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## Language and colonialism. Applied linguistics in the context of creole communities.

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## Language and Colonialism (Applied linguistics in the context of creole communities)

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The choice of language and the use to which it is put are central to a people's definition of itself in relation to its natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces [imperialism and the struggle for liberation from imperialism] in the Africa of the twentieth century (Ngũgĩ 1985:109)

### 1. Introduction

The literature on colonialism tends to focus on Europe's economic exploitation of many regions and peoples around the world and Europeans' use of excessive force towards the latter.<sup>1</sup> While these issues are undoubtedly of great importance, it is equally important to understand the cultural and specifically the linguistic and discursive practices that came to be associated with European colonial rule. These practices played an instrumental role in assigning low prestige to non-European languages and cultures, including cultural and linguistic forms that emerged due to Europe's colonial expansion, and in establishing the superiority of the coloniser's language and culture. Although many of the formally colonised populations have today gained what is usually called political independence, the cultural and linguistic decolonisation of both European and non-European cultures is hardly complete. Particularly since WWII, a struggle has been ongoing that attempts to remove the stigma from non-European cultures and languages, and questions the assumed European superiority. By questioning the colonial status quo, the formerly colonised populations aim to find a way to position themselves in relation to their erstwhile colonisers and other, equally threatening, forces such as globalization. One of the main battlegrounds is the education system. Generally founded during the colonial period, it was conceived on European colonial models and, to date, continues to implement to a greater or a lesser degree many of the colonial linguistic and cultural policies and is thus instrumental in perpetuating colonial discourses.

Let's consider three examples: A first example concerns Kenya. Like many other African countries it has quite a complex sociolinguistic makeup. English and Swahili are the

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<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, the term colonialism refers to all kinds of forceful occupation of the territory of one community by the members of another community in order to exploit its resources. The hegemony of the Arabs, Venetians, Greek or Romans (involving trading posts in the case of some and agricultural exploitation in the case of the others) may all be characterised as instances of colonialism. Such occupations may involve expulsion, extermination or the subjugation of the original population. Currently, the term colonisation is generally used in the sense that it acquired during the 19th century, referring to the establishment of control over a region including its inhabitants by an outside group. This may involve the total destruction of local governing institutions and the disempowerment of their members. The most striking examples of this are the European expansionist movements of the last five centuries. However, all types of colonialism have directly or indirectly given rise to linguistic changes. In the present article we restrict attention to the linguistic effects of the European colonialism of the last five centuries.

country's national languages. In addition, no fewer than 40 other Bantu and non-Bantu languages are spoken as home and community languages but tend to be excluded from the (national) public domain. Since the colonial period, formal education for the indigenous population has been highly limited in scope, focusing mainly on teaching very basic language skills in English and Swahili. Swahili is the medium of instruction until the 5th grade and English is taught as a subject. From the 5th grade on, English becomes the only medium of instruction. This switch in language of instruction in the 5th grade has a detrimental effect on pupils' educational opportunities. Not being sufficiently proficient in English, the majority of children do poorly in the national exams at the end of the 8th year. As a result, a large percentage of children get weeded out of the school system with notoriously low academic skills. As for those who proceed to secondary school, poor language skills continue to hamper their educational performance because educators have until recently failed to see any direct link between good language skills and the ability to do well in exams. Most children complete their 4 to 6 year secondary education with inadequate language skills that can only get them low-paying clerical and service jobs. Moreover, the low language skills in English and Swahili hinder effective interethnic communication, and seriously impact national development. Only in recent years have efforts been made to develop curricula that recognize language as an invaluable educational and cultural tool. However, the World Bank and IMF's insistence that Third World governments spend less of their national budgets on education has aggravated the situation, because language instruction and curriculum development and improvement are among the areas that have suffered major cuts (Mutonyi, p.c. August 2005).

A somewhat different problem emerges in 'classic' bilingual Creole communities where 'the Creole' is only in contact with a lexically related European language, as is the case in Caribbean communities such as Martinique and Jamaica. In these settings which involve a great lexical proximity between the Creole and the European standard language, inter-comprehension between the home language or lingua franca and the European language tends to be (somewhat) greater and therefore often leads to less serious educational problems for pupils, at least on the surface. However, even in these situations problems often arise because pupils do not just engage in monolingual productions but often draw on both codes in the same interaction to create important social meanings. These 'mixed' productions do not easily fit the norm of either linguistic system and are therefore often considered 'ungrammatical' in normative contexts such as the school. These situations require educational policies that address such questions as the relationship between linguistic systems and actual practices, the nature of the similarities and differences between the Creole and its lexifier and considerations of situational appropriateness. Clear guidelines are needed to guide teachers in their dealings with language related issues. For instance, how should they react to the use of Creole and bilingual practices? How can children be encouraged to value the different linguistic practices and at the same time develop and expand on their linguistic competences?

French Guiana (Guyane) resembles Kenya in that its population is also highly multilingual. Politically and demographically, however, the two are quite different. French Guiana was part of the French colonial empire before becoming a French overseas department in 1957. For a long time, its relatively complex sociolinguistic situation did not attract any particular attention from educational institutions. Although Guianese pupils do not generally have the same exposure to French language and culture as metropolitan French children because most of them come from multilingual communities in which French, the language of formal instruction, plays only a marginal role, no effort was made to adapt teaching methods to their needs. Guianese schools largely applied (and to a certain extent still continue to apply) the very same educational programmes and methods as their metropolitan counterparts. Several experts charged with evaluating the school system (Durand & Guyard 1998 ; Hébrard 2000) highlight that this has led to an unusually high rate of educational failure; it is the

highest in all of France including all overseas' departments and territories. They show that alarmingly high numbers of pupils repeat classes and drop out of school early. Moreover, a tremendously high percentage of children leave school quasi-illiterate and with notoriously low qualifications. Quite unsurprisingly, teachers tend to blame Guianese pupils' cultural and linguistic backgrounds for these poor educational results. They argue that pupils' provenance from so-called oral cultures and their insufficient acculturation to French culture and language prior to arriving at school are crucial factors that inhibit their academic progress (Puren 2005, Alby & Léglise 2005). Only in recent years have the education authorities slowly come to accept that the elevated rate of school failure is in great part due to the unsuitability of dominant metropolitan educational practices that give little consideration to the local context. Currently, multiple efforts are being made to give more recognition to local languages and cultures in Guianese schools. However, far from being a simple undertaking, the application of new and more effective educational practices poses a range of new challenges whose resolution will require more than mere good intentions.

In this paper we critically examine colonial and post-colonial language policies with a special focus on Creole communities in the Caribbean and South America. The paper suggests that while faced with similar issues these communities do not constitute a homogeneous group and consequently blanket solutions are not available to change the asymmetrical social and linguistics system inherited from the colonisers. The paper argues that (new) educational policies need to be squarely based on a careful sociolinguistic analysis of each situation and must take a multi-model approach in order to effectively address existing language-based social inequalities. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 briefly introduces the field of language and colonialism, discussing the main research issues and colonial language practices. Section 3 deals with educational practices in colonial and in post-colonial societies, especially in Africa. Section 4 surveys the research on Creoles focusing on its contribution towards improving language-related discrimination in Caribbean Creole communities. Section 5 explores the development of educational practices in different Creole communities and section 6 investigates educational practices in French Guiana arguing for a multi-model approach. The final section summarizes the findings and outlines current research needs.

## **2. The field of language and colonialism**

### **2.1. Studies in the field**

Having been the subject of much debate since the pre-independence periods of most formerly colonised regions, research into the effects of European colonialism on language issues took off in the 1970s and 1980s with the publication of several works such as Césaire (1950), Fanon (1952), Spencer (1971a & b, 1985), Whiteley (1971), Calvet (1974, 1987), Achebe (1975), Bamgbose (1976, 1991, 2000), Dumont (1986), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, 1993). The issue is currently being pursued by researchers such as Pennycook (1994, 1998, 2001, 2002), Phillipson (1992), Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995). The scholars involved in this research tradition come from different academic disciplines such as linguistics, discourse studies and literature. Most of the work focused on drawing attention to the linguistic and social inequalities that had emerged in the formerly colonised regions of the world due to European imperialist expansion, and how they continue to affect the linguistic and social makeup of these regions, the nature of local language policies, and the status and development of non-European languages. They strikingly demonstrate the extent to which the imposition of colonial governance and concomitant education and language policies has negatively affected the linguistic and social makeup of formally colonised regions. Although many of these regions have since gained political independence, access to education, knowledge, power and

self-sufficiency of indigenous populations continues to be highly limited (Phillipson 1992: 109-132). Most of the newly independent countries faced many difficulties in relation to decolonisation. Both economic pressure from the former coloniser and opposition to decolonisation from local elites, who stood to lose their privileged positions, have effectively conspired to maintain colonial social and linguistic practices.

Scholars such as Kachru (1982/1992, 1986), Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1998) coming mainly from an English Language Teaching (ELT) approach, explore the case of English. Kachru's work is largely concerned with the status of colonial Englishes or so-called New Varieties of English such as Nigerian English, Indian English etc. He argues that they are legitimate varieties of English that merit description and valuation independently from metropolitan norms and standards. Their linguistic nature and social functions cannot be understood without consideration of the social and linguistic context in which they emerged, developed and continue to exist. Rather than treating them as 'imperfect' or 'improper' versions of 'true', i.e. native, varieties of English, English Language teaching worldwide, needs to give them full consideration in order to combat the linguistic discrimination of their speakers and to decolonise English.

Phillipson and Pennycook pursue a somewhat different approach. They explore the factors that made English the world's most dominant language. In his book *Linguistic Imperialism*, Phillipson examines colonial and post-colonial policies aimed at promoting English. He shows that the rise of English was not accidental but has been carefully engineered. Monetary incentives from the UK and the USA, Euro-centric research on language learning in the UK and USA, and colonial and post-colonial educational policies supported by local elites have done much to promote and to spread (certain forms of) English. Pennycook investigates the cultural discourses of colonialism. In his book *English and the discourses of colonialism* he shows how the cultural and economic activities of the colonisers played a crucial role in shaping the representation of the other, e.g. Indian culture, but also of the self, specifically British culture. By constructing certain negative discourses about the Other, colonisers also implicitly or explicitly assigned positive representations to themselves. These colonial dichotomies or constructs have had as much an effect on the representation of the colonised as on the colonisers' culture. Pennycook argues that the colonial discourse around English and English culture or anglicism and orientalism may have been employed to justify or rationalize colonial and imperial economic activities but these discursive aspects about the superiority of the former and the inferiority of the latter are not "mere reflexes of the material domain." (ibid: 38). In fact, he maintains that the material exploitation of the colonies and the concomitant scientific, religious and cultural activities of the colonisers are essentially a manifestation of these discourses. They certainly also actively reaffirmed, reinforced and furthered them, however, they did not bring about these discourses. They are "fundamental aspects of European culture that may predate colonialism and certainly have outlived its formal end." (ibid: 40). "At the very least, there is a reciprocal relationship here, with cultures and ideologies both enabling and being generated by colonialism." (ibid: 38).

The novelty of these approaches to language studies only emerges when considered against the background of language studies. Most linguistic (and literary) research on (post)colonial societies takes place in a socio-political vacuum; scholars do not explicitly discuss the social and political issues relating to local linguistic practices and/or shy away from explicit discussions of the socio-political implications of their findings. Generally, linguists meticulously describe and analyse individual languages and language situations, and propose sophisticated models to account for their findings. These studies generally take a relatively objectifying approach and focus on the theoretical goals of linguistic research. Research on language consequently has little or no effect on the formulation of language policies. This means that the colonial status quo with respect to language has largely remained

unaltered. The research on language and colonialism therefore pursues two broad goals. First, it aims to critically investigate and draw attention to the colonial and neo-colonial practices related to language. Second, based on such a critical reflection, it proposes to formulate policies aimed at ‘decolonising the mind’ of the formerly colonised populations and the colonisers alike. It is a vital step towards improving the status of non-European languages and those that emerged as a result of European expansion, e.g. New Varieties of French or English, creoles, pidgins, and will eventually reverse the strongly asymmetrical relationship between these languages and their speakers. For linguists, it was essentially a way to “faire la politique dans la linguistique, par la linguistique” (Calvet 1974: 10).

## 2. 2. Colonial practices in relation to language

The aim of European imperialism and colonialism was to expand the economic and power base of European nations and to assert their superiority. In part, this was achieved by subjugating the local populations. In the case of what are now North America and Australia, for instance, native populations were forced off agriculturally valuable lands that were then taken over by European immigrants. In the Caribbean, native populations were also forced to provide hard physical labour for the colonisers that led to the death of millions of Amerindians. To replace these and to expand economic activities, Europeans then transported Africans as slaves to the Caribbean and the Americas, and forced them to work under horrendous conditions on (sugar, cotton, coffee, etc.) plantations. European slavery is therefore intimately linked to European colonialism and occurred as a direct consequence of the latter. The slave trade allowed European nations and the individuals directly involved in it to considerably expand their economic power but brought about the death of millions of Africans, and led to a significant diminution of the West African population and to major tension including wars between different population groups in the region (Manning 1990). For the enslaved, it meant their brutal physical and social subjugation.

