

# French and underdevelopment, Haitian Creole and development

## Educational language policy problems and solutions in Haiti\*

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This article argues that Haiti's French-dominant school system is an impediment to the nation's development, whereas Haitian Creole-dominant education will lay the foundation for long-term development. In that Caribbean country, 95% of the population is monolingual in Haitian Creole while the portion that additionally speaks French does not exceed 5% with an additional 5–10% having some receptive competence (Valdman 1984: 78; Dejean 2006). Even though French is the language of the school system, as many as 80% of Haiti's teachers control it inadequately and only a minority of students completes school (Dejean 2006). Economic, historical, sociolinguistic, and demographic factors are a part of the explanation for Haiti's low educational achievement. Another important but often ignored factor is *educational language policy*. Data on educational language policy compared internationally show that the use of a second language in schools correlates with high illiteracy rates and poverty (Coulmas 1992). I reject arguments in favor of maintaining French-dominant education in Haiti (Lawless 1992; Youssef 2002; Francis 2005; Ferguson 2006, etc.) because the resources for it are woefully lacking. I argue that the progressive promotion of Haitian Creole throughout Haitian education will lead to improved learning, graduation, and Creole literacy, in addition to a more streamlined and coherent State, economy,

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and society (Efron 1954; De Regt 1984; DeGraff 2003; Dejean 2006). As Haiti rebuilds after the earthquake of January 12th, 2010, aid workers, government employees, and researchers who get involved in the recovery also unsuspectingly perpetuate French, English, and Spanish hegemony in development work (DeGraff 2010). The long history of suppressing Haitian Creole and promoting French in education and administration — and French, English, or Spanish in development work — form underlying obstacles in the nation's struggle to produce an adequate class of educated citizens, to achieve universal literacy, and to make socioeconomic progress.

**Keywords:** Haitian Creole and French in Haitian education, creoles and educational language policy, first-language versus second-language in schools, majority-language versus minority-language education, literacy, bilingual education, creoles in education

## 1. Introduction

The dominance of the French language in Haitian education is one of Haiti's fundamental problems because 95% of the population only speaks Haitian Creole (DeGraff 2003, 2005, 2010; Dejean 2006, 2010). The exclusion of the Creole-speaking masses is also one of Haiti's main impediments for development (Winford 1985: 354; DeGraff 2005: 577, 2010). Haiti's language policy is most problematic in the French second-language school system. First-language educational systems are more successful across-the-board than second-language systems like Haiti's.<sup>1</sup> The international successes of first-language education and the underperformance of second-language education should provoke reflection, critique, and alternative models since it is widely accepted that the official use of a *minority written language* instead of a *majority written language* 'compromises the integrating effect of written language and the unfolding of its socioeconomic potential' (Coulmas 1992: 212–215).

The social, economic, and educational situation in Haiti is extremely challenging. Over the twenty year period from 1980 until 2000, Haiti had more than 13 governments which were largely installed through coups and in that period there was a succession of 23 Ministers of Education (Hadjadj 2000: 13). Recent decades have only worsened and the earthquake of January 12th, 2010, devastated conditions in and around the capital of Port-au-Prince. In 1977, 80% of the population

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1. For example, examples of successful first-language school systems include China, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Japan, the Netherlands, North or South Korea, the United States, Vietnam, etc.

was living in abject poverty (Hadjadj 2000: 13). According to the United Nations, as many as 60% of Haitians live 25% below the 'minimal caloric intake required for light work' ([www.newint.org](http://www.newint.org)). The Gross Domestic Product's rate of growth was negative at  $-0.2\%$  from 1980–90 and  $-2.5\%$  from 1990–1998 while the population growth was  $3.6\%$  and  $2.4\%$  respectively (Hadjadj 2000: 13). Haiti's distribution of income is among the most unequal in the world. Life expectancy, nutritional intake, literacy, school enrollment, and GDP per capita are lower than any other country in the hemisphere.

The low quality of the Haitian educational system results in the low achievement of the students (De Regt 1984: 123). Problems include the fact that (1) the funds spent per student are lower than in other countries, e.g.  $1.5\%$  of GDP compared to the regional average of  $4.5\%$ . (2) Only  $27\%$  of teachers are qualified and they are poorly supervised (De Regt 1984). Teachers are underpaid or left unpaid periodically and they teach multiple levels and ages in a single class. (3) The curriculum, which is based upon an early twentieth century French model, lacks relevancy because teachers provide one-way classical exposition to passive student 'vessels' who are expected to *memorize* French instead of mastering content. (4) Learning materials are too expensive for parents or schools to purchase and consequently books are borrowed and copied by hand. (5) Buildings are minimalistic or dilapidated and classrooms lack adequate benches, tables, chalkboards, chalk, learning aids, and very few have electricity. (6) Students fail to advance because they do not understand the French language, not because of the content of education (De Regt 1984: 122). Finally, all of these problems negatively impact rural people at a far higher rate.

The negative attitudes expressed by many members of the French-speaking Haitian minority for the monolingual Creole-speaking majority originates in colonialism, class ideology, and race-based slavery in Saint-Domingue (a French plantation colony from 1697 until 1803). French-language dominance in Haitian schools adversely impacts millions of children and it is the source of broad societal inefficiency. Scholars should strongly challenge the 'policy of elitist sanctity' which is presupposed in the language policy and planning in several Caribbean countries (Winford 1985: 354). Using the first language of the majority, Creole, in the schools and the State will provide a foundation for progress and stability since it will facilitate access to knowledge and opportunity for the majority of the population. If the language of the home and the school are the same, children will understand the content of education, the dropout problem will diminish, the implementation of knowledge will improve, and the potential for economic growth will rise.

I use quantitative and qualitative approaches to support the argument that majority-language education in Haiti will lead to greater collective benefits. In section (2) I review the historical background and in (2.1) I present Haiti's

sociolinguistic situation in order to show how they influence language policy. In (2.2) I examine the ideology of creole exceptionalism and the scientific principle of uniformitarianism. In section (2.3) I compare Haiti's 1987 Constitution, which recognizes Creole as the language that unites all Haitians with the society's unchanged practice of emphasizing French over Creole in schools. In (3) I examine current educational practices and focus on the educational reform that took place in the 1970s and 1980s in order to show the factors that help or harm the implementation of educational reform. Section (3.1) uses statistics to show the results of current educational policy and (3.2) examines some successful efforts at Creole-medium education in Jamaica and Curacao. In section (4) the main arguments in support of French second-language education in Haiti are refuted and those in support of a first-language education are given. Section (4.1) adds some of the non-academic benefits of first-language education. In (5) I describe the guiding principles of bilingual education in order to identify what would be the most compatible approach for Haitian society. I address instrumentalization in (6) in order to show how it helps a community prepare its language for referential and hegemonic functions. Section (7) presents data on literacy and GDP from around the world in order to show how language policies can benefit or depress a nation's respective rankings. To understand the dominance of French minority-language education in Haitian schools, historical factors are examined next.

## 2. Historical background

During the French colonial period (c. 1625–1803), educational institutions were severely limited. Only wealthy families could send their children to France to receive an education and only a few secondary schools operated in Saint-Domingue (Tardieu 1990). The extraction of agricultural and natural resources was the primary function of the colony. The emphasis on plantation slavery meant that little was done to develop the island or educate its inhabitants.

Colonial slave education involved religious instruction, artisan or trade training, apprenticeships, and the instruction of artists and entertainers (Tardieu 1990: 89). Traditions of knowledge amongst the slaves were mediated through oral traditions such as proverbs, *tintim bwa chèch* 'riddles', and *kont* 'storytelling', general wisdom, languages, and knowledge about the tropical environment, to name a few (Tardieu 1983; Tardieu 1990: 97; Michel 1996; Freeman 2002; Turnbull 2005). Slaves were valued for their labor, skills and craftsmanship but access to literacy through the *syllabaire* 'the spelling book', was forbidden (Fouchard 1953). A visceral contact with literacy that the slaves had was the brand of their owner's name that was inflicted on the flesh (Fouchard 1953).

Vodou constituted a clandestine and subversive educational space because practicing the religion was illegal in the officially Catholic colony (Tardieu 1990: 97). It was within Vodou that many leaders and soldiers of the Haitian revolution reinforced their *oral* anti-colonial education (Rigaud 1953: 54). The culture of *oral transmission* in Haitian Vodou negated and waged war on the culture of *written transmission* in French colonialism and Catholicism (Tardieu 1990: 100). This legacy set up a long lasting dichotomy rooted in history, psychology, and culture: Haiti's capitalist and neocolonial bilingual society evolved as a written civilization whereas monolingual Haitian Creole society evolved as an oral civilization (Tardieu 1990: 100). The overwhelming prestige of French was accompanied by the negation of Creole (Chaudenson and Vernet 1983: 45).

The Haitian revolution challenged the 18th and 19th century colonial world order and as a consequence Haiti was embargoed, preyed upon, occupied, and vilified through much of its history. This isolation has caused some of the country's current poverty (DeGraff 2010, p.c.). Desperate for trade and financing from foreign powers, Haiti's leaders clung to the French language. The elite architects<sup>2</sup> of independent Haiti extended the view that Creole is the language of underdeveloped slaves and the elements of the ex-slaves' culture (agriculture, dress, cuisine, Vodou religion, etc.) symbolized inferiority in their eyes. Differentiation between two value systems, cultures, and languages influenced the thought and actions of individuals on both ends of the spectrum.<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915–1934) provoked the first major shift in thinking as intellectuals writing in Haiti rejected US imperialism and racism and embraced Haitian Creole language and its culture; for example, Price-Mars (1928), Roumain (1943), Marcelin (1950a & b), and Rigaud (1953) are representative of this change. Their books provide Creole source texts with French-language discussions to illustrate and valorize aspects of Haitian Creole culture. Members of the generation that followed began using Haitian Creole itself as the vehicle for researching Haiti and thus they demonstrate yet another important shift, this time toward prioritizing Creole (e.g. Séverin 2000, 2005, 2007; Beauvoir & Dominique 2003; Casimir 2004; Dejean 2006; Jil & Jil 2009, etc.).

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2. Dessalines may have been an exception given that some have suggested that he had a somewhat positive attitude toward Creole, e.g. Descourtilz (1809) and Dayan (1995) (p.c. Degraff 2010). Also of note: already in the early 19th century, Génétal Gérin in Pétion's government proposed a law for using Creole in the schools.

3. As one reviewer pointed out, ascribing essences to the two language-identified cultural spheres may be inaccurate. For example, African-derived religions were and are practiced by persons fully in the literate sphere. I nevertheless think that polarization exists in some quarters of society; see, for example, the anti-Vodou prejudices reflected in Célestin-Mégie (2003).

The following points on Haitian history are the most important for the discussion that follows: (1) favoring the French language in educational policy has restricted education and literacy to a small minority of the population; (2) education was conducted mostly in French until the Bernard Reform of 1979;<sup>4</sup> (3) education has been delivered by a mixture of foreigners, Haitians trained abroad, and Haitians who were trained in Haiti; (4) there is a strong oral culture that lacks access to the culture of writing and power; and (5) since the 1970s, publishing in Haitian Creole has grown dramatically and is gaining the intellectual tools and momentum needed to extend into schools and other domains.

## 2.1 Haiti's sociolinguistic situation

Post-revolutionary Haiti (1804-present) and the pre-revolutionary French colony of Saint Domingue (1697–1803), though different in several respects, are similar in having a French/Creole bilingual minority that governs and economically dominates the majority of the population. This majority is monolingual in Creole currently but was heavily multilingual in Saint-Domingue, e.g. Creole plus many West and Central African languages (DeGraff 2005: 543). In the bilingual elite's idealization of language functions, French serves in government, education, literature, and business while Creole is used by the same group for informal exchanges among close friends, family peers, servants, workers, or peasants (Dejean 1993). Although French has a 'crushing domination' in the realm of official documents, in actuality bilinguals in all the professions and social classes display a preference for speaking Haitian Creole on the job (Efron 1954; Lofficial 1979: 40, 42; Dejean 1993). Among these employees, the use of French marks a hierarchical relationship and formality (Chaudenson and Vernet 1983: 40). In recent decades, Creole has increasingly encroached on domains once viewed as the privilege of French.

