

**KREOL**  
&  
**BHOJPURI**  
**LANG MATERNEL**



*Bilingual Handbook on Mother Tongue Rights*

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&  
**BHOJPURI**  
**LANG MATERNEL**



LEDIKASYON PU TRAVAYER

## KREOL & BHOJPURI: LANG MATERNEL

A Bilingual Handbook on Mother Tongue Rights

1<sup>st</sup> Edition

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The International Hearing on the Harm Done by the Suppression of the Mother Tongue in School.



Jimmy Harmon, representing the Prevok BEC, introduced by LPT member Anne-Marie Sophie, addresses the International Panel.



## LPT's ARGUMENT ON THE MOTHER TONGUE

This handbook is about the right to the mother tongue. And we begin with *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*'s argument in favour of the mother tongue.

Our Association *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* is in favour, just as a large majority of Mauritians are, of the use of the mother tongue in all spheres of life. For a start, we are in favour of using the mother tongue in all democratic institutions, like the National Assembly. We are *for* the keeping of the records and minutes of democratically run Associations in the mother tongue. And, we want the mother tongues to be the medium used in schools. In fact, we want the mother tongues to be used *as a right* wherever people want to or need to use it. And we also show how high-level multilingualism flows best from the transfer of the *common underlying language proficiency* in a well-constructed mother tongue to second and other languages.

We are not in favour, in this day and age, of promoting monolingualism. Far from it. And we are certainly against the kind of demi-lingualism (not knowing any language to the level of high academic and cognitive proficiency) that the present education system produces. We are in favour of mother-tongue based multilingual education, and *for* mother tongue rights.

The summary of our argument is as follows:

1. Human language is more than a “means of communication”. This clichéd definition that “language is a means of communication” is misleading. Our language capacity, in evolutionary terms, is, in fact, our means of representing the external world outside of us, as well as representing our internal world of feelings, and our past and present thoughts inside our brains. It is thus our means of understanding.

As such, language is not just our *tool for communicating*, but it is our *natural* tool for *thinking*.

It is natural, in the sense that it is learned as a child *unconsciously*. Children learn their mother-tongue without any formal teaching, and in large part, from their friends in the neighbourhood.

Our humanness is thus expressed in our mother tongues. The syntax of this naturally spoken language is part of a *common language proficiency* for all languages, and can easily be transferred to other languages.

2. Kreol and Bhojpuri are the mother tongue of 93% of the population of the islands of the Republic of Mauritius. This is proven by the most recent Census of the whole population.
3. Kreol and Bhojpuri are languages that are equal to other languages, like French and English. Any statement to the contrary, or any insinuation to the contrary, is pure prejudice of the worst sort against the people who speak these languages. Sometimes people who

speaking a language can adopt the prejudice of the colonizer, and thus be prejudiced against *themselves*; this is called an “internalized” sense of one’s inferiority.

4. In many instances, the State and related organs of power in Mauritius ban Kreol and Bhojpuri. In particular,
  - in the National Assembly, Kreol and Bhojpuri are not allowed;
  - in schools Kreol and Bhojpuri are not allowed to be used as formal medium, and their use even in oral form in early primary school is severely limited by *The Education Act* and by Inspectors and directors;
  - Associations are not allowed to submit their Minutes of Proceedings, that is to say their collective memory, to the Registrar in the language in which meetings take place, Kreol and/or Bhojpuri, but must by law submit them in English or French.
5. The banning of the mother tongues in the National Assembly is wrong:
  - Because it lowers the level of debate to the level of MP’s proficiency in a foreign language.
  - It reinforces old colonial prejudices against the languages spoken by all the people of the country.
  - It prevents the public from understanding what their democratically elected representatives are saying and doing in the National Assembly.
  - It excludes half of the people from their democratic right to stand for election.
  - It is discriminatory.

In addition, the argument that a majority of people are “against” Kreol as a national language is false. In 2009, a SOFRES survey showed that only between 27-33% are against, that is to say between one quarter and a third.

6. The banning of the mother tongues in schools is wrong, because:
  - It prevents children developing to their full intellectual capacity.
  - It causes rote learning.
  - It harms children psychologically.
  - It harms children culturally.
  - It removes children from their natural linguistic group and forces them into the Anglophone and Francophone groups.
  - It causes mental harm to children of the Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone groups.
  - The physical punishments meted out to children who do not understand their schoolwork, and who make mistakes, causes physical harm to children of the Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone groups.
  - It prevents children from getting access to knowledge, except on the condition that they know foreign languages.
  - It is a cause of a high rate of illiteracy, and of poor literacy skills in all school children, even those who do well.
  - It causes children to drop-out or be pushed out of school early.
  - It causes high failure rates.
  - It is harmful to use English or French as a medium until they have been taught *as a subject* for 6-8 years; and then they can only be used as medium for subjects that are not linguistically or intellectually demanding, like art, music and physical education. After 3-4 years of using these second or foreign languages as a medium for “easy” subjects, they can be used for all subjects. English can be taught as a subject from Standard One.
  - The banning of the mother-tongue stifles creativity.

- It prevents the development of a child's Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), even if it allows the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS).
- It stifles development in the country, because development relies on knowledge transfers, which rely on understanding the content subjects.

The argument often resorted to that "a majority of people are against" the use of the mother tongues as medium is a lie. In 2009, a SOFRES survey showed that only 38% are against. This low figure of people who are "against" is despite the heavy legacy of colonial prejudice and despite the fact that:

- 87% of people do not even know that there is a standardized orthography, "Graf Larmoni";
- 80% of people have no idea that the Pre-vocational schools have had an experience with the Kreol language, let alone that this was successful;
- 93% of people do not know that the University of Mauritius has had a Course in and on Kreol.
- 90% of people do not know that there are Kreol language dictionaries.

7. The banning of the mother tongues in Associations is wrong because:

- It destroys the collective memory of the peoples' organizations in the country by forcing a parody of Minutes to be kept in foreign languages.
- It falsifies Minutes of proceedings by having them either interpreted-and-translated-and-noted simultaneously (an impossible task) and then re-read out after having been interpreted mentally, OR by having two Minutes books, both falsified, either because they are translated, not understood, or not the notes of meeting formally adopted.
- It habituates the very people who care to act collectively and who are in Associations, to a bureaucratic state of mind instead of nurturing their democratic spirit.
- It arbitrarily limits the democratic choice as to who within an Association can be elected to be an Office Bearer of the Association to those who are more skilled in foreign languages.
- It completely stifles the right to freedom of association of those who do not know foreign languages.

And people are in favour of this change of law. There are only 30% of people *against* the use of Kreol for Minutes for the Registrar of Associations, and only 42% against the use of Bhojpuri.

## Conclusion

This is why LPT took the initiative of organizing an International Hearing into the Harm Done by the Suppression of the Mother Tongues in School.

## KEY CONCEPTS IN MOTHER TONGUE BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

**Additive teaching/learning** A child uses and develops the mother tongue up to a high formal level, at the same time as s/he adds other languages to her linguistic repertoire, through mother-tongue-based multilingual education.

*Opposite:* “subtractive teaching/learning”.

**MT Mother tongue.** Language(s) one learns first, identifies with, and/or is identified by others as a native speaker of; sometimes also the language that one is most competent in or uses most. There may be a change of mother tongue during a person’s lifetime according to all other criteria except the first. A person may have two or more mother tongues (“bilingualism/multilingualism as a mother tongue”). Indigenous or minority mother tongues are sometimes called *heritage languages* (often when children do not know them well), *home languages* (implying that they are/should not be used for official purposes), or *community languages* (falsely implying that majority populations do not form a community). The last three terms can (but need not) contribute to the minoritisation of the language(s). Even if they do not yet know (much of) a language, Deaf persons and Indigenous peoples have the right to claim a Sign language or an ancestral language as their mother tongue on the basis of identifying with it.

### MTM Mother tongue medium education

**Mother-tongue-based multilingual education:** Education where the children’s mother tongues are officially used as the languages of instruction, initially in all subjects. Foreign languages are introduced as subjects, first orally, later also in writing. Some teaching can be done through the medium of these foreign languages, initially in subjects which are not intellectually or linguistically demanding (e.g. physical education, music, etc) and where the children can use the context to understand the teaching. Children should NOT be taught through the medium of these foreign languages in intellectually or linguistically demanding subjects (e.g. history, science, mathematics) before they have studied these languages at least 6-7 years as subjects and before they have had at least 3-4 years of teaching through these languages in “easy” subjects. In this way, children go from the known (the mother tongue) to the unknown, from the “easy” more concrete subjects/ concepts/ knowledge, to more demanding subjects/ concepts/ knowledge. They can build all further knowledge on what they already know. They can use the common underlying proficiency for all languages. It is easier, for instance, to learn to read and write in a language that one knows; children need to learn reading only once, the realisation of the relationship between what one hears (or signs) and what one sees on a page, needs to come only once, and is then easily transferred to other languages. mother tongue based multilingual education is a secure way to ensuring that children learn 2-3-4 languages at a high level.

**Submersion/“sink-or-swim” programme.** Linguistic minority or minoritised children with a low-status mother tongue are forced to accept instruction through a foreign official/dominant language, sometimes in classes in which the teacher does not understand the minoritised

mother tongue, and in which the dominant language constitutes a threat to that language, which runs the risk of being replaced; a *subtractive* language learning situation. In another variant, stigmatised and minoritised majority children (or groups of minority children in a country with no decisive numerical and/or power majorities) are forced to accept instruction through the medium of a foreign (often former colonial) high-status language (because official mother tongue medium education does not exist even if the mother tongue may be used orally in the classroom to help children understand what the teacher says). This often occurs in mixed mother tongue classes, mostly without native speakers of the language of instruction, but also in linguistically homogenous classes, sometimes because mother tongue education does not exist or because the school or teachers hesitate to implement a mother tongue-medium programme. The teacher may (or may not) understand children's mother tongue(s). The foreign language is not learned at a high level, at the same time as children's mother tongues are displaced and not learned in formal domains (e.g., mother-tongue literacy is not achieved). Often the children are made to feel ashamed of their mother tongues, or at least to believe in the superiority of the language of instruction. *Opposite*: mother-tongue-based multilingual education.

**Subtractive language teaching/ learning.** A new, dominant/foreign language is learned *at the cost of the mother tongue*, which is replaced or displaced, with a resulting diglossic situation. The individual's total linguistic repertoire does not grow. *Opposite*: additive language teaching/ learning.

**Transitional early-exit and late-exit programmes.** Linguistic minority or minoritised children with a low-status mother tongue are initially instructed through the medium of their mother tongue for a few years; the mother tongue is used as an instrument for acquisition of the dominant language and content. In *early-exit* programmes, children are transferred to a majority-language medium programme as soon as they develop (some) oral communicative competence in the dominant language, in most cases after one to three years. In *late-exit* programmes children may receive some instruction through L1 up to the fifth or sixth grade; sometimes the mother tongue is taught as a subject thereafter. For both program types, the primary goal is proficiency in the dominant language.

*Excerpt from Findings at LPT Hearing on Harm Done  
by Suppression of the Mother Tongue in Schools, 2009*

## WHY MOTHER TONGUE BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR MAURITIUS?

Often asked questions and doubts that school authorities and politicians might have - and even parents...

Why should children be taught mainly through the medium of their mother tongue in school for the first 6-8 years? They know their mother tongue already?

When children come to school, they can talk in their mother tongue about concrete everyday things in a face-to-face situation in their own environment where the context is clear: they can see and touch the things they are talking about and they get immediate feedback if they do not understand ("I didn't mean the apples, I asked you to bring bananas"). They speak fluently, with a native accent, and they know the basic grammar and many concrete words. They can explain all the basic needs in the MT: they have *basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)*. This may be enough for the first grades in school where teachers are still talking about things that the child knows. But later in school children need abstract intellectually and linguistically much more demanding concepts; they need to be able to understand and talk about things far away (e.g. in geography, history) or things that cannot be seen (e.g. mathematical and scientific concepts, honesty, constitution, fairness, democracy). They need to be able to solve problems using just language and abstract reasoning, without being able to do concrete things ("if I first do A, then either D or E happens; if I then choose K, X may happen but Y may also happen; therefore it is best to do B or C first"). The *cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP)* that is needed to manage from grade 3 on in school, in higher grades, upper secondary school and later in life, develops slowly. Children need to develop these abstract concepts on the basis of what they already know in their mother tongue. If the development of the mother tongue CALP (which mainly happens through formal education) is cut off when the child starts school, s/he may never have an opportunity to develop higher abstract thinking in any language.

If teaching is in a foreign power language that a Kreol-speaking child does not know (e.g. English), the child sits in the classroom the first 2-3 years without understanding much of the teaching. S/he may repeat mechanically what the teacher says, without understanding, without developing her capacity to think with the help of language, and without learning almost anything of the subjects that she is taught. This is why many Kreol-speaking children leave school early, not having learned much English, not having learned properly how to read and write, not having developed their mother tongue, and almost without any school knowledge.

If the child has the mother tongue (MT), here Kreol, as the teaching language, s/he understands the teaching, learns the subjects, develops the CALP in the MT, and has very good chances of becoming a thinking, knowledgeable person who can continue the education.

## Parents want children to learn English (and French). If children are taught mainly through their MT the first many years, how do they learn English (and French)?

All mother tongue based multilingual education (Mother-tongue-based MultiLingual Education) programmes should teach English as a SECOND language subject from grade 1 or 2. The teachers know both the children's MT and English. In the CALP part of language, much is shared in the MT and English (and other additional languages such as French). The child needs to learn reading and writing only once in life, and it is easiest to learn it in a language that one knows well. When the child has understood the relationship between what one hears and speaks, and the reading/writing system, in the MT, this can easily be transferred to other languages (even if the script may be different). When the child has learned many abstract concepts in the MT, s/he just needs to learn the "labels", new words for them in English; s/he already knows the concepts (even if there are, of course, cultural differences in nuances). In this way, only parts of the language (English) is new; the child already knows the content in various subjects (e.g. in mathematics). All languages share a *common underlying proficiency*. When the child develops this proficiency in the language she knows best, the MT, it is easily transferred to other languages. And when the child is already high-level bilingual in the MT and English, she learns French and other languages faster and better than if she starts French learning as monolingual in the MT. She needs fewer years of and less exposure to French, to learn it well. All research studies in the world show that the longer the child has the MT as the main medium of education, the better the child learns the subjects and the better s/he also becomes in the dominant language of the country and in additional languages. The number of years in MT-medium education is also more important for the results than the parents' socio-economic status. This means that mother tongue based multilingual education also supports economically poor children's school achievement.

## Isn't it enough if children have the first 3 years in the MT and then the teaching can be in English?

3 years of MT-medium teaching is much better than having all the teaching in English, but 3 years is NOT enough. The CALP development is nowhere near a high enough level in the MT after 3 years. 6 years in the MT is an absolute minimum, but 8 years is better. Ethiopia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, has a decentralised education system where 8 years of mother-tongue-based mother tongue based multilingual education is recommended. Some districts have chosen to have only 4 or 6 years of MT-medium. Comparing results from the whole country, a large study shows that those who have had 8 years of mainly MT-medium and who have studied Amharic (the dominant Ethiopian language) and English as subjects, have the best results in science, mathematics, etc, and also in English. Those with 6 years are not as good, and those who have switched to English-medium already after grade 4, have the worst results, also in English.

Parents want English-medium schools. What are the likely results?

Many studies in India show that children in English-medium private schools initially know English better than children in MT or regional language medium government schools. But at the end of grade 8, the knowledge in the various subjects of the students in English-medium schools is lower than in government schools, and their English is no better. In addition, they do not know how to read or write their MTs and do not have the vocabulary to discuss what they have learned in any Indian languages. They have sacrificed knowledge of Indian languages and much of the knowledge of school subjects but they only get a proficiency in the English language that is not at a high level. This is partly

because the English language competence of teachers is generally not very high, but also because the children have not been able to develop a high-level CALP, neither in the MTs nor in English.

**Mother-tongue based mother tongue based multilingual education for the first 6-8 years, with good teaching of English as a second language and French as a foreign/second language, and possibly other languages too, with locally based materials which respect local knowledge, seems to be a good research-based recommendation for Mauritius.**

*Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, [www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org](http://www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org)*

Quotation from the Appendix to the Findings of the International Hearing into the Harm Done by the  
Suppression of the Mother Tongue in School.



## ARGIMAN LPT LOR LANG MATERNEL

Sa liv la li lor lang maternel. E nu kumans par get argiman *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* anfaver lang maternel.

Nu Lasosyasyon, *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*, parey kuma mazorite dimunn Moris, anfaver servi langaz maternel partu kot li nesaser. Pu kumanse dan tu institisyon demokratik dan pei, kuma dan Lasanble Nasyonal. Nu revandik drwa pu gard nu minits ek lezot rikord nu lasosyasyon dan lang maternel. Nu anvi lang maternel vinn medyom formel dan lekol. Anfet nu anfaver drwa pu dimunn servi lang maternel nerport kan li anvi u kan li bizin. Nu montre kimanyer multilingwis ot nivo li dekul depi enn transfer depi *metriz lingwistik enn baz profon ankomen* ki devlope dan langaz maternel ver dezyem ek lezot langaz.

Zordizur nu, parey kuma tu dimunn, napa anfaver monolingwis. Ditu. Nu *kont* sa espes demi-lingwis (setadir kot dimunn pa konn okenn langaz ziska enn ot nivo akademik ek kognitif) ki sistem aktyel ledikasyon promuvwar. Nu anfaver ledikasyon *multileng baze lor lang maternel*. Nu anfaver protez drwa ki tu dimunn ena, drwa langaz maternel.

Ala semeri nu argiman:

1. Langaz imen li pa zis enn “mwayen kominikasyon”. Erer! Nu kapasite langaz, anterm evolisyon spiyshiyz, li anfet nu mwayen reprezant dan nu laservel tu seki nu kapte par nu bann sans depi lemond extern, ek tu seki nu kapte de nu prop emosyon ek panse prezan ek pase. Li nu mwayen konpran.

Alor, langaz li pa zis enn zuti *kominikasyon* pu imen. Li nu zuti natirel pu *reflesi*.

Langaz li natirel dan sans ki zanf anprann li san reflesi konsyaman lor la. Zanf anprann san okenn lanseyman formel. Li anprann depi so kamarad dan kartye kan li pe zwe.

Lefet ki nu imen, se lefet ki nu ena lang maternel natirelman. Syntax sa langaz ki nu koze natirelman (nu lang maternel) li form parti enn “*metriz lingwistik* ki ena enn baz ankomen” pu tu langaz. Fasil transfer sa *metriz* la.

2. Kreol ek Bhojpuri lang maternel 93% dimunn ki res dan tu lil Repiblik Moris. Dernye resansiman pruv sa. Li kapav plis dimunn ki sa, me pa mwens.

3. Kreol ek Bhojpuri zot langaz lor enn pye degalite ar lezot langaz, kuma Angle Franse. Si kikenn dir lekotr, ubyen suzantand lekotr, sa indik tu sinpleman ki li ena prezize kont dimunn ki koz sa bann langaz la. Ena fwa dimunn ki koz sa bann langaz la, zot mem zot finn adopte prezize kolon, e zot ena prezize kont zot-mem; apel sa enn sans “internalize” inferyorite.

4. Ena buku plas kot Leta ek lezot institisyon ki ena puvwar interdi Kreol ek Bhojpuri. An partikilye:

- o dan Lasanble Nasyonal, Kreol e Bhojpuri interdi.
- o dan lekol pa gayn drwa servi Kreol ek Bhojpuri kuma medyom formel ekrit, e mem kote oral li interdi mem dan bann premye lane lekol atraver *Education Act*, ek bann Inspekter ek direkter lekol;

- o Lasosyasyon pa gayn drwa sumet Minits, setadir memwar kolektif sosyete la, a Rezistrar Lasosyasyon dan lang maternel, mem kan reynion fer an Kreol ek/ubyen Bhojpuri; fode sumet an Angle Franse.

5. Li move pu interdi lang maternel dan Lasanble Nasyonal pu rezon swivan:

- o Li bes nivo deba a nivo metriz ki depite ena dan langaz etranze.
- o Li ranforsi prezize kolonyal kont langaz ki tu dimunn Moris koze.
- o Li anpes piblik konpran seki zot reprezantan, ki zot finn elir demokratikman, pe dir e pe fer dan Lasanble Nasyonal.
- o Li exklir lamwatye dimunn depi zot drwa demokratik pu poz kandida dan eleksyon.
- o Li diskriminatwar.

Lorla, vye vye argiman ki sanse “mazorite kont” servi Kreol kuma langaz ofisyel li enn mansonz. An 2009, SOFRES finn montre ki ant 27 ek 33% dimunn kont, setadir ant enn kar ek enn tyer. Pa enn “mazorite” ditu.

6. Interdiksyon lang maternel dan lekòl fer ditor parski:

- o Li anpes zanfàn devlop zot kapasite intelektiyel byen.
- o Li ankuraz aprann par ker, san konpran.
- o Li fer ditor sikolojik.
- o Li fer zanfàn ditor kiltirelman.
- o Li retir zanfàn depi zot grup lingwistik natirel e fors zot rant dan grup Anglofonn ek Frankofonn.
- o Li fer ditor mantal zanfàn grup Kreolofonn ek Bhojpurifonn.
- o Pinisyon korporel ki zanfàn sibir akòz zot pa pe konpran zot devwar, pu fot ki zot fer, fer ditor fizik zanfàn grup Kreolofonn ek Bhojpurifonn.
- o Li anpes zanfàn gayn akse a konesans, exepite si zot konn bann lang etranzer
- o Li lakoz to elve zanfàn ki pa konn ni lir ni ekrir ek nivo ba literesi parmi tu zanfàn lekòl, mem parmi seki fer byen.
- o Li fer zanfàn kit lekòl ubyen li fors zot aret lekòl boner.
- o Li lakoz to desek byen ot.
- o Li fer ditor zanfàn pu servi Angle ubyin Franse kuma medyom lanseyman sanki zot finn aprann sa bann langaz-la kuma size pandan 6-8 an, ek nek lerla kapav servi zot kuma medyom pu bann size ki pa dimann buku metriz lingwistik u intelektiyel, kuma pu art, lamizik ek fizikal edikasyon. Apre ki finn servi sa dezyem lang u lang etranzer kuma medyom pu size ‘fasil’, kapav itiliz zot pu tu size. Kapav anseyman Angle kuma size apartir Ferst.
- o Interdiksyon lang maternel tuf kreativite.
- o Li anpes devlopman zanfàn-la so metriz kognitif ek akademik langaz, mem si li permet so kapasite Kominikasyon Interpersonel Debaz devlope.
- o Li blok devlopman dan pei, parski devlopman repoz lor transfer konesans, ki asontur depann lor konpreansyon bann size ar konteni.

Argiman ki suvan servi sanse “enn mazorite dimunn kont” servi lang maternel kuma medyom li enn mansonz. An 2009, enn sondaz SOFRES finn demontre ki selman 38% dimunn kont. Sa sif ba dimunn ki kont li malgre pwa leritaz lor prezidis kolonyal e malgre lefet ki:

- 87% dimunn pa mem kone ki ena enn lortograf standard, “Graf Larmoni”
- 80% dimunn pena okenn lide ki finn ena leksperyans servi lang Kreol par lekòl prevok, san mansyonn lefet ki li finn enn sikse
- 93% dimunn pa kone ki dan Liniversite Moris finn ena kur lor e an Kreol.
- 90% dimunn pa kone ki ena diksyoner dan lang Kreol

7. Interdiksyon servi lang maternel dan Lasosyasyon li napa bon parski:

- Li detrir memwar kolektif dimunn zot lorganizasyon dan pei par fors zot gard kitsoz ki resanble enn minits dan lang etranzer.
- Li falsifye minits par fer zot swa interprete, tradir e note anmemtan (enn travay inposib) ek lerla re-lir apre ki finn interpret zot mantalman. Ubyin par ena 2 liv minits, tulede falsifye, parski swa finn tradir, swa pa konpran zot, uswa zot pa samem nots ki finn adopte formelman.
- Li fer sa bann dimunn ki pran swen kolektiv bann lasosyasyon develop enn leta despri birokratik tandi ki zot bann dimunn ki ena lespri pli demokratik dan sosyete.
- Dan enn fason arbitrer li limit swa demokratik lor kisannla dan lasosyasyon kapav eli kuma Ofis Berer lasosyasyon a dimunn ki ena plis skil dan lang etranzer.
- Li blok konpletman drwa liberte lasosyasyon a tu seki pa konn lang etranzer.

E anfet dimunn kareman anfaver sanz sa lalwa-la. Ena selman 30% dimunn ki kont servi Kreol pu minits pu Rezistrar Lasosyasyon, ek ena nek 42% ki kont servi Bhojpuri.

## Konklizyon

Ala kifer LPT finn pran linisyativ organiz enn Hearing Internasyonal lor ditor ki fer kan siprim lang maternel dan lekol.

*Extre depi Fayndings Hearing LPT lor Ditor Fer kan siprim Lang Maternel dan Lekol, 2009*



## KONSEP KLE DAN LEDIKASYON MILTILENG BAZE LOR LANG MATERNEL

**Lansyenman/aprantisaz par azute:** Zanfan servi e li devlop lang maternel ziska enn ot nivo kot formel, e anmemtan li azut lezot lang dan so repertwar lengwistik, atraver ledikasyon miltileng baze lor lang maternel. *Lekotrer:* lanseyman/aprantisaz par retire.

**Lang Maternel.** Li ena 4 definisyon: Langaz ubyen bann langaz ki u aprann anpromye, langaz ar lekel u idantifye e/ubyen langaz ki lezot dimunn idantifye ar u; parfwa langaz ki u pli kone, ubyen langaz ki u pli servi. Pandan u lavi, u kapav parfwa sanz lang maternel, dapre tu definisyon apar premye-la. Enn dimunn parfwa ena 2 ubyen plis lang maternel ("bileng/multileng kuma lang maternel"). Lang maternel otoktonn ubyen minorite parfwa apel *langaz leritaz* (sirtu kan zanfan pa konn zot byen), *langaz lakaz* (ki suzantand pa servi, ubyen pa ti devet servi, pu zafer ofisyel), ubyen *langaz lakominote* (ki inplike ki mazorite dan enn pei pa enn kominote). Dernye 3 term kapav (me pa oblize) kontribiye ver minoritiz bann langaz. Mem si zot pa konn (buku) enn langaz, dimunn ki surd ek dimunn otoktonn gayn drwa dir lang desiyn ubyen langaz ansestral zot lang maternel lor baz ki zot idantifye ar li.

**Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Langaz Maternel:** Sa li kot langaz bann zanfan li servi ofislyelman kuma lang lanseyman, dan kumansman dan tu size. Langaz etranze introdor dabor kuma enn size. La osi, li introdor anpromye oralman e plitar osi an ekri. Kapav anseyne dan langaz etranze pu kumanse selman dan size ki napa exzizan kote intelektuel ubyen lengwistik (e.g. P.E. ek lamizik, etc) e kot zanfan kapav fye lor kontex pu konpran seki pe anseyne. FODE PA anseyman zanfan dan enn medyom langaz etranze pu size ki exzizan kote intelektuel ubyen lengwistik (e.g. listwar, syans, matematik) avan ki zot finn etidye sa bann langaz la kuma enn size pandan 6-7 an ni avan ki, apre sa, zot finn servi pandan omwen 3-4 an pu anseyman size "fasil". Kumsa ki zanfan sorti depi seki li kone (langaz maternel) e li progrese ver linkoni, kumsa ki zanfan sorti depi size "fasil" e plito konsernan size/konsep/konesans konkret, e al ver size/konsep/konesans pli exzizan. Tu konesans ki zot pe gayne li pe batir lor seki zot deza kone. Zot kapav kumsa batir ek fye lor "metriz lingwistik ki kuma enn baz profon ankomen" ki tini pu tu langaz (*common linguistic proficiency for all languages*). Par exanp, li pli fasil aprann lir ekrir dan enn langaz ki u kone; zanfan bizen aprann lir enn sel fwa dan zot lavi pu ki zot realiz lyen ki ena ant seki zot tande ek seki ekrir lor baz. Enn sel fwa sifi, lerla transfer sa konesans la. Pu zanfan surd, li osi ena pu aprann servi langaz siyn enn sel fwa pu realiz lyen ant siyn ek mark lor papye, lerla li kapav aprann lot lang siyn. Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Langaz Maternel enn fason sir pu garanti ki zanfan aprann 2-3-4 lang ziska enn ot nivo.

**Program Sibmersyon/"nwaye-sipa-flote".** Sa li kan zanfan pe koz enn langaz ki ena stati ba e kot zot oblize aksepte lanseyman atraver enn langaz etranze ofisyel swa enn langaz dominan (parfwa kot profesor pa mem konpran zot langaz); suvan lang dominan pe menas langaz zanfan, pe mem riske ranplas langaz maternel zanfan la. Apel sa enn program skoler *par retire*. Enn lot varyan, se kan enn langaz mazorite zanfan li stigmatize (ubyen enn minorite li kraze) e zot oblize aksepte lanseyman atraver medyom enn langaz etranze e byen suvan kolonyal ki ena ot stati, akoz lanseyman pa existe dan langaz maternel, mem si gayn

drwa servi li dan klas oralman pu ed zanafan konpran seki profesor pe dir. Sa arive suvan kot ena plizir lang maternal, me kot pena profesor ki koz langaz enn minorite. Me li osi arive dan enn klas kot tu zanafan koz enn sel langaz, swa aköz pena ledikasyon dan langaz maternal ditu ubyen aköz profesor ubyen lekol ezite pu servi enn program kot langaz maternal servi kuma medyom. Parfwa profesor konn langaz maternal zanafan, parfwa li pa kone. Me, par sibmersyon seki arive se zanafan pa reysi aprann langaz etranze a enn ot nivo, e anmemtan langaz maternal perdi so plas e napa itilize pu aprantisaz dan domenn formel (e.g. zanafan pa reysi akerrir literesi dan so lang maternal). Suvan lekol fer zanafan onte so langaz maternal, ubyen li fer krwar ki langaz lanseyman li sipozeman siperyer. *Lekotrer*: Ledikasyon multileng baze lor lang maternal.

**Lanseyman/aprantisaz langaz par retire:** Sa vedit zanafan aprann enn nuvo langaz (enn langaz etranze ubyen dominan) *odetriman lang maternal*, ki li vinn ranplase ubyen ekarte, e sa amenn enn sityasyon diglosik. Sa individi la so repertwar lengwistik pa devlope. *Lekotrer*: lanseyman/aprantisaz par azute.

**Program tranzisyon exit-boner ek exit-tar.** Sa li enn model kot zanafan ki zot langaz ena stati ba gayn lekolaz dan medyom langaz maternal pu enpe lane; langaz maternal servi kuma instriman pu akerrir langaz dominan ek pu akerrir konteni. Dan program *exit-boner* sistem tir zanafan ver enn langaz dominan osito ki zot devlop (enn tigit) fasilite pu kominike dan langaz dominan, dizon apre 3 an. Dan program *exit-tar* zanafan gayn lekolaz atraver medyom langaz maternal ziska 5yem ubyen 6yem; parfwa kontiyne anseyman lang maternal kuma enn size dan kolez. Pu sa 2 program-la, zot bi se pu fer zanafan fer byen dan langaz dominan.

Extre depi Apenndix a Fayndings dan Hearing Internasyonal dan Ditor ki Fer  
kan Siprim Lang Maternal dan Lekol

## KIFER LEDIKASYON MILTILENG BAZE LOR LANG MATERNEL?

Ala enn-de kestyon ki suvan lotorite ubyen politisyen poze  
– e parfwa mem paran poz mem kestyon ...

Kifer bizen anseyn zanfan atraver medyom langaz maternal pu premye 6-8 lane?  
Zot deza konn zot prop langaz maternal, non?

Kan zanfan ariv lekol, zot kapav koz dan zot lang maternal tanki zot pe koze lor zafer konkre, lor zafer ki tulezur zot truve anfas de zot dan zot prop lanvironnman, e kot kontek-la evidan pu zot: zot kapav truv ubyen tat seki zot pe koze e zot gayn fiydbak tutswit kan zot pa konpran (“Mo pa ti pe koz mang, mo ti dimann twa amenn banann”). Zot koz alez, avek enn bon aksan natif, e zot konn gramer debaz e buku mo konkre. Zot kapav explik tu zot bezwen debaz dan zot lang maternal: zot ena *skil kominikasyon interpersonal bazik* (*SKIP, BICS an Angle*). Sa kapav-et li sifi pu Fers, kot profesor ankor pe koz zafer ki zanfan kone. Me, amizir lekolas progrese, zanfan bizen devlop konsep ki buku pli exzizan kote intelektuel ek kote lengwistik. Fode zot konpran e konn koz lor bann zafer byen lwen (e.g. dan zeografi, listwar) ubyen lor bann zafer ki pa truve mem (e.g. konsep matematik ek syans, konstitisyon enn pei, lazistis, demokrasi). Fode ki zot konn rezud problem inikman atraver langaz ek rezonnman abstre, sanki zot rabat lor kiksoz konkre (“Si dabor mo fer A, lerla D ubyen E arive; si answit mo swazir K, X kapav arive, me Y osi kapav arive; li pli bon fer B ubyen C avan”). *Metriz Lengwistik Akademik-Kognitif* (CALP an Angle) ki anfet nesaser apartir 3yem, e li devlope dusman depi 3yem ziska lafen primer, atraver segonder, tersyer ek tut long lavi. Zanfan oblize baz zot devlopman sa bann konsep abstre lor seki zot deza kone dan langaz maternal. Si devlopman CALP lang maternal (e sa li arive pandan ledikasyon formel sirtu) li kupe kan zanfan kumans lekol, kapav-et zame li pa pu gayn lokazyon devlop refleksyon dan ot nivo abstre dan okenn langaz.

Si montre dan enn langaz pwisan etranze ki enn zanfan Kreolofonn pa kone (e.g. Angle), zanfan asiz dan klas premye 2-3 an san konpran gran soz. Li zis repet seki profesor dir dan enn fason mekanik, san konpran, san devlop so kapasite panse avek kudme langaz, e sanki li aprann gran soz lor size ki lekol pe montre li. Pu sa rezon la ki buku zanfan Kreolofonn kit lekol boner, sanki zot finn aprann buku Angle, sanki zot konn lir ekrir byen, e sanki zot finn devlop zot lang maternal, e san okenn konesans lekol.

Si zanfan gayn so langaz maternal, isi Kreol, kuma langaz lanseyman, lerla li pu konpran seki pe montre, li pu aprann konteni so size, li pu devlop KLAKE dan lang maternal, e li ena buku sans vinn enn zanfan konn reflesi, avek buku konesans ki kapav kontiyn so ledikasyon.

Paran anvi zanfan aprann Angle (ek Franse). Si zanfan aprann sirtu atraver zot lang maternal pandan buku bann premye lane lekol, kimanyer zot aprann Angle (ek Franse)?

Tu program Miltileng baze lor Lang Maternal ti devet komans anseyn Angle kuma enn DEZYEM lang apartir Fers ubyen Segonn. Profesor konn langaz zanfan e osi Angle. Dan seksyon KLAKE langaz, laplipar li partaze dan langaz maternal ek Angle (ek lezot langaz

kuma Franse). Zanafan ena pu aprann lir ekrir enn sel fwa dan enn lavi, e li pli fasil aprann li dan langaz ki li konn byen. Kan zanafan fini konpran lyen ki ena ant seki li tandé ek kote, enn kote, ek sistem lir ekrir lot kote, dan so langaz maternel, sa konesans la fasil transfer dan lezot lang (mem si lekritir pa parey). Kan zanafan fini aprann enn konsep abstré dan lang maternel, li ena selman pu aprann nuvo letiket pu konsep, nuvo mo dan Angle; li deza konn konsep la. Kumsa selman kote langaz (Angle) ki nuvo; zanafan deza konn konteni so size (e.g. matematik). Tu langaz partaz enn mem metriz lingwistik ki ena enn baz profon an-komen (*“common underlying proficiency”*). Kan zanafan devlop sa byen dan langaz ki li konn pli byen, lang maternel, li fasil transfer sa metriz dan lot langaz. E kan zanafan deza bi-leng a ot nivo dan lang maternel ek Angle, li aprann Franse e lezot lang pli vit e pli byen ki si li kumans aprann Franse kuma enn langaz monoleng lang maternel. Li pran mwens lane e mwens kur pu aprann Franse byen. Tu resers dan lemond montre ki pli enn zanafan ena lang maternel kuma medyom prinsipal dan lekol, pli li aprann lezot size pli byen, e pli li aprann langaz dominan kuma Angle ek lezot langaz pli byen. Nonb lane ki bizen lang maternel kuma medyom li faktor pli inportan pu rezilta dan lekol ki lezot zafer, mem pli inportan ki stati sosyo-ekonomik paran. Sa ule dir ki Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Lang Maternel enn gran kudme pu zanafan ki zot paran mank mwayen ekonomik.

### Eski li pa sifi pu zanafan fer 3 an lekol dan medium langaz maternel, lerla anseyne an Angle?

3 an avek lang maternel kuma medyom li pli bon ki tu an Angle, me 3 an PA sifi. Devlopman KLAKE li de lwen pa ase apre zis 3 an lekol. 6 an dan lang maternel li minimem, me 8 an meyer. Etyopi, ki enn parmi bann pei pli pov dan Lafrik, ena enn sistem ledikasyon desantralize kot zot viz 8 an avek medyom lang maternel. Ena distrik finn swazir zis 4 ubyen 6 an Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Lang Maternel, lerla servi zis Angle. Kan konpar rezilta, enn imans letid montre ki zanafan avek 8 an dan langaz maternel (kuma medyom) avek Amharic (lang dominan Etyopi) ek Angle kuma size, ena pli bon rezilta dan syans, matematik, etc, e osi dan Angle. Seki ena 6 an pa osi bon, e seki ena zis 4 an dan zot lang maternel, ena rezilta pli feb, pli feb dan Angle osi.

### Paran rod lekol kot ena medyom Angle. Ki rezilta laba?

Buku letid dan Lend montre ki zanafan dan lekol prive medyom Angle dan bann premye lane konn Angle pli byen ki zanafan dan lekol Guvernman ki aprann dan lang maternel ubyen langaz rezyonal. Me, ariv 8yem lane lekol, konesans zanafan ki finn aprann par medyom Angle dan tu size lekol pli feb ki dan lekol Guvernman, e zot Angle pa meyer. Lor la, zot pa konn lir ekrir zot lang maternel e zot pena vokabiler pu diskrit seki zot finn aprann dan okenn langaz Indyen. Zot finn sakrifye konesans langaz Indyen e ase buku konesans lor konteni zot size, me zot gayn selman enn metriz feb Angle. Sa li anparti aköz konpetans an Angle bann profeser pa tro bon, me li osi parski zanafan pa finn kapav devlop enn KLAKE ot nivo, ni dan zot lang maternel ni an Angle.

**Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Lang Maternel pu premye 6-8 lane, avek bon lanseyman Angle kuma enn 2yem langaz ek Franse kuma enn langaz etranze/dezyem langaz, e osi lezot langaz anplis, avek materyel prodir lokalman, ki respe konesans lokal, pu enn bon rekomandasyon pu Moris, enn rekomandasyon baze lor resers.**

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, [www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org](http://www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org)  
 Extre depi Apenndix a Fayndings dan Hearing Internasyonal dan Ditor ki Fer  
 kan Siprim Lang Maternel dan Lekol



Ledikasyon pu Travayer's  
**INTERNATIONAL HEARING**  
on the Harm Done  
by the Suppression  
of the Mother Tongue  
in Schools



## THE ACTORS

### Official Opening of the International Hearing on the Harm Done by the Suppression of the Mother Tongue in Schools

Opening by Former President of the Republic, Mr. Cassam Uteem

LPT speech by Alain Ah-Vee

Presided: Rada Kistnasamy for LPT

### Members of the International Panel for the Hearing

The International Panel that acted as jury for the International Hearing consisted of seven people highly qualified for the work. Prof. Robert Phillipson chaired the panel very ably. All Panelists brought their specific qualifications to the Hearing. There are brief Curriculum Vitae for each of the Panelists at the footnotes to this chapter.

Jean-Claude Bibi, Barrister-at-Law

Prof. Beban Sammy Chumbow

Vidya Golam, teacher and writer

Prof. Vinesh Hookoomsing

Medha Devi Moti, retired administrator

Prof. Robert Phillipson

Prof. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

### LPT case preparation team

Lindsey Collen

Madu Gungadin

Anne Marie Joly

Afeeka Joolfoo

Shabeela Kalla

Ragini Kistnasamy

Rajni Lallah

with, on the MES Reports: Rada Kistnasamy

### Secretary to the Panel

Alain Ah-Vee

### The Witnesses

#### COMPLETE LIST OF WITNESSES

Jimmy Harmon, in charge of *Bureau Education Catholique* Pre-Vocational Programme in Mauritian Kreol.

Henri Favory, theatre co-ordinator, former primary school teacher

Vimala Lutchmee Pre-school Educator.

Robert Furlong, researcher into printed material in Kreol

Alain Munien, Director, Terre de Paix

Arnaud Carpooran, lecturer University of Mauritius, Co-ordinator, first-ever Kreol-Kreol Dictionary

Dev Virahsawmy, linguist, writer

Rada Kistnasamy (Ledikasyon pu Travayer), IT technician

Rama Poonoosamy, Former Minister of Culture, publisher  
 Mr. Gowtam Choychoo, retired police officer  
 Patrick Ramdony, teacher and writer  
 Suttihudeo Tengur, President of Government Hindi Teachers' Union  
 Samuel Lam, teacher in the BPS pre-vocational BEC school.  
 Sareesh Viramalay, pre-school educator  
 Veda Munian (Playgroup), pre-school teacher  
 Jessinnee Munian. Primary school pupil.  
 Gilbert Ducasse, teacher and union leader  
 Ally Hosenbokus, Prevok teacher non BEC school  
 Lindsay Dhookit, Lecturer at University of Mauritius.  
 Pushpa Lallah (Playgroup). Pre-school Educator.  
 Suresh Ramsahok, parent, taxi driver.  
 Lindley Couronne, Director of Amnesty International Mauritius Section  
 Marie-Claude Jolicoeur, Primary school teacher in Rodrigues  
 Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra, Ombudsperson for Children , former Attorney General,  
     Minister for Women's Rights & the Family  
 Gerard Lesage, social worker.  
 Marie-Rose Lapierre, adult literacy pupil.  
 Jocelyne L'Entete, adult literacy pupil.  
 Jugdish Goburdun, Former Minister of Health, testifying on Bhojpuri  
 Ricardo Louis, health worker, from Rodrigues  
 Meeniam Rungapen, adult literacy pupil.  
 Josian Zoïle, Mauritian Sign Language ( MSL)  
 Pratima Lokhun, Mauritian Sign Language.  
 Ram Seegobin , representative of LALIT.  
 Sandana Vellien, teacher of Tamil and mother.  
 Lindsay Aubeelack, adult literacy pupil.  
 Mohunparsad Burton, retired teacher.  
 Martine Mavisa, parent with her babe-in-arms.  
 Crystal Lorena Moonsamy, primary school pupil, daughter of Martine Mavisa.  
 Marcel Poinen, writer.  
 Alain Romaine, Catholic Priest.  
 Herve Hector, insurance company agent  
 Shiva Tirvengadam, Primary School Teacher.  
 Raj Runglall, who was teacher at Agalega Outer Island and, previously to that, in purely  
 Bhojpuriphone school.

***Audio submission from a witness:***

Steve Obeegadoo, Former Education Minister (plus transcription/translation)

***Written submissions from witnesses:***

Shameem Oozeerally, university teacher  
 Mala Toussaint, secondary school teacher  
 Elsa Wiehe, researcher

***DVD clips of witnesses, submitted:***

Alain Ah-Vee, individual testimony  
 Madhu Gungadin, individual testimony  
 Yannick Jeanne, individual testimony  
 Ragini Kistnasamy, individual testimony  
 Rajni Lallah, individual testimony

***Written reports formally submitted by organisms:***

MES reports on CPE Exams 2005, 06, 07, 08 submitted by MES.

National Human Rights Commission Reports 2006, 2007, 2008 submitted by the NHRC.

***Special Category of Witness (on DVD and in transcription and translation):***

Prof. Derek Bickerton on DVD Film made specially for Hearing (also in booklet form with translation).

**LALIST KONPLET TEMWEN**

Jimmy Harmon, responsab Program Prevok *Bureau Education Catholique* dan langaz Kreol Morisyen.

Henri Favory, kordinater teat, ansyen profesor Primer

Vimala Lutchmee, profesor Preskoler.

Robert Furlong, serser materyel inprime an Kreol

Alain Muneean, Direkter *Terre de Paix*

Arnaud Carpooran, lektyurer Liniversite Moris, Kordinater premye diksyoner Kreol-Kreol.

Dev Virahsawmy, lingwis, ekriven

Rada Kistnasamy (Ledikasyon pu Travayer), Teknisyen kompyuter

Rama Poonoosamy, Ansyen Minis Kiltir, peblisher

Mr.Gowtam Choychoo, polisye retirete

Patrick Ramdhony, profesor e ekriven

Suttyhudeo Tengur, Prezidan Government Hindi Teachers' Union

Samuel Lam, profesor kot Prevok BEC kolez BPS.

Saresh Viramalay, profesor Preskoler

Veda Munian (Playgroup), profesor Preskoler

Jessinne Munian, zelev lekol Primer.

Gilbert Ducasse, profesor ek dirizan sindikal

Ally Hosenbokus, profesor Prevok non BEC

Lindsay Dhookit, lektyurer Liniversite Moris.

Pushpa Lallah (Playgroup), profesor Preskoler

Suresh Ramsahok, paran, sofer taxi.

Lindley Couronne, Direkter Amnesty International Seksyon Moris

Marie-Claude Jolicoeur, Profesor Primer dan Rodrig

Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra, Ombudsperson pu Zanfan, ansyen Atorney Jeneral, Minis

Drwa Fam ek Lafamiy.

Gerard Lesage, travayer sosyal.

Marie-Rose Lapierre, zelev kur literesi pu adilt.

Jocelyne L'Entete, zelev kur literesi pu adilt .

Jugdish Goburdhun, ansyen Minis Lasante, temwayne lor Bhojpuri

Ricardo Louis, travayer lopital depi Rodrig

Meeniamia Rungapen, zelev kur literesi pu adilt.

Josian Zoïle, Lang deSiyn Morisyen ( MSL)

Pratima Lokhun, Lang deSiyn Morisyen (MSL).

Ram Seegobin , reprezantan LALIT.

Sandana Vellien, profesor Tamil ek mama.

Lindsay Aubeelack, zelev kur literesi pu adilt.

Mohunparsad Bhurtun, profesor retirete.

Martine Mavisa, paran ar zanfan dan lebra.

Crystal Lorena Moonsamy, zelev lekol Primer, tifi Martine Mavisa.

Marcel Poinen, ekriven.

Alain Romaine, Pret katolik.

Herve Hector, azan konpayni lasirans  
Shiva Tirvengadam, profesor lekol Primer.  
Raj Runglall, deza travay profesor Agalega ek avansa ti travay dan lekol kot zelev zis  
Bhojpurifonn.

***Temwanyaz odyo:***

Steve Obeegadoo, ansyen Minis Ledikasyon (plis transkripsyon/tradiksyon)

***Temwanyaz ekrit:***

Shameem Oozeerally, profesor Liniversite

Mala Toussaint, profesor kolez.

Elsa Wiehe, serser

***Temwanyaz lor Klip DVD:***

Alain Ah-Vee, temwanyaz antan individi

Madhu Gungadin, temwanyaz antan individi

Yannick Jeanne, temwanyaz antan individi

Ragini Kistnasamy, temwanyaz antan individi

Rajni Lallah, temwanyaz antan individi

***Rapor an ekri sumet formelman par bann linstitisyon:***

Rapor MES lor Exame CPE 2005, 06, 07, 08 depoze par MES.

Rapor Komisyon Nasyonal Drwa Imen 2006, 2007, 2008 depoze par NHRC.

***Temwen dan kategori Spesyal (lor DVD ek transkripsyon e tradiksyon):***

Prof. Derek Bickerton lor DVD Fim spesyalman pu Hearing (osi an form ti liv avek tradiksyon).

Lekip preparasyon ka pu LPT (Lindsey Collen, Madu Gungadin, Anne Marie Joly, Afeeka Joolfoo, Shabeela Kalla, Ragini Kistnasamy, Rajni Lallah)

**Volunteer Interpreters**

Ashish Beesoondyal

Lindsey Collen

Jean Yves Dick

Rajni Lallah

Pascal Nadal

Ram Seegobin

## THE HEARING

In the third week of October, 2009 in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius, *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* (LPT) gathered people together for a truly historic event: an International Hearing on the harm done to children by the suppression of the mother tongue in school. It took the form of a one-week *tribunal*. The Hearing was officially opened on 20<sup>th</sup> October by the former President, Mr. Cassam Uteem, who gave a moving speech. A speech in Kreol.

The LPT Mother Earth Hall on the Main Road in Grand River North West was furnished and fitted out just like a Court Room. The seven International Panelists sat behind a long table with a dark green table-cloth, each with a microphone in front of them, the three visiting professors with headsets over their ears. Prof. Robert Phillipson chaired from the middle seat. To his right were Vidya Golam, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Beban Sammy Chumbow. To his left, Vinesh Hookoomsing, Med Moti and Jean-Claude Bibi. All of them, in different ways, bringing with them the qualifications and experience necessary to judge the testimony that they would hear. Behind them was a banner announcing the Hearing. On each side of it, diagonally across the corners behind the Panelists, there were rattanware screens rounding the Hall off. The interpreters' discreet transmitters and receptors were also visible on tall stands behind the Panelists.

The "prosecution desk", also covered with a dark green tablecloth, was in the Centre, opposite the International Panelists, with its microphone, and from there, one by one, witnesses came forward, sat next to a member of the LPT prosecuting team who posed them the questions that introduced them, and they then gave testimony.

In all over 50 people testified, almost all in Kreol, the vast majority in person, but some in writing, some on audio tapes, and some on DVD film. Amongst the witnesses were children, one only six years old, there were parents and there were teachers. There were artists and academics. There were experts and lay people. There were people who cannot read and write. There were working people. There were trade unionists. There were politicians.

Throughout the Hearing, at the entrance to the Hall, there was a reception desk, screened from the rest of the Hall by folding rattanware screens. People in the audience were invited by the Chair to leave the Hall discreetly, as they wished, to help themselves to tea, coffee, juice and biscuits on the Verandah outside. The wide back door was also screened off, so that people were free to move about without disturbing the concentration of the witnesses, the Panelists or the audience. Reporters could be seen interviewing people on the upstairs open Kiosk behind the Hall.

The interpreters box was in pine wood, at the rear of the Hall. The seven volunteer interpreters could be seen looking through the glass windows at the Panelists and the witnesses.

A long table at the back of the Hall had a permanent exhibition of written materials in Kreol and Bhojpuri.

The public was seated, often transfixed, on both sides of the "prosecution desk". Those who do not understand English had their headsets on their heads, so that they could understand the questions and comments made by the International Panelists from abroad. During testimony, even though it was on weekdays, and for the Findings on the Saturday, the Hall was packed full. The audience was influenced by the fact that the witnesses were all very serious in their approach. Often, quite unexpectedly, the testimony was extremely

moving. People in the audience on a few occasions had tears in their eyes. The proof of harm just went on and on being expressed in a thousand ways. A number of witnesses, quite independently one of another, used the term “crime” to express what they felt the policy represented. At one moment, when someone described the punishments she had endured at school for speaking her mother tongue, people muttered, “But that’s torture,” “It’s torture.” In fact, there was a long and sad list of physical abuse: children for generations being hit with peeled laurel sticks, being asked to present their tiny fingers on one hand all drawn together facing upwards only to have them beaten by the narrow edge of a ruler, having their ears turned, having their heads hit, being made to kneel down on filao seeds, being locked up in storerooms, having a pen put across their mouths (like a bridle) in order to make them pronounce French “properly”. Rote learning is still clearly the rule. There was a page produced showing how children copy rows and rows of senseless words, often copying them vertically, sometimes even letter by letter downwards on the page.

But the witnesses did not just follow one after the other, in random fashion. The LPT “prosecution team” had prepared a central “argument” that was fleshed out in the witnesses testimony. The team presented their thesis at the beginning of the Hearing, and then over the next three days brought their witnesses.

The hearing was in five different sessions. Witnesses would come forward, together with the LPT member introducing them, give their name, what was relevant about their qualifications or work to their testimony, and then give their evidence. Nearly everyone had prepared their testimony meticulously. They spoke relatively slowly, so as to allow the interpreters to translate accurately. At one point, the special witness, Prof Derek Bickerton gave testimony in the form of a 30 minute DVD film, and there were five clips of DVD testimony each about two minutes from five different witnesses, mainly on the severity of the punishments meted out to those not using French or English at school. Written and audio testimony was also presented to the International Panel.

One teacher said “I plead guilty!” to having caused harm. Another said, “I am an accomplice in the harm that’s being done!” Others said they use Kreol all the time in the classroom, even though they get into trouble with Inspectors and Headmasters. A parent said had she known what she now knows, she would never have sent her daughter to a Convent where her mother tongue was suppressed. Adults who had been through the school system without learning to read and write came forward and spoke out about the humiliation they had suffered. People spoke in their formal roles (as teachers, for example), but also as children who had themselves suffered in the schooling system. As many as four former Ministers gave evidence. The Ombudsperson for Children testified. The main experts on the Kreol and Bhojpuri languages testified: Dev Virahsawmy, Arnaud Carpooran, Jugdish Goburdhun, Henri Favory, Jimmy Harmon, Rama Poonoosamy and others. *Lalit* was the only political party that testified. A Prevok-BEC teacher gave evidence on the difference it made when children were suddenly allowed to use their own language in school. The Terre de Paix Director gave evidence of the transformation in difficult children at school when Kreol is used: they change from being violent to being interested in learning. One witness gave evidence of the liberation he had felt when he learnt the Mauritian Sign Language. Being deaf himself, he testified in Mauritian Sign Language. This was translated first into Kreol, and then by the volunteer interpreters into English. Two State institutions sent written depositions: the National Human Rights Commission and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

Some evenings the Panel would hold deliberations. And Friday and Saturday morning were reserved for deliberations. On Saturday afternoon, the public heard the Executive Summary of the Findings of the Hearing. They left home with 100 of the very first copies of the Findings – in both English and Kreol versions.



## Executive Summary **FINDINGS** & Recommendations

*“You didn’t fail in school. The school failed you.”*

### Preamble

Mauritius is in an exceptionally favourable position when compared with virtually all other postcolonial countries. Nearly all its citizens speak one language, namely Kreol. Yet this resource for national unity and development is systematically marginalised in education. Failure to do so results in the education system failing large numbers of Mauritian children. Prejudice and ignorance about the language are widespread.

