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# Creoles in Education

## A Discussion of Pertinent Issues

Bettina Migge, Isabelle Léglise & Angela Bartens

### 1. Introduction

The last three decades have seen a steady increase in the use of Pidgin and Creole (P/C) languages in public life.<sup>1</sup> In many P/C-speaking communities, P/C are now widely used in health education, vocational training, political campaigning and in the media (Migge & Léglise 2007: 314). These developments demonstrate – if it has to be demonstrated at all –<sup>2</sup> that P/Cs are viable means of communication and are well able to express as wide a range of issues as the European languages with which they coexist.<sup>3</sup>

Despite on-going social change in most Creole communities, formal school instruction in Creole-speaking communities has seen comparatively little change. While students are mostly no longer actively discouraged or punished for using their native P/C, their use is generally also not officially encouraged. Few P/Cs are officially recognized as viable means of instruction. They are mostly informally tolerated to varying degrees as a transitional measure to facilitate acquisition of the official language(s) and (European) language(s) of education. In addition to the transitional use of P/Cs as an auxiliary medium, it also tends to be restricted to the oral domain. This creates a vicious circle where no orthography development and other language engineering takes place as a result of the presumed unsuitability of the P/Cs to serve as a means of writing. This in turn, bolsters teachers and politicians claims with regard to the very claim of inadequacy.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms Pidgin and Creole (P/C) here without prejudice. Linguists refer to some of the languages that arose due to colonial expansion and/or contact with European languages as Pidgins and to others as Creoles depending on their usage patterns. Pidgins are generally second languages while Creoles are defined as mother tongues. These distinctions have come to be blurred over time due to social changes and more often than not, it is difficult on linguistic grounds to distinguish between. The speakers of these languages often use these technical terms in different ways, referring to their mother tongue as Pidgin, for instance, or not using these terms at all.

<sup>2</sup> After all, on linguistic terms, no language is more appropriate than another to serve as a means of communication or instruction. The debates concerning the possibility for a language to be used in school, for example, are always based on political and ideological arguments: “A creole is inferior to its corresponding standard language only in social status.” (Decamp 1971: 16).

<sup>3</sup> We would like to observe, however, that there are authors who consider the essential criterion for distinguishing Creoles from Pidgins not to be nativization but the ability to serve all the communicative functions of a community (cf., e.g., Bartens 1996: 9, 137). As a result of adopting this point of view, varieties previously called “extended Pidgins” have to be considered Creole languages.

The virtual exclusion of P/Cs from formal instruction is at odds with the findings of most educational research that suggest that the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction and for initial literacy contribute significantly towards reducing school dropout rates and educational underachievement (Cummings 2009).

The situation is not entirely bleak, though. In a number, if not all, Creole communities, activists have not ceased from bringing up the issue in local or national debates. In some communities, such efforts have led to the launching of mostly experimental projects (Jamaica, French Guiana, San Andrés). In a few communities (Nicaragua, the Dutch Antilles), more far-reaching educational changes are under way. In yet other situations, social changes are being implemented through public awareness campaigns (Hawai'i), awareness programs for teachers (French Guiana) and the institution of subjects that focus on local (Creole) language and culture (France's overseas departments). All of these activities help to pave the way towards the publicly accepted and officially sanctioned use of Creole languages in education.

The goal of this volume is twofold. First, it aims to provide more detailed information than is currently available about several educational activities that seek to anchor Creoles in educational systems from a range of settings. Second, it aims to critically assess and compare such activities in an effort to foster a better understanding of the issues involved. We also wish to discuss a list of procedures that are necessary for successfully developing, evaluating and reforming educational activities that aim to integrate Creole languages in a viable and sustainable manner into formal education.

In the remainder of the introduction we first discuss pertinent sociohistorical issues that have led to the current situation. We then move on to provide a brief overview of educational projects involving P/Cs around the world based on the available literature. Sections Four and Five critically assess pertinent issues of educational projects and propose a road map for the implementation of successful education projects.

## **2. An overview of historical and social issues**

The view that Creoles are not adequate means for communicating about socially important, abstract and/or technical issues in general and for use as media of instruction in formal education in particular has proven to be very resilient throughout the history of their existence. In this section, we discuss some of the reasons for this negative image and the factors that have hampered the integration of P/Cs into the educational domain. Indeed, P/Cs continue to be stigmatized both in the eyes of others and their very speakers in educational systems and beyond.

## 2.1. Status and Function of Creoles

The stigmatization in the eyes of speakers and non-speakers alike of P/Cs are a direct result of the prototypical circumstances of P/C formation, namely the colonial expansion of several European nation-states from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. These prototypical circumstances were constituted by the establishment of plantation societies followed by large-scale slave trading in the Atlantic and movement of indentured labourers in the Pacific area. The populations that came into contact usually did not share a common Means of Interethnic Communication (MIC pace Baker 1997: 96) and therefore had to develop one. In order to achieve this, people relied on their existing linguistic repertoires, such as their first languages and other languages they had learned in the course of their lives, and tried to learn the communicative practices of the new setting.

Early observers focused on the differences of P/Cs *vis-à-vis* their European input languages and argued that they were reflective of the inherent incapacity of their speakers to master a European language. In those cases where the contact language came to co-exist with the European standard language this situation was exacerbated: due to lexical similarities with the European Standard language which at times were superficial at best, P/Cs came to be conceptualized as non-legitimate and deviant versions of the former. For example, Father Sandoval who between 1617 and 1619 authored several texts about the slave population of Cartagena de las Indias which later circulated under the Latin title *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*, considers that they spoke a corrupt version of Spanish calqued on the broken Portuguese of São Tomé:

[...] y los llamamos criollos y naturales de San Thomé, con la comunicación que con tan bárbaras naciones han tenido el tiempo que han residido en San Thomé, las entienden casi todas con un género de lenguaje muy corrupto y revesado de la portuguesa que llaman lengua de San Thomé, al modo que ahora nosotros entendemos y hablamos con todo género de negros y naciones con nuestra lengua española corrupta, como comúnmente la hablan todos los negros. ('[...] and we call them Creoles and natives of São Tomé, as a result of their interaction with so barbarous nations during their stay on São Tomé, almost all of them understand it with a kind of very corrupted language which is distorted Portuguese and they call it "language of São Tomé", just as we now understand and communicate with all kinds of negroes and other nations with a corruption of our Spanish language, just as it is commonly spoken by all negroes.' quoted in Granda 1970: 6; translation ours).

It was and in a good number of settings continues to be argued that the P/C lacks grammar and that "the way it is spoken is [...] the result of performance errors rather than language differences." (Siegel 2005b: 145).

A related issue concerns the social connotations that came to be attached to P/Cs. Although these languages were also widely spoken by the socially dominant groups and used in a great number of situations beyond the prototypical master/overseer – slave interaction (cf. Maurer 1998: 201-202 for the situation in the Netherlands' Antilles), they became squarely associated with the latter type of situation. Since slaves had been assigned low social status in the colonial social hierarchy, the same connotations were also projected onto P/Cs. They were widely perceived as languages that were at best suitable for basic everyday communication in low status social domains, such as the market, the street, the village, the homes and neighborhoods of poor and socially disenfranchised populations. These views were reinforced by the fact that P/Cs, unlike the mostly co-existing European Standard language, did not “have long historical traditions and bodies of literature” and in many cases have not been standardized until the present day (Siegel 2005b: 145). Finally, it is generally the European Standard language rather than the Creole that functions as a means for social upward mobility and economic success (Siegel 2005b: 145) making most people assign low overt prestige to P/Cs and focusing all of their efforts on the mastery of the European language.

Although both speakers of P/Cs and others still perpetuate negative views about them, the status of P/Cs has been improving gradually in most communities over the past decades. These changes in overt attitudes towards P/Cs are due to a variety of reasons, most of them probably related to specific changes in the socio-political makeup and development of individual communities. However, it seems licit to say that processes of democratization and an overall increase in the emphasis on issues of social diversity and the social emancipation of the corresponding speaker communities as well as continued grass-roots advocacy have had a fair role to play in this process.