While bilinguals assign 'high' and 'low' functions to their languages in a limited set of situations, Creole monolingualism is the reality for 95% of the population. Although the monolingual community can obviously not compartmentalize one language, it is nevertheless subject to the pressure and confinement of the elite's language compartmentalization. Language differentiation in Haiti is anchored in social class structure (Winford 1985: 356). Various sociolinguistic

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4. DeGraff (p.c.) points out that there have always been avant-garde thinkers such as a Gérin in the early 19th century who realized the importance of Creole in Haitian education. Yves Dejean, Carrié Paultre, Emile Célestin-Mégie, Frankétienne, and many other writers and educators were already teaching and producing pedagogical and literary materials in Creole long before the Bernard Reform. Another reviewer adds that Protestant missionaries have also long used Creole for religious and other instruction.

conditions buttress language differentiation. The bilingual Francophone minority interacts with the monolingual Creole-speaking majority in Creole and the rural and urban poor have very few opportunities, besides school, to hear or practice French (Valdman 1984: 81). Since most Haitians do not 'live' in the French language or consume French-language products, they are unable to learn the language (Chaudenson and Vernet 1983: 43).

School teachers in Haiti prefer French to Creole for achieving the objectives of education (Jean-François 2006). Teachers hold positive attitudes toward French and urban mesolectal Haitian Creole, but negative ones toward the basilect (Jean-François 2006). In spite of these attitudes, 80% of teachers have poorly mastered French and hence many read directly from books in class (Chaudenson and Vernet 1983: 40). Teachers may also send mixed messages to their students by shifting back and forth between French and Haitian Creole. While they might intend to reinforce their students' understanding of material, they may also be indicating that they or their students do not have a strong command of French.

In terms of parental attitudes, opposition to Creole tends to be found among the urban wealthy whereas support is more common among the rural poor. Middle-class parents are gradually expressing more acceptance for Creole instruction when they have been well-informed about achievement benefits (Trouillot-Lévy 2010: 219). Although there is lingering opposition expressed by some parents, the tide seems to be turning. Already in Valdman (1984: 83), a small sample of 18/28 parents responded that they believed Creole should be taught in schools. Many Haitian parents are concerned about the use of French. In Jean-François' (2006: 9) fieldwork, 37% of parents said they were unsatisfied with French language education because their children master neither spoken and written French nor written Haitian Creole even after several years of schooling (Jean-François 2006). In Valdman's (1984: 83) samples, 14/51 parents revealed their confusion about the goals of education when they stated that the most important objective of school was simply 'to learn French'. This perception encapsulates Haiti's educational dilemma: education is not adequately focused on *content*, *ideas*, and *knowledge* but is rather oriented toward (partial) language acquisition. The next section examines the ideological currents that shape the sociolinguistic situation.

## 2.2 The ideological arena: Exceptionalism versus uniformitarianism

The French-speaking Haitian elite accumulate economic, social, and symbolic capital at the expense of the monolingual Creole-speaking majority (Bourdieu 1982; DeGraff 2005: 571). Wide-spread negative linguistic attitudes limit the use and development of Creole as a language of instruction (Valdman 1988: 77). 'Francophilia' and 'Creolophobia' characterize the mentality of the Haitian elite for

whom this dichotomy is a ‘tool, not for nation building, but [...] the ‘expression of class self-interest’” (DeGraff 2003: 401).

The Francophilic elite hold to ‘creole exceptionalism’ which claims that Creole languages suffer from some deficiency and possess some quality that makes them lesser than the related European lexifier languages (Girod-Chantrons 1785 [1980]: 157f; Vinson 1889: 345–346; Quint 1997). Haitian exceptionalists, like Bellegarde (1949) and Trouillot (1980), have argued that Creole is not appropriate for science, academic textbooks, new knowledge, intellectual activities, and law and order (Howe 1993: 293; DeGraff 2005: 571–573). The exceptionalist point of view is composed of tropes that come down from French colonial slave society and its denial of African and Creole humanity (Dejean 2006: 257). French colonists in the French Antilles viewed European languages as superior to African and Creole languages which were judged as ‘inferior’, ‘unready’, or ‘degenerate’ and these ideologies have undergone no break in transmission from the days of slavery until the present (DeGraff 2005: 535).

An additional type of ‘exceptionalism’ in Haiti is the belief that the Haitian school system can operate as an *exception* that defies the principles of best educational practice adopted in successful school systems, e.g. Cuba, the US, Romania, Japan, the Netherlands, Georgia, etc. In this mutation of the exceptionalist myth, the Haitian school system is supposed to be able to deliver the content of education in a minority second-language in spite of the fact that the school system is destitute and that most of its instructors are grossly under-qualified in the French second language. In societies with majority language school systems it is widely accepted that ‘education is best carried on through the mother [and father] tongue of the pupil’ (UNESCO 1953: 6). Of course, the advocates of exceptionalism know that the policy they defend only serves a minority and they refuse to implement first-language policy because it interferes with the advantages they gain from wielding that exclusive second language (Dejean 2006: 257).

Uniformitarianism holds that all languages — as parameterized instantiations of Universal Grammar — are fundamentally *equivalent* or *uniform* across the species. Uniformitarians have argued that the term ‘Creole’ only has a sociohistorical meaning, not a linguistic one, since the same universal properties are found among all languages (Greenfield 1830; Muysken 1988; Mufwene 2001; DeGraff 2003 and 2005).<sup>5</sup> The modern sciences, including linguistics, assume the fundamental equivalence of all human beings and their languages. Generative linguists

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5. One reviewer argues that the debate between uniformitarians and exceptionalists centers on the debate about the genesis of creole languages and their structural properties and not on the role of creoles in education. However, as DeGraff (2003 and 2005) shows, attitudes about the ‘degeneracy’ of creole structural properties are linked to negative attitudes about the suitability



argue that fundamental linguistic principles are universal in the species (Chomsky 1959, 1995, etc.).<sup>6</sup> Under uniformitarianism, the first-language approach used in the most successful school systems is the best one for Haiti because Haitian Creole is fully endowed linguistically and universally understood throughout Haiti. From the uniformitarian point of view, Creole can serve as an integral part of research, education, governance, socio-cultural practices, the economy, and all other functions (DeGraff 2005: 578; Dejean 2006). The next section explores Haitian educational language policy from a constitutional point of view.

### 2.3 Contemporary Haitian constitutions

In terms of contemporary Haitian law, the Constitution of 1979 classified French as a *langue d'instruction* 'language of instruction', whereas Creole was an *outil d'enseignement* 'a tool of education'. Creole was at the time constitutionally defined as a means to French but not as an end in itself (Jean-François 2006: 20). Article 5 of the current Constitution of 1987, however, recognizes Creole as the sole language that unites all Haitians. In the sentence that follows, Creole and French are both recognized as official languages of the Republic. The 1987 constitution therefore already recognizes the primacy of Creole in Haiti. Furthermore, article 32.1, a section on 'Education and Teaching', states that it is the obligation of the Haitian State to 'make schooling available to all, free of charge, and ensure that public and private sector teachers are properly trained'. Article 32.2 adds that 'The first responsibility of the State [...] is the education of the masses, which is the only way the country can be developed' (<http://pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/haiti/haiti1987.html>).

Although Articles 5 and 32 of the 1987 Constitution skirt around specifically mentioning *which* language should be at the helm of education, the document does appear to point toward the promotion of Haitian Creole. Given those constitutional articles, the current practice of French-dominance is arguably unconstitutional because the law states that *only* Creole 'unites' all Haitians and that the 'education of the masses' is the State's 'first responsibility' (*my emphases*). Creole is the language which *unites* the Haitian masses and the elite and it should be the first choice as the medium of instruction. While the 1987 Haitian law encourages the promotion of Creole, the practice of French medium of instruction continues and many Haitian school children are subject to disproportionate corporeal punishment and humiliation when they are caught speaking Creole on school grounds

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of Creole in the school system. The reviewer also points out that there are exceptionalists like Derek Bickerton who have been champions of the use of creole languages in basic education.

6. E.g. binary branching, X-bar theory, heads and phrases, Move Alpha, etc.

(DeGraff 2010, p.c.; Dejean 2010:209).<sup>7</sup> The next section examines current educational policy and practice.

### 3. Current educational policy and practice

As seen in the 1979 Constitution, Haitian Creole was admitted as a tool for teaching and as a subject of study by Presidential decree with legislative approval occurring on September 18th, 1979 (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983:70). The Bernard educational reform of 1979 was not revolutionary but it did initiate an important process with transformative potential. The ultimate goal remained the vernacularization of French but the way to it was altered. Literacy in the Creole home language was accepted as a prerequisite for the acquisition of French. At the same time, during the first four years, French would be simultaneously instructed to prepare students for the arrival of the primarily French language curriculum in year 5 (Valdman 1984:96). The method adopted was ‘transitional’ in that Creole would *temporarily* serve as the classroom medium of instruction.

Reading and writing in Creole in the 1st and 2nd years is followed by reading and writing in French in the 3rd and 4th years (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983:81). The emphasis on Creole literacy in the first four years was included so that the majority of students (54.8%) who drop out by the 6th year can at least acquire functional literacy skills and ‘a self-contained educational package’ (De Regt 1984: 128; Hadjadj 2000: 20). The Haitian government insisted that the promotion of Creole could not occur at the expense of French (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983:73–74).

Although various leaders undertook a number of Haitian Creole literacy campaigns in the 20th century, no government had attempted to reform the language policy of the school system until the late 1970s. While asserting the privilege of the elite to keep French-language schooling, Haitian governmental texts also argued that a corollary mission should be to educate ‘the immense majority of unfortunates’ who also have a right to a ‘fundamental education’ (i.e. 4 years) (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983:58, 68). The Bernard Reform of 1979–80 was a consistent attempt to modernize the Haitian educational system and to cease repeating the mechanisms of underdevelopment (Hadjadj 2000: 20–22).

The new approach for ‘formal basic school’ proposed by the Bernard Reform divides 9 years into 3 cycles: first a 4-year cycle in Creole with spoken French used in all four years; thereafter, a 2-year cycle in French where Creole is relegated to the status of a subject; and third, a 3-year cycle in French where Creole remains

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7. Note that Creole is used in some places as a medium of instruction, and its use is increasing, as Dejean (2006) notes.

a subject (Hadjadj 2000:22). The curriculum for the first four years includes 3 months of school readiness skills in Grade 1 and four subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, and environmental science (De Regt 1984:128). In terms of weekly language exposure, reading and writing skills in Creole range between 5 and 7 classroom hours in Grade 1; 7 hours and 30 minutes in Grade 2; between 3 and 5 hours in Grade 3; and 3 hours in Grade 4. Oral French receives 5 hours in Grades 1, 2, and 3; in Grade 3, written French receives between 2 hours and 30 minutes and 4 hours and 15 minutes; and in Grade 4, 2 hours and 30 minutes are dedicated to oral French and 4 hours and 15 minutes to written French. In Grade 5 and thereafter the French language is supposed to be generalized through most of the curriculum (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983: 131–133).

The goal of the new formal basic school is to better integrate Haitian students with their own culture and history through Creole while also opening perspectives on the outside world through French. Hadjadj (2000:23) praises the underlying principles of the reform for pursuing homogeneity through a common core of basic training, for having the flexibility that allows students to branch off into vocational training or return to the formal academic classes, for automatically promoting students rather than holding them back, for cost-effectiveness and democratization since the new curriculum provides a large group of students with useful knowledge, and for modernization through its embrace of student-centered pedagogical methods (Chaudenson 2006: 43).

In spite of the theoretical gains that the Bernard Reform represents, the modernized curriculum has not been properly implemented and instead a mixed variety has emerged which blends the traditional curriculum with the new one. The reasons for the mediocre results include formidable constraints imposed by the Haitian government which lacks the will, stability, continuity, resources, and the organization to properly implement the reform (De Regt 1984:130). Outside of the Ministry of Education and the *Institut Pédagogique National*, few in the Haitian government wanted to implement the changes and much time was spent from 1979 to 1986 'sabotaging the reform in a more or less open or more or less insidious way' (Hadjadj 2000: 15 citing Alexandre 1999). The inclusion of Haitian Creole was the main target of those in the government working against the reform (De Regt 1984:132). Additionally, school administrators and teachers lacked training and had difficulty with letting go of the traditional teaching style and with becoming thoroughly literate in Haitian Creole. Even ten years after the reform, 90% of the teachers could still not write Creole correctly (Dejean 1993:78). Cumbersome and stifling teacher guides were difficult to decipher (De Regt 1984:131). Other constraints included the expense and shortage of books, a reluctance in the increasingly important private educational sector, the lack of investment in the form of libraries, laboratories, support material, and the inadequacy of resources and

personnel (Hadjadj 2000: 22). Additionally, private and public schools in Haiti expect parents to purchase all school books, uniforms, and materials (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983: 127).

