

Pidgins and Creoles in Education (PACE) NEWSLETTER

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SHORT REPORTS

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*Kolegio Erasmo: The first school with
Papiamentu as the language of instruction*

“In 1987 a convinced group of parents, represented by the *Fundashon pa Skol Humanista na Papiamentu* ‘Foundation for Humanist Schools in Papiamentu’ started the first school in the Netherlands Antilles with Papiamentu as the language of instruction, the *Kolegio Erasmo*. The school is named after the Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus.

In 1997 a four grade high school, *Skol Avansá Integrá* (SKAI = sky) was added to the six year primary school while currently the school is moving towards a full pre-University High School with General as well as Advanced levels. It has about 500 pupils in total, three hundred in the elementary level and two hundred in SKAI. Passes of the High School are high and promising (82% in 2001; 95.2% in 2002...) compared to the national average score of around 70%.”

The new government coalition that was formed on June 25, 2003 declared in its governing programme its intention to introduce Papiamentu as a language of instruction up till pre-University level, taking thereby the *Kolegio Erasmo* as a pilot-school.”

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*A summary of literature and literacy
activities in Solomon Islands Pijin*

Bible Translation

The Pijin New Testament was published in 1993. This is the most significant piece of Pijin literature in circulation (in terms of size and some would also say content). The initial print run of 15000 is sold out.

The translation of the Old Testament into Pijin commenced in 1995. Completion of this and a minor revision of the New Testament is anticipated for an early 2005 release of the Bible in Pijin. Various trial editions of sections of the Old Testament are in circulation.

Other literature produced by translation

In 1996 a Sustainable Forestry training manual in Pijin was translated for a project on the island of Isabel.

In 1999 the census questions in the Solomon Islands 1999 National Population census were translated into Pijin as a resource for census enumerators. While the census recording form had English questions, the enumerators were give the questions in Pijin so that there would be quality control of the explanation of the questions to citizens who could not understand English.

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In 1999 and 2000 various peace agreements were translated into Pijin. The last of these was the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000. This can be viewed by following the links at: <http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb/NEWS/News_summary.asp>

In 2001 a booklet of articles in Pijin on themes related to the end of the conflict and restoration of society was published by the Solomon Islands Christian Association Peace Office. Some of the articles were authored in Pijin others were translated from English. Those authored in Pijin were also translated into English. The booklet was published in a bilingual format with columns of Pijin and English side by side.

Literacy primer production, basic reading books and courses continue to be available in various forms. These are being produced and conducted by church groups, Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group and by the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal article

“The use of Creole alongside Standard English to stimulate students’ learning” by William Henry in *Forum*, vol.42, no.1, 2000, pp.23-7). The author of this article is a teacher of English and History at a Caribbean Saturday Supplementary School in London, attended largely by students of African and Caribbean origin, with ages ranging from 5 to 16. The article explores the question: What are the advantages of valuing Creole in the school when the teaching is aimed at the acquisition of standard English? Several answers are given. The first has to do with cognitive reasons: it is easier for students to use their home language, rather than a new language, to acquire knowledge and develop intellectually.

The second answer is concerned with issues of identity: “All dialects or Creoles are close to the speakers’ identity and feelings of self worth” (p.24). Black people in Britain already face prejudice, discrimination and negative stereotyping in the media, and their history and culture are not sufficiently

regarded by society in general, including the schools. The author notes that “by allowing black children the freedom to use some Creole in their written work, we are exposing them to their roots and introducing white children to the richness of another culture. This should lead to greater mutual respect...” (pp.24-5).

Another benefit of using Creole in the classroom is that children enjoy it, and this increases their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Although some parents oppose the use of Creole in education because of the dominant standard language ideology, many others support the idea.

Books and Book chapters

On Jamaican Creole

Two publications have appeared concerning Jamaican Creole and education. The first is *The Role of Jamaican Creole in Language Education* by Velma Pollard (Society for Caribbean Linguistics Popular Series Paper No.2, 2002). This short booklet (10 pages) first describes the place of Jamaican Creole (JC) and English in Jamaica, and the social and linguistic relationships between them. The author notes that in talking about the role of JC in language education one is actually talking about the role of JC in teaching English. She argues that the first step is to acknowledge the existence of the two languages in Jamaica and how they complement each other, and to teach the appropriate contexts of use of each of them. Pollard believes that the main goal of teachers should be teaching English so that children can become bilingual.

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She recommends literature as an important resource for teachers, particularly in making students aware of the distinctions between JC and English, and also suggests the use of translation activities.

Language in Jamaica by Pauline Christie (Arawak Publications, Kingston, 2003) has a chapter on "Language in Education" (pp.39-49). The author reports that a large proportion of Jamaican students come to school as monolingual speakers of JC with little exposure to English. Up to 1998, fewer than half of the candidates from Jamaica who sat for the Caribbean Examinations Council exams passed in English (p.40).

Christie cites the stigmatization of students' home language in the schools as one reason for this failure, and she defends the idea of stopping the rejection of children's mother tongue in the school environment:

It could at least lead to a lessening of the culture shock experienced by some children when they first arrive at school and the feeling of alienation this often engenders. ... If children do not feel at home in school, some of them soon reject it and simultaneously set up a block against learning English which is associated in their minds with school. (p.40)

With regard to suggestions that standards would improve if children heard only standard English at home and school, the author says that this is completely impractical in the real Jamaica, where code-switching is the norm, and many parents do not know much standard English.

Christie also refers to the work of Dennis Craig showing that school children often fail to recognize the structural differences between their own language and standard English, and suggests that "teachers have to know more about the structure and also the social roles of both English and Creole" (p.42).

The chapter continues with a discussion of recent calls from different interest groups for the place of JC in the education system to be formalized. There have been strong reactions against these calls by the media and the general public, expressing the following concerns: that using Creole would threaten English as the medium of instruction, that

Creole is not qualified to have a role in education (and never could be), and that such proposals are aimed at keeping Jamaicans backward. The author observes (pp.43-4): "Those who consider that Creole is an extra resource to be exploited rather than kept in a back room are treated as hypocrites."