In recent years, several P/Cs such as, for instance, Tok Pisin (Romaine 1991) and other varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English (Mühlhäusler 1991) as well as Caribbean Creoles (Hellinger 1991) have undergone changes in their socio-political standing and macro-social functions. Most P/Cs have in recent decades also become an important means of expression in “their” community’s public domain. In some situations, P/Cs have in part or fully replaced the official European language in local health education (e.g. Suriname) and are used side-by-side or even compete with the official language in other domains such as political campaigning and vocational training (again e.g. Suriname). In some countries and regions such as Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Netherlands' Antilles, local P/Cs are also used in parliament debates. P/Cs are also nowadays widely used in the media. Newspapers publish entire columns in a P/C or use at least direct quotations even on the front page (Carrington 2001). In the radio broadcasting sector, recent years have seen a sharp increase in the overall usage of P/Cs on the air. P/Cs are widely used on call-in shows by both

callers and hosts (Shields-Brodber 1992). In other settings such as St. Lucia (Garrett 2000; 2007) and Suriname as well as French Guyana (Migge to appear), entire programs treating a wide range of topics ranging from discussion programs to formal-type information programs and news are broadcast using P/Cs. Besides an increase in their use in literary productions otherwise written in European languages (Mühleisen 2002), there is also a growing body of literary works (poetry, short stories and novels) entirely written in a Creole (cf. Baptista this volume on Cape Verdean). Literature written in Papiamentu goes back to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Maurer 1988: 360) and writers from Haiti and the French Antilles have published both original literature and adaptations of French (and other) works for decades now (cf. Fleischmann 1986: 135). This tendency continued to be strong until the 1980s. In the 1990s, some of the same authors as well as others had to face the realities of the market and switched to writing in French in order to reach a greater audience.

P/Cs have also achieved greater official recognition in several counties. For instance, Haitian Creole is a co-official language with French. On Curaçao and Bonaire, Papiamentu is co-official with Dutch and English. On Aruba, it is co-official with Dutch only. Although geographically quite distant from each other, historical parallels have led to a state of affairs where both Vanuatu and the Seychelles at present have three official languages: English, French, and Creole, the only difference being that Bislama in Vanuatu is English-lexified while Seselwa is French-lexified.

In Nicaragua, two regions are now entitled to administer their own affairs in a range of domains such as health, education and natural resources. The Language Law (Law 162 of 1993) bestows official status upon all the regional languages and the Law of Land Demarcation of the Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Communities of the Autonomous Regions (Law 445, 2003) recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples and ethnic communities to use, administer and manage their traditional lands and resources as communal property, and furthermore guarantees land demarcation and titling (Koskinen this volume).

In a few cases (Papiamentu, Seselwa, Haitian, Tok Pisin), these new socio-political statuses have spurred other developments such as the standardization and/or integration into formal (primary and pre-primary level) education of these languages. However, overall it is fair to say that in the domain of formal education, the struggle for the recognition of P/Cs has been extremely heated and is far from being concluded.

## *2.2. Codification of P/Cs*

Opponents of the use of P/Cs in education frequently cite the fact that P/Cs usually do not have an officially sanctioned and rigorously codified orthography as an important reason for excluding them from educational curricula. The absence or, in some cases, the lack of the (widespread) use of

a rigorously codified orthography for P/Cs is closely linked to the social status of these languages. Initially, P/Cs were not felt to be worthy of a written script and its speakers were mostly barred from learning to read and write. The first representations of these languages occurred in travelogues (e.g. Meister 1692 on Portuguese Creole in present-day Indonesia; Handler 1971 on Creole in Barbados),<sup>4</sup> letters (Handler 1971, 1991 analyzed in Rickford & Handler 1994; a 1775 letter written in Papiamentu by a Curaçolese Jew to his mistress analyzed by Wood 1972), learners' guides (Van Dyk 1765), and in diverse literary and folkloric texts such as poems, lyrics of songs, and folktales (cf. D'Costa & Lalla 1989; Lalla & D'Costa 1990; Roberts P.A. 1997: 34-68). The authors generally resorted to the orthographical conventions of the lexically related Standard (European) or any other European language in which they had learned to read and write. Where necessary, they adapted these conventions in order to mark the difference to the European language as a way of more authentically representing P/C speech. However, as can be expected, most early (European) observers did not have sufficient competence in the P/Cs nor were they usually sufficiently trained to accurately represent these languages in writing. They thus distorted and misrepresented these languages to varying degrees (Schuchardt 1890: 11-14 on Meister 1692; Arends 1995a; 1995b). For example, the enigma constituted by the fact that the Portuguese Creole of Sri Lanka described by Dalgado (1900) is so distinct from the Creole of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century usually explained by linguistic convergence may simply be due to the fact that Dalgado was a native speaker of Portuguese, not Creole (Ian Smith, pers. comm., June 2006). In some cases writers may even have purposefully misrepresented P/Cs to ridicule them. The few native speakers who were able to write often did not fare much better because they were also taught reading and writing in a European language. A case in point is Brito (1887), an early description of Cape Verdean.

In most situations, orthographical codification of P/Cs started with missionary activities. In their zeal to impart the Christian faith to speakers of P/Cs, missionaries set out to learn and document P/Cs and other languages around the world with a view to translating important Christian documents such as the New Testament, song books and prayer books into these languages. Some of these missionaries had received training in language documentation and worked with local informants while others lacked such training and may not have been highly literate (cf. Migge & Mühleisen to appear for a discussion). It appears that missionaries from the same mission followed specific conventions when transcribing unwritten languages, but to date little research has been done on their overall nature and transmission

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<sup>4</sup> Albeit not a travelogue since written by a local, the *Monograph of Macao* (Chinese *Aumen Chi-lüeh*, Cantonese *Oumun Keiloek*) written in 1745-1746 and published in 1751 shares its motive with travelogues: presenting curiosities (Caudmont 1993).

(pc M. Van den Berg, July 2009). However, despite the existence of these works, many writers, even today, have continued to use the orthographical conventions of European languages when writing in P/Cs, reinforcing the impression that P/Cs lack codification. As long as P/Cs are not integrated into the formal education system and writing is rigorously taught in schools as in the case of European languages, this situation is unlikely to change (Romaine 2007).

In recent decades, orthographies for P/Cs have mostly been devised by linguists working on these languages (Bollée & d'Offay de Saint-Jorre 1978; Bernabé 1976 & 1983; Hazael-Massieux 1993) often in conjunction with native speaker assistants of these languages or local writers. In a few cases (for instance Curaçao, Aruba, Seychelles), codification was part of national language planning efforts and orthographies were devised by formally convened committees made up of local stakeholders and native speaker linguists. According to Siegel (2005b: 146f), two issues related to the sociohistorical context of the emergence and use of P/Cs have attracted much debate: first, the choice of a suitable variety that is accessible to all community members and second, a representation of the relationship to the lexically related Standard European language; this being the case above all should scripts emphasize similarity or difference to the European language. The former issue poses problems because we lack knowledge about what constitutes a high prestige variety or formal practices for most P/C communities. The gap is due to a bias in research on P/Cs that tends to privilege purely structural linguistic issues over socio-pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues (Migge & Mühleisen 2005). Very often, there is the tacit assumption that P/Cs lack formal practices altogether because the official domain tends to be dominated by the European Standard language. In other settings, often referred to as continuum settings (e.g. Guyana, Jamaica), in which several varieties coexist that show different degrees of similarity to the European language, the variety with the highest prestige and thus the most natural for codification, is a bad candidate for codification because it is also the variety that is most similar to the Standard European language and is not the most widely accessible variety; selection of such a variety would re-inscribe rather than resolve language-based social inequalities. Nevertheless, in certain cases language planners have had to go with the demands of the community and choose an urban and acrolectal variety as a basis for standardization (Samarin 1980: 217 on Sango and Romaine 1994: 34 on Tok Pisin).

In relation to the latter issue, the sometimes fierce debates have centered around whether or not P/C writing systems should be based on etymological or on phonemic considerations (e.g. Bebel-Gisler 1976; Bernabé 1976; Romaine 2007: 692). An etymological system basically relies on the orthographic conventions of the related European Standard language. Two arguments are usually advanced against adopting an etymological system. First, it constructs close similarity with the European language reinforcing



the commonly held lay view that P/Cs are merely (incorrect) dialects of that Standard language. Second, it is more difficult to learn because it “preserves the inconsistencies and historical forms unrelated to pronunciation that are found in the lexifier language.” (Siegel 2005b: 147). The resulting at times poor sound-grapheme match requires much knowledge of the European language and graphic representations of many words have to be learned by heart. By contrast, a phonemic system takes the phonological system of the language as a starting point for developing a maximally transparent and regular orthographical system. In such a system, each sound (phoneme) is represented by one grapheme. Language professionals favor phonemic systems because they allow for easy decoding of written material and are therefore well suited for reducing language-based access problems (Romaine 2007: 692). Crucially, they also emphasize the independence of the P/C from the related European language, making it easier for speakers to differentiate the two.

