Chapter 4
Orthography

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Introduction

Only recently have serious efforts been made to establish an official orthography for Haitian Creole. In the 1940's, the first systematic orthography was developed by an Irish Methodist Minister, Ormande McConnell, and a North American literacy expert, Frank Laubach. This writing system was based on the **International Phonetic Alphabet** (IPA) but was criticized for being too "American." At that time, Haitian sensitivities were still raw as a result of the U.S. occupation. In the 1950's, another effort was made by two Haitians, Charles-Fernand Pressoir, a philologist, and Lelio Faublas, an educator. Their changes modified the writing system, moving it closer to French. The Faublas-Pressoir orthography was used until 1975, at which time it was also revised by the **Institut Pédagogique National** (IPN) and a research and study group called GREKA (*Gwoup Rechèch pou Etidye Kreyòl Ayisyen*). This was done in preparation for the reform program that was to introduce Haitian Creole in the schools as a medium of instruction. The IPN version included elements of both systems and in September 1979, was given the status of official orthography, when the Haitian government, through the Ministry of Education, authorized and encouraged the use of Haitian Creole as a medium of instruction as well as an object of study in schools.

This chapter presents a general introduction to issues connected with orthographies, not simply Haitian Creole orthography. To illustrate fundamental issues, we give significant attention to writing systems for creole and creole-influenced languages of the Caribbean, Guyana, the North Atlantic (the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos), and the U.S. (Gullah and African American English). Gullah is spoken in South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and the Offshore Islands. It is a creole language (also known as Sea Island Creole). African American English (AAE) is not a creole language, but it is considered a language that was influenced by creoles during its genesis and development (Spears 2007 and 2008). Note that in discussing African American English, we will focus on African American Vernacular English (AAVE) rather than what has been termed African American Standard English (Spears 1988 and 2008), since AAVE is the kind of African American English that has been at the center of language ideological controversies.

While the ideological tensions inherent in the process of orthography design are often ignored in the literature, it is all but impossible to make sense of the facts concerning the development of writing systems for these languages without dealing with such issues as relations of power, systems of domination, hegemony, and resistance. In discussing some of the attempts made thus far in devising orthographies, we provide a schematic overview of (1) related and unrelated initiatives that have been undertaken to commit these languages to writing, (2) the implicit and explicit principles involved in the development of these proposed writing systems, and (3) the fate of these orthographies in terms of their actual use and acceptance. In order to properly contextualize our findings, we include theoretical frameworks and practical experiences not only from French-lexifier creole-speaking communities but also from Iberian-lexifier ones as well as from English-lexifier creole-speaking communities in West Africa and Melanesia.

Language, Power, and Orthographies

In his seminal work on linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure asserts that thought is mediated by language: "Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (de Saussure 1960: 105). At the same time Saussure insists that language is a form and not a substance; that is, language is a system of pure values (de Saussure 1960: 106). The juxtaposition of these two ideas lays the foundation for theories about the "ideological saturation" of language (Bakhtin 2000: 270; Derrida 2000). De Saussure's ideas about language and thought are elaborated by Benjamin Whorf (2000), who claims that the particular language we speak establishes our unconscious, obligatory, and socially agreed upon "programs for mental activity," without which any understanding either of the world or of all communicative acts is impossible. These propositions connect with Antonio Gramsci's (2000) concept of hegemony as well as with models of discursive domination through the formulation and propagation of "unitary" (homogenizing) norms and standards which are imposed on language and society (Foucault 2000; Van Dijk 2004).

In other words, language determines to a large extent how we know the world and act in it, due to the meanings conveyed by language. Nevertheless, language itself is pure form (sounds, printed words, bodily movements in sign languages, etc.), and therefore maximally susceptible to manipulation within systems of domination. Such systems include colonialism (as practiced by the U.S. and European metropoles that still have colonies in the Caribbean) and neocolonial corporate globalization, as practiced by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization in the nominally independent countries of the Caribbean (Faraclas 2005). Theorists from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and the rest of the Majority World have applied many of these and similar ideas to the linguistic situation in their own communities and beyond, effectively demonstrating how the imposition of homogenizing standardized European languages on "heteroglossic" (speaking a diversity of language varieties) colonized populations (Bakhtin 2000: 270) through formal education and other metropolitan institutions has resulted in a pervasive form of "colonial alienation."

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized: the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relation to others. . . . The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized. . . . Since culture is the product of the history of a people which it in turn reflects, the child [in school] was now being exposed exclusively to a culture that was a product of a world external to him. He was being made to stand outside himself to look at himself. The images of this world and his place in it implanted in a child take years to eradicate, if they ever can be. . . . [I]t was worse when the colonial child was exposed to images of his world as mirrored in the written languages of the colonizer. Where his own native languages were associated in his impressionable mind with low status, humiliation, corporal punishment, . . . stupidity, non-intelligibility, and barbarism, this was reinforced by the world he met in the works of such geniuses of racism as . . . Hume . . . Thomas Jefferson . . . [or] Hegel. . . . [T]oo much is made of the supposed differences in the policies of the various colonial powers. . . . The final effect was the same: Senghor's embrace of French . . . is not so different from Chinua Achebe's gratitude . . . to English. . . . The assumptions of those of us who have abandoned our mother-tongues and adopted European ones as the creative vehicles of our imaginations are not different either. . . . It is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986: 16 ff.).