However, force alone was not sufficient to drive European imperialist expansion. The imperialist and colonial enterprise was much aided or ultimately even enabled by the existence of a social system and social ideology in Europe which firmly inscribed, legitimised and naturalised European cultural, social, scientific superiority (Pennycook 1998, Calvet 1974). This social system and ideology created two hierarchically ordered social categories of people endowed not only with distinct sets of rights, obligations and social standing but also with distinct intellectual, social etc. skills and properties. The European colonisers and their collaborators who were consistently identified with the positive or prestigious values were firmly located at the top of the social hierarchy, holding the power in the society and enjoying the highest social standing within it. By contrast, the colonised, being identified with the subordinate position, were assigned low social status and granted little or no social power. Calvet (1987: 72) identifies two steps involved in linguistic colonisation. The first one, called ‘vertical step’ refers to the social spread of the language. The European language first spread into the ‘upper classes’ of the colonised people (, i.e., those near or representing the colonial power) and was only then spread among members of the ‘lower classes’. The second one, called ‘horizontal step’, involves its geographic spread. The colonial language is diffused from the capital to small cities and from there to villages. The colonisers spend much effort, mainly through the education system, on instilling this asymmetrical social ideology in their colonial subjects but it was also constantly being reaffirmed and generated by a range of other social and linguistic practices. In relation to language, several distinct but interrelated practices can be identified.

First, colonisation gave rise to a (new) language hierarchy in which the language of the coloniser was inscribed as the most prestigious language and came to dominate the

administrative and mercantile structure of each colony. Since “les dialectes africains ne sont pas des langues de civilisation” (Davesne 1933: 6), language policy in francophone Africa, for example, prescribed the exclusive use of French. On the contrary, the British, in accordance with their “divide and rule” policy, supported the dominant languages in their colonies (Brenzinger 1992) but this had the same effect of affirming the European language as the most prestigious language. These practices had a crucial impact on the local linguistic situation. African languages, for instance, were firmly assigned to the bottom of the language hierarchy and, at best, received auxiliary status. This essentially “froze the opportunities for functional development of almost all the African languages. [It] also froze linguistic competition between languages for access to new domains, and to some extent the European language retarded the extension of existing African vehicular languages.” (Spencer 1985: 394). The coloniser’s language, by contrast, became a necessity for all those who wished to advance socially and to participate in the colony’s public sphere. Especially socially up-ward mobile people quickly came to eschew the local languages and to favour the colonial language. The educated increasingly opted to raising their children in the colonial language rather than in an African language. Coupled with the reluctance of all colonial powers to teach the languages of the respective other colonial powers, colonial language policies “effectively placed a kind of linguistic *cordon sanitaire* around each group of territories, linking them in language, as in trade and finance, with the metropolitan community, and cutting them off from their neighbours.” (Spencer 1971b: 544).

The colonial linguistic hierarchy was enabled by and also generated or reaffirmed by dominant European conceptions of European and non-European culture and language (Pennycook 1998: 47-66). These conceptions are clearly reflected in the discourse surrounding European and non-European culture and language (Calvet 1974: 165). “Simply put, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century Europeans developed a view of the world in which different people could be divided into so-called ‘races’ and that these races differed in terms of various mental and physical characteristics.” (Pennycook 1998: 51). These differences were expressed by a set of dichotomies, the positive characteristics applying to European culture and people and the negative ones being assigned to its ‘natural’ opposite, the non-European. The colonisers were generally described as possessors of culture, history, intelligence, know-how while the colonised were seen as lacking in these vital characteristics (Pennycook 1998: 47-66). In relation to language, this meant that designations such as ‘language’ which were intimately tied up with concepts such as ‘nation’, ‘culture’ and ‘power’ were reserved for the colonial languages. The indigenous languages, linked to tribes, ‘uncultured’ naturalness and lack of military power, were referred to by negative terms such as ‘dialect’, ‘vernacular’ and ‘patois’ implying their inferior status. Terms such as ‘broken/bad language’ were particularly used in reference to languages which had emerged out of the contact between European and non-European languages such as Creoles. Non-European languages were and to a certain extent still continue to be described as ambiguous and imprecise and therefore as unfit for expressing modern scientific thought (Calvet 1974). People’s attachment to these languages was considered irrational and a sign of ignorance and resistance to civilisation. Important evidence in favour of their alleged ‘inferior status’ was evidenced by their lack of a writing system and a literary body. By contrast, the learning of the colonial language was portrayed as an asset in that it presumably ‘opens up a person’s mind to the (modern world)’ and made them civilized, modern human beings (Calvet 1974).

Second, colonial language practices also brought about the demise of many languages. In some cases such as in South America language extinction resulted from the physical elimination of an entire population (as in Uruguay) or of part of it (as in Brazil, Chile or Argentina). In most cases, however, it was caused by “a switch from one language to another by the people in a given culture.” (Day 1985: 163). In the field of “language displacement”,



“language death” and “degeneration”, it is sometimes referred to as “linguistic genocide” or “linguicide” when it involves “the systematic replacement of an indigenous language with the language of an outside, dominant group, resulting in a permanent language shift and the death of the indigenous language.” (Day 1985: 164). But the notion is fuzzy. For some researchers, only “attempting to kill a language” is linguistic, whereas for others policies towards minority languages that may lead to their demise or that leave them in an unsupported coexistence with a majority language are also considered linguistic (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1997). Some language shifts reflect a voluntary decision to abandon a language, whereas others are the result of coercion. Brenziger (1997) notes that in the vast majority of cases, there is “a mixture of these two scenarios, which means neither “language suicide” (Denison 1977) nor “language murder” (Calvet 1974)”. In fact, colonisers generally did not specifically set out to eradicate a language but by systematically limiting its role to increasingly fewer domains and functions and by adopting certain positive discourses about the dominant (outside) language, they actively brought about its disappearance. Prominent examples are most of the Aboriginal languages of Australia (Schmidt 1990), hundreds of native American languages (Hill and Hill 1986, Dorian 1989, Adelaar 1991) and Hawaiian.

Hawaiian, for instance, embarked on a gradual process of language death as a result of its speakers entering into increasingly intense contact with American culture and the English language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, a limited number of Hawaiians came into contact with foreigners mainly for economic reasons such as during the sandalwood trade and whaling activities, but “other trappings of Western civilization (e.g. religion, education) followed.” (Day 1985: 166). Although American missionaries and Hawaiian leaders were initially strongly in favour of instruction in Hawaiian, they changed their mind towards the middle of the century arguing that knowledge of English was essential for the survival of Hawaiian culture.<sup>2</sup> Due to the establishment of English-medium schools and the increasing influence of English-speaking foreigners, English rapidly became the most powerful language in Hawaii. Already by the 1870s, it was replacing “Hawaiian as the original language of government papers. The Hawaiian versions were translated from English, which was referred to for meaning.” (Day 1985: 167). The scale considerably tipped towards English when great numbers of foreign labourers from Portugal, China and Japan, who clearly favoured English, came to work on Hawaii’s plantations in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, in 1900, after the Hawaiian government had been overthrown and the United States had annexed Hawaii, Hawaiian and Hawaiian English Creole were officially relegated to a secondary status, further enhancing the prestige of English and accelerating the disappearance of Hawaiian that had begun in the 1820s.

Third, colonization and slave trade also led to the creation of new languages. The most well-known and studied cases are Creole languages that emerged in European plantation societies around the world, e.g. the Caribbean, the Americas and Australia. Coming from different social and linguistic backgrounds, their creators – such as African slaves and European indentured labourers in the case of Caribbean and South American Creoles and Melanesian indentured labourers in the case of Pacific Creoles – were thrown into a relative social and linguistic void and formed them from the various linguistic resources available to them, including their native linguistic background, the practices they found on the plantations (Caribbean and Pacific), those they had acquired during the middle passage etc. (Mintz & Price 1976/1992).<sup>3</sup> Due to their having emerged as a direct consequence of European slavery,

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<sup>2</sup> According to Day (1985: 166-167) “the missionaries believed the Hawaiians were losing their vitality as a culture and that in order to survive, the Hawaiians had to deal with the outside world on its terms. And that meant, among other things, learning English.”

<sup>3</sup> Note that this situation cannot be generalized to all Creoles. African Creoles, for instance, did not arise in plantation societies.

their surface similarity to the colonial language, and their association with populations of low prestige, Creoles were (and to a certain extent still are) held in great contempt by Europeans. They are generally not recognized as languages in their own right but are held to be makeshift languages and imperfect or corrupted versions of the colonial language (Calvet 1974, Holm 1989, Mufwene 1997, Mühleisen 2002).

Fourth, in some settings, colonial language practices also gave rise to a change in the relationship between the different local languages. While both the British and the Belgian practice in Africa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was to encourage the use of mother tongues or so-called vernaculars in education and in the lower ranks of the colonial administration, they did not give equal attention to all languages. Due to practical considerations, they focused their development efforts on (numerically or politically) ‘dominant’ languages which had a great number of native speakers and/or were already used as a regional lingua franca and actively supported their spread at the expense of other local languages, e.g. Hausa in Nigeria (Igboanusi & Peter 2004), Swahili in East Africa (Temu 1998), Quechua in Peru, and Tupi-Guarani languages in different parts of South America (Adelaar 1991). A fascinating case of a language becoming a lingua franca through colonialist support is the case of *Língua Geral Amazônica* or *Nheengatu*, in Brazil. Around 1500, the Portuguese assumed that all the Brazilian Amerindians spoke the same language. In order to facilitate the conquest and conversion of the indigenous population (Moore and al. 1993: 94-96), Jesuit missionaries set out to produce linguistic descriptions of “the language of the coast” that Figueira (1621) referred to as the *Língua Brasilica*’s, a name commonly used to refer to it in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, the term *Língua Geral* gained currency and from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was referred to as “Nheengatu” (Rodrigues 1986, 100-103). Jesuits also tried to “ameliorate” it by “giving it a grammar” based on a Latin grammatical model (Freire 1983: 48). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, expeditions along the Amazon River revealed an enormous linguistic diversity that much contrasted with the relative linguistic uniformity on the coast. In order to facilitate interaction with these Amerindians who were employed in great numbers by European colonists and the mestiço (children of Portuguese men married to Indian Tupinambá women) colonialists to extract wealth from Amazonian region, *Língua Geral* was actively encouraged as a lingua franca. Its spread was much promoted by several factors such as the presence of many speakers of different Tupi-Guaranian languages, the colonist’s desire for an interethnic means of communication that would facilitate interaction with both their indentured labourers and their own Tupinambá allies and by its widespread use on the coast. Three years after the Jesuits gained official control over the indigenous population (in 1686), *Língua Geral* was recognized as the official language of Amazonia by the government in Portugal, which also endorsed its spread. Expeditions to subjugate and relocate native peoples from increasingly more remote villages were accelerated and education in *Língua Geral* was systematised by Jesuits (Moore and al. 1993: *ibid*). By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *Nheengatu* was nearly universal in colonised Amazonia, a success that eventually brought on its demise when the Jesuits came into conflict with the Portuguese state. Portuguese has since continued to replace *Nheengatu* which, however, still survives in some parts of Amazonia, such as on the Rio Negro.

In British colonial Africa, between 1927 and 1950 various official linguistic committees were set up in each territory that were charged with identifying suitable dominant ‘vernaculars’, standardizing them following “the recommendations for an international African Alphabet put forward by the International African Institute in 1927, and revised in 1930.” (Spencer 1971b: 539) and with promoting the production of texts in these languages. This official promotion of languages such as Hausa and Swahili, however had detrimental effects on the other languages in these multilingual regions. They were essentially relegated to

the 'private' or non-official domain. In some cases this eventually led to language shift or extreme cases of language contact (Igboanusi & Peter 2004).

Colonial standardization efforts were not purely descriptive exercises but actively shaped the linguistic space in which they were operating. When 'developing' African languages, Europeans took three main approaches. They either harmonized or unified a group of related varieties. Unification "seeks to construct a common language for such a dialect-group by employing as much as possible, forms which are common to all of the variants in the group, and where this is not possible, by the use of forms common to the predominant majority, or in previously-attained literary forms." (Lestrade 1935: 137 quoted in Msimang 1998: 165). This way the various varieties are altered and neutralised and eventually merge into a common (standard language). A case in point is Tswana of Botswana where various related dialects such as Ngwato, Ngwaketsi, Kgatla and Tswana "were unified around the Kwena dialect to form the standard variety." (Msimang 1998: 166). However, such efforts were not always successful. For instance, in Ghana, since before independence, attempts have been made to unify Akuapem, Fante and Asante with the aim "to ultimately abolish the separate existence of Akuapem, Asante and Fante and in their place bring into being a single large-circulation language, *Akan*" (Krampah & Gyekye-Aboagye 1998: 81). To date only Akuapem and Fante are unified while Asante continues to remain separate due to disagreements between representatives for the two languages over the representation of various linguistic aspects. In other areas, one or several varieties were selected and elevated to the standard language level "as happened in the Eastern Cape where Thembu and Gcлека were elevated and then harmonised to form Standard Xhosa." (Msimang 1998: 166). In some regions, this practice led to the invention of new languages and to ethnic divisions. In Zimbabwe, for instance, although they realized that they were working with one language, Shona,

[m]issionary linguists created discrete dialect zones by developing written languages centred upon a number of widely scattered bases. The American Methodists at Old Umtali (Mutare), the Anglicans at St. Augustine's and the Mariannahill fathers at Trashill together produced Manyika; the Jesuits at Chishawasha, near Salisbury (Harare), produced Zezeru; the Dutch Reformed Church at Morgenster produced Karanga. Differences were exaggerated, obscuring the actual gradualism and homogeneity of the real situation. (Ranger 1989: 127 quoted in Makoni 1998: 159).

