

**PATH TO THE MOST EXTENSIVE EVER PUBLISHED
BIBLIOGRAPHY RESEARCH ON HAITI'S LANGUAGE –
An Annotated Bibliography On Haitian Creole:
A review of publications from colonial times to 2000**

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ABSTRACT: Documents have been publishing in Haiti since colonial times (1), but it is not easy to find traces of many of them since there has not been an established system to protect documents in Haiti that are part of the country's patrimony. This stimulated me to work on this bibliographic research. Furthermore, Haitians (both in Haiti and in Diaspora) are facing a serious problem with "documentation". Every single researcher and writer should think of how they can find a solution to this problem or how they can collaborate to improve the situation. Looking at the progress made in the Haitian language at the lexical level, as of now, there have been more than 20 bilingual dictionaries published on the language the last three decades. It is necessary to have as many types of tools as possible to promote linguistic research in different areas of the rapid developing study of the Haitian Creole (Kreyòl). But since documentation has been one of Haiti's key problem, many people did not have any idea how much has been publishing on our native langue. An annotated bibliography On Haitian Creole... can also be seen as an inventory of publications, documenting publications covering a wide-range of subject areas as detailed in its Table Of Contents: A Bibliography Of Periodicals With Publications On Kreyòl (268 entries); Agriculture, Flora & Fauna (61 entries); Bibliographies (12 entries); Dictionaries, Glossaries and Related sources (130 entries); Education, Literacy and Teaching materials (334 entries); Folklores, Folk tales & Stories (230 entries); General Subjects (445 entries); Geography & History (63 entries); Grammar (72 entries); Health & Hygiene (52 entries); Historical Linguistics (88 entries); Novels & Short stories (108 entries); Orthography (112 entries); Plays (including related works, 87 entries); Poetry (204 entries); Proverbs (54 entries); Religious Writings (145 entries); Sociolinguistics (116 entries); Teaching materials For Learners Of Kreyòl (41 entries); Theoretical linguistics (325 entries); Theses & Dissertations Related To Kreyòl (75 entries); Interviews With Some Haitian Creolists, Journalists & Authors (13 entries); Appendix (Part I, II & III: Part III, Theses & Dissertations related to Haiti, (308 entries).

OUTLINE:

- A. *Bibliographical overview of prior research*
- B. *Early observation as young teacher, teaching in the Haitian Bilingual Program in Boston*
- C. *From observation to publication (problem posing vs. problem solving)*
- D. *More publications within a specific time frame (8 books released in 1994)*
- E. *My first radio talk show ("Chache konnen ak Védrine") and how I would use some data from it later in my bibliographic research*
- F. *Having a solid bibliographic base to move on with the research*
- G. *A bibliographic itinerary (including Haiti, the United States and Canada)*
- H. *Is this a complete bibliography?*
- I. *Choice of language to write the bibliographic research (respecting the three main languages in which comments /critiques on these documents were primarily written, also three main languages that have been used with Haiti: French, Kreyòl and English)*
- J. *Haiti's linguistic situation (a diglossia)*

CONCLUSION: Again, a bibliography research is never complete and An annotated bibliography On Haitian Creole: A review of publications from colonial times to 2000 is not exception to the rule. I welcome suggestions from readers and help from people who want to collaborate to in finding new documents to enrich the research and advance Kreyòl in the 21 st Century. I hope that ever published seminal research work on Haiti's native language can serve its users for different purposes, seeing it contents and keywords sampling out a (Atlantic Creoles, Caribbean languages, Caribbean literature, Creole bibliographies, Creole corpus, Creole description, Creole genesis, Creole grammar, Creole lexicon, Creole status, Creole teaching, Creole linguistics, Creole Studies, French-based Creoles, Haitian Bilingual Programs, Haitian Creole (Kreyòl), Haitian Culture, Haitian history, Haitian language, Haitian Linguistics, Haitian literature, Pidgin and Creole Languages, Theses and Dissertation on Haitian Creole and on Haiti) as in invaluable tool for research dealing with the Haitian language.

NOTES (From Paper Presented)

1. **COLONIAL TIMES.** Here, it refers to the historical periods before Haiti's Independence (1804).

