEW ZEALAND  
cngwira@olc.ac.nz

## PUBLICATIONS

### Creoles

Three articles dealing with pidgins and creoles and education appeared in recent issues of the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (JMMD). The first, "The politics of Creole language education in Jamaica: 1891-1921 and the 1990s" by Lena McCourtie (Vol.19, no.2, 1998, pp.108-27), focuses on the unique pedagogical situation in Jamaica but typical of other creole-speaking countries, where teaching falls somewhere between mother tongue and foreign language education. Part I of the study examines archival and historical data from Jamaica's colonial period which reveals systematic failure of students to acquire English in elementary schools. Part II reports on a study conducted by the author in post-colonial Jamaica which found a similar cycle of underachievement in secondary schools. Although education policies since independence have aimed to empower Creole speakers, in practice, the majority of school leavers remain an "undereducated underclass". The author suggests that this is due in part to teachers being poorly equipped to deal with the complex situation found in Creole-speaking countries. Several studies funded by the World Bank have looked at the problem and made recommendations for reform. One way forward is summarised in this directive from a 1992 report: "Pupils entering school are usually fluent Creole speakers moving to English as a target language. The resources of both languages must be utilised in the learning process" (pp.123-4).

The second article in JMMD concerns the language situation in the South Pacific country of Vanuatu: "Double trouble, and three is a crowd: Languages in education and official languages in Vanuatu" by Robert Early (Vol.20, No.1, 1999, pp.13-33). According to Vanuatu's constitution, Bislama (the local dialect of Melanesian Pidgin) is the national language and one of three official languages, along with English and French. However, only English and French are designated as principal languages of education. The constitution also guarantees protection of the

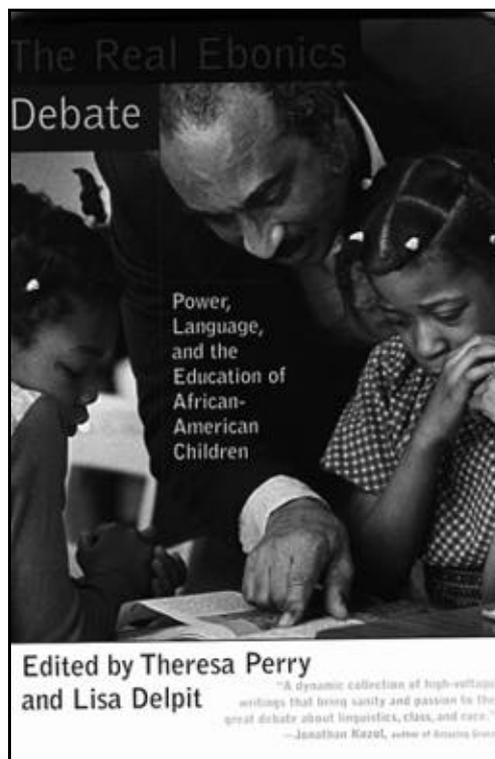
105 vernacular Oceanic languages spoken in the country and requires that the Ombudsman report to Parliament every year on “the observance of multilingualism” and “the measures likely to ensure its respect” (p.13). This article critically responds to the Ombudsman’s reports of 1995-1997, as summarized in the abstract (p.13):

Various deficiencies are claimed, including the definition of multilingualism, the bias towards French, the misunderstanding of language equity, and the misinterpretation of the Ombudsman’s role in language matters. Crucially, the reports fail to acknowledge the complexities of the post-colonial language situation in Vanuatu, and disdain both the important unifying role of Bislama as the national language and the diverse linguistic and cultural base provided by the multiple vernaculars

