

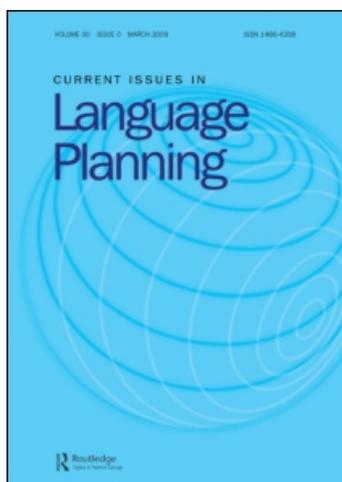
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Literacy in Pidgin and Creole Languages

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Pidgin and creole languages are spoken by more than 75 million people, but the vast majority of their speakers acquire literacy in another language – usually the language of a former colonial power. This paper looks at the origins of pidgins and creoles and explores some of the reasons for their lack of use in formal education. Then it describes some language planning efforts that have occurred with regard to instrumentalisation and graphisation of these languages, and the few cases where they are actually used to teach initial literacy. The paper goes on to discuss how speakers of pidgins and creoles more commonly acquire literacy in the standard European language officially used in formal education. It concludes with a short section on the role of pidgins and creoles in newspapers, literature and other writing.

Keywords: pidgin, creole, literacy, education

Introduction

This paper looks at literacy in pidgin and creole languages – more specifically, at the acquisition and use of literacy by speakers of these language varieties. It begins with some background information, describing the origins of pidgins and creoles, and the different settings in which they are used.

Background

Pidgins and creoles¹ are languages that develop in situations where groups of people who do not share a common language have to communicate with each other – typically as the result of trading or large-scale population movement. In such contexts, people first develop their own individual ways of communicating, either by simplifying their own language or by using words and phrases they have learned from another language, similar to interlanguage in second language acquisition. If the groups remain in contact, certain communicative conventions may emerge and individual variation is reduced. The result is then a new language – a pidgin. The lexicon of the pidgin is derived from the various languages originally in contact, with the majority of words usually coming from one particular language, called the 'lexifier'. However, the grammar is different from that of the lexifier or any of the other contributing languages, and also formally less complex, having a much smaller total lexicon and little if any morphological marking of grammatical categories.

This kind of pidgin is normally restricted to use as a medium of inter-group communication, and would not be considered a vehicle for literacy. However, in some cases, the use of a pidgin has been extended into wider areas – for example, as the everyday lingua franca in a multilingual country. As a result, the language becomes lexically and grammatically more complex, and it is called an

'expanded pidgin'. An example is Melanesian Pidgin with its three dialects: Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea (spoken by over 4 million), Pijin in Solomon Islands and Bislama in Vanuatu. Another example, Nigerian Pidgin, has over 30 million speakers. Both these expanded pidgins are lexified by English.

As the result of population movement, a new community might form, made up of people whose parents or grandparents came from different countries and spoke different languages – for example among the children of plantation slaves or indentured labourers. This community may also have a new variety of language as their mother tongue – a creole. A creole develops when an existing or developing pidgin is adopted by children as their first language, or it may be the result of the lexifier language changing drastically as it is learned by new groups of people in a new environment. Like any other vernacular language, however, a creole has a full lexicon and complex grammatical rules, and is not at all restricted in use, having a full range of informal functions. Examples are Jamaican Creole and Hawai'i Creole (both lexified by English), Cape Verde Creole (lexified by Portuguese), and Haitian Creole (lexified by French), the creole with the most speakers – over 7.3 million.

In this paper I will treat expanded pidgins and creoles together as one kind of vernacular, for convenience abbreviated as P/C (pidgin/creole).² There are at least 76.8 million speakers of P/Cs (see Siegel, 2002 for sources). They are spoken by indigenous populations in at least 50 countries or territories and by immigrants in many other places – for example, there are approximately 1 million speakers of Haitian Creole in the USA (Joseph, 1997: 281).

In some countries, P/C speaking communities are a minority – for example, those speaking Northern Territory Kriol in Australia, and Gullah and Louisiana Creole in the USA. P/C speaking immigrants, especially from the Caribbean, are also minorities in the USA, Canada, Britain, the Netherlands and other countries. In some places, P/C speakers are the majority in a particular state or territory, but a minority in the country as a whole – for example, on San Andres Island, which is part of Colombia, and in Hawai'i, which is a state of the USA. However, in most places where a P/C is spoken, its speakers make up a majority of the population as a whole – for example in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the Pacific; Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean; Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Central African Republic in Africa; and in Belize, Suriname, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in the Caribbean region.

Yet in most of these places there is no official policy for teaching literacy in the P/C – despite its being the majority language. Instead, the language of education in almost all cases is the standard form of a European language – English, French, Portuguese, Spanish or Dutch – usually a former colonial language that has remained an official language of the country. In the sections that follow, I first discuss some possible reasons for this state of affairs. Then, after describing language planning efforts that have taken place, I give an account of the programmes that do exist for teaching literacy in P/C languages, and explore some reasons for their existence. I go on to relate how literacy is taught to P/C speakers in other contexts, and conclude with a description of the current use of P/Cs in reading and writing.³

Lack of Literacy Teaching in Pidgins and Creoles

Like other languages, P/Cs are valued by their speakers in the private domains of family and friendship. Speakers often have positive attitudes towards their language as a marker of solidarity and local social identity, as reported for Hawai'i Creole (Sato, 1991; Watson-Gegeo, 1994); Australian Kriol (Siegel, 1998) and Dominica Creole French (Fontaine & Leather, 1992). However, unlike other languages, P/Cs are rarely valued in public formal domains, and, as a result, they generally suffer from overall negative attitudes and low prestige (see e.g. Mühleisen, 2002; Rickford & Traugott, 1985; Winford, 1994).

