

Pidgins and Creoles in Education (PACE) *NEWSLETTER*

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Newsletter is growing in both size and subscribers. This issue is 15 pages, 5 more than the last, and there are over 125 names on the mailing list.

As promised last time, this issue includes a special report on creoles and education in Australia, where a lot has been happening recently.

But there was still too much information to include in this issue. So, Melanesia will be the focus of yet another special report in the next issue.

For the first time, two people have been involved in the production of the *PACE Newsletter*. Cindy Schneider typed in the reports and summarized the publications. Thanks to Cindy for her efforts!

Thanks also to all the other contributors to this issue. Please keep up the information or short articles for future issues and passing the word (and the newsletter) on to others who may be interested.

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REPORTS

Australia

from: Merryn Philpott
P.M.B. 73
Katherine, NT 0851
AUSTRALIA

“I am a speech pathologist working in Katherine, Northern Territory. My role as a speech pathologist entails the assessment of children and adults who use Kriol.”

from: Russell Hancock
81 Gipps Street
Carrington, NSW 2294
AUSTRALIA

“Currently working on producing handbooks in relevant areas for students involved in the Kriol Interpreters Course at the Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre.”

from: Sr. Pat Rhatigan
The Univ. of Notre Dame Australia
Broome Campus
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Broome, WA 6725
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“We will be offering a new unit at B.Ed level (400) entitled ‘English Based Language and the Aboriginal Student’ in Semester 2 this year. The lecturer will be Joyce Hudson.”

from: Joan Kale
Regional Co-ordinator
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Nhulunbuy, NT 0880
AUSTRALIA

“I am about to complete a PhD thesis on the language and literacy socialization of a Torres Strait Islander child prior to the commencement of schooling (5-6 years of age). The child and her grandmother who was raising

her code switch between Torres Strait Creole and English in the home.

“In 1990 I wrote an article in Baldauf and Luke (*Language Planning and Education in Australia and the South Pacific*) entitled ‘Controllers or Victims? Language and Education in the Torres Strait’ in which I proposed Torres Strait Creole as a medium of instruction in some contexts.

“My MA thesis from Sydney University was an advocacy of the use of Tok Pisin as a medium of instruction in PNG schools.”

Caribbean

from: Karl Erland Gadelii
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SWEDEN

“I’m interested in French-related creoles and have done field-work in the French Antilles and Dominica. I think it is impossible to study pidgins/creoles without getting involved in educational questions.

“In Guadeloupe, Martinique and Dominica, from what I have seen, the status of creoles in education is alarmingly low.

“I think pidginists/creolists need info about whether there are discussion lists, newsgroups, associations etc. dealing with pidgins/creoles. I haven’t heard about any such fora but it would be great if such information could be gathered in some way. If there are no lists/newsgroups I think it’s time to start one or more.”

from: Kate Howe
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FRANCE

“My recently published *Papiamentu Reader* (Dunwoody Press, Kensington, MD, USA, 1993), although intended to teach Papiamentu to anglophones, contains *very* brief and basic information regarding education and particularly standardization (pp.v-vi), and an exposition, with introduction, of spelling and pronunciation (pp.vii-x). The bibliography includes articles addressing problems of norms and standardization.”

Pacific

from: Heather Lotherington-Woloszyn
University of the South Pacific
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Suva
FIJI

“My interest stems from my focus in SLA literacy/biliteracy education. I am interested in educational policy and practice in Melanesia where I think a vernacular transition programme should be instituted in basic formal education. It is my opinion that the dialects of Melanesian Pidgin should play a significant role in building literacy skills in primary education as well as inter-generationally.”

North America

from: Linda Caswell
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USA
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“I have been working with Cape Verdean children in the Boston Public Schools for the past year and have become very interested in how Cape Verdean Creole can be used in educational settings. I plan to do my doctoral research on the affective and pedagogical benefits of using oral and written Cape Verdean Creole in the classroom. I have recently worked on developing literacy materials in Cape Verdean Creole in collaboration with a Cape Verdean kindergarten teacher. I would be interested in hearing about others’ experiences with writing creole and pidgin languages that do not yet have standard orthographies.

“I am also interested in the acquisition of creole languages. I would be grateful for any information you might have on any previous or current research in this area.”

from: Patricia Nichols
Linguistics and Language
Development Department
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San Jose, CA 95192-0093
USA

“Interested in the use of Gullah and/or African American Vernacular English in literacy programs, especially in coastal South Carolina.

“Also interested in Gullah/vernacular

English code switching and in teacher training that recognizes such language use as a resource in both classroom and community.”

from: Eduardo Faingold
Dept. of Hispanic Languages and
Literature
SUNY at Stony Brook
Stony Brook NY 11794-3371
USA

“I am interested in the effects of literacy in the creole, as well as other more ‘standard’ languages (eg Spanish, English, French) on the linguistic development, as well as the survival of creole languages (in, eg decreolization, creole ‘death’, etc).”

PUBLICATIONS

Two chapters in *Multilingualism in the British Isles 2. Africa, the Middle East and Asia* edited by Safder Alladina and Viv Edwards (Longman, London, 1991) are relevant to PACE. In “The Afro-English creole speech community” (pp.42-56), Morgan Dalphinis reviews the difficult linguistic situation of Creole speakers from English-lexified Creole languages who have settled in Great Britain.

Since the 1950s when West Indians came to settle in Britain in larger numbers than ever before, a cycle of underachievement by Creole-speaking students has been perpetuated in the British school system. Citing writers such as Eysenck (1971) who suggest that African and Afro-Caribbean people are of a “genetically inferior” race (p. 47), Dalphinis attributes “institutionalised racism” (p.47) as a major contributor to Caribbean underachievement in British schools. Thus, it is stated that while language awareness programs might be useful to some extent in improving academic performance, a more significant obstacle which must be overcome is the negative attitudes towards Creole-speaking students.

Additionally, Caribbean parents, who have come to equate English language with material success, often feel that teaching Creole in the classroom is just another attempt to “keep down” those who are not in power.

However, some educators attribute academic failure at least partly to the schools’ lack of recognition of Creole language, and they want to validate the unique language skills of Caribbean students. Through exposure to Creole literature and language, these students would be provided with a

source of linguistic heritage and pride.