A second major Mauritian advantage is that its teachers, like most of its citizens, are bilingual, if not multilingual. Yet the education system mainly concentrates on using one language, English, as the main medium for instruction and learning. This counteracts achievement of the goal of preparing schoolchildren to function multilingually both nationally and internationally.

*Ledikasyon pu Travayer* was convinced of the need for a public Hearing. It took the form of eliciting testimony from a wide range of witnesses. The task of the International Panel (see Appendix A for their qualifications and experience) was to analyse Mauritian language and education experience, and specifically the harm resulting from the neglect of the mother tongue in the school, and to make recommendations.

### The Mauritian linguistic, educational and social context

The Former President, Cassam Uteem, when officially opening the International Hearing, speaking in Kreol, referred to education in Mauritius as elitist, and to the suppression of the mother tongue in school. This causes harm to children, and therefore to future adults and to society as a whole. It aggravates and perpetuates poverty.

Schooling is compulsory from 5 to 16 years of age.

Official census data of 2000 shows that 70% of Mauritians declare that they speak Kreol at home, that 12% speak Bhojpuri, and that smaller numbers use a combination of other languages, including 5% who speak both Bhojpuri and Kreol.

The educational regulations decree a primary focus on the use and learning of English and secondarily French, while ancestral languages are studied as optional subjects. In the first three years, other languages, for instance Kreol, can be drawn upon.

Language learning occupies a big part of the school curriculum in Mauritius because there are many languages to be learned. This represents a formidable challenge to young learners right from the start because most of these languages are generally not their mother tongues.

Learning a second or a foreign language and at the same time learning other subjects through a second or foreign language makes the life of the young Mauritian child almost unbearable. Part of the explanation for this complex situation lies in the language history of

Mauritius, which has been one of the dominance of the masters' languages, the obliteration of the slaves' mother tongues and the emergence of a native language, Kreol. Long considered as a patois, Kreol is therefore supposedly not deemed to be a "proper" language for systemic use in education.

Among the Asian languages brought in after the abolition of slavery, Bhojpuri, the dominant mother tongue, was progressively overshadowed by the Indian languages, for instance Hindi, now officially promoted as ancestral languages.

Mauritian Kreol appears now to have established itself as the national language of Mauritius. The language statistics published in the draft Educational Reform Plan 2008-20 show that Mauritian Kreol (70%), Bhojpuri (12%) and combinations of Kreol and Bhojpuri with other languages (11%) are the mother tongues of more than 90 percent of the population. Therefore special attention should be focused on Kreol, on Mauritian Bhojpuri, which appears to be an endangered mother tongue, and on Mauritian Sign Language as a mother tongue.

There is an urgent need to revisit the issue of mother tongue in education, in line with universal language rights, as enshrined in International Conventions dealing with the right to education, access to education, the right not to be discriminated against in education on the basis of language, and the right to equal protection of the law, also in education. The United Nations' **Convention on the Rights of the Child** of 1989 (the "CRC"), one of the international human rights documents that Mauritius is a state party to, stipulates, among other things, the following: a basic right to education is set out in Article 28, paragraph 1, in which the States parties to the CRC recognize *the right of the child to education*. The paragraph also provides that with a view to achieving this right "progressively and *on the basis of equal opportunity*", States will take a range of steps, including, in subparagraph (e), *measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates*. Article 29, subparagraph (a) stipulates that education shall be directed to the *development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential*. Article 29, subparagraph (d) stipulates that education should be directed to the development of *respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values*.

The voluminous submissions received from the witnesses (see Appendix B, List of witnesses) during the Hearing sessions tend to confirm the current status of mismatch between the status of the mother tongues in Mauritian society at large and their marginalization within the school.

### Findings based on the testimony, written & spoken, submitted to the Hearing

1. A large volume of written evidence was submitted to the International Hearing, including legislation pertinent to the prevailing educational system (see Appendix C. List of written depositions). 47 witnesses contributed testimony in person, and their oral testimony was in most cases buttressed and illustrated by documentary evidence. All members of the International Panel had ample opportunity to interrogate the witnesses. Five DVD films and one audio clip recording were also made available to International Panel. The Hearing considered the expert evidence of Professor Bickerton.

2. The International Panel gave due consideration to all the evidence produced. We paid particular attention to the testimony of primary school teachers, pupils/students and their parents. A pupil as young as six testified. We are satisfied that the evidence we heard was pertinent, authentic and reliable.

3. The evidence established beyond doubt the following:

a) the written language used as the medium of instruction in schools is English and the formal oral languages used are English and French as provided in the *Education Act*.

Schooling is free and compulsory from 5 to 16 years of age. There is, though, evidence of significant absenteeism.

b) it is permissible to have recourse to Kreol in the initial years to facilitate understanding, but it is not allowed to use Kreol as the medium of instruction. Educational material in Kreol is not allowed and is therefore not available in schools.

4. The language policy adopted in primary education has dramatic consequences. The rate of failure after nine years of schooling is astoundingly high. Its continuance cannot be justified even though it can be explained by the unwillingness displayed so far by the relevant authorities and, ultimately, by the Government to muster sufficient political courage to address this national problem with alarming consequences. The functional literacy rate is also alarmingly low. At the core of the education system is a language policy that fails to develop children's full potential in terms of their cognitive, emotional, psychological and social growth.

5. The International Panel heard evidence that indicated conclusively that, alongside academic failure, there are a number of closely related problems that malign the whole system: high rates of absenteeism, high push-out rates (euphemistically known as "dropout rate"), and lack of interest and motivation as well as an absence of creativity. Further, there was no doubt from the evidence adduced that grievous emotional and psychological damage is inflicted upon the children with immediate distressing repercussions for whole families.

6. Our attention was also drawn to the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) Examination Report 2004 submitted by the MES, in respect of the Science subject. It is therein mentioned that more than 25% of students could not be awarded any grade. It was also observed that they had poor language skills and could not communicate their knowledge in English. Today, five years later, the situation has not improved at all.

7. The sheer number of failures indicates the extent of the harm being done to children. An analysis of the evidence submitted demonstrates the nature of the harm and its extreme gravity. Indeed witnesses recurrently used the term "crime" to define both the language policy in force and its tragic consequences for the children.

8. As stated in the opening speech of Mr. Cassam Uteem, former President of the Republic, there is a direct link between the prevailing language policy, the non-acquisition of knowledge, and poverty. The evidence of several witnesses confirms this vicious chain of causes and effects, as was pinpointed by Mr. Cassam Uteem in his opening speech.

9. The International Panel is of the view that the testimony of the Ombudsperson for Children was both courageous and unimpeachable. Her testimony echoes perfectly what has already been observed by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child when dealing with the plight of Mauritian children. The said UN Committee expressed in clear terms its concern *"that English as the official language of instruction is not supplemented by educational materials in Creole and recommended that the State Party (i.e. Mauritius) should develop a policy regarding the use of Creole in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) stage and at primary levels"*.

10. The International Panel also deplores, just as the Ombudsperson for Children noted, that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources seems to ignore the urgent necessity of producing handbooks and educational materials in Kreol when there can be no doubt anymore that the need for these is urgent.

11. The International Panel heard evidence from a substantial number of teachers and from a trade union representing teachers, as well as worried parents. Their testimony indicates that many children are traumatised by their language and culture not serving as primary instruments for learning. A large section of the school population does not experience a favourable climate for learning. As a result, many children fail to benefit from schooling. Many are either mentally or physically absent. An equally shocking finding is that the teachers themselves are also in a false position. They are forced to work in an educationally unsound way, using English that is an inappropriate medium for the acquisition of basic literacy skills, a foreign language that is incomprehensible to the children. Teachers can be tempted to accept this situation as inevitable, since it is government policy, and to capitalise on it by augmenting a meagre teacher salary by delivering private instruction outside school hours. They apparently have an incentive to live with unsound pedagogy in school in order to augment their income outside it.

12. The case for using Kreol was strengthened when we assessed the testimony submitted by Prevok-BEC. The whole picture is not altogether bleak. There are real possibilities to improve the fate of Mauritian children. The Prevok-BEC representative explained most cogently why and how the use of the mother tongue – Kreol in most instances and Bhojpurī where required - is of paramount importance. They have implemented a language policy of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and the positive results that this produces are indisputable and were not disputed.

13. We need to remind all institutions and all persons concerned that Mauritius is a signatory to many human rights instruments that proclaim the rights of children, including the right to education and the right to non-discrimination (see Appendix D. International human rights documents considered, where we also cite some of them). As matters stand in the education system, there is overwhelming evidence that the suppression of the mother tongue is causing incalculable harm to Mauritian children. Indeed, the exclusion of Kreol as a language of instruction is more than sufficient proof that children who have Kreol as their mother tongue are being discriminated against and are being deprived of effective access to the kind of education they are lawfully entitled to under Mauritian law and under international law.

14. The Panel wishes to put on record its appreciation of the action taken by the government of Mauritius to recognize and promote the development of the Mauritian Sign Language and its introduction as the mother tongue of the Deaf Mauritian child at school.

15. The panel was also apprised of the issue of mother tongue in education in Rodrigues. The more homogeneous composition of its population and the political autonomy of the island should facilitate the adoption of the mother tongue in school.

Summing up, then, we have considered the legal basis of the right to education in international human rights law and the extent to which that right requires mother tongue medium education (Appendix D, International human rights documents considered). We have compared these to evidence produced by the witnesses, including the written documentation received (see Appendices B. List of witnesses, and C. List of written depositions). We have also consulted the massive international research evidence on language in education. Mauritius uses mainly English, or sometimes French, as the main medium of instruction with children whose mother tongue is not English, even if Kreol or Bhojpurī may be used orally. This is known as submersion education (see Appendix F, Definitions of key concepts used). We argue that various forms of submersion education *violate the right to education*.

This submersion education through the medium of a language, foreign to most of the children, *does not give children access to education*, because of the cognitive, pedagogical, psychological and sociological barriers that they create. Submersion education is inconsistent with the basic right to education, as set out in a range of international standards. While many of those international human rights standards do not explicitly require mother tongue medium education, their satisfaction nevertheless implies the use of mother tongue medium education.

The *prohibition of discrimination* and the requirement of *equal protection* of the law are cornerstones of international human rights law. From this perspective, mother tongue medium education is essential if equal treatment of Mauritian children in the education system is going to take place. The effective implementation of a range of international standards is also made difficult, and often impossible, by submersion education practices, while following these standards would be facilitated by mother tongue medium education.

The oral and written submissions confirm

- that a significant number of children fail to attend school;
- that despite following several years of schooling, a large number of students fail to achieve basic functional literacy in any language;
- that the educational failure adversely affects life chances, including employment prospects.

**Thus the present educational system in Mauritius often violates children's right to education. It often prevents access to education. It discriminates against children on the basis of language, and it does not grant children equal protection of the law. It can cause and often causes serious harm to children; this harm can have consequences for them during the rest of their lives. It also has negative implications for the country as a whole, in terms of lack of development and use of the full potential of its people in terms of cognitive, emotional and educational capabilities and creativity, and in terms of both democratic participation and economic development.**

On the other hand, in comparison with many other countries, Mauritius is in a very good position to change, because there have been many positive experiments (e.g. the Playgroups, Prevok) and most teachers are bilingual or multilingual. Timely implementation of the right decisions can lead to Mauritius becoming a regional hub for linguistic and educational, research and development excellence in mother tongue based multilingual education, mother-tongue-based multilingual education. This should be a priority goal for the Education Strategic Plan 2008-2020.

## Which way forward?

Would it help to teach children through the medium of Kreol or Bhojpuri for the first 3-4 years, and then “exit” them to English-medium teaching (so called early-exit transitional programme, see Appendix F. Definitions of key concepts used)? Kathleen Heugh (2009) asks the question how long it takes to learn a foreign or second language for educational purposes, and, listing many sources, answers: “*From 1953 to the mid 1980s, most literacy/language education specialists thought that it would be possible to provide early literacy (**learning to read**) in MT and switch to L2/FL (**reading to learn**) by years 2 or 3. We now know from comprehensive studies in Scandinavia, Australia, Russian Federation, India, North America, and, especially in Africa that it takes 6 - 8 years to **learn** enough L2 to be able to **learn through the L2***”. Kathleen Heugh also summarises the African experience on early-exit transitional models on the basis of many large-scale studies: “Early transition to the international language of wider communication/ILWC across Africa is accompanied by:

- Poor literacy in L1 & L2 (SACMEQ 11 2005; UIE-ADEA study 2006; HSRC studies in S Africa 2007)

- Poor numeracy/mathematics & science (HSRC 2005; 2007)
- High failure and drop-out rates (Obanya 1999; Bamgbose 2000)
- High costs/ wastage of expenditure (Alidou et al 2006).”

Heugh also states (2009: 97-98) that “*early transition from the MT to the educational second language in African settings does not facilitate the requisite competence in the second language. High-level linguistic competence is necessary for meaningful access to the curriculum and without this the student is unable to engage with educational materials and discourse. Education in the former colonial (second) language therefore, does not offer equity with MTM education and it cannot deliver quality education. The comprehensive ADEA-UIE stock-taking evaluation of mother-tongue and bilingual programmes across sub-Saharan Africa found no evidence that second language only or early transition to the second language programmes produce successful academic achievement for students (Alidou et al 2006). Several cross-national studies show disturbing signs of poor achievement in literacy, mathematics and science, in the second language, across the region (UNESCO 2000). SACMEQ II (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality) 2000-2002 shows that 44% of learners in 14 countries achieve minimal levels of literacy at grade 6 whereas only 14.6% achieve the desired level of literacy achievement (Mothibeli 2005).*” These studies suggest that current language models fail most students and that the early transition to second language medium contributes to failure and attrition” (Heugh 2009: 110). Thus, mother-tongue based multilingual education (mother tongue based multilingual education), lasting minimally 6-8 years, is needed instead.

**Mother-tongue-based multilingual education** is education where the children’s mother tongues are officially used as the languages of instruction, initially in all subjects. Foreign languages are introduced as subjects, first orally, later also in writing. Some teaching can be done through the medium of these foreign languages, initially in subjects which are not intellectually or linguistically demanding (e.g. physical education, music, etc) and where the children can use the context to understand the teaching. Children should NOT be taught through the medium of these foreign languages in intellectually or linguistically demanding subjects (e.g. history, science, mathematics) before they have studied these languages at least 6-7 years as subjects and before they have had at least 3-4 years of teaching through these languages in “easy” subjects. In this way, children go from the known (the mother tongue) to the unknown, from the “easy” more concrete subjects/ concepts/ knowledge, to more demanding subjects/ concepts/ knowledge. They can build all further knowledge on what they already know. They can use the common underlying proficiency for all languages. It is easier, for instance, to learn to read and write in a language that one knows; children need to learn reading only once, the realisation of the relationship between what one hears (or signs) and what one sees on a page, needs to come only once, and is then easily transferred to other languages. mother tongue based multilingual education is a secure way to ensuring that children learn 2-3-4 languages at a high level.

In some African and Asian countries, mother tongue based multilingual education includes four languages: the mother tongue, a provincial/state language, the national language, and an international language (which may be the official language of the state). The specific number of languages in mother tongue based multilingual education depends on the language situation and the language policy of the particular state. What is important is that the mother tongue is the initial language of instruction.

Research has shown conclusively that minoritised children (children whose mother tongues are not official languages in the countries where they live) whose early education is in the language of their home, tend to do better in all subjects, including the official (or international) language (for instance English) than children who are being taught through the medium of the official language, foreign to the child. The longer the mother tongue is

the main medium of education, the better the results. The medium of education is the most important factor influencing these children's school achievement. It is even more important than their socioeconomic position. Thus mother tongue based multilingual education can function to promote social equality.

The use of the MT as medium has the advantage that the child knows the medium to a reasonable extent at school age. The MT can therefore serve as the foundation of acquiring new concepts, new knowledge and a bridge for learning of a second or foreign/official language and any number of languages.

Consequently, the MT as the first language of instruction strengthens the social, cultural, psychological, cognitive and affective variables in learning, thus building confidence in the children that leads to a strong motivation and a positive attitudes towards self and others. Ultimately this results in a better performance.

Conversely, research and controlled experiments have established that starting education in a second or foreign language (not known by the child), triggers negative effects of socio-cultural, psychological and cognitive variables. This erodes confidence, sap motivation and negatively affect attitudes, leading to failure or poor performance, resulting ultimately in repetition of classes and/or pushout.

Among many advantages of mother tongue based multilingual education education, children can become multilingual and multicultural. They are also multiliterate: they can read and write competently in the mother tongue, the national language and one or more international languages of wider communication such as English or French.

It has been shown that properly implemented mother tongue based multilingual education can even in the short term cost less than the present submersion system with teaching through the medium of a foreign language (e.g. Burkina Faso), or, if it requires new materials, revised teacher training and retraining, etc, the cost may initially be around 1-2% of the education budget. In the long term, mother tongue based multilingual education saves educational and societal costs because it to a large extent can eliminate the appalling human and economic wastage caused by submersion education.

UNESCO has, since 1953, emphatically declared that *'the use of the mother tongue in education from infancy and as far up the ladder of education as possible'* is crucial for development of the child. Recent UNESCO positions emphasize the need to preserve multilingualism and linguistic and cultural diversity by every member nation of the Union. The adoption and use of mother tongue based multilingual education policy constitutes an obvious way of maintaining multilingualism, or conserving linguistic and cultural diversity. UNESCO published in 2003 an Education Position Paper: *"Education in a multilingual world"*. It replaces UNESCO's classic book, *The use of vernacular languages in education* (Paris, 1953). In its first principle, UNESCO supports mother tongue medium instruction "as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers". Mother tongue medium instruction "is essential for initial instruction and literacy" and should "be extended to as late a stage in education as possible". In Principle II, *"UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies."* Principle III (II), advocates the implementation of "the right to learn in the mother tongue" and the "full use of culturally appropriate teaching methods of communication and transmission of knowledge" and Principle III(III), advocates that education should raise "awareness of the positive value of cultural [and linguistic] diversity". All this necessitates mother-tongue-based multilingual education.

Mother tongue based multilingual education is the educational language policy favoured and recommended by the African Union and the Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism. The adoption and implementation of mother tongue based multilingual education by any African state is necessary to comply with UNESCO and African Union

(AU) policy positions on languages in general and language-in-education policy in particular.

## The International Panel's Recommendations

1. The Government should urgently define in explicit terms its national languages policy in the light of –

- Conventions on language in education signed & ratified by Mauritius (see Appendix D).
- Latest research evidence on the education of children who need to become high-level multilingual under various circumstances.
- Findings of the International Hearing.

2. The Ministry of Education should enforce the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction, i.e. adopt mother-tongue-based multilingual education, mother tongue based multilingual education in schools, by

- introducing relevant instructional models and assessment, teacher education programs, curricula, teaching/learning materials, and parental and public awareness campaigns;
- adapting and extending the experience gained and materials produced by various NGOS in this area;
- mobilising the resources of modern technology for this purpose.

3. As a member of the African Union, Mauritius should take appropriate measures to formulate a comprehensive language policy which provides a new status and corresponding functions to Mauritian mother tongues (including Mauritian Sign Language) as languages of instruction and development for multilingual education (which includes English and French). This is in conformity with the African Union's Language Action plan for Africa, Title III, article 7(e) (see Appendix F, Recent African documents).

4. The Mauritian national languages policy should be clearly set out in appropriate legislation urgently.

5. The state should consider establishing a National Languages coordinating Centre [as provided for in the African Language Plan of Action Title III (article (e))], charged with co-ordinating the implementation of language policy and proposing solutions to language-related and language-dependent problems (article f). The Centre should be provided with adequate resources to undertake language development activities of standardisation, revalorisation, instrumentalisation and intellectualisation of Mauritian languages to assume their new functions in education and national development.

**The findings and recommendations of the Panel should be communicated, among others, to The Minister of Education, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Family Welfare & Child Development, to the Ombudsperson for Children, the Truth & Justice Commission, and other relevant bodies, to ensure that the needs and rights of children are safeguarded with respect to the principles of equal opportunities for access to and success in basic education and lifelong learning.**



Versyon Kreol  
Semeri Exekitif  
**FAYNDINGS**  
&  
Rekomandasyon

*“Pa u ki finn fel dan lekol. Lekol ki finn fel.”*

## Preambil

Moris dan enn pozisyon eksepsyonel, enn pozisyon buku pli for ki preske tu lezot pei post kolonyal: Preske totalite sitwayen Morisyen koz mem-mem langaz, langaz Kreol. Me purtan sa rezurs pu linite nasyonal e pu devlopman pa pe servi ditu dan sistem ledikasyon. Sa mankman la fer ki sistem ledikasyon pe fel dan ka buku zanfàn. Prezize e linnyorans lor langaz Kreol byen repandi.

Dezyem lavantaz ki Moris ena se ki profesor, parey kuma mazorite sitwayen, zot bileng, mem multileng. Purtan sistem ledikasyon met lanfaz lor servi enn sel langaz, langaz Angle, kuma medyom lanseyman. Sa li al alankont bi lekol pu prepar zanfàn pu fonksyone lor enn baz multileng, ki li onivo nasyonal ubyen onivo internasyonal.

*Ledikasyon pu Travayer* ti kone ki li nesese fer enn Hearing piblik. Sa Hearing la finn pran form ekut temwaynaz depi enn gran levantay dimunn. Travay sa Panel Internasyonal (Get Apenndix A pu kalifikasyon ek lexpéryans manb Panel) li ti pu analiz lexpéryans Morisyen kote langaz ek ledikasyon, e an partikilye pu get spesifikman ditor ki fer kan negliz langaz maternel dan lekol, e pu fer rekomandasyon.

## Sityasyon Lingwistik dan Moris, dan kontex ledikasyon e dan kontex sosyal

Ansyen Prezidan Repiblik Cassam Uteem ti fer luvertir ofisyel Hearing Internasyonal. Dan so diskur, ki ti an Kreol, li finn dir ki ledikasyon dan Moris li elitist; li finn fer referans a kimanyer kan siprim langaz maternel dan lekol, li fer ditor zanfàn, ki pu plitar vinn bann adilt, e li fer ditor a sosyete antye, e li usi agrav e perpeteye lamizer.

Lekol obligatwar depi laz 5 an ziska 16 an.

Dapre Resansman Ofisyel 2000, 70% dimunn Moris dir ki zot koz Kreol lakaz, 12% koz Bhojpuri, e enn pli tipti pursantaz dimunn koz plizyer langaz e ladan 5% koz Bhojpuri ek Kreol.

Lalwa ki guvern ledikasyon dir li primordyal servi ek aprann Angle. Apre vinn Franse. Langaz ansestral ena stati kuma enn size opsyonel. Pandan premye 3 zan lekolaz kapav servi lezot langaz, par exanp Kreol.

Aprantisaz langaz okip enn gro but kerikilem lekol dan Moris akòz ena buku langaz pu aprann. Sa li enn veritab chalenj pu bann zenn zanfàn kan zot pe demare parski tu sa bann langaz-la pa zot langaz maternel.

Pu zanafan Moris aprann enn dezyem langaz, ubyen enn langaz etranzer, anmemtan ki li pe aprann lezot size atraver enn dezyem langaz ubyen enn langaz etranzer, fer lavi enn zanafan preske insiportab. Nu bizen get dan listwar langaz dan Moris pu reysi konpran sa sityasyon konplex-la: langaz bann met-esklav finn domine, tandi ki tu langaz esklav finn sibir destriksyon, e nu finn gayn nesans enn langaz dan Moris, Kreol. Langaz Kreol, ki ti konsidere kuma enn patwa pandan buku letan, swadizan pa ti kapav servi li kuma langaz ki servi sistematikman dan ledikasyon.

Parmi bann langaz Oryantal ki ti amene apre abolisyon esklavaz, Bhojpuri ti langaz maternel pli repandi. Bhojpuri finn dusman dusman perdi so plas e ranplase par bann langaz referans Endyen ki asterla apel bann lang ansestral, kuma Hinndi.

Langaz Kreol Moris paret finn etabli limem kuma lang nasyonal Moris. Statistik langaz pibliye dan *Educational Reform Plan 2008-2020* dir ki Langaz Kreol (70%), Bhojpuri (12%) e konbinezon Kreol e Bhojpuri avek lezot langaz (11%) reprezant lang maternel plis ki 90% popilasyon. Alor seki nesaser se pu met lanfaz lor Kreol, lor Bhojpuri ki enn lang maternel ki andanze, e lor Langaz Siyn Morisyen, kuma lang maternel.

Li irzan zordi reget keston rol langaz maternel dan ledikasyon – dan kad drwa iniversel konsernan langaz, drwa ki finn gayn proteksyon bann Konvansyon Internasyonal ki liye avek drwa a ledikasyon, akse a ledikasyon, drwa a enn ledikasyon kot pena diskrimasyon lor baz langaz, e drwa a proteksyon egal lalwa dan domenn ledikasyon, usi. Moris finn siyn Konvansyon lor Drwa Zanafan 1989 Nasyon Zini. Paragraf 1, Lartik 28 *Konvansyon Drwa Zanafan* li lor ledikasyon kuma enn drwa fondamantal e li dir ki Leta siynater sa Konvansyon rekonet *drwa enn zanafan a ledikasyon*. Sa paragraf prekoniz kimanyer sak Leta “progresivman e lor baz sans egal” bizen adopte bann mezir pu fer kuma suparagraf (e) dir pu dekuraz absanteism e amenn redikasyon dropawt depi lekol. Lartik 29, suparagraf (a) dir ledikasyon bizen viz ful devlopman personalite zanafan, ful devlopman so talan e so kapasite fizik ek mantal. Lartik 29, suparagraf (d) dir ki ledikasyon bizen viz devlop *respe pu paran bann zanafan, e zanafan la so idantite kiltirel, so langaz e so valer*.

Volim imans bann sebmisyonn depi temwen (get Lalis Temwen dan Apenndix B) pandan sa Hearing-la vinn konfirm mismach ant stati bann langaz maternel dan sosyete Moris an zeneral e marzinalizasyon langaz maternel dan lekol.

## Fayndings baze lor temwayaz, ekri ek koze, sumet divan Panel dan Hearing

1. Enn gran kantite temwayaz anekri finn sumet divan Hearing Internasyonal. Sa finn inklir kopi lalwa ki konsern sistem ledikasyon (Get Apenndix C. Lalist depozisyon anekri). 47 temwen finn kontribiye anpersonn, e dan zot temwayaz oral, dan laplipar ka, zot finn ranforsi seki zot finn dir avek bann exhibit anform dokiman. Tu manb Panel Internasyonal ti gayn lokazyon interoz temwen. Ti ena osi senk fim DVD ek enn klip odyo. Panel ti gayn sa osi. Hearing ti osi benefisye depi evidenns exper avoye par Profesor Bickerton ki li ti fini anrezistre lor fim DVD depi avan.

2. Panel Internasyonal ti pran tu temwayaz an konsiderasyon. Nu finn ekut avek enn latansyon spesyal seki profesor lekol primer, zelev primer ek zot paran, finn dir. Enn zelev laz siz-an ti parmi temwen. Nu satisfi ki evidenns ki nu ti gayne ti pertinan, otantik e ki nu kapav fye lor li.