There are several possible reasons for the low prestige of P/Cs. First, it may be attributed to their history. Each P/C-speaking country or territory was formerly the colony of a European power. Those in control and those with economic advantage spoke the European language. The P/C-speakers who later became the educated and well-off elite were those who acquired the European language. When they became leaders, they supported the European language remaining as the official language. Thus, as the language of the former colonial power and the current leaders, the European language is seen as the key to upward mobility and economic success. In contrast, the P/C, as a language of former slaves or indentured labourers, is often associated with repression and powerlessness.

In addition, as the new languages of relatively recently formed speech communities, P/Cs suffer from comparison to the official languages. First of all, the European languages have long historical traditions and bodies of literature, whereas P/Cs do not (Alleyne, 1994). Second, European languages are clearly standardised in both orthography and grammar, and have many dictionaries and grammar books, whereas most P/Cs do not have a widely recognised standard grammar or orthography, although some dictionaries and grammatical descriptions have been written by linguists.

Most significantly, however, P/Cs are often not considered to be legitimate languages, but rather deviant and corrupt forms of their lexifiers. This is especially true in situations where a P/C coexists with the standard form of its lexifier as the official language. This view is reinforced by the fact that, at least superficially, the P/C and the standard share the same lexicon. It is thought that the P/C does not have its own grammatical rules and, consequently, the way it is spoken is considered to be the result of performance errors rather than language differences. This lack of autonomy is exacerbated in countries like Jamaica and Guyana where there is a creole continuum – a cline of varieties ranging from what is called the *basilect* (furthest from the lexifier) to the *acrolect* (closest to the lexifier), with intermediate varieties, the *mesolects*. In such cases, there seems to be no clear dividing line between the lexifier and the creole.

Hawai'i Creole is a good example of a P/C with a history of denigration by teachers, administrators and community leaders. In publications starting from the 1920s, it was consistently labelled with negative terms such as 'lazy', 'ungrammatical', 'faulty', 'sloppy', 'slothful' and 'ugly'. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was even considered a speech defect. In 1962, a major local newspaper compared it to the language of animals in an editorial entitled 'Why Not Just Grunt?' (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 13 February 1962).⁴ Such extreme statements are now getting harder to find, but the language is still commonly referred to as a corrupt form of

English, as indicated by this extract from a letter to the editor of the same newspaper: 'It's broken English. And when something is broken, you fix it.' (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 12 October 1999).

Thus, in most P/C contexts, the general public, including educators and administrators, believe that their own language is a deviant form of the standard and therefore not suitable for education. Such attitudes have been reported for many P/Cs, such as Carriacou Creole (Kephart, 1992), other varieties of creole in the Caribbean (Alleyne, 1994; Winford, 1994), Krio in Sierra Leone (Fyle, 1994), Nigerian Pidgin (Elugbe, 1994), Hawai'i Creole (Sato, 1985), Torres Strait Creole (Shnukal, 1992) and Tok Pisin (Nidue, 1988).

But even when P/Cs are recognised as legitimate languages, some educators, administrators and even linguists still argue that using them in education would be both impractical and detrimental to students. These arguments have to do with issues such as lack of standardisation and fear of interference with acquisition of the standard form of the European official language, learning of this standard being the ultimate goal of the education system everywhere P/Cs are spoken (see Siegel, 2002).

Language Planning for Pidgins and Creoles

In some countries and territories where P/Cs are spoken by the majority, language planning efforts have been carried out to expand the use of these varieties into literacy and education. With regard to status planning, the aim has been to increase both the status and functions of the P/C so that it is used in official contexts alongside the existing official language (instrumentalisation). Many of the arguments for such expansion are socio-political, pointing out that a large proportion of the population is disenfranchised by not knowing the established official language. The use of the P/C in formal education, government and other official domains would give people greater access and allow them to participate in decision-making processes, thus counteracting neo-colonialism and elitism (see e.g. Bebel-Gisler, 1981; Devonish, 1986.)

With regard to corpus planning, the major efforts have been in codification: choosing a 'standard' variety of the P/C to be used for these wider functions and developing a writing system for it (graphisation). However, because of the socio-political underpinnings of language planning efforts, and the lack of perceived legitimacy of P/Cs, as described above, the codification of a P/C has two goals not usually found in other contexts: (1) choosing a variety of the P/C that would be accessible to the majority of speakers of the language, and (2) making the P/C autonomous from its lexifier so that it is perceived as a separate, legitimate language. Thus, codification in P/C contexts does not involve developing a 'standard' in the usual sense of the term (Siegel, 2002). In other language contexts, the standard is based on a prestige variety used by the social elite and usually found in an established literary tradition. In addition, the standard language is often modelled on an already established standardised language used in the community (such as Latin in Europe). In contrast, a P/C normally does not have an established literary tradition. The prestige variety of the P/C is the form closest to the lexifier, and the established standard is often the lexifier itself – and both are generally spoken by only a small elite class (see Sebba, 1997).