2. **BIBLIOGRAPHIE DES ÉTUDES CRÉOLES, LANGUES ET LITTÉRATURES.** 1983. Albert Valdman, Robert Chaudenson, Marie-Christine Hazaël-Massieux. Indiana University-Bloomington. "Cette bibliographie tire son origine d'un projet lancé lors de la préparation du premier C.I.E.C (Conseil International des Études Créoles - Nice, novembre 1976). "Dans un premier temps, ses initiateurs se proposaient de compléter la partie de la Bibliographie des études créoles de John Reinecker (*A Bibliography of Pidgin and Creole languages*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), traitant des créoles et pidgins à base lexicale française – dorénavant et dans le texte de la bibliographie l'on se servit des sigles CLF et PLE pour dénoter les créoles à base lexicale française et les pidgins à base française respectivement. Les indications fournies par le regretté doyen des études créoles s'arrêtant à 1972, elles devaient être prolongées pour une période de 1972-76..."

3. **THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM.** That program was a "transitional one". They expected students to master the English language as quickly as possible in order to mainstream. However, it wasn't an easy task for many students, particularly the flow of students coming from Haiti in the late 80's where education in Haiti has become less challenging, due to political unrests, and teachers with less qualifications to teach. People were tired of Jean-Claude Duvalier's dictatorship and started rising against him. From time to time, schools were closing down; students barely completed a full academic year and also, the quality of education in Haiti started to go down in the early 80's. Among the flow of students who left Haiti, were these students found in the Boston Public Schools. Due to their age, they were placed at high school level. Many of them never even completed the elementary or middle school cycle, and were functioning below grade level. They were neither literate in French nor in Kreyòl therefore many who fell in that category were referred to SPED (Special Education Program). Teachers in the Haitian Bilingual Program felt pressured by the school administration that did not really understand what was really going on since they were conducting regular school business. Some Haitian teachers who really broke the ice, trying to understand the real problem of these students were really patient with them. They tried their very best, helping them and some did succeed (at least having a high school diploma) because of these Haitian mentors they had.

4. **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

5. **YON KOUDÈY SOU PWOBLÈM LEKÒL AYITI** -- The work that I have done in this book was partly motivated by my work as a teacher in the Haitian Bilingual Program in Boston. However,

my work is very much directed at the challenges of education in Haiti. It is a habit of mine to return to Haiti (mentioning it) in order to analyze some of the problems within the school system there. There are so many problems within the Haitian schools and my return to Haiti (mentioning it) helps me to really understand or show readers, students, and teachers the problem and its sources so they can be able to analyze and propose some solutions. --- I discuss the language issue in order to bring enlightenment on both French and Kreyòl. We know that in Haiti during the 30-year dictatorship, educators in Haiti never really talked about the serious problems of Haitian education. In fact, one of the confusions that have been propagated is the exaggerated concern between French and Kreyòl in order to avoid showing that it's politics that causes the major problems and not whether the school is committed to French or Kreyòl. As researcher, I contend that the problem of language is important, but secondary to the reality of politics. It is politics that can create the conditions for educational quality and opportunity in Haiti and not what language one speaks. Language is just a medium; one can use any language in education. So, the real problem is not really one between French and Creole, the way many educators in Haiti used to show it in order to avoid touching on the political reality and how it really defines the contours of our educational expectations. --- I take my position on that and at the same time as writer, familiar with linguistic research and one who cares deeply about the Haitian Reality, I feel that I have a responsibility to do a job that would advance Kreyòl language as the main language medium in the educational system in Haiti. Further, I try to advance Kreyòl in the Haitian Diaspora in all bilingual programs. I do believe in what I am doing and I stand firmly on it. On the issue of language again, we must not forget the attitudes that we are sometimes dealing with when some Haitian teachers put forth negative attitudes against Kreyòl language. That is another problem we can analyze and why some teachers insist upon using only French as the language for Haitian students. So, they don't see the use of Kreyòl language as a medium to help Haitian children in their transition in bilingual program. Bilingualism is under scrutiny in the Diaspora while Kreyòl is the Haitian educational structure is under scrutiny as the official language there. Negative attitudes in both the Diaspora and Haiti about Kreyòl language must be changed. Language then is the crucial link waiting in the wings to come forth and do its job in Haiti once Haitian politics restructure an educational system for sustained excellence. Kreyòl is the native language and it must be respected and officially used. I stand by that. Also, I think that the Diaspora can play an important role in helping to accomplish that goal because for instance, in Boston, though there was certain resistance by some Haitian educators in the Boston Schools System to use Kreyòl, it was still known as the Haitian students' official language in the bilingual program.