Efforts were made from 1991 to 1995 to take charge of the reform but the programs were not fully implemented again due to political turmoil and the lack of adequate support. The absence of a national debate, ignorance of the reform, the inertia of field agents, and the reluctance of schools and parents continue to be major impediments (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983: 55). Parents hold disparaging views of Haitian Creole because they fear that an education in that language will hinder the progress of their children in the formal economy where French dominates. They worry that Creole will be relegated to the poor while the children of wealthy families will retain French and magnify their advantages.

Chaudenson (2006: 43) argues that the reforms 'revolutionized' the Haitian school system because they represented the first elaboration of a language policy for teaching in Haiti. The decision of the Ministry of National Education to include a Haitian Creole examination at the end of the 6th and 9th year has also ensured that most schools at the very least offer courses to help prepare students for the exam (Valdman 2010: 205). French-dominant education is still common, however, in the first four years in elite public and private schools where instruction in Creole literacy is only begun in the 5th year in preparation for the Creole exam.

The refusal to universally adopt the Creole curriculum in the first four years reinforces traditional divisions between urban and rural and rich and poor, etc. (Chaudenson 2006: 45). The Bernard Reform broke from the myth that Haitians are bilingual in Creole and French; however, because the public school system is so weak, the large private school system so entrenched in the maintenance of French, and the political, economic, and social situation so catastrophic, the reforms have also contributed to an anarchic situation (Chaudenson 2006: 44–48).

Language policy and educational reform, no matter where they are undertaken, cause anxiety for parents, teachers, and students. Crucially lacking in Haiti's reform were campaigns to explain the changes prior to their implementation. Virtually no quantitative and experimental work was conducted before, during, or after the policy adjustments and this lack of attention to planning and assessment meant that the reforms took effect extemporaneously. The next section analyzes the results of current policy by providing recent data and statistics.

### 3.1 The results of Haitian language policy

In 1950 the school enrollment ratio for school-aged children in rural areas was 10% and in 1970 it was 12% (Hadjadj 2000: 16). Over the academic years of 2001–2002, 45.9% of the population between the ages of 6 and 24 attended a school or

university, with little difference based on gender. Out of 1,000 students who begin primary education, 500 complete Grade 4 and 355 continue on to secondary education (Hadjadj 2000: 12). The repetition rate was 9% in 1985 and 20% in 1997. According to Emànèl Bito, Haiti's former Minister of Education (1994–1995), 80% of primary and secondary teachers have low French proficiency and 90% of Haiti's school students struggle to understand French (Dejean 2006: 7). In 2000, 53% of public sector teachers and 92% of private sector teachers were unqualified on the basis of not graduating from a teacher training institute and not holding a teaching diploma (Hadjadj 2000: 35).

According to recent records from the Haitian government's statistics bureau, 61% of the population over the age of 10 is illiterate; the rural rate is 80.5% and the urban rate is 47.1% (Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique, <http://www.ihsi.ht>). 37.4% of the population over the age of 5 has no level of schooling; 35.2% has enrolled in primary school; 21.5% has enrolled in secondary school; and 1.1% has enrolled in university level education.<sup>8</sup> UNICEF's data separates gender: the net primary school attendance ratio from 2005 to 2009 for males was 48% and for females 52%; the net secondary school attendance ratio from 2005 to 2009 was 18% for males and 21% for females (<http://www.unicef.org>).

To illustrate Haiti's problem with promotion and graduation, Dejean (2006: 152) provides junior and senior year results from three geographic Departments from 2001 in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** 2001 Pass, Re-take, and Elimination Results for the Junior and Senior Years in Public Schools in 3 Haitian Departments

<i>A. Rhétorique</i> (Junior year)	L'Artibonite (5,679)	Northwest (1,329)	West (52,599)
Passed	7.89% (448)	11.29% (150)	17.40% (9,152)
Re-take	24.48% (1,390)	34.84% (463)	35.69% (18,775)
Eliminated	67.64 (3,841)	53.88% (716)	46.91% (24,672)
<i>B. Philosophie</i> (Senior year)	L'Artibonite (2,010)	Northwest (448)	West (21,515)
Passed	43.18% (868)	41.07% (184)	50.75% (10,918)
Re-take	42.89% (862)	51.12% (229)	39.76% (8,555)
Eliminated	13.93% (280)	7.81% (35)	9.49% (2042)

As one reviewer noted, the exams reported on above assess specific subject matters and do not directly assess language skills. However, if a student does not master

8. The bureau does not specify whether the individuals graduated or not.

the second language of instruction, the ability to pass examinations in a specific subject will be seriously diminished (Dejean 2006: 152; Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik 2010). In 2003, for example, only 21.99% of all those enrolled in school passed the *rhétorique* exams and 17.75% passed the *philosophie* exams (Dejean 2006: 152).

Some of the trends in the Haitian school system in the period 1980–2000 include the expansion of enrollment in schools at an average rate of 7.6% annually. The pattern has been mostly driven by low quality institutions, the *lekòl bòlèt* ‘lottery schools’, which operate in the private sector. Most of the growth has come in the second decade at 11% compared to the first at 3.5%. The enrollment of 642,390 in 1980–81 increased to 1,429,280 by 1996–97. Of this growth, 92% came from the private sector. Overall, the private sector held 76% of enrollments in 1996–97 compared to 57% in 1980–81. The increases appear to be going in the right direction since net enrollment was 64.6% in 1996–97 compared to 38% in 1980–81. Additionally, it also appears that the expansion of enrollment has been accompanied by an increase in the number of teachers. This growth, however, has also been shadowed by a decline in the quality of the school system (Hadjadj 2000: 17–18).

With respect to the qualifications of teachers, 11.3% of those in primary school held a professional degree in 1980–81 while 15% held one in 1996–97. One and a half percent of primary teachers had graduated from high school in 1980–81 compared to 11% in 1996–97. 74% of instructors have neither academic qualifications nor teacher training. Due to low pay and difficult working conditions, turnover is common and as a result 50% of instructors had less than 5 years of professional service in 1996–97. Another difficulty is the high number of over-aged students at all levels: 53.2% of students were 3 or more years behind in 1980–81 and 48% in 1996–97 (Hadjadj 2000: 20). Seriously over-aged students produce pedagogical and curricular chaos and lead to low internal efficiency in the Haitian school system (Locher 2010: 190). Such students do not share the same learning curve, their experiential and physical development differs greatly and negatively influences the learning experiences of younger students, and frequent grade repetition can result in being labeled as a ‘looser’ (Locher 2010: 190). Seriously over-aged students should be refused admission and enrolled in special education programs (Locher 2010: 191).

There are low retention rates in Haiti. Only 46.2% of students remain in school by the 6th grade. The drop-out rate decreases over the first four years from 18% in year one to 10% in year four since the majority language, Haitian Creole, has a more important role.<sup>9</sup> Dropout rates expand precipitously to 30% in years 5 and 6 precisely when the exoglossic language, French, takes over the curriculum

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9. Michel DeGraff (p.c., 2011) observes from his own experience in Haiti and limited survey data that those years are mostly taught in some approximation of French and often via rote-memorization of texts that often are not understood. He adds that even the official curriculum

(Hadjadj 2000:20). The main product of the Haitian school system is dropouts, not graduates (Locher 2010:186). The next section introduces efforts made toward Creole-medium education in Jamaica and Curacao.

### 3.2 Toward Creole-medium education in Jamaica and Curacao

It is instructive to explore how language policy and educational reforms are promoting the creoles of Jamaica and Curacao (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:22–27). The reforms undertaken on those Caribbean islands have aimed at redressing educational failure by incorporating the home language into the school. At first, teaching in the first language was tried in an effort to help students transition into learning in the second language. In spite of the attempts, both school systems were afflicted with ongoing dropout problems and functionally illiterate students regardless of the transitional approach they employed.

Jamaica's monoliterate transitional bilingualism was implemented in the 1970s. That approach allowed 'free talk' in Patwa but only developed literacy in Standard Jamaican English. In spite of major financial investments, Jamaica did not significantly improve its graduation rates and levels of functional literacy. In response, in 2003 the Bilingual Education Project received government permission to create experimental classes in two schools with volunteer students. The goal of the Grade 1–3 program was to produce students with *full bilingualism* and *literacy* in both Patwa and Standard Jamaican English. The planners of the Jamaican project identified various areas for the experimental schools to work on, including the sociolinguistic self-concept of students and teachers and how the additive, subtractive, or immersion language policies impact it (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:34). Shifting the diglossic habits of teachers (e.g. Patwa for discipline and Standard Jamaican English for science) into an affirming and egalitarian use of both languages in schools is a first measure (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:39). Unconscious code-switching needs to cease, languages must be kept apart, politeness should be extended in both tongues, collaboration with monolingual parents encouraged, and comparable teaching materials need to be available (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:43). Jamaica's experimental classes implemented preparatory measures such as information campaigns, training to overcome diglossic language habits, and materials development needed to ensure successful first-language education (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:22–27).<sup>10</sup>

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(which is itself written exclusively in French) suggests that the use of Creole is prescribed mostly for specific Creole language classes.

10. In 2003 the Bilingual Education Project received government permission to create *experimental* classes with *volunteer* schools and students.

Even more assertive efforts have been attempted in Curacao. The private Papiamentu primary and secondary school, Kolegio Erasmo, provides an example of a school that has operated successfully for more than 20 years and proved itself to be a worthy model for the expansion of first-language education on that island (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010: 252). The government of the Netherlands Antilles could not at first implement the 8 year Papiamentu curriculum in 1994 due to a ruling made by the highest court in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the privately run primary and secondary school, Kolegio Erasmo, established in 1987, decided to forge ahead with Papiamentu-medium education.

The use of the students' native language has positive psychological effects (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010: 252). Many students who had been abandoned by other schools were able to integrate and succeed in Kolegio Erasmo. The school's enrollment has increased to 440 students. Between 2001 and 2008, 84.1% of the students completed elementary school; since the secondary school was added, 82% of students passed in 2001, 95.3% in 2002, and 90.3% in 2003 compared to the national average of the Dutch-medium system which is between 60% and 70% (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010: 253). Kolegio Erasmo stands today as one of the only schools to offer primary and secondary education in Papiamentu. In 2003 the government of the Netherlands Antilles announced plans to include Papiamentu through the university level and used the Kolegio Erasmo as a pilot school (Devonish & Carpenter 2007: 24–25). Creolists can look to Kolegio Erasmo as a shining example of the benefits of employing Creole languages in education. The next section examines the main arguments in support of and against second-language education in Haiti.

#### 4. The status quo and options for educational reform

This section compares the arguments of the proponents of the status quo — French-dominant education in Haiti (Youssef 2002; Francis 2005) — with those of the advocates of educational reform in the direction of Creole-dominance (Dejean 2006; DeGraff 2003, 2005). Authors in favor of French-dominance plus some type of bilingualism like Youssef (2002) and Francis (2005) assert that the second language deserves prioritization because it ensures access to international communities, institutions, funds, and products. They claim that European languages like French help avoid a condition of 'isolation' that Haitian Creole education would create. They also take the position that it is 'easy' for children to acquire a second language and hence consider bilingual education to be unproblematic.

Youssef (2002: 182) states that 'monolingualism in Creole is normative for a population with little prospect of socioeconomic advancement' and that Haiti has the 'potential for sound bilingual education policies'. Youssef (2002: 183)



recognizes that a solid level of development in a child's first language is essential to avoid ending up with gaps in *both* first and second languages. Transitional bilingualism, she argues, is the best form of education for Haiti because literacy skills are more readily transferable from a first language to a second language than the other way around. Youssef (2002: 183) additionally states that 'academic success and the development of cognitive skills are better served by education policies which support maintenance of the mother tongue as long as possible'.