Phonemic orthographies exist for instance for several of the Creoles of Suriname (Sranan Tongo, Nengee [Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka], Saamaka), Jamaican, Papiamentu (Curaçao and Bonaire), Hawaiian, and Bislama. Phonemic spelling systems were also developed for other Creoles, such as Mauritian Creole, Haitian as well as several Antillian French Creoles, Seselwa, Kriol, but due to lack of acceptance were later amended so that they are now partially phonemic and partially etymological in nature (Siegel 2005b: 148 and references therein). A highly etymological system was adopted in the case of Aruban Papiamentu in order to set it apart from the varieties spoken on Curaçao and Bonaire.

Local issues tend to hamper the acceptance and use of orthographies, but it seems that the lack of public awareness constitutes an important contributing factor. As a rule of thumb, however, it appears that phonemic orthographies are more easily accepted in settings in which the P/C does not coexist with its related European language. If they do co-exist, people often argue that it is easier to use etymological conventions because people would already be familiar with them and would therefore not be burdened by the acquisition of a new system and/or be less likely to wrongly apply the new conventions to the Standard European language (Bartens 2001: 30). Interestingly, this never poses an insurmountable problem when learning related European languages.

Apart from devising spelling conventions for P/Cs, codification also involves the creation of standard reference materials, most notably dictionaries and grammar books. There is a long tradition of such materials being strongly prescriptive in nature, mandating the “correct” use of a language. In the case of P/Cs, due to the scarcity of formal language planning institutions – Siegel (2005b: 148) mentions the existence of such institutions for Papiamentu/o (Aruba and Curaçao), Seselwa (Seychelles), Belize Creole (Belize), Bislama (Vanuatu), Kweyol (St. Lucia and Dominica), Jamaican (Jamaica) – and perhaps the greater involvement of

trained linguists, grammars and dictionaries usually follow a descriptive approach. However, a serious problem with most of these materials, particularly grammars written in recent years, is that they are not easily comprehensible to non-linguists. They are for the most part constructed within specific linguistic research paradigms following an inherent academic logic that is not easily accessible to non-linguists (Crowley 2007). Changes in academic career requirements and availability of funding also make it very difficult for most linguists to rewrite grammatical descriptions for a lay population – this often requires translating them into another European language or into the P/C itself since most academic grammars and dictionaries are published in English – and to devote additional time and energy to compiling comprehensive dictionaries (Crowley 2007). Nevertheless, there are a few such publications such as the Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage (Allsopp 1996), (on-line) dictionaries of some of the Creoles of Suriname (SIL), grammars aimed at teachers for Nengee (Goury & Migge 2003) and Saintandrewan (Bartens 2003).

### *2.3. Creoles in education: a brief historical overview*

Colonial education systems “subverted in their various ways the political, economic and cultural aims of the colonial governments.” (Spencer 1971: 538). Educational institutions were initially implanted in the main cities to fill the educational needs of the colonizers’ children. Colonial authorities usually rejected education for the colonized until the abolition of slavery because the wider availability of education was seen as posing a threat to colonial order (Abou 1988). In many territories, just before the end of slavery, Catholic or Protestant missionaries were, however, given the right to spread the Christian faith among the slaves as a way of appeasing them and to ‘improve’ their social position. Although instruction initially centred on Christian issues, children also learned basic reading and writing from these missionaries. In some P/C-speaking communities, usually in those in which the P/C was not related to the European language (e.g. Suriname, Papiamentu/o), missionaries used the local P/C as a medium of instruction in lower levels of education, as in most African and Asian British colonies (Awoniyi 1976: 39; Spencer 2001). However, when local governments took charge of education – sometimes this meant that they only passed legislation while teaching remained in the hands of missionaries – P/Cs were banned from education in favour of the colonizers’ language. Religious instruction sometimes (e.g. Suriname) continued to be carried out in the P/C, but instruction in reading and writing in the P/Cs was discontinued in formal education.

When most of the countries where P/Cs are spoken became independent after WWII, the educational sector expanded rapidly because all children regardless of social background were now supposed to access at least primary school education. However, this expansion often did not go hand in

hand with major educational reform. As in Africa (Bamgbose 2000: 49), most countries continued to follow colonial educational practices. Although many countries recognized that education through a socially restricted European ex-colonial language was not ideal, they did not adopt a local more widely used language as a medium of instruction.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, children did not receive much instruction in the European language, but were mostly treated as mother tongue speakers of the European language whereas in most cases they had not at all been exposed to the language prior to entering education. A variety of reasons have been responsible for post-colonial countries' reluctance to change educational practices with regard to the medium of instruction (see also the articles in this volume).

First, in many countries, decision makers felt that P/Cs – just as many other local languages for instance in Africa – could not be implemented in education because they were not sufficiently standardized. For many of them formally accepted scripts or books documenting their grammar and vocabulary, let alone suitable educational materials and a sizable body of literature, did not exist (Siegel 2006a: 42). Suggestions for devising such materials were usually rejected with the argument that this was very time consuming and represented an unjustifiable financial burden for emerging countries. While realistic cost calculations have never been presented, it seems that economic incentives from the USA, Great Britain or France coupled with euro-centric language learning models disseminated by new language-centred academic disciplines such as Applied Linguistics and English as a Foreign or Second Language did much to undermine any attempts at changing the language of instruction (Pennycook 2001).

Other “practicality” arguments that have been invoked are the hitherto unproven and under-researched belief that the most optimal way of acquiring a new language is through full immersion rather than a guided bilingual approach that equally values both languages (McWhorter 1998). However, Siegel (2006a: 52) points out that most of the so-called immersion projects are in fact submersion projects. Cummins (1988, 2009) and many of the articles in this volume show that they have negative effects on children's learning trajectories.

Finally, due to the lack of proper descriptions of most P/Cs, there is also the widespread belief that most P/Cs are not sufficiently different from the related European language to merit a full bilingual approach. However, other scholars have shown time and again that learning difficulties do not decrease with a small number of structural differences. In fact, they may increase because students are not aware of the differences and therefore have the impression that they know the second language when in fact they do not (Siegel 2006a: 54-55).

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<sup>5</sup> In Africa, five countries – Guinea, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Togo and Ethiopia – attempted or actually changed their medium of education at least temporarily, but did not abandon the European colonial language entirely (Migge & Léglise 2007: 307-308).

Language attitudes, however, probably represented the most crucial factor hampering change. Many decision makers, as well as the population at large, did not see P/Cs as legitimate tools of education, but perceived them as corrupt derivatives of the standard language (Siegel 2002: 13) that lack a clearly defined grammar (Siegel 2006a: 40-41). This perception was particularly strong in situations in which the P/C exists in a sociolinguistic continuum with its related European language. Due to widespread code-switching and code-mixing between the P/C and the related European language, speakers (and at times linguists) felt that it was not possible to isolate a sufficiently distinct prestige variety suitable for educational purposes (Valdman 1989). However, as pointed out by Siegel (2006a: 56) this argument has proven to be wrong by the successful standardization of some P/Cs around the world.

Given the low esteem in which P/Cs were held, parents and teachers felt that any time spent on learning reading and writing in these languages is time lost for the acquisition of the standard language, full knowledge of which represented a primary factor for social advancement. This so-called “time-on-task” argument is based on the persistent false belief that there is a direct relationship between “instruction time and achievement in the standard educational language” (Siegel 2002: 13; Cummins 2009) and that skills learned in the L1 cannot be transferred to another language (Cummins 2001).

Educators often also bring up the “ghettoization” argument. According to Snow (1990 referred to in Siegel 2002), they maintain that using the home language in formal education “deprives children of the instruction they need to get the economic benefits that speakers of standard varieties have, and condemns them to permanent underclass status.” (Siegel 2002: 13). They argue that the main purpose for education is to “free” people from what they see as a deprived social environment. The only way to do this, they feel, is by imbuing European cultural values in them through the use of what they see as a sophisticated European language; the P/C is usually felt to be unable to convey socially important knowledge. Crucially, at least some parents in all P/C-communities share this view and are vehemently opposed to their children being taught in the P/C because they are convinced that this would constitute an obstacle to their social advancement. Interestingly, the euro-centric, home-language-based curricula of western countries are seldom considered an obstacle to European children’s social and linguistic development.