Following a similar line of reasoning, a number of popular educators, literacy workers, and social theorists contend that in order to control people's actions in the present and their vision of their future, it is necessary to control their interpretation of their past. (Freire 1970; 1971; 1973; Faraclas 2001: 75-76.) Focusing on the case of Haitian Creole, Bambi Schieffelin and René Doucet (1994) describe the ideological battleground upon which struggles are waged in the Caribbean and beyond over the design and propagation of orthographies for creoles and other marginalized languages that are spoken alongside European languages of domination.

[The] process of representing the sounds of language in written form is . . . an activity deeply grounded in frameworks of value. . . . We suggest that arguments about orthography reflect competing concerns about . . . how speakers wish to define themselves to each other, as well as to represent themselves as a nation. Because acceptance of an orthography is based more often on political and social considerations than on linguistic or pedagogical factors, orthographic debates are rich sites for investigating competing nationalist discourses. To draw on Anderson's (1983) evocative notion, orthographic choice is really about "imagining" the past and future of a community (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994: 176).

Throughout the colonial era as well as in the current era of recolonization by the multilateral institutions of corporate globalization, the design of orthographies for creoles and other marginalized languages has more often than not been officially ignored until the use of one of these languages in schools becomes necessary to address the catastrophic consequences of the use of metropolitan languages as media of instruction. Alongside all of the affective, psychological, and social damage that it inflicts on colonized peoples, the use of a metropolitan standard language as the language of education is responsible as well for the cognitive crippling of entire generations of students, as evidenced by the scandalous rates of failure and attrition in most of the school systems of sub-Saharan Africa, Melanesia, and the Caribbean, the three regions of the globe where creole languages are most widely spoken. Hubert Devonish (1986) makes the following observations regarding the situation in the present and former British colonies in the Caribbean.

In reality, the education system is intended to reproduce the prevailing socio-economic and linguistic order by. . . . induc[ing] an ideological acceptance by the mass of the population of the status quo, linguistic and socio-economic. . . . [In the British Commonwealth Caribbean, t]he education system inherited from the colonial power was one in which English, in addition to a subject to be taught, was the sole medium for teaching literacy as well as general instruction. The assumption underlying this language education policy was that those who entered the education system were, in fact, native speakers of English, English-lexicon Creole being no more than a form of "broken English" which

had to be corrected by the education system. . . . In the face of the new linguistic reality in the post-independence era of an education system involving a vast majority of Creole-speakers with very limited competence in English, the official myth that competence in English could be created either by ignoring Creole or correcting it was severely put to the test. And it failed the test (Devonish 1986: 26).

He further notes that

> In Jamaica, the adult literacy organization, JAMAL, carried out a Communications Skills Survey. A representative sample of the population over the age of 15 years was surveyed. . . . Some 21.8% of the adults sampled were totally illiterate, while only 18.8% could "read and write well" (JAMAL, cited in Carrington 1978: 148-149). . . . 38.5% of the sample suffered, to varying degrees, from limitations imposed on their literacy . . . caused by the fact that they had a limited degree of competence in the language in which they were using their literacy skills. The group who suffered from this limitation constituted 67% of those in the sample who were able to write at all. If one generalizes the results of this survey to the Jamaican population as a whole, what is particularly significant is not simply the high rate of illiteracy, but the large number of the literate population who, at great expense to the society, have acquired literacy only to have that literacy restricted by their lack of competence in English, the language in which literacy was taught. Every indication suggests that the plight of Creole-speaking literates in the other English-lexicon Creole speech communities of the Commonwealth Caribbean is no better than in Jamaica (Devonish 1986: 28).

In nearly all (if not all) of the countries of the Caribbean, the great majority of Creole-speaking children in their crucial first years of schooling are faced with the unreasonable task of learning to read and to write in a language that they neither speak nor understand. Except for the handful of students from very privileged backgrounds who are raised speaking the metropolitan language and perhaps another 10 to 20 percent of students who somehow find a way to learn the metropolitan language well enough in school to cope, the vast majority of young people in these countries never have the opportunity to establish a solid foundation in reading and writing, and thus never have the chance to succeed in school. Throughout their entire experience with formal education, the only lesson that the preponderant majority of students learn well is that their own cultures, languages, families, communities, and, by extension, themselves are somehow inferior to the people, language, and culture of the metropole. Such feelings of linguistic inferiority are compounded when students speak a creole, since creole languages often carry the added stigma of being erroneously considered to be "bastardized" or "broken" forms of metropolitan languages. When considering the effects of colonial and neo-colonial education in his own community as well as in the rest of the region, Edward Kamau Brathwaite goes so far as to describe the Caribbean as a "cultural disaster area" (Brathwaite 1984: 312).