In the same volume, “The Kwéyòl speech community” by Hubisi Nwenmely (pp57-68) provides a general overview of the Kwéyòl-speaking community in Britain (particularly immigrants from Dominica and St. Lucia). It provides a brief history and evolution of modern Kwéyòl in the Caribbean, its transplantation to Britain, and its current status and patterns of use in Britain. There is also a discussion of the various efforts towards promoting Kwéyòl culture and writings in both Britain and the Caribbean.

Hubisi Nwenmely also teams up with Carol Morris in their article on “The Kwéyòl Language and Literacy Project” in *Language and Education* 7/4, 1993 (pp.259-70). Despite some overlap from Nwenmely’s 1991 publication (above), this article deals more specifically with the development of the “Patwa Project” (Kwéyòl Project) for Dominicans and St. Lucians living in Britain. The project launched its first phase of Patwa classes in May 1984, and since then has produced a number of teaching and reading materials. Aims of the project have been to “to develop literacy skills amongst St. Lucian and Dominican people and to encourage the development of students to become tutors on the Project” (p.263).

Additionally, participants in London’s Kwéyòl Project have established ties with people in St. Lucia who are also keen to write Kwéyòl. The result is a mutually enjoyable and profitable teaching/learning experience between the two groups.

Lise Winer, author of “Teaching Speakers of Caribbean English Creoles in North American Classrooms” (in *Language Variation in North American English Research and Teaching*, edited by A. Wayne Glowka and Donald M. Lance (The Modern Language Association of America, New York, 1993, pp.191-198), provides an overview of Caribbean English Creoles and discusses the situation where English Creole speakers are transplanted into North American schools. As stated in the overview on page 191, this article “provides some basic information about Caribbean English Creole and about teaching Caribbean-background students, including suggestions for teacher preparation, classroom teaching procedures, and useful reference sources.”

Winer believes that a little knowledge of

students' social, cultural, and political background can go far in facilitating the transition of Creole-speaking students into North American classrooms. She suggests that teachers gain a knowledge of Caribbean geography and history, and be aware of the current family and social structure, educational system and cultural traditions, and how these differ from North American norms.

While Winer does not propose that teachers learn the Creole of their students, she does believe that they have a duty to obtain a basic knowledge of Creoles, so that they may be more aware of potential problems arising from linguistic misunderstanding.

The *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 102 (1993) focusses on "Creole Movements in the Francophone Orbit", and contains several articles of interest.

In "So near, yet so far: *Bannzil's* pan-Creole idealism" (pp.27-38), Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing tells the story of the how the *Bannzil Kréyòl* movement originated, espoused ambitious ideals, and then experienced a swift decline in momentum and spirit.

The movement arose from the French-inspired Comité International des Etudes Créoles (CIEC). Dissatisfied members of this organization began to see a need not only for scientific study of Creole languages, but also for a society which celebrated Creole speakers of both the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands as a distinct community.

The ideals of the *Bannzil Kréyòl* movement thus focussed on the idea that Creole speakers, despite their cultural and linguistic differences from island to island and from ocean to ocean, are part of a larger family of Creole speakers that share a common linguistic, cultural, and social background.

The movement also had the aims of promoting Creole languages as a vehicle for scientific and literary communication, and to be recognized at the university, national, and international levels.

What happened to the *Bannzil Kréyòl* movement, the author wonders. With regards to a pan-Creole culture, Hookoomsing believes that cultural differences and distance prevailed over desired unity. For example, in Mauritius, Creole speakers and those who consider themselves to be members of the Creole community do not necessarily constitute the same group. A large portion of the Mauritian community who are of Indian origin continue to identify with the culture of

the ancestral subcontinent, yet these people also have acquired the Creole of their adopted land. In Mauritius, the term "Creole" therefore better serves to identify the ethnic (African-European) sub-group of Mauritians, rather than the larger group of the Creole-speaking community, as a whole.

With respect to developing Creole as a scientific and literary instrument: there was a seminar for this purpose held in Réunion in 1984, a gathering which in itself was significant. However, little serious discussion and no follow-up projects resulted.

What Hookoomsing considers most paradoxical is that by 1987, *Bannzil Kréyòl*, without any legal status of its own, became registered as a French association, thus losing its Creole identity.

The author refers to the *Bannzil Kréyòl* movement as an attempt to reverse the "...unpalatable visions depicting Creole islands adrift like shipwrecks" (p 36). Despite its early demise, however, s/he feels that perhaps the experience has taught us to take a more localized and pragmatic, rather than globalized and idealistic, stance toward Creole languages.

Yves Dejean, who was born and raised in Haiti and returned there after sixteen years in exile, has written a comprehensive and informative article entitled "An overview of the language situation in Haiti" (pp.73-84).

He launches into his discussion by refuting the existence of a diglossic situation in Haiti. Addressing some of the requirements for diglossia according to the theories of both Ferguson and Fishman, Dejean argues his points, noting that 99% of the population is monolingual in Creole, and the one to two percent who do speak both Creole and French do not reserve either code for specific situations, and furthermore, they code-switch constantly between the two languages. Dejean also strongly disagrees with Fleischmann's account of Haitian "linguistic anguish" (p.76) whereby Creole speakers allegedly long to be competent in French, stating that the average citizen carries on day-to-day life in "...a peaceful linguistic existence undisturbed by...imaginary quarrels and conflicts..." (p.77).

The author then continues on with a description of the issue of language planning in Haiti. He scorns the 1980 educational reform which has as its goal for all Haitian children to be fluent speakers, readers, and writers of both French and Creole. Citing

Haiti's low economic status and high illiteracy rate, as well as the fact that fluent French speakers for students to "practice" with are few and far between, Dejean dismisses this reform as unrealistic.

A new Creole adult literacy campaign was initiated by the government in the late 80s, but was unsuccessful according to Dejean, absorbing huge amounts of "talk, bluff, and money" (p.79).

He seems to acknowledge that the traditional educational system, which has subjected Haitians to 200 years of non-Creole usage, has taken its toll – Creole is still considered by some to be an inferior and inadequate language to learn in schools. However, it is encouraging to note that (p.79) "...the most varied and distant regions of the country gladly welcomed the announcement of literacy programs all based solely on the use of Creole."