3. Evidenns finn etabli avek sertitid bann zafer swivan:

a) Langaz ekrit ki servi kuma medyom lanseyman dan lekol li Angle, e langaz oral formel ki servi dan lekol li Angle ek Franse, kuma *Education Act* spesifye. Lekolaz li gratis e obligatwar 5 a 16 an. Ena osi evidenns ki ena buku, buku absanteism.

b) Li permisib pu rabat lor Kreol dan bann premye lane pu fasilit konpreansyon, me li napa permet pu servi Kreol kuma medyom lanseyman. Okenn materyel edikatif an Kreol napa gayn drwa servi, alor Minister napa furni li.

4. Polisi langaz dan ledikasyon onivo primer ena konsekans grav. To esek apre 9 an lekolas, li byen for. Li inposib zistifye kontiyn avek sa polisi, mem si so explikasyon li kler: lotorite konserne pa ule sanze, e anfenkont, pena kuraz politik pu met enn fen a sa problem nasyonal avek so konsekans osi alarman. To literesi fonksyonel li telman ba ki li alarman. Osant sistem ledikasyon ena enn polisi langaz ki enn esek total kote devlopman ful potansyel nu zanfan, ki li kote kognitif, emosyonel, sikolojik ubyen sosyal.

5. Panel Internasyonal finn ekut temwayaz ki montre klerman ki, akote esek akademik, ena osi enn seri lezot problem ki liye ar sa, ki rann sistem an antye bankal: enn to absanteism byen ot, enn to evens zanfan byen ot (seki suvan apel “dropawt”, enn term ki maske esek sistem), enn mank lentere ek motivasyon zanfan, ek enn labsans kreativite. Anplis, pena okenn dut ki, depar evidenns ki finn amene divan Hearing, ena ditor emosyonel ek sikolojik extreman grav inflize lor zanfan, avek rezilta direk ki tromatizan pu zot fami antye.

6. Temwayaz finn osi atir nu latansyon lor Rapor Rezilta CPE 2004 ki MES finn sumet divan Hearing, lor kekyon size syans. Ladan li dir plis ki 25% zelev pa ti gayn okenn rezilta. Ti osi dir ki zot metrize langaz ti feb, e zot pa ti kapav kominik seki zot kone an Angle. Zordi, senk an plitar, sityasyon pa finn amelyore ditu.

7. Nomb esek, par li tousel, li montre nu letandi ditor ki pe fer zanfan. Kan nu analiz evidenns ki nu finn tande ek truve, li montre natir sa ditor la e komye buku li grav. Buku diferan temwen finn servi mo “krim” pu dekrir polisi langaz aktyel e so konsekans otan trazik pu zanfan.

8. Kuma M. Cassam Uteem, ansyen Prezidan Repiblik kan li ti uver Hearing ofisyelman ti dir, ena enn lyen direk ant polisi langaz aktyel, ek lefet ki zanfan napa pe akerrir konesans, e lefet ki ena povrete. Evidenns buku temwen finn konfirm sa lasenn koz-e-lefe dyabolik, ki M. Cassam Uteem finn diserne dan so Diskur Luvertir.

9. Panel Internasyonal kwar ki temwayaz Ombudsperson pu Zanfan ti kuraze ek sanzapel. So temwayaz ti donn enn leko presi seki deza nu finn truve ki Komite Nasyon Zini lor Drwa Zanfan ti dir, kan li ti dekrir sufrans zanfan Repiblik Moris. Sa Komite Nasyon Zini finn dir li klerman: *“Angle, kuma langaz ofisyel, li napa sutenir par materyel edikatif an Kreol, e finn rekomann ki Leta Sinyater (Repiblik Moris) ti devet devlop enn polisi konsernan itilizasyon Kreol onivo pre-primer (Early Childhood Development - ECD) ek lekolas primer.”*

10. Panel Internasyonal deplor lefet ki, kuma Ombudsperson pu Zanfan finn note, Minister Ledikasyon, Kiltir ek Resurs Imen paret pa realiz nesosite irzan pu komans servi liv lekolas ek materyel edikatif an Kreol, kan nepli ena okenn dut ki li irzan.

11. Panel Internasyonal finn ekut temwayaz depi ase buku profeser e depi enn sindikalist dan sekter profeser, osi byen ki paran ki pe trakase pu zot zanfan. Zot temwayaz montre ki buku zanfan tromatize par lefet ki pa pe servi zot langaz ek kiltir kuma instriman esansyel aprantisaz. Enn gran proporsyon popilasyon lekolas pena enn klima propis pu aprantisaz. Sa fer ki buku zanfan pa reysi benefisy depi lekolas. Buku absan – swa mantalman, zot pa la, swa fizikman zot pa vinn lekolas. Enn lot faynding soka se ki profeser, zot osi, truv zot dan enn pozisyon fose. Zot oblize travay dan enn fason ki zot kone pedagozikman pa fezeb, setadir servi Angle ki enn mediyom ki pa aproprye pu anseyn literesi debaz, enn langaz etranze ki zanfan pa konpran. Profeser tante pu aksepte sa sityasyon la kuma inevitab, akoz li polisi guvernan, e pu kapitaliz lor la atraver ogmant zot saler modest atraver donn

leson prive andeor ler klas. Aparaman, zot ena enn innsentiv pu viv avek pedagozi ki pa marse kan zot dan lekol, pu tus enpe plis kas andeor lekol.

12. Kes anfafer servi Kreol ti ranforsi par temwayaz ki ti amene par Prevok-BEC. Alor, tu pa perdi. Ena posibilite pu amelyor sor zanfan Moris. Reprezantan Prevok-BEC finn explik byen klerman kifer bizen ek koma kapav servi langaz maternel – Kreol pu laplipar zanfan, e Bhojpuri kot nesaser – e kimanyer li ena enn linportans absoli. Zot finn implimennt enn polisi langaz kot servi langaz maternel koma medyom e rezilta positiv ki zot finn prodir li indiskitab e anfet personn pa finn chalennj zot.

13. Nu bizen atir latansyon tu dimunn e tu institisyon konserne ki Repiblik Moris enn siynater buku konvansyon drwa imen ki protez drwa zanfan, inklir zot drwa a ledikasyon e drwa a proteksyon kont diskriminasyon (get Apenndix D. Dokiman drwa imen internasyonal ki nu finn pran an konsiderasyon, e ki parfwa nu finn site). Kuma li ete dan sistem ledikasyon, ena temwayaz par gran kantite ek bon kalite ki sipresyon lang maternel pe fer ditor imans zanfan Moris. Anfet, exklizyon langaz Kreol kuma medyom lanseyman li plis ki prev ki zanfan Kreolofonn pe sibir diskriminasyon e pa pe gayn akse efektif a kalite ledikasyon ki, dapre lalwa anplas dan Moris e dapre lalwa internasyonal, zot ena drwa gayne

14. Panel ule met lor rikord aksyon guvernman Moris ki finn rekonet e promuvwar devlopman *Lang Siyn Morisyen* (MSL) e pu introdri MSL kuma lang maternel pu zanfan surd Morisyen dan lekol.

15. Panel ti aprann lor langaz maternel dan Rodrig. Dan Rodrig lefet ki popilasyon pli omozenn anterm langaz e lefet ki ena lotonomi politik ti devet fasilite adopsyon lang maternel dan lekol.

An konklizyon, kuma semeri, nu finn get baz legal drwa ledikasyon dan lalwa internasyonal drwa imen, e ziska ki pwenn sa drwa la exziz ledikasyon dan langaz maternel. (Apenndix D, Dokiman drwa imen internasyonal ki nu finn pran an konsiderasyon). Nu finn konpar sa avek temwayaz ki bann temwen finn amene, inklir dokiman ekrit. (Get Apenndix B, lalis temwen, ek Apenndix C, lalist depozisyon ekrit). Nu finn get sa imans kantite evidenns depi resers syantifik kote internasyonal lor size langaz dan ledikasyon. Moris servi Angle sirtu, e parfwa Franse, kuma medyom prinsipal lanseyman avek zanfan ki zot langaz maternel li pa Angle, mem si parfwa ena profesor servi Kreol ubyen Bhojpuri kote oral. Apel sa polisi langaz la “sibmersyon” (Get Apenndix F, definisyon konseps kle servi). Nu argiman se ki bann diferan form ledikasyon “sibmersyon” li vyol drwa a ledikasyon.

Ledikasyon atraver “sibmersyon” dan enn langaz, ki etranze pu laplipar zanfan, kan servi Angle kuma medyom lanseyman anfet vedir *pa pe donn zanfan akse a ledikasyon*. Sistem ledikasyon pa donn akse parski li kree bann baryer kognitif, pedagozik, sikolozik ek sosyolozik a aprantisaz. Ledikasyon sibmersyon li alankont drwa ledikasyon, kuma mansyone dan enn seri lalwa internasyonal. Mem si buku sa bann konvansyon internasyonal pa spesifikman exziz ledikasyon avek medyom lang maternel, pu ki enn Leta respekté sa bann konvansyon la, fode servi lang maternel kuma medyom pu ledikasyon.

*Interdiksyon diskriminasyon ek proteksyon egal lalwa* zot 2 pilye lalwa internasyonal drwa imen. Depi sa perspektiv, langaz maternel kuma medyom ledikasyon oblize introdri pu ki ena tretman egal, pu ki pena diskriminasyon. Inplemantasyon reyel enn seri lezot stenndard debaz internasyonal, sa osi, li difisil, mem inposib, si servi metod sibmersyon. Si ti introdri langaz maternel koma medyom, sa bann stenndard ti pu respekté.

Bann temwayaz ek sumisyon an ekri finn konfirme:

- Ki ena enn ase gran proporsyon zanfani pa al lekol (absanteis);
- Ki, malgre plizir lane lekolaz, enn gran proporsyon popilasyon pa akerir literesi fonksyonel debaz dan okenn langaz;
- Ki esek skoler afekte u sans viv u lavi byen, e afekte u sans gayn enn plas travay konvenab.

**Alor, sistem ledikasyon aktyel Moris li byen suvan vyol drwa a ledikasyon. Li byen suvan anpes zanfani akerir ledikasyon. Li fer diskriminasyon kont zanfani lor baz langaz, e li pa donn zanfani proteksyon egal de lalwa. Li kapav fer buku ditor, e suvan li anfet fer buku ditor zanfani: sa ditor la kapav ena konsekans pu zot pandan tut long zot lavi apre. Li ena implikasyon negatif pu pei la an antye, aköz ena enn mank devlopman, enn mank a gayne aköz dimunn pa reysi gayn zot ful devlopman kognitif, emosyonel ek pa metriz seki zot aprann, pa reysi kree. Ena mem enn pert anterm partisipasyon dan demokrasi e dan devlopman ekonomik.**

**De lot kote, konpare ar lezot pei, Moris truv li dan enn bon pozisyon pu li kapav amenn sanzman, parski finn ena buku lexpertyans pozitiv (e.g. Playgroup, PreVoc) e laplipar profesor konn langaz zanfani plis enn minimem Angle ubyen Franse. Inplemantasyon atan bann desizyon korek kapav amenn Moris vinn enn pivo rezyonal pu resers langaz ek edikatif e devlopman ekselans dan Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Lang Maternel. Sa ti devet enn priorite pu Plan Stratezik Ledikasyon 2008-2020.**

## **Ki bizen fer anplas sistem aktyel?**

Eski li ede pu anseyne atraver Kreol ubyen Bhojpuri pandan premye 3-4 an lerla fer zanfani “exit” zot langaz maternel, setadir kit zot langaz maternel e shifte ver medyom Angle? [Apel sa tranzisyon avek exit-boner, get Apendix F. Definisyon konseps kle.] Kathleen Heugh (2009) poz kestyon komye letan li pran pu aprann enn langaz etranzer, ubyen enn dezyem langaz, pu bezwen servi sa langaz la dan ledikasyon, e li sit buku surs pu li reponn kumsa: “Ant 1953 e omilye lane 1980, laplipar exper dan literesi/langaz ti krwar ki li posib pu gayn literesi boner (aprann lir) dan langaz maternel e lerla shifte ver L2/FL (lir pu aprann atraver lektir) apre 2 ubyen 3 an lekol. Me asterla nu kone, apre resers vast dan Skandinavi, Ostrali, Federasyon Larisi, Lend, Lamerik Dinor, e sirtu dan Lafrik, ki li pran 6 - 8 lane pu **aprann** sifizan L2 (dezyem langaz) pu ki kapav **aprann atraver L2**”. Kathleen Heugh osi amenn ansam ek fer semeri lexpertyans Afriken lor model tranzisyon exit-boner kot finn ena bann imans letid:

“Tranzisyon boner ver langaz internasyonal ubyen langaz kominikasyon pli larz li kwensid avek:

- Literesi feb dan L1 ek L2 (SACMEQ 11 2005; UIE-ADEA study 2006; letid HSRC dan S Africa 2007)
- Nimeresi feb/matematik ek syans feb (HSRC 2005; 2007)
- To desek ot, buku zanfani kit lekol (Obanya 1999; Bamgbose 2000)
- Kut ser/ gaspiyaz depans (Alidou et al 2006).”

Heugh dir osi (2009: 97-98) ki “tranzisyon boner depi Langaz Maternel ver dezyem langaz dan pei Afriken pa fasilite konpetans dan sa dezyem langaz la. Konpetans avanse kote lingwistik li nesaser pu ena veritab akse a konteni kerikulem, e san sa, zelev pa kapav devlop enn lyen ar materyel edikatif ni terminoloji edikatif. Ledikasyon dan langaz ansyen kolon (segonn langaz) li pa amenn mem nivo ki ledikasyon medyom langaz maternel, e li pa furni ledikasyon de bonn kalite. Evalyasyon vast par ADEA-UIE dan zot rivyu langaz maternel ek bann program bileng dan Lafrik Sib-Sahara finn truve ki pena okenn prev, okenn indikasyon, ki swa servi kuma medyom selman enn dezyem langaz swa servi enn

sistem exit-boner depi langaz maternal, prodir rezilta pu zelev. (Alidou et al 2006). Buku letid dan plizir pei montre siyn bulversan ki ena literesi feb ek osi matematik ek syans feb kan servi enn dezyem langaz (UNESCO 2000). SACMEQ II (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality) 2000-2002 montre ki selman 44% zelev dan 14 pei gayn enn minimem literesi ariv 6yem ek selman 14.6% vreman letre ase (Mothibeli 2005). Sa bann letid sigzer ki model ki servi aktyelman dan buku pei pe fel, e ki tranzisyon boner li kontribye a to esek e a atrisyon.” (Heugh 2009: 110). Alor, ledikasyon milti-leng (mother tongue based multilingual education) ki baze lor langaz maternal (MT), bizen plito kontinye omwen 6-8 lane.

**Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor langaz maternal *vedir*** ledikasyon kot langaz maternal zanfan servi ofisyelman kuma langaz lanseyman, dan bann premye lane pu tu size. Langaz etranzer lerla introdri kuma size, dabor oralman, apre an ekri. Apre sa, enn ti-parti lanseyman kapav fer atraver medyom langaz etranze, sirtu dan size ki pa tro difisil kote intelektuel ubyen kote lingwistik (par exanp, PE, lamizik, etc) e kot zanfan kapav servi kontex pu devinn seki pe dir. Fode PA zanfan gayn lanseyman atraver medyom langaz etranze dan size ki difisil kote intelektuel ubyen lingwistik (kuma listwar, lasyans, matematik) avan ki zot finn etidye sa bann langaz etranze pu omwen 6-7 banane kuma size, e avan ki zot finn lerla travers 3-4 an lanseyman dan size “fasil”. Kumsa, zanfan sorti seki koni (lang maternal) al ziska lenkoni, depi seki “fasil”, size, konsep ek konesans pli konkre al ziska size, konsep, konesans pli difisil. Zot kapav batir tu zot nuvo konesans lor seki zot deza kone. Zot kapav servi sa metriz lingwistik ki existe kuma enn baz profon an-komen anba tu langaz. Li pli fasil, par exanp, pu aprann lir ekrir dan enn langaz ki u kone; e zanfan bizin aprann lir enn sel fwa, lerla li fini kone pu tultan ki ena enn lyen ant seki nu tande (ubyen seki nu truve si li langaz siyn) e seki ena lor paz. Li bizen realiz sa lyen la enn sel fwa, lerla li transfer li dan lezot langaz. Ledikasyon Miltileng baze lor Langaz Maternal li enn fason asire ki zanfan aprann 2-3-4 langaz ot nivo.

Dan serten pei Lafrik ek Lazi, ledikasyon li inklir kat langaz: langaz maternal, enn langaz provens, langaz nasyonal, ek enn langaz internasyonal (ki parfwa langaz ofisyel Leta la). Nomb langaz dan Ledikasyon Milti-Leng depann lor nomb langaz dan sak pei e polisi langaz. Seki inportan se servi langaz maternal dan kumansman lanseyman.

Resers finn montre dan enn fason kler e net ki zanfan minoritarize (zanfan ki so langaz pa langaz ofisyel dan pei kot li reste) ki so ledikasyon primer fer dan langaz ki li servi lakaz, fer mye dan tu size, inklir langaz ofisyel internasyonal (kuma Angle) ki zanfan ki aprann atraver langaz ofisyel, ki enn langaz etranze a zanfan. Pli lontan ki servi langaz maternal kuma medyom, pli rezilta bon. Medyom ledikasyon li faktor pli inportan ki afekte reysit zanfan. Li mem pli inportan ki klas sosyal. Alor, ledikasyon milti-leng ki baze lor langaz maternal li promuvwar egalite sosyal.

Kan servi langaz maternal kuma medyom ena lavantaz ki zanfan konn medyom ase byen kan li laz pu al lekol. Langaz maternal alor li enn subasman pu akerir nuvo konsep, nuvo konesans e li form enn pon pu aprann dezyem ek trwazyem langaz ubyen langaz ofisyel ubyen etranze, e nerport ki nomb langaz.

Alor, langaz maternal kuma medyom li vinn ranforsi febles kot ena varyab dan aprantisaz, kote sosyal, kiltirel, sikolojik, kognitiv, ek afektiv, e kumsa li batir konfyans zanfan e sa asontur amenn enn motivasyon pli for e enn latitud pozitiv anver zot mem ek lezot. Sa amenn pli bon performans apre.

Lot kote, bann letid (resers avek zanfan dan diferan filyer langaz) finn pruve ki si u kumans montre dan enn langaz etranze ubyen enn segon langaz (enn langaz ki zanfan pa kone), sa deklans lefe negatif kote sosyo-kiltirel, sikolojik ek kognitiv. Sa asontur sap konfyans zanfan, sap so motivasyon, e amenn latitud negatif, ki amenn esek ubyen move rezilta, e li amenn zanfan fer ripiterz ubyen kit lekol/lekol fors li deor.

Parmi lavantaz Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternal, zanfan vinn miltileng ek milti-kiltirel. Zot vinn milti-letre: zot kapav lir-ekrir byen dan lang maternal, dan langaz nasyonal, e dan enn ubyen plizir langaz pu kominikasyon larz, kuma Angle Franse.

Fini pruve ki Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel kan li inplemante korekteman, li pli bonmarse ki sa sistem sibmersyon aktyel, kot anseyne dan enn medyom etranze (e.g. Burkina Faso), e mem kan bizen nuvo liv ek materyel, kan bizen re-antrenn profesor, etc, ku inisyal kapav 1-2% bidze pu ledikasyon. Alalong, Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel li permet u fer lekonomi larzan, parski depans dan ledikasyon mwens ek depans dan repar ditor sosyal mwens, aköz u elimin gaspiyaz imen ek ekonomik ki gayne dan metod sibmersyon.

Depi 1953, UNESCO finn deklare kler ek net ki “servi langaz maternel dan ledikasyon depi tipti, e osi lontan ki posib dan lekol” li vital pu devlopman zanafan.

Resaman UNESCO finn met lanfaz lor nesese prezerv multilingwis ek diversite langaz ek kiltir, e sa finn gayn lakorite tu manb dan Nasyon Zini. Kan adopte Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel li enn fason mentenir multilingwis, ek enn fason konserv diversite lingwistik ek kiltirel.

An 2003 UNESCO finn publiye enn Papye lor so Pozisyon lor Ledikasyon: “*Ledikasyon dan enn lemond multileng*”. Sa deklarasyon li ranplas liv klasik UNESCO, *Itilizasyon Vernakiler dan ledikasyon*” (Paris, 1953). Dan so premye prinsip, Prensip I, UNESCO dir li promuvwar lanseyman dan langaz maternel “kuma mwayen amelyor kalite ledikasyon aköz pe batir lor konesans ek leksperyans zelev ek profesor”. Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel li “esansyel pu lanseyman inisyal e pu literesi” e bizin servi li osi lontan ki posib.”

Prensip II dir “UNESCO sutenir ledikasyon bileng ek multileng a tu nivo ledikasyon kuma enn fason promuvwar egalite sosyal ek ant garson ek tifi, e kuma enn eleman kle dan pei kot ena diversite lingwistik. Prensip III (II) promuvwar inplemantasyon “drwa aprann dan langaz maternel” ek osi promuvwar “itilizasyon metod lanseyman pu komunikasyon e pu transmisyon konesans ki apropiye kiltirelman” e Prensip III (III) promuvwar ledikasyon ki ogmant “awerness valer pozitif diversite kiltirel [e lingwistik].” Pu respekte tusa, bizen Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel.

Ledikasyon Milt-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel li politik langaz ki favorize e rekomande par Linyon Afrikesn, e Forom Internasional Bamako lor Multilingwism. Adopsyon ek inplemantasyon Ledikasyon Milti-Leng baze lor Langaz Maternel par tu leta Afriken nesese pu kapav respekte polisi UNESCO ek polisi Linyon Afriken (LA) lor langaz an zeneral ek langaz-dan-ledikasyon an partikilye.

## Rekomandasyon Panel Internasional

1. Li irzan ki Guvernman definir klerman so politik langaz onivo nasyonal alalimyer
  - Konvansyon Internasional lor langaz-dan-ledikasyon ki Moris finn siyne ek ratifye (get Apendix D)
  - Resers ek prev pli resan lor ledikasyon zanafan, ki ena nesese devlop multilingwis ot nivo dan diferan sikonstans.
  - Fayndings Hearing Internasional
2. Minister Ledikasyon bizen met anviger itilizasyon lang maternel kuma medyom lanseyman, setadir adopte enn ledikasyon multileng baze lor langaz maternel dan lekol, atraver
  - introdri bann model lanseyman ek asesmennt ki relevennt, introdri program antrenman profesor, kerikilem, materyel pu anseyman/anprantisaz ek kanpayn pu sansibiliz paran ek piblik.
  - adapte ek etann leksperyans ki finn akterir ek materyel ki finn prodri par diferan NGO dan sa domenn-la.
  - mobiliz resurs teknoloji modern pu atenn sa bi-la

3. Antan ki manb Linyon Afriken, Moris bizen pran mezir apropiye pu formil enn polisi langaz zeneral ki akord enn nuvo stati, ek asontur enn nuvo rol, a langaz maternal Morisyen (inkli Lang de Siyn Morisyen) kuma langaz ki servi pu lanseyman ek pu devlopman, pu ledikasyon multileng (ki inklir Angle ek Franse). Sa li konform ar Linyon Afriken so Plan Daksyon pu Langaz pu Lafrik, Tit III, lartik 7(e) (get Apenndix F, Dokiman Afriken resan).

4. Li irzan ki enn “polisi langaz pu Moris” onivo nasyonal ankadre dan enn lalwa dan enn fason kler.

5. Leta bizen konsider met dibut enn Sant Nasyonal pu Kordinasyon Langaz (kuma li dir dan Plan Daksyon Langaz Afriken, tit III, lartik (e)) ki pu ansarz kordinn inplementasyon polisi langaz ek propoz solisyon a tu problem lye u depandan lor langaz. (lartik f). Sa Sant-la bizen ena puvwar ek lemwayen pu organiz bann aktivite pu devlopman langaz pu standardizasyon, revalorizasyon, amenazman, instrimantalizasyon ek intelektualizasyon langaz Morisyen pu ki nu langaz kapav asim zot nuvo fonksyon dan ledikasyon ek developman nasyonal.

Konklizyon ek rekomandasyon sa Panel-la bizen avoy, antrot, a Minis Ledikasyon, Minister Drwa Fam, Byenet Lafami ek Devlopman Zanfan, Ombudsperson pu zanfan, Komisyon Zistis ek Verite ek lezot lenstitisyon konserne, pu asire ki bezwen ek drwa zanfan garanti dapre prensip sans egal pu gayn akse a ek pu reisit dan ledikasyon debaz ek aprantisaz tutlong lavi.



## About the PEOPLE WHO WERE ON THE INTERNATIONAL PANEL

**Jean-Claude Bibi**, is a Barrister-at-Law, member of human rights association *Justice*, writes in Mauritian Kreol and has worked on promoting the Kreol language. Author of *Law Keepers and Hypocrites* and *The Best Loser System: A Communal Perversion*. He was Minister of Justice and has been Mauritian Ambassador to Australia and Madagascar.

**Beban Sammy Chumbow** Ph.D Indiana (USA), is a Professor with specialization in Language Policy and Planning, in particular in relation to mother-tongue education and national development. He has been Vice-Chancellor of three different Cameroon Universities. He is currently Vice President of the Cameroon Academy of Sciences. He is also Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences. He is a member of the board of the African Languages Academy (ACALAN), which is the responsible for seeing to the implementation of the African Union's policies on language in education in member countries.

**Vidya Golam** has degrees from the University of London. He is Head of English at the Loreto College Quatre Bornes. He was Web-tutor for Educenet (the first virtual school in Mauritius) and chief coordinator for the English section. He has scripted and presented programmes for the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA). He regularly collaborated to the Culture section of *Le Militant* newspaper between 1976 and 1977. He has participated in various public debates on Kreol language and literature. His published creative works include *Kanser* and *Disab Dan Lizye* (plays), *Voltiz Tu* (a collection of poems), *Lonorab Yago* (a political satire) and *Honourable Yago* (an adaptation in English of *Lonorab Yago*).

**Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing** holds a PhD in Linguistics from Laval University, Québec, Canada. His areas of research and publication cover language, education and cultural studies in relation to Kreol and plural diaspora societies. Former Pro Vice-Chancellor for research, consultancy, and publications at the University of Mauritius, he headed the University's Language Institute project until he retired in May 2008. In 2004, he was entrusted by the Ministry of Education with the responsibility of producing a harmonized orthography – *Grafî Larmoni* – for the Mauritian Kreol language. He chaired the Linguistics Association of SADC Universities (LASU) from 2004 to 2007. His current responsibilities include the management and development of the Mauritian Sign Language, a government of Mauritius project. Among his relevant publications are: *Dictionary of Mauritian Creole*, co-authored with Philip Baker, l'Harmattan, Paris, 1987; and *Multiple Identities in Action: Mauritius and some Antillean Parallelisms*.

**Medha Devi Moti** graduated in English Language and Literature at the University of St. Andrews and holds a Diploma in Education from the University of Oxford. She joined the Ministry of Education as a secondary school teacher and taught English for ten years after which she was posted at Ministry headquarters. She served for the next 25 years in various departments of the Ministry, notably the Pre- Primary Unit, the Inspectorate and Arts and Culture Division. After retiring, she has acted as consultant on assignments for Unicef, ADEA, UNDP and the Mauritius Institute of Education.

**Robert Phillipson** is British, with degrees from Cambridge and Leeds Universities, and a doctorate from the University of Amsterdam. He worked in Africa and Yugoslavia before moving to Denmark, where he is a professor at Copenhagen Business School. His books on language learning, language rights, and language policy have been published in ten countries. He is involved in evaluating the European Union's policies for multilingualism. He is best known for *Linguistic Imperialism* and *English-only Europe? Challenging language policy*.