Over the past fifty years, vast quantities of evidence have been amassed from every continent, showing that children who learn to read and write in the language that they use in their home not only perform better throughout their academic careers, but also go on to master other languages (including those of the metropoles) far more effectively than those students who are forced to struggle with initial literacy in a foreign metropolitan language. Among the many reasons for the better results obtained by students who come to literacy in their own language, the most important cognitive factor bears directly on issues related to orthography design. When a person learns to read and write in their own language, they establish a maximally strong network of sound-symbol correspondences in their minds that serves as an optimal foundation for academic success and the acquisition of a multiplicity of literacies throughout their lives. However, the legacy of internalized racism and oppression in the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and Melanesia is such that despite all of this evidence and the

dismal track record of the formal education sector, an alarming number of nations (including every single one of the present and former British colonies in the Caribbean) maintain the metropolitan language as the only language of instruction in their schools.

Orthography Design: Principles and Approaches

Organic orthographies

Organic orthographies constitute one of two types, the other being formal orthographies. Organic orthographies evolve through the efforts of individual writers to express themselves in a language that has no widely accepted formal orthography. Generally, these writers attempt to represent the sounds of their language with symbols from other languages in which they are already literate. In the case of Haitian Creole, this language was of course French. Over the past few centuries, speakers of Creoles have recorded samples of speech, kept diaries, and written literary texts using organic orthographies invented on the spot for the communicative purpose at hand. A thorough discussion of organic orthographies used over the years by speakers of English-lexifier Caribbean creoles with extensive examples is provided by Marlis Hellinger (1986: 58-62). She identifes three "major" strategies that many native speakers of creole languages will intuitively employ in writing their first language:

(1) The general frame of reference remains the orthographic system of the prestigious standard language
(2) The linguistic distance between the Creole and English is generally perceived in such a way that speakers will represent it in writing . . . [while] speakers' readiness for a more radical departure from the dominant model becomes evident in numerous idiosyncratic spellings
(3) There is remarkable similarity in the choice of creole features that are felt to deserve independent treatment

Nzengou-Tayo (this volume) present examples of Haitian Creole organic orthographies. Carolyn Cooper characterizes the organic spelling of Jamaican Creole used in the print media and by such writers as the renowned poet Louise Bennet as "chaka-chaka" spelling (Mühleisen 1999: 20-22). An example of a short text written by an author employing an organic orthography is given here:

St. Thomas/St. Croix (From the quelbe song *Queen Mary*)

Queen Mary, ah where you gon' go burn?
Queen Mary, ah where you gon' go burn?
Doan ask meh nothin' 'tall.
Just geh me de match and oil.
Bassin Jailhouse ah there money dey (Williams 1998: 13)

[Queen Mary, where are you going to go start a fire?
Queen Mary, where are you going to go start a fire?
Don't ask me anything at all.
Just get me the matches and oil.

The Jailhouse at Bassin is where the money is.]

Formal orthographies

In contrast to organic orthographies, formal orthographies are designed by linguists, educators, authors, or others in positions of authority concerning matters related to language, not to meet an immediate or particular expressive need, but rather to provide a writing system for all readers and writers of a particular "Target" (in this case a creole) language. In the literature, it is usually this type of formal process that is discussed.

Principles of orthography design

Developers of both formal and organic orthographies use a set of implicit or explicit principles of orthography design to provide a rationale for the writing systems that they devise. In the case of the Caribbean creoles, these principles are identified with two overarching ideological orientations: (1) that of the proponents of what are known in the Caribbean as "Phonological" orthographies, who stress the independent status of creoles as autonomous linguistic systems that are separate from their European lexifier languages and (2) that of the advocates of what are known in the Caribbean as "Etymological" orthographies, who stress the historical connections and similarities between creoles and their metropolitan lexifier languages. These ideological orientations are associated with four general categories, each of which has a different primary focus or addresses a different concern: (1) systematic *representation* of the Target language; (2) effective and efficient *pedagogy*; (3) *political* considerations; and (4) *practical* reproduction of written materials.