Three main viewpoints about the use of JC in education are then described. The first view is to use Creole as a medium of instruction. This view does not deny the importance of English, but rather promotes bilingual education. Its two main priorities are "(1) to minimize the psychological problems arising from the gap between home and school [and] (2) to help the child achieve proficiency in English" (p.44). Another related perspective is that Creole should be used orally in the schools to facilitate ease of transition and early learning, but English should be introduced early and take over as the medium of instruction as soon as students are proficient enough in it. This perspective "is informed by research findings that children learn best in their native language in their early years" but "it acknowledges that Creole is not ready for use as a language of literacy, nor is establishing literacy in Creole, even at the initial stage of schooling, considered a priority" (p.45).

The second view is to teach Creole in schools. This view is often misunderstood to mean teaching the language to children who already know it. However, it really refers to teaching about the language, its varieties, and its written form, much as English-speaking students are taught English in other countries.

The third view is to "make use of Creole in school as considered necessary in specified situations" (p.45). According to this view, English should remain the medium of instruction, but teachers should use Creole where necessary to make sure their students understand the subject matter. (Of course, as Christie points out, many teachers have been using Creole informally in this way for a long time, both consciously and unconsciously.) This view is the one currently advocated by the Ministry of Education. Christie reports (p.46):

The ROSE (Reform of Secondary Education) programme endorsed by the Ministry also proposes that students should be allowed to express themselves freely, employing whatever variety makes them comfortable in the classroom and outside. In other words, while English should be the sole formal medium of education, teachers should help their pupils to acquire it by making it easier for them to learn all subjects and also by making them feel less self-conscious about the language they bring to school.

This policy comes a long way from the days when Creole was officially banned from classrooms.

Christie goes on to mention some practical criticisms of each of these views – some concerning costs of classroom materials and training teachers and others concerning negative public attitudes. The linguistic problems also exist with regard to the difficulty of separating Creole and English, and the fact that a significant number of children would not be familiar with a standardized Creole. But with regard to the criticism that using Creole in schools would “keep Jamaicans backward”, Christie points out that the traditional education system, in which over half the students fail, has already kept many Jamaicans backward (p.48). She concludes:

[T]o recognize the potential of Creole is neither pandering to more or less monolingual Creole speakers nor “descending” to their level. Rather, it is going where they are, in an effort to improve their status in society by helping them to gain more from their schooling, including more English. The aim is to have learning designed *for* them rather than *in spite of* them. The real issue today is not whether Creole should be taken seriously into account in educational planning but rather whether we can afford not to take it seriously into account in one way or another.

The final chapter in the book, “The Jamaican situation in perspective” also contains a section on “Creoles in education” (pp.56-61). This section first describes the use of creole languages as the medium of instruction to teach initial literacy in three different countries: Haiti, Curaçao (Netherlands Antilles) [see report above], and the Seychelles. It also describes other initiatives using pidgins and creoles in the

classroom, including Ron Kephart’s efforts to teach initial literacy in Carriacou Creole and Katherine Fischer’s Caribbean Academic Program in Evanston, Illinois, and the current editor’s research on the use of Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. Christie summarized the most important lessons that Jamaicans can learn from these cases (p.60):

1. Learning to read and write in Creole initially does not negatively affect the learning of the official language.
2. Learners readily transfer reading and writing skills learned in Creole to learning to read and write the official European language.
3. Social and political factors, from both the leaders’ viewpoint and that of the alleged beneficiaries, play a significant role in the success or otherwise of policy decisions about language.
4. Teaching children about Creole is a useful means of overcoming the stigma traditionally attached to it.

On African American English

Lisa J. Green’s *African American English: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002) has a chapter titled “Approaches, attitudes and education” (pp.216-242). This begins with a discussion of the relationship between African American English (AAE) and mainstream English (ME), the variety closest to the standard, and attitudes toward AAE as a distinct variety. She points out that many African Americans do not like to see AAE characterized as unique and substantially different from ME because it once again sets them apart from other Americans. This could mean “buying into, if not providing more evidence for, the claim that African Americans are inferior and language is just another deficiency” (p.222). Green says such misconceptions and negative attitudes toward AAE can be countered to some extent by more clear descriptions of its rules and patterns in order to show that it is a legitimate variety, and not slang or incorrect English.

After a discussion of attitudes toward AAE and employment, Green goes into the topic of education. First she describes the issue of the “over-diagnosing and mislabeling child AAE speakers as being communica-

tively impaired” (p.227). Part of the problem is that AAE children’s language is judged according to standards of the ME-speaking community. She describes a research project at the University of Massachusetts to develop a language assessment instrument specifically for child AAE speakers.

Green goes on to review AAE and education from the 1960s to the 21st century. She demonstrates how African American children still lag behind whites in reading levels, and notes that since the 1960s sociolinguists have been advocating that the differences between children’s language (AAE) and ME should be taken into account. Suggestions have also been made that texts and other materials written in AAE should be used in the classroom. However, as Green points out, most parents would not agree with these methods because “schools are viewed as the very places where children can and should be able to escape from the nonstandard language of the street and the less educated” (p.230). Another criticism against the validation of AAE in the classroom is that those who are advocating it have already learned the standard and are benefiting from it; using AAE in the classroom will deny children the chance to use the standard and therefore deny them the chance to receive the same benefits.

With regard to classroom strategies, Green shows how constant correction is a “very ineffective and counterproductive” practice (p.234) because it inhibits students’ participation in the educational process. (This is not to say, however, that poor performance should be accepted.) She presents five principles put forward by Labov that may be useful for teaching reading to AAE speakers.

Green continues by describing the “contrastive analysis” approach which helps students to analyse the differences between their own home varieties and the standard. This approach has been advocated by many sociolinguists and teachers. Finally, she discusses the use of reading materials in AAE or “dialect readers”. These have produced some positive results and are also advocated by many sociolinguists as a means not only

for teaching reading, but also for legitimizing the language. However, Green points out some complications with using them, in addition to parents’ resistance. These include changing lexical items, no conventional ways of spelling, and no information about children’s development in AAE.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of teachers in implementing classroom strategies for AAE speakers. First of all, these strategies do not require teachers to teach AAE, because children have already acquired it. Instead, teachers should “be responsible for understanding and respecting students’ language and providing accurate mainstream English patterns that correspond to the patterns in the child’s native dialect” (p.240).

Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture by Marcyliena Morgan (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002) also has a chapter on educational issues: “Language, discourse and power: outing schools” (pp.132-52). The author stresses that “even though much of the cultural activity, creativity and intelligence [of African Americans] described in earlier chapters have been ignored or denigrated within school systems, black people believe that education is the key to success” (p.134). However, she attempts to answer two important questions: “First, how does the education system understand and address African American language and cultural practices? Second, why do some scholars consistently insist that black students oppose formal education... and what, if anything, does this have to do with language? (p.134).

Morgan points out that during the public ridicule of AAE in the Ebonics debate following the Oakland School Board resolution in 1996, one view which emerged was that “black people speak AAE because they don’t want to participate in American society in the same way as whites” (p.135). The educational policy that goes along with this view is that African American children should be taught only basic skills that prepare them for “non-career employment”.

The opposing view was that “black people speak AAE for cultural and historical reasons and because of race and class discrimination” (p.135). The educational policy that goes along with this view is that African American children should be taught not only basic skills but other areas that will enable them to choose any employment that they wish. She then gives some historical background about the “educating to do and work” versus the “educating to know and learn” positions (p.136). But in the wake of the Ebonics debate, there was widespread agreement in the African American community that all children should learn to speak “good English” – i.e., mainstream English.

The chapter then goes into a discussion of “social psychological theories about literacy, race and social class in research and educational policy” (p.137), including the deficit and deprivation approaches and the teaching Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) approach of the 1970s, which included some dialect materials. She observes:

[A]dministrators of SESD programs did little to explain these programs to parents and inform them about the dialect materials and how they would be used in the teaching of standard literacy. Nor did they train teachers about stereotypes, racism and the relationship between language and culture, historical and language loyalty issues. This failure to inform both parents and teachers had dire effects on all SESD programs.

Parents were rightly concerned that these programs “did not highlight the social functions of literacy” (p.140).

Next is a brief description of the origins of the Ebonics philosophy – focussing on AAE as a unique variety of language that has African roots, and as an important part of African American culture and heritage.

Morgan continues by describing the mismatch between working-class and African American culture and the white middle-class culture of the schools. She notes (p.143):

It is the unspoken dirty secret of public education: to receive a middle-class education you must criticise working-class and African American cultural practices. This creates a crisis of identity and loyalty for students who want to excel academically without sacrificing membership in their community.

Morgan describes Carter G. Woodson’s notion of the “educated fool” – “one whose education has made him or her ashamed of African American history and culture” (p.144). And she implies that educated African Americans who are opposed to AAE are in this category. It is therefore true that many African Americans associate the education system with whiteness and see it as responsible for perpetuating negative attitudes toward their culture and language. But Morgan argues that this does not mean that African Americans do not value education, and she presents a list of studies showing that education was a prestige indicator in African American communities until the 1960s.

The chapter concludes by citing research which shows that rather than resisting education in general, African American students are resisting racial stereotypes and the denigration of the language and culture in the education system. Morgan asks (p.151):

The question that arises is whether African Americans want to be like the very people who seem to want to eradicate their language and culture, and whether refusing to be like them will result in exclusion from the resources and rewards deemed necessary to survive in the United States.

Part IV of *Sociocultural and Historical Contexts of African American English* edited by Sonja L. Lanehart (Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2001) is titled “African American English and Education” and contains four chapters. The first is “The role of family, community, and school in children’s acquisition and maintenance of African American English” by Toya A. Wyatt (pp.261-80). The author first gives an overview of various theories of child language acquisition/development, and then describes how children from African American English (AAE)-speaking backgrounds are virtually the same as children from General American English (GAE)-speaking backgrounds in their language development up to age 3. She then discusses language diversity in the AAE child speech community as a function of social class, region, and language change, and

cautions that educators “must avoid viewing the language development of all African American children as homogeneous” (p.268). Speech and language clinicians should also be careful to distinguish speech disorders from normal AAE use for a particular social group.

Wyatt goes on to describe variation as a function of linguistic context and setting, and looks at the development of bilingual abilities with regard to the second-dialect learning of GAE. She points out that reactions and views of teachers, parents and peers to AAE and GAE have an important effect on second-dialect learning, and warns (p.275): “The unconscious or conscious denigration of a child’s home language by teachers – whether direct, indirect, or implied – can have deleterious consequences for second-dialect learner success.” In addition, educators need to be aware that some African American students may experience social pressure not to use GAE where AAE is a key badge of social identity or solidarity – especially during the teenage years. Finally, they should be aware of “African Americans’ resistance to the use of AAE in the instructional process” (p.276).

The next chapter, by Michèl Foster is “Pay Leon, pay Leon, pay Leon paleontologist: Using call-and-response to facilitate language mastery and literacy acquisition among African American students” (pp.281-98). The author advocates the use of AAE prosody or discourse modes, not just AAE phonology and syntax, in the educational process. Here she describes the use of one such discourse mode, “call-and-response” by one teacher in primary school classrooms in San Francisco, and shows how it was successful in teaching phonemic awareness, vocabulary development and other skills, as well as in increasing enthusiasm and motivation among the students. Foster notes that in using call-and-response, the teacher used the students own social, cultural and linguistic knowledge “to help students become skillful and adept at handling new vocabulary words” (p.295). She continues:

At the same time that the teacher honored and drew upon students’ indigenous linguistic

abilities, she juxtaposed these abilities with other linguistic forms that she helped the students appreciate and learn. This included patterns of discourse that invited students to articulate a deeper understanding by talking aloud about the process of problem solving or decision making...