**Tove Skutnabb-Kangas** has doctorates from Finland and Denmark. She has published widely (over 50 written or edited books, over 400 book chapters and scientific articles) in over 30 languages on language in education, multilingualism, and linguistic human rights. She is emerita from Roskilde University, Denmark, and associate professor at Åbo Akademi University, Vasa, Finland. She has done specialized work on the relationship between mother tongue education and academic results. She has advised the UN, UNESCO, the OSCE and many national bodies on educational language policy, language rights, linguistic diversity and multilingual education. One of her books is the 800-page book *Linguistic Genocide in Education or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights*.

## Lor MANB PANEL INTERNASYONAL

**Jean-Claude Bibi** enn avoka. Li manb lasosyasyon JUSTICE. Li ekrir an Kreol Morisyen. Li finn travay pu promuvwar langaz Kreol. Li oter *Law Keepers and Hypocrites* and *The Best Loser System: A Communal Perversion*. Li ti Minis Lazistis. Li finn Anbasader Moris Ostrali e Madagaskar.

**Beban Sammy Chumbow** PhD Indiana (USA) enn Profeser ki spesyalize dan Polisi Langaz ek Planing, sirtu konsernan ledikasyon langaz maternal ek devlopman nasyonal. Li finn Vis-Sanselye 3 liniversite Kamrunn. Aktyelman li Vis Prezidan Lakademi Syans an Kamrunn. Li osi Felo Akademi Syans New York. Li manb bord ACALAN (Lakademi Langaz Afriken), ki responsab inplemantasyon polisi Linyon Afriken lor ledikasyon parmi pei manb.

**Vidya Golam** ena BA Honours Angle ek Diplom an Ledikasyon depi Liniversite Lond. Li Sef Departman Angle Kolez Loret. Li ti prof web pu Educenet (premye lekol vertyel Moris) e kordinater ansarz seksyon Angle. Li finn ekrir ek prezant plizir program MCA. Li ti kolaborater seksyon Kiltir dan lagazet *Le Militant* and 1976 ek 1977. Li finn partisip dan deba piblik lor langaz ek literatir Kreol. So piblikasyon inklir *Kanser* ek *Disab Dan Lizye* (pyes), *Voltiz Tu* (koleksyon poem), *Lonorab Yago* (satir politik) ek *Honourable Yago* (adaptasyon Angle *Lonorab Yago*). Li finn rediz *John Keats: Selected Poems* ek *Ngugi: A Grain Of Wheat*.

**Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing** ena PhD Lingwistik depi Liniversite Laval, Québec, Canada. Li finn fer resers e pibliye lor langaz, ledikasyon ek kiltir, anrelasyon avek sosyete pliryel dyaspora. Li ti Pro Vice-Chancellor pu resers, konseltennsi ek piblikasyon pu Liniversite Moris, Li ti ansarz proze Institi Langaz Liniversite Moris ziska li pran retret Me 2008. An 2004 Minister Ledikasyon ti met li ansarz rod enn lortograf armonye – *Grafi Larmoni* – pu Kreol Morisyen. Li ti cher Lasosyasyon Linguistik Liniversite SADC (LASU) 2004 ziska 2007. Purlleman, li responsab manej ek devlop Lang Siyn Morisyen, enn proze Guvernman. So piblikasyon inklir *Dictionary of Mauritian Creole*, ansam ar Philip Baker, l'Harmattan, Paris, 1987; ek *Multiple Identities in Action: Mauritius and some Antillean Parallelisms*.

**Medha Devi Moti** ti zwenn Minister Ledikasyon antan ki profeser segonder. Li ti travay profeser pu 10 an, e lera li ti dan Minister. Li ena 25 an lexparyans dan diferan seksyon Minister, kuma Yunit Pre-Primer, Inspektora, ek Divizyon Lar ek Kiltir. Depi so retret, li finn konsiltan Unicef, ADEA, UNDP ek Mauritius Institute of Education. So degre li an Angle ek Literatir Anglez Liniversite St. Andrews an Ekos, e li ena Diploma an Ledikasyon depi Liniversite Oxford.

**Robert Phillipson** enn Britanik, avek degre depi Cambridge ek Leeds. So doktora depi Liniversite Amsterdam. Li ti travay Lalzeri ek Yugoslavi avan ki li res Dannmark, kot li Prof. Angle ek Pedagozi Langaz Copenhagen Business School. So liv, pibliye dan 10 pei, sirtu lor aprantisaz langaz, drwa imen lingwistik, polisi langaz. So liv ki pli koni se

*Linguistic imperialism*, ek *English-only Europe? Challenging language policy*. Li finn donn lekcher ek fer advayzer enpe partu dan lemond. Pu so CV ek pilbikasyon kapav al vizit so sayt <http://www.cbs.dk/staff/phillipson>. U kapav dawnlod lartik.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, retrete aster, enn akademik ek aktivist pu lang maternel baze lor enn ledikasyon multileng ek lor drwa imen. Li finn pibliye dan 30 langaz ([www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org](http://www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org)). Li Asosyet Prof. Abo Akademi University, Vasa, Finland. So travay spesyalize lor lyen ant ledikasyon baze lor lang maternel ek rezilta dan lekol. Li enn rar akademik avek 2 doktora. Li finn travay dan Liniversite partu dan lemond, e ti gayn pri Linguapax Prize 2003 pu so kontribisyon extraordiner dan domenn diversite lingwistik ek ledikasyon multileng. Enn so liv koni li 800 paz e li apel *Linguistic Genocide in Education or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?*

## LIST OF ALL DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED before the HEARING

### Submitted by LPT Case Preparation Team

1. Constitution of Mauritius, 1968. **Section 49, Official language of National Assembly.**
2. Education Act 1957, **Section 34 Grant in Aid** and **Section 35 State supported schools open to all** [Sections on Free Primary and Secondary schools].
3. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Privy Council Judgement 2004 in appeal Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Port Louis & Ors v. Tengur & Ors (Mauritius) [2004] UKPC 9 (3 February 2004) confirms free Primary and Secondary education.
4. *Education Act 1957*, Section 37, **Compulsory primary education**
5. (1) Table D8 – Resident population by language usually spoken at home and sex. Official Government Census 2000 (carried out every 10 years), Central Statistics Office, Mauritius. [Ledikasyon Pu Travayer breakdown on number of people speaking different languages “usually at home” in Mauritius 2000.]  
(2) Table E1 – Residential population 12 years of age and over by geographical location, sex and languages read and written. Official Government Census 2000, Central Statistics Office, Mauritius. [Ledikasyon Pu Travayer highlights surprising number of people who only read and write Kreol and Bhojpuri]

## 6. REGULATIONS CONCERNING MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Education Regulations 1957, Schedule Act 39/57, 28 December 1957, p 531. From *Education Ordinance 1957*, Section 43, “Medium of instruction and teaching of languages”.  
Subsidiary Legislation of Mauritius. 1988. Volume 1 . A-E. By L.E.Venhard and A.H.Angelo.

### 43. Medium of instruction and teaching of languages

- (1) In the lower classes of Government and aided primary schools up to and including Standard III, any one language may be employed as the medium of instruction, being a language which in the opinion of the Minister is most suitable for the pupils.
- (2) In Standards IV, V and VI of the Government and aided primary schools the medium of instruction shall be English, and conversations between teacher and pupils shall be carried on in English: provided that lessons in any other language taught in the school shall be carried on through the medium of that language.
- (3) The Minister may make provision for the teaching of languages other than English which are current in Mauritius, and for their study in any Government and aided primary school, and may require an Education Authority to make arrangements for such teaching in any of the primary schools under its control. [Act 2/60]

## 7. POSITION TAKEN BY MINISTER OF EDUCATION, Hon. D. Gokhool, 2006

From page 8 on “**Use of vernacular languages in Education**”, a speech by *Hon. D. Gokhool, Minister of Education & Human Resources on the occasion of the opening of a 3-day colloquium in the context of the celebration of World Literacy Day, 8 September 2006 at BEC conference room, Rose Hill, Mauritius.*

### **“Minister of Education, Hon. D. Gokhool: Exerpt on use of vernacular languages in Education**

For at least five decades since the 1953 UNESCO report on the use of vernacular languages in Education, African countries have been struggling to find an effective strategy that allows them to move from an education system inherited from the colonial period to a more transformative and culturally relevant education that takes into consideration African Values and languages, people's socio cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as their educational needs.

Such a relevant and effective education strategy would be characterized, first of all, by the use of a more appropriate medium, the use of adequate teaching techniques, and the use of culturally adequate curriculum content.

During the 2003 Biennial meeting of the association for the development of education in Africa in Grand Baie, one of the major themes discussed was 'Relevance: adapting curricula and the use of African languages'. Mother tongue education and Bilingual Education, in the context of Education for All, raised great interest from different stakeholders, international agencies and education experts.

ADEA commissioned a study on the state of the art of mother tongue education and Bilingual education in order to help intensify the policy dialogue at the level of national governments, international organizations as well as in the field among teachers and students.

#### **Two competing views**

The study outlined two competing views with respect to the central issue of language in education: there are those who promote the "Status quo" in terms of medium of instruction, and those who advocate the use of a more appropriate medium of Instruction Strategy.

**The status quo** view reflects the current practice in most African countries which advocates the continued use of the official/foreign language as the primary and ultimate medium during the whole educational system. On the other hand, the view in favour **a more appropriate medium involves a rupture with the current status quo** and the use of mother tongue throughout the education system as its primary medium of instruction. This view aims at bringing profound social change in terms of development and societal progress.

It is clear that any kind of language policy should be based on the vision of the society it is designed and implemented for, as well as the political economy and the sociolinguistic reality of the country.

The Education Act in Mauritius makes allowance for the use of Kreol as a **facilitator** till Standard III. This implies that the teacher has recourse to the mother tongue when he or she finds that the message of the content does not go through. At the lower primary level the emphasis should be on the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

The child learns sounds, lexical items matching pictures, and syntax. Because knowledge is a construction of information on a mind which is not tabula rasa, the teacher uses **a diversity of pedagogical strategies through the medium of instruction and Kreol to concretize a concept.**

The exposure of the child to concepts through mime, role play, songs, and short stories helps him to grasp and master the content. It should also be realized that by introducing the 'Bridging the Gap' initiative at Standard I level, we are ensuring that all learners start on the same footing with acquisition of skills proper to pre-primary. Already, according to the cognitive development milestone, the child should be able to play with words, mimic and create sounds and sing rhymes and do a number of other actions even when prompted in English or French. The crux of the problem lies in the transaction of the Primary Curriculum during early years of childhood.

The questions that we should ask ourselves are:-

1. Is there sufficient oral work done in Standard I?

My observation is that there is too great a hurry to switch to writing

2. Is class coverage sufficient to cater for the attention of all learners in class?

3. Does every child have enough time to practice both oral and written?

4. Does the teacher give himself or herself enough teaching time for learning to take place?

The major problems at the root of illiteracy and innumeracy very often lie in **an overloaded curriculum and poor pedagogical transactions**. The International Bureau of Education of UNESCO has for the past three years carried out a research, action and training project called 'Analyse et innovations curriculaire de l'éducation pour tous en Afrique sub-saharienne dans la lutte contre la pauvreté.

Mauritius is participating in this project together with 8 other Sub-Saharan countries. The conclusions of the research confirm the content overload in all the countries participating and the poverty of pedagogical transactions at class level.

The Belgian 'Pédagogie de Convergence' tested in Mali has not necessarily proved to be effective in the transfer from the mother tongue to the foreign language. The passage from the mother tongue to the foreign language is fraught with difficulties. At national level we cannot afford to rush where angels fear to tread. However, we must be open and receptive to any research that is proven to be a full proof strategy.

The societal and global aspirations are our guiding rules. We are a small island state in a huge global village where English is the tool of progress, knowledge and scientific and technological improvement. The more we reduce the digital divide separating our own people, the faster can we progress towards becoming competitive. The international economic order pushes us to master not one or two but even more international languages. Every new pillar of the modern economy compels us to be proactive and to espouse new values.

That is why our political vision of World Class Quality Education is based on recognition of best practices in the world that can be implemented, adopted or adapted in the Mauritian context.

There have been many cases of total collapse of performance in foreign languages in countries that have too quickly adopted the mother tongue as the language of instruction for a number of years before the foreign language is introduced. *Specialists are themselves divided between the mother tongue and the bilingual education models. Mauritius wants to be cautious. But this does not preclude our support to agencies that want to try and research on certain models.*

September, 2006  
Hon. Min of Ed, D. Gokhool"

8. Question B/823 **Kreol Language – Medium of Instruction.** Answer by Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources. Mauritius Fourth National Assembly, Debate No. 22 of 2009. Sitting Tuesday 14 July 2009. PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS.

9. Submission by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Ref. HRC/170 to *Hearing into the Harm Done to Children* of NHRC Annual Reports for the year 2006, 2007 and 2008. The Commission highlights paragraphs 37-39 of *NHRC Annual Report 2006*, Section "B. Kreol as a Medium of Instruction" in *NHRC Annual Report 2007* and paragraph 55 in *NHRC Annual Report 2008*.

10. Paragraph 435 of the "Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the implementation of the Covenant in Mauritius" on Kreol and Bhojpuri in the Mauritian education system. United Nations Economic and Social Council ECOSOC, Substantive session of 1995. E/1990/S/Add. 21. 14 October 1994.

11. Set of all prescribed books for standards I, V and VI in primary schools. A second set of books used in private tuition for standards V and VI primary school students (*Paving the Way to Success: French, Standard VI*, D.V. Chetty, Starprint; *Paving the Way to Success: English, Standard VI*, D.V. Chetty, Starprint; *Paving the Way to Success: Science, Standard VI*, D.V. Chetty, Caslon); *Paving the Way to Success: History and Geography, Standard VI*, D.V. Chetty, Starprint. *Paving the Way to Success: Mathematics, Standard V*, D.V. Chetty, Starprint; *Paving the Way to Success: French, Standard V*, D.V. Chetty, Caslon; *Paving the Way to Success: English, Standard V*, D.V. Chetty, Caslon.)

12. Section 2.2 of *Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020*. Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, November 2008

13. "Lack of necessary skills" as one of the main reasons for recruitment difficulties. Public Report on the *ICT-BPO Sector Salary Survey Highlights*, page 16, OTAM-CCIFM, Mauritius 2008.

14. *Grafi-larmoni*. A harmonized writing system for the Mauritian Creole Language, Professor Vinesh Y Hookoomsing, University of Mauritius, September 2004.

15. Survey on perception of people on the use of Mother Tongues in various State institutions in Mauritius, including in schools, as well as degree of awareness of people about the existence of language support (like dictionaries, use in Pre-Vocational, systematized orthography) and analysis of results. Sofres (Maurice) Ltée. March 2009.

16. Existing Dictionaries, as a guide to instrumentalization of Kreol and Bhojpuri:

(1) Baker, Philip. *Kreol. Description of Mauritian Creole*. UK. 1972.

(2) Ledikasyon Pu Travayer. *Diksyoner Kreol Angle*. Prototip. LPT. First Edition 1984.

- (3) Hookoomsing, Y. Vinesh and Baker, Philip. *Morisyen-English-Francais: Diksyoner Kreol Morisyen*. Harmattan. 1987.
- (3) Sewtohul, K. Goswami. *Diksyoner Kreol Bhojpuri*. LPT. October 1990.
- (4) Carpooran, Arnaud. *Diksioner morisien*. Prototip pou enn pemie diksioner kreol monoleng. Bartoldi. 2005.
- (5) Carpooran, Arnaud. *Diksioner morisien*. Premie ototip pou enn pemie diksioner kreol monoleng dan Lemond & Ekivalan lexical an franse ek angle. Koleksion Text Kreol. 2009.

### **Other written submissions from witnesses present**

#### **ABAIM:**

Tizan ar so 8 Frer (ABAIM,2003)  
 16 Ti Morso Nu Lanfans (ABAIM,2002)  
 Rekreasyon, 31 ti parfin nou memwar, ABAIM, 2009

#### **Arnaud Carpooran**

1. MA dissertation sur “*Identite et langue en milieu scolaire confessionnel catholique (garçons) a Maurice: une etude sur l’utilisation de marqueurs linguistiques dans une problematique identitaire liee a l’integration en milieu scolaire*”, Universite de la Reunion, 1992.
2. PhD thesis “*Langue(s) et droits(s) en milieu plurilingue: le cas de l’Ile Maurice*”, 1996-2000.

#### **Gowtam Choychoo**

A set of 9 press articles published in Impact News

#### **Jean Lindsay Dhokit**

In Praise of Kreol, I & II (articles published in *L’Express* 04.12.96 & 22.01.97)

#### **Federation of Pre-School Playgroups**

Pedagogy in line with needs/rights, A child’s expression through different art forms, as part of a broad based, mother tongue based multilingual education process, prepared by Federation of Pre-School Playgroups.  
 Complaint in the matter of The Federation of Pre-School Playgroups, Srawansing Ramsahok, Marie Sylvaine Laval v. The Minister of Education, Science & Technology, & The Republic of Mauritius, Supreme Court of Mauritius, May 1997.  
 Early Childhood Development, Programme Guidelines Handbook (0 – 3 years), Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare.  
 Early Childhood Education, Pre-School Programme Guidelines (3-5 years)  
 Bato Bazaar, Playgroup, 1999  
 Al Rod Soley, Playgroup, 1998  
 Abu dan Bwa, Playgroup, 1988  
 Sinn Sinn, Playgroup 1999  
 Vwayaz Ti Zanimu, Playgroup, 1999  
 Bonnfam Lamer, Playgroup, 1987 and 2004  
 Marday so Zardin, Playgroup, 1999  
 Pekoy al Lapes, Playgroup, 1998  
 Zistwar Labutik, Playgroup, 1999.  
 Dinododo, Playgroup, 1991.  
 Songs and Poems, with CD, Playgroup, 2002.

#### **Jugdish Goburdhun:**

World Bhojpuri Hamaar Maa , Indian Diaspora Centre August 2009  
 Bhojpuri Ke Heera-Moote (Diamond & Pearl of Mauritian Bhojpuri)

#### **Jimmy Harmon (BEC)**

Salient Features of Prevokbek (Centre de Formation pour Educateurs BEC, 20 Oct.2009)  
 Set of books used in BEC courses.  
 Extract Document- Letter from H.G de St Pern to Hon. S.Obeegadoo, Minister of Education, 15 December 2004.



Internal Bilingual Evaluation: Maths/Matematik, July 2008

Internal Bilingual Evaluation: Kreol Morisien, Oral, July 2008

Open Letter to Prime Minister N.Ramgoolam: Debates on Equal Opportunity Bill- Strong Case for Kreol Morisien (Mauritian Creole) in schools.

Katesez Prevok (Commission Catechese de L'Ile Maurice, Zanvie 2008))

**Vimala Devi Lutchmee**

Letters from Pre-school Trust Fund

**Alain Romaine**

Parol Bondie pou so Zanfan, Tex Biblik, 2004

**Shiva Tirvengadum**

Bridging the Gap

## RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL & AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED by the HEARING

Here is a list of international human rights documents that were considered by the International Hearing into the Harm Done by the Suppression of the Mother Tongue in School.

On the *right to education*. Article 26 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>), adopted on 10 December 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly. Paragraph 1 of Article 26 guarantees the right of everyone to education. Paragraph 2 provides that such education “shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”, and “shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups”.

The **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (the “ICESCR”) of 1966 (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>). Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Article 13.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (the “ICCPR”) of 1966 (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>), Article 27.

The 1960 **Convention Against Discrimination in Education** ([http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF)), Article 5, subparagraph 1 (a) provides that Education shall be directed to, amongst other things, the full development of the human personality.

The United Nations’ **Convention on the Rights of the Child** of 1989 (the “CRC”), Article 17, para 4, Article 28, paragraph 1, Article 29, para 3, and Article 30, para 2. The basic right to education is set out in Article 28, paragraph 1, in which the States parties to the CRC recognise *the right of the child to education*. The paragraph also provides that with a view to achieving this right “progressively and *on the basis of equal opportunity*”, States will take a range of steps, including, in subparagraph (e), *measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates*. Article 29, subparagraph (a) stipulates that education shall be directed to the *development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential*.. Article 29, subparagraph (d) stipulates that education should be directed to the development of *respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values*.

The **Convention Against Discrimination in Education** of 1960 ([http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF)). Article 5, subparagraph 1 (a) provides that Education shall be directed to, amongst other things, the full development of the human personality.

Source: Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove & Dunbar, Robert (in press). **Indigenous Children’s Education as Linguistic Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity? A Global View**. Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino  
Gáldu, Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (<http://www.galdu.org>).

The African Union, in three landmark historic documents, *African Cultural Renaissance Charter* (AU2006a), *Language plan of Action for Africa* (AU2006b) and *The Statutes of the African Academy of languages* (AU 2006c)(see [www.acalan.org](http://www.acalan.org) for these) clearly require every member state of the Union to take urgent measures to ensure that local African languages are used as medium of instruction in education and ultimately as languages of administration along with the official languages of the colonial *legacy* which henceforth become ‘partnership languages’ to African languages in the enterprise of national development. These documents and instruments were presumably signed by all Heads of states or their representatives at the Khartoum summit of the African Union in January 2006 and therefore constitute a commitment, an engagement, an undertaking to ensure the use of the mother tongue in education and eventually for various aspects of governance.

"WHAT'S IN THE WORDS!"

A SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS FROM LIVE TESTOMONY  
BEFORE THE HEARING

These are some of the phrases that struck the International panel from amongst the testimonies.

1. 'Ena mem reponn an Kreol pu lexame pu kestyon poze an Angle.'  
*Some even answer in Kreol to examination questions set in English.*
2. 'Shakespeare ek Moliere ti kreatif dan zot langaz.'  
*Shakespeare and Moliere were creative in their mother tongues.*
3. 'Nu koz seki tabu dan langaz maternal'  
*We use the mother tongue to discuss taboos.*
4. 'Ledikasyon bizen enn plezir, pa enn fardo.'  
*Education should be fun, not a burden.*
5. 'Mo pli gran kado se mo de langaz maternal'  
*The greatest gift I've ever received is my two mother tongues.*
6. 'Se apartir langaz maternal ki nu konstrir nu personalite'  
*Our personality is built on our mother tongue.*
7. 'Zanfan plis ere kan zot aprann dan zot langaz maternal.'  
*Children are happier when taught in their mother tongue.*
8. 'Bhojpuri hamar ma.'  
*Bhojpuri is my mother.*
9. 'Se enn idantite ki disparet kan langaz maternal pa anseyne.'  
*Identity is obliterated when the mother tongue is not taught as subject.*
10. 'Enn langaz devlop tu so potansyel selman kan li ekri.'  
*The full potential of a language is developed only when it's written.*
11. 'Nu fel parski sistem la kuyon.'  
*We fail because the system is stupid.*
12. 'Profeser pas so letan tradwir an Kreol.'  
*The teacher spends all his time translating into Kreol.*
13. 'Nu ena sufrans ki nu pe viv tulezur aköz nu langaz'  
*We suffer day in day out because of our language.*
14. 'Sistem lazistis fer lenzistis aköz problem langaz'  
*The legal system causes a lot of injustice because of language difficulties.*
15. 'Lekol denigre nu kiltir ek nu langaz.'  
*The school vilifies our culture and language*
16. 'Mo pa ti koz Franse alor mo pa ti gagn permisyon pu al twalet.'  
*I couldn't speak French, and I had to ask to go to the toilet in French.*
17. 'Mem program politik li pibliye an Angle ek Franse. Kot demokrasi partisipativ?'  
*Even political programs are published by the parties in English and French. What does this mean for democracy?*
18. 'Mo zanfan panvi al leköl parski li pa konpran langaz servi.'  
*My child doesn't want to go to school because she can't understand the language used.*
19. 'Bizen kumans avek seki nu kone pu aprann seki nu pa kone '  
*We need to use the known medium to discover the unknown .*
20. 'U pa finn fel, se leköl ki finn fel.'  
*You didn't fail in school, the school failed you.*

## WHAT HUMAN LANGUAGE IS, & WHAT THE CREOLE LANGUAGES ARE

*by* Derek Bickerton

The Hearing considered the expert evidence of Professor Derek Bickerton,  
Emeritus professor at the University of Hawaii.  
It was recorded on DVD, and then submitted especially for the Hearing.

I'm sorry I'm not able to be physically present at this meeting. I've visited Mauritius on two previous occasions – 1988 and 1998 – and both times I greatly enjoyed my visits and deeply appreciated the warm and friendly hospitality of the Mauritian people. It's therefore with the greatest of pleasure that I am here again, if this time only in digital form, to talk to you about language.

What exactly do we mean by language?

According to one dictionary definition, it is “communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols”. According to another, it's “a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings”.

But these typical and very common definitions leave something out. They imply that thoughts and ideas have an independent existence, quite apart from language. They imply that thoughts and ideas are somehow already there, in the mind, that they are just waiting for you to find the right words to express them. They imply that language is simply a means of expression – nothing more

In fact, language is a lot more than that. Ask yourself, if you weren't human, would you be able to have the kind of thoughts and ideas that all of us humans have? If you were a lion, would you be able to think, “I am the bravest lion on the savanna”? You couldn't say it, but if all language does is express thoughts, you ought to be able to think it. If you were a cow, would you be able to think, “If it gets any hotter, I'll have to move into the shade”?

I doubt it. You would just get hotter, and after a while you would move into the shade, but you probably wouldn't be able to think about doing it before you actually did it. Thinking – or at least, thinking in the way humans do it – is based, just like language, on symbols. Symbols are signs that somehow stand in place of the things they represent, that is things that exist in the real world. Thinking and language both involve doing things with symbols. Language does it in a way that other people can see and hear and thinking does it in a way that only you can perceive – that's the difference, that's the only difference. If you don't have some kind of symbol for things like “hot” or “move” or “shade”, you can't even think things like “If it gets any hotter, I'll move into the shade.”

Why not? Because symbols are tokens, just like gambling chips, only more so. Each chip has a particular value, just as each symbol has a particular meaning. You could play poker, say, or roulette without chips, but it would be a messy business, with checks, coins and notes of all denominations scattered around the table. But at least each coin or note

would already have a particular value. There's nothing like that in the human mind--you either think with symbols or you think about what you can actually see or hear, and if you're not seeing it or hearing it right now, you can't think about it. And any kind of directed thinking, thinking with some definite purpose in mind – as opposed to just having vague formless notions about heat or shade or whatever – would be impossible. It would be like playing for notes or coins in a gambling game where nobody knew just what value each of the notes or coins had, or even whether they had any value at all. But directed thinking, thinking with a purpose, thinking that actually gets things done, that imagines new things and then brings them to life--that's the kind of thinking that makes us humans, and it's the only kind of thinking that's unique to humans.

Symbols of some kind, then, are essential for both thought and language. And in the whole of nature, there is only one species that has symbols, and that species is us. We've actually been called "the symbolic species". And since it was only the use of language that forced us to create symbols, then we can say that language, and language alone, lies at the very root of what it means to be human.