While some principles of orthography design can be easily assigned to one particular category, other principles straddle category boundaries. Various linguists have proposed and utilized different sets of principles for devising writing systems. However, most of the distinctions between each of these proposed frameworks can be attributed to nuances of terminology or emphasis. In Table 4.1, three sets of principles put forward by three different linguists (Smalley 1964; Williamson 1984; Winer 1990) are arranged in such a way as to show their rough equivalence:

Table 4.1. Principles of orthography design organized by category and ideological orientation

Categories:	Phonological Orientation/Bias: Target Language (Creole)			Etymological Orientation/Bias: Other Languages (Metropolitan)			
	Representation	↔	Pedagogy	↔	Politics	↔	Practical
Smalley 1964	Representation of Speech		Ease of Learning		Transfer Acceptability		Ease of Reproduction
Williamson 1984	Adequacy; Consistency		Learnability		Harmony		Simplicity
Winer 1990	Pronunciation Based Spellings; Support Consistency		Pedagogical Independence		Historical Precedent		Practicality
	Readability Independence						

Representational principles

Two types of principles are concerned with systematic representation of the target language. The first is what Kay Williamson calls "Adequacy" and Lise Winer calls "Pronunciation Based Spellings." This principle stipulates that every sound in the Target language must have a means to represent it in writing. The second principle, termed "Consistency" by both Williamson and Winer, requires that a particular symbol be used to represent only one sound and no other. William Smalley roughly groups both of these sets of principles under what he calls "Representation of Speech." Representational principles are generally associated with the Phonological orientation because they are based nearly exclusively on the sound system of the Target (creole) language, with no reference to any other language, including its metropolitan lexifier.

Pedagogical principles

To ensure effective and efficient pedagogy, another principle has been proposed, which Smalley calls "Ease of Learning" and which Williamson calls "Learnability." According to this principle, an orthography must be maximally learner friendly. The learners that this principle is concerned with are those who speak the Target language (Jamaican Creole) as their main language in daily life and who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives. For these students, optimal Learnability is achieved by making the sound-symbol correspondence as straightforward as possible. This means that the representational principles of Adequacy and Consistency must be rigorously and systematically applied so that when learners read a symbol, they can be assured that the symbol always represents a specific sound and no other, and when they write a sound, they can be sure that the sound in question is always represented by one specific symbol and no other. Primary emphasis is therefore given to this set of principles by those who adopt a Phonological orientation to orthography design.

As shown in Table 4.1, there exists another set of principles that have to do with pedagogy, but which are not exclusively concerned with the process of acquiring initial literacy in the Target language. The principle that Smalley calls "Transfer" and that which Williamson calls "Harmony" have more to do either with the process of acquiring literacy in the Target language *after* already having come to literacy in an "Other" language, i.e., colonial language of wider

communication, or with the process of gaining literacy in an Other language *after* having become literate in the Target language (Jamaican Creole). Winer's principles of "Pedagogical Support" and "Readability" conflate these Other language-oriented principles (Transfer and Harmony) with the Target language-oriented pedagogical principles (Ease of Learning and Learnability).

Williamson, who was concerned primarily with the development orthographies for the four hundred or so languages spoken in Nigeria, proposed her principle of Harmony in protest against the linguistic policies of the apartheid government in South Africa, which sponsored the development of orthographies for indigenous South African languages that would be maximally different the one from the other, in order to make it difficult for those literate in one indigenous language to learn to read and write another. In contrast Winer, whose focus centers on the Caribbean, formulated her principles of Pedagogical Support and Readability with primary concern for those coming to initial literacy in the Target language, but with a very strong secondary emphasis on facilitating both the process of learning to read and write the Target language by those already literate in the metropolitan language, as well as the process of learning to read and write in the metropolitan language by those who have come to initial literacy in the Target language.

Thus, while Williamson argued that Nigerian Pidgin should be spelled using the strict application of the principles of Adequacy and Consistency as is the normal practice for other indigenous Nigerian languages, Winer concedes that many words which are clearly recognizable as having come into the Target language from the metropolitan language might have to retain their metropolitan 'Etymological' spellings, which in many cases violate fundamental representational principles such as Adequacy, Consistency, and Learnability, though they observe Familiarity and Historical Precedent. Although ideology permeates all aspects of orthography design, it should be clear to the reader that with these particular principles, our primary focus shifts from representation and pedagogy to politics.

Political principles

Winer proposes two opposing principles that attempt to account for the political context within which the process of orthography design takes place: (1) Independence, which stresses the status of a creole language as a separate system from that of its metropolitan lexifier language (the Phonological orientation), and Historical Precedent, which emphasizes the historical and political connections between a creole language and its metropolitan lexifier (the Etymological orientation). Since she was working by and large with noncreole languages, Williamson puts forward no principles of this nature, while Smalley's Acceptability is more or less equivalent to Winer's Etymologically oriented principle of Historical Precedent.