Obviously, the goals of accessibility and autonomy would not be accomplished by developing a standard form of the P/C on the basis of the lexifier.

This is most relevant to the choice of orthography. There are basically two types of orthography used for P/Cs: etymological and phonemic. An etymological orthography is based on the conventional spelling of the lexifier language – for example in Hawai'i Creole: *They stay coming fo talk with that old bugger.* 'They're coming to talk with that old guy.' A modified etymological orthography distinguishes some of the salient linguistic features of the P/C, especially in pronunciation (Winer, 1990). So the same example from Hawai'i Creole with modified etymological orthography would be: *Dey stay coming fo talk wit dat ol buggah.*

A phonemic orthography is based on the sounds that actually occur in the P/C without any reference to the lexifier, ideally with one symbol for each phoneme. So the Hawai'i Creole example would be: *Dei ste kaming fo tawk wit daet ol baga.* An intermediate phonemic orthography basically has one symbol (or digraph) for one phoneme, but in some cases it uses the spelling conventions of the lexifier – for example: <ou> for /u/ in French-lexified creoles (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1994) and <oa> for /ou/ as in *boat* in the English-lexified Belize Kriol (Decker, 1995).

It is the phonemic orthography that appears to meet the language-planning goals of accessibility and autonomy for P/Cs. First of all, it is well known that a phonemic writing system is easier to learn when acquiring literacy because of its consistency and because new readers tend to decode sound by sound. In contrast, the etymological orthography preserves the inconsistencies and historical forms unrelated to pronunciation that are found in the lexifier language. Thus the phonemic system is more suitable if the P/C is to be used for teaching initial literacy, which is a usual goal of language-planning efforts in P/C contexts.

Second, with regard to the goal of autonomy, the phonemic orthography (including the intermediate type) clearly makes the written form of the P/C look distinct from that of the lexifier. In contrast, the etymological orthography (including the modified type) reinforces the view that the P/C is a deviant variety of the lexifier. (For a more detailed discussion of orthographic issues, see Mühleisen, 2002; Sebba, 1997.)

Phonemic orthographies have been developed for many P/Cs. Haitian Creole has had several since the 1920s, all surrounded by vigorous ideological debates (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1994). The current official system, *òtograf IPN* (Institute Pédagogique National) is an intermediate phonemic orthography developed in the mid-1970s and made official in 1980. This system is now widely used in Haiti, although some, such as Métellus (1998), still promote a more etymological alternative. In the Caribbean, orthographies based on the Haitian IPN model were developed for the French-lexified creoles of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the mid-1970s and for those of St Lucia and Dominica in the early 1980s. These are in general use, although alternatives have been proposed (e.g. Bernabé, 2001; Hazäel-Massieux, 1993).

In the Indian Ocean, a phonemic orthography was developed for Seselwa in the Seychelles in 1976 (Bollée, 1993), but this was later amended to be more similar to that of Haitian Creole (Baker, 1991). At least four different phonemically-based orthographies have been devised for Mauritian Creole, but none of these has achieved official recognition. However, the Mauritius Ministry of Education

has recently released a proposal for a standard orthography that appears to have wide acceptance (Hookoomsingh, 2004).

With regard to English-lexifier P/Cs, Tok Pisin had several different phonemic orthographies in use from 1935 to the 1950s, when standardisation efforts began. Although it is not officially recognised, the orthography used in the Tok Pisin translation of the New Testament, published in 1968, has become the de facto standard (Romaine, 1992; Wurm, 1985). General agreement on an informal standard orthography for Bislama emerged around 1995, but makeshift spellings are still widely used (Crowley, 2000). A translation of the New Testament that appeared in 1993 and the work of Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group have promoted a standard phonemic orthography for Pijin, but it is also not yet widely used. In Africa, the orthography used in the Sierra Leone Krio dictionary (Fyle & Jones, 1980) is generally recognised as the standard for Krio. In the Central African Republic, the government implemented an official orthography for Sango in 1984.⁵ In Australia, a phonemic orthography was developed for Northern Territory Kriol from 1973 to 1976, primarily for use in education (Sandefur, 1979). It is widely used, but with some variation in spellings.

A phonemic orthography for Jamaican Creole (which could be adapted for other English-lexified creoles in the Caribbean) was devised by Cassidy (1961, 1993), and one for Hawai'i Creole was devised by Odo (see Bickerton & Odo, 1976). These orthographies are used by linguists (whom they were developed for) but rarely by others. Instead, nearly all literature in the English-lexified creoles of the Caribbean, and in Hawai'i Creole (including the recent translation of the New Testament), uses different modified etymological orthographies rather than the phonemic ones. An intermediate phonemic writing system using some orthographic conventions from English was developed with wider consultation for Belize Kriol in the mid 1990s and seems to have more acceptance (Decker, 1995). An intermediate phonemic writing system for Sranan in Suriname using some orthographic conventions from Dutch became the official orthography for the language in 1960, but was never widely accepted by the general public. The same is true for the more phonemic, modernised orthography using international conventions that became official in 1986 (Sebba, 2000).