Finally, in some cases Europeans actively created new varieties. Yanga (1998) for instance argues that Standard Kikongo (*Kikongo ya Leta* 'State Kikongo') and other languages in the region such as Lingala were specially engineered by Europeans for their needs. Even today, standard Kikongo is considered a non-native and foreign-made variety by speakers of Kikongo.

Fifth, Calvet (1974) points out that the colonial language hierarchy also ensured that the European and local languages influenced each other differently. The languages of the colonised populations, generally borrowed a significant amount of lexical material from the colonial language. Schmied (1991: 141), based on examples from major African languages such as Bemba, Hausa, Luo, Mina, Shona, Swahili etc., however, shows that African languages mainly borrowed European lexical items from "[d]omains associated with modern European life and inventions, such as technology, administration, education, sports and entertainment". There are few, if any, borrowings that relate to local culture because "English equivalents do not exist or are considered inappropriate by Africans." While the colonial

languages also adopted lexical material from local languages, they were clearly much fewer in number and generally did not become widely used in the colonial language; they tend to be only in use in local varieties of French and English. Analysing lexical borrowings in East and West African English, Schmied (1991) shows that they come from domains such as food, people, the African environment and elements related to local customs. Quint (2000:37) argues that africanisms in creole languages also concern these domains, also see Huttar (1985). Most of the terms of African origin in European languages are marginal at best and are “only used to render meanings in an African context [...]” (Schmied 1991: 79). They are associated with African domains and are therefore not widely known outside of the African context. A possible counter-example are French borrowings from Arabic that are used in informal interactions such as *toubib* ‘medical doctor’, *clebs* ‘dog’ etc.

### **3. Colonial and post-colonial educational language practices**

#### **3.1. Educational language practices in French and British colonies**

The colonial education system played an instrumental role in establishing the coloniser’s language in its powerful position since by their very nature, colonial education systems “subverted in their various ways the political, economic and cultural aims of the colonial governments.” (Spencer 1971b: 538). However, descriptions and comparisons of colonial educational systems (cf. Spencer 1971a&b, Awoniyi 1976, Pennycook 1998, Phillipson 1992) make it quite clear that the different European colonial powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century did not always pursue the same policies with respect to the medium of instruction and that even within the same colonial empire partially different practices were put in place. Writing about language policies in India, Malaysia and Hong Kong, Pennycook (1998) convincingly argues that this is due to the fact that colonial language practices did not stand in a simple relationship to colonial governance.

[They] can be seen as constructed between four poles, first the position of colonies within a capitalist empire and the need to produce docile and compliant workers and consumers to fuel capitalist expansion; second, local contingencies of class, ethnicity, race and economic conditions that dictated the distinctive development of each colony; third, the discourses of Anglicism and liberalism with their insistence on the European need to bring civilization to the world; and fourth, the discourses of Orientalism with their insistence on exotic histories, traditions and nations in decline. (Pennycook 1998: 68)

Despite local differences, two broad types of colonial language policies can be identified: The metropolitan language model and the vernacular model. France and Portugal pursued the former and Britain and Belgium the latter. “Since the end of the eighteenth century, the bases of French policy in West Africa were the liberal ideas of the French Revolution and the concept of one universal civilization towards which the world was moving and of which Europe was the leader.” (Awoniyi 1976: 31). The education system that became implanted in French colonies was therefore closely modelled on the one in metropolitan France. Students throughout the French empire were subject to the same curriculum and French was inscribed as the only valid medium of instruction and learning. “[...] learning French was considered as an essential preliminary to all intellectual activity [...] and] by teaching the French language and culture to the Africans, they were bestowing an invaluable gift, a gift which would form the key to unlock all the doors of French culture and wider civilization.” (Awoniyi 1976: 31).

The French state categorically refused to allow mother tongue education or the teaching of local languages as subjects in schools because they strongly believed it would have disadvantaged the children in the colonies in relation to metropolitan children. Local languages were however used in some religious schools “which only aimed at religious instruction” (Spencer 1971b: 543). Missionary schools which carried out a great part of the educational responsibility of the colonial state in some parts of the colonial empire, e.g. Ivory Coast, Benin, also did not dispute this policy out of both necessity – they were dependent on governments funds – and because they supported the view that European culture and morals were best taught through French. According to sources cited in Awoniyi, the French only policy in schools was also strongly supported and even demanded by educated West Africans. Mother tongue education was, however, deemed appropriate for adult literacy programmes and is still today widely used as the main medium of instruction in African states. The exclusive use of French gave rise to several negative consequences. Besides alienating children from their home culture while not supplying adequate work opportunities, it “retarded scholastic progress” and led to high drop-out rates (Awoniyi 1976: 33). However, French colonial educational practices did not actually affect many children. “Figures for French Equatorial Africa for 1938-1955 indicate that, even when accorded the most favourable interpretation, less than 1 per cent of children attended school.” (Calvet 1979: 132 quoted in Phillipson 1992: 112). In fact, the desire to impose French was not constant throughout the entire period of colonisation or across the territories involved. At the beginning of French colonisation in North Africa, for instance, no effort at all was made to promote French (Ageron 1973). Many colonisers – notably led by the governor of French Tunisia, H. Tridon – were acting in favour of maintaining “l’ignorance des masses musulmanes afin de prévenir toute révolte et conserver la domination coloniale” (Riguet 1985: 22). Although it is widely believed that French “was imposed” and spoken everywhere, Calvet (1974: 119) argues that a more precise analysis shows that in Algeria for instance, the colonial system was not very successful in imposing the use of French. To believe that French was spoken everywhere would be to “accorder un préjugé favorable au colonialisme dans un pays qui compte près de 85% d’analphabètes bien qu’il soit resté pendant 130 ans en contact direct avec la langue française.”

In the British colonies, education was initially only available for a small number of people and schools were generally run by missionaries and private persons. In India, considerations about opening up education to a wider circle of people started from about 1823 but were not much pursued until the middle of that century for lack of funds and infrastructure (Pennycook 1998: 71). It was only after the 1854 Despatch (*Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East Indian Company, to the Governor General of India in Council (No. 49, dated 19 July 1854)*) that an Education Department and other educational facilities including regular supervision were created in India. From this point on, the government saw it as its moral duty to facilitate education. “It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the diffusion of useful knowledge, and which India may, under Providence, derive from her connexion with England.” (Bureau of Education 1922: 364 in Pennycook 1998: 87). But they also pursued clear economic interest:

[We] will teach the native of India the marvellous results of the employment of labor and capital, rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of their country, guide them in their efforts and gradually, but certainly, confer upon them all the advantages which accompany the healthy increase of wealth and commerce; and, at the same time, secure to us a larger and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our

manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population, as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labor. (Bureau of Education 1922: 365 in Pennycook 1998: 87)

After 1854, funding was therefore made available to schools that conformed to governmental regulations (Pennycook 1998).

In Africa, as in India, the Protestant missions took a lead in the establishment of formal education with the British government only starting to take an interest in educational matters in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Spencer 1971b). The strong missionary influence ensured that initially most of the teaching in the British colonies was carried out in native languages. The missionaries generally favoured an indigenous medium of instruction over English out of pragmatism. They realized that the Christian faith could only be properly taught to the colonised through their own language. “In other words, the ‘formal’ school was regarded as the institutional agent of the spiritual church, with the mother tongues as the media.” (Awoniyi 1976: 36). A good number of the missionaries in the British colonies and particularly in Africa were therefore either engaged in the description, standardization and development of reading materials for non-European languages and/or had to acquire some level of proficiency in one or more of these languages (Welmers 1971). The first colonial Education Ordinance for West Africa, 6 May 1882, tried to change this policy by stipulating English reading and writing as the main goals of schooling (Awoniyi 1976). However, due to lack of a viable government infrastructure and widespread opposition by missionaries, this goal would not be easily realized. The missionary policy soon received support from an independent investigation into educational matters by the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1920-1924) and by the Advisory Committee on Native Education that was made permanent by the government in 1929. Both bodies strongly favoured mother tongue education. Following these recommendations, the British government adopted a policy of encouraging so-called vernacular education at primary level, “with English introduced gradually.” (Awoniyi 1976: 39). Full instruction through English only started at the secondary school level which until after WWII was generally only open to a few chosen individuals (Spencer 1971b: 537-39). African languages could, however, be continued as a subject during secondary schooling. “[F]rom 1931 to 1951, through the provision made by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, it was possible to offer papers in Yoruba, Gã, Fante, and Twi at the London Matriculation Examinations.” (Awoniyi 1976: 39). Similar provisions were later made at the London General Certificate of Education examinations. Due to pressure from parents who felt that their children were being disadvantaged – they felt that their children were deprived of a skill, English, that was essential for social advancement – the policy of mother tongue education was increasingly abandoned or not further developed after WWII (Spencer 1971b). English was now introduced quite early as the main medium of instruction and the mother tongues were only used to bridge initial comprehension problems.

As discussed in more detail in Pennycook (1998, chapters 3 and 4, 2002, cf. also Phillipson 1992) in relation to Asian colonies, British mother tongue education was not a philanthropic endeavour but geared towards British colonial interests. Colonial educators generally felt that colonial subjects required moral and cultural grounding to make them better, i.e. well-ordered, docile and co-operative, subjects and ultimately to facilitate colonial rule. Writing about the benefits of vernacular education in the State of Perak (Malaya), the Inspector of Schools explains

[...] ...After a boy has been a year or two at school, he is found to be less lazy at home, less given to evil habits and mischievous adventure, more respectful and dutiful, much more willing to help his parents, and with sense enough, not to entertain any ambition beyond following the humble home occupations he has been taught to respect ... The school also inspires a respect for the vernacular; and I am of the opinion that if there is any lingering feeling of dislike of the 'white man', the school tends greatly to remove it, for the people see that the Government has really their welfare at heart in providing them with this education, free, without compulsion, and with the greatest consideration for their mohammedan sympathies. (Perak Government Gazette, 4 January 1895: 4-7 cited in Pennycook 1998: 100)

It was widely believed that this would be best achieved through a sound but basic education focusing on both European (or British) values and an understanding of their own culture (as viewed through British eyes). Mother tongue education and translations of major English works into the native languages was generally seen as a crucial instrument in this endeavour since it would assure full comprehension of the issues taught and have the 'positive' side effect of 'enriching' the local cultures (Pennycook 1998: 72-73, 85ff).<sup>4</sup>

While missionaries and the colonial governments in Africa supported mother tongue education, they also agreed that it would be uneconomical to make education available in all languages and specifically those that only had a small number of speakers. In 1927, the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee in Africa therefore "suggested encouraging 'dominant' vernacular languages through their use in education, and had recommended the unification and standardisation of dialect clusters by means of the officially sanctioned development of standard literacy idioms." (Spencer 1971b: 539). Languages that were selected for this purpose are, for example, Hausa in Nigeria, Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania.

The learning of English, although much in demand by the colonial subjects, was generally not much encouraged by the government because it was not felt to be conducive to the aims of colonial rule. The colonial enterprise only required a limited group of people such as clerks, translators and administrators who were able to function in English. General learning of English by the masses would presumably unnecessarily raise their hopes of attaining such positions when, in fact, they were not available. Colonial educators also argued that an English medium education would undermine the effectiveness of education. People would be disintegrated from the cultural context and would become a danger to British rule. [I]f 'the study of the English language is forced upon a very large class of students for whom the Government is unable to provide employment', there is the danger that such people, 'becoming unfit for their own natural and hereditary professions, remains discontented and disloyal members of the community' (Government of India, 1963: 202-203 in Pennycook 1998: 91). Moreover, such an education would not be conducive to instilling morality or knowledge in the colonial subjects. Instead, the learning of English would become an end to itself. The Under Secretary to the Government of India, for example, speaks of the "evil tendency which has shown itself more especially in the immediate vicinity of the Presidency Towns to substitute a study of the English language in place of the acquisition of general knowledge through the vernacular" (Pennycook 1998: 90). Finally, given the acute shortage of teachers in most places, it was felt that English medium instruction for the masses would lead to the development of 'bad' English. British colonial subjects were generally not very supportive of mother tongue education and administration. "There was a tendency among

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<sup>4</sup> Pennycook's (1998 : 75-81) discussion of the Orientalist and the Anglist position and his exploration of educational policies in Hong Kong in relation to medium of instruction makes it clear that support for so-called vernacular education was not unanimous and changed over time and represented a major point of contention among colonial educators.

educated Africans to see in their use the danger that progress for the African peoples and their integration into the modern world would thereby be impaired.” (Spencer 1971b: 540). Newly independent African states such as Ghana and Nigeria therefore initially opted for an English only educational policy (Bamgbose 2000).