Practical principles

The remaining principles listed in Table 4.1, i.e., Smalley's Ease of Reproduction, Williamson's Simplicity, and Winer's Practicality, all stipulate that the orthography should be maximally easy to type and print. Since most typewriting, word processing, and printing technologies are designed primarily to produce and reproduce materials written in metropolitan languages, there is an Etymological bias here toward creoles' lexifier languages,

as shown in the following guidelines for selection of symbols for contrastive sounds in the Target (creole) language, adapted from Williamson by Stringer and Faraclas (2000: 67):

(1) First Choice: If the sound is contrastive in the official language or in nearby languages that have alphabets, adopt the symbol used for the sound in the official language or nearby languages if the symbol obeys the principles of Adequacy, Consistency, Learnability, and Harmony in those languages. Example: use the orthographic letters <b>, <d>, and <g> for the sounds /b/, /d/, /g/ respectively (represented with International Phonetic Alphabet symbols).
(2) Second Choice: If the conditions described in (1) do not apply and the sound follows regular patterns, try a spelling rule. Example: doubled vowel symbols, e.g., <aa> and <ee> for long vowels /a:/ and /e:] respectively, or vowel plus <n>, e.g., <an> for nasalized vowel /ã/.
(3) Third Choice: If the conditions described in (2) do not apply, try to use a digraph (two symbols together) or a trigraph (three symbols together) to represent the sound. Example: the digraph <th> for /θ/.
(4) Fourth Choice: If the conditions described in (3) do not apply, use a subdot or underscore beneath a symbol that has already been selected to represent a similar sound in the Target language, e.g., <e> for [e] but <e> for /ɛ/.

With respect to these guidelines, Haitian Creole orthography shows a bias toward French, its lexifier language. Observe that the Creole distinction between /e/ (*me* 'month of May') and /ɛ/ (*mè* 'mother') is represented by <e> and <è>, making use of the grave accent diacritic, creating the same grapheme used in French for /ɛ/. (A **grapheme** is one or a combination of letters representing one sound in the language. The subdot and underscore [Fourth Choice] are also diacritics.)

Diversity of Approaches to the Design of Orthographies for Creole Language Orthographies

Alongside the abundance of organic orthographies which have been devised for virtually every dialect of the creoles under discussion, there are the formal writing systems proposed by linguists. In addition to the purely Phonological and Etymological approaches described above, Winer (1990) and Schieffelin and Doucet (1994) advocate a third set of approaches, hybrid (or compromise) approaches, for Trinidadian and Haitian, respectively. In the case of English-lexifier creoles, they are basically Phonemic but retain English spellings for recognizably English words and/or change English spellings only where there is some salient difference between the creole language and English pronunciations. In the case of Haitian Creole, the hybrid is basically Phonemic but uses some graphemes (each letter or letter combination that represents one sound in the language) based on French orthography, e.g., <ou> /u/ *bouch* 'mouth'. In the Haitian orthography, however, unlike in the French one, each grapheme always represents the same sound, and one and the same sound is always represented by the same grapheme. In Belize, Decker (1995: 4-6) has experimented with a fourth approach, which involves selecting the most general spelling patterns of English and applying them as consistently as possible to all words in the Creole language that is spoken

there. The orthography being used to translate biblical texts into Gullah is being designed by a reference group of Gullah speakers who determine preferred spellings on a word-by-word basis (Decker personal communication, 8/2005). Meanwhile Devonish (1986: 43) suggests that the use of Cassidy's Phonological orthography could be extended from the western Caribbean to all of the English-lexifier Creole languages in the region, which (with the exception of the Suriname language varieties) enjoy a significant degree of mutual intelligibility.

Concepts of creole identity, counteridentity, and disidentity

Two schools of thought have emerged in recent debates about the meaning of the term *creole* among theorists from the French-lexifier creole-speaking societies. One the one hand, scholars such as Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseaux, and Raphaël Confiant (1993) in their landmark work, *Éloge de la créolité*, see creole language and culture as constituting an essential component of an oppositional process of counteridentification on the part of enslaved populations to dominant European language and culture. They describe *créolité* as being located at the inner core of Afro-Caribbean identity, underneath a superficial layer of Europeanness. On the other hand, other theorists such as Édouard Glissant (1990) prefer not to think in terms of a monolithic identity at all, but rather in terms of an unpredictable, dynamic, and continuing process of *créolisation* that is deployed by Afro-Caribbean peoples when they attempt to disidentify and disassociate themselves from all of the binary oppositions and the very notions of identity that define systems of domination in general. He argues that this process gives rise to the constant reinvention of Afro-Caribbean subjecthood and to the creation of new spaces for creativity that are inaccessible to the colonial gaze. Brudzinski sums up this position in this way: "Glissant considers the danger of *créolité* to be that it does not question the very notion of an identity, whether it be Creoleness or Frenchness, or whiteness, which has made so much persecution and domination possible" (Brudzinski 2003: 5).

Despite their differences, Brudzinski points out that the proponents of both *créolité* and *créolisation* are alarmed at certain ways in which the concept of creole is commonly understood:

> [T]here is evidence of a . . . desire to pin down even creolization into a static and identitary form . . . [T]here is still so much attention paid to *créolisation* as *métissage*. The slippages between all these notions—Creolessness, Creoleness, Creolization, *métissage*, syncretism—belie their separate intellectual geneaologies . . . and suggest a disturbing erasure. By using such egalitarian phrases as "composite nature," "syncretic," or "peoples thrown together" we may run the risk of implying a neutral, almost abstractly geometric, process of mosaic-making—which obfuscates the tremendous power differentials inherent in the institution responsible for much culture-building in the Antilles: plantation slavery (Brudzinski 2003: 5).