Another article on the Caribbean focusses upon the language situation in Dominica, an island which was originally colonized by the French but was handed over to British rule in 1805. Despite almost 200 years of British influence and an Anglophonic tradition on the island, French-lexified Patwa is slow to die in Dominica. Stephanie Stuart examines the status of Patwa in her article, "Dominican Patwa – mother tongue or cultural relic?" (pp.57-72).

Stuart identifies many obstacles which hinder the use of spoken and written Patwa in Dominica. For example, the fact that Patwa is a French-lexified creole within an officially English-speaking environment causes problems in the coinage of new words, where lexical borrowing from English does not come so easily as it would come from French.

Other factors which confine Patwa development is official as well as de facto English usage in government and the legal system. Even in the schools, English is considered to be the only "appropriate" language of communication, to the disadvantage of at least 30% of students whose home language is Patwa. To the date when this article was written, there was still no standardized orthography for Patwa.

Although Dominica became independent from Britain in 1978, beliefs dating back to colonial rule linger in Dominican society. For example, it was considered "inappropriate" in times of British rule to use Patwa in "polite discourse". Such discourse encompassed virtually all aspects of life except for

communication with servants or estate workers.

Currently, young people in the country speak Patwa fluently but regard this as a "disability". Paradoxically, their counterparts in urban areas are much less capable in Patwa, but mix it with their English and "...have learned or are learning to value it" (p.61).

The creation of the *Komité pou Etid Kwéyòl* (KEK) in the 1980s has helped the Creole cause in Dominica. It acts as a point of contact for creolists in other countries, and has worked to establish an oral history as well as written documentation of Patwa. Additionally, the *Komité* has initiated adult literacy courses in the language. The KEK has to a limited extent influenced the educational system. Many teachers are beginning to understand the creative resources to be found in the mother tongue of their students. However, the educational system does not provide for this. Also, since Patwa as yet does not have a standard orthography, teachers are reluctant to instruct in an area where there is no adjudicated "right" and "wrong" spelling form.

Stuart also writes about the status of Patwa in other aspects of society, where it generally suffers from a low status in relation to English. An exception to this is in music, where Patwa flourishes, and in dance, which is supported by the Cultural Division of the government.

Although in the words of Stuart, the government now pays "lip service" to Patwa, it benefits from no formal language planning. The author feels that for this language to carry on amidst an English-speaking environment, steps will need to be taken to "officialize" Patwa. This would mean including it in the school syllabus, and promoting it as a working language that should not be admired as a mere cultural relic, but as a language to be *used* in both formal and informal settings.

In "Language policy in the Seychelles and its consequences" (pp.85-99), Annegret Bollée takes a cautiously positive stance towards the status of Seychellois Creole. After describing its origin and history derived from Mauritian and Réunion creole-speaking immigrants, Bollée explains how language policy in the Seychelles has traditionally been very supportive of Seychellois Creole. Since the 1960s and 70s, it has been used in public functions, on radio news broadcasts, and in government dealings with the public. In 1979, only three years after independence from

Britain, Seychellois Creole was designated as an official language along with English and French, and in 1982 it became the medium of instruction in primary schools. In later school years, Creole is the language of instruction in conjunction with French and English.

Bollée notes that despite the fact that Seychellois Creole is the language of instruction in Seychelles' schools and that it is used with great success on radio and TV, the print media continues to use predominantly English and French. Creole literature can still be found only to a limited extent in bookshops. This is attributed to the limit of Creole's vocabulary, and the fact that it is easier to leave English and French media reports in their original language than to translate them into Creole. Bollée expresses the hope that in the coming years, when current students will have graduated with an academic background in Creole, the tide will turn towards increased usage of written Creole in the media and in literature.

In anticipation of this, the Komite Kreol, later taken over by the Lenstiti Kreol (Creole Institute) has been established with the aim of doing research on Creole (dictionaries, grammars), creating literature, and promoting Creole, generally. Bollée lists the stated aims of the Institute, and provides examples of its work, such as the coining of new Creole words and some rulings in Creole grammar.

Bollée anticipates a bright future for Creole, not only in the spoken domain where it is already strong, but also in its developing written domain. She notes, however, the necessity of retaining English and French as official languages in the Seychelles, where the local language could not reasonably be expected to infiltrate international borders.

Alain Armand focuses on the creole of neighbouring Réunion in "A Kréol/French dictionary: to what purpose? A lexicographic undertaking on Réunion" (pp.101-16). Armand provides an overview of social and theoretical issues involved in creating the *Dictionnaire kréol réunionnais/français*: How wide a boundary to create between Creole and its lexifier language, French? How to define Creole words with no direct French equivalent? How to account for a spelling and grammar in a language that has not been standardized?

He makes mention of the impact that a bilingual dictionary might have on the school system, suggesting that it could be used as a tool in the mastery of Creole, which would in

turn aid in the learning of other codes such as French.

Armand promotes his dictionary as a flexible orthographic proposal which can change to meet the needs of Creole speakers in the years to come. He notes (p.109), however, that "...it is not a question of transcribing from the spoken language, which is a place par excellence of variation, but to give birth to a written language, which stabilizes usages".

Another article of interest is "The creole movement in Guadeloupe" by Ellen M. Schnepel (pp.117-34). To quote the author (p.118):

[T]his article analyzes the relationship between politics and language in the current movement to promote, develop and popularize the Creole language on the island of Guadeloupe in the French Antilles. In tracing the evolution of the "Creole Movement", we shall observe how the Creole question both reflects and structures the island's changing sociopolitical environment. In particular, how each political party's posture on the status and role of Creole corresponds to its own position regarding Guadeloupe's political status in relation to the French nation.

With regard to Creole and education, Schnepel notes (p.126): "The institution where the conflict between French and Creole cultures played out most dramatically was the local school system." She describes how, in 1981, a secondary school started an experimental program to teach Creole in several classes in addition to the French class. The purpose was to correct interference errors in French due to Creole, and also "to liberate the students by allowing them to communicate more freely through speaking Creole in the classroom" (p.127). For the political faction that supported this experiment, it was a "preemptive measure to forestall a French government effort to teach Creole along its own ideological lines" (p.127).