The third article in JMMD is “Challenges for multicultural education: Sociolinguistic parallels between African American English and Haitian Creole” by Flore Zéphir (Vol.20, No.2, 1999, pp.134-54). It starts out by discussing the concept of multicultural education in general, characterizing it as a form of “critical pedagogy” whose purpose is “to contest the established historical order, the traditional curriculum and teaching practices in schools, by rejecting racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society” (p.137). Then the author describes language issues in multicultural education, showing that despite the recognized positive effects of native language instruction on academic achievement, Black vernaculars have been marginalized in American education. This has led to high failure rates among both African Americans and Haitian immigrants. She notes that “using African American English as a pedagogical tool enhances the changes of academic success for speakers of this variety” and wonders “why, at a time when multicultural education appears to be the prevalent educational model, African American English, unlike Chinese or Spanish, still has to wage a legitimacy battle” (p.146). In the Haitian community, several organizations as well as parents and students have filed a class action civil rights lawsuit against the New York City Board of Education, several local communities, and the State of New York, demanding quality bilingual education programs using Haitian Creole. The author calls for equality and justice for all through curricular reform in the education system by allowing Black vernaculars into the classroom.

### **Minority dialects**

In 1996, the Oakland School Board resolved to use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Ebonics in education to help African American students acquire standard English. This sparked a great deal of controversy in the USA, and the debate is still going on three years later. Several books have appeared which are relevant to this controversy.

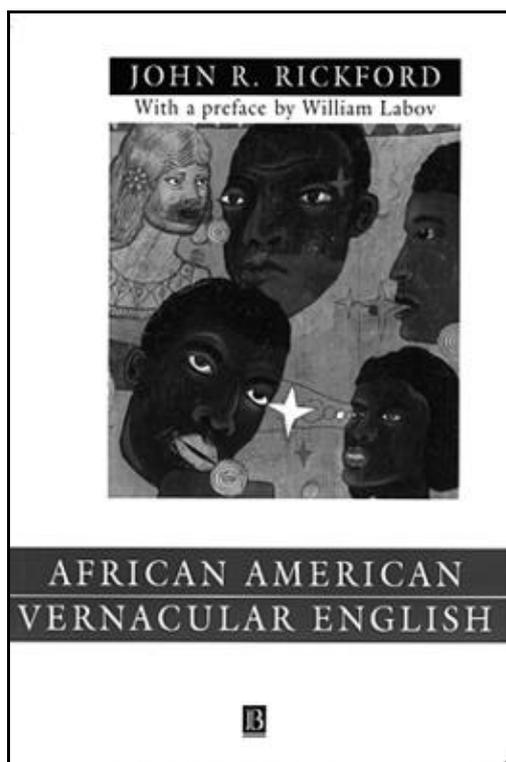


*The Real Ebonics Debate: Power, Language, and the Education of African-American Children* is a collection of essays, interviews and other materials edited by Theresa Perry and Lisa Delpit (Beacon Press, Boston, 1998). The book has five parts. Part 1, INTRODUCTIONS, has two essays: “I ’on know why they be trippin’: Reflections on the Ebonics debate” by Theresa Perry and “What should teachers do? Ebonics and culturally responsive instruction” by Lisa Delpit. Part 2, WHAT IS EBONICS?, contains essays by Geneva Smitherman, Wayne O’Neil, Ernie Smith, James Baldwin and Mary Rhodes Hoover, plus an interview with John Rickford. Part 3 is about Classroom implications, containing interviews with Oakland teachers Carrie Secret (“Embracing Ebonics and teaching standard English”) and Hafeezah AdamaDavia Dalji (“Listen to your students”). It also has contributions by Paul Laurence Dunbar, Terry Meier, Mary Rhodes Hoover and Monique Brinson, about the use

of literature, testing and other matters.

The Ebonics Resolution itself is the topic of Part 4. The texts of the original resolution and revisions are given as well as the Oakland policy statement and recommendations of the Task Force on Educating African-American students. The Standard English Proficiency Program is described. Also included are a response to critics of the Ebonics policy by the Oakland superintendent of schools, Carolyn Gettridge; the Linguistics Society of America resolution on Ebonics; a piece by Geneva Smitherman; an interview with Oakland School Board member, Toni Cook; a piece by an Oakland student, Michael Lampkins; and an interview with activist Isaac Taggart about Ebonics and the role of community. Part 5 consists of personal essays by Joyce Hope Scott and Beverly Jean Smith.