Interference or “negative transfer”, as it is called in second language studies, is another commonly invoked argument against the teaching of and through a P/C (Siegel 2006a: 48).<sup>6</sup> Teachers and parents are concerned that

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<sup>6</sup> “Negative transfer” is contrasted with the term “positive transfer” in the literature on second language acquisition. It refers to the use of principles and rules of the first language

their children will apply rules and principles of the often more familiar P/C to the European Standard language, i.e. make grammar mistakes, and will not be able to acquire full competence of the European language. Such transfer or interference does indeed take place to varying degrees in contact settings but maybe overestimated (Siegel 2006a: 49). One thing is clear, however: disregard of the home language is hardly the best strategy for reducing transfer. An approach that addresses both languages and highlights the differences between them may be most suitable for “combating” negative transfer (Cummins 2009).

Several P/C-speaking communities (see below and the articles in this volume) have implemented some measure(s) towards alleviating language-based discrimination, but overall it seems that elites in P/C speaking countries have to date been quite successful in preserving their competitive advantage and privileged access to higher education, socially-prestigious and well-paid jobs and socio-political power through mandating the European ex-colonial language as the only means of instruction in schools.<sup>7</sup>

#### *2.4. Current situation: why is there renewed interest in integrating P/Cs into education*

Many of the articles in this volume and others (Siegel 2002: 12; Skutnabb-Kangas 2009) attest to the fact that speakers of P/Cs generally do not do well in formal education. Children from predominantly P/C-speaking backgrounds achieve lower grades, have greater difficulties with reading and writing, are much less likely to finish school or to proceed and finish third level education, and to obtain highly skilled, socially important, stable and well-paid jobs (Forbes 2005a: 90-91). The traditional, all too common reaction is to blame the children’s language, the P/C, for the low educational achievements. It is traditionally argued that the P/C acts as a major barrier for full acquisition of the Standard European language and consequently for educational success (Siegel 2005a: 295). In many situations, educators and parents therefore believe that banning the P/C from educational practices and educational institutions is the best approach to improve children’s educational achievements.

However, at the same time, there currently appears to be greater negative awareness about what some people refer to as the continuing drop in educational achievement rates or, at least, no significant improvement over recent decades (Craig 2001: 70). In recent years, maybe due to greater emancipation of the masses, the continued invocation of the knowledge economy and how it will drive prosperity or simply governments’ embarrassment about the lack of significant achievement, governments

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(P/C) when using the second language (European language) that happen to be similar in the two languages. Positive transfer is supposed to promote language learning.

<sup>7</sup> In the literature this strategy, best documented for post-independence Haiti, is called “elite closure” (Myers-Scotton 1993).

appear to be more willing to at least think about likely causes and ways of improving the current situation. A handful of countries such as the Seychelles (Bollée 1993), Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea (Siegel 1996, 1997b), and Haiti (Dejean 1993; Howe 1992; Valdman 1991) are trying to break with the conservative status quo inherited from the colonial period. As part of their usually leftist political agenda, they have undertaken far-reaching educational changes involving the introduction of the local P/C as a medium of early formal instruction in order to lay a solid foundation for subsequent education to be possibly undertaken in the traditional medium of instruction. In other contexts (e.g. Jamaica, Curaçao, French Guiana), continued activism by scholars has led to the implementation of projects and programs that attempt to address the negative effects of the colonial and early post-colonial status quo. We provide an overview and critical appraisal of such projects in sections 3 and 4 of this introduction.

Another factor that appears to have a positive though slow effect on the greater acceptability of P/Cs in education are the results of sociolinguistic, ethnographic and second language acquisition research that systematically explores the reasons for educational failure in P/Cs-speaking contexts and in contexts in which children speak a minority language (Gumperz 1982; Collins 1988; Corson 1993) or a stigmatized minority dialect of the Standard European language (Craig 2001; Siegel 2005a), such as African American English (AAE) in the USA (Labov 1970; 1972). Such research clearly shows that P/Cs and minority languages and dialects are definitely not the root cause of children's educational underachievement. Research has identified professional, institutional and environmental factors as the main causes of educational failure. The discussion has been most heated in relation to AAE, particularly since the highly controversial decision of the Oakland School Board in late 1997 to recognize AAE as the home language of AA children and to validate it educationally (cf. among others Baugh 1998, 2000; Lippi-Green 1997; McGroarty 1996; Rickford J.R. 1999; Rickford et al. 2004; Wolfram & Christian 1989).

Research in this area has highlighted a number of issues that lead to educational failure in P/C- speaking and minority language and dialect contexts. One of the most important and most persistent issues are negative attitudes and ignorance of teachers (Siegel 2002: 14; 2006a: 59) that sometimes overlap with the prejudices of educational institutions towards children "from an oral tradition society" (see Alby & Léglise 2005 for French Guiana). Much of the research in the USA, Canada and the UK in relation to educational failure of African American and Caribbean children has shown that teachers tend to assume that these children have language difficulties and, because of their different linguistic practices, assume that they have learning disabilities; there is a long tradition of placing "minority" children in special education classes at a much higher rate and for quite different reasons than children from mainstream backgrounds. Teachers have lower educational expectations for speakers of P/Cs and minority

languages and dialects and are less likely to encourage their educational advancement. In some cases, this type of discouragement is quite overtly expressed. At times teachers are not fully aware of how specific actions on their part embody such attitudes and the harm they are doing their students by expressing them. The only way to combat this problem is by raising teachers' awareness about these issues and to provide them with materials on the languages and cultures in question.

The second issue relates to the low self-esteem of children and their overt negative attitudes towards their home language, usually a direct result of the negative feedback that they have received from teachers and parents (Siegel 2002: 15; Siegel 2006a: 59). Children do not see the P/C as a valuable language and may even be ashamed about using it in public. This lack of confidence and low self-esteem inhibit learning and self-expression in general, including the use of the medium of instruction (e.g. Winer & Jack 1997), as they may adopt an anti-establishment posture in order to fight institutional denigration of their identity. Note that despite strongly negative overt attitudes towards P/Cs and minority languages and dialects, many of their speakers also have very positive covert attitudes towards them; they value these languages as markers of local social and personal identities and means of expressing important personal feelings such as belonging etc. Again, addressing this rather subtle issue requires educational measures that raise awareness about the nature and functions of P/Cs, and languages in general, and their positive use in educational practices. For instance, teachers should be encouraged to use P/Cs to set up positive interpersonal relationships with students rather than scolding them for using them. They should also abstain from excessively correcting children's mistakes when using the standard that most likely hail from patterns in the home language. Finally, teachers should try to raise awareness about the differences between languages using a systematic contrastive approach that does not constantly identify the home language in a negative way.

A third obstacle involves the repression of self-expression due to the banning of P/Cs and minority languages and dialects from schools. Children's inability to express their thoughts and feelings or raise questions about issues addressed in school slow down their cognitive development and make it difficult for them to develop independent thinking (UNESCO 1968 cited in Siegel 2002: 15; Skutnabb-Kangas 2009). The best approach to addressing this problem short of implementing the home language as a medium of instruction is to allow students to express themselves about content issues in their home language until they have acquired enough competence to do so in the educational medium. This is already practice in many Caribbean communities (Carrington 2001) but is rather difficult to achieve in multilingual communities where teachers and students may not share the same languages.

A fourth issue concerns the teaching of literacy. It is well known that literacy is more easily learned in a familiar variety of language and that

these skills can then be transferred to another language (Collier 1992; Snow 1990; Siegel 2006a: 58; Cummins 2009). Addressing this problem requires a more structured approach to learning the medium of education, if it cannot be changed. Children should first acquire oral competence in the language before they are asked to read and write in it. Reading and writing could initially be taught through the mother tongue or be delayed until sufficient spoken knowledge has been acquired (cf. also Benson 2009).

A final issue also referred to in the articles on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao and Nicaragua deals with the nature of teaching methods and available materials. In many countries, traditional teacher-centered methods are all too common. Students are asked to repeat what the teacher is saying (so-called rote-learning) and get few chances to express themselves in a more equal manner with other students as well as the teacher during class time. In many cases, teaching materials such as books and workbooks are rare or not suited for children because they are based on socially different contexts. Coupled with lack of competence in the medium of instruction, this does not motivate students to engage with education. Teachers should be trained and encouraged to regularly experiment with a variety teaching methods that put the students in charge of their learning and encourage them to develop their own ideas. Teaching materials need to address issues that are relevant to students' lives as well as present "new" or unfamiliar issues in innovative ways that are adapted to students' learning practices.

In sum, it seems clear that views that target P/Cs as the cause for educational failure are entirely off the mark. In fact, educational research has made it very clear that P/Cs can and must be used as an integral tool for improving educational achievement. They are at the center of students' identities and are the key to their learning.