William Labov is the author of the following chapter, “Applying our knowledge of African American English to the problem of raising reading levels in inner-city schools” (pp.299-317). He describes the “profound and persistent” gap between reading achievement of “Euro-Americans” and African Americans (p.301), and reports on a teaching method aimed at reducing this gap. This method involves “direct instruction on the ways in which letters of the alphabet combine to signal the sounds of English” (p.307) – for example, that in a word with the structure C-V-C(e) the final -e is not pronounced and the preceding vowel is long (with a few exceptions). The experiments reported in this chapter show that the method is effective in significantly reducing error rates in reading and raising children’s reading levels to the Basic level that is required by the educational system. However, the method is not so successful in teaching the decoding of final consonant clusters, which in AAE have a higher rate of simplification than in other dialects of English. In this regard, Labov reports on a program going beyond phonemic awareness to teach “morphophonemic awareness”, to “develop the recognition of the abstract rule that hides the inaudible – and invisible – stops in *ghosts, wasps, desks*” (p.315).

The final chapter in this section is by John Baugh: “Applying linguistic knowledge of African American English to help students learn and teachers teach” (pp.319-330). Baugh argues that “all successful education is a cooperative enterprise” (p.319), and to improve the educational prospects for African American students, there must be collaborative cooperation among “adult educational advocates” (including parents and teachers), professional educators (teachers, administrators, staff members), and the students themselves. At the same time, progress cannot be made as long as

uninformed linguistic stereotypes about AAE being incorrect English prevail among educators, and as long as a large number of schools continue to lack resources and adequate standards. He concludes by saying that “teachers who are respectful of their students, including their linguistic heritage and vernacular culture, are much more likely to be successful than are teachers who devalue students who lack General American English proficiency” (p.329).

In the last chapter of the book, “Reconsidering the sociolinguistic agenda for African American English: The next generation of research and application” (pp.321-62), Walt Wolfram also touches on some educational issues. He asserts that there is no rigorous evidence of success in teaching GAE as a second dialect, and articulates some principles that “might promote the prospects of success without compromising the sociolinguistic integrity of speakers” (pp.349-50). These are also relevant to teaching standard varieties to speakers of creole, and include the following:

The teaching of GAE must take into account the importance of the group reference factor. Students will not be motivated to study a dialect that they cannot imagine themselves using; but if they see that their own group uses the dialect for certain purposes or groups that they would like to be included in use the dialect, they are more likely to regard dialect development as a sensible, natural extension of their language knowledge.

The teaching of GAE should produce an understanding of the systematic differences and social marking between GAE and vernacular forms, beginning with heavily stigmatized features which affect large classes of items. (p.350)

Wolfram also advocates teaching about the nature of dialect diversity, especially through “dialect awareness programs”. He observes (p.351): “The level of misinformation and prejudice about language diversity in general and African American speech in particular remains abysmally high; hence there is great need for the adoption of school-based and community based language awareness programs.”

CUTTINGS FROM NEWSPAPERS

from *The Christian Science Monitor*
(April 15, 2003)

<<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0415/p13s02-lecs.html>>

From the islands to the classroom and back

The Creole language of Cape Verde found reinforcement from an unexpected source – the bilingual-education law in Massachusetts. Now, that law has been repealed.

By Cheryl de Jong-Lambert

Language is one of the deepest legacies of colonialism. In most countries that gained independence from foreign rule, the language of the colonizer persists in schools and government offices.

Yet for the business of everyday life – raising families, bargaining at the market, and chatting with friends – people usually speak something else, be it an ancient indigenous language, or a creole or pidgin that blends the colonizer’s tongue with their own.

This dual-language situation gives rise to the question: What language should a nation officially call its own? In the arid Cape Verde islands, 380 miles off the coast of West Africa, this query is rising with new urgency thanks to interjection by an unlikely contingent: expatriates now living in Massachusetts.

Non-English speakers there were required by a state law to be taught in their first language. The Cape Verde immigrants in the US faced an unusual obstacle: Their language was primarily oral, not written, so suitable textbooks did not exist. As educators in Massachusetts began to design a curriculum to teach Creole, their counterparts in Cape Verde saw an opportunity.

If they could use these teaching materials in their own classes, the hope of making Creole an official language, together with Portuguese, might be realized.

Now, however, that window of opportunity may be closing. The 30-year-old Massachusetts bilingual-education law is being scrapped at the end of this school year.

The statute was overturned by a 68 percent vote in last fall's elections.

"Bilingual education forced Cape Verdeans [in Massachusetts] to develop the written language," says Gunga Tavares, cultural attaché for the Consulate General of Cape Verde in Boston. "There is now a whole range of experience from here that can be used [in Cape Verde]. Why reinvent the wheel?"

Too obscure a language?

Since Cape Verde won independence in 1975, sporadic efforts were made to use Creole – a mix of several African languages and Portuguese – in official situations. But Mr. Tavares says the enormous task of developing and installing written Creole in schools, courts, and ministry offices thwarted officials. "When you say you're going to have school be in Creole [in Massachusetts], it is much easier than doing it for the whole country [in Cape Verde]."

But with fewer than 1 million Cape Verdean Creole speakers globally, opponents argue that students would be better off continuing to learn in Portuguese, a widely spoken language.

Cape Verde is home to about 430,000 people, and an estimated 350,000 immigrants and subsequent-generation Cape Verdeans live in New England, where their ancestors migrated in droves on whaling ships in the 1800s. Cape Verdean communities also dot Europe, South America, and Africa.

Because children on the islands are not exposed to Portuguese until they enter school at age 6, they spend a lot of time learning it – much the way immigrant students in an English-only classroom would do in the United States. "When you go to school in Portuguese [in Cape Verde], you spend five years learning how to say chair or table," Tavares explains, adding that students cannot express themselves or learn new material as quickly or as well in Portuguese.

About five years ago, the council of ministers in Cape Verde agreed to put the Massachusetts-developed Creole writing system on trial in schools and government offices, says Manuel Gonçalves, a bilingual guidance counselor who just published "Pa

Nu Papia Kriolu" (Let's Speak Creole), a book on Creole language acquisition.

In 1999, Cape Verde's minister of education visited several Boston schools to watch bilingual education in action and to start an exchange between schools in Massachusetts and Cape Verde, Tavares says. Cape Verde's Constitution was also revised that year to endorse the idea of bringing Creole into "every segment of society."

Indigenous languages like Creole would then be used for elementary education, lower courts, hospitals, and many radio broadcasts, says Eyamba Bokamba, a professor of linguistics and African languages at the University of Illinois.