Orthography and identity

The different approaches outlined above to the development of formal orthographies for these languages can be correlated with different positionings on the part of their speakers in relation

to the asymmetries of power that are encoded in languages and cultures. Etymological orthographies and the principles that underpin them are often linked to a position of *identification* with metropolitan language and culture, a posture criticized by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, as noted above. Phonological orthographies and the principles utilized to formulate them are normally associated both with (1) the position of *counteridentification* against metropolitan languages and cultures articulated by Bernabé, Chamoiseaux, and Confiant (1993) as well as (2) the position of *disidentification* that Glissant adopts toward metropolitan ways of knowing. Hybrid or compromise orthographies and the contradictory principles involved in their design are often reminiscent of the coexisting "mutually agreed upon opacities" evoked by Glissant with reference to the end result of his process of *créolisation*.

The Official Haitian Orthography

The official orthography is presented below in Tables 4.2-4.7, adapted from Bernard 1980. In Table 4.2, the sound values of the Haitian Creole graphemes are illustrated with English words. Tables 4.3-4.5 illustrate their sound values with Creole words. As noted above, the official Haitian orthography is basically Phonemic but incorporates some features of French orthography. Thus, Haitian <s> and <z> each always represent one and only one sound: the former the sound in English *cla**ss*** and *ra**c**e* (in boldface) and the latter the sound in English *ha**z**y*. Examples of French-influenced orthography features are <ch> for the sound in English **sh***irt*, <j> for the sound in English *mea**s**ure*, <ou> for the sound in *m**oo**n*, and <on> for the sound in French *b**on*** (with the letter "n" representing nasalization of the preceding vowel /o/— and other nasalized vowels, e.g., <an>). The Haitian orthography also uses <ui> to represent the sound in Haitian *n**ui***t* (semi-vowel plus vowel), which is the same sound in French *n**ui***t*, represented as /ɥi/ in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols.

With some of the other sounds, French was rejected as a model. For example, the Haitian grapheme <e>, IPA /e/, does not bear an acute accent as does the French <é>. This Haitian grapheme represents a rational choice since the acute accent is not needed to distinguish the sound it represents from <è>, with a grave accent. The distinction can be represented by the absence of any diacritic. To have chosen the acute accent could be seen only as a bow to French.

It is worth pointing out that, although the orthography does not provide symbols for the front rounded vowels of French, used by some Creole speakers (often French-Creole bilinguals), the orthography can easily be extended to represent them. Valdman (this volume) does so as follows:

- <u>, for the high front rounded vowel in Haitian *s**u***k (IPA /syk/) 'sugar', which is more often *sik* in the speech of Creole monolinguals
- <eu>, for the rounded vowel in *z**eu*** (IPA /zø/) 'egg', more often *ze* in the speech of Creole monolinguals (cp. French *oeuf* /œf/, singular, *oeufs* /ø/, plural)
- <eù>, for the rounded vowel in *s**eù***, IPA /sœ/) 'sister' (cp. French *soeur* /sœʁ/), more often *sè* (sometimes *sèr*) in the speech of Creole monolinguals.

(As observed above, the Haitian orthography does provide a symbol for the high front rounded semi-vowel plus vowel combination <ui>.) The English example words in Table 4.2 are based

on standard American English. IPA symbols in Table 4.2 are provided for Creole sounds with no (standard American) English equivalent, no full English equivalent (e.g., where the sound is part of a diphthong in English), or English equivalents occurring in words subject to significant dialectal variation (e.g., *law*, /ɔ/ ~ /a/). Note that Creole <an>, representing the phoneme /ã/, is most often realized phonetically as [ʌ̃]. In Tables 4.3-4.5 example words with the relevant sound in word-initial, word-medial, and word-final position are given where such a word exists.

Table 4.2. The Sounds of the Haitian Orthography, with English Example Words

1. Consonants					
b	**b**ar	j	mea**s**ure	p	**p**an
ch	**sh**eet	k	**k**ey	r	[ɣ] a voiced, velar fricative, similar to the French <r>, which is uvular
d	**d**og	l	**l**ook	s	**s**ound
f	**f**ood	m	**m**ake	t	**t**ap
g	**g**ood	n	**n**eed	v	**v**an
h	**h**ad	ng	si**ng**	z	**z**ip

2. Vowels					
Oral					
a	h**o**t	i	m**ee**t	ou	m**oo**n
e	g**a**te [e]	o	b**oa**t [o]		
è	g**e**t	ò	l**aw** [ɔ]		

Nasalized				
an	/ã/ [ʌ̃]	on	/õ/	
en	/ɛ̃/	oun	/ũ/	

3. Semi-vowels					
w	**w**ay	y	**y**es	ui	/ɥi/ the first symbol represents the rounded semi-vowel counter-part of the semi-vowel /w/