Regarding creoles lexified by other languages, Papiamentu has two official orthographies, both widely used: an etymological one used on Aruba and a phonemic one used on Curaçao and Bonaire (Kouwenberg & Muysken, 1994). In Africa, the government of Cape Verde decided to officially support a unified orthography for Cape Verde Creole in 1998 (Gonsalves, 1999).

A final feature of language planning for P/Cs is that government-sponsored language-planning organisations are not very common. However, there exist three for Papiamentu: two in the Netherlands Antilles – Instituto Lingwistiko Antiano, which has been in existence for over 20 years (Dijkhoff, 1993), and Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma (FPI), which was founded in 1998 – and one in Aruba – Instituto Pedagógico Arubano (Pereira, 2004). Agencies in other countries are Lenstiti Kreol in the Seychelles (Bollée, 1993) and the National Kriol Council of Belize. Non-government organisations also exist that conduct some language-planning or -promotion activities – for example: the Folk Research Centre in St Lucia (Frank, 1993), Komité pou Etid Kwéyòl in Dominica (Stuart, 1993), the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (O'Donnell, 1992), and the

Literacy Association of Vanuatu (Crowley, 2000). One of the newest language planning agencies is the Jamaican Language Unit, established in 2002 in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the University of the West Indies in Kingston. One of the responsibilities of this agency is to 'formally propose and popularise an official standard writing system for Jamaican [Creole]' (Devonish, 2002). One way this is being done is through the Jamaican Language School Literacy Competition for primary school children in Grades 5 and 6. Entries have to be in the Cassidy writing system, and workshops on this system have been held for teachers of these students from all over the country (Devonish, 2003).

The Use of P/Cs in Teaching Literacy

Formal education

There are only four countries or territories where the P/C has been officially designated as the medium of instruction for the early years of primary school, and is therefore the medium for acquiring initial literacy. In the Seychelles, Seselwa has been the language of education for Grades 1–4 for more than 20 years (Bollée, 1993; Mahoune, 2000). More recently, its use has been extended for some subjects for up to five more years. The Seychelles has two other official languages: English and French. English is used as a teaching language for some subjects starting in Grade 3, and French is introduced in Grade 6.

In Haiti, a presidential decree issued in 1979 allowed the use of Haitian Creole in schools along with French, and in 1982 the Ministry of Education issued its own decree reorganising the education system so that the creole became the medium of instruction and an object of study in primary school. However, the government did not attempt to implement this education reform until 1989 (Howe, 1993: 294). Haitian Creole was made an official language along with French in the 1987 constitution, and it is now used in primary education throughout the country.

In the Netherlands Antilles, which includes the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire, the official language is Dutch but at least 80% of the population speak Papiamentu, a creole lexified by Portuguese and Spanish. A law passed in 1982 allowed Papiamentu to be used as a language of instruction in the first two years of primary school, but it was not implemented (Dijkhoff, 1993: 2). In 1983, Papiamentu was introduced as a subject of study in all grades in all schools, but only for half an hour a day. In 1993 a new educational plan was issued, making Papiamentu the language of instruction throughout primary school (Appel & Verhoeven, 1994: 73) (but see below).

Papiamentu is also spoken on the island of Aruba, geographically close to Curaçao and Bonaire and also a former Dutch colony, but now with separate political status. The parliament decided that as of September 2000 the educational language would be Papiamentu instead of Dutch (Ferrier, nd).

These four places may seem like the success stories of language planning in P/C contexts, but the full story is something else. First of all, in all four situations, the programmes are transitional – meaning that literacy in the P/C is not seen as an end in itself but rather as a means of acquiring literacy in the European official language(s), which are used for higher education and government. Secondly, in each location, there is still a good deal of resistance to the use of the local P/C as

the language of literacy. In the Seychelles, Mahoune (2000) reports that people 'subconsciously associate development with French and English', that there is a growing tendency to use these languages rather than Seselwa, in public functions, and that people who actually write the standardised creole are very few. A web site on the situation in Haiti includes the following observations:

Although experts agree that it is easier to become literate in one's first language, implementation of the education reform has been slow. Many sectors of the population do not see the value of becoming literate in Creole. This attitude is even found among the poor, who tend to view education as a means of escaping poverty rather than as a means of learning; as a result, they are especially concerned that their children learn French. While the reform had sought to make Haitian Creole the language of all primary grades, the government was forced under pressure to limit its use to the first four grades only. (<http://www.culturalorientation.net/haiti/hlang.html>)

In the Netherlands Antilles, after the implementation of the education plan making Papiamentu the language of instruction, there was a dispute about freedom of choice that went to the courts. Since then, schools can be either bilingual (Papiamentu and either English or Dutch) or all Dutch (Christie, 2003: 57). Nevertheless, the official policy is still to strongly support Papiamentu as the language of education. The following reaction to this is found on a satirical web site:

Our government has decided it is an elitary [*sic*] thing to have schools in Dutch; maybe because those pupils have it much easier in higher education in foreign countries. So all but five schools are in Papiamentu now, never mind the flood of protests. One result is that 300 (15%) of the pupils have been turned away, many weepingly, against 200 accepted at the five remaining schools in Dutch. (<http://www.vrcurassow.com/2dvrc/stateofaffairs/circus.html>)

