

Gibson, L. C. (2011). Resistance to Reform of Creole as a Medium of Instruction in Schools: Rebuilding Haiti's Educational System, *International Journal of Educational Policies*, 5 (1), 15-32.

Resistance to Reform of Creole as a Medium of Instruction in Schools: Rebuilding Haiti's Educational System

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Abstract

This paper examines the educational and linguistic situation in Haiti by positioning it in the broader linguistic reality of a post-colonial society where language stratification prevails. A critical approach is used to explore the language situation in Haiti through a historical, political, and social context, focusing on linguistic discrimination and inequality, which are perpetuated through the language of instruction in schools. In looking ahead at re-creating Haiti's educational system with a particular focus on language of instruction, Haiti's current educational language policy is explored by examining the ways that the government and schools affect language use and language acquisition in Haiti. Particular emphasis is placed on the Bernard Reform of 1982, which placed Creole as a medium of instruction in the early grades, yet received much resistance from monolingual Creole speakers as well as the upper and middle classes. The author concludes with recommendations for future reform including implementing Creole as the medium of instruction in schools, teaching French as a foreign language, and empowering policymakers, teachers, parents and students through awareness of the current research on the importance of instruction in one's native language.

Key Words: Haiti, Education, Reform, Creole, French

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Introduction

After the January earthquake in Haiti, international agencies have promised billions of dollars to create a more equitable and improved Haitian education system. In reforming and rebuilding Haiti's education system, the aspect of language cannot go unnoticed (DeGraff, 2010). In examining the widespread failure of the current Haitian educational system, one cannot ignore Haiti's linguistic situation (Dejean, 2010), which is situated in and created by a high degree of stratification.

In order to explore the educational and linguistic situation in Haiti, one must situate Haiti in the broader linguistic reality of a post-colonial society where language stratification prevails (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982). Haiti, like other post-colonized countries, has experienced a phenomenon that Kachru (1977) noted where the colonized language serves as the divider and the unifier (Nero, 2006). Unlike other post-colonial societies, however, the Haitian vernacular, Haitian Creole, also serves as the divider and unifier (Zephir, 1995).

In the spirit of recent trends of applied linguistics, this paper takes a critical approach to explore the language situation in Haiti through a historical, political, and social context, examining linguistic discrimination and inequality in Haiti through language. This paper will investigate the language policy of Haiti by looking at the ways that the government and schools affect language use and language acquisition (Tollefson, 2002) in order to examine the 1982 Bernard Reform and the resistance it experienced (Locher, 2010). I will conclude with language recommendations for current educational reform in Haiti. In the next section, I will give background to Haiti's present-day situation by exploring the history of Haiti, beginning with the colonial context.

History of Haiti – Post Colonial Social Structure Colonial Context

In order to understand the present educational and linguistic situation in Haiti, one must explore Haiti's colonial past. The Spaniards first settled the island of what is today Haiti and the Dominican Republic. They called it Española. In 1697, Spain transferred to France the western part of the island, which was given the name Saint Domingue. During this time, the colonial economy shifted from a pastoral nature to an agricultural economy that depended on slaves to run the plantations (Lindley, 2002). French colonizers created a plantation economy rooted on the slave system (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982).

The slaves who were taken to Haiti came mostly from the West African region, and the majority of the colonizers were outcasts of the French bourgeoisie. It is thought that no other colony in the Caribbean imported as many slaves as the French colony of Saint Dominique in the eighteenth century (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982). Haitian Creole developed in the late seventeenth century out of contact between the regional and colloquial dialects of French that were spoken by the European colonists along with the multiple African languages of the Niger-Congo spoken by the Africans who were enslaved and shipped across the Atlantic to work on Caribbean colonial plantations (DeGraff, 2009). The majority of the enslaved

Africans taken to Haiti would have spoken African languages such as Ewe, Fongbe, Mandingo, and Kikongo (Zephir, 2010).

In accordance with Gatling's imperialism theory, the French acted in an imperialistic nature by dominating the "other" through exploiting the colony (Phillipson, 1992). The colonizers' main goal in the colony was to build up wealth through slave labor and production. During the eighteenth century, the colony of Saint Domingue was one of the wealthiest colonies in the Caribbean. The economy created a class system, which consisted of the *grands administrateurs*, French administrators who ran the colony for the French throne, *grand blancs*, large land holders, *petit blancs*, merchants and white artisans, *gens de couleur*, mulattoes, and the black slaves (Furon, 2010; Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982).