6. **L'UNNHOH** (Union Nationale des Normaliens Haitiens). The largest Teachers' Association in Haiti, regrouping over 3000 members.

7. **SEZON SECHRÈS AYITI** (Season of drought in Haiti), first published in 1994, is one of the very few Haitian novels that embarked the problems of the peasants, why they are leaving Haiti. The title of the novel is twofold: a play-on-word and a metaphor dealing with the political problems of Haiti where peasants are always those who suffered the most in our society. Not too many people pay attention to their real problems and try to understand what they've going through, which, in a way, forced them to leave Haiti. All the characters in the novel are peasants. Written in 1992, it's a literary piece reminding us of the Haitian peasants being sent back to Haiti by Dominican officials just few months after president Jean-Bertrand Aristide took power (on February 7, 1991) as the first democratically elected president of Haiti. He was widely voted by Haitian peasants, hoping that their situation would be changed once for all but unfortunately, the bloody coup of September 30, 1991 that sent Aristide into a 3 year exile has changed the whole course. Mèsidye is one of the great heroes of the novel. He was working in the sugar cane fields in the Dominican Republic and was among those sent back to Haiti. Once arrived in Haiti, he is trying to organize the peasants such as organizing fund-raising to help themselves buying the necessary tools to irrigate land.

8. **FUNDING FOR THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS** (*Di yon vèb, tire yon kont* (Say a verb, I will tell you a riddle in Haitian Creole), *Ide pou kreye yon High School Ayisyen prive nan Boston* (Ideas to found a private Haitian High School in Boston), *Materyèl Edikatif pou Bileng Ayisyen* (Teaching materials for Haitian Bilingual), *Poetry in Haitian Creole*, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti* (Season of drought in Haiti, novel), *Ti istwa kreyòl: Short stories in Haitian Creole*, *Un stylo international* (An international pen, poetry), *Yon koudèy sou pwoblèm lekòl Ayiti* (A look at the problem of schools in Haiti, essay) was taken from my student stipend from Harvard University. Funding for this five year bibliography research has been Provided by Jesula Védrine, my sister, to whom I express my warmest gratitude. a person with such a great heart who is always ready to help those in need. My philosophy of supporting the Creole Project, by not begging for grants from anywhere, is one that deals with dignity in the sense that the energy we need is also within us; in other words, many of us have the potential to do great things (without counting 100% on outside help). That has been a big problem for Haiti's development: most Haitians think the real help Haiti needs is coming from outside (in the sense that others will come to do the basic things that we need or we have to count on them all time by not thinking of our potential as humans resource.). That is a challenge to meet in my naked eyes.

9. **THOMAS MADIOU** (1814-1844), in his own word stated that he was desperately looking for a Haitian history book to read and could not find any (after coming back from his studies in France) and told to his father that he was going to work on one. His voluminous research on the subject had later, inspired many Haitian historians.