More importantly, however, linguistic imperialism did not end when the former colonies gained political independence. Economic incentives from the USA and Great Britain coupled with euro-centric language learning models disseminated by new language-centred academic disciplines that were emerging in the two countries after WWII such as Applied Linguistics and English as a Foreign or Second Language did much to bolster the importance of (certain native) English(es). Phillipson (1992: 132-133) writes that “[t]he professionalism of ELT has been built up and propagated. These developments are a natural extension of colonial language policies and are legitimated analogously. They also reflect an internalization on the part of many periphery-English leaders of linguisticist norms which can be traced back to their socialization in pre-independence days.” He notes that the British had been co-operating with the Americans since the mid-50’s in order to realise a “great offensive to make English a world language”, an “English language campaign on a global basis” on a hitherto unprecedented scale”. To support his argument, he discusses in some detail (ibid 137-172) the role of the British Council and the relation between American foreign policy and the field of Applied Linguistics.

France, for its part, created the *francophonie* organization to promote the French language. As argued by Branca-Rosoff (1996: 106), the word ‘francophonie’ “semble forgé pour absoudre la France de l’ancien péché de colonialisme tout en marquant la vocation universelle du français.” Discussing the ambiguity of the term and of the approach, she shows that the notion *francophonie* thinly disguises the fact that speaking French essentially coincides with successive French colonialisation and that the *francophonie* serves above all French interests; the overall goal is to maintain France’s zone of political influence and to halt the rapid spread of English and Anglophone culture, especially since WWII. The *francophonie* represents a ‘natural’ grouping of states each of which maintains privileged cultural, economic and political relations with France. The status of France within the *francophonie* has never been entirely clear – is it simply a part of it or is it its centre? Equally unclear is the status of France’s overseas’ departments in this organisation. For instance, the literary works written in French by persons from Martinique and Guadeloupe – French citizens – are generally treated as francophone literature rather than as French literature per se. “La singularité de ces territoires est donc d’être à la fois dedans et dehors, à l’interférence de deux logiques, la logique administrative qui y voit des départements, c’est-à-dire une partie du territoire de la France et – comme une cicatrice de la colonisation – la logique historique, géographique et sociale qui maintient leur extériorité.” (ibid, 109). If the actual promotion of one or many African language(s) is nowadays feasible in many countries of the francophone orbit, Laroussi and Marcellesi (1997:198) wonder whether “la promotion et l’extension de certaines langues africaines au détriment du français pourraient-elles se faire sans ‘l’accord’ préalable de l’ancienne métropole ? Tout le sens de la décolonisation réside dans la réponse à cette question.” Calvet and Chaudenson (2001) hold a more optimistic view. Investigating the development of language policies in *francophonie* institutions, they show that while these institutions initially did not take into account the multilingualism of the francophone countries, this has much changed in the last thirty years. The co-existence of the different languages in the “francophone space” was officially recognized and today the relationship between French and these languages is presented in terms of a partnership. However, the central role of France, at both a linguistic and at a political level, has so far remained unchallenged.

### 3. 2. Language and education in Africa in the post-colonial period



Political independence provided the former colonial territories with the opportunity to determine their own language policies. The decisions of the newly independent states were multiplex and depended on a variety of factors, e.g. nature of the colonial practices, the linguistic, cultural and ethnic makeup of the population, their ideological and educational goals. Most of them faced numerous problems and, in relation to language and education, insurmountable obstacles (Dumont 1986). Laroussi and Marcellesi (1997) argue that 'unequal bilingualism' or 'diglossia' are, in most of the cases, a general inheritance of decolonization. At independence, three kinds of attitudes to language can be discerned in Africa. "...[A]n attitude of letting things be, which translates into a continuation of colonial policies and practices." (Bamgose 2000: 49) and served to perpetuate and to entrench the colonial status quo (Devonish 196: 29). Some countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and Zimbabwe were eager to 'modernize' and (initially) felt that a European medium education would be the most effective way to achieve this (Bamgose 2000: 50). A final group of nations, e.g. Guinea, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Togo, Ethiopia, took a nationalistic approach opting for education in the mother tongues throughout the entire primary cycle and/or were making arrangements to expand their use also to higher levels of education. However, right from the beginning, three important factors have been affecting language policies of African states (Bamgose 1976).

First, they tend to be vaguely stated to avoid possible political repercussions. This gives room to individual solutions but it may also cause problems "leading to lack of uniformity, frustration on the part of the teachers and lack of direction." (Bamgose 1976: 17). Second, language policies were, at least in the initial years, subject to fluctuations due to changes in ideologies and governments (Bamgose 2000: 50). For instance, in 1951 Ghana adopted a policy of gradual transition to English in the second year. In 1960, only the first year was reserved for the mother tongues but in 1963 it was decreed that conditions permitting, English should be used right from the start. In 1968, there was a return to the 1960 policy only to be changed to the 1951 policy in 1970 (Bamgose 1976: 17). Guinea and Burkina Faso abandoned their mother tongue education after a change in government (Bamgose 1991, 2000). Third, there is usually a lack of consistency between policy and practice due to difficulties in carrying out the policy. For example, although the policy in the Western State of Nigeria is that the medium of instruction should change from Yoruba to English at the end of the third year of the primary school, the mother tongue continues to be used freely in many schools, especially those in the rural areas, because of the pupils' inadequate level of competence in English. On the other hand, in some urban schools where there is a mixture of different language groups, English often becomes the medium of instruction much earlier than laid down by official policy. (Bamgose 1976: 18). Fourth, new policies often led to new language-related inequalities. In North African countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, the French only educational policy practiced during the colonial period has in the last thirty years been replaced by a bilingual approach promoting a policy of "arabicization"—to a minimal extent at the primary level (Granguillaume 1983, Ennaji 1991). This policy creates new problems though because pupils speak different Arabic 'dialects' or Berber as their native languages but are being taught through classical or literary Arabic. This 'new' linguistic domination (of classical Arabic over the so-called colloquial Arabic varieties and other mother tongues) is due both to the association of classical Arabic with the notion of pureness – the language is called "the pure" (*al-fushā*) – through its function as a sacred language, its past as a hegemonic language, and the colonial inheritance of centralist and anti-multilingualism policies. According to Devonish (1986: 30-35), a similar problem arises in Tanzania where the selection of Swahili as the country's only official

language is effectively obstructing people who come from non-Bantu and non-Swahili-speaking regions from equal participation in the state's local and national institutions.

Despite differences in policy, European languages have continued to dominate African education systems in the postcolonial period mainly because the independent African states selected the language of their former coloniser either as the only or as one of their main official languages. According to Bamgbose's typology given in Table 1, mother tongue education still plays only a marginal role in education throughout Africa, being mainly used during the initial stages of primary education, if at all. Few countries use it throughout the entire primary cycle or at secondary level. The picture is even grimmer at tertiary level.

Table 1: Typology of African Language Use in Education

	Use/Level	Countries
1.	No Use	Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Cape Verde.
2.	No Use with Experimentation	Cameroon, Niger, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali
3.	Early Primary	Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Madagascar, Zimbabwe
4.	Secondary	Somalia, Ethiopia
5.	Tertiary	No example, except in the case of metalanguage for teaching the language itself, e.g. Swahili in Tanzania, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in Nigeria, Akan in Ghana, Shona in Zimbabwe.

(source: Bamgbose 2000: 53, Table 4)

However, language policies have always been subject to critical examination. At least in some countries, experiments have been conducted to increase the effectiveness of educational practices and to address common shortcomings. Experiments are of three types. On the one hand there are enrichment projects "designed to achieve a more effective use of existing media, without changing the extent of their use as a medium." (Bamgbose 2000: 51). The Primary Education Improvement Project in Northern Nigeria, for instance, focused on enhancing teacher training, curriculum development, development of more suitable teaching materials. Even when the medium of instruction is a European language, teachers are encouraged to take into consideration their pupils' mother tongues when preparing teaching materials (Bamgbose 1976: 21).

On the other hand, there are projects that aim to bring mother tongue education to areas where it previously did not exist and to assess its effectiveness. One such project is the 1981 PROPELCA project in multilingual Eastern Cameroon. It aimed to integrate seven local languages into the school system. In the first year 70% of school time is dedicated to and carried out in African languages, "gradually decreasing to 30 per cent in the third year. Basic language skills are introduced in the African language and the introduction of French is gradual [...]." (Bamgbose 2000: 51). Currently, 12 languages are regularly used in primary level education in that area. Finally, there are projects that aim to extend mother tongue education. One successful project in this area is the 1971 Six-Year Primary Project in Nigeria. It was designed to compare a six-year mother tongue (Yoruba) education with the standard

three year mother tongue and three year English medium primary education. Evaluations show that the former approach produces clearly superior educational results.

While mother tongue medium education and the teaching of African languages at school still lacks wide spread support among parents and governments, there is a greater tolerance for the teaching of these languages as a subject or their use in adult literacy programmes (Bamgbose 2000). Some countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, and Togo currently offer a few of their indigenous languages as subjects at secondary and at tertiary levels and pupils can sit their final exam papers in them. All countries, even those which do not allow mother tongue teaching in their education system (e.g. Benin) conduct all adult literacy programmes in the mother tongue (Bamgbose 2000: 56ff). The teaching of African languages is hampered by various factors (cf. Awoyini 1982, Bamgbose 1976, 1991, 2000, Bodomo 1997). Teachers of these languages are rarely well trained. In fact, very often, the only requirement is that the teachers be speakers of these languages. Teaching materials are generally not up-to-date, readily available or as innovative as those for European languages. Teachers usually do not have the same teaching incentives as their counterparts teaching European languages or other subjects. By contrast, the former tend to be held in low esteem. Finally, while European languages tend to be mandatory at all levels and in final examinations this is generally not the case with African languages. Even if they are obligatory subjects as in Tanzania (Swahili) and Zimbabwe (Shona), the exam grade is irrelevant for students' academic advancement (Roy-Campbell 1998). Some of these shortcomings may be eventually addressed by the various institutes dedicated to African languages such as the School of Ghana Languages at Ajumako, the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, the Institute of Swahili Research in Tanzania, and by many African universities which are increasingly dedicating time and effort to working on local linguistic, social and pedagogical issues (Bamgbose 2000).

### **3.3. Language and education in Creole communities during the colonial period**

Initially, educational institutions were implanted in the main cities of the Caribbean and South American colonies mainly to fill the educational needs of the colonisers' children. For example, before 1848, the symbolic date of the abolition of slavery in the French colony of Guadeloupe, the colonial council refused all the educational projects for the poor populations proposed by the royal government (Abou 1988). This attitude was justified by the fear of "dispenser un savoir qui peut se transformer en arme contre les planteurs très défavorablement marqués par la Révolution. S'instruire à cette époque à l'Ecole de la France représente la condition première de toutes les libertés dont la plus redoutée, celle de la contestation de l'ordre établi" (Durizot-Jno-Baptiste 2003: 27). Eventually, the education system was also slowly opened up to the masses because it was generally felt that (European-based formal) education was the best way for (former) slaves to overcome their inferior social position into which slavery had forced them. However, the increasing access to education did not generally provide the (former) slaves with the opportunity to move up the social hierarchy. For instance, in 1845, the governor of Guadeloupe argued that "[i]l est vrai que les esclaves ont aujourd'hui le droit d'aller à l'école, mais il n'est pas encore temps qu'ils en usent" (cited in Lucrèce 1981). In the context of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Caribbean [and South America], "religious instruction and education in its more general sense were synonymous." [...] Educational skills such as literacy were taught with the clear aim of enabling the population to read religious literature [...]. There was, however, no instrumental motivation involved in the provision of this education." (Devonish 1986: 49-49). While this has definitely changed with independence in most former colonies, access to social power and the opportunity for social advancement has remained relatively unattainable for the masses. Language continues to play a key gate-

keeping role and sound familiarity with the former colonial language remains an indispensable prerequisite for social and economic success.

At independence, countries with predominantly Creole-speaking populations in the Caribbean (Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago), South America (Suriname, Guyana) and Oceania (Vanuatu, Papua Guinea, Solomon Islands) generally adopted the European language inherited from their coloniser as the instructional medium in schools. As in Africa, this continuation of colonial practices was due to attitudinal factors – most people believed that their native (Creole) language was a ‘lesser’ language and thus not a viable means of instruction; its adoption as an official language would allegedly obstruct access to modern science, technology & information (Devonish 1986: 30) – but also the result of practical considerations. Most Creoles had not been (and are still not) sufficiently codified, e.g. lack of common orthographies, lack of technical vocabularies, and few if any written texts, let alone textbooks suitable for schools, existed at the time (see Prudent 2005: 38 for Creole in Martinique, Craig 2001 for the West Indies). Possible exceptions are Sranan Tongo in Suriname, Dutch Creole (Negerhollands) in the Danish Virgin Islands and Papiamentu spoken in the Dutch Antilles. They have been written languages since the beginning of the missionary activities by the Monrovia Brethren, the Danish Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church who used these languages for religious instruction (Devonish 1986: 49-51). Even today many Surinamese children, for instance, learn to read and write in Sranan Tongo at some stage, usually during religious instruction. Its use as a medium of instruction in schools has, however, remained unofficial or informal since 1876 (Carlin 2001: 236). In colonies such as Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua in which “English emerged as the dominant European language alongside an English-influenced Creole, the use of the Creole language in even as restricted an area as religious instruction was ignored [...] due to a lack of awareness of the existence of Creole as a distinct language variety”. (Devonish 1986: 51-52).