In an imperialistic situation, control is gained through force, bargaining, and persuasion through ideas. Language is a principal manner for communicating ideas; therefore, the language of the colonizer is strongly introduced into the colony and used for high purposes in order to communicate with the colonized and rule through ideas. The concept of communication also entails a shared code, which the colonizer ensures is the code of the oppressor. Although the British and the French used different methods to create linguistic hegemony in their colonies, the French empire actively proliferated a linguistic ideology of the dominance of French (Phillipson, 2003). Because Haiti was a French colony, French was the power language used by the colonists, while Creole was the language of the oppressed African slaves. Therefore, French was the language used in the formal domains of colonial establishment, while Creole was used in the plantations. This was the beginning of linguistic stratification in Haiti (Lindley, 2002; Zephir, 1995).

The colonists created a division of labor among the slave populations, creating a hierarchical structure amongst the slaves. The slaves that were brought directly from Africa were known as the *Bossal* slaves, while the slaves that were born to slave parents residing in the colony were called *Creole* slaves. The *Bossal* slaves worked in the plantations while the *Creole* slaves worked in the masters' residencies. Because the *Creole* slaves had more contact with their masters, they often learned the language of their masters. Many of the *Creole* slaves even learned to read and write in their masters' language. Likewise, many of the female *Creole* slaves mothered their masters' children, giving birth to mulatto children. If the master was generous, these mulatto children would be freed, and the males would be sent to France to be educated. Hence, French was regarded as the language of freedom, high class, social mobility, and political and economic strength, while *Creole* was deemed the language of oppression, backwardness, domination, and slavery (Dennis, 1995).

Although Creole was the lower language that was used on plantations, it is important to note that Creole served different concurrent functions. At first, Creole served as a lingua franca between the white colonial establishment and acculturated *Creole* slaves, as well as the *Bossal* slaves who came directly from Africa. There first was a pidginization from African languages to Creole, and then a repidginization from Creole to reduced structure so that it could be understood by the slaves from Africa. In colonial society, Creole was a dominant language compared to the languages of African nations while simultaneously being a subordinate language to French. In later parts of the development of colonial Saint-Domingue, Creole served as a marker of

social identity, a symbol of the colonial way of life rather than the way of life in France (Valdman, 1988).

Within the colonial context, there was much strife between the large land holders, the merchants and white artisans, and the mulattoes, adding to the mistreatment of the slave population, which resulted in social and political unrest that eventually led to the first successful slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere. The colony declared its independence from France on January 1, 1804, and the leaders of the revolution gave the country its original Indian name, Haiti (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982). Not surprisingly, Haiti's Founding Fathers wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Haitian Constitution in French, feeling that if they used a language that enjoyed international prestige, Haiti would be regarded as a civilized country and would receive external recognition (Dennis, 1995). In the following section, I will examine the history of Haiti in the post-colonial context.

Post-Colonial Context

All postcolonial contexts share certain phenomena, including the conflicted feelings about both the vernacular and the colonial languages. While ambivalence towards language exists in Haiti, this quandary in regard to language is a common theme that is woven through post-colonial societies in regard to creoles and subordinated language groups. For example, vernacular English Creoles within the Caribbean have long been demised as well as celebrated (Winer, 2006). Similarly, in Hawaii, Pidgin serves as a separating and a uniting force (Eades, Jacobs, Hargrove, & Menacker, 2006). Furthermore, in Bolivia and Ecuador, indigenous people often feel that they must reject their indigenous heritages and languages (King & Benson, 2004).

Like most post-colonial societies, these conflicting feelings about both the vernacular and the colonial language and the hierarchical structure of the colonizer and the colonized played a significant role in creating the system of the new republic of Haiti. In this post-colonial context, the new Haitian leaders, who were all former slaves, failed to create a Haitian society in the years following independence. Rather, the new republic functioned for many years on the same model created by the French colonizers. The mulattoes, who formed the new elite class, continued to look to France for their culture and education, while the ex-slaves continued to work for the mulattoes. Therefore, when the Haitians ousted the French, they did not get rid of the French system nor the French language (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982).