### **3. Overview of educational projects using P/Cs world-wide**

According to Siegel (1999a: 515; 2005a: 295ff), three broad types of educational programs using P/Cs can be distinguished: instrumental, accommodation and awareness-raising programs. All three programs seek to integrate the P/C into formal education. The main difference between them is the role that they assign to a P/C in this process.

Instrumental programs make the most far-reaching use of P/Cs. They employ them as medium of instruction for teaching subjects such as mathematics and social sciences – in the ideal case all subjects –<sup>8</sup> and children acquire literacy in and through the P/C. The European Standard language is taught as a second language. There are only very few countries

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<sup>8</sup> For example, in the formal education system of the Philippines, Math and Sciences are currently taught in English whereas for example History is taught in Tagalog. As a result, high school graduates have a linguistic competence clearly divided by domain (cf. Gonzalez 1998a & b).

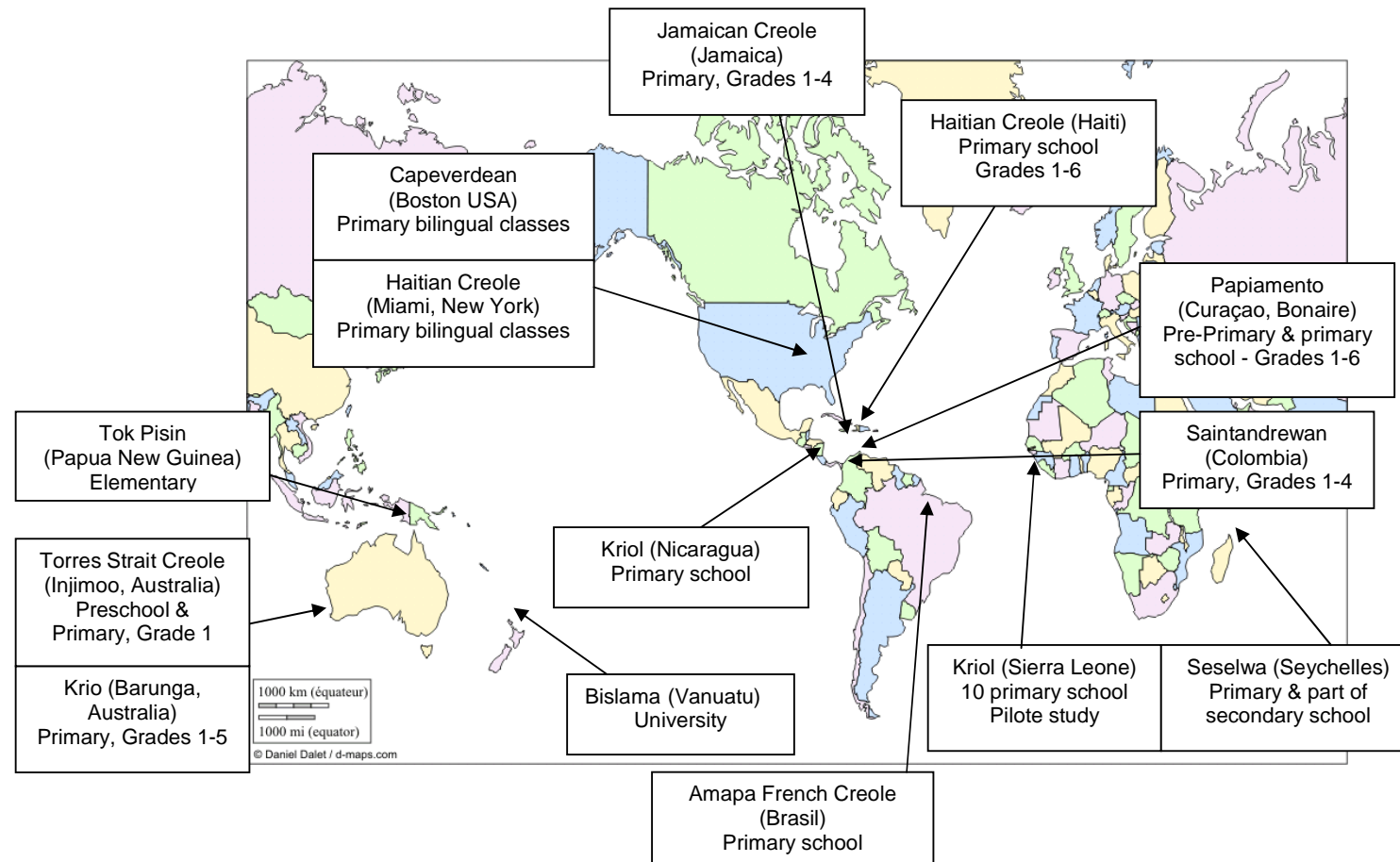


that have implemented instrumental programs or projects in formal education. Map 1 created and updated from Siegel (1999a) gives an overview of such projects and programs in formal education.

Since 1999, some important changes have taken place in this area. First, countries like Nicaragua have adopted instrumental programs and others such as Jamaica and San Andrés have been running experimental projects to test the viability of bilingual or multilingual education using a local P/C. Second, several countries such as Curaçao and Bonaire have either made the use of the P/C as an optional means of instruction or the program has been (at least temporarily) discontinued due to external circumstances, including changes in the socio-political landscape of the country or region. This is the case of Sierra Leone (cf. Kamanda 2002). It is also noticeable that most of these mother tongue projects only affect the primary school sector and, as in several African countries, only the first few years of primary school education. In only a few countries (the Seychelles, Curaçao), attempts have been made to extend instruction through a P/C to higher levels of education. Only one country, Vanuatu, makes use of Bislama at tertiary level, but the language is not used in a structured manner in primary and secondary education.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Siegel (1999a) also includes a table listing projects that make use of creoles in non-formal education such as in preschool and adult education.



Map 1: Instrumental programs for Pidgin and Creole languages

A second set of programs Siegel (1999a: 515) refers to are awareness programs. Instead of implementing the language as a means of instruction for a wide variety of subjects, such programs aim to raise positive awareness about the children's home language and culture and, in some cases, try to highlight the differences *vis-à-vis* the language of education, particularly if the two are related. The programs that fall into this category are quite heterogeneous. Map 2 summarizes some information on these different programs. A lot of awareness programs or projects are aimed at teachers or the general public and essentially stem from grass-roots activism that tried to address educational disadvantage. These projects are often voluntary and require a lot of personal investment on the part of the activists. However, many of them have led to the creation of valuable teaching materials that can be easily applied in formal education or the creation of university-level teaching courses for teachers. It seems that greater interaction between people involved in such grass-roots projects and a rigorous examination and comparison of these published materials would allow to set up a kind of matrix for devising educational materials for other settings where they are still lacking. However, to date little has been done, mostly due to difficulties in obtaining funding for such research (Siegel 2005a).

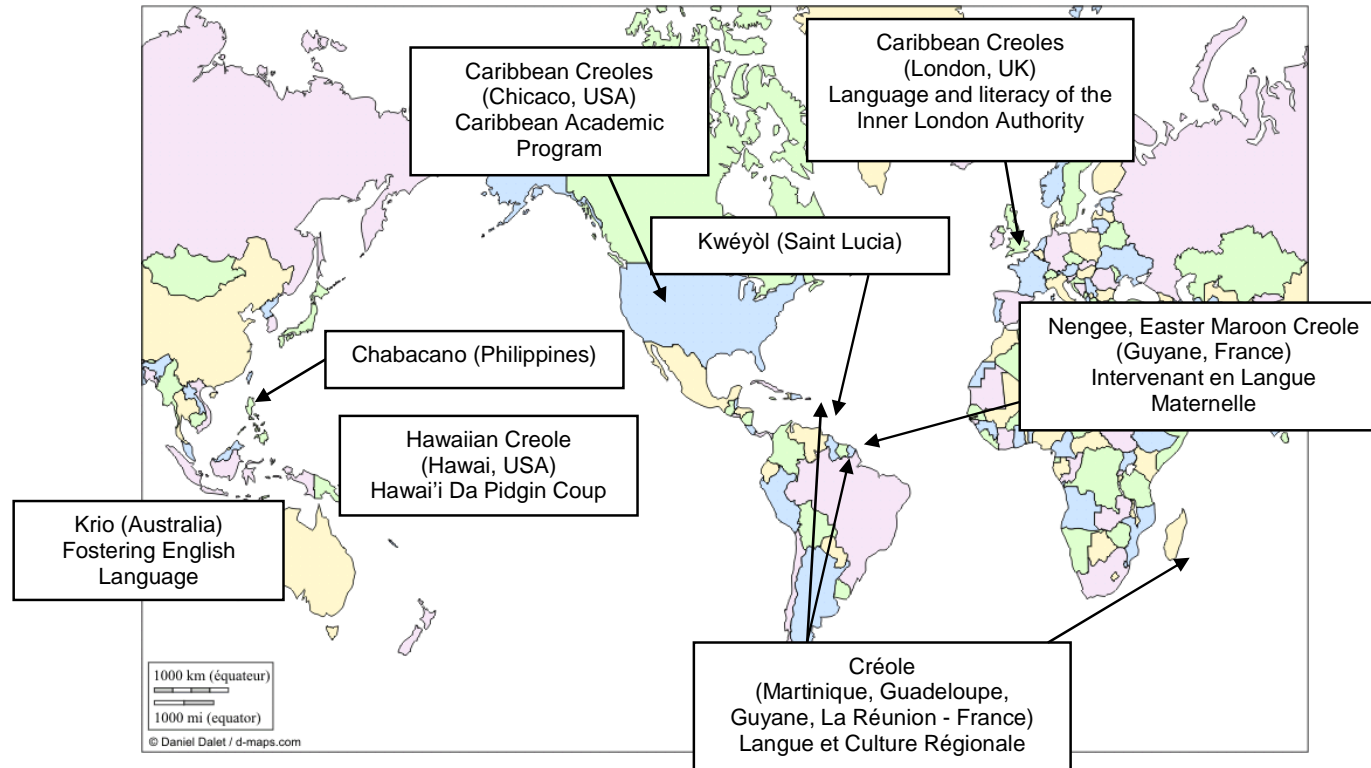
In some French speaking overseas departments, courses have been implemented (both experimentally and permanently) in primary schools that teach about cultural, other local issues, and some language issues through the P/C (for example Nenge(e)) or through both French and French Creole. The main purpose of these programs appears to be the validation of previously denigrated local identities, but at least the program *Intervenant en Langue Maternelle* aspires to eventually develop beyond this.