The only other country where the local P/C is widely used in formal education to teach literacy is Papua New Guinea. A total reform of the nationwide education system began in the early 1990s. This changed the six years of primary schooling in the medium of English to three years of Elementary School followed by six years of Primary School. The language of instruction and initial literacy in Elementary School is chosen by the community; English is introduced in the second or third year of Elementary School and becomes the medium of instruction in Primary School. Although exact figures are not available, many communities, especially in urban areas, have chosen Tok Pisin for their schools (Ray, 1996). Also, at least in one rural area, in the Sepik Province, there are at least 26 Elementary Schools using Tok Pisin (Wiruk, 2000). Also, in Papua New Guinea's current National Literacy Policy, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu (another pidgin language, though not so widely spoken as Tok Pisin) are recognised as the two national languages. One of the National Goals of the policy (Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2000) is: 'All Papua New Guineans must be encouraged to become print literate in their own language and one of the two national languages'.

It is interesting to examine why P/Cs in the five places discussed above are

widely used in teaching initial literacy, while in other places this is not the case. The most obvious factor seems to be autonomy. This is clearest in situations where the lexifier language of the P/C is different from the official language, as in the case of Papiamentu, where the lexifier language is Spanish or Portuguese while the official language of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is primarily Dutch. Autonomy can also exist where the lexifier and the official language are the same if there is no continuum between it and the P/C. This is the situation in Haiti, the Seychelles (which also has the advantage of one of the official languages, English, being different from the lexifier, French), and Papua New Guinea (see Siegel, 1997a). Thus these locations contrast with places like Jamaica, Guyana, and Hawai'i, where there is not a clear dividing line between the P/C and the official language used for advanced education. However, of course, many P/Cs are not used in education even when they have clear autonomy – for example Sranan, an English-lexified creole in Suriname, where Dutch is the official and sole educational language (Sebba, 2000; St-Hilaire, 1999).

Another significant factor is the existence and acceptance of a separate phonemic orthography, as found in all five locations. The lack of an accepted orthography in Suriname may be one reason for the lack of use of Sranan in formal education in Suriname, despite its autonomy.

Finally, the designation of the P/C as a national and/or official language may also be important. However, again, this does not necessarily mean that such a language will be used in formal education. For example, Bislama is the national language of Vanuatu, but it is not used to teach initial literacy in government schools, and at one time its use was even banned in schools by the Ministry of Education (Lynch, 1998).

Other programmes

There are some other, less widespread, examples of the use of P/Cs to teach initial literacy in formal education – again, all transitional programmes.

In Australia, a bilingual programme with Northern Territory Kriol and English began at Barunga School in 1977. It was among other bilingual programmes involving Aboriginal languages run by the Northern Territory Department of Education. Kriol was used for teaching reading and writing from Grade 1 until English was introduced in Grade 4 or 5. After that, Kriol was restricted to subjects about cultural heritage (see Siegel, 1993). Unfortunately, this bilingual programme, along with others, was terminated by the Territory government at the end of 1998. Also in Australia, the Home Languages Project began in 1995 at Injinoo School in north Queensland. In this project, pre-school and Year 1 children have been taught to read and write in their home language, a variety of Torres Strait Creole (Turner, 1997).

In the Caribbean, an experimental 'trilingual' programme using Islander English (or Creole) was started on San Andres Island, Colombia, in 1999 (Morren, 2001).⁶ The creole is used as the medium of education in the two pre-primary years of school and Grade 1. Oral English is introduced in Grade 1, and oral Spanish (the official and national language) in Grade 2. English is used for reading and writing and to teach some subjects from Grade 2. Spanish is similarly used from Grade 3. By Grade 4 all subjects are taught in English or Spanish.

On the island of Guadeloupe, there is an experimental (non-governmental)

elementary school run by Dany Bebel-Gisler. Education is primarily in the local French-lexified creole (Gwadeloupéan), and French is taught as a foreign Language from around Grade 3 (Faure, 2000). There are also other experiments involving teaching Gwadeloupéan as a subject to older students in junior and senior high schools.

Finally, in the USA there have been bilingual programmes in Massachusetts, New York and Florida for immigrants speaking Haitian Creole (Zéphir, 1997) and Cape Verde Creole (Gonsalves, 1996). In Massachusetts, however, the bilingual education law was overturned by voters and scrapped by the state government in 2003 (de Jong-Lambert, 2003).

In each of these cases, the P/C used is autonomous from the official language. The importance of this factor is clearly seen with regard to the bilingual programmes in the USA. Programmes exist for creoles lexified by French and Portuguese but not for those lexified by English (such as Jamaican Creole), which are just as widely spoken by immigrants.

Non-formal education

The use of P/Cs is more frequent in teaching initial literacy to pre-school children and to adults in non-formal programmes run by the government or by non-government organisations (NGOs). In Haiti, the government established adult literacy programmes in Haitian Creole in the 1960s and the Roman Catholic Church sponsored similar programmes in the 1980s (Library of Congress, nd). In the Seychelles, the School of Adult and Continuing Education at the National Institute for Education has an Adult Literacy Unit that deals specifically with teaching in Seselwa (Mahoune, 2000). Adult literacy programmes using other French-lexified P/Cs are carried out by NGOs in countries where the official language is only English: Dominica (Stuart, 1993) and Mauritius (UNESCO, 2003). With regard to English-lexified P/Cs in Melanesia, pre-school and adult education programmes in Tok Pisin and Bislama, and adult programmes in Pijin, are run by many different NGOs (Siegel, 1996). Adult literacy in Haitian Creole has also been taught in Florida in the USA (Dade County Public Schools, 2001), and in other French-lexified Caribbean creoles in the United Kingdom (Nwenmely, 1996).