After Haiti won its independence from France, it continued to use French as the language of the courts, education system, and government even though French was not recognized as the official language of Haiti until 1918 (Berotte Joseph, 2010; Schiefflin & Doucet, 1992). French was legally recognized as the official language of Haiti in the Haitian constitution of 1918 and again in the Haitian Constitution of 1926 (Doucet, 2011; Valdman, 1988).

Due to political instability, Haiti was occupied by the United States from 1915 to 1934 (Pamphile, 1984). Ironically, French became recognized as Haiti's official language during US occupation. Yet, during the US occupation, language attitudes in Haiti experienced a shift to authenticate Creole as a language. At the time of the US occupation, English became a much greater threat than Creole to the exclusive use of

French in power situations in Haiti. In response to the English threat in Haitian society, French and Creole were viewed as one in opposition to English language encroachment (Trouillot, 1996). Moreover, during the US occupation, a strong Haitian nationalism and an increased black consciousness emerged, causing many Haitians to view Creole as the language of Haiti. In 1924, the first Creole text appeared and the first Creole newspaper was published in 1943. At the start of the 1950s, a movement to make Creole an official language in Haiti began to slowly evolve (“Library of Congress Country Studies”).

Indeed, the 1957 Constitution maintained French as Haiti's official language but also allowed for the use of Creole in circumstances where using French only could put a monolingual Creole speaker at a disadvantage, such as in a court of law (Doucet, 2011; Prou, 2009). In 1979, the Bernard Reform was implemented in order to overhaul Haiti's largely failing education system. One of the goals of the Bernard Reform was to formally introduce Creole as a medium of instruction into the schools, which resulted in greatly elevating the role of Creole in Haiti. The educational policy, which increased the status of Creole, helped to somewhat banish the negative connotations associated with the Creole language and the culture of monolingual Creole speakers (Prou, 2009). The social, political, and educational implications of the Bernard Reform will be discussed in subsequent sections.

As a result of Creole being implemented in the schools by law, the Haitian government embarked on the task of unifying Creole orthography. By 1980, there was a formalization of an official orthography, and Creole was recognized as an official national language of Haiti by the Constitution of 1983 (Doucet, 2011; Schieffelin & Doucet, 1992). The mandated use of Creole in the schools by the Bernard Reform resulted in the full recognition of Creole by the 1987 Haitian Constitution, which coined Haiti a bilingual country because it had two *official* languages (Doucet, 2011; Prou, 2009). However, today, most official documents in Haiti are still written solely in French to the disenfranchisement of monolingual Creole speakers (DeGraff, 2009). In the next section, I will discuss the debate of whether Haiti is truly a bilingual country.

Bilingualism in Haiti

Bilingualism as a group possession is generally called societal bilingualism (Baker, 2006). While Haiti is considered a bilingual country with French and Creole being the two official languages, researchers have found that only seven percent of Haitians are truly French/Creole bilingual (Doucet, 2011). Valdman paints an even starker picture regarding the use of French in Haiti, arguing that only five percent of Haitians have competence in French (Valdman, 1988).

Traditionally, Haiti is a country characterized by two linguistic communities, the bilingual elite and the monolingual urban and rural masses. Haiti's linguistic situation, however, is more complex than the two-community model. First, there exists a great majority of monolingual Creole speakers. Although the majority of Haitians are monolingual Creole speakers, many dialects of Creole are spoken depending on the location and group (Bentolila, 1987; Dejean, 1993; Schieffelin & Doucet, 1992). Regional dialects of Creoles amongst the masses are distinguishable

between those who live in the center, the north, and the south of Haiti. Within these regions, the Creole of the urban speakers differs from the Creole of the rural speakers (Dejean, 1993). Likewise, in all geographic locations, the small bilingual elite express themselves in Creole that differs from the Creole of the monolingual masses (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1992).

Like all languages, Creole is experiencing change due to language contact (DeGraff, 2005). Creole is evolving as a result of Haitians who come from the diaspora with Creole that is influenced by American English, Dominican Spanish, or Quebecois French. Although there are varying Creole dialects, the categories of Creole speakers are not static; rather they are fluid and dynamic (Dejean, 1993; Lindley, 2002).