After a long history of neglect of languages other than French, the Socialist government passed a law in 1982 acknowledging minority languages and spelling out provisions for their being taught in the school system. However, creole languages were not included. But in 1983, a surprise announcement was made that Creole languages and cultures were considered regional languages and would be gradually introduced as an experiment into the school systems of the overseas territories.

This led to a great deal of controversy. Many people were “hostile to the idea of elevating their vernacular to the status of a regional language and teaching Creole in school where it had been previously banished” (p.127). Others supported Creole, but thought it should be considered the national language of Guadeloupe, not a regional language of France. Others feared that introduction of Creole into the schools would lead to greater interference from French or decreolization. People argued about which variety was the “real Creole” or “pure Creole”. Teachers debated about the level at which Creole should be introduced into the schools (if at all)—preschool, primary or secondary—and about whether it should be merely the medium of instruction for some years or an object of study along with French.

What was the result of all this political conflict and in-fighting on Creole in education? Schnepel gives the following answer (p.130): “Through the decline in student interest, parental campaigns against the classes, teacher apathy, and the absence of any clear administrative support, the school program has been marginalized.”

Finally, “Integrating Creole into Caribbean classrooms” by Peter A. Roberts (*Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 15/1, 1994, pp.47-62) is the published version of a paper given at the conference of the Society of Pidgin and Creole Linguistics in Amsterdam. This paper is summarized in *PACE Newsletter* 4, p.9.

THESES

As mentioned in the last issue, Jeff Allen has completed two graduate theses on St. Lucian and Dominican creoles. Here are summaries by the author:

“Sainte-Lucie: Description sociolinguistique d’une île antillaise”. (Maîtrise Thesis. Département des Sciences du Langage, Université Lyon, 1992).

“This thesis is a sociolinguistic study of St Lucian French Creole, a language spoken on the island of St Lucia in the West Indies. Chapter one, taking a historical perspective, treats issues such as language varieties, pidginization, and creolization. Also included is a brief case study comparison of St Lucia and Martinique. Chapter two takes on a more contemporary point of view with various discussions on economy (internal resources,

external aid, tourism), cultural points (theater, radio, medicine, church/religion, International Creole Day), language varieties in modern St Lucia, the process of relexification, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors, language attitudes and an overview of Former Lexifier Language Acquisition (FLLA). Allen has coined the term FLLA for the specific context of St Lucia where French, once the official language of the island and the lexifier language of St Lucian Creole, was replaced by a competing international language (English) in the 19th century. When the contemporary St Lucian seeks to learn French, certain factors facilitate or impede the learning process. FLLA may also apply to other Creole contexts that show evidence of a change in the official status of the lexifier language in the past. Chapter three looks to the future with discussion on the political climate, standardization of the orthography, literacy programs for children and adults, and post-literacy issues.”

“Sainte-Lucie: relexification, décreolisation, recreolisation ou adlexification?” (Diplôme d’Etudes Approfondies Thesis, Département des Sciences du Langage & Centre de Recherches Linguistiques et Sémiologiques, Université Lyon, 1993)

“This thesis is a phonological study of loanwords that originate from different varieties of standard and local English and that have now entered into the St Lucian and Dominican French Creoles. This study reconsiders the concept of word-borrowing by first defining the situation of St Lucia and Dominica within various contemporary theories of lexification and then by analyzing data according to pertinent issues in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Textual data is collected from newspapers and folkloric stories written in the two French Creole varieties; interviews are conducted with St Lucians living in the UK based on the data collected in the texts.

“Chapter one presents the socio-historical development of St Lucian Creole from the arrival of the Europeans in the 17th century up through case studies of modern century tutoring and literacy programs. Chapter two contains complete phonetic and phonemic inventories for the varieties of English and the French Creole that coexist both in St Lucia and in Dominica. Chapter three provides a 30-page comprehensive diachronic survey of the theories of creolization, decreolization, re-

creolization, relexification, and adlexification. Chapter four examines the degree of lexical influence that occurs through the contact of two languages, including topics such as language choice, code-switching, word-borrowing, and bilingualism. Chapter five contains analyses of over 200 utterances/sentences with loanwords from English varieties that are found in the writing and speech of St Lucian and Dominican French Creole speakers. Chapter six discusses the data by categorizing the examples of the corpus into semantic domains. Chapter seven, contrary to past literature on St Lucian French Creole, concludes by stating that these French Creoles today are not undergoing relexification, a process normally attributed to the pidginization stage of language development. This study rather argues that adlexification (lexical borrowing from coexisting adstrate languages) is currently affecting these French Creoles via English varieties, thus producing some totally assimilated loanwords, some non-assimilated loanwords, and some partially assimilated loanblends in St Lucian and Dominican French Creoles.”

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SPECIAL REPORT: PACE in Australia

A lot has been happening with creoles in education in Australia over the past few years, both with Kriol, spoken in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of Western Australia, and with Torres Strait Creole, spoken in the Torres Strait Islands and the northern tip of Queensland.

Several reports and articles appeared showing that negative attitudes towards the creoles have had a detrimental effect on the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These led to calls for a change in perspective to allow a place for creoles in the education system, and in other areas as well, such as the health and legal systems.

Here, some recent reports are outlined, and then some of the resources which have come out to help teachers and teacher trainers. Following this is some recent news from different creole-speaking areas, and then a listing theses and publications.

Reports

A survey of attitudes to Kriol in the Halls Creek area by Margaret Sefton (1994)

This is a detailed report of a survey conducted last year to find out people's attitudes to several issues regarding Kriol. The author talked to three old people (ranging in age from their 50's to 70's) and four children (6-8), and interviewed 14 people (in their 30's and 40's), using a questionnaire. Some of the findings from the interviews were that many people are not familiar with the term "creole" and call their way of speaking "Pidgin English" or "broken-down English". There were differing opinions about whether Kriol is a separate language or a deficient form of English. For example, one person said it's "an Aboriginal language", while another said "it's just lazy English". However, most people agreed that Kriol is not mutually intelligible with English.