The book also contains a useful list of resources on Ebonics, a section "Clarifying terminology", and detailed notes and references.



*African American Vernacular English: Features, Evolution, Educational Implications* by John R. Rickford (Blackwell, Malden MA, 1999) is a collection of the author's writings on AAVE. Part III, Educational Implications, has four chapters. The first, (Chapter 13), "Attitudes towards AAVE, and classroom implications and strategies" (pp.283-89) discusses the importance of educators being

aware of the attitudes toward AAVE held by students, parents, employers and other teachers. These affect both expectations, the decision teachers must make about whether or how to use AAVE in their teaching. The chapter outlines the results of many studies, many showing predictably negative attitudes, but others surprisingly positive. Some preliminary remarks are made about specific teaching methods and strategies, such as using contrastive analysis, which are expanded upon in later chapters.

The next chapter, "Unequal partnership: Sociolinguistics and the African American speech community" (pp.290-319), was originally published in *Language in Society* in 1997, and is discussed in the *PACE Newsletter* no.8, p.15.

"Suite of ebony and phonics" (pp.321-28) shows that there are more positive attitudes towards AAVE than were reported in the media during the Oakland Ebonics controversy in 1996, and that AAVE is more systematic and has a longer history than usually assumed. The chapter also notes the educational implications of the scientific study of AAVE – in particular the value of the contrastive approach which the Oakland School Board was advocating.

Finally, Chapter 16, "Using the vernacular to teach the standard" (pp.329-47), details the devastating rate of failure in schools among African Americans, and considers possible language and non-language factors. It goes on to discuss how AAVE could be taken into account when teaching language arts. Three approaches are described: the linguistically informed approach, contrastive analysis and introducing reading in the vernacular (using "dialect readers"). Rickford concludes:

I would argue that to continue with traditional approaches in light of their dramatic failure rates, and to ignore innovative methods of taking the vernacular into account, despite their success and promise, represents an unconditional surrender, bordering on disgrace.

Another important book about AAVE and education in the wake of the Ebonics debate is *Making the Connection: Language and Academic Achievement among African Americans* edited by Carolyn Temple Adger, Donna Christian and Orlando Taylor (Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, McHenry IL, 1999). This is the proceedings of the Coalition on Language Diversity in Education, held in January, 1998. (See *PACE Newsletter* no.9, pp.11-12.) The book has nine chapters and an appendix, each of which

is important reading for educators:

- Chapter 1: Language diversity and academic achievement in the education of African American students—An overview of the issues (John R. Rickford)
- Chapter 2: The language of African American students in classroom discourse (Courtney B. Cazden)
- Chapter 3: Enhancing bidialectalism in urban African American students (Kelli Harris-Wright)
- Chapter 4: Repercussions from the Oakland Ebonics controversy – The critical role of dialect awareness programs (Walt Wolfram)
- Chapter 5: Considerations in preparing teachers for linguistic diversity (John Baugh)
- Chapter 6: The case for Ebonics as part of exemplary teacher preparation (Terry Meier)
- Chapter 7: Language policy and classroom practices (Geneva Smitherman)
- Chapter 8: Language diversity, and assessment – Ideology, professional practice, and the achievement gap (Asa G. Hilliard, III)
- Chapter 9: Lessons learned from the Ebonics controversy – Implications for language assessment (Anna F. Vaughn-Cooke)
- Appendix: Testimony of Orlando L. Taylor on the subject of “Ebonics”