While different varieties of Creole can be found in Haiti, the small bilingual Haitian elite also speak different varieties of French. A very small group of bilinguals speak the traditional French of Haiti, marked by local color and seeming slightly old-fashioned compared to the French spoken in France. A second group, approximating French speakers, use French with *creolisms*. These speakers do not use French in everyday life; they use Creole. However, they use French for meetings, speaking on the radio, and speaking on the television (Dejean, 1993). In reality, for many Haitians, language use is “multiple, recursive, coming and going without end poles, but rather adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act” (Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010, p. 189). As individuals “engage in multiple complex communicative acts that do not in any way respond to the linear models,” (Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010, p. 189), many Haitians engage in dynamic bilingualism. While scholars have debated whether Haiti is a bilingual country, researchers have also questioned whether Haiti is a diglossic context. In the following section, I will explore the phenomenon of diglossia in Haiti.

Diglossia in Haiti

Ferguson originally defined diglossia in 1959 as a situation in which two varieties of the same language exist side by side throughout a community, with each one playing a definite role. However, in 1971, Fishman used the term to describe communities with unrelated or distinct languages that experience contact but have different functions (Dejean, 1993; Winford, 1985). Regardless of whether diglossia is used to describe communities with two varieties of the same language or unrelated languages, diglossia refers to a situation in which each language plays unequal roles and is ascribed an unequal value; there is a High (H) and a Low (L) language of the community. One of the social consequences of diglossia is that the majority of the population never masters the H variety, which excludes them from participation in the more public and formal activities of the community (Winford, 1985).

Ferguson claimed that Haiti is a diglossic case. However, according to DeGraff (2009), Haiti does not match Ferguson's initial definition of diglossia in terms of having two varieties of the same language because Creole is a separate language rather than a variety of French. Therefore, Haiti is not a classic diglossic situation in the sense that Ferguson defined diglossia. Valdman (1988) also argues that Haiti does not match Ferguson's original definition of a classic diglossic situation

for several reasons. First, French and Creole are two separate languages rather than two varieties of the same language. Second, in a diglossic situation, the low language is learned at home but the high language is acquired in a more formal setting like school. Bilingual Haitians, however, learn both languages at home, but perfect their French at school. Third, French and Creole do not serve different functions. For the bilingual elite, French serves vernacular functions but Creole is present in every communicative situation. For monolingual Haitian Creole speakers, Creole serves all vernacular functions and exists in all domains including religion, television, and radio (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1992; Valdman, 1988).

While Haiti does not meet Ferguson's classic definition of diglossia, it does exhibit the other characteristics of diglossic situations where the two languages are ascribed unequal value. According to DeGraff (2009), Doucet (2011), Valdman (1988), and Zephir (1995), French is the H language and Creole is the L language in Haiti, resulting in the majority of Haitians never mastering French. Similarly, the use of French by a small but powerful elite continues to be used to keep the majority of Haitians, monolingual Creole speakers, out of powerful positions. These French-only policies create a situation of „linguistic apartheid“ (DeGraff, 2009, p. 126). In the following section, I will explore the topic of language and identity in Haiti, an issue that is closely related to the phenomenon of diglossia.

Language and Identity

Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) argue for an awareness of the shifting and changing relationship among ethnicity, social identity, and language use in the context of postcolonial diaspora. While Haiti's colonial past with the French resulted in the emergence of social classes, Haitians themselves continue to internalize and perpetuate class divisions. One of the traces of Haiti's post-colonial past is a stratified society based on a mixture of many factors including economics, education, family name and lineage, affluence, social conduct, skin color, and religion (Doucet, 2011; Schieffelin & Doucet, 1992). Although many factors contribute to the stratification of Haitian culture, language plays a major role in defining and maintaining social class. At the same time, despite the gate keeping role that language plays in Haitian society, language also acts as a unifying factor in marking Haitian identity (Zephir, 1995).