Finally, there are what Siegel (1999a: 515) refers to as accommodation programs. In these programs the P/C is accepted or tolerated in the classroom, but it is not a medium of instruction. If teachers and students are both competent in the P/C such as in many Caribbean countries, children may use the P/C to express themselves and for creative activities, at least until they have acquired sufficient knowledge in the European language. Outside of English classes, spelling and grammar are often also not part of assessment (Carrington 2001). In situations in which there is a significant gap between teachers' and children's language practices, children are encouraged to talk about aspects of their culture in the classroom and educational activities aim as much as possible at centering on the children's environment in early primary school. This kind of rather informal use of the home language and/or culture is reported for many communities nowadays; it appears to go hand in hand with primary school curricula reforms.

Whereas the latter kind of accommodation program can indeed accurately be called a program, the tolerating of P/Cs in the classrooms in contexts where both students and teacher are native speakers, frequently constitutes more an established and even unacknowledged practice than an program. In the latter case, teachers may not even encourage expression in

Migge, B., Léglise, I. et A. Bartens, 2010, « Creoles in Education. A Discussion of Pertinent Issues », in B. Migge, A. Bartens & I. Léglise (coord), *Creoles in Education: a Critical Assessment and Comparison of Existing Projects*, John Benjamins, 1-30

the P/C but resort to the Creole as a means of making more complicated content matter accessible to students, especially in lower grades and likewise tolerate responses in the P/C if the students would not otherwise be able to participate at all. This occurs for instance in Suriname, most Caribbean countries and on Old Providence.



Map 2: Awareness programs for Pidgin and Creole languages

Mis en forme : Anglais (Royaume-Uni)

#### **4. Critical review of projects**

In this section we critically assess some of the essential features of current and prior programs and projects that seek to integrate P/Cs into formal education systems. We argue that programs and projects are often set up without full consideration of all the relevant social, identity-related, political, (socio)linguistic etc. issues that have an important bearing on the success of such educational projects. This seriously impinges on their long-term viability and feasibility. We will base the main part of the discussion on the projects described in this volume.

##### *4.1. Defining project aims, goals and activities*

Many programs and projects whose goal is to integrate P/Cs into the formal education system start out as grassroots projects that try to address or solve issues that are seen to directly or indirectly relate to a locally spoken P/C. Depending on the background of the initiators and/or the issues to be addressed, the aims and consequently the activities developed in these projects may vary. For instance, the goal of language revival projects is to increase and broaden the use of a language menaced by extinction by bringing speakers and non-speakers together, by teaching people the language, by developing new vocabulary for new domains and/or by stimulating the use of the language among more or less competent speakers. By contrast, heritage-based projects generally focus on introducing a language that is possibly widely used in other contexts into education as a means of validating children's home culture in order to facilitate their transition from home to school environment and/or lessen existing antagonistic feelings towards the dominant culture and language among the population group in question. Such projects do not necessarily focus on language teaching and learning related issues, but may simply involve activities, possibly by way of mainstreaming, that deal with local practices and knowledge as objects of teaching and learning. Local practices may also be positively and overtly contrasted with socially dominant ones to raise awareness about local culture. Finally, educationally-oriented projects generally seek to address specific educational problems such as lack of competence in a dominant language through targeted language-based activities. For instance, students may be taught to read and write in the local (widely used) language first in order to be in a position to subsequently transfer such skills to the socially dominant language, rather than having to learn them through the unfamiliar dominant language. Students may also be exposed to activities that contrast the two languages in order to help students "keep them apart".

However, not all programs and projects are always designed on the basis of clearly defined primary and secondary aims or issues to be addressed and goals to achieve. As a result, the proposed activities are heterogeneous or even devised on an ad hoc basis, drawing on aspects of different types of approaches. This may make them incoherent and difficult to achieve positive outcomes, and to assess their effectiveness. For instance, the main aim of the French national project *Langue et Culture Régionale* (as practiced in relation to French Creoles in the French overseas regions called *Départements d’Outre-Mer* (DOMs)) appears to be to validate an officially denigrated Creole identity. A secondary aim is to (indirectly) improve educational achievement rates. However, many of the activities – at least judging from the manuals used in French Guiana – focus on developing narrative skills and text production and interpretation skills, often through French. Traditional cultural practices are uncritically presented and modern ways of life receive little mention. Moreover, the importance of culture preservation is not addressed directly.

To be fair, some of these difficulties arise as a result of clashes and changes in interests and policies. (National) government agencies and project initiators, including communities, may have very different ideas about what should and can be done, and how it should be done. As a result, the aims, goals and activities of programs and projects either change fully or partially over time and/or are the (none optimal) result of various compromises that essentially dilute more optimal approaches. Many of the articles in this collection attest to this problem.

#### 4.2. *Assessing the sociolinguistic context*

Another issue that does not receive sufficient attention when projects are designed is a thorough analysis of the sociolinguistic context in which a language is used prior to its implementation. It seems that most projects are designed based on the tacit assumption that P/C communities are essentially diglossic communities (Ferguson 1959) in which the P/C takes on the position of the Low variety and the European Standard language that of the High variety. The latter is reserved for formal situations and associated with high prestige. It is assumed to have a more complex grammar, a more elaborated set of norms, is rigorously codified, and is the medium of instruction in schools. By contrast, the Low variety is learned naturally in the family and community and is not codified or used in formal settings and schools. It has low overt prestige but is valued as a community language.

However, sociolinguistic work on a number of P/C communities has shown that this is not the case. Many children who speak P/Cs are bilingual or multilingual depending on the context prior to entering school because many communities are linguistically heterogeneous. In some communities, children already have some degree of knowledge of the Standard European language, but possibly not the varieties used for teaching. In some cases,

this knowledge extends to some domains but not to others for both the European language and the P/C because the two languages are in complementary distribution. In other settings, the two languages are in overlapping distribution. In yet other communities, speakers of the P/C also speak one or more other local languages and may even be dominant in languages other than the P/C (and the socially dominant language). Moreover, the repertoires and competences of individual members in the same location/community may also vary considerably depending on social factors such as their social background, family history and practices, interaction pattern etc. This is the case, for example in French Guiana (see Migge & Léglise, this volume). Another important issue that is less often addressed in a systematic manner are societal language attitudes including people's ideologies about the different languages used in the community. Does the language have overt or covert prestige? Do people consider the language to be suitable for education? Does the language compete with other local languages? Is it negatively viewed by other population groups or widely accepted as a lingua franca? Such issues must be determined and in the case of seriously negative attitudes must be addressed prior to or concomitant to implementation and/or feature as an integral component of educational activities (cf. also Siegel 2002: 29-33 on activities and Higgins this volume). Lack of systematic attention to students' linguistic repertoires and attitudes seriously endangers the success of projects. For instance, a P/C can only be successfully used as a medium of education if all children have sufficient competence in it, otherwise such programs essentially introduce a new layer of language-based disadvantage. Or heritage programs focusing on one language and culture may actually promote discrimination if a good number of the children in the classroom are speakers of other, equally disadvantaged communities. Finally, if classrooms are linguistically and culturally heterogeneous, a program that focuses on language awareness issues, language attitudes and L2-based learning strategies for the dominant language may be socially and linguistically more useful than a bilingual project that only addresses a few of the languages present while disregarding others (Migge & Léglise 2007: 313-325).