Youssef (2002: 185) argues that we live in 'a globalizing age' that requires 'a language of maximum communicability' and hence the people of the Caribbean, including Haitians, 'need to embrace both varieties of language, the Standard and the Creole'.<sup>11</sup> Youssef (2002: 186–187) is aware that (1) poverty, (2) political instability, (3) lack of social mobility, (4) deficits in teacher training, (5) ineffective rote-learning, and (6) inadequate facilities, among other problems, form immense barriers to learning. Nevertheless, Youssef (2002: 187–189) still claims that the acquisition of French from a Creole-base should be the goal of Haitian education. She claims that children have a 'propensity for languages' and that 'today's globalizing environment' requires bilingual and even trilingual education. If bilingualism or trilingualism is not established, she claims that Haitians will continue to be 'cut off from the world'. A parallel idea, common in former French colonies, is this statement of Madagascar's official language policy in the mid-1970s: 'It is necessary to recognize that for a long time yet, we will need this French language [as opposed to the Malagasy majority language] as a window open to the world of technical civilization' (Rambelo 1991: 46). For Youssef's (2002: 191) plan to work, she concedes that political reform, a stable and effective government, social and economic improvements, and the infusion of capital for teacher training are needed.

Francis (2005: 212–223), who draws from Youssef (2002), also argues that the 'globalization of labor markets' means that 'exclusionary 'one State — one language' educational policies' are impractical and unaffordable. Children have a 'dual language learning right' and immigration trends make pluralistic language policies 'irresistible'. Like Youssef (2002), Francis (2005: 223) argues that Haitians are best served by the transitional bilingual policy in which 'mother tongue/first language-medium' (e.g. Creole) instruction dominates in the first four years and includes the simultaneous introduction of the 'national language/second language' (e.g. French) through 'context embedded content and non-academic realms'. Gradually the students transition into French instruction in 'context-reduced academic curricular areas'. French shifts from being a *subject* into being the *medium*

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11. The use of the term 'Standard' as distinct from 'Creole' is dubious because Haitian Creole itself has 'Standard' and 'non-Standard' varieties (for example, central/western Creole is more 'standard' than northern Creole).

of instruction. For Francis (2005), teachers and communities determine the relative proportions of the second language and first language (e.g. 90% second language — 10% first language; 80% second language — 20% first language; 70% second language — 30% first language). Francis (2005:223) claims that French and Creole should be exploited as a 'bilingual asset' instead of being viewed as an 'insurmountable multilingual challenge'. According to Francis (2005:224), research on child bilingualism suggests that primary school instruction should not be restricted to *one* language, but should employ two languages in specifically determined roles and amounts.

Youssef (2002) and Francis' (2006) claim that Creole education would 'isolate' Haiti ignores the large number of nations in which 'small' languages are the instruments of primary and secondary education. Tongues like Icelandic, Danish, Georgian, Estonian, Latvian, Slovenian, etc., serve as the dominant languages in primary and secondary education and the people who speak them do not 'isolate' themselves; to the contrary, they integrate and universalize communication where it matters the most: *within* the nation (Dejean 2006:35). Youssef (2002) and Francis (2006) admit that learning French is extraordinarily difficult since books, qualified teachers, electricity, and food, among other basic necessities, are lacking. Their solution involves pumping money and teacher training into the society (Dejean 2006:119). They do not seem to understand that adequate resources are permanently lacking. The proponents of French-dominant education in Haiti focus on the notion of a language of wide communication and yet they fail to acknowledge that some 9,500,000 out of an estimated total of 10,000,000 Haitians speak only Creole. What they do not say is that 9,500,000 people remain isolated *inside* of their own nation, Haiti. Efron (1954:230) long pointed out that Haitians are more isolated by their illiteracy than they would be if they adopted a Creole school system and achieved universal Creole literacy and with it the expansion of societal knowledge.

Youssef (2002) claims that acquiring a second or third language is relatively 'easy' for children. However, children best learn languages through *constant immersion* in them in the *home* and *school*. Learning a new language is not 'easy', however, if the exposure is confined to the institution of school and if 80 percent of the teachers have substandard control of the target language. Haiti's drop-out rates confirm the difficulty of second language acquisition. Under the circumstances of poverty, undernourishment, and now earthquake recovery, the acquisition of French is one of the hardest imaginable objectives for Haitian children. The most important components of education, *ideas* and *content*, are, for most, lost because of the heavy emphasis placed on learning the second language.

Acquiring a language at home from birth onward is not at all the same as acquiring it at school from the age of 5 or 6 onward. Natural language acquisition leads to fluency whereas artificial language acquisition in schools too often

leads to partial or minimal acquisition (Dejean 2010:210). A 5-year-old English speaker in the US enjoys significant scholastic advantages because she can build knowledge at school by means of the English words she already uses at home. A Haitian Creole-speaking 5-year-old has an equal mastery of her native language; however, she is expected to master a completely different language in order to get to the actual object of education, the study of content.

The choice of a minority second language, for example, negatively impacts the amount of reading done by school students. Dejean (2006:99) estimates that US school students between the ages of 10 and 14 optimally read 100–200 pages per week. In a five year period, a US student will read approximately 25,000 pages. Most Haitian school children do not engage in even a fraction of this reading. They instead focus on memorizing the French-language curricular content found on roughly 3–15 textbook pages per week, depending on the grade level. Pupils can often sound-out French words but they cannot understand what they read (Dejean 2006:91). Even after 10 years at school, many students only achieve a limited degree of fluency in French (Chaudenson & Vernet 1983; Dejean 2006:77). From an individual cognitive point of view, it should be borne in mind that not all people are equally capable of mastering a foreign language. While one child may excel in mathematics, another may excel in art or language. Those less apt in second language acquisition should not be excluded from studying the broader content of the curriculum. Learning in a second language like French, in the context of abject poverty, is exceedingly difficult and as a result there is wide-scale staling in learning and a vast drop-out problem (Dejean 2006:14).

Haitian Creole orthography, phonology, morphology, syntax, prosody, and lexicon are significantly different from French and mutual intelligibility between the languages is negligible (Dejean 2006:47–49; 60–62). The ability to acquire a first language rapidly in infancy is propelled by the language capacity that is inborn in the human brain. Youssef (2002) and Francis (2006) assume that French can be successfully implanted into the minds of Creole-speaking school students ages 5 and up. One developmental problem with their ‘language implantation’ model is that the most active stage of the ‘critical period’ for language acquisition is between 1 and 6 years of age while school only begins at the age of 5 or 6 (Lenneberg 1967; Cook & Newson 1988; Chomsky 1995). It is only once the fundamental phase of the critical period has already unfolded (e.g. Haitian Creole first-language acquisition) that most Haitian children are for the first time exposed to an ineffective approximation of French (Dejean 2006; DeGraff 2011, p.c.). It is essential to re-emphasize here that the majority of teachers in Haiti are not able to function fluently in French. The claim of Youssef (2002) and Francis (2005) that children learn languages with ‘ease’ is unsupported and Haiti’s 200 years of educational history suggests that the acquisition of French has been *unreasonably difficult*.

The argument for first-language education is strengthened when one compares the performance of students who have been taught in their native language with that of students who have been taught in their non-native language. Vedder's (1987) testing of elementary students in Dutch and Papiamentu in Curacao and Dutch in the Netherlands provides insight into the type of language divide Haitians experience. Vedder (1987:24) points out that in Curacao learning in a second language produces debilitating problems such as a high dropout rate and grade repetition. Identical bilingual tests in speaking, listening, and story-telling in Dutch and Papiamentu were given to Curacaon children in the second and sixth grades while the Dutch test was given in the Netherlands to children in the first, second, and third grades.<sup>12</sup> Most of the Curacaon students who took the tests spoke Papiamentu at home and only became acquainted with Dutch at school. For the 'speaker test', first, second, and third graders in the Netherlands ( $n = 53$ ) averaged together scored higher at 69.4% while Curacaon second graders scored lower at 51.0% in Dutch ( $n = 90$ ) and 56.0% in Papiamentu ( $n = 95$ ). Furthermore, Curacaon sixth graders scored 70.7% in Dutch ( $n = 113$ ) and 68.5% in Papiamentu ( $n = 114$ ) whereas the average score for first, second, and third graders for Dutch in the Netherlands ( $n = 53$ ) was at the same level at 69.4% (Vedder 1987:51). In other words, first, second, and third graders in the Netherlands averaged together score in the same range as sixth graders in Curacao. The same pattern repeats itself for Vedder's (1987:51–2) 'listener test' and 'story test' which suggests that second language-dominant education retards achievement in *both* the first language, Papiamentu, and the second language, Dutch.

An experiment in Haiti and France equivalent to Vedder's (1987) study would doubtlessly show similar or more dramatic differences due to the deeper under-funding and poverty in Haiti. Although no such comparative work exists, Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik (2010) provide revealing results from an Early Grade Reading Assessment Study that was given to 2,515 students in 84 schools. The study, which was conducted exclusively in Haiti for the World Bank, shows 'alarmingly inadequate' levels of reading, writing, and oral comprehension in French and Creole in years 1–3. Third year students on average could only read 23 French words per minute and they could only correctly answer 20% of all questions asked, suggesting very low abilities in decoding meaning (Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik 2010: 30). The percentage of students unable to read a single French word was 76% for year 1, 49% for year 2, and 29% for year 3; for Haitian Creole the percentage was 63% for year 1, 48% for year 2, and 23% for year 3 (Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik 2010: 1). For written comprehension in year 3, 10% of the questions in French

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12. Since the data from Curacao and the Netherlands differ in terms of grade level, the results can only be taken to indicate broad trends.

were answered correctly while 17% were correct in Creole. On the oral comprehension test, 20% of the questions in French and 51% of the questions in Creole were answered correctly.

The poor performance of the students is disturbing because without good early performance in reading, students lack the skills to enrich their vocabulary and they cannot decode unknown words they encounter. Students cannot easily interpret texts, make inferences, draw conclusions, and discover new information. The low level of competence also 'dramatically impacts the acquisition of other scholastic competencies, since in order to grasp a lesson or discussion on mathematics, it is necessary to be able to read correctly' (Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik 2010: 30–31). Students with weakness in reading fall behind while a small number of strong readers thrust ahead; the use of a second language accentuates inequalities. In spite of the fact that the students in the schools financed by the World Bank showed no improvement over the period of funding, and in spite of the fact that their report provides ample evidence that French second-language medium of instruction is at the root of performance problems, Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik (2010: 31) do not specifically mention the importance of overhauling language policy in Haiti. Instead, they recommend the improvement of the instruction of reading and writing in French and Creole since all basic competencies depend upon the students' ability to decode text. Like Youssef (2002) and Francis (2005), they also recommend well trained teachers and better manuals. Vedder (1987) and Messaoud-Galusi & Miksik's (2010) respective studies plainly illustrate how instruction in the Dutch or French second language has a negative impact on the acquisition of reading, writing, and comprehension in both the second language *and* the first language, Papiamentu or Creole. The next section turns to some other non-academic benefits of Haitian Creole-dominant education.

#### 4.1 Other arguments in support of a Haitian Creole-dominant education

A common argument made for the maintenance of French is the idea that Haiti's economy and workforce cannot absorb the larger number of educated citizens that Creole education would produce. Economic stagnation and the limited number of job openings in commerce and administration reinforce the use of French as a means of narrowing competitive pressures (Fleischmann 1984: 111). The French educational language policy is a strategy for keeping the masses at their low station and for keeping job opportunities within elite families (Valdman 1984: 82).

There are several reasons to think, however, that the maintenance of French in fact acts as a handicap on Haiti's economy. To begin with, economic development is negatively influenced by low educational participation (De Regt 1984: 121). An increase of 20% in literacy rates, for example, correlates with a GDP growth of

0.5% (Hicks 1980). At present, people who could contribute to economic development are denied access to the knowledge and skills they need.

If Creole becomes the dominant language of instruction, the linguistic advantage of the urban upper class will diminish and more upward mobility among the poor will emerge (Fleischmann 1984: 114). Haiti has a mass of uneducated people and 'sufficient' highly qualified professionals (Fleischmann 1984: 114). The country's middle class is exceedingly small, and education in Haitian Creole will accelerate its growth. The growth of the middle class will benefit the upper classes by creating more consumers, a larger pool of talent for top positions, and more social stability.<sup>13</sup> Meritocracy can gradually replace nepotism and oligarchy in Haiti. More participation in the educational system will improve health and life expectancy and it will promote economic growth (De Regt 1984: 121).