Norton (1997) notes that identity construction must be explored within the larger society that is formed by relations of power and that identity is formed by and forms language. Norton Peirce (1995) posits that social identity is varied with language organizing society as well as serving as the vehicle to combat the political and social aspects of societal organization. According to Buchanan (1979) the French language and culture of Haiti's former colonizers has been used by the small and powerful elite to validate their claims of power and prestige while blocking the majority of Haitians from participating in national life. Similarly, the positive and negative ideas regarding French and Haitian Creole and the contexts in which they are deemed appropriate reveal the complexity of Haitian identity. While scholars have examined the concept of language and identity in Haiti, researchers have also explored the topic of language attitudes in Haiti.

Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are typically strongly revered and socially constructed based on historical events and happenings (Nero, 2000). In the case of Haiti, language attitudes regarding Creole are complex and nuanced with a tension between contempt for Creole and the Pro-Creole movement. As a result of Haiti's post-colonial state, a disdain for Creole exists amongst the elite as well as the urban and rural masses (Dejean, 1993; Doucet, 2011; Schieffeline & Doucet, 1992). In accordance with Paulo Freire's analysis, the masses have internalized the dominant ideology of the oppressor (Dejean, 1993).

Haitians of all social classes have internalized the ranking of whiteness and French culture and language as superior to blackness and African-based culture and language. Haitians feel that French, a power language with international prestige, is the appropriate language to use in Haitian national settings and the choice language to project Haiti's national identity to the world. Fluency in French is essential for social mobility in Haiti because the French language is a symbol of power, authority, formal education, refinement, cultivation, and social status (Buchanan, 1979).

Ironically, in Haitian culture, both French and Creole are also associated with opposite values. French is considered the language of deception and pretense, while Creole is considered the language of truth and genuineness. French represents divisiveness in the social classes while Haitian Creole represents unity of the Haitian people. Haitian Creole symbolizes Haitian identity, which comes from African roots, while French symbolizes imposition and colonization (Buchanan, 1979; Zephir, 1995). Likewise, many Haitians ridicule the French language practices of the bilingual elite class (Dejean, 1993).

The situation of language attitudes in Haiti is complex regarding the status of French and Creole. As is similar in diglossic cases, a „push-pull“ (Smitherman, 1986, p. 170) exists between the high and low languages. While French is regarded as the high language, the aforementioned US occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 resulted in a revived interest in Africa and a call to return to African values in Haiti. This spur in Haitian nationalism created an awareness of the need to use Haitian Creole as the major vehicle of communication. Although a literary revival of celebratory African indigenous traditions and practices emerged, Haitian Creole was not used in literary domains. Rather, Africa and a rural way of life was celebrated through the medium of French as Creole was still deemed inappropriate for use in intellectual realms (Zephir, 1995).

Moreover, on February 7, 1987, the Duvalier regime fell, causing an outpouring of the urban and rural masses to enter into the political realm (“Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Organization of American States”). A multitude of voices were heard rather than the voices of a select bourgeoisie few. The majority of those who only spoke Creole began to be heard and many of the bilingual minority started speaking Creole rather than French in the public sector. Those who spoke French rather than Creole in the public realm were increasingly seen as viewing the people in a pejorative manner (Dejean, 1993; Prou, 2009). These complex and dynamic attitudes regarding the use of French and Creole have impacted and shaped all aspects of Haitian society, particularly the Haitian education system and

educational reform. In the next section, I will discuss the issue of language in Haitian schools.

Language in School

The use of language in the realm of education is a major issue in Haiti. Many questions and issues are raised including which language should be used as a medium of instruction, the issue of teaching literacy in a language that is not the child's vernacular language, questions of which language the teachers are most literate and most orally proficient in, and issues of social mobility and linguistic capital surrounding language for certain social classes. Dejean claims that Creole has been absent from formal school education in Haiti, which has affected Haitians' attitudes towards Creole, specifically its use in formal school situations (Dejean, 1993). DeGraff (2009) argues that the most powerful tool in stigmatizing and devaluing Creole is the Haitian school system. He claims that the stigmatization and exclusion of Haitian Creole in schools and other formal situations serves to make monolingual Haitian Creole speakers second class citizens. Worse, Dejean (2010) describes practices in Haitian schools that punish Creole speakers and force students to monitor each other's speech by telling on those who speak Creole rather than French, demonstrating the broad disrespect that is shown toward the Creole language in Haitian schools.