Note here that it doesn't matter what symbols are like. They can be spoken or signed or written, and within each of these modes they can be different for different groups of people. There are no good symbols or bad symbols. A symbol is a symbol if it creates in the mind of the receiver whatever idea the symbol was meant to convey. If it fails to do this, it is not a bad symbol, it is just not a symbol. 'Dog' represents, for speakers of English, a particular kind of small canine mammal. For speakers of French, "chien" does the same thing. For speakers of Spanish the symbol is "perro" and for speakers of German, it's "hund". These four symbols don't resemble one another in the slightest and there is nothing in any of them that would--for a speaker of Chinese, say – suggest that all four of them referred to the same thing, or that the thing they referred to was a small canine mammal. This is what we mean when we say that symbols are "opaque": they don't wear their meanings on their sleeve. This is what we mean when we say that symbols are "arbitrary": they have no direct connection with the things they represent. In other words, it doesn't make any difference, it doesn't matter in the slightest what symbol you choose, as long as everyone agrees about what the symbol stands for. You can never say that some symbol is better than others, or worse than others. Bear this in mind later on, when we come to what some people have called "good" or "bad" languages.

Language, then, has as its basis a set of symbols. But a set of symbols alone is not enough. One symbol by itself tells you very little. If I say just "dog", you will know I'm thinking about a particular kind of animal, but you won't know much more than that. You won't know if I'm thinking about one particular dog, or some set of dogs, or dogs in general. Still less will you know what, at that particular moment, I'm thinking *about* dogs. That they're man's best friend? That they're annoying when they bark? For symbols to do more than just refer to things, for symbols to make statements about things, you have to put two or more of them together. Like in "dogs bark". Now you know I'm talking about dogs in general, and about one particular behavior of dogs that I'm thinking about. But you still don't know whether I approve of their barking because it keeps away intruders or disapprove of it because the noise irritates me. The fuller and more complete the thought I want to convey to you, the more symbols I need to express it.

So language involves not just having symbols, but putting symbols together to form the strings that we call sentences. Can't way put want together them any we we to. Got that? Of course not. The symbols for what I want to say are all there but I didn't put them into the right order. What I want to say is, "We can't put them together any way we want to". That sentence contains ten words, and there are literally millions of ways in which we could have put those ten words together. But only one of those ways gives the meaning I intended, or any meaning at all, for that matter.

It follows that, for understanding to take place, we have to know certain rules – rules that determine the orders in which symbols can be placed. In the case of our native

language, at least, we were never explicitly taught those rules. By the time we get to school and are taught “rules of grammar”, we already know all the rules of grammar. The rules we are taught in school usually aren’t rules of language at all. They’re things like “Never end a sentence with a preposition” (a rule Winston Churchill demolished with the remark, “That is a restriction up with which I will not put”) or “Two negatives make a positive” (that’s a flat-out lie – in most languages, two negatives make a negative). They’re not “rules of grammar”, they’re rules of social behavior, rules that someone, somewhere, quite arbitrarily decided was “the right thing to do”. Like other rules, like “Not dropping the ‘g’ in ‘going’ to say ‘goin’” (that’s a lie too, there’s no ‘g’ at the end of ‘going’), they have nothing to do with language, and everything to do with “sounding like nice people”.

The system of rules that we use when putting words together is known as syntax. Syntax is a vast and very complex subject and I won’t be able to say much about it here. It’s enough to note that while some basic principles of syntax are the same throughout language, each of the several thousand forms that language takes – that’s to say, six or seven thousand different languages – has, on top of these universal principles, a number of rules of its own. Some languages have a lot of these extra rules, others have relatively few.

It follows that some languages have a more complex syntax than other languages. Or at least one that seems more complex. It often happens that what is complex in one area is offset by what is simple in another. So there is really no single objective measure by which we can say, unreservedly, “Language A is more complex than language B”, or vice versa. But we may get the impression that a language with fewer rules over and above universal principles is somehow, in some sense, simpler than one with more rules.

In the old days, people used to believe that European languages were more complex than non-European languages, therefore superior to non-European languages. Then as more and more non-European languages were studied, it became obvious that some of these were far more complex than any European languages. Indeed, some European languages (such as English) and some non-European languages produced by highly developed cultures (such as Chinese) were in fact a lot less complex than many languages spoken by small, remote tribes who had no writing system. Consequently the idea that there was some kind of pecking order in languages, with languages like French and English at the top, had to be abandoned.

With a few exceptions.

Those exceptions consist of what came to be known as Creole languages. Languages like one that all of you here are familiar with – Mauritian Creole French, or simply Kreol, as many of its speakers call it. Many people who speak Creole languages still think that their language is unique. Or, if for example they speak a Creole that draws most of its vocabulary from French, they may think that only languages related to French can be described as Creoles. In fact, there are around eighty different Creole languages in the world, and while some, like Kreol, get most of their words from French, others get them from English, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese or even Arabic. But wherever Creoles are located and whatever language or languages contributed to their vocabulary, they are remarkably similar in their grammars.

While a tiny handful of scholars had been interested in Creole languages for a couple of centuries, it was not until fifty or sixty years ago that linguists began to scientifically study Creole languages. It then soon became clear that most of the things people had believed about Creole languages simply were not true,

For instance, it was believed (and is still believed by some people) that Creole languages were somehow inferior to other languages. Creole languages were inferior, it was said, because the people who originated them had been too slow or too backward or too stupid to learn languages like French properly. Creole languages were just corrupted versions of European languages; Kreol was no more than extremely bad French. Indeed Creoles did not deserve even the name of language. Polite people called them “dialects”; people less polite called them “jargon”, “broken talk”, or, in French-dominated areas,

“patois”. To use a Creole language in public was thought of, almost universally, as a sign of low intelligence or lack of education or both. In Hawaii, where Creole is based on English, there’s a joke about a man who has brain surgery that goes drastically wrong. Before the operation, “He talked like this”; after it, “‘e go tok li’ dis”.

In fact, the notion that Creole languages are somehow inferior languages has no basis whatsoever.

In the first place, Creole languages are not merely corrupted or reduced versions of European languages. The fact that many, even most of their words may be drawn from a European language merely obscures the fact that that such words almost always undergo both changes in form – in the ways that they are pronounced and written – and changes in meaning – their original meanings are broadened, narrowed, or shifted in some way, sometimes so radically that nouns become verbs, verbs nouns, and so on.

In the second place, the claim that “Creole languages have no grammar” is totally false. Creoles have complete, and indeed quite rigorous grammars, at least as precise and detailed as the grammar of French or English. They are just different from French or English grammar, which is of course exactly what you would expect if they were real languages in their own right, rather than merely reduced versions of European languages. In fact their grammars contain constructions such as serial verbs (“he take rock break window” instead of “he broke the window with a rock”, for example) or verb reduplication for emphasis--constructions that are not found anywhere in European languages. The systems of tense, mood and aspect in Creole languages are not simplifications of European systems but are organized according to an entirely different pattern, and so on. A French speaker who tries to address Mauritian people in broken French may be understood, but that speaker will not understand when the Mauritian answers. French speakers have to learn a French Creole just like speakers of English would; it may be easier for the French speaker because some of the words may be recognizable, but it will be no easier for him to learn the grammar.

So if there is no linguistic inferiority, where do people get the idea that Creoles are inferior?

The reasons are social, not linguistic. In former French colonies, the upper classes, the prosperous and better-educated, will for the most part speak fluent French. The working classes will not. The poorer a person is and the darker his skin, the greater the likelihood that he will speak Creole and nothing but Creole. Consequently, people who don’t think very much will identify Creole speech with poverty and lack of education. Creole is looked down upon because the people who speak it are looked down upon. And after all the ancestors of these people were slaves, the languages themselves were mostly created by slaves. Now whether or not you became a slave, in eighteenth or nineteenth century Africa, had relatively little to do with your intelligence or skill or even your rank – it was mostly a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. But once you were a slave, you immediately became unskilled, and unintelligent, and low-ranking. Or at any rate, that was how you were perceived. Consequently your language, like everything else about you, could not be taken seriously by free and prosperous citizens.

In other words, the reason Creoles have been despised is prejudice, pure and simple prejudice, and nothing more. People who look down on Creole languages, who regard them as unfit to use in schools or universities, simply need more education themselves. The more they can be taught to understand and appreciate these languages, the more they will free themselves from anti-Creole prejudice.

A large part of understanding Creole languages comes from looking at the circumstances under which they were born. They arose because new societies needed new ways to communicate. Typically, in the tropical colonies of European powers, a small handful of Europeans would begin to assemble a plantation work-force by buying slaves from a number of different areas. In consequence, these newcomers spoke a variety of languages, and in most cases were unable to understand one another.



But for a plantation to work properly, there had to be a common language. The language of the plantation owners, French or some other European language, would not work. In the early days of a plantation colony, where there were few Europeans but also relatively few slaves, learning might have been possible, and it is likely that the first slaves acquired a fairly adequate version of their masters' language. Soon, however, the population ratio changed. From Africa and, in the case of Mauritius, from Madagascar and India too, thousands more workers were quickly brought in. Soon there would be ten non-speakers of French to every French speaker. And as numbers rose, the social distance between master and slave increased. Soon, learning became impossible.

But the newcomers had to communicate somehow. They did so by whatever means they could – by picking up isolated words both from French and from the languages of other newcomers, and by stringing these words together as best they could. The result was what is termed a pidgin – something without regular rules, adequate for brief and simple messages or instructions, but quite inadequate for the full purposes of language.

The people involved in this process were all adults. And it is well-known that there are wide differences between adults and children when it comes to acquiring language. Children almost universally acquire a first language without any explicit instruction and afterwards (as long as they are still children) find it quite easy to learn other languages. But as they become adults, things change. If they are one of the tiny minority who, through some abnormal circumstance, have failed to learn a first language, they will find it extremely difficult, often impossible to learn a full human language at all. If they already have a first language, they will find it much more difficult to acquire a second, and may fail absolutely, or acquire only a handful of words and phrases in the new target.

Why is this so? In all other areas, from tying shoelaces or riding bicycles to high-level math or physics, adults are much better learners than small children, so the reason cannot be that children have some arsenal of learning skills that adults lack. One fact we do know is that the brains of young children are much more flexible than the brains of older persons – a flexibility that decreases steadily over time as fixed brain circuits, especially circuits dedicated to the speaker's native language, become more and more firmly established. It may be that these fixed circuits block access to the basic processes that underlie language, and that enable children to learn not only their own language, but one or two or even more other languages, provided exposure to these comes early enough.

The hypothesis that children have greater access to some basic universal processes of language creation explains several things about Creole languages that otherwise would remain mysterious. Adults, who find it difficult to acquire a new language, seem to find it almost impossible to create a new one. In Hawaii, pidgin existed for nearly a century and a half with little structural change or development because for most of that period it was spoken exclusively by adults (the Hawaiian language was acquired instead by the relatively small number of non-Hawaiian children born during that period). Then at the end of the nineteenth century the Hawaiian language suffered a sharp decline and children began to use the pidgin. In using it, they transformed it, in a single generation, from a formless, highly variable and extremely limited medium to a full and highly regular human language – what is now known to linguists as Hawaii Creole English.

Although evidence is far from complete, a similar transformation seems to have taken place in all Creole-speaking communities – first an unstructured pidgin, then, as soon as children begin using it, a rapid transformation into a complete and regularly structured language.

There is yet further evidence for a connection between the birth of Creole languages and the ability of children to access basic universals of language. This evidence comes from the profound structural similarities that exist between all the languages that have been formed in former plantation colonies – that is to say, all the languages that have undergone this pidgin-to-Creole transformation. It is sometimes claimed that these similarities arise from the fact that all the Creoles concerned are related to European languages. This claim is

nonsense. Most of the features Creole languages have in common are features that are NOT present in any of the European languages. Where do these features come from?

It has been claimed that they come from what are called “substrate languages”, the languages of West Africa that were spoken by slaves in the Caribbean colonies. In other words, it is claimed that those West African slaves simply kept features from their original languages when they formed the various Caribbean Creoles. If this were true, then Mauritius, which had at most two or three hundred slaves from West Africa, and the Seychelles, which had none, and Hawaii, which had none, would have none of these features. Instead, they ought to have features from Malagasy or East African languages (in the case of Mauritius and the Seychelles) or features from Pacific or East Asian languages (in the case of Hawaii). But they do not. They have features that are similar to those of all the other Creoles, the languages that have supposedly inherited West African features.

So all attempts to explain the deep similarities among Creole language have failed. The only possible explanation is that, in creating Creole languages, the children involved somehow must have tapped into universal processes of language creation, probably the same processes that originally launched human language. Thus Creole languages, far from being some inferior breed of language, are in fact closest to the wellsprings of the human language faculty itself – the least cluttered by all the superfluous accretions that older languages acquire through centuries of use..

What's the take-home message here? It's that every reason ever put forward for believing that Creole languages are inferior is simply false. Every reason that has ever been put forward is based either on ignorance or on some kind of misunderstanding. What consequences should follow from this finding?

The most significant consequence for this audience concerns the role of Creole in education. There is a long history of discrimination against Creole in schools; a long tradition of teaching children from the earliest stages mainly or exclusively in English. Many Mauritians support this policy because English is a world language and they fear that their children will be severely handicapped in a global economy if they don't speak English well. This of course is true.

What is not true, what is in fact an outrageous lie, is the claim that in order to speak English well, all the teaching in every subject has to be done in English. That is nonsense. In a recent survey, 61% of Mauritians stated that they felt handicapped by their poor mastery of English. 61%! Nearly two-thirds of the population! And this, note, after an entire school career of being forced to listen to English, year in, year out--English in math classes, English in history classes, English in science classes! But the problem is not just that the students came out with an inadequate knowledge of English. Think about this for a moment: how much did those students really learn about all the other subjects--about math, about history, about science--when all these subjects had to be filtered through a language that they didn't properly understand? And how much greater was their handicap in competing with students who had been raised in families where English was the home language, or one of the home languages! What chance would they have against that kind of competition?

Compare the situation here with that in the Netherlands. Both the Netherlands and Mauritius are small countries whose majority languages, Dutch and Kreol respectively, are spoken by hardly anyone outside those countries. Even though, unlike Mauritius, the Netherlands were never governed by English speakers, Dutch people have just as much need of English as Mauritians do. And most of them speak it fluently, many are as fluent as native speakers, and distinguishable from natives only by a slight accent.

How do they achieve this? By having all their instruction in English? Certainly not. The Dutch, a proud nation, would scorn to have their children educated in somebody else's language. Up to the age of twelve, all instruction in all schools in all subjects is in Dutch. In just a handful of specialized high schools, instruction is 50% in English or 50% in German. The other 50% of classes is taught in Dutch. And in most Dutch high schools,

100% of the instruction – except in those classes where specific languages are taught – is carried out exclusively in Dutch.

The Dutch owe their success to that fact that they don't confuse the teaching of English with the teaching of other subjects, but instead teach English as a subject, and just teach it extremely thoroughly and well.

The Dutch experience is not unique. Numerous studies from all over the world have shown that education is most effective when it is carried out all the way through primary and secondary levels in the native language of the majority of the students. The native language of the vast majority of Mauritians is Kreol. The logic is inescapable. Kreol is not only a full and fully respectable language, able to hold its own against any other – it is also the language in which all citizens of Mauritius should be taught if they are to become fully functional members both of their own society and of the larger world beyond the island's borders.

## LOR LANGAZ IMEN & LOR BANN LANGAZ KREOL

*par* Derek Bickerton

Hearing ti pran an konsiderasyon evidenns exper Prof. Derek Bickerton. Li ti fer so temwayaz lor DVD, li ti sumet li spesyalman pu Hearing la.

Mo byen sagren ki mo pa kapav prezan fizikman dan sa Hearing la. Mo finn vizit Moris 2 fwa - an 1988 e an 1998 - e tulde fwa mo finn byen amize e mo finn osi byen apresye lakey salere dimunn Moris. Alor li avek lepli gran plezir ki mo la - mem anform dizital sann kut la - pu koz lor size langaz.

Kan nu dir “langaz”, ki nu pe ule dir?

Si nu get diksyoner, nu truv definisyon kuma: “kominikasyon panse ek lemosyon atraver enn seri sinyal arbitrer atraver son lavwa, zest lame, ubyen senbol ekrit.” Ubyen: “enn mwayen sistematik pu kominik lide ubyen lemosyon atraver itilizasyon siyn, son, zest, ubyen mark, ki ena sinifikasyon ki dimunn partaze”.

Me, sa zar definisyon pe rat kiksoz. Li pe suzantand ki panse ek lide ena enn lexisans indepanndan depi langaz, separe net depi langaz. Li suzantand ki panse ek lide wadire deza la, dan u lespri, e pe zis atann atann ziska u gayn bann parol apropiye pu exprim zot. Li suzantand ki langaz li enn sinp mwayen dexpresyon – pa plis.

Anfet, langaz li buku plis ki sa. Poz u mem lakestyon, si u pa ti enn imen, eski u ti pu kapav ena mem zar panse ek lide ki nu tu, antan ki imen, ena? Dizon u ti enn lyon. Eski u ti pu kapav pans, “Mwa lyon lepli kuraze lasavann”? U pa ti pu kapav *dir* li, me si langaz zis exprim panse, u ti devet kapav *pans* li. Dizon u ti enn vas, eski u ti pu kapav pans, “Si soley vinn pli for ki sa, mo al dan lonbraz, mwa”?

Mo dut for. U ti pu zis gayn pli so, pli so, lerla apre enn serten tan, u ti pu al dan lonbraz, me sirman u pa ti pu pans fer li depi avan u anfet fer li. Panse – ubyen omwen panse kuma imen fer – li baze, parey kuma langaz, lor enn seri senbol. Ki ete bann senbol? senbol se siyn ki dibut dan plas enn zafer ki li reprezante, setadir li dibut dan plas enn obze reyel ki existe dan lemond. Panse ek langaz, tulde, inplik senbol. Langaz fer li dan enn fason ki lezot dimunn truve e tandé, tandi ki panse fer li dan enn fason ki zis u u kone – ala diferans, e sa li sel diferans. Si u pena kit kalite senbol pu zafer kuma “so” ubyen “buze” uvyen “lonbraz”, u pa kapav mem pans zafer kuma “Si li vinn pli so, mo va buze ver lonbraz.”

Kifer pa? Parski senbol se bann zeton, parey kuma zeton dan kazino, me plis kumsa ankor. Sak zeton li ena enn valer spesifik. U kapav zwe dizon poker, swa rulet san zeton, me li an dezord – pu gayn manda, koyn, biye tu grander fane partu lor latab. Me omwen sak koyn, sak biye deza ena so valer atase ar li. Me, dan lespri imen pena sinifikasyon deza akorde kumsa. Swa u pans avek senbol ubyen u pans lor seki u pe truve ubyen tandé la, la, la, e si u pa pe truv li asterla mem, si u pa pe tann li asterla mem, u pa kapav pans lor li. E nerport ki refleksyon, panse avek enn bi spesifik antet – pa zis enn lide vag lor saler ubyen lonbraz lot lot – pa pu posib. Li pu kuma zwe pu biye ek koyn dan enn zwe gembling kot

personn pa konn valer sa bann biye ek koyn la, ubyen pa mem kone sipa zot ena valer. Me panse direk, refleksyon avek enn bi, panse e lerla al fer kiksoz apartir de la, fer kiksoz baze lor mazinn kiksoz nuvo e fer li vinn vre, sa kalite panse-la, sa kalite refleksyon la, zis nu imen ki ena sa kapasite la. E li sel zar refleksyon ki inik a imen.

Sa vedir senbol (kit zar senbol) esansyel pu e panse e langaz. E dan tu lanatir, sel spiyshiz ki ena senbol, se nu. Nu finn deza gayn tit “spiyshiz senbol”. E etan done ki li zis itilizasyon langaz ki finn obliz nu kree senbol, nu kapav dir ki langaz, e langaz tusel, alabaz nu limanite.

Avredir, li pa inportan ki kalite senbol servi. Li kapav pran form koze, langaz siyn, lekritir, e dan sak sa mod-la langaz pran diferan form pu diferan grup dimunn. Pena bon senbol move senbol. Ena zis senbol. Enn senbol enn senbol si li kree dan lespri dimunn ki resevwar li samem lide ki senbol ti viz avoye. Si li pa reysi fer sa, li pa kestyon li enn move senbol, li pa enn senbol ditu. “Dog” pu bann Anglofonn li enn kalite mamals kaninn. “Chien” li mem zafer pu Frankofonn. “Perro” pu Ispanik, “Hund” pu Alman. Sa kat senbol pa resanble ditu e pena naryen dan zot ki pu permet enn dimunn ki koz Mandarin, dizon, ena kit subson ki tule 4 mo vedir mem zafer, ubyen ki zot pe refer a enn ti mamals kaninn. Se sa ki nu pe dir kan nu dir senbol “opak”: zot pa deklar zot sinifikasyon uvertman. Se sa ki nu pe dir kan nu dir bann senbol zot “arbitrer”: zot pena enn koneksyon direk avek zafer ki zot reprezante. Setadir, li pa fer okenn diferans, li konpletman irelevant ki senbol u servi, purvi tu dimunn dakor ki li pe reprezante. Zame u pa pu kapav dir ki tel senbol meyer ki enn lot, ubyen pir ki enn lot. Gard sa antet pu kan nu ariv kot seki serten dimunn dan lepase finn apel bann “bon” ubyen “move” langaz.

Alor, langaz ena kuma baz enn set senbol. Me, enn set senbol par li tusel li pa sifi. Enn senbol par li pa dir u gran soz. Si mo dir zis “lisyen”, u kone mo pe pans enn zar zanimo partikilye, me u pa pu konn gransoz plis. U pa pu kone sipa mo pe pans enn lisyen spesifik, ubyen kit seri lisyen, ubyen lisyen an zeneral.

E u pli pa pu kone ki anfet mo pe panse *konsernan* lisyen. Kumkwa zot meyer kamarad lom? Kumkwa zot agasan kan zot zape? Pu ki senbol fer plis ki zis refer a kiksoz, pu ki senbol kapav reysi fer enn pwen *lor kiksoz*, fode ena de u plis senbol ansam. Kuma “lisyen zape”. La u kone mo pe koz lisyen an zeneral, ek enn konportman spesifik ki lisyen ena ki mo ena antet. Me u tuzur pa kone si mo pe apruv zot zape parski zot farus voler u ki mo dezapruv zot zape parski tapaz agas mwa. Pli mo anvi exprim kiksoz konplet ar u, pli mo bizin itiliz buku senbol pu exprim li.

Sa vedir ki langaz pa vedir zis *ena* senbol, me li usi vedir met zot enn apre lot pu form bann seri ki nu apel bann fraz. KAPAV ANSAM MET PA ZOT ULE NERPORT KI PA FASON NU NU. U konpran? Normal, pa konpran. Purtan tu senbol pu seki mo anvi dir, zot tu prezan, me selman zot pa dan enn bon lord. Seki mo anvi dir se, “Nu pa kapav met zot ansam nerport ki fason ki nu anvi.” Sa fraz la ena duz mo, ek ena literalman plizyer milyon fason ki nu kapav met sa 12 mo la ansam. Me enn sel dan tu sa bann lord la furni sinifikasyon ki mo ti pe vize. Anfet dan lezot lord, sa bann mo la pa ule dir naryen ditu.

Alor, li swiv ki, pu ki ena konpreansyon, nu bizin konn bann reg – reg ki determinn dan ki lord pu plas senbol. Dan ka nu lang maternal, omwen, zame nu finn resevwar okenn lanseymen formel lor sa bann reg la. Kan nu ariv lekol purtan, e kan bann la kumans montre nu bann “reg gramer”, nu deza konn tu reg gramer nu langaz. Laplipar ditan bann reg ki nu aprann lekol pa reg langaz ditu. Par exanp, an Angle zot dir “zame pa bizin terminn enn fraz avek enn prepozisyon” (enn reg Winston Churchill finn demoli ek enn remark. “*That is a restriction up with which I will not put*”). Ubyen zot dir «de negatif fer enn positif» (sa li enn mansonz total, aköz dan preske tu langaz, de negativ fer enn negatif). Zot pa bann “reg gramer”, zot bann reg konportman sosyal, reg ki kit kikenn, kit plas enpe arbitrer finn deside ki “kumsa bizin fer” Kuma bann lezot reg, kuma “pa bliye pronons “g” dan “going”, pa dir “goin” (sa li enn mansonz osi, pena son “g” lafen “going”). Tusala pena nanye pu fer ek langaz, ek buku pu fer ek pas u pu “bon dimunn”.

Sa sistem reg ki nu servi kan nu met bann mo ansam apel sentax. Sentaz li enn size vast ek kompleks e mo pa pu kapav dir gransoz lor la isi. Li sifi pu mo dir ki ena serten prinsip debaz dan sentax ki parey dan langaz anzeneral. Me, sak diferan langaz, dizon parmi sa 6,000 ubyen 7,000 diferan langaz ki existe lor later, ena osi so prop reg, anplis sa bann reg debaz ki tu langaz ena. Ena langaz ena enn ta lezot reg (bann anplis-la), lezot ena “tigit”.

Alor, ena langaz ki ena sentax pli konplex ki lezot. Ubyen plito li paret pli konplex ki lezot. Byen suvan seki konplex dan enn domenn sentax, li senp dan enn lot domenn sentax. Alor, pena okenn fason obzektif mezire e anonse ki “Langaz A li pli konplex ki langaz B”, ubyen vis versa. Me, nu kapav gayn linpresyon ki enn langaz avek mwens sa bann reg adisyonel (plis ki bann prinsip iniversel) li, pa kone kimanyer, li pli senp dan kit fason.

Lontan, ena dimunn ti krwar ki langaz Lerop pli konplex ki langaz ki pa ti Eropyen, alor zot ti sanse siperyer. Me, amizir finn etidye langaz ki pa Eropyen, li ti vinn deplizanpli kler ki sertenn sa bann langaz la buku pli konplex ki nerport ki langaz Lerop. Anfet, ena serten langaz Lerop (kuma Angle) e serten langaz ki pa Eropyen ki ti prodir par kiltir byen devlope (kuma dan Lasinn) ti mwens konplex ki serten lezot langaz ki enn tipti tribi lwenten, san sistem ekrir, koze. Alor, sa fos lide ki ena enn yerarsi langaz, avek langaz kuma Angle ek Franse lao, finn abandone.

Abandone, avek enn-de exsepsyon. Kot prezize finn persiste.

Exsepsyon ti pu bann langaz apel bann langaz Kreol. Langaz kuma “Kreol Franse Moris”, ubyen tu senpleman “Kreol”, kuma nu apel li isi. Buku dimunn ki koz langaz Kreol tuzur panse ki zot langaz li inik omond. Ubyen, ena panse, si ena ase buku vokabiler ki finn tire depi Franse, ki tu langaz Kreol tir zot vokabiler depi Franse.

An realite ena otur 80 diferan langaz Kreol dan lemond. E ena ki pran mo depi Franse, tandi ki lezot pran mo depi Angle, Olande, Espanyol, Portige ubyen Arabik. Me nerport ki kote ki ena enn langaz Kreol e nerport ki langaz (ubyen seri langaz) ki finn kontribiye dan zot vokabiler, zot resanble buku, anterm zot gramer.

Alor, ti ena zis enn poyne serser ki ti interese ar bann langaz Kreol pandan 200 an, ariv 50 a 60 an desela, bann lingwis finn kumans etidye bann langaz Kreol syantifikman. Deswit zot finn realize ki enn ta zafer dimunn ti pe panse lor bann langaz Kreol pa ti vre ditu.