Again, the P/Cs that are used in non-formal education are generally those that are autonomous from their lexifier, and which have an accepted phonemic orthography. Thus, these appear to be necessary although not sufficient conditions for the choice of a P/C as the language used for teaching initial literacy.

Studies of Pidgin and Creole literacy programmes

There has been only a small amount of research done on the use of P/Cs in teaching literacy, and this is described in detail elsewhere (Siegel, 1993, 1999a, 1999b). Briefly, there have been rigorous evaluations of the bilingual programme using Kriol in Australia (Murtagh, 1982), the education reform using Seselwa in primary education in the Seychelles (Ravel & Thomas, 1985), and a pre-school programme teaching initial literacy in Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea (Siegel, 1997b). There has also been a study of teaching literacy in Haitian Creole to Haitian immigrants in New York (Burtoff, 1985). All these studies show that learning literacy in the P/C had no negative effects on the subsequent learning of

English (the official language, or one of the official languages, and the goal of formal education in each case). In fact, students who learned initial literacy in their P/C eventually had better literacy skills in English than students who learned initial literacy in English. Also, the two studies that looked at performance in other subjects such as mathematics (Ravel & Thomas, 1985; Siegel, 1997b) showed that students who acquired literacy first in the P/C outperformed those who acquired it first in English.

Two experimental studies in the Caribbean region have dealt with older creole-speaking children (Grade 5–6 and junior high school) who had reading problems in the educational language, English. In each study, a small group of children were for the first time taught literacy in their own vernacular – Carriacou Creole English (Kephart, 1992) and Lucian French Creole (Kwéyòl) (Simmons-MacDonald, 2004). In both cases, this led to a marked improvement in the children's literacy skills in English.

There are also some reports that give an indication of the success of programmes using P/Cs to teach initial literacy. The first primary school in the Netherlands Antilles with Papiamentu as the language of instruction, the Kolegio Erasmo, added a four-year high school in 1997, Skol Avansá Integrá. Arion (2003: 1) reports: 'Passes of the High School are high and promising (82% in 2001; 95.2% in 2002) compared to the national average score of around 70%.' Regarding the experimental trilingual programme on San Andres Islands, Morren (2004) presents the preliminary results of an Islander English diagnostic reading inventory administered to children after they completed first grade. These indicate that the programme has been successful in teaching the various skills needed to become a successful reader.

Literacy Acquisition in the Standard Language

Other than the few exceptions described above, P/C-speaking children have to acquire literacy not in their own language but in the standard European language that is officially used in the formal education system. Thus, they have to acquire both literacy and a second language (L2) in their first few years of school. As described above, except for a few countries such as St Lucia and Suriname, the official educational language is also the lexifier of the P/C. This is called the 'lexifier L2' situation by Craig (1998). As also described above, in such situations, both educators and the general population consider the P/C to be a substandard form of the lexifier/official language – in other words, a dialect rather than a separate language. Therefore, learning the official language is considered to be second dialect acquisition (SDA) rather than second language acquisition (SLA), and the standard form of the lexifier is considered a D2 (second dialect) rather than an L2. This is similar to the 'dominant D2' situation, where the D1 (first dialect) is an ethnic, social or regional variety with marked differences from the standard – for example African American English (AAE, or Ebonics) in the USA (Siegel, 2003).⁷ These considerations affect the nature of special educational programmes for P/C-speakers when they have existed.

Speakers of P/Cs are most often considered to be merely poor speakers of the standard language. At best, teaching of the standard occurs as if the students' vernacular does not exist – what Craig (2001: 66) refers to as the 'English-as-the-

mother-tongue tradition'. This occurs in creole-speaking countries in the Caribbean region where English is the official language, such as Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. At worst, students are urged to give up the 'bad habits' they display in speaking their vernacular and replace them with the 'good habits' of the standard – in other words, eradication of the P/C.

However, after P/Cs and social dialects became recognised as legitimate, rule-governed varieties in the 1960s, methods from foreign language teaching (FLT) and teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) began to be employed to teach standard English to speakers of other 'dialects'. This became known as teaching standard English as a second dialect (SESD). Following the audio-lingual approach popular in the late 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis was on habit formation and oral fluency, with teaching focused on particular grammatical structures. Contrastive analysis of the L1 and L2 (or D1 and D2) was done to determine which structures should be taught, and pattern practice and drills were used to teach them. This method was used for programmes with P/C speakers in the Caribbean (see Craig, 1966, 1976) and in Hawai'i (Crowley, 1968). Some modestly successful results were reported for these methods – for example, by Craig (1967) for Jamaican Creole, and Crowley (1968) and Peterson *et al.* (1969) for Hawai'i Creole.