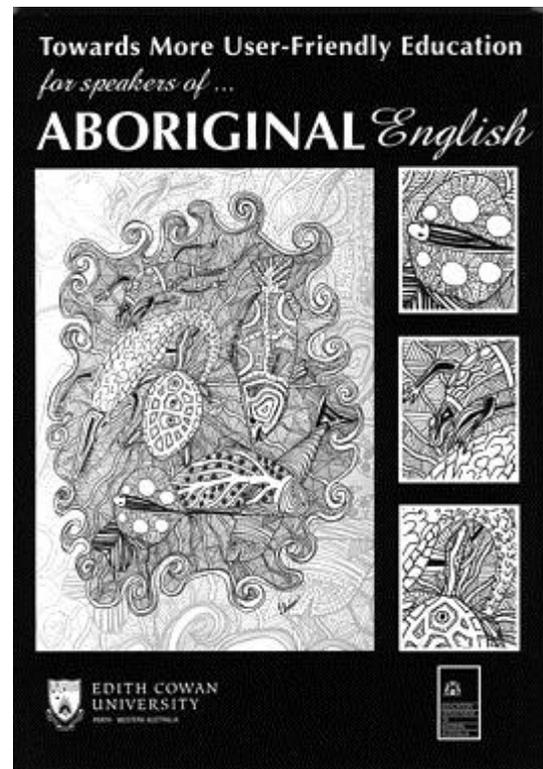
A dissenting point of view with regard to the role of AAVE in the classroom comes from John McWhorter in his book *The Word on the Street: Fact and Fable about American English* (Plenum Trade, New York and London, 1998). Chapter 8 of the book (pp.201-61) is entitled “Dialect in the headlines – Black English in the classroom?”. According to the author, the differences between AAVE and standard English are too minor to warrant the use of dialect readers or contrastive analysis in a “bridging” approach. Most African American children already know some standard English and can code-switch to and from AAVE with relative ease. He ascribes the failure of African American students not to differences between AAVE and standard English but to three main causes: the decline in quality in the American education system; the socioeconomic disparity between blacks and whites, especially in inner-city areas; and a “less fundamental orientation toward education” among many African American students than among other groups (p.228).

McWhorter presents five recommendations that linguists could make to help African American students in educations. These are:

1. Train schoolteachers in the systematicity of Black English (p.236).
2. Institute Afrocentric curricula at predominantly African American schools

(p.239).

3. Allow young African American students to speak in their home dialect in class (p.248).
4. Teach African American children to read in standard English (p.251).
5. Only older students should be taught to “translate” into standard English in writing, as a remedial approach (p.252).



Moving on to Australia, *Towards More User-friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* is the report of a research project conducted in 1996-7. The authors are Ian Malcolm, Yvonne Haig, Patricia Königsberg, Judith Rochecouste, Glenys Collard, Alison Hill and Rosemary Cahill. The report was published in 1999 in Mr Lawley (WA) by the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research at Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia.

The project set out to gain greater understanding about Aboriginal English (AE) and how it differs from standard Australian English. The ultimate goal is to be able to use this understanding to facilitate a more accessible (or “user friendly”) education for AE-speaking students in primary and secondary schools. It concentrated on the following previously under-researched areas of AE: semantic fields, functions of language use in relation to form, genres, particular registers and codes. It also aimed to relate Aboriginal ways of approaching experience

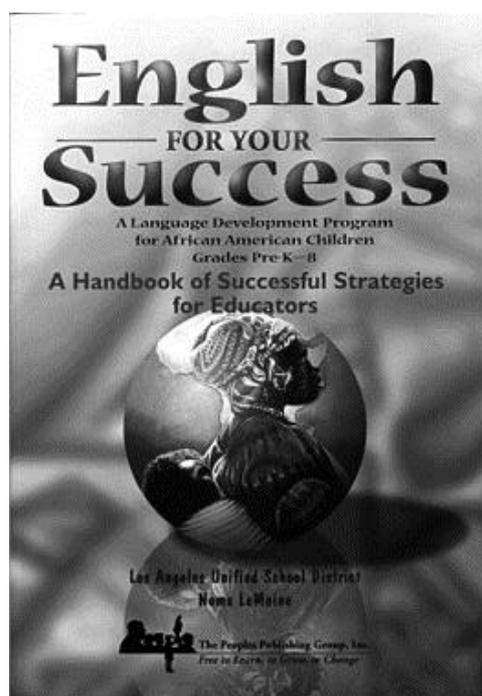
and knowledge to the following areas: curriculum, student outcome statements and pedagogical strategies to support two-way learning. (See the description of *Language and Communication Enhancement for Two-way Education* by Ian G. Malcolm (Edith Cowan University, 1995) in the PACE Newsletter no.8, 1997, p.14.)

