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Language and Slavery: A social and linguistic history of the Suriname creoles. By Jacques Arends. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 2017. Pp. xxix, 463. Hardback €105 /US \$158 [To order electronically, visit <https://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/cll.52/main> ISBN 9789027252760; e-book, visit <http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027265807>]

Reviewed by Bettina Migge (University College Dublin)

This book has been in the making for a long time: Jacques Arends spent two decades researching it and after his untimely death in 2005, it took another decade to appear. The wait was not in vain though as the final product goes well beyond Arends' previous work, shedding new light on Suriname's early period and sociolinguistic matters. Although aspects of the volume are by now inevitably somewhat dated, it still constitutes the most comprehensive historical treatise on the emergence and early development of the Suriname creoles, and significantly enhances current knowledge on creole genesis.

The book consists of a preface, seven chapters, references, and an index. In addition, there is a short note contextualizing the circumstances of the book's publication, a preface by one of the series editor, Miriam Meyerhoff, and an introduction by Eithne Carlin that outlines the scholarly significance of the book and each chapter. The author's preface highlights the guiding theme of the book: given the biases, absences and distortions in accounts of non-European cultures, thorough critical investigation of historical facts is crucial for developing viable linguistic theories. According to Arends, the history of the Suriname Creoles has to be told "as an integral part of Suriname's history *per se*" (xxiv).

The first chapter sets the scene. The initial part gives a panoptic overview of Suriname including its location, geographic and demographic makeup. A detailed table of historical events follows. It then outlines the linguistic landscape of Suriname and the use of the Suriname Creoles in writing. Thereafter it discusses the historical relationships between the seven creoles and their predecessor, the early plantation varieties. Here we find information on the origin, linguistic nature and basic usage patterns of what Arends considers to be the main representative of the three creole clusters, Sranan (SRANAN), Ndyuka (EASTERN MAROON CREOLES) and Saamaka (WESTERN MAROON CREOLES). This section is useful but inevitably somewhat dated (see Price [2013] and Migge & Léglise [2015] for more recent work). Issues relating to the book's research approach —diachronic philology— are discussed in the final part. Included among these issues are the nature of early creole texts, an overview of diachronic research and its most important findings, as well as pertinent theoretical questions to be addressed in theories of creole genesis. Arends emphasizes the gradual nature of creole genesis and the role of substrate influence.

Chapter Two explores current understandings of the historical context of creole genesis in Suriname, revisiting existing tropes using a combination of primary and secondary historical sources to encourage "creolists [to] cease to put blind faith in secondary sources and begin studying the primary (i.e. archival and other documentary) sources themselves" (p. 99). Drawing special attention to the potential impact of the early period, the chapter examines the pre-colonization, the English (1651-1667) and the early Dutch (1667-1690) periods in some detail. Arends' analysis of the demographic and linguistic makeup and

development of the early settlements in the wider Guyana region (roughly 1530 to 1651) paints a picture of a dense network of overlapping communities that must have been instrumental in facilitating the transmission of communicative practices and agricultural knowledge which in turn spurred the emergence of the early plantation varieties and the rapid expansion of the plantation colony on the Suriname River during the 1650s. The available evidence for the English period confirms the European rather than Brazilian origin of the Sephardic population, and suggests the important role of second language varieties of English because indentured laborers were overwhelmingly of Scottish and Irish background. Slaves either originated from Africa's Slave Coast arriving via Barbados or St Kitts, or were of Arawak origin.

The early Dutch period was marked by economic stagnation and change. There was a lack of manpower and expertise in tropical agriculture as many of the English were initially encouraged to leave and to dismantle equipment. New immigration and a high birth rate ensured that population numbers nevertheless remained relatively high. The war with the Caribs altered the physical and social makeup of the colony, leading to the development of a new, linguistically heterogeneous plantation area on the Commewijne and Cottica Rivers at the onset of the expansion of the sugar economy and increasing maroonage on the Suriname River. Revisiting historical and linguistic evidence, Arends argues contra Price that the Saamaka community must have emerged during this mid-17th century period rather than after 1690.