On the other hand, other researchers, such as Torrey (1972), reported only very limited positive results, and the problems of the uncritical use of FLT and TESOL methods became apparent, as pointed out by scholars such as Politzer (1973). These had to do with both the ineffectiveness of the teaching methods themselves (Kochman, 1969) and the special characteristics of contexts where the standard language is being taught to speakers of lexically related vernaculars such as P/Cs (for more recent criticisms, see Malcolm, 1992).

The biggest factor goes back to the problem of autonomy. As pointed out long ago by Stewart (1964), in FLT and TESOL, two different autonomous linguistic systems are easily recognised. The learners' L1 often has its own dictionaries and grammars, just like the L2. However, in SESD, because of similarities with the standard, the learners' vernacular is most often not recognised as a separate variety of language. This leads to both teachers and students thinking that there is only one legitimate language involved, and that the learners' vernacular is just 'sloppy speech'. For this reason, the P/C is not even allowed in the classroom. Thus, students are clearly disadvantaged by not being allowed to express themselves in their own variety of language, a factor which has a negative effect on cognitive development and school achievement (Feldman *et al.*, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 2002; UNESCO, 1968).

Another popular FLT/TESOL methodology used in P/C contexts was the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach of the 1980s and 1990s, which emphasise language function and use in real-life situations. This approach has been used in the Caribbean, but with little success (Craig, 1998, 2001). Again, some problems exist with the methods themselves, but in this case problems are also caused by linguistic factors. As Craig (1966, 1976, 1983, 1988) has observed, in most foreign- or second-language-learning situations, learners have little if any familiarity with the target language. However, in situations where the standard variety is the target, learners already recognise and produce some aspects of it as part of their linguistic repertoires. Also, unlike learners of a separate

language, P/C-speakers learning the standard variety often have no communicative reason to keep using the target (that is, the standard) in the classroom. Craig (1998: 12) points out that in such situations, 'learners can all retain their normal language usage for performing communicative tasks, and there is no need to learn anything new'. In addition, because of the similarity between the P/C and the lexifier, the learner might not be aware of some of the differences that do exist. Thus, as Craig noted years ago (1966: 58), 'the learner fails to perceive the new target element in the teaching situation'.

One educational programme aimed at P/C speakers that has had more success is the Kamehameha Early Education Programme (KEEP), which was started in the 1970s for ethnic Hawaiian children, mostly speakers of varieties of Hawai'i Creole. In teaching reading, the programme took a conversational approach, making use of discourse strategies and participation structures similar to those in a speech event found in Hawai'i Creole called 'talk-story'. It was found that this approach facilitated learning to read in standard English (Speidel, 1987).

The Hawai'i English Programme, which ran through the 1970s to the early 1980s, was a more far-reaching programme that also respected the students' home language, which at that time was mainly Hawai'i Creole. This programme, as described by Rogers (1996), was different from others in that it made specific use of the creole in several ways. Firstly, it looked at particular features of the language in comparison to standard English. Secondly, some stories written in Hawai'i Creole were included and children were sometimes given the choice to read either these or others in standard English. Thirdly, there was a unit on dialects that looked at dialect diversity outside Hawai'i, as well as containing activities, described by Rogers as follows:

These activities encourage elementary school students to view HCE [Hawai'i Creole English] as a complete and legitimate language form, to undertake some simplified linguistic analyses of HCE, and to witness dialectal flexibility in local role models. (Rogers, 1996: 233)

This programme was a forerunner of later programmes using what has become known as the 'awareness approach'. In this approach, students' P/C vernaculars are seen as a resource to be used for learning the standard, rather than an impediment. This approach has two or three of the following components. In the socio-linguistic component, students learn about different varieties of language – such as regional dialects, pidgins and creoles – and explore the history and politics of language that led to one particular variety becoming accepted as the standard. This component helps both teachers and students to realise that all vernacular varieties of language are legitimate and that no variety is intrinsically better than another, even though some may have more practical benefits in some contexts. In the contrastive component, students examine the grammatical and pragmatic characteristics of their own vernaculars to see how they are rule-governed and how they differ systematically from the standard. Sometimes translation or role-playing activities are used. This component helps students to notice (and eventually learn) differences that they may not have realised exist. In the accommodation component, teachers may make use of aspects of students' language and culture, as in the KEEP programme or in having

students study literature or song lyrics written in the P/C. Sometimes students may also be given the freedom to express themselves in their own varieties.

Programmes using the awareness approach have been developed for P/C-speakers mainly in countries where they are a minority, namely Kriol speakers in Western Australia (Berry & Hudson, 1997; Catholic Education Office, 1994) and English-lexified creole-speaking immigrants from the Caribbean in Britain (ILEA Afro-Caribbean Language and Literacy Project in Further and Adult Education, 1990), Canada (Coelho, 1988, 1991) and the USA (Fischer, 1992; Menacker, 1998). (For more details on these programmes and research evaluating some of them, see Siegel, 1999a, 1999b.)