10. **GRAMÈ KREYÒL VÉDRINE** (Védrine's Grammar of Haitian Creole). First monolingual grammar ever written in Haitian Creole. It covers the basic grammatical aspects of the language with a foreword and acknowledgment in English, including a bibliography of 63 sources. – Comments on that publication: “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine may not be an answer to all sociolinguistic questions in Haitian society; rather, it is a document witnesses the existence of the Creole language as a spoken language, a document that can serve as a guide to the native language of all Haitians... I take all my linguistic freedom together with the authority of the Haitian language to write these grammatical theories that I advance in this book. They are not inventions but rather observations of the native speakers. As a guide to the Haitian language, I hope that Gramè Kreyòl Védrine will serve as a source of inspiration to Haitians writing in Creole and for all those working very hard for the total linguistic liberation of the Creole language.*” (E. W. Védrine). ---“*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine is a reference tool for everyone writing and learning Creole... I congratulate Emmanuel Védrine for this work. Little by little, the language will shoot buds.*” (Féquièrè Vilsaint). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine is a rich work filled with a variety of information. Emmanuel Védrine deserves praises for the courage and effort displayed in this great book, which paves the way for the development of our native language. This document answers many challenges that ignorant or so-called educated people used to raise about the language of Haiti. It is an answer to those critics who used to say Creole doesn't have rules, it doesn't have grammar. I am confident that the mentality of everyone who reads this book will change toward a particular appreciation for the Creole language that connects all Haitians.*” (Jorave Telfort). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine is a great tool deserving of praise, valuable to everyone working in the Creole language, whether in the scientific or literary area. We have been looking for this great tool a long time. That's why I want to raise my voice with other experts in Creole everywhere to ring the bell and say bravo! to the linguist, Emmanuel Védrine*” (Keslèbrezo). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine, another great accomplishment in the history of the Creole language, will help people to better see and understanding the reality of their native language. This grammar is a tool that's going to open the mind. It's going to play a great role for every Haitian teacher and student...*” (Serge Claude Valmé).

11. **HAITIAN CREOLE SEMINAR** (Védrine Creole Project First Free Kreyòl Seminar in Boston) – EVALUATION - *“The instructor thoroughly covered what he had planned to cover. Plenty of information was provided since the manual used deals with a very extensive range of topics. - I have now better command of the orthography. That was very good practice to hear Haitian speakers read materials out loud: I am now clearer about the sound-symbol correspondences in Haitian Creole. That was also interesting to review the changes in the orthography with the shift from one to another. I learned much just by listening to the instructor and the participants talking and discussing issues related to Creole. - I was mostly interested in the cultural part, in particular proverbs and references to Haitian folk literature (Bouki) mirroring the Haitian duality. The discussion about some Haitian proverbs or idioms and trying to phrase them differently to make their sense clear or giving corresponding situations were very useful exercises. - I have already recommended and will definitely recommend the seminar to other people in the Haitian language and culture. I would like this type of seminars to continue and propose the following improvements: • Actual group practice with the orthography: maybe a few dictions with immediate self-correction in order to assimilate to the main spelling rules. --- • Some practical work in group on the short stories: for instance, working out some short lesson plans or brainstorming on how these materials would be used in class. --- • To begin each part of the seminar with a short practice before lecturing or reading from the book. It would be a good way to identify where people have most questions or doubts about the language. --- I particularly appreciated the practice of the instructor and all participants: every one kindly stopped the class each time I did not understand in Creole, and I felt I was very lucky to be part of that group. Finally, all the materials given out are very useful and I am very grateful to have receiving them...”* (Corinne Etienne, Ph.D in French Linguistics, Indiana University-Bloomington).

12. **LIBRERI MAPOU** (Mapou’s Bookstore). One of my literary pilgrimages was to pay a visit to *Libreri Mapou* in 1997. Living in the United States for for almost three decades, it was the very first time I spent a week in Miami. *Libreri Mapou* can be seen not only as a place where people come to buy books and other stuffs but can also be seen as a center for “documentation” that exist in Miami and one that is quite important for all Haitians everywhere in the Haitian Diaspora. --- Many people who are conducting research on Haiti (be it foreigners, American as well as Haitians) come to this to find information. For instance, the very first day I arrived at the bookstore, there was a group of white Americans (college students) who were researching on many communities. They stopped by to learn about Haitian Culture and Haitians who are living in Miami.

13. **DIGLOSSIA**. 1983a. Yves Dejean. “Diglossia Revisited: French and Creole in Haiti”. *Word*. Vol. 34. No 3, pp. 189-273. *“...The first part of this study examines the concept of diglossia formulated by Ferguson (1959) as it applies to the language situation in Haiti. The second part analyzes, also in relation to Haiti, the subsequent development and transformation of this concept. The conclusions from this analysis are not restricted to the theoretical investigation of Creole. They have important practical implications for questions or orthography, literacy, orientation and goals of primary and secondary schooling, the methodology of teaching and learning French, and the appropriate way of discussing language problems with a Haitian audience.”*