#### **4. The research on Creoles**

Since the 1960s, Creole linguistics has developed into an autonomous area of research. The research on Creole genesis in particular has made important contributions to theoretical issues in historical linguistics and language contact studies such as the role of universals in language acquisition, the role of superstrate and substrate influence in contact situations and the mechanisms and processes of language change. Research on creole continua has much contributed to our understanding of linguistic variation and change. However, while most of the research on Creoles still largely focuses on structural aspects and on issues relating to their genesis, there is a growing interest in sociolinguistic issues. Initially, most of the research focused on what is usually referred to as English-lexified Creoles, particularly those of the Caribbean and was carried out in the UK and the USA. Research on French-lexified Creoles was not deemed a serious and worthwhile field of academic inquiry in French universities until the 1980s.

##### **4.1. Research on the status and nature of Creoles**

Research on Creoles has addressed the question of the status of these languages from various perspectives. Descriptive and quantitative sociolinguistic research on English-lexified Creoles (cf. Bailey 1966, Craig 1971, Edwards 1983, 1985, LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985), for instance, aimed at showing that Creoles are socially and linguistically highly focused linguistic systems in their own right (Winford 1997) that are clearly distinct from their lexifier English. These studies found that Creoles employ distinct function morphemes, e.g. TMA markers, copulas etc., whose linguistic distribution is also governed by rules and principles

that are clearly different from those of English. Quantitative sociolinguistic studies also revealed a striking difference in the social distribution of English and Creole. The two were essentially found to be in a diglossic relationship. While English is reserved for formal events and activities, Creoles tend to be the norm in informal in-group settings. These studies also suggest that the variation between a Creole and its erstwhile lexifier, e.g. English, that occurs in some settings is not random but is conditioned by various social factors, such as the nature of the setting and interlocutors, as in the case of other bilingual communities (Winford 1997).

A few studies directly address the social prestige of Creoles. One such set of studies describes the changes that occurred in the socio-political standing of Creoles such as Tok Pisin (Romaine 1991) and Melanesian Pidgin English (Mühlhäusler 1991), and Hellinger (1991) compares such changes in different Creoles. These studies focus on demographic and macro-social data. In relation to the former, they investigate issues such as the numerical strength of its speakers, including its L2 speakers, their geographical distribution, and its institutional support. With respect to the latter, the studies establish the social contexts or domains (e.g. home versus school) and the macro-social purposes (e.g. writing, informal discussion) for which speakers use Creole. These studies demonstrate that socio-demographic and legal changes lead to significant changes in the status and macro-social functions of Creoles, suggesting that their official recognition spurs their standardization which in turn results in their use in new social domains (e.g. schools).

A second cluster of studies investigates speakers' *social evaluation* of their native Creole. Employing a matched-guise method (cf. Rickford 1985), a structured interview method (cf. Beckford Wassink 1999), and a written questionnaires format (cf. Winford 1976, Mühleisen 2001), these studies explore the beliefs and attitudes people hold about the Creole, its speakers, the contexts of its usage, and their emotions and actions toward the Creole. They demonstrate that the local Creole is attributed low prestige in official settings but high prestige in informal and in-group encounters. From a diachronic perspective, however, the studies also reveal on-going changes in beliefs about, and feelings and behavioural patterns towards Creoles. Mühleisen (2001), for example, shows that in 1993 Trinidadian teachers no longer rated Trinidadian Creole (TC) and their own speech as "bad English", a common rating in Winford's (1976) study. In 1993 the teachers affirm TC as an integral part of their post-colonial social identity. While the official function and status differentiation of TC and English have remained largely unaltered in Trinidad between 1976 and 1993, the 1993 informants state an increase in their overall use of TC and responses reveal that TC is employed in a greater range of settings and for a wider range of social purposes.

Inspired by earlier research such as Reisman (1970, 1974a&b) and Abrahams (1983), some of the current sociolinguistic research is concerned with the stylistic complexity of Creoles, the social and linguistic characteristics of the different styles and their social functions (cf. Patrick 1997, Patrick and Payne-Jackson 1996, Garrett 2000, 2005, Migge 2004, Roberts 2004). It shows that Creoles, like any other language, have several styles and varieties and that varieties cannot be arranged along a single continuum, Creole to English, as suggested by the dominant creole continuum model (Bickerton 1975, Decamp 1971). Moreover, the colonial standard language is by no means the only or main prestige language in Creole communities. Eastern Maroons in Suriname and French Guiana, for example, recognize at least four Creole styles. *Lesipeki taki* 'respect speech' is a formal speech style that is obligatory in all kinds of formal situations, e.g. socio-political meetings, socio-religious events, talking to elders. It is linguistically highly focused (Migge 2004) and distinct from formal styles of the European languages in the region. *Wakaman taki* 'traveller's speech' is a modern urbanized speech form that characteristically involves code-mixing with other languages in the regions, e.g. Sranan Tongo, Dutch, French and English, and various kinds of processes, e.g. truncation, relexicalization, found in youth language. It is associated with the

urban centres, young men and non-traditional settings (Migge to appear). *Kowounu taki* ‘common speech’ is the speech used in regular everyday settings and *basaa nenge* ‘low language’ refers to non-native or L2 varieties of the Eastern Maroon Creole (Migge 2004, Léglise and Migge to appear 1). In addition, Eastern Maroons also distinguish different kinds of registers such as *kuutu taki* ‘arbitration speech’, speech associated with socio-political meetings, *begi* ‘praying’, *gongosa* ‘chatting’, *kosi* ‘cursing’, *sitaati taki* ‘street language’. Last but not least, Eastern Maroons also recognize at least five regional or ethnic varieties, namely Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka, Kotika, Saakiiki (Léglise and Migge to appear 1).

In the case of St. Lucia, Garrett (2000) identifies three varieties of Kwéyòl. ‘Kwéyòl as spoken in past generations’ is a French-lexified Creole variety comparable to others in the region like Martiniquian. It is currently used mainly by elders but is also common in church contexts, e.g. sermons, teachings and discussions of bible passages, and in political campaigning. ‘Ordinary’ anglicised Kwéyòl “contains many fully assimilated English lexical items, as well as frequent English borrowings and code-switches; many calques on English/VESL [vernacular English of St. Lucia] phrases;” (Garrett 2000: 74). It is the everyday language of most St. Lucians. Finally, there is also ‘high’ Kwéyòl. It is a newly emerging ‘high’ register of Kwéyòl currently used in the rapidly emerging radio broadcasting sector where Kwéyòl plays an important role as an alternative to English. Like ordinary Kwéyòl, ‘high’ Kwéyòl is much influenced by English, the official language of St. Lucia. However, while the former involves much overt influence from English, e.g. direct lexical borrowing, and code-switching, the latter consciously avoids such elements to construct a modern and intellectual Kwéyòl variety. It is characterized by calques on standard English phrases, neologisms and ‘false’ Kwéyòl words based on English and avoidance of characteristic creole features, e.g. reduplication, clefting processes and so forth. Studies on these two but also on other situations make it clear that, as in non-Creole communities, styles are not only differentiated on the morpho-syntactic level, as suggested by Bickerton and most quantitative sociolinguistic research. Differences are also found on the lexical (Garrett 2000, Migge to appear) and/or discursive (Migge 2004) level as well.

In creole communities, as in non-Creole communities, each variety, including the official European language, indexes distinct social meanings. Speakers variably draw on them or code-switch between them in both informal and formal or public situations to create various discursive and identity-related meanings (Shields-Brodber 1992, Sidnell 1999, Fengisen 2005, Migge 2005, Migge to appear). Especially young members of multiethnic and multilingual nation states such as Suriname and French Guiana regularly draw on the locally available linguistic varieties to construct distinctive local social identities. Like their North American and European peers, they also ‘cross’ into other varieties (Rampton 1995), e.g. the use of Jamaican Creole or Rastafari by Surinamese maroons. Creoles are also acquired by members of other linguistic communities giving rise to new linguistic practices that carry important social and linguistic implications in the local context (Léglise and Migge, to appear 1).

In summary, current sociolinguistic research is revealing the great social and linguistic complexity of Creole communities and providing important counterevidence to such earlier sociolinguistic models as the Post-Creole continuum (Bickerton 1975) and diglossia (Ferguson 1959, 1991, Fishman 2002). While we now have a much more diversified view of Creole communities, we still lack a significant amount of knowledge on a range of issues such as the kinds of locally recognized linguistic practices in the different Creole communities, their social meanings and functions in the everyday lives of Creole speakers and the nature of linguistic ideologies etc. Investigations into these and related issues would provide important information about the vitality of Creoles and the overall patterns of language use in these socially diverse communities that like other communities around the world are undergoing

massive social change due to large-scale processes such as urbanization, globalization and mass instruction.

In current research on language prestige, studies investigate the linguistic practices within specific social domains and their social meanings instead of eliciting language ideologies from members of the community and describing macro-social changes in the use of Creole. They are interested in shedding light on the reasons for prestige changes and on capturing the interrelationship between the different components that contribute to the prestige of a language. Mühleisen's (2002) study on language prestige among West Indians in Great Britain shows that a comprehensive understanding of the prestige of a language only emerges from analysing both socio-historical and interactional data. On the one hand, this requires exploring the socio-historical forces involved in the discursive construction of the language (group), its prestige and that of its speakers. On the other, it involves investigating the various communicative functions of the language in the different social discourses since these discursive negotiations are at the heart of prestige formation, affirmation, and change. Her study shows that Creole is linguistically quite different depending on its speakers (e.g. 1st versus 2nd or 3rd generation immigrants; persons of Caribbean origin versus non-Caribbean origin) and also serves different kinds of identity-related functions for each group. A change in social functions of Creole is also observable in the Caribbean literature. While Creole used to predominantly be employed to authenticate local characters, in current writing it is increasingly used for a range of expressive purposes and also in the narrative voice that used to be reserved for English.

## 4.2. Applied linguistics and Creoles

One line of research in Creole Studies deals with applied issues, language planning and educational language policy. It developed in response to two developments. First, the language-related education problems that were [first] emerging on an unprecedented scale in the 1960s and 1970s in the Anglophone West Indies due to the rapid expansion of the education system "to include large numbers of the Creole-speaking mass of the population who had, as a group, been previously excluded" (Devonish 1986: 102) and generally had a highly limited competence in English, the medium of instruction. Second, the positive results of the early descriptive and theoretical research on Creoles that proved their linguistic adequacy. These developments, in part encouraged by Caribbean governments, led to an intensification of research on the instrumentalisation of Creoles especially in the education system, language acquisition in Creole settings, the development of teaching methods (Craig 2001).

In the 1980s, native linguistic movements emerged also particularly in French Creole communities.<sup>5</sup> These movements emerged due to several favourable developments, namely an increasing demand for applied linguistic research, greater participation of scholars from the formerly colonised regions in the production of western intellectual knowledge, and an overall opening up of academic disciplines towards formerly non-prestigious subject matters; Labov's work on non-standard varieties in the USA, for instance, inspired many a creole-speaking linguist to study these languages (see below). An example is the *Comité Bannzil Kréyol*, formed [in the 1980s] by researchers from Mauritius, the Seychelles, La Réunion and the French Creole-speaking islands of the Caribbean. The aim of the committee was to join forces to achieve, both in their home communities and on the international level, a recognition

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<sup>5</sup> In Suriname, a nationalist movement called *Wie Eegie Sanie* 'our own thing' developed in the 1950s. Its aim was to unite the multicultural society of Suriname. According to Devonish (1986: 70), it focused on making Sranan Tongo the national language of Suriname. During this period quite a lot of poetry and drama emerged in the language.

that Creoles are suitable for expressing scientific thought and for use in such functional domains as education and administration. This movement led to the valorisation of these Creoles and to the development of a standardised writing system and the progressive emergence of a literary tradition. It was also instrumental in establishing the idea of an International Creole Day celebrated at the same time (on the last Friday of October) in each community and within the Creole Diasporas in Europe and North America (Prudent and Schnepel, 1993: 6-9).

Scholars from the Caribbean and from the USA argued that Creoles (and non-standard varieties in the case of the USA) should be integrated into the education system (Craig 2001). However, according to Devonish (1986: 102-103) most of the proposals did not question the status quo. While they argued that Creoles should be used for oral communication and preferably also for written communication in elementary school (Craig 2001), they never aimed to make Creole the main medium of instruction. They proposed a transitional bilingual approach where the use of Creole primarily served to facilitate the acquisition of English (Devonish 1986: 104).