At the elementary level, students study an international language – such as Portuguese – as a subject in school, and then go on to secondary school in that language to acquire fluency. South Africa, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, and Nigeria are among the few African countries that have two official languages, he says.

"Most African countries have language policies that advocate use of the colonial language in education and government, and in most instances more than 80 percent of the population is not conversant in that language," Professor Bokamba says. "But there is a sizable population that needs to be served."

Massachusetts, which in 1971 was the first state to pass a bilingual-education law, has decided to replace bilingual education with a one-year English-immersion program for immigrants. Voters in California and Arizona also overturned bilingual-education laws in recent years.

In a bilingual-education program, students who speak little or no English could spend up to three years taking subjects like math and science in their first language while receiving supplementary English-language instruction. The idea was to bring students up to speed in English while still advancing their knowledge in other subjects.

Opponents charged that too many students languished in bilingual classes in every language, ultimately graduating from an

American high school without the ability to speak, read, or write in English. In immersion programs, students focus on learning English for one year before being ushered into all their subject classes in English.

Tavares and Gonçalves, who are recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as leaders in the Creole bilingual movement, agree that the demise of bilingual education is a setback for the Creole-education effort in Cape Verde – and for continued cultural development in the US. With low per capita income, according to the embassy website, and no universities, Cape Verde lacks the resident linguists needed to develop the written language and the funds to pay them.

“The seed is there,” Gonçalves says. “I just hope that individuals who have the knowledge will transmit it. It will be harder with no institution to guide them, but I don’t think it will die.”

Missing a connection

In the past few years, the movement’s momentum has included the Creole publication of some dozen books on language, poetry, and fiction. There are also many instructional materials from Massachusetts that could be used in Cape Verdean classrooms. But still, supporters say, something is lost.

“It’s one thing to look at a pile of books, and another to have an exchange with a live classroom,” Tavares says. People also need to learn the writing system in order to read the materials in it, says Gonçalves, who has taught Creole classes to adults at the University of Massachusetts, Boston University, and Rhode Island College.

As education officials in Cape Verde continue to consider schools for a Creole pilot program, the Ministry of Education has supported first-language instruction through a radio program on the station RTC. Every afternoon students can tune in to have all their subjects explained in Creole...

In the absence of video coverage – since television is a luxury – the program does not advance the effort of making written Creole widely available, but she says it does enable students to catch information they may have

missed or misunderstood in the Portuguese classroom.

However, given Creole’s obscurity and the fact that there are scores of dialects scattered about the islands, some educators feel that it is politically and logistically difficult to use Creole in the classroom. For these reasons, Rhode Island teaches its large Cape Verdean student population in Portuguese rather than in Creole.

“When students come from Cape Verde, many speak Portuguese very well,” says Maria Lindia, a bilingual-education coordinator in Rhode Island. “Since there are problems in spoken and written Creole, our students participate in a Portuguese bilingual program.”

Those who arrive in Rhode Island without any schooling go into an English as a Second Language program, she says.

With more than 120 language groups to cater to in the system, schools would have a tough time implementing bilingual programs, Ms. Lindia says. “Often we don’t have enough students – or the qualified teachers – for a bilingual class.”

Forced homogeneity is what Creole supporters and bilingual advocates in other languages are fighting against. “Language identifies us as a separate group,” Tavares says. “Otherwise we are identified as Portuguese. Using Creole is not only to learn better, but to have an identity.”

Just as agreeing on a language to use in class can be a prickly issue, capturing the language in writing can be similarly challenging. Like indigenous languages around the world, a written form for Cape Verdean Creole was devised in the 19th century when missionaries and colonial officials needed a basic written language to carry out their work.

These early writing systems generally used letters and accents from the colonizing language, which linguists are trying to expunge today. As such, the modern alphabets are usually phonetically based, with one letter representing only one sound and representing that sound consistently.

For this reason, there is no “C” in the Massachusetts-developed Creole. “C” does

exist in Portuguese, but Gonçalves says it is superfluous because, as in English, its soft sound can be made by the “s” (like “cyber”) and its hard sound by the “k” (as in “cafe”).

And with that, the name of the country changes from Cabo Verde in Portuguese to Kaboverde in Creole, a difference so dramatic even supporters like Tavares challenge it. “The argument against it is more emotional than scientific,” she says. “It is strange to see Cape Verde spelled with a ‘K’. I’m sure it makes sense from a linguistic point of view, but ordinary people like me don’t like it or understand it.”

Gonçalves says that the spelling difference is the essence of the language distinction. Beyond the loss of funding for curriculum development to aid the Creole movement in Cape Verde, educators in Massachusetts are worried about how the demise of bilingual education will affect students.

Without a gentler transition through Creole, Gonçalves and Tavares say that culture shock – as well as catching up academically – may be harder for both new immigrants and students who are born into Creole-speaking homes here. “It is a disaster,” Gonçalves says. “Kids were able to learn in their own language and culture. We sent thousands of kids to college through bilingual education.”

SPECIAL BOOK REPORT

Lisa Delpit and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy have edited an excellent collection of 12 articles that are all relevant to issues surrounding the use of creoles and non-mainstream dialects in education: *The Skin that We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom* (The New Press, New York, 2002). The purpose of the book is “to explore the links between language and identity, between language and political hierarchy, and between language and cultural conflict” (p.xviii), and it is concerned primarily with language and education. The book has an introduction by Lisa Delpit and 3 parts. Each chapter has an introductory summary, quoted in part below.

Part 1: Language and Identity:

Ch.1: OVAH DYUH by Joanne Kilgour Dowdy

At her mother’s insistence, coeditor Joanne Kilgour Dowdy learned as a child in Trinidad how to perfectly imitate British English, the idiom of the colonizer and Trinidadian public life. The cost of acquiring this “skill” was alienation from her peers and also from herself; though “the Queen’s English” won her a certain kind of social affirmation, it prevented her from relating to friends and stymied the expression of her vital, inner feelings. ... One’s “language of intimacy” must be validated in the public sphere, Dowdy urges, in order to eradicate the schism in colonized societies – and colonized individuals – between master discourse and the language of personal expression.