Par exanp, dimunn ti krwar (e ena ankor dimunn ki krwar) ki bann langaz Kreol zot inferyer ar lezot langaz. Bann langaz Kreol, zot ti pe dir, existe aköz dimunn ki finn invariant zot ti tro “lant”, ubyen tro “aryere” pu aprann langaz kuma Franse konvenableman. Zot ti pe dir bann langaz Kreol ti zis bann form koronpi Franse, enn form Franse mal-parle. Ena ti pe dir langaz Kreol pa vreman merit apel “langaz”. Dimunn pli poli ti apel zot “dyalek”, e bann mwen poli ti apel zot “zargon”, “Franse barok”, “patwa”. E preske tu dimunn ti partaz enn fos lide ki pu koz Kreol an piblik ti enn siyn ki u mank intelizans ubyen mank ledikasyon, ubyen mank tulde. Ena mem bann jok, par exanp dan Hawaii, kot Kreol pran so mo depi Angle, ena enn jok kot sanse enn dimunn oper so latet. Avan loperasyon “Il a parlait comme ça”, e apre “Li koz kumsa”.

Anfet, lide-mem ki langaz Kreol inferyer dan kit fason, li pa tini dibut ditu. Li pa baze lor naryen.

Dabor, langaz Kreol li pa zis enn versyon koronpi ubyen redwir de kit langaz Lerop. Lefet ki buku so mo, mem laplipar so mo, inn pran depi enn langaz Lerop, maske lefet ki sa bann mo la travers bann sanzman dan form – manyer prononse, manyer ekrir – e osi sanz zot sinifikasyon -- mo la ena enn sinifikasyon pli larz, ubyen pli restren, ubyen finn transforme dan kit fason. Parfwa sa sanzman byen radikal, par exanp enn nawn vinn enn verb, enn verb vinn enn nawn, etc.

E answit, sa lide ki sanse “Langaz Kreol pena gramer” li totalman fos. Bann langaz Kreol zot konplet. Zot gramer byen rigore, e li omwen osi presi, osi detaye, ki gramer Franse ubyen Angle. Zot zis diferan depi gramer Franse ubyen Angle. E se sa ki u ti pu atann depi enn lot langaz. Bann langaz Kreol zot bann langaz apar antye. Zot napa sipaki versyon redwit enn langaz Lerop. Anfet zot gramer kontenir bann verb an-seri (“li lev ros

kas lafnet” anplas “li ti kas lafnet ar enn ros” par exanp). Ena verb ki repete pu lanfaz – enn form konstriksyon ki pa truve dan langaz Lerop. Tenns, mud, laspe an langaz Kreol pa enn sinplifikasyon bann sistem Lerop, me organize dapre enn lot sistem net. Insi deswit. Petet bann Morisyen pu konpran enn Frankofonn ki sey koz ar zot an Franse ape-pre, sinplifye. Me, sa Frankofonn la pa pu konpran repons sa Morisyen la. Frankofonn bizin aprann koz Kreol Morisyen, parey kuma Anglofonn bizin aprann. Li posib ki Frankofonn gayn lavantaz ki serten mo ena kit resanblans, me pu li aprann gramer Kreol, li pa pli fasil.

Alor, si na pena enn zafer apel inferyorite lingwistik, depi kotsa dimunn al ramas sa lide ki bann langaz Kreol inferyer?

Rezon li sosyal, pa lingwistik. Dan tu ex-koloni Franse, bann klas siperyer, seki eze, seki byen edike, zot koz Franse laplipar ditan. Klas travayer non. An zeneral pli dimunn mizer, pli so lapo enn kuler fons, pli sans li koz Kreol e zis Kreol. Alor, dimunn san-reflesi al konklir ki langaz Kreol asosye ar lamizer, langaz Kreol asosye ek mank ledikasyon. Dimunn malvi langaz Kreol aköz dimunn ki koz li malvi. E, apre tu, anset sa bann pep la ti esklav, e laplipar diferan langaz Kreol ti kree par esklav. Me, kan u finn devinn enn esklav an Afrik dan 18yem ubyen 19yem Syek li pa ti ena gran soz pu fer ar u lintelizans, u metye, ubyen mem u ran dan sosyete. Li ti sirtu aköz u ti dan enn plas done dan enn moman done, kikenn finn koken u ale. Me, kan zot finn fini pran u kuma esklav, tutswit zot deklar u san-skil, pa intelizan, ek met u dan ran pli anba. Kumsa zot ti truv u, kan u ti esklav. Alor, u langaz, parey kuma tu ki konsern u, pa ti ena linportans ni stati pu enn grup sitwayen ki ti lib ek ris sa lepok la.

Andotmo, rezon kifer dimunn finn ayir tu bann langaz Kreol dan lemond se *prezize*. *Prezize pir*. Pa plis ki sa. Dimunn ki ena enn move lopinyon de langaz Kreol, dimunn ki truve ki pa kapav servi langaz Kreol dan lekol ubyen liniversite, zot ki mank ledikasyon. Alor, seki nesaser se pu anseyn zot. Anseyn zot pu zot konpran *ki* sa bann langaz la ete, e pu apresye zot valer. E pli zot edike, pli zot pu liber zot depi bann prezize kont langaz Kreol.

Pu konpran langaz Kreol, bizin get so nesans. So zenez. Dan ki sirkonstans zot ti ne? Zot ti ne aköz nuvo sosyete fek kree ti bizin nuvo mwayen pu kominike. Ala seki ti arive tipikman dan listwar bann koloni tropik ki gran pwisans Eropyen ti pran. Enn ti poyne Eropyen ti kumans ramas mendev pu tablisman. Zot ti fer sa par aste esklav depi diferan landrwa. Kumsa, sa bann dimunn fek arive ti koz enn kantite diferan langaz. Laplipar pa ti konpran zot kamarad travay ditu.

Me, pu sistem plantasyon, sistem tablisman marse, ti bizin enn langaz ankomen. Langaz proprieter tablisman, Franse ubyen lezot langaz Lerop, pa ti pu marse. Dan kumansman enn koloni plantasyon, kot ti ena byen tigit Eropyen, me osi byen tigit esklav, li pa inposib ki ti kapav marse, e sirman premye esklav ti anfet koz Franse, ubyen langaz zot met, ase byen. Me, ase vit, proporsyon met-esklav sanze. Par milye travayer ti debarke byen vit. Dan ka Moris, zot ti debarke depi Lafrik, depi Madagaskar, depi Lenn osi. Dan enn ti-mama truv 10 dimunn ki pa Frankofonn pu enn Frankofonn. E amizir sa proporsyon esklav-met ogmante, distans sosyal, li osi, ogmante. Alor, aprantisaz vinn inposib.

Me, nuvo-veni bizin kominik ant zot par kit fason. E zot ti fer enpe de tu seki kapav. Zot finn pran enn-enn mo isi laba depi Franse, depi zot diferan langaz maternal, e sey tis zot ansam kuma kapav. Rezilta sa sityasyon la se enn pijinn – enn kiksoz ki pena regleman intern strik, me ki sifi pu mesaz ubyen instriksiyon debaz, me li pa sifi ditu pu zwe ful rol enn langaz.

Dimunn inplike dan kree sa pijinn-la, zot tu ti adilt. E tu dimunn kone ki ena enn mond de diferans ant adilt ek zanfan an seki konsern aprantisaz langaz. Zanfan, preske tu zanfan, gayn zot premye langaz san okenn lanseynman eksplisit e apre sa (tan ki zot zanfan) zot kapav fasilman aprann lezot langaz. Me, kan zot vinn gran, tu sanze. Si zanfan pa aprann enn premye langaz – par sirkonstans byen byen rar – zot pu gayn gran, gran difikilte aprann langaz imen dan so sans konplet, e petet zot pa pu reysi zame dan zot lavi. Si zot

deza ena zot premye langaz, kan zot vinn adilt, li pu byen difisil gayn enn dezyem. Zot kapav pa reysi ditu, ubyen gayn zis enn-de mo ek fraz dan langaz zot pe sey aprann.

Kifer li kumsa? Dan tu lezot domenn – ki nu get atas lase sulye ziska mont bisiklet, fer matematik ot nivo ubyen fiziks, adilt aprann pli byen ki tipti zanfan. Alor, li pa aköz zanfan ena enn arsenal kapasite aprantisaz ki adilt pena. Me, enn zafer ki nu kone se ki laservel enn zanfan li buku pli flexib ki laservel dimunn avek plis laz – e sa flexibilite la li diminye amizir bann lane pase, aköz bann sirkwi fix dan servo, sirtu sirkwi ki okip langaz naturel ubyen maternel, vinn deplizanpli etabli. Li posib ki sa bann sirkwi fix zot bar akse a prosesis debaz aprantisaz langaz, enn akse ki ti uver e ki ti permet zanfan apran enn, de ubyen plis langaz adisyonel, si zot expoze ase boner.

Ipotez ki zanfan ena pli gran akse a serten prosesis lingwistik debaz e iniversel li enn ipotez ki explik buku zafer konsernan bann langaz Kreol, ki sinon ti pu res misterye.

Adilt, parey kuma zot gayn difikilte akerir enn nuvo langaz, paret truv li kareman inposib pu invariant enn nuvo langaz. Dan Hawaii, pijinn ti existe pu 150 an san ki so striktir sanze, san ki li devlope, parski pandan sa lepok la, li ti koze inikman par adilt (pa ti ena buku zanfan ne, e seki ti ne, zot ti akerir langaz Hawaii). Lerla, ep! Lafen 19yem syek, langaz Hawaii enn ku truv enn deklen drastik, e zanfan kumans servi pijinn. Kan zot servi li, zot finn transform li, dan lespas enn sel zenerasyon, depi enn medyom san form, ki sanz-sanze e ki ti byen limite, an enn langaz imen konplet ek extreman regilye. Sa nuvo langaz la, lingwis apel li Kreol Angle Hawaii.

Mem si prev pa konplet, paret finn ena enn transformasyon similer dan tu sosyete Kreolofonn – premye enn pijinn san striktir, lerla, kan zanfan kumans servi li, ena enn transformasyon rapid ver enn langaz striktire, regilye, antye.

Ena ankor evidenns pu lyen ant nesans langaz Kreol ek kapasite ki zanfan ena pu konekte ar seki form baz iniversel tu langaz. Sa evidenns la li sorti similarite striktirel inkriwayab ant tu langaz ki finn pran nesans dan bann koloni plantasyon – setadir tu langaz ki finn transforme depi pijinn-a-Kreol.

Parfwa ena dimunn dir ki similarite li aköz tu langaz Kreol ena enn lyen ek kit langaz Eropyen. Sa li betiz. Laplipar laspe langaz Kreol partaze ankomen, zot NAPA prezan dan langaz Eropyen ditu. Alor, kot sa bann laspe similer sorti?

Ena osi serten dimunn ki dir ki zot sorti “langaz sustrat”, langaz Lafrik Delwes ki bann premye esklav Karaib ti koze. Andotmo, zot dir kumkwa sa bann esklav depi Lafrik Delwes finn tu sinpleman gard serten laspe zot langaz avan esklavaz, kan zot ti pe kree diferan langaz Kreol dan Karaib. Si sa ti vre, lerla Moris, ki ti ena 200-300 esklav depi Lafrik Delwes, e Seychelles ki pa ti ena ditu, ek Hawaii, ki pa ti ena ditu, pa ti pu ena sa bann laspe an-komen la. Zot ti bizin plito ena laspe ankomen avek langaz Malgas ubyen bann langaz Lafrik Deles (pu Moris ek Sesel) ubyen langaz depi Pasifik ubyen Lazi Deles (dan ka Hawaii). Me, zot pena. Zot ena laspe ki similer a tu lezot langaz Kreol dan lemond, similer a tu sa bann langaz ki finn sipozeman erit bann laspe depi langaz Lafrik Delwes.

Alor, tu sa bann tantativ pu explik sa bann similarite profon ant bann langaz Kreol finn tonbe. Sel explikasyon se, kan zanfan kree langaz Kreol, zot pe fer li parski zot pe konn surs sa prosesis iniversel pu imen, setadir zot ena kapasite rant an kontak ek lasurs kreasyon langaz. E li sirman mem prosesis ki finn kree langaz imen, dan kumansman limanite. Alor, langaz Kreol, lwen det dan enn fami langaz inferyer, li anfet pli pros a lasurs sa fakilte lingwistik ki limanite partaze – li seki sarye mwens fardo tu kalite gomom anplis ki finn al kol ar bann pli ansyen langaz, amezir finn servi zot pandan de-syek e de-syek.

Alor, ki mesaz pu u amenn lakaz depi tu sa? Mesaz se ki totalite bann rezon ki finn deza avanse pu pretann ki bann langaz Kreol inferyer, zot tu fos. Sak rezon ki bann la finn avanse li baze swa lor linnyorans swa lor malantandi. Ki retonbe ki swiv sa dekuvert?

Retonbe pli konsekan pu tu dimunn prezan dan Hearing LPT, konsern rol langaz Kreol dan ledikasyon. Ena enn long listwar diskriminasyon kont langaz Kreol dan lekol; enn long tradisyon montre zanfan depi enn pli tipti laz, swa antyerman ubyen sirtu, an Angle. Buku



Morisyen sutenir sa polisi la, aköz Angle enn langaz mondyal e zot per ki zot zanfän pu sibir enn serten dezavantaz dan enn lekonömi global si zot pa köz Angle byen. E sa li vre.

Me, seki pa vre, seki anfet enn mansonz grotesk, se kan dimunn mintenir ki, pu ki u köz Angle byen, fode montre tu size an Angle. Sa li betiz. Dan enn sondaz resan, 61% Morisyen finn dir ki zot santi zot sibir enn andikap aköz zot pa könn Angle ase byen. 61%. Preske de-tyer popilasyon. E sa, remarke, apre ki zot finn swiv tut-enn karyer oblize ekut Angle, lane vini, lane ale – Angle dan klas matematik, Angle dan klas listwar, Angle dan klas syas! Me, problem li pa zis ki etidyan finn travers lekölaz sanki zot aprann Angle byen. Mazinn kiksoz enn ku: komye eski sa bann etidyan la finn vremen aprann lor size ki ti pe anseyn zot – lor matematik, lor listwar, lor syans – kan tu sa bann size la ti bizin travers “filt” enn langaz ki zot pa vremen ti pe konpran? E ki pli gran andikap kan u pe an konpetisyon ar etidyan ki finn elve dan enn fami kot Angle zot langaz maternal, ubyen enn parmi zot langaz maternal! Kimanyer met konpetisyon kan u ena enn andikap kumsa?

Anu konpare Moris ar Laoland. Tulde pei tipti. Tulde zot langaz mazoriter, Olande ek Kreol respektivman, pa tro köze andeor zot pei. Mem si Olande, e sa li diferan depi Morisyen, pa ti kolonize par dimunn ki köz Angle, Olande ena mem bezwen langaz Angle ki Morisyen. E laplipar köz li byen. Buku köz li osi byen ki enn Anglofönn natif, avek zis enn ti-diferans aksan.

Abe, kimanyer zot reysi fer sa, zot? Zot fer li par fer tu zot lezot size an Angle? Zame. Olande enn pep fyer, e zot pu refiz fer edik zot zanfän dan langaz lezot dimunn. Ziska laz 12 an, tu lanseynamn dan tu size li an Olande. Kote kölez, ena zis enn poyne kölez spesyalize kot zot servi 50% Angle ubyen 50% Alman, ek 50% Olande. Me laplipar Kölez, laplipar leköl segonder, zot aprann 100% an Olande – avek eksepsyon dan klas kot pe anseyn enn lot langaz kuma enn langaz.

Sikse bann Olande dan aprann Angle, se zot finn evit fer konfizyon ant anseynman Angle kuma enn langaz ek anseynman tu lezot size. Zot anseyn Angle kuma enn size, e zot fer sa dan enn fason byen rigore ek byen rode.

Lexperyans Laoland pa inik. Buku letid partu dan lemond montre ki ledikasyon li reysi pli byen kan fer li dan langaz maternal mazorite zanfän, depi primer e atraver segonder. Langaz maternal lagran mazorite Morisyen li Kreol. Lozik la li evidan. Kreol pa zis enn langaz konplet, e totalman respektab, ki kapav dibut ar nerport ki lot langaz, me li osi langaz dan lekel tu sitwayen Moris ti bizin aprann pu ki zot kapav vinn manb apar antye dan zot sosyete, e manb apar antye pli lwen ki frontyer zot bann zil osi, dan lemond antye.

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED

### HUMILIATIONS WITH RESPECT TO MOTHER TONGUE USAGE by Shameem Oozeerally

This written testimony was submitted to the International Hearing. It is research done in 2009.

#### CASE 1:

##### Victim's (V) profile:

Age: 60

Sex: Female

Mother Tongue: Bhojpuri

Usual Spoken Language: Creole

Known Foreign Languages: English, French, Urdu

Profession: Ex primary Urdu teacher, recently retired

Ethnic Background: Muslim

##### Aggressor's (A) profile:

Age: 60-70

Sex: Male

Mother Tongue: Unknown (probably Bhojpuri)

Usual Spoken Language: Unknown (probably Creole and French pidgin style)

Known Foreign Languages: Unknown

Profession: Vegetable seller

Ethnic Background: Unknown (phenotype Hindi Speaking)

Very often exposed to French due to strategic place; unlikely to speak French; understanding probably not very good

##### Place of Aggression: Bras d'eau

Strategic place as far as tourism and white people frequentation is concerned. Tourists usually take this route to access nearby beaches and bungalows. White Mauritians also often take this route; some of them live nearby.

##### Original conversation:

(In presence of a French speaking white/tourist couple)

V: Legim-la komie?

A: Rs X. (irritated)

V: Be pa kapav bes li enn tigit?

A: (Aggressively) Kiete? OU ki pou dir mwa bes pri? Bann dimounn kouma OU kot pou kav vinn aste legim kot mwa ? Get mo bann klian (showing the white couple, who started laughing). OU pou vann ou *Baju* si ou pa pou kav aste mo bann legim. Bez sime ale

##### Translation:

V : The vegetables are how much ?

A: Rs. X (irritated)

V: Isn't it possible to lower the price?

A: (Aggressively) What? YOU will tell me to lower the price? People like you will be able to buy vegetables from me? Look at my customers (showing the white couple, who, by then, have started to laugh). You won't be able to buy my vegetables even if you sell your *Baju* (Bhojpuri for dress). Get the hell out of here!

**Situation:**

Initiation of conversation in creole from the customer sparks an aggressive reaction from the seller, who humiliates the woman, in front of French speaking tourists/whites who laugh at the situation. Paradoxically, the seller does not speak French and imports a Bhojpuri word in the conversation (*Baju*).

**CASE 2:**

**Victim's (V) profile:**

Age: 22

Sex: Male

Mother Tongue: Creole

Usual Spoken Language: Creole

Known Foreign Languages: English, French, Urdu

Profession: Student at UoM

Ethnic Background: Muslim

**Aggressors' (A) profiles:**

Age: 50-60

Sex: Female

Mother Tongue: Unknown (probably Mauritian French)

Usual Spoken Language: Unknown (probably French)

Known Foreign Languages: Unknown

Profession: Unknown

Ethnic Background: Unknown (white/mulatto)

**Place of Aggression: Jumbo Riche Terre Commercial Centre**

The victim was in a queue, waiting for his turn to pay at the cashier. In front were two ladies, apparently of white/mulatto belonging.

**Original conversation:**

The victim wanted to leave (his partner accompanying him would pay for the articles)

V: Pardon S.V.P, mo kapav nek pase enn kou

A1: (aggressively) Eh oh, c'est quoi tou ca! Si ca se trouve vous êtes un voleur !

V : Pardon ?

A2 : Oh oh oh, c'est quoi ca. Attention hein ! Vous n'avez pas le droit de passer !

A1 : On va appeler la sécurité !

**Translation**

V: Excuse me; can you please give me the way?

A1: (aggressively) Hey, what do you think you are doing?! You must be a thief!

V : Sorry ?

A2 : Hey, what's all this ! Beware; you don't have the right to cross this point!

A1 : We will call the security!

**Situation:**

Again, a request for action formulated in creole sparked an aggressive behaviour from French speaking Mauritians, accusing the victim of theft and insulting him.

**Case 3:**

**Victim's (V) profile:**

Age: 54

Sex: Female

Mother Tongue: Creole  
Usual Spoken Language: Creole, French  
Known Foreign Languages: English, French  
Profession: Primary school head teacher  
Ethnic Background: General Population

**Aggressors' (A) profile:**

Age: Deceased  
Sex: Male  
Mother Tongue: Unknown (probably Creole)  
Usual Spoken Language: Unknown (probably Creole and French)  
Known Foreign Languages: Unknown (probably English, French)  
Profession: Unknown  
Ethnic Background: Unknown

**Place of Aggression: Primary School**

The situation was ongoing, when the victim was a child, studying at primary school level. Most of the pupils were victims.

**Situation:**

- The teacher always spoke in French and/or English. As a result, most of the pupils did not understand. Also, they feared asking questions concerning the studied materials for the following reasons (among others):
  - They did not know how to speak English/French 'properly'
  - They feared punishment
  - They felt humiliated (the teacher could reprimand them/laugh at them and the other pupils who understood and spoke those languages could also make fun of them).
- Therefore, the pupils feeling humiliated almost never communicated with the teacher in the classroom.

## MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

by Mala Toussaint

I am a Secondary School Teacher, aged 50, and I reside at Quatre Bornes, teach at a secondary school in St. Pierre.

### Testimony No 1

*Original:* Enn zur dan mo ladolensans e ki mo ti pe pas vakans kot mo gramer, lerla mo kuzin e mwa, nu ti pe get enn tantinn ki ti pe netway kad foto larenn Elizabeth 2, Langleter,(ti ena foto famiy rwayal Britanik dan lakaz mo gramer, kumadir zot ti form parti mamb lafamiy!), mo kuzin e mwa nu finn kumans kritik sa fason fer - vedir gard famiy rwayal dan lakaz; lerla nu finn osi kumans kritike ki dan Parlman Morisyin koz Angle malgre ki nu ti fini vinn enn peyi independan (nu pa ti ankor vinn Repiblik lerla), enn tonton e sa tantinn la ti byin revolte par nu bann propo e zot ti reponn: “*Pa kapav koz Kreol dan parlman parski li pa prop.*” Etone nu tulede finn demande, si langaz ki nu pe servi e ki zot usi pe servi *malprop*(?).

Zot finn dir nu ase koz ninport, pu fini pli kurt avek nu etan done ki zot pena pwin pu kont kare nu argiman.

Li fer nu mal alez pu aprann ki langaz ki nu servi tulezur gayn tretman: **MALPROP!**

*Translation:* One day, during my adolescence when I was at my grandmother's place during the holidays, my cousin and me were watching an aunt busy cleaning the frame of a photo of Queen Elizabeth II from Great Britain (there was several photos of the British royal family at my grand mother's place, as if they were members of the family too!). So me and my cousin started to criticize this behaviour, that is; keeping the royal family at home, and then we also criticized the fact that it is compulsory to speak english inside the Mauritian Parliament even if Mauritius had become an independent country (We were not a republic then). One of our uncle and this aunt were very annoyed by our opinions and they answered: “We cannot speak kreol in the parliament because it is a filthy language”.

*Astonished, we both asked whether the language we were using and that they both using was a dirty one? They told us to stop talking nonsense, to make short due to the fact that we had no more arguments. It causes much discomfort to learn that the language you use every day is called: DIRTY!*

### Testimony Number 2

*Original:* Mo ti tann l dimunn ki dir avek dedin: *swa dizan enn dimunn edike, me li koz so gro kreol.* (Li ti pe fer referans l patron lekol prive dan QB).

*Translation:* I heard someone talking with disdain: “He is ostensibly an educated person, but he speaks Kreol (He was refering to the Rector of private school in Quatres Bornes).

### Testimony No 3

*Original:* Dan lakur ennkolez prive, direkter koz dan mikro e tu vwazinaz tande seki li dir: “Zelev bizin montre ki zot ena bon manyer, bizin kan zot vinn dan biro direkter, servi Angle u Franse, me pa Kreol.” Direkter an kesyon al pli lwin par koz manti par dir ki swadizan ti ena inspekter dan so biro e ena zelev ki finn rantre e itiliz langaz Kreol e ki li

(linspekter) inn truv sa deplorab; mem tem avek versyon inpe modifye: ki swadizan enn paran ti ban biro e serten zelev inn rant dan biro e itiliz langaz Kreol, li (direkter) inn gayn anbarase e byen onte, kan sa paran finn dir li kuma li posib ki bann zelev mank ledikasyon e koz Kreol avek la direksyon (ledikasyon pu zot vedir koz Angle/Franse!). Sa direkter e sertenn so bann pros toletan dir zelev: “*Dan klas, bizin servi Franse u Angle kan zot koz avek profeser u direkter.*” Rezilta, zelev sey exprim dan enn sa de lang la e zot gayn difikilte pu exprim zot. Ena anseynan ki nek koz swa Angle ubyin Franse avek etidyan, ki li dan klas, lakur lekol u lor sime kan zot zwenn zot bann etidyan, mem si bann ki resepter mesaz pa pe tro konpran ubyin pa konpran ditu. Rekter adres avek tu nivo zelev an Angle u Franse, e li paret ki zelev pa tro konpran mesaz ki zot resevwar par baryer langaz. Sertenn anseynan ki imilye zelev kan bann la swa servi enn ekspresyon Kreol dan konpozisyon ekrit, ubyin kan zot pe adres zot mem avek zot profeser dan langaz Kreol. Komye fwa nu finn tann dir: “*Kreol pa enn langaz.*” Ubyin: “*Ase koz patwa.*”

*Translation: In the yard of a private school, the director spoke in the in the mike and all the neighbourhood heard what he said: “All students must show that they are well mannered, when they come into the director’s office, they must talk only in English or French, but not in Creole. The director went further and even lied, saying, while an inspector was in his office, some students came in and spoke Creole. According to the inspector this behavior was deplorable. We got the same theme for another so-called situation with only a slight difference. This time a parent was in his office when some students entered and spoke in Creole, and he (the director) added that he was very annoyed and felt really ashamed when the parent asked him how it was possible that the students lacked education so much that they spoke in Creole to the head of the school (education means for them to speak French/English!).*

*This director and his relatives were known to always tell students, “You have to speak French or English when you speak to the teacher or the director.”*

*This resulted in the fact that it was very difficult for the students to express themselves in one of these two languages, when they tried to do so. There were teachers, who talked only in French and English with students, whether in the classroom, in the schoolyard or in the street outside the school premises when they met their pupils. Very often the latter were not able to understand the message much, or not at all. The Rector spoke to all the students (irrespective of their social background) in English or French, and it seemed that the students could not understand the message they were receiving due to the barrier of language. Some teachers even humiliated pupils when they used Creole expressions in their essays, or when they addressed themselves to their teacher in the Creole language. How many times have I ever heard: “Kreol is not a language” or “Stop speaking in dialect”.*

#### Testimony No 4

*Original: enn etranze ki ti pe res Moris e li ti evit koz Kreol e kan dimann li so rezon, li ti dir: “Si je parle cette langue, j’aurai l’impression de parler le nègre.”*

*Translation: A Frenchman who was living in Mauritius chose not to talk in Creole and when he was asked why, he answered; “If I speak this language, I will have the impression I’m speaking Negro.”*

#### Testimony Number 5

*Original: Apre, ena enn bann plas kot Kreol ofisyezman interdi. Mo pe pans lafarmasi, magazin, sertenn libreri; bann vandez vinn otomatikman adres kliyan potansyel an Franse, mem si Franse la byin suvan les a dezire.*

*Translation: Then there are places where Creole is unofficially banned. I mean pharmacies, shops, some bookstores and so on, where, the salesgirls automatically*

*address themselves to the potential client in French, even if more often than not the French used lacks precision.*

#### **Testimony No 6**

*Original:* Tanto mo ti pe ekut enn interview lor TV Knowledge, MCA, kot enn responsab lekol maternel ti pe reponn kesyon langaz ki servi dan so lekol, li dir ki servi inikman Franse avek zelev, seki li deplore, parski paran obzekte ki servi langaz Kreol avek zot zanfan! Li mem dir ki li ti pe fer zanfan ekut e sant sante an Kreol, par examp, Ti-marmit, lerla li finn gayn konplent avek paran ki finn ankoler ki zot zanfan finn aprann sant an Kreol.