Although the Creole language is widely disrespected in Haitian schools, it serves a significant and strong role in Haitian society. Creole is interconnected in the practices of the *Vodou* religion, played an integral role in the Haitian Revolution, and sustains Haitian culture (Prou, 2010). Most importantly, the entire population of Haiti speaks Creole (Spears, 2010), creating many personal and national possibilities for Creole instruction.

On a personal level, teaching students to read in their first language, Creole, followed by French in later school years, would lead to higher literacy rates, give students access to information and knowledge, and allow students to attain a greater level of bilingualism in all areas of the languages. While instruction in Creole would benefit students personally, it would also benefit the nation as a whole. Using mother tongue instruction, or Creole as a medium of instruction, in Haitian schools would reduce Haiti's illiteracy rate, creating economic development for the nation. Along with the social change resulting from higher literacy creating economic development in Haiti, the use of mother tongue instruction would slowly lead to eradicating pejorative attitudes towards Creole in Haiti (Trouillot-Levy, 2010). In the following section, I will discuss the 1982 Bernard Reform of education, an attempt to make Creole the medium of instruction in Haitian schools, and the resistance it received.

Bernard Reform

The Bernard Reform, which originated in 1976, was instituted in 1979, and was installed in 1982, was headed by the Minister of Education, Joseph Bernard, to make Creole a medium of instruction in Haitian schools while providing educational access

for all Haitian students as well as implementing pedagogical changes (Berotte Joseph, 2010; Locher, 2010). The Bernard Reform mandated that Haitian Creole serve as the primary language of instruction during the first four years of elementary education, calling for literacy skills to be taught in Creole. During the first year of school, French was to be taught orally as a subject rather than used as a medium of instruction, and teachers would start teaching written French during the third year. The purpose of the reform was to create students who were balanced bilinguals by the culmination of the first ten years of schooling (Dejean, 2010).

Some might suggest that the Reform had disastrous results. At the end of the first decade of the Reform (1979-1989), the new curriculum was being implemented in 16.2 percent of all classrooms. A decade later, the Ministry noted that all of the public schools were using the Reform curriculum, including the component of Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) during the first years of schooling. However, site visits and field studies have demonstrated that parts of the Reform are missing in the majority of schools. In the private sphere, some of the most prestigious schools have introduced limited MTI such as teaching Creole as a subject, but the Reform curriculum has been applied partially. Access to Creole textbooks and manuals for the first six grades have been available at times, but they are in short supply, so most private schools use French manuals along with Creole instruction (Locher, 2010). In reality, the Reform has been very difficult to implement, causing Locher (2010) to assert, “probably not a single student in Haiti has ever been taught exclusively according to the reform plans” (p. 179).

Despite the Reform’s mandate that Haitian Creole serve as the primary language of instruction during the first four year of elementary education, in reality this is not happening. Many Haitians have never been taught to read or write in Creole because their education has been in French. While Haitian teachers speak Creole, many are not familiar with written Creole (Hallman, Clemens, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982). Teachers also lack the training necessary to implement the new methods of instructing in Creole, and do not have sufficient knowledge of literacy in Creole to effectively and consistently convey information in the language (Lindley, 2002).

Although many teachers lack Creole literacy and the training needed to use Creole as a medium of instruction, other factors contribute to the difficulty of using Creole in the schools. Youssef suggests that social factors could have potentially worked against the educational Reform to use Creole as the medium of instruction. Some of these social factors include a high level of poverty, which keeps the majority of students out of school, economic difficulties that children encounter, political corruption and instability, and the lack of social mobility, which makes education impossible for those living at the lowest level and makes it unfeasible for students to advance through the educational system. In addition, various schools have reported different language policies based on the responsiveness of the parents and the abilities of the teaching staff, resulting in inconsistency in the educational Reform (Youssef, 2002).

Regardless of whether the Reform has had disastrous results, the outcomes of the Reform have been quite disappointing. The Reform was embarked upon with indifference, as the government did not lend adequate support. The Haitian government suspended the Bernard Reform from 1982 to 1986 and then extended the

suspension until 1987. In December 1987, the government officially began Reform activities under the direction of the restructured National Pedagogical Institute (Dejean, 2010). Several schools began to implement the policies of the Bernard Reform, but presently, no Haitian Minister of Education has carried out the Reform efforts on a significant level since Bernard. From 1991 to 1995, however, the government attempted a push to encourage the Reform, but experienced only minimal success (Berotte Joseph, 2010; Dejean, 2010).