Ch. 2: EBONICS: A CASE HISTORY by Ernie Smith

Ernie Smith, now a renowned linguist and powerful public orator, tells the story of his life through the story of his language. From his first experience with school, his language was labeled deficient. School authorities placed him first in remedial courses and then, finally, at a vocational school where he wouldn’t need to learn “sophisticated” speech. After graduating, Smith hit the streets. It was out there that he received his most extensive education in language, learning now to seamlessly switch back and forth between Ebonics... and Standard English. Eventually Smith was inspired to return to school, and he went on to become the speaker he is today. ... Only when “Standard English” was modeled by those whose ideas called for the political liberation of African Americans did the standard become acceptable to him as a language choice.

Part 2: Language in the Classroom:

Ch. 3: NO KINDA SENSE by Lisa Delpit

When Lisa Delpit’s eleven-year-old daughter, Maya, transfers to a school where most of the students are African American, her self-esteem soars. She also transfers from Standard English to African American English. Even while struggling to understand her own emotional response to Maya’s newly acquired language form, the author is amazed at how quickly her daughter picks it up. She realizes that her daughter is learning it from friends who welcome her as brilliant and beautiful – “part of the club”. She concludes that if schools are to be as successful at teaching Standard English, they must be just as welcoming – of the children, of their lives, and of the worlds that interest them. ...

Ch. 4: TRILINGUALISM by Judith Baker

Judith Baker is a high school English teacher who has discovered that when students know

that their “home” language is respected, they can be fascinated by a study of the different “Englishes” they speak. ... When formal English no longer threatens to demean, students are more than willing to master it. When teachers understand that they cannot force a language form upon their students, those students are more than willing to acknowledge that being “trilingual” – being as proficient in formal English and professional or technical English as they are in their “home” English – can only make them more effective.

Ch. 5: SOME BASIC SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONCEPTS by Michael Stubbs

Like other authors in this collection, linguist Michael Stubbs examines the relationships between language and perceptions of social class, level of education, and family background. He describes the exquisite sensitivity listeners have to the social implications of dialect and accent and the perception that speech which deviates from standard spoken English is slovenly or ugly. This is familiar territory. What is unfamiliar is that Stubbs is examining these phenomena in Great Britain, where people being stereotyped by their vernacular are those who come from Birmingham, East London, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Glasgow. Stubbs believes that children should be taught (warned of) the conventions of English so that they can, if they wish, match their speech to the setting in which they find themselves. They should not, however, be told that their language is wrong.

Ch. 6: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND THE ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN by Asa G. Hilliard III

Because teaching and learning are rooted in environments that are shaped by politics, says psychologist and historian Asa Hilliard, educational assessments of African American children cannot be divorced from the historically oppressed status of African Americans in the United States. Hilliard dismantles the notion that African American culture is an insufficient reflection of Western culture, or that Ebonics is an inadequate attempt at Standard English. Instead he provides a picture of the richness of the culture and language, not only as independent entities, but as major contributors to larger American society. He urges us to produce educators who can examine the big picture behind an education system that assesses not a child’s aptitude for learning, but which words she speaks.

Ch. 7: I AIN’T WRITIN’ NUTTIN’: PERMISSIONS TO FAIL AND DEMANDS TO SUCCEED IN URBAN CLASSROOMS” by Gloria J. Ladson-Billings

In a first-grade classroom, a child is about the educationally shortchanged. Shannon, a six-year-old speaker of African American language, has been asked to think of a sentence about something special, share that sentence, and then write it down. It’s a clear assignment. However, all that takes for Shannon to be passed over with a “maybe you’ll feel like writing tomorrow” from the teacher is a shake of the little girl’s head and a firm announcement, “I ain’t writin’ nuttin’!” In contrast, Ladson-Billings tells us about a teacher who galvanizes his poor and working-class African American students who “hate” to write by creating culturally responsive lessons that include music and drama as precursors to writing. ... It is fine, the author tells us, to empathize with students, but don’t allow their language or attitudes to lower expectations of their abilities or to compromise your own willingness to see creative educational solutions.

Ch. 8: “... AS SOON AS SHE OPENED HER MOUTH!”: ISSUES OF LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND POWER” by Victoria Purcell-Gates

Language and discrimination is not always a Black-White issue. Victoria Purcell-Gates’s two-year ethnography of a White family from southern Appalachia introduces us to Donny, the barely literate young boy of two barely literate parents. Donny was written off as a hopeless case by his teachers as early as second grade. He had not ever been exposed to the acts of reading and writing before coming to school, and had not, therefore, developed a concept of literacy as many of his middle-class peers had. His teachers treated this difference in experience as an intellectual deficiency: instead of introducing Donny to the culture of literacy and helping him use his oral language to access the printed word, they assumed that he was less capable of learning and associated his hillbilly language with intractable ignorance. It is the duty of teachers to guide all students to literacy with equal rigor, insists Purcell-Gates, without ever telling them that the language they speak is wrong.

Part 3: Teacher Knowledge

Ch. 9: TOPSY-TURVIES: TEACHER TALK AND STUDENT TALK by Herbert Kohl

Students are very sensitive to the language of their teachers – the words, the tone, its trustworthiness – while teachers are insufficiently aware of how they are being heard and understood. Without this awareness, this “attunement”, teachers may find that their students are hearing something quite different from what the teacher hears herself saying, or from what she had hoped to say. A classroom can unravel quickly when vigilant students

detect insincerity, condescension, anti-Semitism, racism, or even fear and uncertainty. To avoid this, teachers need to do what Herb Kohl calls making a topsy-turvy. Teachers must analyze how they are presenting themselves and then make a 180-degree shift and construct how their students hear them. Teachers must listen to their students, and they must also listen to themselves being listened to.