Societies that are linguistically fragmented are almost always poor while linguistically congruent societies tend to have healthier economies (Coulmas 1992: 25, 31). Fragmentation means that the official language of the society is not a common majority language but a minority language. The linguistic welfare of a society is a reflection of the distance between the native speakers and the set of official languages: Haitian Creole and French are mutually unintelligible, the distance between them is significant, and there is linguistic malaise not welfare (Ginsburgh & Weber 2008). The deprivation of linguistic rights creates disenfranchisement for citizens since they cannot communicate in the language of their choice.

The emergence of the rational State is closely linked to the establishment of a standard common language (Coulmas 1992: 31). A standard common language ensures ease of communication, reduced cost of translation, increased trade, improved economic performance, and efficiency in administration (Ginsburgh & Weber 2008). Trade in the bureaucratic State becomes possible and calculable when privileged access to language is eliminated. A common language is an economic asset because all members of society can be drawn into the economic process and goods and services can be related together (Coulmas 1992: 32–33). Linguistic homogeneity means that all referential uses of language denote one coherent world. Societies and economies with a common language meet all the communicative needs of their members, have a closely woven social cloth, facilitate social mobility,

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13. An alternative hypothesis is provided by a reviewer: the increased educational levels necessary for creating a middle class can also bring discontent with the status quo, leading eventually to unrest — unless there is significant political and economic change. There does seem to be an impasse in Haiti: the elites want the status quo, which implies the neglect of educational advancement, which in turn implies that social upheaval is required for social, economic, and educational progress. I hypothesize, however, that the adoption of Creole in schools and the State will represent a dramatically *positive* transformation that will not lead to upheaval but to social coherence.

and have broad political participation (Coulmas 1992:36). Linguistic homogeneity supports the market because the exchange of goods and currency can only take place by means of communication and agreement (Coulmas 1992:40). Trade puts people from different walks of life and origins into contact and all parties can make use of a common reference system in order to understand what is said and intended. Money and language function as reference systems since they establish 'a shared normative order' (Coulmas 1992:41). For the vast majority of Haitians, there's already *linguistic homogeneity*, a *common language*, and a *common reference system*. What is missing is a 'common language' that encompasses the State, formal-education, and the everyday lives of the majority of Haitians. Only Haitian Creole can play that role.

Only a small cohort of language professionals — and not an entire society — are needed to transfer knowledge amassed in foreign languages. Mazrui (2002:273) points out that dependency on 'Western'<sup>14</sup> culture in Africa is reflected in the emphasis placed on 'Western' (1) language, (2) culture, (3) science, and (4) technology. African education has wrongly emphasized all four components when in fact 'Western' (1) language and (2) culture are not crucial for development while (3) 'Western' science and (4) technology are (Mazrui 2002:273). Japan provides an example of 'selective Westernization' which aims to minimize 'Western' linguistic and cultural intrusion. Japan places emphasis on the transfer and acquisition of 'Western' science and technology through a professional class of translators and experts. The motto, 'Western technique, Japanese spirit', captures the fact that the knowledge and techniques developed and possessed by specific ethno-linguistic groups can be obtained without requiring that the society at large acquire the languages spoken by those foreign groups (Coulmas 1992:203–223).

Creole instruction can greatly facilitate the conveyance of knowledge that is *regionally relevant* since languages develop over generations in a reciprocal relationship between people and their environment (Dei et al 2006:244). Creole education, for example, can take a lead in Haiti's struggle against environmental destruction. Séverin's publications in Creole on plant and tree science (2000), Haiti's bamboo industry (2005), and ornithology (2007) could already give students in

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14. Here, following Michel DeGraff's (p.c.) observations, I put the word 'Western' in quotes since the notion cannot be rigorously defined, and be taken to exist without the contributions of 'Eastern' scientists. Another reviewer pointed out that without strong qualification the term 'Western' may fall into the trap of Euro-centrism. Current science and technology has been co-produced by all world peoples in a trajectory that includes all of human history, running up to Industrialization, in which 'Western' peoples were the leaders. US science and technology, which has been a leader for perhaps 150 years owes much to unheralded nonwhites in the US. The reviewer adds that it is also important to observe that the US has a diminishing grip on it at the current time.

secondary schools relevant information about plants and trees, soil science, biology, ecology, biodiversity, economics, and medicine, among other topics. By means of photographs, illustrations, and lucid Creole texts, these books present knowledge about the Haitian environment in the language Haitians understand. Institutional second languages are poorly understood and bring vocabulary, expressions, and environmental nomenclatures that are alien and lack relevance with regard to the regional reality onto which they are superimposed (Dei et al 2006: 244).

A final argument can be made on the basis of Haitian Creole linguistic cohesion in Haiti. The leading school systems in the world assume that the normal path of learning is by means of the best known language; however, the selection of one such language in many States (like Nigeria, for example, with its 521 languages) is complicated by the existence of a multitude of first languages, ethnolinguistic rivalries, and the absence of a clear majority language. Haiti, however, is essentially monolingual in Haitian Creole and hence the language policy solution is straightforward. The next section examines the guiding principles of bilingual education in order to identify the best approach for Haiti.

## 5. Prerequisites for bilingual education in Haiti

I have argued that Haitian Creole should dominate Haitian education. Creole-dominance does not mean the elimination of a second language, however. This section investigates the varieties of bilingual education and identifies guiding principles in order to show what elements are required for success. I will point out that Haitian schools remain far from meeting the recommendations of the guiding principles.

As I mentioned earlier, the Haitian Ministry of Education introduced 'transitional' bilingual education in 1979, although its implementation has been piecemeal. Several authors argue for a bilingual approach with French at 70% and Haitian Creole at 30% of the curriculum (Francis 2005). I suggest, however, that the ratios need to be *reversed* with Haitian Creole-dominance at 70% and French, English, or Spanish serving as a second language in 30% of class hours. Many Haitians deem this to be a radical position and therefore a bilingual model entailing 50% Haitian Creole and 50% French is also considered, and rejected, further ahead.

As a prerequisite to further discussion, presented first are recognized types of bilingual education (Baker 2001: 192–201). Bear in mind that the first three varieties of bilingual education pertain to *minority* language populations whereas Haitian Creole is spoken by a *majority* language population. (1) 'Transitional bilingual education' attempts to shift the child from the minority home language



of immigrants to the dominant majority language. This approach is common in many schools in the United States which try to rapidly transition speakers of other languages into English-only instruction. Haiti's approach is often called 'transitional', too, however, there is no comparability because the Haitian school system attempts to transition the *majority* into a *minority* language. (2) 'Maintenance bilingual education' tries to grow the minority language in the child, enhance her sense of cultural identity, and affirm the rights of an ethnic minority group in a nation (Baker 2001: 192). A related variety, (3) 'developmental maintenance', aims to produce proficiency and literacy in the home language at a level equal to the dominant language (Baker 2001: 193).

Three models are identified for students who speak a majority language (Baker 2001: 194). The (4) 'immersion' model emphasizes the second language, sometimes entirely, and other times at 50%, in which case it is 'additive bilingual'. The (5) 'two-way dual language' approach involves giving the minority and majority languages equal emphasis in a classroom in which equal numbers of minority and majority language speakers are enrolled (such as Spanish and English-speakers in US schools). Finally, the (6) 'mainstream bilingual' approach involves placing emphasis on one majority language and adding a 'drip-fed' second-language in short 30 minute daily classes.

The current Haitian curriculum is theoretically 'subtractive' and 'immersion' bilingualism since the first language, Haitian Creole, is subtracted from the curriculum in the fifth year, remaining only as a lone content class, while students are expected to 'immerse' themselves in French (Austin 2000: 18).<sup>15</sup> Due to the already enumerated deficits, Haiti's 'subtractive' and 'immersion' model has produced several generations of scholastic failure because teachers and the society at large lack the skills and resources to properly immerse students. The 'two-way dual language' option (5) is also unfeasible in Haiti since there are almost no classrooms where equal numbers of students speak French and Creole at home.<sup>16</sup> The 'mainstream bilingual education' approach of (6), with some adjustment, is a reasonable method

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15. The fact that the 'added' language, French, is only acquired by 5% of students and that the majority of the population fails to gain full literacy in *either* language sadly suggests that Haitian education is 'doubly subtractive'. Transitional programs in general do not perform as well as full and maintained bilingualism programs (Devonish & Carpenter 2007: 37). Of the 32 educational systems around the world that employ transitional bilingualism, only Singapore has achieved high levels of literacy in a foreign language (Bryan & Mitchell 1999: 23).

16. Smit (2008: 296–297), writing about wealthy European bilingual education, warns that it requires 'extra effort' from teachers and students. It can have 'aggravating effects' on less successful students and, in order to succeed, both teachers and students must be 'proficient enough'. Clearly Haitian teachers and students cannot put forth extra effort under the hardships in which they live. Since both the teachers and students fail to attain adequate proficiency, it is also accurate to

for Haiti. This approach, which entails emphasizing the first language of the majority and adding a second language, is one of the most common approaches to bilingual education in successful school systems.

Baker (2001) amasses a lot of evidence that some form of intensive bilingual education is beneficial; however, his focus on wealthy countries cannot be realistically generalized to poor ones like Haiti. ‘Drip-fed’ second-language instruction in mainstream Anglophone-dominant education treats the second language like ‘a subject in the curriculum similar to History, Science, Information Technology, and Mathematics’. Baker (2001:200) laments that in the US and the UK ‘relatively few second language learners blossom’ if they are only exposed to 30 minutes daily from the ages of 5–12.<sup>17</sup> As an advocate of bilingual education in the Northern hemisphere, Baker (2001) can take as a given the underlying advantage that the US or UK Anglophone majority enjoys by getting an education in the home language.

If, as Baker (2001:200) argues, the ratio of 30 minutes per day is inadequate for the formation of ‘functionally bilingual children’, this should be remedied, but not at the expense of producing elementary and high school graduates. To overcome this problem, one might propose expanding exposure from one thirty minute module to *two* or *three* such modules (i.e. 60–90 minutes). Such an approach may remedy underexposure but leave the primacy of the first language intact. In the 70% Haitian Creole and 30% French model, three 30 minute French-language modules daily should have a communicative and meaningful orientation. French courses in Mathematics, for example, could also mirror general curriculum courses in Haitian Creole in order to review and reinforce skills mastered through Creole first. Mathematics and other core courses, however, should never be taught in the second-language alone.

The will to preserve French in at least 50% of instruction is expressed by some influential Haitian groups including one of the nation’s first organizations to promote Creole, the *Sosyete Koukouy* ‘Lightning Bug Society’, which recently published this statement: ‘We always said, and we repeat, that the French language is ours in Haiti, it is a heritage that we should not lose. We did not come out in favor of Creole in order to lose French. French and Creole, those two fully matured languages, are supposed to advance arm-in-arm’ (Mapou 2009:32) [*author’s*

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say that the ‘aggravating effects’ impact the majority of students and not a minority as the case may be in European bilingual education.

17. A reviewer noted that the students in his US public school learned to speak and read a second-language or a third-language proficiently or fluently in daily classes of one 50 minute period. The classes had poor, working class, and middle-class students plus the teacher was excellent. It is important to emphasize that learning a second language *can be done* under the right circumstances.

*translation*]. In a country where only 5% of the population masters French, the statement that 'the French language is ours in Haiti' is a blatant illustration of elite ideology in which the minority bilingual community is falsely taken to represent the entire nation.

The *Sosyete Koukouy* advocates the approach that falls under the category of 'additive bilingualism' since the second language is added to the first language. The goal of additive bilingualism is for students to fully acquire *two whole* languages rather than *two half languages* (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:31). The goals of full bilingualism are to: (i) show linguistic and related self-concept in both languages; (ii) to demonstrate literacy skills in both languages; and (iii) to manifest control of the material taught in content subjects (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:32). The 50/50 approach, when it is successfully implemented, can produce reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in both languages, plus improved mastery of content areas, a better grasp of grammar and metalinguistic notions (Devonish & Carpenter 2007:38).

As attractive as additive bilingualism appears on paper, since knowledge of French is woefully inadequate among teachers and economic conditions bleak, this goal is also unfeasible in Haiti. The next paragraphs examine widely accepted guiding principles for the successful implementation of fully bilingual education in order to show that additive bilingual education is NOT a realistic option in Haiti. Successful bilingual programs promote academic achievement by focusing their attention on (1) assessment and accountability, (2) curriculum, (3) instructional practices, (4) staff quality and professional development, (5) program structure, (6) family and community involvement, and (7) support and resources (Lindholm-Leary 2007:5).