In addition to limited government support, the Bernard Reform suffered from a paucity of teacher and principal training to implement the new system, inactivity of field agents who were to implement the reform, and the absence of a national dialogue around improving the nation's schools. Further, principals of private schools were slow in implementing the Reform, and schools were troubled with a lack of materials, inadequate staffing, and nonexistent support services such as libraries (Dejean, 2010). In addition, the Bernard Reform experienced great resistance, which will be discussed subsequently.

The Haitian school system is stratified, reflecting the stratification of society at large. The upper-class often speaks French, attend schools that use French as the medium of instruction, and have French textbooks. On the other hand, the lower middle-class and lower class often attend schools where Creole language curricula and materials are used. As a result of the high degree of social stratification based on language in Haiti, the notion of decreasing students' French language skills is met with fear and resistance as students feel that their social status would decrease with limited French skills (Trouillot-Levy, 2010).

Zephir (1995) posits that the educational Reform to place Creole as a medium of instruction was mishandled by the Ministry of National Education, which resulted in monolingual Creole speakers resisting the reform. The Reform was first implemented in reform schools, which consisted of select public schools. Private schools did not have to implement the Reform, which allowed them to continue teaching in French. Because public schools educate almost exclusively the underclass and poor students, monolingual Creole speakers viewed the Reform as a way to deprive students from the lowest socio-economic class of a good education, which they considered an education through a French medium. Zephir (1995) argues that in order to have avoided this negative reaction to the Reform, the Ministry of Education should have implemented the Reform in both public and private schools.

While some monolingual Haitian Creole speakers, primarily the lowest-class, vehemently opposed the Bernard Reform, viewing it as a tactic to hinder their social mobility and keep them subordinate by eliminating their access to French (Berotte Joseph, 2010; Doucet, 2011; Zehir, 1995), the wealthy felt that using Creole as a vehicle of instruction in the schools took away symbolic power from French and undermined the traditional role that schools play as a "gatekeeper" in maintaining social divisions (Prou, 2009). Middle- and upper- class parents also strongly opposed the Reform because they felt that it would jeopardize their social order by inhibiting their children's acquisition and mastery of French, which they felt was necessary to experience success in their careers as well as internationally (Trouillot-Levy, 2010).

In addition to students and parents' resistance to using Creole in the schools, many educators also hold pejorative views about Creole (Trouillot-Levy, 2010). The

teachers' experiences and attitudes towards French and Creole play a primary role in the language of instruction in Haitian schools. A mixed methods study conducted by Jean-Francois sought to examine the attitudes of elementary school educators towards Haiti's linguistic situation. The results of the study found that while the majority of the teachers spoke and understood Creole better than French, they had a higher level of written proficiency in French than in Creole. They used Creole alone in informal situations and they code switched in less formal situations. French was solely used in official situations. Similarly, Haitian educators preferred French over Creole in obtaining educational objectives while holding positive attitudes towards French and Urban Creole, but having very negative opinions of rural Creole (Jean-Francois, 2007). Indeed, presently many educators choose to use French textbooks over Creole textbooks, though limited institutions use textbooks written in Creole as part of their curriculum (Trouillot-Levy, 2010).

Despite resistance to the use of Creole as a medium of instruction in classrooms, Trouillot-Levy (2010) posits that some progress has been made in accepting Creole as a vehicle of instruction in the classroom. Trouillot-Levy found that when middle-class parents are educated about the academic benefits of using a Creole language curriculum, some parents support it. Further, particular groups of parents have taken a greater interest in the broader academic progress of their children, so they do not oppose the use of Creole textbooks. Parents of lower socioeconomic status who live in rural areas demonstrate the least resistance to Creole-medium schools because these parents are typically monolingual Creole-speakers who are predominately illiterate and do not exhibit animosity towards the use of Creole textbooks in the schools. In reality, however, despite the Reform mandates to use Creole as a medium of instruction in the schools, there has not been a significant increase of the use of Creole-medium textbooks in the classrooms, many public schools are not teaching students to read in Creole, and the use of Creole as a medium of instruction in classrooms still receives resistance from all social classes.

