

The Contact Ecology of French and Creole – a comparative perspective

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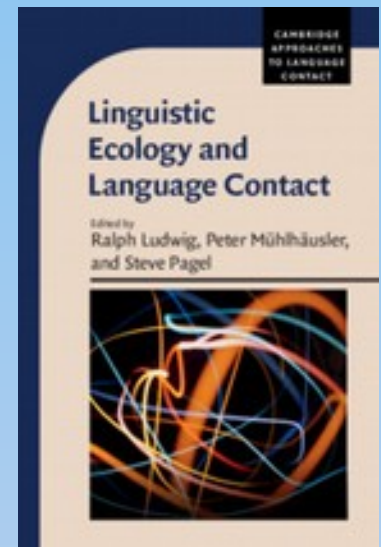
5es Assises européennes du plurilinguisme, 23-24 mai 2019, Bucarest

What is linguistic ecology?

Language exists only in the minds of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment. Part of its ecology is therefore psychological: its interaction with other languages in the minds of bi- and multilingual speakers. Another part of its ecology is sociological: its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication. [...]

Language ecology would be a natural extension of this kind of study and has long been pursued under such names as psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and the sociology of language (Haugen 1972, 325ss.)

For a detailed presentation see Ludwig & Pagel & Mühlhäusler 2019



Dimensions of language contact

1. Dominant contact vs. non-dominant contact;
mono-contact vs. poly-contact
2. Contact with an Indo-European language, a non-Indo-European language or a Creole
3. Contact with a written language vs. contact with a non-written language

(see Gadet & Ludwig & Pfänder 2009)

The contact ecology in Guadeloupe and the Seychelles

The Republic of the Seychelles



- Archipelago of 110 islands situated in the Western Indian Ocean
- Population: 100.000
- National Languages: Seychelles Creole, English, French



The contact ecology in Guadeloupe and the Seychelles

Guadeloupe French Overseas Department



- Archipelago belonging to the Lesser Antilles
- Situated in the Caribbean
- Population: 400.000
- Languages: French official language, Creole regional language



The contact ecology in Guadeloupe and the Seychelles

□ shared parameters:

📖 Guadeloupe and the Seychelles have been colonized by the French in the 17th and 18th century. This colonization led to the emergence of a French-based creole language, product of contact between French and the languages spoken by the slave population.

📖 The French Creoles (Guadeloupe, Seychelles etc.) share about 90% of their vocabulary with French but they have to be considered as autonomous languages because of their morphosyntax which is considerably different from French.

- In both areas, Guadeloupe and the Seychelles, French and a French-based creole are in contact until today.

The contact ecology in Guadeloupe and the Seychelles

□ diverging parameters:

1) different timing of French colonization: *17th century French exported to Guadeloupe and 18th century French exported to the Seychelles*

The contact ecology in Guadeloupe and the Seychelles

□ diverging parameters:

2) Different colonial power since 1814: the Seychelles have been a British colony from 1814 to 1976. Guadeloupe always remained French and is still a French overseas department.



 *Reciprocally dominant monocontact situation between Guadeloupean Creole and French in Guadeloupe (Gadet & Ludwig & Pfänder 2009)*

- Polycontact situation between Seychelles Creole, English and French in the Seychelles

The contact situation, speakers competences and forms of language hybridation

Guadeloupe:

- Dominant contact situation between Creole and French, widespread bilingualism, difficult coexistence (but not a diglossic situation)
- Existence of several forms of French: « français antillais » and « français hexagonal de référence »
- Creole is gaining in importance (e.g. in education); while French remains the main written language, literacy in Creole is increasing
- French is influenced by Creole and Creole by French

The contact situation, speakers competences and forms of language hybridation

Seychelles:

- Polycontact situation in which Creole and English have a dominant influence on French while French has no dominant influence on neither Creole nor English
- Existence of several forms of French: « français régional de l'Océan indien » and L2 or 3 varieties of French
- Creole is the language of primary education, followed by English, French is taught as a foreign language

« Français guadeloupéen » and « français seychellois » – copies from Creole

- **Code copying framework by Johanson (e.g. 2002, 2008)**

This chapter aims at an integrative approach to the phenomena of language interaction, dealing specifically with contact-induced language change within a code-copying framework. (...)

It will illustrate how phenomena commonly referred to as borrowing, transfer, adaptation, convergence, levelling, koinéization, shift etc. may be dealt with under one « umbrella » by adopting this unified framework (Johanson 2002, 285)

Copies are never 'imported' or 'transferred' foreign elements and never true replicas of their models. There are always dissimilarities in substance, meaning, contextual applicability and frequency between models and copies (Johanson 2008, 62)

Some examples of morphosyntactic copies in French

Valency of the verb:

Sey si on adressait une personne dans une office

Gua quand une malheur arrivait quelqu'un



no prepositional coding of the experiencer

Reflexive voice:

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creole word order with causee between 'faire' and infinitive form

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Sey C'est confondu avec la bibliothèque des enfants même



different semantic and syntactic distribution of the marker 'même'

From code copying to code alternation

Guadeloupe: Creole—French

Le manioc amer contient cinquante milligrammes de poison par kilo.
Et le manioc doux contient quinze milligrammes par kilo. Les habitués, qu'est-ce qui enlève le poison? *Zot tout kè mò o swè-la!*



French as matrix language

Seychelles: Creole-French-English

X1: Ale. Dan lavi fodre pa per.

X2: *No, of course.* Nou pa per nou.

X1: Bondye i dir ou *n'ayez pas peur.*



Creole as matrix language

- **Conclusions: Comparison and typology**
- **Main references**

Kriegel, Sibylle & Ludwig, Ralph (2018): « Le français en espace créolophone – Guadeloupe et Seychelles », *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, Volume 69, 56-96.

Kriegel, Sibylle & Ludwig, Ralph & Salzmann, Tabea (2019): « Reflections on discourse ecology and language contact: The crucial role of some scalar terms », in: Ludwig, Ralph & Mühlhäusler, Peter & Pagel, Steve (eds.): *Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 179-213.

Thank you for your attention!

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seychellois
sɛlɔpɛn

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