Chapter Three expands on Arends' previous work on the colony's social structure and linguistic development. He shows that 18th century plantation society was highly stratified, and based on occupation and ethnicity. Apart from domestic staff, there were a variety of other skilled laborers and non-working staff, suggesting that field laborers often made up only half of the slave population. The relatively small number of free persons, mostly Europeans, consisted of ex-sailors and ex-soldiers working as overseers and directors. Despite the socially and ethnically hierarchical nature of colonial society, social relationships extended across ethnic and status groupings and constituted dynamic and rich networks of exchange linking plantations, plantations to Paramaribo, and Maroons to colonial society. It promoted the development of common norms besides linguistic differentiation and spurred the blurring of ethnic and social boundaries especially from the 18th century onwards when manumission accelerated in Paramaribo. Detailed demographic data on the slave trade and the colony also confirms that speakers of Gbe and Kikongo must have influenced the development of the plantation varieties and that nativization of the African population and their communicative practices was slow and rather late due to a high death rate and low proportions of women and children. Arends concludes that "creole formation in Suriname was [therefore] to a large degree a matter of second rather than first language acquisition" (p. 161).

Chapter Four investigates sociolinguistic matters including variation and change, language attitudes and usage patterns in the pre-Emancipation era. Conclusions are based on a meta-linguistic analysis of the early sources and, where available, other primary and secondary sources. This is a very welcome approach because critical social analysis is still rarely applied to historical texts in creole studies where descriptive and quantitative structural analyses still dominate (Migge & Mühleisen 2010). Arends shows that variation was present from the beginning and that patterns were systematically related to social dimensions. Ethnicity initially emerged as salient as blacks and whites were identified with different speech varieties— i.e., *nengre* and *bakra tongo*— that differed on lexical and less so on morpho-syntactic grounds. As ethnic lines blurred, so did usage patterns and prototypical

features of *bakra tongo*, which eventually acquired high social status and a flavor of “urbanity”. Plantation ownership and region also conditioned variation, as older plantations and those in the Cottica region were often linked to a higher preponderance of English terms, Sephardic plantations to Djutongo, a Portuguese-Spanish variety, and city people to Dutch. African-Creole-Maroon differences appear to have been mostly phonological in nature. Finally, Moravian missionaries’ texts are structurally similar to lay people’s texts but involved new coinages and reinterpretations to vehicle Christian concepts. Like language use, attitudes to the plantation varieties were also heterogeneous, ranging from decrying them as simple and rough to highlighting their expressiveness. In relation to language use, evidence suggests that the plantation varieties were widely used by all sections of society, and for diverse purposes. European languages such as Dutch, French and Portuguese were predominantly used by Europeans, but some members of the enslaved population and Maroons also gained access to them. English continued to be spoken rather widely after the English exodus while the rise of Dutch was slow, only gaining momentum in the 19th century with the introduction of universal education in Dutch. The main African languages mentioned were Cromantin (Akan-Twi) and Loango (Kikongo). The chapter includes two appendices listing *barka tongo* and *Djutongo* lexical items.

Chapter Five examines the earliest linguistic sources of pre-Emancipation Sranantongo and to a much lesser extent Saamaka. They range from short statements in court recordings to dictionaries and longer texts such as bible translations and language learning manuals. The discussion provides useful information on the nature of the texts, their authors, if available, and examines the linguistic value and nature, including the authenticity of each text and compares them on the basis of structural linguistic features. Arends argues that they represent different stages on a developmental or diachronic continuum and thus provide opportunity for diachronic analysis.

Chapters Six and Seven present linguistic texts from the pre-Emancipation period, their English translations and available background information arranged in chronological order. Most texts are written in Sranan but there are also some Saamaka and Ndyuka texts. Chapter Six features orally performed genres such as songs for different occasions, sayings and some stories. Chapter Seven offers written texts, including early court records, Herrlein’s dialogues, the Saramaka Peace Treaty, dialogues from Van Dyk’s and Weygandt’s language primers, extracts from Schumann’s Saamaka dictionary and from Wullschlägel’s and Focke’s Sranan dictionaries, poems in Sranan and Sranan translations of texts concerning Emancipation and the Saramaka Maroon letters. Together, these texts provide invaluable insights into Suriname creole and colonial culture, and the linguistic practices in the pre-Emancipation period.

Although the book contains an abundance of very detailed information and examines a multitude of interrelated themes, readers can easily get a handle on the overall narrative and its sub-themes thanks to the addition of clear and concise introduction and summary sections. There is, however, one potential issue with the book: it takes for granted (and thus leaves unexplained) major theoretical concepts such as the post-creole continuum. Also, language attitudes and variation are frequently discussed without contextualizing them on the basis of existing literature. Notwithstanding these relatively minor shortcomings, the book is a must read for students and scholars interested in the Suriname Creoles, and a model of exemplary scholarship on creole genesis.

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