Table 4.3. Consonants, with Creole Example Words

b	bal 'dance'	debat 'argue'	kapab 'to be able'	m	malad 'sore'	enfimite 'cripple'	dam 'woman'
ch	chat 'cat'	rache 'to rip'	rach 'ax'	n	nas 'screen'	zepina 'spinach'	machin 'vehicle'
d	daso 'to open'	kadas 'register'	gad 'to look at'	ng	--	--	zing 'tiny bit'
f	fal 'gizzard'	rafal 'volley'	saf 'greedy'	p	poto 'pillar'	rapadou 'candy'	pap 'big shot'
g	garaj 'garage'	bagay 'thing'	bag 'ring'	r	rat 'rat'	marasa 'divine twins'	--
h	ha 'rare'	branhang 'barren'	enhen 'yeah'	s	sik 'cycle'	dousi 'to sweeten'	sous 'fountain'
j	jalou 'jealous'	kajou 'mahogany'	raj 'rabies'	t	taso 'beef jerky'	titato 'game'	tèt 'head'
k	kad 'frame'	makawon 'critical'	avèk 'with'	v	vakabon 'shiftless'	lave 'to wash'	rèv 'dream'
l	lavi 'life'	pale 'to speak'	fasil 'easy'	z	zafè 'matter'	razè 'penniless'	raz 'short'

Table 4.4. Vowels, with Creole Example Words

1. Oral Vowels (vwayèl bouch)							
a	ase 'enough'	latè 'earth'	leta 'the State'	o	ochan 'anthem'	foli 'madness'	mato 'hammer'
e	elèv 'pupil'	redi 'to tug'	rale 'to pull'	ò	òfèv 'jeweler'	gòl 'goal'	gadò 'sheperd'
è	ès '< s >'	kèk 'some'	ankè 'entire'	ou	ouvriye 'working'	goud 'gourde'	kalfou 'junction'
i	istwa 'history'	pit 'sisal'	anasi 'spider'				
2. Nasalized Vowels (vwayèl bouch-nen)							
an	anlè 'fickle'	zandolit 'lizard'	devan 'front'	on	onz 'to move'	ponpe 'to pump'	pantalon 'pants'
en	enbesil 'foolish'	pentad 'shy'	lapen 'rabbit'	oun	ounsi 'novice'	mezounbèl 'type of yam'	youn 'one'

Table 4.5. Semi-Vowels (vwayèl-konsòn), with Creole Example Words (examples are listed according to the vowel that the alphabet letter precedes; examples are not always listed according to position in word)

1. w

wa	watè 'move bowels'	lakwa 'cross'	wo	wotè 'height'	gwo 'big, large'
wan	wanga 'talisman'	lakwann 'get lost!'	wò	wòl 'role'	bwòs 'brush'
we	wete 'to remove'	dwe 'to owe'	won	wont 'ashamed'	fwonte 'impudent'
wen	wench 'wrench'	kwen 'corner'	wou	woule 'to roll'	kwout 'crust'
wi	witi 'to go get'	kwi 'gourde bowl'			

other examples – word-final

kaw 'crow'	lakataw 'storm'	kiw 'pow!'
bow 'boom!'		

Note Well:
wo, wò, won, wou can also be written ro, rò, ron, rou

Examples:
rote, gro, ròl, bròs, ront, fronte, roule, krout.

2. y

ya	pyas 'money'	faya 'to faint'	yo	konfyolo 'conspiracy'	koyo 'cuckhold'
yan	yanvalou 'Rada dance'	pyan 'plant'	yò	biyòt 'block'	miyò 'better'
ye	ye COPULA	katye 'neighborhood'	yon	yon 'one'	bouyon 'broth'
yè	yè 'yesterday'	soupyè 'tureen'	you	pyout 'cute'	you 'one'
yen	yenyen 'whining'	kretyen 'Christian'			

other examples – word-final

pay 'weak'	kay 'hut'	bòy 'dumpling'
fey 'leaf'	chany 'shoeshine boy'	

3. ui

uit 'eight'	luil 'oil'	nuit 'nocturnal'	zuit 'tiny'

Table 4.6. Alphabet (alfabe)

a, an, b, ch, d, e, è, en, f, g, h, i,
j, k, l, m, n, ng, o, ò, on, ou, oun,
p, r, s, t, ui, v, w, y, z.

Table 4.7. Punctuation (siy espesyal)

1. Hyphens (ti tirè)

Hyphens may be used, if one wishes, to link a noun to a following definite article or possessive adjective, or a verb to its object pronoun, for example:

—*definite article (fòm atik defini)*

fi-a	*nèg-la*	*gason-an*	*fanm-nan*
'the girl'	'the guy'	'the boy'	'the woman'

—*possessive adjective (fòm ajektif posesif)*

papa-li	*pitit-mwen*
'his father'	'my child'

—*object pronoun (pwonon konpleman retresi)*

Nèg-la di-m li te wè-m yè.