Some changes in the direction of awareness programmes are slowly starting to occur in lexifier L2 settings. In Hawai'i, a recent grammar of Hawai'i Creole (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003) was written as a resource for teachers to help them bring the language into the classroom. In the Caribbean, Craig's (1999) valuable resource for teaching standard English in creole (and minority dialect) contexts includes awareness activities. Christie (2003: 46) reports that according to the recent Reform of Secondary Education in Jamaica, 'students should be allowed to express themselves freely, employing whatever variety makes them comfortable in the classroom and outside'. Also, the CAPE syllabus 'Communication Studies' in Jamaican high schools includes a 'Language and Society' module that focuses on the linguistic situations in Caribbean countries and their historical background, as well as on aspects of the grammar of Creole vernaculars as compared to English (Kouwenberg, 2002).

Use of Pidgins and Creoles in Literacy Activities

The actual use of different P/Cs as written languages varies greatly from place to place. In the few places where a P/C is the language of initial literacy, it seems to have fairly common use in reading and writing. In the Seychelles, novels and short stories in Seselwa appeared in the late 1970s, and today popular fiction in the creole ranges from historical and detective novels to science fiction. More functional materials such as research reports and government leaflets are also written in Seselwa, as are most articles in local newspapers and magazines (Mahoune, 2000). Popular writing in Haitian Creole began to come out in the mid-1970s, and today there is a substantial body of literature in the language in novels, shorts stories, plays and poetry (St Fort, 2000). Papiamentu is used in daily and weekly newspapers and in magazines. Tok Pisin is used in at least one newspaper, and in many government publications. These languages are also found in news reports and other materials on the Internet.

The use of written materials in other P/Cs is more restricted. Members of various Christian churches utilise some P/Cs for religious services and reading translations of the New Testament. In addition to Haitian Creole, Papiamentu and Tok Pisin, these include Hawai'i Creole, Bislama, Solomons Pijin, Cameroon Pidgin, Sranan, St Lucia Creole and Sango. While English-lexified P/Cs in Africa, the Caribbean region and Hawai'i are not generally found in the print media or government publications, they are commonly used in literature. For example, poetry, short stories and plays have been written in Nigerian Pidgin and Cameroon Pidgin (Todd, 1990: 75–7). Throughout

the Caribbean, English-lexified creoles are used in stories, especially in dialogue, and also in songs, poems and plays (Winer, 1990). Jamaican Creole is also widely used in cartoons and comics, and since the 1990s it has been used in stories as the voice of first- and third-person narration. In recent years, Hawai'i Creole has also become a literary language, with the appearance of many popular short stories and poems and several novels using dialogue in the language (Romaine, 1994; Schultz, 1998).

Whether or not the growth of writing in these P/Cs indicates an increase in prestige is an open question. On one hand, negative attitudes toward P/C literature prevail in some countries, such as Guyana (Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001). On the other hand, Mühleisen (2002) argues that the expanding use of Caribbean creoles for referential functions in novels, rather than only for expressive functions as in the past, is an indication of greater prestige.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that, whatever their use in religious and secular literature, literacy in these P/Cs depends on previous literacy in the official European language. Since these P/Cs are not languages of education, their speakers must have learned literacy first in the European language and then transferred the literacy skills to the P/C. This explains why literature in these P/Cs is written mostly in etymological orthographies, based on European languages, rather than in phonemic orthographies, which would make acquisition of literacy easier.

It is difficult to find information about the more personal use of P/Cs – for example, in writing letters. With regard to Vanuatu, however, Crowley (2000) reports that, except for secondary-school leavers who use English or French, most people use Bislama for this kind of writing. The fact that they do not learn literacy skills in Bislama explains why, when they do use the language for writing, they do not follow the standard orthography. Instead, they are highly influenced by the orthography of their first language of literacy, either English or French.

Conclusion

In summary, with regard to literacy, every P/C is still subservient to a standard European language. Despite language planning efforts to increase the status and use of P/Cs and develop autonomous orthographies, the vast majority of speakers of these vernaculars still learn literacy in the official standard and use an orthography based on this standard if they do write their own language. The few P/Cs that are used to teach initial literacy in the formal education system may be exceptions, but even these are not considered worthy by many of their own speakers – as we have seen for Haitian Creole and Papiamentu. Although the prestige of some P/Cs may be increasing, most have a long way to go before they are fully recognised as legitimate vehicles for literacy.

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Notes

1. Note that *pidgin* and *creole* are technical terms used by linguists, and not necessarily by speakers of the languages. For example, speakers of Hawai'i Creole call their language 'Pidgin', and speakers of Jamaican Creole call theirs 'Patwa' (from *patois*).
2. Another reason for using the abbreviation P/C is the controversy in the field about whether particular languages are a pidgin or a creole. For example, Melanesian Pidgin is considered by some creolists to be a pidgin because it is a second language rather than the mother tongue for the large majority of its speakers. It is considered a creole by others because it has some native speakers and its grammatical features are just as complex as those of clearly recognised creoles.
3. For another overview, see Simmons-McDonald (2004).
4. This information comes from a position paper written by a staff and student interest group at the University of Hawai'i (Da Pidgin Coup, 1999: 6–8).
5. http://www.isp.msu.edu/AfrLang/Sango_root.html.
6. In this article, Morren talks about the program being in existence on all three islands of the archipelago: San Andres, Providence and Santa Cataline, but in later work (e.g. Morren, 2004), he mentions only San Andres.
7. Teaching standard English in both the dominant D2 and lexifier L2 situations has been labelled Teaching English to Speakers of a Related Vernacular (TESORV) by Craig (1999).

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