Despite the importance of these issues, few of the projects and programs discussed in this volume systematically investigated speakers' repertoires prior to deciding on the design of the program/project and the educational activities or have not adapted activities once such knowledge has become available, probably because of the time gap between research and political decisions. A notable exception is the bilingual project currently under way in Jamaica where researchers of the Jamaican Language Unit first carried out a country-wide language survey aimed at determining language attitudes towards using Jamaican Creole in education. Again, in all fairness, in some cases the lack of research in this area may be related to the lack of resources and/or the lack of knowledge about such issues; clear road maps for designing projects and programs or handy guides for carrying out systematic



analysis of sociolinguistic contexts are still mostly nonexistent. It seems that this issue requires more cross-fertilization and co-operation between sociolinguists, applied linguists, educational researchers and language practitioners – and, last but definitely not least – decision makers.

#### *4.3. Setting up the educational program*

According to Siegel (1999a:515), “[t]he goals of all three types [of programs, i.e. accommodation, immersion and awareness programs] are usually the same: additive bilingualism or bidialectalism – helping students to acquire the standard language while maintaining their own way of speaking and thus their linguistic self-respect.” However, analysis of most projects suggests that these goals are hardly attained by most, if any, of the projects. Most projects have a strongly transitional bilingualism focus. Essentially, the P/C is brought into education in order to facilitate and enhance mastery of the European Standard language that functions as the main medium of education. As in some African countries, for instance, instruction through and in the local language or P/C only takes place in the initial years of primary school education until sufficient knowledge has been acquired in the European language. Instruction in and through the P/C usually ends at the higher primary school cycle or at the end of the primary school cycle; only the Seychelles have so far implemented Seselwa as a medium of instruction at post-primary level but, as far as we know, only on an experimental basis or in vocational tracks. In some African countries, the local language may be kept on as a subject at higher levels, but to our knowledge this is not the case in P/C communities.

While some programs also promote writing and reading in the P/C, the aim is rarely to encourage full bilingualism. These skills are mostly taught through and in the P/C in order to facilitate the learning of the European language and more crucially, to facilitate their application to other European languages. Very quickly after transition to the European language, writing and reading in the P/C are discontinued. Moreover, for most projects activities that promote the development of reading materials and literature more generally are absent or are a minor feature. These kinds of arrangements enshrine the idea that writing and reading in the dominant European language is essential while reading and writing in the P/C is secondary or lacks value and importance.

Another issue that receives little attention in projects is the nature of the language practices that are being taught and promoted in educational projects on P/Cs and other lesser-used languages. Since projects (and most descriptive language materials) are often not devised on the basis of a thorough analysis of the sociolinguistic context, teaching activities have to proceed on the basis of existing structural linguistic descriptions of the language, and/or teachers’ (native or non-native speakers) assumptions and/or personal language practices. This is problematic because the

structural linguistic analysis presented in grammars may vary considerably from actual language practices especially in bilingual and multilingual communities (Crowley 2007). Students (and their parents) may make frequent use of code-switching and code-mixing practices or language repertoires may differ considerably from (homogenizing) grammatical descriptions aimed at a linguistic audience. On the other hand, personal perceptions, assumptions and ideologies of language use can vary considerably from one person to another introducing possibly a new layer of heterogeneity, if not properly overtly addressed. However, more crucially, individuals' views on what is proper language use are likely to undermine the usual project/program goals for promoting suppressed identities and facilitating access and motivation to education because they may vary considerably from the practices of the majority or may not take into account and/or positively value the practices of different social groups. There is a (human) tendency to value one's own practices more highly than those of others and/or to disregard practices that do not fit into one's social ideology. As a result, the language and culture-based discrimination will not be removed, but a new layer of disadvantage may be added. Projects and programs should therefore first determine the sociolinguistic structure and the nature of language practices including surveying language attitudes and ideologies before deciding on the use of language practices and/or how to discuss and approach them in the most positive and least discriminatory fashion. Equally, it seems necessary that any project or program include language awareness components as part of their teacher training and as part of their teaching activities (and interactions with parents).

#### 4.4. Evaluation of projects

Siegel (2002: 24) also mentions that research on the use of P/Cs in education is still an underdeveloped area of investigation. According to him, most of this research focuses on instrumental projects that make use of a P/C as the only or main medium of instruction (cf. Murtagh 1982 on the use of Kriol and English in Australia; Ravel & Thomas 1985 on the use of Seselwa in the Seychelles; Kephart 1985, 1992 on the use of Creole on Carriacou; Siegel 1992, 1997a on teachers' views on inferences from Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea; Siegel 1993 for a summary). There is even less research on accommodation and awareness programs. Siegel (2002: 28) mentions a few small-scale studies on Hawaiian Creole English discussed in Boggs (1985) and Feldman, Stone & Renderer (1990). The studies in this collection attest to this fact. Only some of the projects reported on in this volume, namely Carpenter & Devonish, the French Guianese project *Intervenant en Langue Maternelle* (ILM) discussed in Migge & Léglise, and Simmons-McDonald include an explicit research component in their project. Others are either in the beginning stages or financial means and researchers who could carry out such studies are not currently available.

However, it is crucial that the effectiveness of program or project is regularly assessed. Such evaluations require careful cooperation between educational researchers, psychologists, (socio)linguists and teachers because comprehensive evaluations should measure programs and projects on a number of parameters and these results have to be interpreted on the basis of a sound understanding of the social, linguistic and educational environment. Apart from measuring and comparing students' scores in set tests, qualitative research on the development of students' and teachers' perceptions and assumptions about the project aims, the languages involved etc. has to be carried out and possibly subsequently managed because negative views or misconceptions can seriously hamper the performance of even the most optimally designed project. Perceptions and attitudes can rapidly change in concert with other social changes.

One of the biggest challenges in relation to assessments of effectiveness is the creation of adequate test materials. Testing materials usually exist for European languages and/or are in European languages. However, such tests only have limited usefulness for assessing the effectiveness of programs and projects involving P/Cs. They can only test programs'/projects' overall effects on students' educational achievements or their development in specific subject areas such as the European language, Mathematics etc., but they cannot test the overall effectiveness of activities carried out in the P/C. Moreover, such standardized tests rely on the fact that children have a high enough competence in the dominant educational language (to understand them) and have sufficiently absorbed the cultural practices on which tests are based. This cannot always be taken for granted, especially in the case of psychological tests that require a good understanding of the concepts being queried. This then suggests that depending on the nature of the sociolinguistic context, testing material has to be provided in the P/C or the local variety of the dominant language and be well adapted to the local cultural environment in order to be indicative. However, to date there is very little work in this area most likely because devising and administering socially, linguistically and culturally appropriate testing material requires a fair amount of collaboration between psychologists, educators, linguists, native speakers, etc. A first attempt at this has been within the framework of the multi-year research project *Ecole Plurilingue Outre-Mer* (ECOLPOM) which endeavors to investigate the educational benefits of mother tongue education projects carried out on the French periphery (New Caledonia (Kanak languages), French Polynesia (Tahitian) and French Guiana (Nengee and Kalin'a)).

Careful scientific observation of educational projects is also vital in order to identify problems in the delivery and in the design of a project. For instance, (irregular) observation of classroom activities in the ILM project in French Guiana revealed that some teachers had not fully mastered some parts of the material discussed in training courses and/or that they were adapting materials in a non-optimal way and thereby confusing students.

Discussions with teachers in the project (Puren 2005) and during training sessions also revealed that working conditions were suboptimal in several cases and/or that teachers required more pedagogical training in order to be in a better position to create and fully exploit new materials. The same observation applies to the now trilingual project discussed in Morren (this volume): some teachers were simply not confident enough to subsequently apply the P/C materials and strategies devised during training in real classroom situations.

#### *4.5. Political and financial issues*

We agree with Taufe'ulungaki (1987 as cited in Migge & Leglise 2007: 324) who summarizes the challenges of educational reform in the following words:

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.