With regard to using Kriol in schools, there were many strong opinions on both sides: About half of the people surveyed thought that children should speak and read and write in Kriol at school, while the other half were strongly opposed to this. To quote from one reply given in the report (p.27): "At school, children should learn Standard English. At home or with their friends, that's another thing. Schools should be educating people in the proper manner—teaching Kriol would be a waste of public funds." Yet, another person said (p.28): "You need to have Kriol for the little kids so they can understand. They can talk it and read it and write it so they get confident."

People expressed both positive and negative attitudes towards using Kriol at work. Some said it was essential for efficient communication at the local level, while others said it can cause confusion.

The majority of people wanted to hear Kriol on the radio, along with traditional Aboriginal languages. They wanted their children to speak traditional languages most of all, but many also wanted them to speak Kriol and English in appropriate contexts.

Summary of the report of the 1990/1991 Barkly and Sandover language in education survey by Robert Hoogenraad (1992).

This is a large summary of an even larger report of a survey of vernacular and English language needs in education in the Barkly and Sandover area of the Northern Territory, and

includes an Aboriginal language census. The survey included discussions with staff of the NT Education Department and with Aboriginal people at nearly 100 places. One of the many recommendations of this report is for "an integrated approach to language in the Aboriginal classroom". Here are some quotes:

There are a number of cogent reasons why the language curriculum for the Aboriginal classroom must treat English, the vernacular (Aboriginal English, Kriol or an Aboriginal Language), and the traditional Aboriginal language of the community together:

- The language of classroom management has to be one that the teacher, assistant teacher and pupils understand and accept...
- Ideally, the language of instruction has to be a language that both the teacher and pupils have a very good command of: that implies the vernacular for a considerable period of the child's schooling...
- In teaching English, including English literacy, the teacher must start from a thorough understanding of the child's existing language...
- This implies both research to learn more about the vernaculars in use in school communities, and in-service training for teachers in the techniques of teaching English as a foreign language or dialect.

Recommendation 1b of the report concerns a re-examination of language policy in Aboriginal education, as follows:

There needs to be a re-evaluation of the role in Aboriginal education of English and the vernaculars, ie Aboriginal languages, Kriol or a creolised variety of Aboriginal English...

In developing language policy for Aboriginal schools:

- good Standard English and English literacy need to be recognised as the central goal;
- English and Aboriginal languages need to be given equality of regard;
- the legitimacy of the community's vernacular language, the language in everyday use, needs to be explicitly recognised, whether that be an Aboriginal language, Kriol or a creolised variety of Aboriginal English, in order to ensure that the child's identity is not being undermined.

The extent of the use of Kriol, other creole varieties and varieties of Aboriginal English by schoolchildren in the Northern Territory and its implications for access to English literacy by Mari Rhydwen (1992)

This is the report of a Project of National Significance, funded by the Australian Department of Employment, Education and

Training (DEET). The Executive Summary of the report is given here:

The purpose of this report is to identify children who are prevented equity of access to English literacy because they are speakers of creole languages or Aboriginal English, and to indicate ways to redress this inequity. The survey of children documented in this report was conducted in the Northern Territory, but much of the report would reflect the situation in other States where a creole or Aboriginal English is spoken. The main points of the report are:

1. In Aboriginal communities in the NT the first language of children is either an ancestral Aboriginal language, a creole or Aboriginal English. None of these children speak Standard Australian English as a first language.
2. In schools in other areas, including major urban centres, many Aboriginal children do not speak Standard Australian English as their first language.
3. In many schools where none of the children speak Standard Australian English as a first language, there is no provision for teaching English as a foreign or second language.
4. Few teachers have training in Teaching English as a Foreign or Second language, few have any knowledge of Aboriginal languages, or linguistic theory in relation to education.
5. Teaching English to Kriol or Aboriginal English speaking children requires particular training which is specific to that task, because of the particular history of those varieties and the misinformation that has been generated about them and is still in circulation. This training is not currently provided.

The main recommendations of this report are:

1. More information to be made available to counteract general misunderstanding about the nature of creole and creole-related dialects of English
2. An extensive increase in the provision of language-related professional development programs for teachers of Aboriginal children.
3. Regular negotiation and discussion with communities where creoles and Aboriginal English are spoken, in particular to ensure that any programs to enhance equity of access

to English literacy do not conflict with community aspirations for maintenance of ancestral languages.

The report points out some of the problems with negative attitudes towards Kriol (p.27):

A major problem for teachers of Kriol and Aboriginal English speaking children is that of attitudes of non-Aboriginal people.

Throughout the areas where such varieties are spoken there is intense prejudice towards them. I have heard Kriol described as “gibberish” by a long term council employee in Barunga, as “shit language” by a long-term resident of Daly River, as “rubbish English” by a school principal in a creole-speaking area. In casual conversation with people in the NT, whenever I made the mistake of talking about my work, I was accused of encouraging the use of sub-standard English, to the detriment of both Aboriginal children and the English language.

More on this occurs later in the report (pp.32-33):

[O]ne of the most important factors affecting children who are speakers of Kriol or Aboriginal English is the attitude of others toward those varieties. In considering the education of such children, the attitude of their teachers is highly significant. In many cases, educators are committed to teaching such children that the variety they speak is unacceptable. At worst, their language is simply denied. When children speak to a teacher in Kriol the teacher may appear to not hear what is said and simply ignore it.

And later (p.85):

A common factor throughout all the schools I visited was the lack of interest demonstrated by teachers in the language of the children. Apart from Barunga, not in any of the schools where children spoke Kriol did any of the non-Aboriginal teachers claim to have made any deliberate attempts to learn about Kriol or to learn to speak it... The lack of knowledge about Kriol, to which many teachers openly admitted, is a matter of some concern and one that needs to be addressed.

Resources for teachers and teacher trainers

Fostering English language in Kimberley schools (FELIKS): Professional development course for primary schools (Catholic Education Office, Broom, 1994).

This is a kit designed for running a course to train teachers about Kriol and Aboriginal English. It was developed by Joyce Hudson, Rosalind Berry and others on the “Language Team”. Its ultimate aim is to “provide teachers

in the Kimberley with skills and support” in order to teach Standard Australian English (SAE) to speakers of Kriol and Aboriginal English.