Ch. 10: TOWARD A NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY ON LANGUAGE by Geneva Smitherman

In this 1986 piece, Geneva Smitherman addresses the NCTE [National Council of Teachers of English] and the CCCC [Conference on College Composition and Communication] with a direct and compelling call to action. Smitherman's challenge to these groups comes twelve years after both groups passed resolutions affirming the right of students to speak their own language. Just as those resolutions did not stem the tide of educational discrimination, so Smitherman's piece is another chapter in a frustratingly slow process. In 1988, the CCCC convened to reassess their 1974 policy in light of the growing English Only movement. They supported a principle of "English Plus", which became formally known as the National Language Policy of 1988. The components of this policy are outlined in Smitherman's article. In 2000, a survey was conducted of all members of NCTE and CCCC to assess how widely the groups' policies have taken effect. Although the survey was confined to the organizations' members – those teachers most likely to identify with the agreed-upon policy statements – 65 percent of the respondents were not familiar with the 1974 "Students' Right to Their Own Language", and 66 percent had no knowledge of the more recent National Language Policy passed in 1988.

Ch. 11: THE CLASH OF "COMMON SENSES": TWO AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN BECOME TEACHERS by Shuaib Meacham

Colleges and universities across the country are recruiting African American students to become teachers. Shuaib Meacham suggests that these efforts will not be successful if the teacher education programs do not examine their attitudes toward Black English. Linda and Tanya are young African American women preparing to be teachers, and the process itself becomes harrowing. Linda, who grew up speaking Black, or African American, English has been inspired to go into education by one of her own teachers – a "true teacher". She finds, however, that the "common sense" (generally accepted practice) of teacher preparation is "standard form, standard grammar, Standard English" and that the language she speaks, the

language that her very supportive family and all her friends speak, is deemed deficient. Tanya, on the other hand, grew up speaking Standard English, which she herself defines as "talking white". For Tanya, finding her place in the teacher education program is complicated by what becomes a vigorous struggle to maintain her own sense of cultural identity as a Black Woman.

Ch. 12: "WE DON'T TALK RIGHT. YOU ASK HIM." by Joan Wynne

After witnessing bright young students and concerned parents who stopped themselves from speaking publicly because they "don't talk right", educator Joan Wynne explored the pervasive myth of language supremacy held by students, teachers-in-training, and in-service teachers. She found that the concept of Standard English as correct, neutral, and universal is nurtured in the classroom, where it is almost always the only dialect used and accepted. First, Wynne urges, it is imperative that teachers are educated to understand that language validity is based on politics, not science; only then can they understand how the exclusive endorsement of one dialect is a disservice to all children, not only children of color. Instilling in our children respect for and familiarity with other dialects would allow them to construe a truer version of American history, be fuller human beings for having access to multiple expressions of reality, and be better prepared to deal with the complexities of a shifting, shrinking world.

CONFERENCES

A session on educational issues was held at the Summer Conference of the Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics at the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu August 14-17, 2003. Here are the abstracts of the relevant papers.

Pidgin and creole educational policies in the wake of the Ebonics controversy

John Baugh

This paper evaluates a combination of federal and state laws and corresponding educational policies for students who are speakers of pidgin and Creole languages throughout the United States, including Hawaii. Linguists such as Lippi-Green (1997) and Sato (1989) have raised important educational considerations regarding students who are not native speakers of mainstream varieties of English, and their work informs the present evaluation

of recent and on-going changes in federal and state laws that seek to modify or mandate programs for students who are not readily classified as English language learners (see Cummins 1980, Hakuta 1986, Valdés 2000).

The educational controversy that began in Oakland, California in 1996 with a resolution declaring Ebonics to be the native language of African American students within that school district exposed additional legal gaps in educational language policies. Studies by Perry and Delpit (1997), Rickford and Rickford (2000), Adger et al (2000), Baugh (2000) and Smitherman (2000) call specific attention to the educational plight of African American students. In so doing their efforts raise important educational questions that are directly or indirectly relevant to students who speak pidgin and Creole languages, especially for those varieties that were formulated in contact with English. Former secretary of Education, Richard Riley, concluded that Oakland's educators were seeking bilingual education funding, and he denied access to such funding. The legality of his assertions is called into question here.

After a brief survey of legal issues regarding Title I (for students in poverty), Title VII (for English Language Learners) and the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA, for deaf students or others with pathological linguistic handicaps), we survey LeMoine's innovative efforts in the Los Angeles Unified School District, beginning with the "Language Development Program for African American students," and its evolution into the "Academic English Mastery Program." Briefly, the latter effort, which is intended to serve students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, grows directly from bilingual education policies developed by Krashen (1984) and Cummins (1980), albeit with modifications that are intended to meet the literacy needs of traditional English language learners as well as students who are native speakers of African American vernacular English (i.e., AAVE, or Ebonics).

LeMoine's efforts, supported by a combination of federal, state, and local funds, provide a basis upon which to consider expansion to other communities that serve

pidgin and Creole students (e.g., such as students who speak Haitian Creole). However promising, we conclude with caution based on the efforts of Ron Unz, who has sponsored voter initiatives under the banner of "English for the Children." His efforts have severely constrained bilingual education, and could easily restrict programs like those developed by LeMoine in Los Angeles.

The paper concludes with precise suggestions that can circumvent Unz's efforts, and are tailored to comply with federal laws in pursuit of developing comprehensive educational language policies that are based upon the home language(s) of individual students; that is, regardless of their linguistic heritage.

AAVE and HCE: Comparative history of educational debates with policy implications

Eileen H. Tamura

Like African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) has long been a topic of educational concern. Why? Both have been prevalent and noticeable within their communities. Both have raised questions about their role in hindering the learning of standard English (SE). Both have stymied educators and been at the center of controversial policies. A comparative history of the debates generated by these two nonstandard forms of English can be instructive. The similar myths about them and the attendant issues they raise point to policy implications.

Considerable research on dialects and creoles appeared in the 1960s and 70s (Labov 1965; Jacobson 1971; Landau 1979; Wolfram & Fasold 1974). An enlightened view of nonstandard forms of English emerged, one that recognized them to have legitimate grammatical and pronunciation patterns. Efforts were made to teach teachers about ways to help students who spoke nonstandard English (e.g., Burling 1974; DeStefano 1973; Fasold 1971; Shores 1972). Despite considerable publication on stigmatized languages, however, public understanding did not follow. Two school board controversies in Hawai'i and Oakland

attest to this lack of knowledge and to the politics of language. I provide highlights of the school board controversies and discuss reasons why stigmatized dialects persist: a critical mass of like speakers; the desire to maintain fluency; in-group identity (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1997; Rickford 1998; Ogbu 2000); resistance to “acting White” (Fordham & Ogbu 1996); and issues of class (White et al 1998).