'The guy told me he had seen me yesterday'

2. Apostrophe (apostwòf)

The apostrophe can be used after contracted pronoun subjects

m' vini rele ou epi ou pa vini.

'I came to call you and you didn't come' OR 'I am calling you and you didn't come'

Jèda pa la, l' al lekòl.

'Jeda is not here, she went to school'

Note that m', n', l', are treated like other words: a space must be left between them and the following word.

3. Grave Accent (aksan)

The grave accent is used to turn <e> into <è> and <o> into <ò>. It is also used to prevent <a> before <n> from becoming <an>, for example:

van /vã/	*vàn /van/*
'breeze'	'flood gate'

pan	*pàn*
'peacock'	'breakdown

Note: <èn> is the oral vowel <è> followed by <n>, i.e., IPA /ɛn/; ò followed by n is IPA /ɔn/. In cases where /ã/ is followed by /n/, it is written thus: aprann 'learn'

Conclusion: Creoles and Heteroglossia

The diversity of approaches used in the development of formal orthographies for creole languages reflects to a great extent the linguistic and cultural diversity, pluralism, and

heteroglossia that are the norm where they are spoken. (*Heteroglossia* refers to speaking different languages and/or speaking particular languages in different ways.) Devonish convincingly argues that, in the Caribbean, the lack of a single standardized form of English-lexifier creole only becomes a "problem" when the situation is viewed from the "unitary language" standpoint, that of those who accept colonial and neocolonial linguistic and cultural norms and the discourses of domination and exclusion accompanying them. His remarks can be extended to organic and formal orthographies designed thus far for these languages:

> What then should be the approach to the question of the continuum [consisting of all the language varieties from that least like the European lexifier language to that most like it]? A democratic approach would be to avoid imposing a single variety of Creole on everyone in the society. Otherwise, the language planners would be copying the very same intolerant language attitudes they are in the process of rejecting. The solution would be to (i) develop a description of the range of intermediate varieties of Creole along the continuum, all of which would be considered as acceptable forms of Creole, and (ii) identify certain forms which are most common and likely to be widely known, which could be recommended for use by journalists, broadcasters, and others who find themselves in key positions as disseminators of information in Creole. This last recommendation is not necessarily intended as a means of creating a "standard" variety of Creole. It is intended purely as a variety of Creole for communicating with as wide a cross-section of the population as possible (Devonish 1978, quoted in Devonish 1986: 44).

Meanwhile, to use an example from other side of the planet, Melanesian literacy workers in the nation states of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu and in the colonial territories of Bougainville, West Papua, and Kanaky have effectively demystified formal orthography development and challenged the common assumption that orthographies must be part of a language standardizing project. Working with communities to establish literacy programs for children and adults in several dialects of the Melanesian English-lexifier creole (the name for which is Melanesian Pidgin) and in some 300 other languages, the movement for critical literacy in Melanesia has had to confront head-on all of the issues related to orthography design in colonial and neocolonial contexts.

Throughout Melanesia, methodologies based on practical experience have emerged over the past few decades from attempts to affirm the power of each and every community to find and express its own unique voice in creating new forms of literacy. Phonological orthographies based on the principles of Accuracy, Consistency, Learnability, and Independence are routinely developed by community members in a matter of a few days. These orthographies are for writing their particular language varieties and those varieties that speakers themselves feel are most appropriate to express and assert their identity. Locally generated texts are written on stencils and printed on silkscreen printers by community members in the orthographies of their choice, to be used in their own literacy study groups and classes. The resulting validation of local languages and cultures stemming from this process has transformed the process of coming to print literacy in local languages from one weighted down by alienation and cognitive handicapping to one infused with enthusiasm and competence. Moreover, it has established within each learner the confidence to achieve literacy in any other language.

One of the most important aspects of the Melanesian experience is that while it involved the design and propagation of formal orthographies for hundreds of separate languages, no attempt was made to standardize any particular code. The pressure to make formal orthographies part of language standardization should be resisted also in the case of languages treated in this chapter. Any minor inconveniences resulting from the absence of standardization

(with one orthography serving all language varieties) or even several coexisting writing systems would be far outweighed by the many ideological, social, affective, and cognitive advantages that come from developing formal orthographies that give maximally accurate, consistent, learnable, and independent expression to creole languages and that promote cultural and historical agency as well.

In the case of Haiti, there is one universally spoken language, Creole, with a number of varieties of it—social and regional (Valdman, this volume). Though the formal orthography for Creole does not provide for the accurate representation of all Creole varieties, as observed above the orthography can be easily extended for those who might wish to capture, e.g., "frenchifying" pronunciation, notably involving front rounded vowels. We feel, however, that the important issue is to provide a formal orthography that can facilitate the process of raising literacy rates. Insisting on standardization at this time, given Haiti's political, social, and economic resources, would add an unnecessary burden to the learning process, and slow the process of raising literacy rates.

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