Recommendations for Current Reform

The use of language in the realm of education is a major issue in Haiti. Many questions and issues are raised including which language should be used as a medium of instruction, the issue of teaching literacy in a language that is not the child's vernacular language, questions of which language the teachers are most literate and most orally proficient in, and issues of social mobility and linguistic capital surrounding language for certain social classes. Dejean (1993) claims that Creole has been absent from formal school education in Haiti, which has affected Haitians' attitudes towards Creole, specifically its use in formal school situations. DeGraff (2009) argues that the most powerful tool in stigmatizing and devaluing Creole is the Haitian school system. He asserts that the stigmatization and exclusion of Haitian Creole in schools and other formal situations serves to make monolingual Haitian Creole speakers second class citizens. Further, Trouillot-Levy (2010, p. 219) posits that "linguistic apartheid" typifies Haiti's educational policies.

Situating Haiti in the broader linguistic reality of a post-colonial society where language stratification prevails (Hallman, Etienne, & Fradd, 1982), one must critically

examine the language and schooling situation of Haiti through a historical, political, and social context. Special attention must be paid to the ways that the government and schools affect language attitudes and use (Tollefson, 2002), and the resistance that the Bernard Reform received must be taken into account when implementing current educational reform.

In reforming Haitian schools, I am recommending that the Haitian government implement a language policy that is sensitive to Haiti's post-colonial past while at the same time applying relevant and current research on language and education to ensure that Haitians are granted an equitable and appropriate education. First, instruction in Haitian schools should be conducted in Creole, the native language, as the primary language and the main medium of instruction (DeGraff, 2010; Dejean, 2010). Research has demonstrated the importance of literacy in one's first language. Restricting students' opportunities to learn in their first language has a negative impact on their cognitive growth and their academic achievement, while strong literacy in one's first language correlates to acquisition of literacy in a second language (Cummins, 1991; Garcia, 2002; Grant & Wong, 2003; Spears, 2010). Dejean (2010) notes that in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries where teaching foreign languages in the schools has been quite successful, students begin their early education in their native language, which continues to be their primary language throughout their schooling and their lives. Students are never expected to adopt a foreign language as their primary language.

Second, I propose that French be taught in Haitian schools as a secondary language, or a foreign language (DeGraff, 2010; Dejean, 2010). As a result of Haiti's post-colonial state, the elite as well as the urban and rural masses resisted the Bernard Reform to raise the status of Creole (Zephir, 1995). Because the majority of Haitians feel that French is essential for social mobility in Haiti (Buchanan, 1979), an educational system that did not teach French would probably receive resistance much like that received by the Bernard Reform. However, French should be taught as a foreign language in Haiti rather than replacing Creole as the primary language.

Third, I suggest that policy makers, teachers, parents, and students be informed of the existing research on the importance of instruction in one's native language so that the elite, urban, and rural masses are empowered to advocate for and to educate their children in their mother tongue, which has been deemed most effective by research (Cummins, 1991; Garcia, 2002; Grant & Wong, 2003; Spears, 2010). Perhaps empowering citizens with this research would also help eliminate the resistance to education in Creole that was experienced with the Bernard Reform.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one must explore the language situation in Haiti through a historical, political, and social context (Tollefson, 2002) in order to understand the current linguistic discrimination and inequality that is perpetuated by the schools in Haiti (DeGraff, 2010). As a result of Haiti's post-colonial state, a disdain for Creole exists amongst the elite as well as the urban and rural masses, which caused a resistance to the Bernard Reform to raise the status of Creole (Dejean, 1993; Doucet, 2011;

Schieffeline & Doucet, 1992). In reforming the Haitian education system by implementing Creole as the medium of instruction in Haitian schools, teaching French as a foreign language, and empowering policy makers, teachers, parents and students with the current research on the importance of instruction in one's native language, the linguistic situation in Haitian schools can mirror and serve the Haitian population. Use of Creole as a medium of instruction will provide personal and social benefits in Haiti by creating literacy and aiding in the elevation of the prestige of Creole, the language that all Haitians speak.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Shondel Nero at New York University for her insight and guidance on drafts of this article. Additionally, I want to extend my gratitude to Dr. Fabienne Doucet at New York University for her encouragement and support.

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International Journal of Educational Policies

ISSN: 1307-3842

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