The project was carried out by two groups of researchers: a “base team” made up of linguists, educational administrators and research assistants, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, based in Perth; and a “field team”, made up of 6 Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers, each linked with a cooperating teacher, at 6 state schools around Western Australia. Members of the field team gathered tape recordings of AE discourse which was transcribed and analysed by members of the base team. Both teams got together for 4 week-long live-in workshops. These resulted in “mutual awareness raising” on the part of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants and enabled them to develop joint interpretations of the data. They discussed the implications of the linguistic findings to two-way learning and established strategies for developing curriculum and pedagogical approaches (p.v).

The project demonstrated the following (p.vi):

- a) AE as used by the children and adults studied differs systematically from standard English with respect to its phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse and pragmatic functions.
- b) The differences in semantics suggest significant underlying cognitive differences, as exhibited in different prototypes, schemas, taxonomies and patterns of polysemy and metaphor.
- c) The distinctiveness of AE is already at the level of awareness of many of the adults and children studied and strategic use is made by them of a bidialectal repertoire.
- d) Bidialectal research, curriculum development and pedagogical innovation are achievable on the basis of cooperative involvement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel on an equal basis.
- e) The principle of open investigation of dialectal difference across cultural groups has significant application to academic research, to two-way pedagogy and to professional development.

**Resources for teachers:**



Teaching materials have been published for an acclaimed Los Angeles program: *English for Your Success: A Language Development Program for African American Children Grades Pre-K-8* by the Los Angeles Unified School District and Noma LeMoine (Peoples Publishing, Maywood NJ, 1999). The teachers’ guide is titled *A Handbook of Successful Strategies for Educators*. It contains chapters on normal language development in children, the historical development and characteristic features of African American Language (AAL) [i.e. AAVE], facilitating a shift in language instruction strategies, and goals and strategies for the mastery of mainstream American English (MAE) [i.e. standard English] . Later chapters include sample lessons and lesson organizers, information on implementation issues and questions about the program frequently asked by teachers, parents and administrators. The book also contains useful references for African and African American literature in general, African American children’s literature, the use of African American literature for contrastive analysis, reference books and journals, research articles, computer programs and videos. In addition, there is a glossary of selected terms for educators.

The goals of the program (from p.44 of the *Handbook*) are given below.

Table 1: English for Your Success
Goals

1. Acquire an awareness and appreciation of home language and culture
2. Develop receptive language in MAE
3. Acquire basic literacy skills
4. Develop an awareness and appreciation of language and cultural diversity
5. Be able to recognize and label the differences between AAL and MAE
6. Expand a personal thesaurus of conceptually coded word concepts
7. Analyze linguistic differences between MAE and AAL
8. Use MAE structure functionally in oral and written form
9. Recognize the language requirements of different situations
10. Demonstrate proficient use of MAE in written and oral form
11. Develop an expanded knowledge and appreciation of AAL and the language and culture of others
12. Communicate effectively in cross-cultural environments

Two publications for teachers have come out of the research project described above, *Towards a More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English*. The first is *Two-Way English* by the same authors as the report on the project, published in 1999 by the Education Department of Western Australia, East Perth. The first chapter introduces teachers to Aboriginal English and the concept of “two-way English”. The second chapter describes the research project in language accessible to both teachers and parents. Chapter 3 gives more details about Aboriginal English and codeswitching to standard English, and goes on to present some implications for the teaching of Aboriginal students. Chapters 4 and 5 present the official curriculum framework in Western Australia and show how some of the findings about Aboriginal English can be applied in curriculum development and teaching. The final chapter and the appendices describe resources available for putting into practice the ideas presented earlier in the book. These include learning from Aboriginal colleagues, additional training and written resources.