However, from very early on it became clear that the use of Creole as medium of instruction would be difficult to implement. First, a commonly agreed-upon writing system was not always available and despite on-going work in this area in most societies a standard variety on which schoolbooks could be based did not exist (Craig 2001: 69). Devonish (1986: 114-115), however, challenges this view. He argues that “[t]he Cassidy Phonemic writing system which as developed for Jamaican Creole, has been [successfully] used, with minor modifications for the representation of other English-lexicon Creoles in the Caribbean by linguists.” Second, despite the availability of written material teachers were not sufficiently trained to teach literacy in Creole, and the idea did not get an enthusiastic reception among them (Craig 2001: 67). Third, there was an obvious lack of educational material. Fourth, in the most Caribbean and South American communities there was lack of commitment on the part of local governments to implement such policies (Devonish 1986: 53-87). Craig (1976) and Devonish (1986: 51-52) argue that conditions are generally more favourable for the use of Creole as a medium of instruction if it is unrelated to the official language. This situation is, however, not very common overall.

The research on language acquisition focuses on the linguistic environment of Creole speaking children including the classroom setting, the nature of learner varieties and the patterns of acquisition. This research reveals that Creole children grow up in a variety of different linguistic settings that range from monolingual to various kinds of bilingual and multilingual settings (Youssef 1990, 1996, Carrington 1989, Simmons-McDonald 2001). Creole children, therefore, have different levels of exposure to and knowledge of the dominant language and the different Creole varieties. This leads to various acquisition patterns and entails the application of a range of special teaching methods (Craig 1980, 1985, 1999, 2001). Regular foreign or second-language teaching procedures just like those for first language speakers tend to be ineffective because Creole speakers do not properly belong to either category. On the one hand, the standard language, e.g. English, tends not to be unknown to them; however, on the other hand the majority does not have anything close to a native competence in it either.

## **5. Education in the context of creole communities, historical background and recent changes**

While minority or indigenous languages in general are being denigrated or, at least, not given much attention by governments all over the world, Creoles have a double burden to carry. Having emerged from colonial contact situations and showing a certain degree of similarity to



prestigious European standard languages, at least on the surface, they are generally assumed to be make-shift languages and inferior versions of their European ancestor, and not proper languages (cf. Mühleisen 2002). In most communities where Creoles are spoken, they still have not received official recognition. Even if they are a co-official language such as Haitian Creole in Haiti, they generally have not the same status as the European language. The latter continues to dominate the public domain, e.g. administration, education, and to function as a gate-keeper to positions of social power and prestige. The situation of many Creole communities continues to largely resemble the classic case of diglossia in Haiti discussed by Ferguson (1959). In Haiti, French is the High variety and Creole the Low variety. Being reserved for formal situations and associated with high prestige, the High variety is seen as having a more complex grammar and is linguistically codified, possessing an elaborated set of norms. The High variety is the medium of instruction in schools whereas the Low variety is learnt “naturally” through family and peer group interaction. Most of the time, written and oral formal practices only exist in the High variety. Persons who are monolingual or dominant in the Creole continue to be in a socially disadvantaged position. They are denied access to the political decision-making institutions and their opportunities to participate in them and to obtain information from them is seriously hampered. In particular, their access to modern technology, higher levels of education, and their success rate at all levels of education continue to be seriously curtailed. This greatly infringes on people’s opportunities for employment and social advancement, and consequently increases their poverty risk and leads to marginalisation (cf. Devonish 1986: 16-17). Finally, other essential services like medical services, law enforcement and justice tend to be difficult to participate in (Léglise to appear, Devonish 1986: 89-91, 98-101). However, despite their lack of official recognition, most Creoles have, particularly in the last 20 years, gained in social prestige and are gaining ground in situations in which they were previously not used.

In relation to Creole communities, an important difference has to be drawn between those societies where French-lexified Creoles are spoken and those where English-lexified Creoles are in use. Most of the latter have become independent countries while a number of the former have remained part of their former coloniser, France. For quite some time, the social, cultural and political relationship of the French overseas possessions to the ‘mother country’ remained unclear adding a further ideological dimension to the study and promotion of French-lexified Creoles. In Anglophone Creole communities, the use and promotion of Creole was much less closely aligned with nationalism and anti-colonialism but this did not lead to a greater recognition of Creoles (Devonish 1986: 87-88). Most newly independent countries continued, to uphold colonial language policies by making the European language their official language. The majority of the local elites also believed in the rightness of these policies. Moreover, the maintenance of such ties was also carefully promoted by the former colonial powers through a range of monetary incentives (Phillipson 1992: 137-222).

One of the issues that was fiercely debated in both Francophone (cf. Bebel-Gisler 1975, Bernabé 1976) and Anglophone Creole communities was whether the Creole writing system should be based on that of their lexifier, e.g. English, French, or whether it should be maximally different to clearly reflect the difference between the two. Another important question in education planning in all Caribbean territories concerns the implementation of the Creole as a medium of instruction. The degree to which creoles have been recognized for educational purposes has varied over the years and from one territory to the next. According to Appel and Verhoeven (1995), policy decisions are based on sociolinguistic factors, such as the linguistic relationship between the Creole and the official language, the existence of a norm acceptable to the population, the level of national consciousness and the geographical and age distribution of the languages.

## 5.1. Anglophone Caribbean countries

Creoles have not gained official status in the newly independent states but it has always been an important symbol of these countries' national identity. "[...] the growing self-confidence of the masses of the Creole-speaking population, coupled with the need for them to be integrated within the national economy, has forced a series of **de facto** changes in language practice at the public and formal levels." (Devonish 1986: 89) and led to the gradual erosion of official language policies. For a very long time now, Creoles have been widely employed in political campaigning, health education and in agricultural training. Besides their increasing use in literary productions otherwise written in English, e.g. current Caribbean novels (Mühleisen 2002), there is also a body of local poetry and drama entirely written and performed in Creoles. In recent years, newspapers have been publishing smaller sections dealing with humour but also with news reporting in Creole. Direct quotations from individuals in Creole are also increasingly included in news reports, even those figuring on the front page (Carrington 2001: 30, Devonish 1986: 92). A particularly important area of growth is the broadcast media. In most Caribbean countries such as St. Lucia (Garrett 2000) and Dominica (Devonish 1986: 74), radio stations regularly offer news broadcasts and other entertainment programmes in the local Creole. In other countries such as Jamaica broadcasts may be officially in English but due to widespread use of call-in features and opinion pieces that involve interviews with the person-in-the street a great amount of the talk is actually done in Creole. Moreover, "radio drama and advertisements aimed at a mass audience, tend to include characters who, in order to appear credible and true to life, have to speak Creole." (Devonish 1986: 93).

Creoles have even been making headway in education, one of the sectors from which they were traditionally shunned mainly because its rapid expansion which drastically changed the conditions in which it had to operate. Carrington (2001: 28), for example, tells us that while only a few Creoles in the Caribbean region are officially supported in the education system, such as Papiamentu and Haitian Creole (cf. Devonish 1986: 54-65), they are nevertheless widely informally recognized and are taken into account in various ways. Teachers in the West Indies usually employ Creole in class to overcome comprehension problems and also allow its use by pupils in oral interactions. And "[t]he Caribbean Examination Council has a policy by which only the content of a subject is the focus of marking. Consequently, it is only in the examination of English that students' scripts attract penalties for inappropriate language use." (Carrington 2001: 28-29). Such largely informal practices initiated by the members of these communities or by those working with them are clearly valuable in that they reduce language-related obstacles in the educational system and undoubtedly challenge the status quo. However, they are also fragile. Their implementation depends very much on the goodwill or interests of the individuals involved and may thus lead to further inequalities. Since these arrangements are not legally prescribed, they can also be changed or stopped at any time without their beneficiaries having any legal grounds to oppose it (Carrington 2001). This considerably adds to Creole speakers' vulnerability.

In most communities in the Caribbean, a range of linguistic practices exist and variation between Creole varieties and European language varieties are an integral part of community life. The processes of language planning, particularly in the area of education, are rather complex in such settings. Besides selecting one of the Creole varieties as the medium of instruction, time and effort will have to be invested in codifying (e.g. corpus planning) it and in increasing its status (status planning) because creoles historically have relatively low overt prestige (Appel and Verhoeven 1995: 74). Devonish (1986: 119) argues that the introduction of Creoles to education without a fundamental change in the national language

policies will not bring about a change in attitudes to Creoles but spark confusion and resistance.

To date, language-related inequalities have been least addressed in the justice system (Devonish 1986: 89-91).

## 5.2. Curaçao and Aruba

Until 1986, Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba were part of the group of islands referred to as the ABC Islands or Dutch Antilles. According to Martinus (1997) and Quint (2000) Papiamentu developed out of a Portuguese-African proto-creole language the African slaves brought to Curaçao, starting from 1662. When missionaries came to Christianise the slaves, they chose to do this in Papiamentu and encouraged its use, as was noted down in 1740 by the Dutch Jesuit Congregation (Smeulders 1987, quoted by Croes 1995). With the opening of Aruba for colonists in 1754, Papiamentu was widely used in the Aruban and Curaçaoan community. Educational institutions (especially for children from the lower classes) were run by the Roman Catholic mission for several decades and Papiamentu was the medium of instruction. However, in 1936, a law completely banned Papiamentu from all schools on the islands and Dutch became the sole means of instruction. It was felt that Papiamentu was an obstacle to the learning and teaching of the official language, Dutch, in the new school system which was a copy of the Dutch system (Appel and Verhoeven 1995:70-71).

Papiamentu “is the major medium of public communication in the Islands” (Devonish 1986: 65) and is widely used in the print media and radio and television broadcasts. In Curaçao, “[g]overnment decrees are published in both Dutch and Papiamentu, and those holding political office use Papiamentu exclusively when addressing the public.” (Devonish 1986: 65-66). It is currently the mother tongue of 90% of the children in Curaçao (Appel and Verhoven *ibid.*). On Aruba, Papiamentu is spoken by 76,5% of the population, English by 9%, Spanish by 7,5% and Dutch by only 5.5% (Croes, 1995:10). 94,5% of the children are still being submersed into a language, Dutch, that they do not master. This situation is largely responsible for the high repetition rate (15 to 20%) in primary school (Van Breet 1994). In Curaçao, more than 70 % of the children do not succeed in finishing primary school without repeating a class (Appel and Verhoeven *ibid.*). They quote research carried out by Kook and Velder, in 1989, that demonstrates that children from lower class Papiamentu-speaking homes have a substantial deficit with respect to lexical skills in Dutch, as compared with children from higher social classes, who speak both Papiamentu and Dutch at home. Severing and Verhoeven (1994) show that in grade 5 of primary school, the children’s level of language comprehension was better in Papiamentu while their level of decoding was better in Dutch. Both proficiencies turned out to be related to sociolinguistic factors and background characteristics such as repeating classes at school, length of residence in town, and family size. The vast majority of the school population consequently underachieves at school.

Since 1983, a group of researchers has been working on the standardization and elaboration of Papiamentu focusing on the orthography, lexicon and syntax. In 1983, Papiamentu was introduced as a subject in all grades of primary school for half an hour a day. In 1993 a new plan for primary education was issued in Curaçao. It decreed that Papiamentu should be the language of instruction throughout the primary school, and Dutch should be treated as a ‘foreign language’. Appel and Verhoeven (1995:73) discuss the different problems that accompanied the implementation of this policy: First of all, there was political opposition. Members of the higher social classes tended to prefer to stick with Dutch as the main language of schooling. Second, as in many other cases, Papiamentu was seen as an ‘inferior language’, not elaborated and codified enough to be introduced in school. Third, they remarked that the lack of sufficient human and financial resources might obstruct or at least

seriously delay the implementation. The implementation was finally attained in 2004 when Papiamentu was instituted as the medium of instruction at primary school level in all schools on the island. Much of this development is due to the efforts of the writer Frank Martinus Arion and his collaborators who, to defy the negative attitudes of the local administration, had for several years been running a private Papiamentu-medium primary school and were thus able to prove the beneficial nature of such a change in educational policy.

On Aruba, in primary education, Dutch is still employed as if it were the pupils' mother tongue. However, there is a growing tendency to teach Dutch as a foreign language (Croes 1995:12). In 1988, the Aruban Government accepted a Policy Bill saying that it is the intention to work towards a bilingual education system with both Papiamentu and Dutch as languages of instruction. However, the policy did not reflect on the introduction of other languages, namely English and Spanish, that were identified as being spoken natively and as second languages by sections of the Aruban population by a linguistic survey of Aruba's working population. Croes (1995:61-64) argues that it would be beneficial to reflect on the relation between Papiamentu and all of Aruba's foreign languages. Spanish, for instance, should remain a subject at all levels of primary and secondary education and English, Dutch and Papiamentu should be integrated into a trilingual education model. Papiamentu should initially be the primary medium of instruction in primary school while Dutch and English should be introduced as second languages at an early stage.

The case of language planning on the island of Curaçao makes it clear that the standardization of a Creole and its implementation in education is feasible. However, it is important to note that the case of Curaçao refers to a linguistic situation in which the Creole and the colonial language are not related, except for similarities that have emerged due to extended contact between Dutch and Papiamentu. However, the consequences of language planning are usually costly. The poor socio-economic background of most postcolonial states may therefore hamper the realization of innovative policies. The provision of new instructional materials in the Creole and in the official language, which would then be taught as a foreign or second language, and the training of teachers require ample funds.