The course is divided into seven sessions, normally run over 2 days:

1. Introduction

2. How the meaning of words affects communication
3. Dialects, pidgins and creoles
4. Socially appropriate language
5. How sounds affect communication
6. Differences between English and Kriol grammar
7. Workshop

The first session shows participants that Kriol is a valid language and Aboriginal English is a valid dialect of English; they are not just “poor English”. It also aims to make participants aware of the differences between these varieties and SAE, and of the potential for miscommunication when these differences are not understood.

The second session focusses on differences in meaning of similar words in the different varieties. The third session emphasizes the importance of control of both SAE and Kriol/Aboriginal English, and teaches some sociolinguistic terms such as pidgin, creole and speech continuum. Session 4 aims to make participants understand that each of these varieties can be used appropriately in different contexts, and that it is important to teach children to be able to switch between them.

Session 5 concentrates on sounds and pronunciation of Kriol/Aboriginal English compared to SAE, and session 6 on grammatical features. The final session is a workshop to identify ways in which FELIKS strategies can be used in the schools and discuss various aspects of the course.

The FELIKS kit includes a manual for presenters, audio and video tapes, and masters for overhead transparencies, participants’ booklets and games handouts. The manual contains Background Notes and a section for each session, beginning with the objectives, a pre-reading list, lists of resources and equipment, an outline of necessary steps for preparation, and a list of references. The text for presenters includes a detailed outline of the content, cues for using overheads and tapes, and descriptions of group activities and games.

This is a most valuable resource and has already been used quite widely (see below).

Kriol: What is it, who speaks it and what’s it got to do with me? by Mari Rhydwen (1992)

This is a draft of a booklet meant for teachers, providing background information about Kriol and other creole languages. It helps new teachers to recognize when children are speaking Kriol, and explains its relationship to

Aboriginal English. Some phonological, lexical and grammatical differences between Kriol and Standard Australian English (SAE) are described. Here is a quotation relating to attitudes (pp.9-10):

Kriol is often described as a stigmatised language. This means that it is treated as if it is a matter of disgrace and is reflected by the fact that people may refer to it as a "rubbish" or "bastard" language. One of the reasons for this, and many other pidgins and creoles, not just Kriol, are stigmatised, goes back to the history of such languages. They are the languages of the less powerful groups, the slaves, the indentured workers, the colonised and it is not only the languages but the customs and beliefs of such people which are often despised or ridiculed. Whilst, nowadays, people may be more accepting of Aboriginal culture in general, Kriol continues to be regarded as an inferior language, both by non-Aboriginal people, who are unaware of its complexities, and by Kriol speakers themselves who have been scorned, ridiculed or abused because of the language they speak. These days, our knowledge of the origins of such languages, their history as intelligent and creative responses to racism and oppression, enables us to recognise the importance of reviewing popular attitudes towards them as imperfect forms of language and to respect the languages themselves and the people for whom they are the 'mother tongue'.

A result of this ignorance and stigmatization is that many Kriol speakers continue to feel ashamed of speaking Kriol in the presence of non-Aboriginal people. Children who speak it as their first language may interpret attempts by teachers to teach them English as attempts to deny their language and, as a result, will suffer from loss of self-esteem. Moreover they may rebel against what they see as "put downs" of their language by refusing to adopt the use of English...

It is therefore important for teachers to openly acknowledge the validity of the children's language and not to expect that it will be replaced by English.

The booklet also includes suggestions about ways of teaching SAE to Kriol speakers, and a section with questions and comments from teachers.

Australian Indigenous Languages Framework

A national curriculum for a Year 11-12 subject on Aboriginal languages is being developed by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia. A textbook is being trialled this year at a few schools. Chapter 10

is on "Aboriginal English and Australian creoles". It describes the origins of creole languages in general and of NT Kriol and Torres Strait Creole in particular, giving examples of some of their features. Some other creoles around the world are mentioned, and attitudes towards creoles are discussed.

Langwij comes to school: Promoting literacy among speakers of Aboriginal English and Australian Creoles

This 32 page colour booklet was produced in 1994 by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) as a public awareness campaign for teachers and parents. It defines terms such as pidgin, creole and dialect, and provides some information on origins of Aboriginal English and Australian creoles. There is a section (on pp.18-19) about Joyce Hudson and the FELIKS course (described above).

There is also a description of the Kriol-English bilingual program at Barunga in the Northern Territory (pp.24-25), as described in *PACE Newsletter 1*. The rationale for the program is given as follows:

- It respects Kriol as the children's mother tongue. The use of Kriol as a language of instruction in school supports their pride in themselves and their language.
- It supports families in teaching the children their own language and culture.
- It helps children understand things better when they can talk about them first in Kriol, in most cases their mother tongue.
- It helps children understand the differences between Kriol and English. This helps them learn more about English and how to use it properly.

Information is also given about the school's language production centre which supports the bilingual program by producing books and other reading materials developed by Aboriginal teachers and literacy workers.

A section, "How does it work?" is reproduced here:

Children in pre-school have a mostly Kriol program. The English component ... introduces students to types of oral English they will use at school (eg commands, requests, questions and answers, story structures).

The early childhood program (the first three school years) introduces literacy in Kriol. The proportion of time devoted to Kriol learning decreases during primary school and vice versa with English.

An effort is made to keep the two languages identified and separate through

strategies such as having separate workbooks, exercise books and display areas. Teachers are advised not to mix the languages in one lesson, to point out differences between the two languages whenever appropriate and to explain the reasons for using the two languages.

The appearance of *Langwij comes to school* was widely reported in the media, sparking a great deal of interest, with both positive and negative responses to the suggested role of Aboriginal English and Creoles in schools. In some cases, however, media reports made serious mistakes—for example, saying that Aboriginal children in Brisbane speak Kriol. The booklet has been criticized by some teachers and linguists for not being clear enough in distinguishing varieties of Aboriginal English and creoles.

Controversy

The following letter appeared in *The Bulletin*, 2 August 1994, soon after the release of the booklet *Langwij comes to school* :

Help Aborigines to preserve and learn their indigenous *tribal* languages (along with correct Australian English) by all means (*B*, July 12). But why linguistically cleanse Pidgin English by first calling it Creole (technically correct, but an American term, if of French/Spanish ancestry) and then changing the spelling to allegedly Australianise it to “Kriol”? And then actively teach it as a legitimate language!