*First*, dual-language programs need to have multiple measures in both languages on a yearly basis in order to assess learning. The same items need to be tested in both languages in order to attain valid and reliable assessments (Solano-Flores & Trumbull 2003). Assessment has to follow the progress of a variety of groups in the program over time by using disaggregated data in order to solve problems in the curriculum, testing, and instructional alignment (Lindholm-Leary 2007:8). Disaggregated data is valuable because it provides information about individuals and particular factors such as a person's age, sex, etc. Assessment must be aligned with the vision and goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, academic achievement, and multicultural competence (Lindholm-Leary 2007:9).

*Second*, the curriculum should be aligned with standards and assessment. The curriculum should be challenging and not remedial (Lindholm-Leary 2007:10). Texts in both languages need to be developed across the curriculum (Doherty et al. 2003). Additionally, bilingual facing-page books in multiple genres and technological support are also needed (Lindholm-Leary 2007:10).

*Third*, instructional practices need to incorporate a variety of teaching techniques to enable different learning styles (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 12). Positive interactions between students and teachers in both languages are important (Doherty et al. 2003). Rather than the teacher-centered transmission model of instruction, teachers need to participate in dialogue and facilitate instruction. Cooperative and interdependent learning encourages the development of higher level cognitive skills rather than just factual recall (Doherty et al. 2003). Good instruction also requires adjusting the input to the comprehension level of the learner by making it interesting and relevant, providing it in sufficient quantity, and ensuring that it is challenging (Lindholm-Leary 2001). Language instruction needs to be slower, expanded, simplified, repetitive, and highly contextualized (Krashen 1981; Long 1981). Communication should give ‘scaffolding’ or ‘shelter’ by giving the context, motivation, and foundation of the new information (Echevarria et al 2003). Examples of scaffolding include visual aids, modeling, and negotiating meaning with students, linking new to prior knowledge, giving students the chance to act as mediators, providing alternative assessment (like portfolios), and using diverse presentation strategies (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 14). Structured and unstructured opportunities are needed for students to develop fluency in oral production. Lesson delivery needs to be monolingual to promote adequate language development and teachers should not translate for students (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 15).

*Fourth*, successful bilingual programs have instructors with the appropriate teaching certification and knowledge of the subject matter, curriculum and technology, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The instructors need to be credentialed bilingual teachers and have knowledge of bilingual education and second language acquisition. In addition, they should have native or near-native skills in the language(s) of instruction. Tools for professional development should be available to instructors. Materials, resources, and training are necessary to encourage teachers to acquire skills they may lack. Teachers should be mentored by trainers and partnerships with universities should be encouraged. Teacher study groups, retreats, and teaching evaluations by colleagues are important for teachers to receive feedback and to improve (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 21–22).

*Fifth*, program structures that encourage bilingual education start with a commitment and a focus on the goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism. Programs must be safe, orderly, and welcoming. All students should receive additive bilingual instruction. The program needs to have a central administration with a dedication to oversight, accountability, and planning. Planning includes determining the proper scope, sequence, and alignment with standards that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 34).

*Sixth*, family and community involvement supports bilingual education by including a range of activities for the home and school. The parents and community

feel welcome when they encounter bilingual staff and see announcements and signs in both languages. Parent training in dual language education and theory should be provided to show how they can advocate and support biliteracy (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 37).

*Seventh*, bilingual education requires networks of support and resources. Support is needed from the community, the school board, and the district. Resources have to be allocated fairly. The program has to be viewed as an enriching and permanent part of the school. Administrators and teachers need to ensure that equal access and resources are given to both languages in the program (Lindholm-Leary 2007: 39).

The guiding principles of the fully bilingual approach discussed in Lindholm-Leary (2007) are outstanding; however, as anyone who has visited Haitian schools knows, they describe elements which are largely missing. Underlying problems cast doubt on the ability of the Haitian government to implement either fully bilingual or second language-dominant instruction. As I have argued, assessment measures are inadequate, instructional practices are off-target, teaching certification is absent among a majority of instructors, there is no central administration with a dedication to oversight, accountability, and planning, Creole-speaking parents and the community do not feel welcomed in schools, and missing are networks of support and resources. These problems and others suggest that second language-dominant or fully bilingual education will simply maintain the status quo wherein the majority drops out of school prematurely. Majoritarian Haitian Creole first-language education is the best policy to improve educational outcomes in Haiti. The next section addresses instrumentalization — a key component in the strategy for the empowerment of Haitian Creole.

## 6. The processes of Haitian Creole instrumentalization

The rise of the majority first-language and the relegation of the minority second language are shifts which often span centuries. For example, the earliest French texts, the *Strasbourg Oaths*, date from the 9th century but the French language only began replacing Latin as a medium of instruction in 16th century France (Lodge 1993). The Korean language, for its part, already had an efficient spelling system by the mid-15th century but it only replaced the official Chinese script in 1894 (Sohn 1999: 122). Language shift depends upon the existence of an efficient orthography, an expanded lexicon, a respectable body of writings, and a change in attitudes and ideologies. Normalization occurs when a subordinate language is promoted to serve as the national vehicular language and when it takes on referential functions used to transmit written cultural heritage (Valdman 1988: 69–78).

Some claim that Haitian Creole orthography lacks uniformity. In the history of its orthography, one camp has argued that Creole spelling should follow French spelling in order to function as a bridge to the latter while another camp used linguistic evidence to show that Creole deserves its own logical spelling (Schieffelin & Doucet 1998). The orthography of Sylvain (1903 [1929]) tends to imitate French patterns, Pressoir (1947) moved to the middle ground, while McConnell & Swann (1945) and the ultimately official IPN system eliminate most French patterns. The new system, named IPN after the *Institut Pédagogique National*, became official in 1979; it is an autonomous spelling system that represents sounds much more consistently than English or French, for example.

Some have claimed that the shift between *Bib-la* (1985) and *Bib la* (1999) illustrates disunity. However, the difference between the Faublas-Pressoir *Bib-la* (1985) and IPN *Bib la* (1999) reflects progress since the entire contents of the 1999 edition now adhere perfectly to the IPN. Furthermore, the majority of major post-1979 Creole literary or scientific publications employ the official orthography which shows that its adoption has been accepted and generalized. There is a fully adequate Creole orthography, so concerns about the availability or adequacy of the spelling system are baseless.

Publishing and the formation of a corpus in a subordinate language are the main expressions of instrumentalization. The expansion of the lexicon also occurs as authors borrow or coin terms in order to write about new domains. A respectable corpus of writings emerges and attitudes begin to change. At the national level, publishing and reading in the majority language need to rival and surpass publishing and reading in the minority language (Lodge 1993).

Haitian Creole is the most highly standardized and instrumentalized of Creole languages and many important books have already been published in it (Valdman 2010: 181). In the 1980s, Haitian Creole was already considered to be adequately standardized and instrumentalized for instructional and referential functions (Chaudenson 1983: 39). Recent decades have been even more fruitful for Haitian Creole publishing. Already numerous Haitian Creole works could support significant parts of a Haitian Creole curriculum (Trouillot-Lévy 2010: 224–5). The table below provides a sample of some of the more important publications that have appeared in recent years:

**Table 2.** Major Haitian Creole works that are appropriate for a Haitian Creole secondary or tertiary educational curriculum organized into genres and areas:

1. Linguistics	Dejean (1995), <i>Ann etidye lang nou an</i> 'Let's study our language'; Dejean (2006), <i>Yon lekòl tèt anba nan yon peyi tèt anba</i> 'An upside down school in an upside down country'.
2. Agronomy:	Séverin (2000), <i>Plant ak pyebwa tè peyi d Ayiti</i> 'Plants and trees of the Haitian Soil'; Séverin (2005), <i>Chèche grenn banbou</i> 'Seek bamboo seeds'.
3. History/Political Science:	Trouillot (1977), <i>Ti difé boulé sou istoua Ayiti</i> 'A little discussion on the history of Haiti'; Théronier (1999), <i>Dantan komin Koto ak lejann li yo</i> 'Ancestors of the Coteaux district and its legends'; Casimir (2000), <i>Ayiti Toma/Haïti Chérie</i> 'Beloved Haiti'; Casimir (2004), <i>Pa bliye 1804</i> 'Don't forget 1804'.
4. Religious Studies:	Beauvoir & Dominique (2003), <i>Savalou E</i> 'Oh Savalou'; Beauvoir (2008a), <i>Lapriyè Ginen</i> 'Ginen prayer'; and Beauvoir (2008b), <i>Le Grand recueil sacré ou répertoire des chansons du Vodou haïtien</i> 'The Great sacred collection or repertory of Haitian Vodou songs'; Jil and Jil (2009), <i>Sèvis Ginen</i> 'Service for the Ginen'; Hebblethwaite et al (2012), <i>Vodou songs in Haitian Creole and English</i> .
5. Fiction:	Frankétienne (1976 [2002]), <i>Dezafi</i> 'Cock-fight'; Paultre (1975–1976 [2001]), <i>Tonton Liben</i> 'Uncle Liben'; and Morrisseau-Leroy (2001), <i>Kont kreyòl</i> 'Creole tales'.
6. Poetry:	Morrisseau-Leroy (1990), <i>Djakout 1, 2, 3</i> , 'Knapsack 1, 2, 3'.
7. Literary Criticism:	Laroche (2000), <i>Teke</i> 'Tapping'; Laroche (2004), <i>Prensip Marasa</i> 'Twin principles'.
8. Theater:	Frankétienne (1979 [2002]), <i>Pèlen Tèt</i> 'Head noose'; Jan Mapou (1996), <i>DPM Kanntè</i> 'DPM Raft'.
9. Translations:	<i>Bib la</i> 'The Bible' (Anonymous 1985, 1999); Dejean & Dejean (1987), <i>Konstitisyon Repiblik peyi d Ayiti</i> 'The Constitution of the Republic of Haiti'; Desmarattes (2001 [1983]), <i>Mouche Defas</i> 'Tartuffe'; Desmarattes (2004), <i>Lekòl medam yo</i> 'The School of women'; Jisten (1999), <i>Kozman</i> 'The Prince'; Burns et al (2000), <i>Kote fanm pa jwenn doktè</i> 'Where women find no doctor'; Camus; Régis (2008), <i>Etranje!</i> 'The Stranger'; Rimbaud; Hebblethwaite and Pierre (2010), <i>Yon sezon matchyavèl</i> 'Une saison en enfer'.
10. Folklore:	Freeman (2002), <i>Fòklòl peyi Dayiti</i> , vol. 1 & 2 'Folklore from Haiti'.
11. Wisdom Literature and	Turnbull (2005), <i>Hidden meanings</i> ; Jeanty & Brown (1996), <i>Paròl granmoun</i> 'Words of the elders'.
12. Autobiography	Ogis (1998), <i>Mwen rele Kanis Ogis</i> 'My name is Kanis Ogis'.
13. Ornithology	Séverin (2007), <i>Ti zwazo kote w a prale</i> 'Little bird where will you go?'

14. Health and sanitation      Dennery (2008), *Observation et hygiène* 'Observation and hygiene' [a bilingual textbook].
15. Reference works      Ross & Freeman (2002), *Konkòdans Bib la* 'The Bible concordance'.
16. Pedagogical works<sup>18</sup>      Féquière Vilsaint, <http://www.educavision.com>; Gérard Marie Tardieu, <http://lactionsociale.com/catalogue.php>; Jocelyne Trouillot-Lévy, <http://www.editionsuniversitecaraibe.com/>; Frantz Voltaire, [http://www.cidihca.com/publications\\_vente.php](http://www.cidihca.com/publications_vente.php); Jan Mapou, <http://www.librerimapou.com>; Prophète Joseph, <http://www.editionskonbit.com/>; Emmanuel Védrine, <http://www.potomitan.info/vedrine/vedrine1.php>; Librairie Henri Deschamps; Orésjözèf Publications, <http://www.nysedregents.org>; MIT calculus lecture, <http://haiti.mit.edu/2010/10/13/mit-ocw-videos-with-creole/>; MIT earthquake lecture, <http://haiti.mit.edu/2010/10/22/blossoms-video-with-kreyol/>
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The list above includes some of the better books published. I have learned much about Haiti and the world from them and their incorporation into a Haitian Creole-dominant curriculum will have a positive impact on educational experiences and the attainment of knowledge. As one reviewer has pointed out, major gaps exist in important areas: 1. Mathematics, 2. Biology, 3. Chemistry, 4. Physics, 5. Medicine, 6. Engineering, 7. Pharmacy, 8. Computer Science, 9. Law, 10. Dentistry, 11. Nursing, 12. Veterinary Medicine, 13. Business, 14. Economics, 15. Journalism, etc., among other disciplines. Authors and scholars who write Haitian Creole have more work to do in order to fill these gaps. At the same time, it is clear that Haitian Creole already has at its disposal a variety of valuable books which could already be used in various parts of Haiti's curriculum. The next section examines international data to explore how language policy intertwines with literacy and GDP per capita.