One of the constant problems in language planning is the lack of attention paid to the question of who will use the additional competences learnt at school in the Creole. Appel and Verhoeven (1995:74) mention that too often, implementation and evaluation have been neglected as necessary stages in language planning. In many cases, too much emphasis is put on the construction of general plans but little attention is paid to the effects of the proposed legislation. In this light, Roberts (1993) advocates an integrative approach to the use of Creole in the classroom with sustainable development as its major objective, and affective rather than material and physical factors as the key to development. At the same time, negative attitudes towards the Creole, related to its low status, should not be neglected.

### **5.3. Francophone Creole Communities, the case of Martinique and Guadeloupe**

In relation to Francophone Creole communities Prudent and Schnepel (1993) identify two categories of situations. On the one hand, there are several countries that were only briefly colonised by France and that have then been independent nations for quite some time such as the Seychelles, Mauritius and Haiti. However, despite these overall political similarities, their policies in relation to their Creoles differ quite a bit. In the 1990s, for instance, there was a strong pro-Creole atmosphere in the Seychelles (see Bollée 1993). In Mauritius the official position was pro-Creole too but the government made much less effort to promote the language and in Haiti, even today the policies regarding the promotion of Haitian Creole remain ambivalent (Devonish 1986, Dejean 1993).

On the other hand, there are the four French overseas departments – Guyane in South America, Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, and La Reunion in the Indian Ocean<sup>6</sup>. They have been under French control for a relatively long period of time and in 1946 were politically integrated into the French state, giving rise to a different linkage between language, identity, and politics. According to Schnepel (1993: 126):

The institution where the conflict between French and Creole cultures played out most dramatically was the local school system. Regarded as the chief avenue for social and professional advancement in the French West Indies, the school is the most visible symbol of French cultural, linguistic, and political hegemony. Likewise it is the institution where demands for “Antillanisation” or West Indianization, are most suppressed (Schnepel 1993, 126).

Efforts to promote the local Creoles are frequently associated with autonomist or independence movements that were opposing French domination. In debates surrounding the promotion of Creole, the French education system, which enforces French as the only medium of instruction, has generally been the main target of criticism. In the French Caribbean Overseas Departments, Fanon (1952), for example, speaks of an alienation of French Antilleans through a *dispositif de dressage mental et social*. Bebel-Gisler (1976) accuses the education system of a perpetuation of a colonial culture. In the 1970s, some individual attempts were made to integrate Creole into the school in Guadeloupe (Schnepel 1993, Durizot Jno-Baptiste 1996, 2003) and in Martinique (Gratiant 1988). These were however not very successful since overall public opinion remained firmly in favour of French as the main or only medium of instruction and feelings about the implementation of Creole in the French school system remains controversial.

Aside from the 1951 *loi Deixonne* that gave a first recognition to regional languages in Metropolitan France, the French government had never acknowledged the linguistic or cultural rights of minorities within its borders. In 1982, an educational law – the Savary circular - proposed the teaching of regional languages and cultures for three hours a week but Creoles were neglected in the statute. On the occasion of the Fourth International Conference of Creole Studies at Lafayette in Louisiana, in May of 1983, the new chancellor of the Antillean Academy, the French Guyanais Bertène Juminer, sent a delegate to officially inform the participants of the decisions to integrate Creole into Antillean schools in the coming school year. The Lafayette Declaration was the focus of much controversy that clearly illustrate the ambivalent feelings towards Creole. When the news of the announcement reached Martinique through the media, public opinion quickly ran high. The General Council, parents’ associations, and certain teachers’ unions who had been involved in preparing the implementation of the Creole in local schools suddenly had second thoughts about the project. The chancellor finally had to renounce his decision. And although a few minor unofficial educational projects involving the use of Creole were eventually carried out later in primary and secondary schools, the Savary circular (1982) was essentially ignored. In 2001, the *loi Deixonne* was extended to Creoles, and in 2002 a national teaching examination, the CAPES<sup>7</sup>, was created for Creole(s). The promotion of French-lexified Creoles in the French national education system is still a long way off though. Even if the law actually allows the presence

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<sup>6</sup> Old colonies were divided into French Overseas Departments comparable to a Metropolitan Department, and French Overseas Territories which are more autonomous in some of their decisions (New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, Mayotte, St Pierre and Miquelon).

<sup>7</sup> CAPES : Certificat d’Aptitude au Professorat de l’Enseignement Secondaire (Certificate of Aptitude for secondary level teaching). It is a national examination for becoming a permanent teacher at secondary school/High school level, licensing them to teach Creole culture and language.

of Creole languages and cultures in schools for three hours a week, discussions on the issues have not ceased. The two most recent discussions concerned the existence of the Capes Creole(s), its definition and improvement (see Prudent 2001) and the introduction, in Martinique, of obligatory lessons called *Humanités créoles* on Creole culture and environment (see Séminaire des Inspecteurs de la Martinique, 2003 and many discussions on the internet site kapeskreyol).

Prudent (2005) reminds us that particularly in the case of the French overseas departments the debate is not limited to the nature of the school system as such but touches on issues such as the notion of citizenship and equality.

[S]oit on considère que les Domiens sont des Français appelés à partager un sort national et les décideurs se retrouvent devant le dilemme « en quoi devons-nous leur enseigner autre chose » et quelles sont les limites de cette autre chose (si on voit bien comment adapter les programmes en histoire et en géographie ou en sciences naturelles, on voit plus difficilement l'adaptation en mathématiques). Soit on les considère comme irréductiblement différents dans leur culture et leur identité, et alors il faut leur enseigner cette différence mais en prenant le risque de franchir le pas de la Loi commune : ne leur interdirait-on pas de ce fait de concourir aux mêmes postes que tous les autres Français ? (Prudent 2005: 36-37).

While the activism of members of Creole communities and the support of some political institutions is clearly necessary to implement Creoles in the school system, a great number of practical matters also arise. Apart from textbooks and teacher training, there is also a need for the development of pedagogical methods for the teaching of Creole and French that will effectively respond to the unique needs and experiences of Creole speakers in the different communities. In situations in which the Creole remains in close contact with its European input language which generally functions as the dominant language, as in much of the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean communities, the main issue does not simply consist of devising policies for the valorisation of the main home language of the children in the school environment. Few if any of these communities are classic diglossic communities. In the home context and in the public sphere the relationship between the two languages is generally much more complex. From a very early age on, children are to varying degrees exposed to both the Creole and the European standard language. Bernabé (1999) therefore proposes to consider both Creole and French as their mother tongues. Which of the two will be considered the 'first' or the 'second' mother tongue would essentially depend on the language practices in the family. He adds that French tends to become the first mother tongue and Creole the second one. However, the Creole is no less indispensable than French in the French Antilles. Based on these observations and on the idea of "qualitative decreolisation" which leads to a symbolic "désinvestissement", he militates for the implementation of Creole at school, both in terms of speaking and writing.

Il est donc de la plus grande importance que ces données soient prises en compte par l'Ecole et que l'organisation pédagogique s'applique à gérer le processus de décréolisation. Est-ce à dire que le rôle de l'école pourrait être de permettre une recr éolisation du créole ? [...] l'école doit délibérément prendre en charge non pas la simple transmission de la langue, mais aussi les pratiques de création de la langue et dans la langue. Cela signifie que l'école doit être ce lieu privilégié de création d'un créole littéraire, langue qui ne sera pas

plus artificielle que le français littéraire, coupé de la langue quotidienne. Il y a lieu de mettre en place une double stratégie. 1) stratégie de la langue spontanée, instrument de communication. 2) stratégie de la langue différée, travaillée, instrument de l'expression. (Bernabé 1999 : 46-47)

By contrast, March's (1997) study on the discourse on language attitudes and language practices by Martiniquian mothers demonstrates that few engage in monolingual practices. In their interactions, Creole speakers variably draw on all of their linguistic resources combining them into mixed productions. Prudent (1981) and Romani (2000) for instance describe them as the result of a macro-system called *interlect*, and not as productions from two independent languages, French and Creole. Based on these observations, researchers at the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres) in Martinique have for the last roughly ten years been engaged in the development of new pedagogical methods. This *pédagogie de la variation* (Romani 1994) starts from the recognition that speakers engage in a range of linguistic productions that cannot be easily attributed to either of the languages involved but constitute bilingual productions.

la pédagogie de la variation conteste alors l'évidence suffisante de la langue maternelle créole, la loi de la langue scolaire, et par conséquent postule qu'il y a un espace entre l'usage et la norme, qu'il peut y avoir plusieurs langues dans l'Ecole, plusieurs formes y compris fautives dans la bouche des élèves, et qu'il faut revenir à la pluralité des variantes et des variables dans cette Ecole de l'Outre-mer. (Prudent 2005: 40)

This approach is of interest because it is based on real productions and essentially tries to implement the findings of recent sociolinguistic research on Creoles. However, it is not clear how effective these new teaching methods are because, to date, to the best of our knowledge, no official audit of this programme has been carried out.

## **6. A multimodel approach to multilingual societies: the case of French Guiana**

### **6.1. Historical background**

It is generally felt that language issues are much more difficult to resolve in multilingual than in bilingual communities. Besides attitudinal issues, the alleged costs involved in language development and the production of teaching materials, policy-makers tend to argue that the multiplicity of languages is a serious obstacle to the successful implementation of mother tongues as teaching media. Bamgbose, however, suggests that especially the last 'problem' has been seriously overrated because "even when a minority language cannot be used for initial literacy in primary education, what is important is that there should be a language available for this purpose, which is already spoken by [most] of the children." (Bamgbose 2000: 66). While this is definitely true in the case of some African countries where the languages spoken in one region are often closely related (for example Benin, Togo, Ghana where the languages spoken in the South of these countries all belong to the Kwa group of languages) this is generally not the case in societies such as Suriname, Guyana, and French Guiana, whose population originates from various migration waves.

In the French overseas' department of Guyane, for instance, roughly 30 typologically diverse languages are spoken besides French, the official language. The languages include several Amerindian languages belonging to diverse language families, i.e. Carib, Tupi-

Guarani and Arawak, European languages such as French, Brazilian Portuguese and to a lesser extent varieties of English, Dutch or Spanish, and English and French-lexified Creoles. The English-lexified Creoles are better known as the Creoles of Suriname, e.g. Saamaka and the varieties of the Eastern Maroon Creole (Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka).<sup>8</sup> They are spoken by populations referred to by the same names who have either been resident in the department for a long time or just arrived in the last roughly 20 years as the result of the civil war in Suriname in the late 1980s. There are at least two French-lexified Creoles widely spoken in French Guiana, Créole Guyanais and Haitian Creole.<sup>9</sup> The former is the mother tongue and community language of the Afro-Guyanese population of the department and has been in existence since colonisation. Haitian Creole is the mother tongue of migrants from Haiti who have been coming to French Guiana in the last roughly 30 years.

In addition to the great linguistic diversity, there is also overlap between the different communities because neither of the linguistic communities in French Guiana is monolingual. In some communities, the ancestral language is the main medium of interaction in the majority of families while in others, particularly in urban settings, exchanges take place in more than one language or mainly in one of the dominant languages, French or Creole. Léglise (2004) found that four languages serve as lingua franca in interethnic encounters (market, school, hospital etc.). They are Créole Guyanais, which used to be the main lingua franca of the department but is now mainly used on the coast particularly in the eastern part, Brazilian Portuguese, which is used mainly in the east and a variety of Nengee or Sranan Tongo which is currently the main means of interethnic communication in the western part. French, the official language, is used in administration and in education and until recently remained the main language of the media. While it is increasingly used as a lingua franca in recent years (Léglise 2005) because of the rapid growth in the school population (due to higher school attendance rates, a higher birth rate and growth in immigration), its dominance in the media is currently being challenged by local languages. The regional radio station (RFO) now also broadcasts, at certain times, in Créole Guyanais and increasingly produces broadcasts realized in French on local Amerindian languages and (Busi)engee. Smaller radio stations in the West such as Reutemeger also broadcast several hours a week in Sranan Tongo. Another station, Radio IDL, has a very popular two hour programme every evening called *Loweman Pansu* 'the runaways' offspring' organized by a group of young Eastern Maroons. It is realized in the Eastern Maroon varieties, mostly Ndyuka, and is principally but not exclusively targeting the local Maroon population. In addition, some of the Surinamese broadcasting stations, such as Paramaribo-based *Konyeebaa* 'come and listen please' which broadcasts all day in Ndyuka and others which have programmes in Sranan Tongo can also be received at least in part in western French Guiana.

The linguistic and cultural diversity of the department is hardly reflected in other areas of public life and particularly in the educational institutions though. All education is strictly carried out in French and access to all levels of education and jobs in the public service sector, one of the largest employers in the region, is still largely dependent on a person's ability to speak French. This presents a serious problem for most members of the Guianese society. A sociolinguistic survey focusing on the school population (Léglise 2004), for instance, shows that an overwhelming majority of children living in the western part of French Guiana do not have much contact with French outside of the school context. The home and community context continues to be strongly dominated by the ancestral languages and French often only plays a marginal role.

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<sup>8</sup> Note that in recent years speakers of Guyanese Creole from Guyana have also migrated to French Guiana.