Implications for Policymakers: Academic Achievement. Scholars note the fallacy of making a linear connection between speaking and writing (Da Pidgin Coup 1999). Writing requires skills that are different from speaking (Shaughnessy 1977). But even if scholars were to establish indisputably that nonstandard forms of English are not barriers to writing, schools have the responsibility of teaching SE so that students can code-switch. Students should be given the tools to enter mainstream society should they want to do so. In this light, what is the best way to teach SE while at the same time respecting native dialects? The pedagogical literature (e.g., Harper, Braithwaite & LaGrange 1998; Hoover 1998; Perry & Delpit 1998; Taylor 1998) argues that teachers should understand the causes of student resistance, teachers should start from where the student is, teachers and students should understand the grammatical structure of the nonstandard dialect, and teachers should understand the sociological causes of low student achievement.

Politics of Language. The way people attach prestige to different language varieties, and the connection between marginal dialects and lower socioeconomic classes, make nonstandard forms of English ripe for educational controversy. In Oakland and Hawai‘i, native speakers were strong critics of AAVE and HCE—an illustration of cultural hegemony (Hall, 1997; Reyes 1987; Lippi-Green 1997; Corson 1991). Despite more than three decades of sociolinguistic research, scholars have made little headway in eliminating public ignorance about language diversity. The uproars in Hawai‘i and Oakland demonstrate the need for educators to anticipate controversy. Moreover, linguists

must continually spend considerable effort in educating each new generation.

The FELIKS Approach to teaching Standard English

Joyce Hudson & Rosalind Berry

There are many literacy programs in Australia which have been developed with the aim of improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students whose first language is a creole or a nonstandard variety of English. Since the early 90s, linguist Joyce Hudson and ESL consultant Rosalind Berry have worked with teachers and students in northern Australia developing a bidialectal program known as The FELIKS (Fostering English Language In Kimberley Schools) Approach. This includes Professional Development packages, a resource book for teachers and a video.

As creoles and non-standard dialects become prominent in education programs around the world, the need to actively teach students to develop their code-switching skills has been increasingly recognised. In 1991 Elizabeth Coelho wrote in *Caribbean Students in Canadian Schools*, Book 2: “Effective language learning takes place when students are conscious of their need to learn the new language... this means that there must be a positive awareness of language variety and of the need to select appropriate language for specific purposes.” (p.90) The FELIKS Approach focusses on this need for awareness and control of language varieties. Its central feature is the use of a Code-switching Stairway which was developed to help teachers understand the needs of students and plan activities for the classroom.

The Stairway begins at the bottom with the Awareness step. Teachers and students must first become aware of the reality of the two varieties and have a positive attitude toward the creole/nonstandard variety of English (nsE). Only then can students learn to separate the creole from the standard language (the Separation Step). Here teaching of English as a second language/dialect is emphasised. The third step is Code-switching where there is focus on developing the crucial skill of switching, competently and with

confidence, between creole/nsE and the standard variety. Finally, the top step of Control is one that continues past the classroom years and into real life. During the presentation each of the four steps will be explained and illustrated by video clips.

Australia's Indigenous people who have gained control over the standard language frequently feel that they have done so at the expense of their creole/nsE. Students who are taught using The FELIKS Approach will be encouraged to increase their skills in both the creole/nsE and the standard language, thus providing greater opportunities in the mainstream society without losing their identity.

Opportunities for rigorous testing have not been available to the developers because of the enthusiastic acceptance of the approach by both indigenous creole speakers and the teachers of English who demanded more support and resources. Energies were always directed at the practical issues of preparing more professional development and classroom resources. The presentation will include anecdotal evidence from teachers of the effectiveness of The FELIKS Approach.

Creole trilingual education –
San Andres Island, Caribbean
Ronald C. Morren

This paper presents an “applied linguistic issue”. Its primary focus is education, though historical, social, linguistic, and orthographical features are intertwined and are acknowledged and dealt with. Research in the past 50 years supports UNESCO's position that: “It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue... Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium” (UNESCO 1953: 11).

This presentation reports on a trilingual education project on the Colombian owned Caribbean Island of San Andres. On San Andres, an English lexifier Creole language is spoken known as Islander English. The main inhabitants of San Andres are of African descent. In the mid 1800s a school was established for the Islanders using standard English as the medium of instruction. “By the

end of the 19th century more than 90% of these [Islanders] were able to read and write in English” (Vollmer, 1997: 56). In 1953 Colombia declared San Andres Island a free port. Many Hispanic Colombians moved to San Andres to establish duty free businesses precipitating a demographic, economic, and linguistic change. Before long, government services were being conducted in Spanish, including public education.

Islander English-speakers became alarmed that their mother tongue, values, and cultural mores were being eroded. They recognized the importance of knowing Spanish, but did not want to lose their identity as Islander English-speakers. Therefore, some form of bilingual education utilizing both English and Spanish that simultaneously passed on their cultural heritage was favored.

After discussing various instructive possibilities with Islander English-speaking leaders a trilingual education approach was agreed upon. This begins schooling with Islander English, proceeds to standard English, and then Spanish. The goal at the end of primary schooling is age appropriate language proficiency in these three languages.

It is hypothesized that San Andres Island children who, during their pre-first and first grade of school are taught in their mother tongue and are given mother tongue support in subsequent grades, will do better academically in the content areas such as mathematics, social science, and natural science. Further, upon completion of primary school these children will be able to speak a second and third language (i.e. English and Spanish) as well as or better than other Island children who did not receive instruction in the mother tongue.

The presentation will describe the model in detail, the procedures for standardizing the orthography, the development of curriculum materials to date, and reactions of Islander English-speakers.

Forthcoming conference

SPCL will meet jointly with the Society for Caribbean Linguistics (SCL) in August 2004 in Curaçao.