The second publication is *Solid English* (Education Department of Western Australia, 1999). It has three sections: (1) What each Aboriginal student brings to school; (2) Things teachers can do to capitalise upon what Aboriginal students bring to school; and (3) Strategies teacher might like to use. It also

includes appendices with notes about Aboriginal cultures, information about what makes Standard Australian English the *standard* dialect, and how Aboriginal English relates to [Australian] Kriol and pidgins and creoles in general.

For more information on the 3 publications on Aboriginal English mentioned above, write to:

Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research  
 Edith Cowan University  
 2 Bradford St  
 Mt Lawley, WA 6050  
 Australia  
 or  
 Education Department of Western Australia  
 151 Royal St  
 East Perth, WA 6004  
 Australia  
 or contact  
 Patricia Königsberg by email  
 patricia.konigsberg@eddept.wa.edu.au

## PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Big Wok: Storian blong Wol Wo Tu long Vanuatu*, edited by Lamont Lindstrom and James Gwero, is the first book to be published internationally in Bislama. Published by and available from the Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, it relates stories of the involvement of ni-Vanuatu in World War II, the presence of American and other troops in Vanuatu, etc. Contact Linda Crowl (crowl\_l@usp.ac.fj) for more information.

## ON THE WEB

At least three essays on Haitian Creole are available in the weekly commentary section of the “Windows on Haiti” site:

<http://windowsonhaiti.com>

“Kreyolity in literature and education” by Carol F. Coates

“On Creole and its role in Haitian society” by Max Blanchet

“The language issue: My perspective” by Serge Bellegarde

“Language Varieties” is a new website is being developed for educators and interested members of the public:

<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/esl/langnet/home.htm>.

It gives information on pidgins, creoles, minority dialects, and indigenized varieties in general and on particular varieties as well. The varieties covered so far are Hawai‘i Creole

English and Singapore Colloquial English.

## THESIS

### **Creoles in Education – A discussion of the issues with reference to Northern Australian Kriol**

Siobhan K. Casson

University of Durham

In the last two decades, creole studies has established itself within the field of linguistics. Creolists have worked at gaining recognition for creole languages as autonomous languages in their own right and not mere “broken” or “bastardised” versions of a European colonial language. With the melding of the theoretical and sociological aspects of creole studies...has come the drive to use creole in education as a right for the speakers or as a pedagogical tool to aid second language acquisition and literacy.

In this essay I investigate some of the issues surrounding the use of creole in education. In order to illustrate various points I look at a creole spoken by Aboriginal people in the Katherine region of the Northern Territory of Australia – Kriol.

In the first section I summarise some of the main theoretical arguments in creole genesis in order to illustrate the language status of creoles... I then outline the origins of Kriol and its sociohistorical background.

In the second section I explore various language issues. Using the Australian situation as an example, I discuss the acceptance of Kriol as an identity marker and its links to traditional Aboriginal culture in order to show the importance of evaluating these issues in the educational context. Additionally, I briefly outline the problems of language standardisation, which is relevant if creole literacy is being considered for use in a creole language program. I also describe the creation of an orthography and existing applications of Kriol literacy.

In the third section I discuss four factors which I feel are important when considering the use of a creole in education, drawing on the issues discussed in the previous sections. I comment on various studies, but in particular those relating to the use of creoles in Australia.

In conclusion I present some recommendations for a comprehensive approach to introducing a creole into education.