<sup>9</sup> Note that other Antillian Creoles, e.g. St. Lucian, Martiniquan or Guadeloupean Creole, are also spoken in French Guiana. According to the National Census of the Population (INSEE 1999), less than 5% of the population living in French Guiana come from the Antilles.



For the past 30 years anthropologist and linguists working in the region (cf. Hurault 1972, Grenand 1982, Grenand and Lescure 1990, Goury et al. 2000, 2005) have repeatedly pointed out that the educational system in French Guiana, which follows a total submersion into French policy, is in many ways unsuitable for the local context. In the past 20 years some headway towards integrating the social, cultural and linguistic background of the pupils has nevertheless been made. In 1986, inspired by the Savary circular (1982) which laid the foundation for the recognition of regional languages and cultures by the French ministry of education, the chancellor of the Académie Antilles-Guyane, Bertène Juminer, supported the integration of Créole Guyanais into all levels of the local education system. Initially, three hours of instruction a week on Créole Guyanais language and culture were available to about 10 classes in the department. However since 1986 the programme has been much expanded so that currently roughly 300 classes benefit from it (Puren 2005). This change in policy was only possible because the Creole population of French Guiana had been categorized as non-native speakers of French. While this was strategically clearly necessary, it is quite clear that there are nowadays only few children, if any, who are not exposed to both languages from a very early age on.

The introduction of Créole Guyanais into the education system did not, however, immediately lead to the official recognition of the other languages spoken in the department although their speakers tended to be, for the most part, monolingual in their home languages and the linguistic and cultural difference was much more significant for these children. French-dominant teachers working in primary schools in local Amerindian communities were the first to raise this issue. The urgency of the matter was then quickly reinforced by the local Amerindian movement of cultural and linguistic self-recognition and by efforts on the part of several linguists who had previously participated in the development of bilingual education projects in other South American countries.<sup>10</sup> They focused on demonstrating the ineffectiveness and destructive nature of the education system that essentially brutally separates young Amerindians from their ancestral language and culture without providing them with a feasible alternative (Jean-Aubéric Charles 1997). As a result of these developments, several linguists working in the region together with the then *inspecteur de l'académie de Guyane*, M. Farraudière, initiated an educational programme that was supposed to answer the concerns voiced particularly by the Amerindian activists and to eventually lead to a truly bilingual and bicultural education (Grenand & Lescure 1990).<sup>11</sup> However, the education policies enforced by the French ministry of education in French Guiana did not allow the development of bilingual education projects of the same nature as in neighbouring South American countries (Renault-Lescure 2000). The initiators of this project have also successfully lobbied for the inclusion of these languages on the list of regional languages of France.<sup>12</sup> In the late 1990s, in an effort towards addressing language-related issues in schools, the linguists of the CNRS-IRD (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique and Institut de Recherche pour le Développement) research unit CELIA (Centre d'Etude des Langues Indigènes d'Amérique) initiated the programme *Médiateurs Culturels et Bilingues* (Goury et al. 2000, 2005). Its aim is to give basic linguistic (and cultural) training to members of the different communities in French Guiana which would enable them to teach the community's young children in their home language and culture for several hours a week. The goal is to facilitate children's integration into the school environment, help them develop metalinguistic

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<sup>10</sup> Note that the first attempts at a culturally sensitive bilingual education were carried out by individual teachers teaching in Amerindian-dominant schools (Puren 2005).

<sup>11</sup> This project was part of the programme Cordet : « Application des connaissances linguistiques à la scolarisation des populations sylvoicoles de Guyane ».

<sup>12</sup> Note that the Poignant report (1998) considers only Créole Guyanais as a regional language for French Guiana while the next one, the Cerquiglioni report from 1999 also lists the different Amerindian languages, all varieties of the Eastern Maroon Creole, Saamaka and Hmong as regional languages of French Guiana.

competences in their home language and give the home language and culture a place in the school environment. It is hoped that eventually a greater number of members from the different local communities will be encouraged to become teachers and thereby lead to the effective 'indigenisation' of the school system.

The cultural and linguistic mediators do not follow a fixed programme. Their contributions depend on various factors such as their own interests and abilities, the needs of the school and the students, the age groups they deal with and the location in which they carry out their job. They generally spend several hours per week with one group, either at the preschool level (3-6 year olds) or at the primary level (6-8 years). Some teach every class in the school for about one hour a week while others do several hours in only a few classes. Some mediators focus on linguistic and cultural activities that they have designed themselves while others largely carry out the same activities as the French teacher only doing them in the native language. Yet others concentrate on teaching writing skills in the mother tongue. Some of the mediators have their own classrooms while others have to carry out their classes in the hallway or in the playground. In a few cases, mediators are essentially treated as teacher helpers and are only asked to translate in parent-principal/teacher interactions. To date no evaluation of the programme has taken place but this is planned for the near future.

While this programme is definitely a step in the right direction, it currently only reaches a very small number of pupils in less than 20% of the schools in the department. Its expansion will require a significant financial investment on the part of the ministry of education and the development of improved training facilities including the greater availability of qualified training staff and the development of training materials.

## **6.2. Current approaches and proposals for the future**

In multilingual societies such as French Guiana and Belize, for example, the valorisation of the home languages usually proves to be much more difficult because of the linguistic diversity. In areas that tend to be relatively mono-ethnic, like certain rural areas in French Guiana, a broad bilingual approach may be an effective first step towards addressing language and culture-related inequalities. However, programmes such as the current project *Médiateurs Culturels et Bilingues* need to take into account the fact that students will always also engage in a range of bilingual productions and that similarities in the first language background do not necessarily mean that these children also have the same linguistic and cultural background. As pointed out by Alby and Léglise (2005) the term 'mono-ethnic' implies that the members of a community necessarily share the same linguistic and cultural background. Copious sociolinguistic studies have however shown that diversity is an integral part of every speech community.

To date not all local languages participate in the programme. For the moment, it explicitly focuses on languages that are likely to be recognized as regional languages, that is the languages of populations who are an integral part of the society and whose members are (in the majority) French citizens (Cerquiglini 2003). The languages that are currently part of this project are the local Amerindian languages, the varieties of the Eastern Maroon Creole and Hmong (Goury et al 2000, 2005). Other languages such as Haitian Creole or Brazilian Portuguese the speakers of which represent a significant part of the current school population, 15% each, and who will also become French citizens since they were mostly also born in French Guiana have not yet receive much attention from the educational system.

A bilingual approach is hardly possible or cannot be the only useful approach in strongly multiethnic areas such as most urban centres where each class consists of students from a variety of different linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds. In this situation the linguistic and cultural diversity is much more overt and needs to be openly addressed by the

institution to avoid various problems. Pupils may be disadvantaged if the teacher does not have a good understanding of their particular background because they may misinterpret their linguistic productions. For example, in such contexts, pupils tend to be multilingual rather than bilingual and will therefore not only draw on their home language and the official language but generally also select linguistic material from other regional lingua franca, e.g. 'takitaki' in French Guiana (Léglise & Migge to appear 1). An equally serious problem is posed by negative language attitudes. Pupils tend to have a number of negative preconceptions about each other's culture and language that may lead to interethnic problems and reinforce negative feelings about students' home languages. Particularly in the latter case, this may cause the denial or rejection of the home language and give rise to language shift (Léglise 2004).

In these situations several additional kinds of policies need to be implemented that target both the teaching staff and the pupils. First, teachers need to receive extensive training about the social, linguistic and cultural background of their pupils and have access to cultural and linguistic resources (e.g. books, seminars, consultants) to be able to adequately interpret their students' productions and difficulties and to be in a position to devise educational units that take the multicultural setting into account. Essentially, the teaching staff needs to enter into dialogue with the academic community, notably (socio)linguists, sociologists and anthropologists and the latter need to make a concerted effort to diffuse its research findings in an appropriate manner to the public at large. For instance, in the last five years a number of research projects on different social, cultural and linguistic aspects have been carried out in the case of French Guiana but the diffusion of their results has only just begun (Léglise & Migge to appear 2). Their appropriation and implementation by the local institutions such as the education system will still take some time. In the USA, for instance, the integration in the school curriculum of schools that have a high percentage of African American students of units that explicitly deal with topics related to African American language, culture and society has much encouraged African American students who previously had little interest in school to participate in class and to develop positive attitudes to school and education (McWhorther 1998).

Second, students need to be made aware of and educated about each other's cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A method that has proved very useful in this respect is the *Language Awareness* approach that was initially developed in the United Kingdom in the 1980s (Hawkins 1984, Moore 1995). It was tested and further developed in the course of two projects funded by the EU, the programme *Evlang* (1997-2000) and *Janua Linguarum* (2000-2004). This approach has four objectives. First, it aims to interest and open up students to the notion of diversity and to dispel the myth that homogeneity is the norm and more desirable. In multilingual classes it guides students towards discovering, recognising, legitimising and valorising the linguistic and cultural identities and competences of each member. Second, it aims to develop students' aptitudes for observing and analysing languages. It enhances their language learning skills and reinforces and improves their existing linguistic competences. Third, it is designed to positively encourage pupils to learn languages, including the languages of their fellow-pupils and the official language. Fourth, it aims to develop pupils' knowledge about their immediate linguistic environment as well as about more distant regions. This approach also touches on questions about patterns of language use in society. Within the framework of this approach, it is also possible to discuss language attitudes in a systematic manner. This kind of overt approach to issues surrounding linguistic stigmatisation may lead to these languages' eventual destigmatization. The experience gained from the teaching of immigrant languages in metropolitan France suggests that the (mere) recognition of stigmatised languages by way of offering classes in them, for instance, does not always effectively dispel such stigma or halt language shift (Billiez 2000). In French Guiana several

language awareness workshops have taken place in the past five years to raise teachers' awareness about the local linguistic situation. However, to date few pedagogical documents have emerged (Candelier to appear) and these methods have only been tried out in a few classes.

Third, the languages taught in schools should reflect more closely the local linguistic realities as is already done in several border regions in Europe. In multilingual regions that have been much affected by migration, for instance, it would be useful to base decisions on which languages should be taught in schools on sociolinguistic surveys in the region (Léglise 2004, Leconte & Caiituccoli 2003). For example, those languages that are widely used as a lingua franca in the region, e.g. Sranan Tongo, or the official language of the neighbouring country, e.g. Dutch and Brazilian Portuguese, could be taught besides other global languages such as English. This would not only be a significant step towards valorising all the languages in the region but also significantly improve trans-border communication, regional integration and improve pupils' chances on the local job markets.

## **7. Summary and conclusion**

Colonial policies have had a far-reaching, mostly negative effect on language and educational practices in formerly colonised countries. Colonial powers actively reshaped the linguistic makeup of many regions and implemented educational systems that were clearly geared to suit their own needs; they were mainly interested in instilling notions of European morality in their colonial subjects and at forming an easily available and cheap labour resource for their economic endeavours. Little effort was made to expand the education system to cover all subjects and/or to open up all levels of education to all pupils because skilled positions were generally reserved for Europeans and colonial governments were notoriously fearful of indigenous opposition and unrest. Most regions found it hard to shed their colonial inheritance even after they gained political independence or after they became officially integrated into the national state, in the case of some former French possessions, because both the former colonisers and local elites did their best to maintain the status quo for their own benefit. Although the education system in most regions has been extended to cover an increasingly greater number of pupils since WWII, educational curricula, teaching methods and language policies have only been slowly adapted to these new challenges. Most people in developing countries still receive a highly inadequate education, if at all, and continue to be burdened by discriminative language policies. It goes without saying that this situation is highly unsatisfactory and one of the main obstacles to building democratic societies and to achieving sustainable national and local development, and these countries' equal participation in the family of nations.

However, there are also positive experiences. Recent developments in Curaçao and French Guiana show that it is possible to implement Creoles and other non-European languages into the education system as media of instruction or as subjects. Especially in the case of Curaçao, it is clear that such a shift in policy contributes significantly towards reducing language-related learning difficulties. The case of Martinique and Guadeloupe demonstrates quite clearly that language attitudes and real linguistic needs more than lack of human and financial resources appear to be major factors that determine whether or not new policies will be implemented and whether or not such policies will be effective. While bilingual educational models exist and can be relatively easily implemented, multilingual countries like French Guiana, Aruba and most African countries pose quite different challenges. Viable multilingual approaches to education still do not exist and research on multilingualism and its effects on learning and linguistic practices is still on-going. It is clear

that a range of measures will have to be instituted. These measures need to be squarely based on comprehensive qualitative and quantitative surveys because each setting poses unique challenges. Implementation is then, another difficult step. "To revolutionize an entire educational system from its structure, to its administration, to its curricula, to its training, to its goals, requires capital and professional expertise » (Taufe'ulungaki 1987)

In order to tackle relevant issues in applied linguistics such as language attitudes and the nature of linguistic and educational practices, sociolinguistic research on Creoles needs to focus on the following issues:

- Creole speakers' identities and language attitudes and how they relate to linguistic practices in the community,
- a comprehensive sociolinguistic description of (Creole) language varieties which takes into account all social actors' perspectives
- Creoles and language contact: what is the role of typology (linguistic distance) in bilingual (e.g. Creole-English) speech? What are the consequences for education and pedagogy?
- the recognition of such research by educational institutions and their implementation in education.

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