## 7. Arguments in favor of first-language education from around the world

In this section I compare Haiti with other nations in order to place the country in an international context. My original hypothesis was that the cohort of nations that employ a majority first language in schools should rank high in literacy and wealth whereas the cohort of nations which employ a minority second language should rank low in literacy and wealth. A large-scale study of quantitative data in literacy and Gross Domestic Product per capita [GDP PC] from around the world, I speculated, could provide evidence for the advantages of first-language

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18. I am indebted to Michel DeGraff for providing this list.



education. I will argue that there *is* strong evidence that first-language education dramatically improves literacy. At the same time, there is less evidence that first-language education and mass literacy ensure a GDP in the upper 50% of nations. Indeed, complex historical, societal, demographic, and resource factors can influence economic productivity in ways that obscure the influence of language policy.

Table 3 below shows the nations with the highest rankings in literacy. The order given in the first column is based upon the percentage of literate individuals in the society. Underneath the literacy ranking in the same column, the ranking of the nation in terms of GDP per capita out of 194 nations is provided. The second column names the nation's majority language and the third column gives the number of minority language(s) spoken. The use of a majority language in schools is coded with a check '☑' and the use of a minority language is coded with a cross '☒'. All of the top tier nations, with the exception of Barbados, Guyana, and Luxembourg, which I will return to, employ a majority language.<sup>19</sup> The top 18 rankings for literacy were taken into consideration.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 3.** Nations in the top tier of literacy (2007)

NATION & PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY IN THE POPULATION & GDP PER CAPITA RANKING	THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IS:	
	THE MAJORITY LANGUAGE	A MINORITY LANGUAGE
1. Georgia 100.0 [GDP PC # 117/194]	☑ Georgian [3.9/4.6 million]	[12 languages]
2. Cuba 99.8 [GDP PC # 86/194]	☑ Spanish [10/11.3 million].	[2+ languages]
2. Estonia 99.8 [GDP PC # 45/194]	☑ Estonian [1/1.3 million]	[14 languages]
2. Poland 99.8 [GDP PC # 56/194]	☑ Polish [36.5/38.6 million]	[11 languages]
5. Barbados 99.7 [GDP PC # 52/194]	Bajan [230,000]	☒ English [13,000] [2 languages]

19. The above data has been synthesized from Grimes (2000), [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com), and [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org). The [wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) list originates from United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, released in 2007. The data on GDP per capita comes from the CIA's *World Factbook* (2009), also available at [wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

20. There are sometimes several nations ranked in one position therefore the top tier actually consists of 31 nations in all. To save space, I have placed the nations between ranking 8 and 18 in the next footnote.

5. Latvia 99.7 [GDP PC # 55/194]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Latvian [1.3/2.3 million]	[5 languages]
5. Slovenia 99.7 [GDP PC # 35/194]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slovenian [1.7/1.9 million] + Italian + Hungarian	[4 languages]
8. Belarus 99.6 [GDP PC # 73/194]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Belarusian [6.7/10.3 million] + Russian [1.1 million]	[8 languages]
8. Lithuania 99.6 [GDP PC # 54/194]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian [2.9/3.6 million]	[4 languages]
See the footnote below for the intervening nations <sup>21</sup>		
18. Luxembourg 99.0 [GDP PC # 3/194]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> + Luxembourgish [300,000/462,000]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> French [13/462,000] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> German [10 thousand]

21. All these top ranked nations, except Guyana, employ a majority language in their school systems: 10. Kazakhstan 99.5 =  Kazakh [5.2 /15 million] + Russian [6.2 million]; [7+ languages]; [GDP PC #66/194]. 10. Tajikistan 99.5 = Tajiki [3.3/6.9 million ]; [9 languages]; [GDP PC #164/194]. 12. Armenia 99.4 =  Armenian [2.9/3.3 million]; [6 languages]; [GDP PC #98/194]. 12. Hungary 99.4 =  Hungarian [10.0/10.2 million]; [12 languages]; [GDP PC #47/194]. 12. Russia 99.4 =  Russian [117/143 million]; [60 languages]; [GDP PC #57/194]. 12. Ukraine 99.4 =  Ukrainian [31/47 million]; [10 languages]; [GDP PC #99/194]. 12. Uzbekistan 99.4 =  Uzbek [16.5/26.4 million]; [7+ languages]; [GDP PC #148/194]. 17. Moldova 99.1 =  Moldovan [2.6/4.4 million]; [5 languages]; [GDP PC #135/194]. 18. Australia 99.0 =  English [15.6/19.9 million]; [273 languages]; [GDP PC #16/194]. 18. Austria 99.0 =  German [7.5/8.1 million] + Hungarian, Slovenian, and Croatian; [9 languages]; [GDP PC #14/194]. 18. Belgium 99.0 =  Dutch [4.6 million /10.3] (majority in north),  French [4 million] (majority in south),  German [150 thousand]; [9 languages]; [GDP PC #15/194]. 18. Canada 99.0 =  English [17.1/32.5 million],  French [6.1 million]; [85 languages]; [GDP PC #18/194]. 18. Czech Republic 99.0 =  Czech [10.0/10.2 million]; [9 languages]; [GDP PC #37/194]. 18. Denmark 99.0 =  Danish [5.0/5.4 million]; [8 languages]; [GDP PC #7/194]. 18. Finland 99.0 =  Finnish [4.7/5.2 million]; [13 languages]; [GDP PC #12/194]. 18. France 99.0 =  French [51/60 million]; [29 languages]; [GDP PC #19/194]. 18. Germany 99.0 =  German [75/82 million]; [27 languages]; [GDP PC #20/194]. 18. Guyana 99.0 =  English/Guyanese English Creole [650/705 thousand]; [16 languages]; [GDP PC #133/194]. 18. Iceland 99.0 =  Icelandic [230/293 thousand]; [3 languages]; [GDP PC #9/194]. 18. Ireland 99.0 =  English [2.6/3.9 million] + Irish [260 thousand]; [5 languages]; [GDP PC #5/194]. 18. Japan 99.0 =  Japanese [121/127 million]; [15 languages]; [GDP PC #25/194]. 18. Republic of Korea 99.0 =  Korean [42/48 million]; [2 languages]; [GDP PC #40/194].

Now consider the rankings from the point of view of the bottom tier of literacy, starting with Haiti at #154.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 4.** Nations in the bottom tier of literacy (2007)

NATION & PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY IN THE POPULATION	THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IS:	
	THE MAJORITY LANGUAGE	A MINORITY LANGUAGE
154. Haiti 54.8 [GDP PC # 168/194]	[Haitian Creole]	☒ French [400 thousand/8.5 million]
155. Yemen 54.1 [GDP PC # 142/194]	[8 languages]	☒ Standard Arabic [NA]
156. Togo 53.2 [GDP PC # 181/194]	[38 languages]	☒ French
157. Morocco 52.3 [GDP PC # 125/194]	[12 languages]	☒ Standard Arabic [NA]
158. Mauritania 51.2 [GDP PC # 152/194]	☒ Hassaniyya [2.4/2.7 million]	[6 languages]
159. Timor-Leste 50.1 [GDP PC # 146/194]	[more than 15 languages]	☒ Portuguese [NA] ☒ Tetun [50 thousand/1 million]
160. Pakistan 49.9 [GDP PC # 141/194]	[78 languages]	☒ English [NA] ☒ Sindhi [18.5 million/159 million] ☒ Urdu [10 million]
161. Côte d'Ivoire 48.7 [GDP PC # 157/194]	[78 languages]	☒ French [NA]
162. Central African Republic 48.6 [GDP PC # 185/194]	[70 languages]	☒ Sango [350 thousand/3.7 million] ☒ French [NA]
162. Nepal 48.6 [GDP PC # 176/194]	[126 languages]	☒ Nepali [11/27 million]
164. Bangladesh 47.5 [GDP PC # 162/194]	☒ Bangla [100/141 million]	[39 languages]

See the footnote below for data on 166–177<sup>23</sup>

22. To save space, the rankings of nations 165–177 are given in the next footnote.

23. All these bottom ranked nations use a minority language in their school systems: 165. Bhutan 47.0 [24 languages]; ☒ Dzongkha [130 thousand/2.1 million]; [GDP PC # 111/194].

Although conditions differ complexly in each country, the indicators given above in Tables 3 and 4 suggest that there is a general pattern which distinguishes the top tier literacy rankings from those at the bottom. The top tier countries generally have educational and State services that are provided in the nation's first language whereas most of the bottom tier countries provide these services in some second language. The Tables suggest that the choice of language in the school system has positive effects on literacy in the case of first-language systems and negative effects in the case of second-language systems.

Despite the broad tendencies toward widespread literacy identified for first-language school systems, as Coulmas (1992:209–212) observed, there are some nations which do not fit into the general pattern. A few top tier nations have successful second-language or bilingual/trilingual policies and a few bottom tier nations have unsuccessful first-language school systems. If one looks closer, however, these exceptions do not negate the overall pattern of strength in first-language education and weakness in second-language education. Economic, political, geographical, demographic, linguistic, and historical factors explain how some countries in the top-tier for literacy present exceptional traits, either for achieving high ranking through a second language or a bilingual/trilingual approach or for having economic stagnation in spite of a high ranking in literacy. Barbados, Guyana, and Luxembourg use minority second languages in their schools and yet they rank high for literacy. Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Moldova use majority languages and rank high in literacy but rank relatively low in per capita GDP. Bottom-tier countries like Bangladesh and Mauritania are also exceptions because they use the majority language and yet are ranked low for literacy and GDP.

There are good reasons for the successes of Barbados in literacy and wealth in spite of the use of a minority language (Fenigsen 2000; Van Herk 2003). Barbados finds itself among the top 30% of nations in terms of GDP per capita (i.e. 52/194). On the island only 13,000 people speak Standard English compared to 230,000

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166. Guinea-Bissau 44.8 [21 languages]; ☒ Portuguese [5/18.8 million] (27% speak P. as 2nd language); [GDP PC # 189/194]. 167. Gambia 42.5 [9 languages]; ☒ English [NA]; [GDP PC # 167/194]. 168. Senegal 39.3 [36 languages]; ☒ French, [NA] ☒ Wolof [3.5/10.8 million]; [GDP PC # 160/194]. 169. Mozambique 38.7 [43 languages]; ☒ Portuguese [NA]; [GDP PC # 180/194]. 170. Ethiopia 35.9 [84 languages]; ☒ English [169 thousand/67 million], ☒ Tigrigna [3.2 million], ☒ Amharic [17 million]; [GDP PC # 182/194]. 171. Sierra Leone 34.8 [24 languages]; ☒ English [NA]; [GDP PC # 188/194]. 172. Benin 34.7 [54 languages]; ☒ French [NA]. 173. Guinea 29.5 [34 languages]; ☒ French [NA]; [GDP PC # 175/194]. 174. Niger 28.7 [21 languages]; ☒ French [NA]; [GDP PC # 187/194]. 175. Chad 25.7 [132 languages]; ☒ Standard Arabic [NA], ☒ French [NA]; [GDP PC # 158/194]. 176. Mali 24.0 [50 languages]; ☒ French [NA]; [GDP PC # 174/194]. 177. Burkina Faso 23.6 [68 languages]; ☒ French [NA]; [GDP PC # 172/194].

who speak Bajan English Creole. English and Bajan Creole, however, are closely related and the variety closest to English, the acrolect, has become dominant. Additionally, Barbadians travel extensively to English-speaking countries. Ranked 18th for literacy, Guyana is also an exception. In Guyana acrolectal Creole is also closely related to Standard English. Although Guyana is poorer than Barbados (i.e. its per capita GDP ranking is 133/194), its government is in the top tier for spending on education (CIA world fact book). Another drastic underlying difference is the way in which Haiti versus Barbados and Guyana achieved their respective independence (DeGraff 2010, p.c.).