## CONFERENCES

### *Past*

The 1999 meeting of the **Society for Pidgin and Creole Languages (SPCL)** took place in conjunction with the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) meeting in Los Angeles, 8-9 January. For the first time special sessions were held on **Applied Creolistics**. The following papers were delivered:

Creoles as medium of instruction (Malcolm A. Finney)

Using a stigmatized variety to teach the standard: Interference or separation? (Jeff Siegel)

A Creole English reading experiment (Ron Kephart)

Applied creolistics in court: Linguistics, methodological and ethical dimensions of expert testimony (Peter L. Patrick)

The case of Aboriginal English in the Australian legal system (Diana Eades)

The hegemony of English: *Hau kam yu wen kawl wat ai spik ingglish wen yu no no waz?* (Kent Sakoda & Ermile Hargrove)

Policies of teaching in a multilingual context: The case of creole languages in French Guiana (Laurence Goury)

**Wat, bada yu? Voices Heard and Voices Unheard: Pidgin, Local Identities and Strategies for Multicultural Learning** was a special conference on Hawai‘i Creole English (locally known as “Pidgin”), held at the University of Hawai‘i 6-10 April, organized by the Office for Women’s Research. The program included panel discussions and presentations on the following topics:

- Pidgin in the 21st century: Deconstructing the hegemony of standard English
- Language discrimination: Creole English(es) and the courts
- Pidgin in the schools: Educational policies, learning environments and teaching strategies

There was also a session with readings in Pidgin by nine well-known creative writers, and performances in Pidgin by the local personality Joe Balaz and the Kumu Kahua Theater.

**Le 9e Colloque International des Etudes Créoles** was held in Aix-en-Provence, France, 24-29 June 1999. There were two round tables relevant to PACE:

Orthographe: entre mythe et réalité?

Enseignement des langues maternelle et seconde en milieu franco-créolophone : problématique, enjeux, défis et perspectives

The following presentations were also of interest:

Complexion créole et complexe créole dans les pages des écrivains mauriciens (Shakuntala Boolell)

Language for education and standardization, as factors in language attitude ratings: Survey findings from urban, southern Nigeria on anglo-Nigerian Pidgin (Charles Mann)

Le créole à l'épreuve de l'école antillaise. Fantômes identitaires et expériences glottopolitiques (Lambert-Félix Prudent)

Enseigner pour instruire (Roger E. Savain)

Créole et école: de l'expérience seychelloise aux défis à venir (Rada Tirvassen)

**Issues in "non-standard" dialect research** was a special symposium held at the 1999 conference of the Australian Linguistic Society at the University of Western Australia in Perth, 30 September - 1 October. The following presentations were made:

Non-standard dialect research issues in legal contexts (Diana Eades)

Non-standard dialect research issues in educational contexts: New technologies in multilingual classrooms (Viv Edwards)

Stigmatized and standardized varieties in the classroom: Interference or separation? (Jeff Siegel)

Non-standard dialect research issues in community contexts (Ian Malcolm & Glenys Collard)

Non-standard dialect research issues in workplace contexts (Janet Holmes)

Work in progress: The ABC project, "Two way bidialectal education of speakers of Aboriginal English" (Ian Malcolm, Alison Hill, Patricia Königsberg, Glenys Collard & Rosemary Cahill)

Program for Bidialectal Development in a USA school district (Kelli Harris-Wright)

A study in progress: Teacher perceptions of student speech (Yvonne Haig)

Work in progress: Socio-cultural dimensions of the English of Western Australian primary school children (Graham McKay, Rhonda Oliver & Judith Rochecouste)

The symposium also included a discussion and response on the first five presentations by Susan Kaldor, and a panel discussion on Models of bidialectal education, with Glenys Collard, Kelli Harris-Wright, Patricia Königsberg and Jeff Siegel.

### *Upcoming*

The **Fifth International Creole Language Workshop** will be held at Florida International University 30 March - 1 April, 2000. For further information contact:

Dr Tometro Hopkins  
Linguistics Program, Dept of English  
Florida International University  
Miami, FL 33199 USA  
Phone: (305) 348-3096  
Fax: (305) 348-3878  
hopkinst@fiu.edu