However, we would like to emphasize the important role of language ideologies and politics of language. It is common sense to say that a State's language policy and its language education policy have to do with politics and with political issues. As such, they reflect prevalent language attitudes and language ideology rather than the results of academic research on the benefits of mother tongue education as outlined in section 2.4. This creates a gap in visions and convictions between researchers and decision makers which often proves devastating to attempts aimed at the introduction of P/Cs into the educational system.<sup>10</sup>

Political agendas are often camouflaged as financial issues which especially in emerging countries indeed constitute a reality language activists have to grapple with. However, the huge improvements in information technology that have occurred in the past decades have drastically reduced the cost of producing for instance teaching materials and theoretically enables people all around the world to share certain resources. At the same time, investment in human resources has become a key issue. Be it as it may, the new technologies at least partly falsify the cost argument which nevertheless is extremely persevering in the discourses of politicians of minority language and P/C communities (Bartens 2001).

Financial issues are also cited when the duration of a program or project is defined. Research results (cf., e.g., Cummins 2009) demonstrate that six to ten years is the recommendable duration for bilingual programs but usually duration is sacrificed on the altar of finance to the detriment of

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<sup>10</sup> The same applies, of course, to status vs. corpus planning.

students; programs are pruned down to the very first years of the primary school cycle.

However, the success of a program is also conditioned by the size and manageability of the task not absolute financial resources.<sup>11</sup> This is how Ravel & Thomas (1985) explain the success of the endeavor in the Seychelles compared to the failure in Haiti. Note, however, that the educational reform was part of a large-scale socialist revolution in the Seychelles which also favorably contributed to its success.

The case of Martinique and Guadeloupe also demonstrates quite clearly that language attitudes and real linguistic needs rather 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 (Migge & Léglise 2007).

## **5. Roadmap for setting up and maintaining education projects/programs**

The discussion so far suggests that any attempt at devising educational projects and programs that aim to integrate P/Cs or any non-dominant language into formal education have to be based on a complex set of considerations. This requires fruitful interaction and collaboration between researchers from a range of disciplines. In this section we try to outline these in a concrete way by proposing a set of steps that have to be followed

Step I: Carrying out a representative sociolinguistic survey of the community in which the project is to be implemented in order to minimally identify the following issues:

- the languages spoken in the community and their broad social distribution,
- people's linguistic repertoires and usage patterns,
- linguistic practices in a range of social settings,
- people's attitudes towards the different languages and practices,
- linkages between social and linguistic practices,
- ideologies' of language use in the community,
- current social issues within the community and perceptions of their causes.

These issues may be investigated using both qualitative (participant observation and semi-guided interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire-based surveys) research methods.

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<sup>11</sup> Admittedly it is virtually impossible to separate these factors.

Step II: Selecting an educational approach (instrumental *vs.* accommodative; bilingual *vs.* monolingual etc.) based on the finding of the sociolinguistic investigation. This should be done in conjunction with both educational researchers and community members.

Step III: Formulating the aims and goals of the project/programs. Again this has to be done in conjunction with educational researchers, community members and others who will be involved in the project. The aims and goals have to be based on the sociolinguistic findings (e.g. a bilingual approach is not useful in highly multilingual areas) and take account of the resources that the project is likely to attract.

Step IV: Convening of committees and groups involving both the people concerned and professionals that are in charge of defining the different tasks to be carried out and possibly carrying them out as well. Tasks involve awareness campaigns, obtaining official and other types of support including initial funding for the project, devising of a preliminary schedule of educational activities to be implemented, planning of the activities and construction of educational and training and reference materials such as dictionaries, grammars, orthographies, etc.

Step V: Raising awareness of the issues in the community and among those most strongly affected by the project such as politicians, children, parents and teachers. People have to understand why the project is being implemented, how implementation will affect them and what they stand to gain (or lose) as a result of implementation. Such activities should also be channeled towards obtaining support from these interested parties and getting them involved in different parts of the project.

Step VI: Fundraising. This initially involves devising both a financial and a full project content outline for the project and applying for funding from national and international bodies.

Step VII: Devising a schedule of activities or a curriculum. Again, the input of educational researchers and practitioners is required. This involves determining the target group (e.g. suitable educational stages), the amount of time to be spent on specific activities, the intervals in which they will take place (e.g. 5 hours a week), the location where the activities can take place, the people who will implement the activities etc.

Step VIII: Construction of activities and materials. This implies formulating a detailed curriculum and schedule as well as devising educational materials and teachers' guides for all subject areas to be covered. Commonsense logic suggests that compiling these materials start at the pre-school and first grade levels so that the entire materials for one grade are completed before starting

the elaboration of the materials for the next level instead of writing all L1 instruction materials, then continuing with the Math books, etc. Indeed, this is the usual order of proceeding (cf. Koskinen, this volume on Nicaragua).

Step IX: Training of teachers and other practitioners. For this step, considerably more time and resources have to be devoted than is usually the case. Especially in P/C contexts where the coexisting H language is the lexifier language, entrenched language attitudes have led to a degree of linguistic insecurity which cannot be amended by a few workshops (see comments on the San Andrés trilingual pilot project in section 4.4. above).

Step X: Piloting the educational program among a reduced but representative student population. For example, the San Andrés trilingual pilot project was undermined by the fact that students and teachers were shifted around schools between years, resulting in highly heterogeneous classrooms especially in the case of one of the three schools initially involved.<sup>12</sup>

Step XI: Evaluation of the successes and shortcomings of the pilot program and making the necessary adjustments in both curriculum design and in the teaching materials.

Step XII: Implementation of the actual program. This requires the continued supervision of a) teachers, b) classroom activities, and c) overall running of the program or project. In order to respond to arising problems and to gather data for both future program development and research purposes, a log should be kept. There must at all times be clearly designated persons in charge of specific tasks otherwise the program fails as a result of lack of coordination.

Step XIII: Continued qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the project and its functioning at regular intervals and implementation of changes when and where necessary to respond to social changes as well as problems which may arise along the way.

Step XIV: Convening of groups of teachers and researchers that are in charge of producing additional education materials and of updating existing ones.

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<sup>12</sup> This was the Central Baptist school. The school of the First Baptist Church desisted from the project and only in the Emmanuel Baptist school of San Luis teachers could work with a predominantly Creole-speaking student population (cf. Morren this volume).

## 6. Conclusions and Outlook

This volume is addressed both to practitioners, people who wish to set up educational projects and to people interested in the social history of P/Cs in education. All chapters describe the sociolinguistic and educational context in which the educational projects are taking place, policy developments, the projects and programs underway, and address the evaluation activities. The first chapters give insight into practical matters and deal with sociolinguistic issues or historical and political challenges (Higgins, Bolus, Koskinen, Sippola, Migge & Léglise). Some authors also present more specifically the creation and appraisal of teaching materials (Higgins, Sippola, Simmons-McDonald, Morren) while other authors describe more precisely the educational context and the project activities in which many of the authors are also taking part (Baptista et al., Djikhoff et al., Ferreira, Morren among others).

In putting together this volume, we have sought to attain a number of goals. Firstly, we have aimed at raising awareness of the roles P/Cs can and indeed do play in education in specific and sociolinguistically complex communities. The articles in this volume confirm that integrating Creoles into education is not only a viable option rather than just a distant vision, but also leads to positive educational results. Second, we hope that the information on existing initiatives and programs will encourage academics, decision makers and the wider public to engage in a critical and scientifically accountable manner with educational initiatives in the communities in which they work and/or live; while social activism is vital for initiating projects and programs, it is equally important that programs and projects are on a sound scientific footing in order to be sustainable. Third, where projects already exist, we would like to stress that regular evaluation and supervision of activities is a prerequisite for successful and lasting programs. Unfortunately, current initiatives tend to often neglect evaluation.

It is clear that P/C mother tongue education programs have to be set up in a principled manner. Given the heterogeneous background of all the entities involved in such programs, especially in the domain of formal education, it is obvious that the approach for designing such a program has to be interdisciplinary, drawing at least on linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and pedagogy. We firmly believe that more research and exchange of experiences will enhance the design and execution of individual projects and programs in a significant manner.

Just as there are typologies of the use of P/Cs in educational projects and programs, most importantly Siegel's (1999a: 515; 2005a: 295ff) classification into instrumental, accommodation and awareness-raising programs<sup>13</sup>, it might be possible to establish a similar typology for validation of programs. Although this hypothetical possibility exists, it

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<sup>13</sup> See also Craig (1980; 1999).



might be more feasible and above all more economic in the sense of avoiding excessive theory-building to state that the validation methods differ by necessity according to the type of program to be evaluated.

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