Luxembourg's success with multilingual education is also the result of tangible factors (Horner & Weber 2008). This wealthy landlocked northern European nation offers trilingual education in Luxembourgish, French, and German. Of the 476,000 citizens of Luxembourg, 278,000 (i.e. 58% of the population) are native Luxembourgish-speakers and 198,000 are foreign (i.e. 42%). Situated between France, Belgium, and Germany, Luxembourgers experience constant exposure to French and German. For example, thirty thousand German, 34,000 Belgian, and 66,000 French *frontaliers* workers commute from their respective countries every work day (Horner & Weber 2008). Due to the inclusion of the first language in addition to geo-linguistic, economic, and political factors, Luxembourg has built a good multilingual school system.

With respect to Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Moldova, an important question is why those nations achieve high rankings for literacy but relatively low ranking for GDP per capita. Georgia, which ranks 1st in literacy and 117th for GDP per capita, Tajikistan, which ranks 10th for literacy and 164th in GDP per capita, Uzbekistan, which ranks 12th in literacy and 148th in GDP per capita, and Moldova, which ranks 17th in literacy and 135th in GDP per capita, were all Soviet satellite States until the early 1990s. In those countries emphasis was placed on first-language educational policy. Modest economic rankings were caused by state control of investment, public ownership of industrial assets, an inflexible and sometimes inept political class and administration, poor governance, rampant corruption, bad planning and policy, minimal public feedback due to a culture of fear, in addition to factors like geography, environment, and natural resources.<sup>24</sup>

Regardless of modest economic rankings, these Soviet satellites achieved exceptional levels of literacy due to first-language policies. The Bolshevik revolutionaries of 1917 recommended using the national languages so that their new ideas could be understood and accepted. Soviet *korenizatsiia* 'nativization' of the 1920s ensured that administrations, courts, and schools functioned in local languages (Pavlenko 2008). The policy gave rise to the translation of world literature into

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24. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet\\_economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_economy) for more information.

local languages, contributed to the standardization of languages, supported the growth of local literatures, established alphabets, encouraged Russians to study local languages, and taught people to read and write in their respective languages (Pavlenko 2008:280). In the 1920s and early 1930s, Georgian and Belarusian, for example, had already assumed hegemonic functions (Pavlenko 2008:280). A dual course<sup>25</sup> was ultimately taken wherein Russification was combined with national institutions and languages. The maintenance of linguistic nativization resulted in the 'massive spread of literacy' and triggered a 'cultural revival' even as economic growth was limited (Pavlenko 2008:281).

Among the low tier countries, multilingual and multicultural populations often struggle with complex colonial and neocolonial legacies. The bottom tier nations tend to have minority second-language education. In low tier nations like Mauritania (Taine-Cheikh 1988; Handloff 1990) and Bangladesh (Heitzman & Worden 1989; Hamid 2006), the first languages have only recently been added to schools within a context of resistance, in the case of Mauritania, and social and economic hardships and under-investment, in the case of Bangladesh.

Mauritania is a sparsely populated nation with 2.7 million inhabitants. French-language education was introduced in the 1950s and was retained until the 1980s. Since attending school was not compulsory, in the 1960s only 14% and in the 1980s only 35% of the school-age population was enrolled and most were boys. The educational policy of replacing French with Hussaniyya Arabic and the regional languages, Pulaar, Azayr, and Wolof, has been met with resistance from both French-speaking Mauriticians in addition to those educated in classical Arabic who feel that it should be the only written variety (Taine-Cheikh 1988, p.xx; Handloff 1990). These factors have limited the positive effects of first-language education.

Bangladesh was controlled by colonial powers for more than three centuries. The British ceded Bangladesh to Pakistan in 1947 and that nation occupied it until 1971 (Heitzman & Worden 1989). English medium of instruction was followed by Pakistani Urdu instruction (Heitzman & Worden 1989). Bangla, the majority language, was only first introduced as a medium of instruction in the 1970s. Bangla education has had a limited impact due to Bangladesh's low economic status (i.e. the annual GDP is \$520 per capita) and low education expenditures (i.e. 1.3% of GDP) (Heitzman & Worden 1989). A minority of teachers is adequately trained, a minority of school-age students is enrolled, the student-teacher ratio is 54 to 1,

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25. It was in the mid-1930s that the Soviet government retreated from 'linguistic nativization' and began promoting Russian second-language education as a means of consolidation, industrialization, and collectivization (Pavlenko 2008:281-2). This drive did not crush the native languages which continued to be used in education, the arts, and the press.

and a patriarchal social structure tends to deny education to women (Heitzman & Worden 1989).

The top-tier of literacy has numerous exceptional countries — Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc. — that have achieved universal literacy by focusing on instruction in the first language and yet have only a modest economic status. Coulmas (1992: 213) points out that a high literacy rate does not necessarily equate with socioeconomic development. Historical, political, and economic factors can override linguistic ones. Even if the socioeconomic value of literacy cannot be measured on a scale with linear progression, it can be conceptualized as a graded notion (Coulmas 1992: 210–211). Individual and social mastery of literacy does not necessarily correlate with material welfare (Coulmas 1992: 211). However, as UNESCO (1953) has shown, the world map of illiteracy generally does match the world map of poverty (Coulmas 1992: 211). Although the top-tier nations in literacy do not ‘correlate exponentially’ with social affluence, it is striking that *all of the nations in the low-tier of literacy have low GDP per capita* (Coulmas 1992: 211).

The languages in the top tier of literacy are often spoken by small communities, providing ample evidence against the warnings of ‘isolation’ made by the proponents of French-dominant education in Haiti. A language like Haitian Creole put to work in schools will not limit Haiti just as the use of Georgian, Estonian, Latvian, Slovenian, Belarussian, and Lithuanian, etc., in education has not severed those nations from the world.

A school system’s embrace of first-language majority education *does* generally correlate with higher literacy. Economic outcomes also *tend* to be better with first-language schooling while they are *consistently* worse in second-language schooling. The selection of a common written language is an advantage because it enables the definition and implementation of standards (Coulmas 1992: 214). The employment of a minority written language coincidentally linked to developed economies will not promote socioeconomic progress because production, commerce, administration, and integration are limited to a small portion of the population (Coulmas 1992: 214). In Haiti, the French minority language erects socioeconomic barriers while the Haitian Creole majority language will erect socioeconomic bridges.

## 8. Conclusion: Haitian Creole-dominant educational language policy for the majority

The persistent use of French in Haitian schools and the State rests upon historical forces, habit, the strictures of economic mobility, international pressures, social class ideologies, and the collaboration of those over whom authority is exercised (Foucault 1977: 202). Diamond's (2005: 354) popular book, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, claims that there is 'no hope' for Haiti.<sup>26</sup> Other books, like Girard's (2010: 227) *Haiti*, recommend 'a free market approach' that entails industrial outsourcing in the form of assembly plants, a service and tourism economy, the elimination of trade tariffs, and the end of U.S. intervention and aid. Diamond (2005) and Girard (2010), among many other authors, overlook what I argue is one of the *root problems* in Haitian society: an educational policy which favors a minority language over the language of the vast majority. Many linguists recognize that *prioritizing* the alignment of the school language with the home language of Haitian children, Haitian Creole, will advance education and graduation, disseminate knowledge, expand literacy, and improve economic conditions.

On November 23rd, 2010, ten months after Haiti's devastating earthquake, the Inter-American Development Bank [IDB] announced that it was granting \$250 million over five years to support 'an educational reform plan' that would make quality education available at no cost to all Haitian children (<http://www.iadb.org>). The grant will subsidize tuition and school supplies and it will pay for the construction of 2,500 schools that will be built using anti-seismic and hurricane-proof construction guidelines. The plan will also require the improvement of teacher training and the enforcement of school certification. The Haitian government will simultaneously increase spending on education from 1.5% of GDP to 4%. Lastly, funding will be used by the Ministry of Education to modernize its administration and to establish an autonomous school infrastructure authority. The IDB's plan somehow manages to ignore Haiti's underlying educational language policy problem. Absent from the announcement — made available in English, French, and Spanish — is any mention of the well-documented failure of Haiti's French-dominant language policy. Pierre Michel Laguerre, the second in command in Haiti's Ministry of Education, also failed to mention the language problem in his French-language presentation on 'Education for a Renewed Haiti' at the Haitian Studies Association conference in 2010 (Laguerre 2010). The Ministry's plans for

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26. Diamond (2005: 354) also writes, 'Haiti is so poor, and so deficient in natural resources and in trained or educated human resources, that it really is difficult to see what might bring about improvement'. Reply: Haitian Creole first- language education instead of French second-language education *is* what *will* bring about improvement.



greater 'efficiency', 'education for all', and 'a new Haiti' are mere platitudes if advancing Haitian Creole is not a central part of 'renewal'. The investment of \$250 million over five years into a school system that employs a minority language will have a limited impact on graduation and literacy.<sup>27</sup>

Language policy in Haitian schools and the State is caught in an 'upside down' pattern (Dejean 2006). Throughout the former colonial regions of the 'Francophone' southern hemisphere — with the possible exception of the French overseas departments — one finds that limited and very limited French speakers, who form the vast majority of the populations, are deprived of the right to an education, to information, to health care, and to work, etc. (Chaudenson 2003: 296). Schools in these regions quickly exclude 60–70% of the school-age population, one which is going to double by 2020 (Chaudenson 2003: 296). Most of the students who enroll in a French minority-language school system draw very little benefit from it (Chaudenson 1991: 158). The progressive promotion of Haitian Creole education for the majority is the most effective way to improve the performance of Haitian schools and students since Haiti is essentially a monolingual nation.

I have argued that the social, economic, and intellectual progress of a society is accelerated by education in a first language. Strong arguments have been presented for favoring a Creole-dominant school system: (1) resource deficiencies prohibit effective French instruction; (1.1) the Haitian government does not have the money, personnel, or resolve needed to train, place, and retain adequate numbers of French teachers; (1.2) the majority of Haitians lack the time and resources to acquire French because of severe infrastructural and economic constraints. (2) Haitians are linguistically isolated on a regional basis since no neighboring State uses French and they are linguistically isolated from the State apparatus and from the school system inside of Haiti since the monolingual Creole-speaking majority of 95% cannot communicate in French which is *de facto* the primary official language and the primary language of instruction; (2.1) the need for an international language is contradicted by the many small States that successfully employ autochthonous languages; (2.2) Haiti, thanks to Haitian Creole, is linguistically and culturally cohesive; (3) Haitian Creole has a coherent spelling system and an impressive corpus of high quality books; and (4) first-language education will greatly

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27. Consider the fact, for rough comparative purposes, that the education budget of the state of Florida, with roughly twice the population of Haiti, was over \$22.7 billion in 2010 alone (<http://www.flgov.com/release/11305>). One reviewer suggests that the dollar can go further in Haiti than in the U.S.; however, as an island isolated from major trade thoroughfares, the cost of living in Haiti is actually very high. Plus note that the \$250 million is for 5 years whereas Florida spends exponentially more than that amount on education *annually*.

expand literacy and the implementation of standards which are multipliers linked to development (Coulmas 1992).

Haitian Creole dominance at 70% with second language courses at 30% is a formula which will lead to considerable progress while facilitating the learning of French as a *foreign* language. The current 'pedagogy of exclusion', which prioritizes the learning of French over the learning of the content of education, needs to end if Haiti hopes to educate a larger share of its population and attain greater egalitarianism (Freire 1972; Winford 1985: 354; Dejean 1993: 80). Language policy aberrations are a detriment to children in primarily poor countries. Second-language school systems for speakers of a first-language are paradoxical since they are a case in which *ideology* trumps *best educational practice* (DeGraff 2009, p.c.). Second-language dominance in the most destitute and failing school systems deserves sustained criticism because such policy only serves a small minority of students while discarding and wasting the potential of the majority. Haitian Creole is a linguistic tool that is perfectly adapted to the daily problems, society, and environment of Haiti. Haitian Creole dominance in education is the best way to secure an education for a majority of Haitians and it is the foundation of hope, progress, economic growth, and the expression of genius in Haiti.

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