A mongrel “language” complete with mongrelised spelling—at best—a regional usefulness...just what our young Aborigines need if they’re to become politicians or journalists. Now is the *arzole*, or *assol*, or *rektum*?

G.K. Aalborg
Launceston, Tasmania

People from Ngukurr (Roper River) replied as follows:

Dear Ms/Mr Aalborg,

We are full-blood Aborigines and have lived at Ngukurr Roper River since our childhood. Creoles are fully developed, complete languages. The linguistic term creole is used for languages which developed during colonial time as a means of communication between Europeans and Non-Europeans.

Kriol is not a mongrel language, as it has its own grammar. Kriol is part of our culture here at Ngukurr; by that we mean we speak it everywhere—at home, health clinic, office, hunting, communicating with nearby communities and at school as a language of instruction. At public meetings it is used to

explain the difficult issues discussed by politicians. We have many books which were translated by Aborigines whose mother tongue is Kriol.

Kriol started at Roper River at the beginning of this century, when 200 people from 7 language groups settled at the mission. Kriol grew up from the pidgin language because different language groups had to communicate with each other, especially in the dormitories where the children were kept.

We the Kriol speakers of Ngukurr Roper River are proud to keep Kriol as part of our Aboriginal identity and cultural heritage.

If Kriol is a mongrel language, what about English with its Romance and Germanic roots?

The letter is signed by 79 people from Ngukurr. (Thanks to Dany Adone for a copy of the letter.)

News from around Australia

The news from creole-speaking areas of Australia shows that both Northern Territory Creole (Kriol) and Torres Strait Creole are becoming more and more recognised as languages in their own right, and not just “broken English”. The evidence is in three areas: training of creole interpreters, acceptance of creole in legal contexts as being distinct from English, and finally, use of creoles for various activities in school education.

From the Northern Territory:

At the end of last year, Denise Angelo, from the Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre (KRALC) sent in the following report:

“Kriol was included in KRALC’s ‘brief’ as a result of a vote at the 1993 AGM. It was agreed that Kriol is an Aboriginal language (ie its speakers are Aboriginal); that virtually no services are easily accessible to Kriol speakers (education, law, health, social security, etc); and that KRALC move to secure recognition of Kriol and services for Kriol speakers (ie interpreting).”

In a phone conversation with the editor on 24 November 1995, Denise provided an update. Here is a summary of that information:

Interpreting:

A Kriol interpreting course, run by Batchelor College, was held this year at the Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre (KRALC). It was taught by Denise

Angelo and Prudy McLaughlin. Five students will be going for para professional accreditation from NAATI (National Association for Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters). The emphasis of the course has been Kriol-English interpreting in legal and medical contexts, but it is envisaged that the trainees will also be involved in other areas, such as land claims. Also, as part of the course, teaching materials in Kriol have been developed for future use.

The trainees have already been involved in work experience, travelling with a speech therapist on community visits. The speech therapist has also been successful in getting funds from the Northern Territory Health Department for a part-time Kriol interpreter to assist with diagnoses. Two trainees will also undertake one week's work experience in December in the Supreme Court in Darwin, along with two Yolŋu language interpreting students.

In the lead up to the interpreting course, KRALC received a grant from the Department of Primary Industry's Rural Access Program for a project to produce illustrative word lists to help in interpreting. Six booklets are presently going to print on the following topics: personal finance, health, law, education, social security and Aboriginal organizations.

In addition, the Health Department has started to pay for Kriol translations of major health issues, such as AIDS testing and women's health. Written translations are accompanied by a cassette recording of the same material to overcome literacy problems.

Legal contexts:

On several occasions, Kriol interpreters were used in the Magistrate's Court and the Family Court in Katherine, explaining bond and bail conditions, and helping defendants make pleas. Aboriginal Legal Aid has also been using the interpreting students in the cells and interview rooms before court appearances.

Prudy McLaughlin of KRALC was asked by Aboriginal Legal Aid in Katherine to give advice regarding an Aboriginal defendant's understanding of English. In the Magistrate's Court in Katherine in August 1995, she gave evidence that the man, who broke a good behaviour bond, could not have fully understood the bond conditions explained to him in English and found in the written bond document. As a result of this evidence, the breach of bond charge was dropped. This appears to be the first time in the Northern

Territory that a successful defence has been based on expert linguistic evidence proving that a defendant could not fully understand English.

In another consultancy for Aboriginal Legal Aid earlier in the year, Denise Angelo showed that a Kriol-speaking man could not have understood the police caution given to him in English. This led to the case against the man being dropped.

Education:

Recently there has been a demand for introductory courses in Kriol from non-Aboriginal people living in Katherine. This year classes for 8 students were taught by the interpreting trainees at KRALC, using both the SIL materials (*An Introduction to Conversational Creole* by J.R. & J.L. Sandefur [Work Papers of SIL-AAB, Series B, Volume 5, Darwin, 1981]) and some of their own activities. KRALC linguists also provided some input.

At the Barunga C.E.C. [Community Education Centre] (where there is a Kriol-English bilingual program), the FELIKS course (described above) was adapted for in-service training for teachers by KRALC and the Barunga teacher linguist. KRALC, in conjunction with the Barunga C.E.C., is looking at developing classroom materials for targeting English from the NT Kriol perspective.

Barunga C.E.C. also obtained a grant through the Commonwealth Schools Program to investigate children's language—both English and Kriol. One research question is whether children's Kriol is different from adults', and if so, what are the reasons. Is it decreolization, or just children's language or the result of English language learning?

Changing attitudes:

Two Family Court judges came to Bachelor College to assist in the training of the Kriol (and Yolŋu) interpreters described above.

Every year, the "Aboriginal Languages Fortnight" is an important part of the course of studies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Bachelor College enrolled in the School of Education Studies and at the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL). During this time, students do work of their choice on their own languages. In 1995, for the first time some urban students from Katherine who speak English as their mother tongue decided to

learn Kriol for their language studies. Nine students studied with language workers from KRALC. This is a significant change, as English speakers often have the most negative attitudes towards Kriol.

Also, a number of town organizations in Katherine are now starting to put out Kriol/English newsletters which are prepared by the KRALC team, eg the Aboriginal Cultural Centre: *Living with Alcohol*.

For more information, contact:

Denise Angelo and Prudy McLaughlin
KRALC
PO Box 89
Katherine, NT 0851

From the Kimberley:

Interpreting:

TAFE courses for Kriol interpreting have run for two years now, taught by Dagmar Dixon of the Central Metropolitan College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Perth. Last year (1994) courses were held at Derby and Fitzroy Crossing, with Eirlys Richards teaching the Kriol components. Three students were accredited at the para professional level by NAATI (National Association for Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters). This year a course was held at Halls Creek, with Margaret Sefton teaching the Kriol component. Four students have similarly been recommended for accreditation. Next year, another Kriol interpreting course is planned for Halls Creek and for the first time at Turkey Creek (for the Warmun community).

Funding for travel and other costs for the courses has come from DEET, TAFE and the Attorney General's Department in Canberra (following recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody).

Each course was started off with a workshop on Kriol awareness for the trainees, adapting the FELIKS materials. The usual TAFE materials have been also adapted for teaching interpreting in Kriol and other Aboriginal languages. The existing four modules were divided into six blocks or units, involving 300 hours of instruction. The course is written in uncomplicated English for easy adaptation to the other languages. The trial package was used for the previous courses and the final product will be ready for next year.

Education:

The FELIKS (Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools) in service course for teachers was started in 1991. By 1994, the course had been presented at all 13 Catholic schools in the Kimberley. This year, 40 new teachers went through the course, and updates were presented for all schools at three different centres in the region.

Staff from the Western Australia Education Department were trained as FELIKS presenters in 1994 and 1995 and this year they presented the course at 17 schools.

This year the first issue of *FELIKSnews* appeared, edited by Rosalind Berry and Joyce Hudson. It contains reports and stories from teachers, games and other ideas for classroom activities, and other useful information for teachers of Kriol-speaking students.

In their updates of FELIKS, Joyce and Rosalind have been talking about what they call the "code-switching stairway" – four steps towards learning Standard Australian English and appropriate code-switching between it and Kriol. This issue of the *FELIKSnews* talks about the first two steps: awareness and separation. The first step involves teachers, teaching assistants and students becoming aware of the presence of the different languages spoken in the community and realizing that no language is intrinsically better than any other. The second step involves focussing on the linguistic differences between Standard Australian English and either Kriol or Aboriginal English and also the differing contexts in which each is used. (The other two steps, code-switching and control, will be covered in later editions of the newsletter.)

In other news, Joyce and Rosalind are working on a book, to be trialled in 1996, based on FELIKS. The title is *Making the jump: a resource book for teaching English in Kimberley schools*. This will certainly be of great help to teachers in the region and other parts of Australia as well.

For further information about FELIKS or the newsletter, contact:

Rosalind Berry or Joyce Hudson
Catholic Education Office
PO Box 1451
Broome, WA 6725

From North Queensland:

Education:

In June/July this year, the Home Languages Project began at Injinoo School, a

campus of Bamaga School. This project involves preschool and year 1 children whose home language is Injino Creole, a variety of Torres Strait Creole, and it is better known as the "Injino Creole Project". The children are taught to read and write in Creole first and then to translate from Creole to Standard Australian English where it is appropriate. The separate functions of the two language are emphasized—for example, displaying the Creole alphabet on one side of the classroom and the English alphabet on the other.

The preschool teacher, Mary Eseli, and the year 1 teacher, Christine Turner, are reported to be very enthusiastic about the project and the children are apparently "really turned on to reading and writing" since it began. Also, soon after the project started, the year 1 children were tested as part of the "Diagnostic Net" a state-wide test of development, and Creole as well as English literacy were looked at. Next year, literacy in both Creole and English will be tested and compared, and also the English literacy level of the Injino children will be compared to that of other children in the Torres Strait region.

Anna Shnukal, who has reported on negative attitudes in other areas towards the use of Creole in schools, was hired as a consultant in the early stages. This project, however, is fully supported by the community, and it was the community's idea to have children learn literacy in both Creole and English – "the two languages walking together", they insisted.

Legal contexts:

In May 1995 in the Supreme Court in Cairns, Helen Harper (Bachelor College, NT) gave expert linguistic evidence in the defence of a Torres Strait Creole speaker charged with attempted murder. The evidence, which was accepted by the court, was an analysis of the accused's understanding of the police interview. It was concluded that the accused did not have sufficient knowledge of English to deal with the complexities of the questions in the interview. The charge was reduced from attempted murder to unlawful wounding.

Recent theses:

"Writing on the backs of the blacks: literacy, creole and language change in the Northern Territory" by Mari Rhydwen (PhD Thesis, Sydney University, 1994).

[not seen by the editor]

"Kriol on the move: An investigation into the spread of a creole language in Northern Australia" by Jennifer M. Munro (BA Honours thesis, University of New England, 1995).

This thesis compares the linguistic features of regional varieties of Kriol and looks at the socio-historic background to examine the alternate hypotheses of independent development vs language spread and shift.

Recent publications:

Aboriginal languages in education edited by Deborah Hartman and John Henderson (IAD Press, Alice Springs, 1994) contains a chapter by Christine Nicholls entitled "Vernacular language programs and bilingual education programs in Aboriginal Australia: Issues and ideologies" (pp.124-34). This includes a brief discussion of research on the Barunga Kriol-English bilingual program.

Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia edited by Michael Walsh and Collin Yallop (Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1993) has two chapters on Kriol. "Losing and gaining a language: The story of Kriol in the Northern Territory" by John Harris (pp.145-54) gives an account of the origins and development of Kriol as a new Aboriginal language. "Kriol: the creation of a written language and tool of colonialization" by Mari Rhydwen (pp.155-68) discusses the issues involved in creole literacy—especially with regard to the development of orthographies for different regional varieties.

CONFERENCES

Several sessions on pidgins, creoles and language contact in general were at the Second International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics in Suva, Fiji, 3-7 July. It was decided to form the Pacific Area Contact Linguistics Association (PACLA) which will meet again in conjunction with the next Oceanic Linguistics conference, at University of Waikato (Hamilton, New Zealand) 8-12 January, 1997. Papers on pidgins and creoles in education will be most welcome. For further information, or to put your name on the mailing list, contact Jeff Siegel.