Vreman sokan e deplorab pu enn mantalite. Li byin tris. Vedir ki zanfan kuma li kit liniver so lakaz, li rant dan enn domenn ki koz nek Franse, enn domenn etranze avek so lanvironnman. Normal sa pu ena bann reperkisyon lor devlopman zanfan la.

Mo pa kone si li pu itil pu temwanyaz, me mo finn soke par latitid sa bann paran Morisyin la. Normalman, mo kone se lekol ki fer forsing pu pa servi langaz maternel.

*Translation: One afternoon, I was watching an interview on TV Knowledge, by the Mauritius College of the Air, where the director of a pre-primary school was answering some questions on the use of mother tongues in schools. He said that he used only French with the pupils and, according to him, this was a most deplorable situation, and only because parents were against the use of Kreol language at school.*

*He added that they even made complaints, when he introduced the children to Kreol songs like “Ti-marmit”. This kind of mentality is very shocking and really sad. It means that the moment a child leaves his/her home environment, he/she enters a place where French is the only allowed language, which is drastically different from the environment he/she comes from. It is quite normal and evident that this type of education will cause negative impacts on the development of any student.*

*I don’t know whether this anecdote will be useful for the Hearing, but I was shocked by the attitude of such Mauritian parents. Normally it was schools which prevent students from using their mother tongues at school.*

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE

by Elsa Wiehe

My name is Elsa Wiehe and I am sorry I cannot be here at this important political forum. Last year, I completed 9 months of qualitative research in an elementary school in a poor area of Mauritius for my doctoral thesis at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Every week, I spent three to four mornings observing six upper-primary classrooms in this school, and eventually focused more particularly on one Standard Four level to get an in-depth look at the ways children's learning evolved over a year. My project looked at the ways environmental education is taught in schools, looking at the state curriculum in the broader context of a community fraught with environmental injustices, such as water, air, pollution, class exploitation and racial discrimination. Although my focus was on environmental education, it included observation of the role of language in acquiring environmental knowledge and a look at the way the school falls short of addressing the realities in which our children live or not.

And this is indeed the important question: What are schools doing to our children, what are they teaching them and through which means are they teaching them?

So in the next few lines, I'd like to share with you a few of my observations and fieldnotes. These are by no means anecdotal. I have selected these descriptive instances because they *systematically* occur in the classroom, that is, they *represent* events which occur regularly, on weekly and sometimes daily bases. All of the examples have to do with language usage in the classroom, directly or indirectly.

**Low levels of Basic literacy.** Let's start with a basic observation. About 40% of the children I observed in upper primary (in Stds. 4 to 6, approximately 96 children over 240, or one in every 2-3 children) could not read nor write. This is an extremely low level of basic literacy and leads one to wonder how these children got to this upper primary level without reading. These are children who are or will be getting ready for the CPE in subjects ranging from history/geography to mathematics to English. In the fourth grade I observed, the majority of these children *could not even write their names* and did not know the first three letters of the alphabet.

**Why?** There is no causality in the world of reading and language. However, a variety of factors can help explain this. Principally, low literacy levels are affected by, and compounded by language use, including mother tongue suppression, which includes:

### 1. The unquestioned hegemony of English (and French)

All curricula material, produced by the Mauritius Ministry of Education and used systematically in class, was in English. The curriculum was primarily delivered to the children in French, and Creole was occasionally used. During the entire 9 months I observed, I saw teachers bringing outside material to the classroom twice, and these material were in English/French, never in Creole.

When questioned on the usage of Creole in school, teachers generally said they were not sure whether it would be a good thing as it would be at the detriment of English and French



acquisition. Teachers generally do not think of Creole as a legitimate language, and think of English and French as necessary for “success.”

## 1. Language order patterns

The teachers’ language use in day to day pedagogical instances of teaching followed a hierarchical pattern. English and French were used first, followed by Creole. In other words, the teacher had to revert to Creole in the last instance, never the first. The consistency with which the teacher used this pattern was quasi formulaic:

- 1) Start off with French to explain the English textbook words,
- 2) English usage of textbook words
- 3) French explanation
- 4) Creole explanation as last resort – Creole used for discipline situations

### Fieldnote excerpts from 04/03/09 on a unit on plants

Teacher: (reads) *What I have* (students repeat) /*learnt* (students repeat).

*Ca veut dire ce qui nu finn apran.*

(reads) *We get fruits* (children repeat) /*from plants* (children repeat). *We get vegetables* (children repeat) /*from plants* (children repeat). *Ki peut m'expliquer ca? Le 3eme.*

(reads) *We get* (children repeat)/*food grains* (children repeat) /*from plants* (children repeat). *Ki peut m'expliquer? Un exemple, c'est du riz. C'est enn lagrain ca qui nou consome. Nou gagn legume, nou gagn lagrain.*

(Continues reading in mechanical fashion with children repeating): *We get/many foods/from animals/ for example/milk/fish/mutton/fromage/sardines*

*Vous avez compris. C'est pas seulement plantes ki donn nu manze, c'est animals aussi.*

As the students start their assigned task:

Teacher: *Ecrivez le nom n'oubliez pas! Parceque vous n'êtes pas assez attentif, vous!* [She hits student with ruler.]

## 2. Stark compartmentalization/tracking

**Classroom level tracking.** The literacy problem was compounded with stark compartmentalization of children who read and children who did not read. In the classroom, teachers divided non-readers and readers into separate groups. The division was intellectual and physical. Non-readers were physically placed to the side of the crowded classroom in a group, isolated from the others, and in the nine months, *were never once* solicited to participate in the main lesson and follow the main textbook. They were urged to copy down words separately while the others followed the English textbook. Struggling readers were made to copy down words in English in columns *all day* (**see the very telling scanned examples in the back**). The lessons in the textbooks in English were taught to those who could read. Those who could not were excluded from these lessons.

### 29/01/2009 Excerpt from fieldnotes during science lesson:

2:20 The teacher goes up to the whiteboard and writes the words: *Ear, Hear, I hear with my ears*

*"Show me your ear/ears" she says. The children hold their ears.*

*To the (non-readers) children on the window side of the room and wall side, she says "Vous vous faites 3 colonnes, une colonne "hear", une colonne "ears," une colonne "I hear with my ears." The children draw three columns on the page and are to write these three words over and over until the bottom of the page.*

*To the rest of the children, as she orients her stance toward the “reading” group: "Ouvrez la page 13" (in Unit 1 the Human Body) "My senses," she reads (everyone repeats) "are hearing" (everyone repeats). "What is the title? Quel est le titre?" "I can hear with my ears." The teacher reads, the children repeat/read [are they repeating or reading?]*

*"Let us read part B - and then we will do the questions"*

*"Nous avons 5 sentences: eye, sens de vue, nose, sense of smell, tongue - kan nu gute - (kids respond/repeat each time; in general they are fairly engaged during this explanation).*

*"Tournez a la page 14" On board, teacher writes while reading outloud: we hear sounds while kids repeat. "Pourquoi les oreilles sont importants? Ki fer li importan?" Kids say: "Pu ekoute"*

*The kids on both sides of the room do not have their books out. They are doing their three columns and word repetitions. I asked the teacher if the reason why they did not have their textbooks out was because they didn't have books. She said, "they do, it's in their bag, but their writing is so poor they can't do the exercise with the others". I approached the kids to look at what they were doing. Many were going down the list vertically, writing I, I, I, I, I and then hear, hear, hear, hear, then with, with, with, with, etc. Some were even doing this letter by letter. I walked around the classroom to ask a few children whether they understood what "ear" and "hear" meant. Some responded 'zorey,' others were quiet.*

**School level tracking.** At the school level, there is compartmentalization as well in terms of 'success' and 'failure.' This compartmentalization finds itself again in the division between 6<sup>th</sup> grade repeaters and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Those children who have failed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and are in the "repeaters" class do not even say they are in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. They say "I am a repeater."

### 3. Textbooks and testing in English = Denial of the right to introduce children to complex thought – conceptual violence

The time it takes for student to learn basic concepts in English takes away from rich conversations they could be having in Creole about the same subject material. When timing the (usually 1h30) lessons, for example, it is easy to observe that most of the teacher's time and energy is devoted to explaining simple English concepts. For example, a lesson on weather in fourth grade, because of the language constraints, over a period of 45 minutes of explicit instruction (teacher explaining), the children will have solely learned and rehearsed the words: winter-cold-warm clothes/summer-hot-light clothes. 7 words. They will also have counted the 12 months of the year and established that 6 months are summer, 6 months are winter. Day after day, students accumulate such lessons which "dumb-down" their intellect, reducing the ideas and concepts they could be dealing with if instruction was in their mother tongue.

If the curriculum had been in Creole, for example, they could have *had more time* to discuss in depth about the weather: weather patterns in their community, had time to start a chart project to show weather predictions, discussed how they would use various scientific instruments to collect actual data and add the data to the chart.

#### 26/02/2009 Excerpt from fieldnotes during lesson on weather – what the teacher is reduced to explaining

*Teacher : Regardez List A and List B. Tournez la page. She reads : We wear (children repeat) light clothes (children repeat) in summer (children repeat). Qu'est ce que ca veut dire 'we wear'? 'We' veut dire 'nous.' 'Wear' veut dire 'ce qui nous portons.' Ca veut dire la phrase veut dire, il faut porter des vêtements très légers quand il fait chaud. 'We' c'est nous, 'wear' c'est porter.*

### 4. Textbooks and testing in English = Crushing creativity, promoting the idea of right/wrong binaries

Because English is not relevant to children's realities, and children are focused on memorizing what basic words they are learning in English, they often used uninformed

guesswork to find the “right” answer. They are taught that there is a “right” answers as opposed to taught to process things intellectually for themselves.

## 5. Absence of meaningful print-rich environments at school (and often, at home)

In school, there is no library. Never any stories told. Oral literacies do not appear to be valued. Storytelling, an intricate part of children’s imaginations, is not honored in school, whereas Creole as a traditionally oral language has a rich history of storytelling and oral narratives.

During my research, I brought and used bilingual English/Creole PlayGroup (LPT) children’s books in the classroom to work with children. They took a keen interest in these books, and even the struggling readers were able to recognize words and learn the stories. When children use Creole, a visible and marked change manifests itself on children’s faces. They smile, the eye contact is different. They are engaged, animated, and appear emotionally connected to the subject at hand.

## 6. Alienation from one’s spiritual development (or imposition of religion!)

Prayer is conducted in English twice daily at general school assemblies. See the excerpt from my fieldnotes:

*“The kids came in after recess for the general assembly, again lined up by grade and by gender. Some were standing in the sun, most were very sweaty from the recess play. I noticed a boy wiping the sweat of his forehead onto the neighbor girl’s shirt. She did not seem to notice. Another prayer in English, this time for the teachers, the school, the work we do. Two children apparently were playing in the ranks during prayer so the headmaster then did a small lecture on discipline and obedience, alternating between French and Creole. He had a small stick in his hand and hit one of them on the head. The prayer was recited in somewhat of mechanical fashion so the headmaster had them start again and repeat each sentence from the board after him. “Who do we pray when we pray?,” he asked, “To our neighbor?” “No-s” stem from the student audience. “We pray God,” the headmaster continues, “alors if faut se recueillir.” They bowed their heads and the headmaster recited each verse of the prayer, the children imitating his exact intonation as he read the verses.*

## 7. Physical violence in school

Physical violence was a routine occurrence in school. Although physical violence was not directly related to Creole language use in causal, direct ways, the excerpts shared in points 7 and 2 (of this document) show that the physical violence was closely related to academic behavior, concentration, and comprehension. Students were *routinely* reprimanded for not being able to follow or being able to understand, and oftentimes, the discipline was physical. Given the recent laws protecting the child passed in Mauritius, teachers are well aware that they are not “supposed” to hit children. Verbally, many teachers complained to me that their “teaching tools” were being removed from their toolkit.

Despite legislation, several methods were used to circumvent legality and visibility of the violence:

- Using flat wooden rulers (the yellow 30 cm wooden kind) and hit children on the palm of the hand
- Having children group their fingers together and hit at the tip of the fingers so as to not show any marks
- Having children watch other children while the teacher was busy grading, and have children hit other children if they were inattentive or speaking loud in class.
- Ear pulling, hitting on the back with flat hand

- Having recourse to parents – parents, oftentimes would support teachers’ use of physical violence, and outwardly encouraged teachers to use this “method” on their sons, daughters, wards, despite the law.

### Struggling readers’ work in the classroom ~ Meaningless language usage!

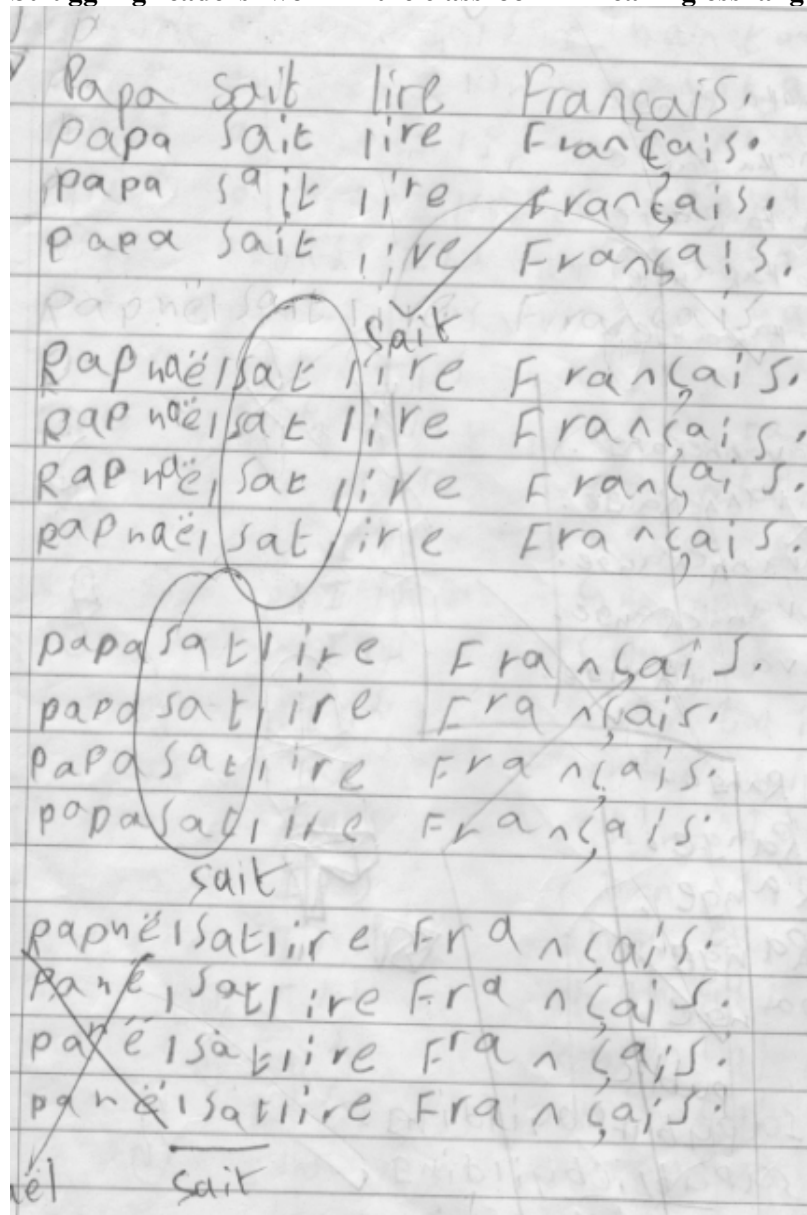


Figure 1

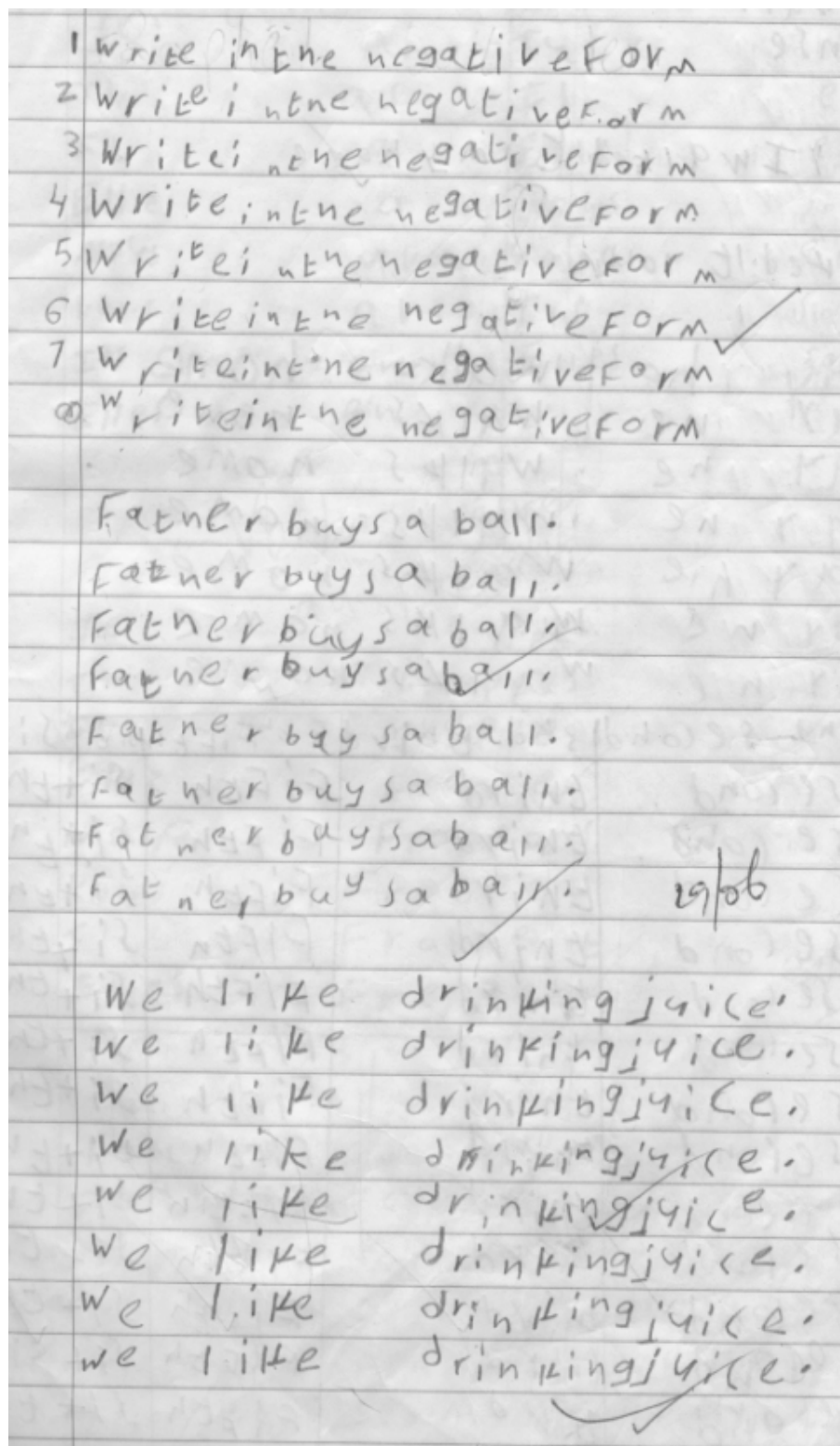


Figure 2



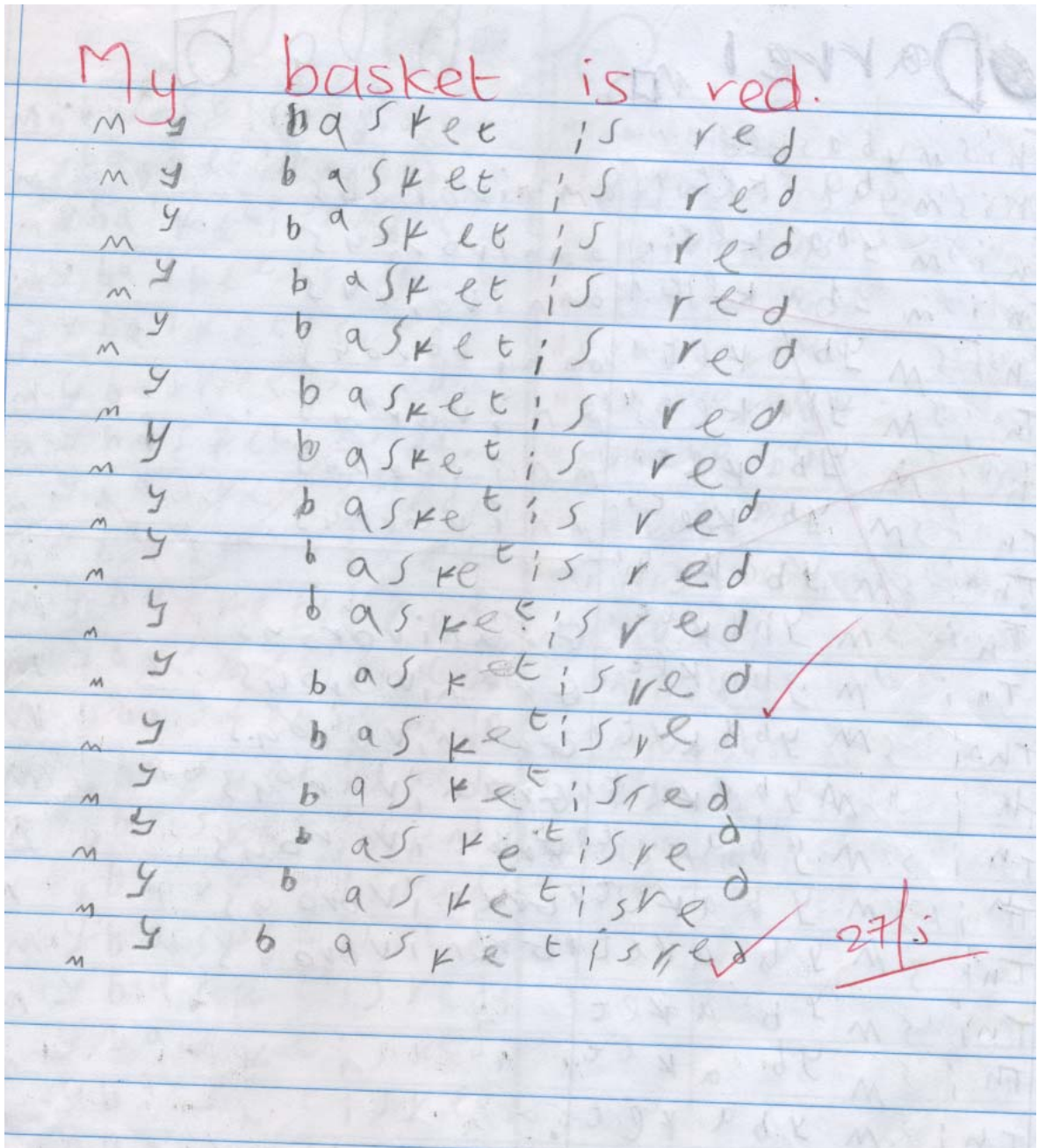


Figure 4 What is most noticeable here is that the writer writes letter by letter vertically



INTERVYU ODYO

STEVE OBEEGADOO, ANSYEN MINIS LEDIKASYON

*Merkredi 14 Oktob, mwa Shabeela Kalla pe intervyyuwe Misye Steve Obeegadoo, ansyen Minis Ledikasyon. Bonzur Misye Obeegadoo.*

**Kestyon:** *Donk premye kestyon ki mo pu poz u Misye Obeegadoo se ki lane u ti Minis Ledikasyon.*

**Repons:** Alor mo ti Minis Ledikasyon ant lane 2000 ek 2005.

**Kestyon:** *Dakor. Donk depi 2005 ziska zordi, ki travay u finn fer par rapor zisteman a ledikasyon.*

**Repons:** Alor mo finn gayn lokazyon travay dezan lor plan internasyonal: premye lane mo finn travay pu lasosyasyon pu devlopman ledikasyon dan Lafrik ki apel l'ALEA, lor devlopman ledikasyon post-primer an Afrik lor baz enn proze finanse par Labank Mondyal. E dan enn dezyem tan mo finn azir kom direkter dan UNESCO responsab kordinasyon internasyonal zefor pu asir ledikasyon pu tu dimunn (Education for All). Mo finn fer sa ziska ki mo finn return Moris ena de mwa.

**Kestyon:** *Dakor. Misye Obeegadoo, la mo pu poz u kestyon ki pli inportan pu nu zordi: se ki u panse u personelman lor servi lang maternel dan lekol.*

**Repons:** Alor pu reponn sa kestyon la, mo panse li inportan revinn lor lekol limem, [setadir] lor ledikasyon. Ledikasyon zordi rekonet kuma enn drwa imen fondamantal. Anfet, avek ladopsyon Sart Iniversel lor bann Drwa de Lom ena 60 banane, lakominote internasyonal rekonet ledikasyon e anpartikilye ledikasyon primer gratwit kuma enn drwa fondamantal pu tu dimunn. Kifer? Parski se ledikasyon ki permet enn individi, nerport ki individi, nerport ki kote dan lemond konpran limem, rant an interaksyon avek bann lezot imen, konpran lemond kot li viv, e donn li bann kapasite sinon bann kapabilite pu sanz so lemond, pu transform so lemond. Donk si nu get li kumsa, ledikasyon li enn drwa fondamantal ki permet, dan nu lepok, enn et imen truv so dinite, gayn so lavi, e definir so plas dan sosyete. Sa se enn premye eleman.

Mo krwar ena enn dezyem eleman fondamantal se ki si nu panse ki tu bann et imen egal an drwa, ledikasyon li enn zuti kapital pu asir egalite dan lasosyete, egalite sosyal. E li bon konpran ki istorikman, progre sosyal finn zisteman amenn rekonesans sa drwa pu tu dimunn gayn ledikasyon. Bann pei devlope finn fer sa lexperyans istorik la e alafen 20yem syek, finn reafirm sa drwa la atraver bann obzektif milener OMD, an angle *Millenium Development Goal* ki reafirme ki ledikasyon set enn drwa fondamantal e fikse bann obzektif tre kler disi 2015 e enn sa bann obzektif la par ekzanp se ki tu zanfan bizen gayn ledikasyon primer, konplet zot ledikasyon primer disi 2015.

Proze lor ki mo finn travay "Ledikasyon Pur Tus" li met lanfaz lor la: ki ledikasyon primer pu tu dimunn se pa zis gayn akse, me osi konplet enn sik ledikasyon primer ek



konplet li avek sikse. Setadir alafen sa sik la, gayn enn bagaz de konesans e de konpetans ki permet sa zanfàn la, sa zenn la viv so lavi kuma dimunn dan lasosyete.

Ki nu truve Moris? Nu truve ki dabor ena enn inegalite omoman bann zanfàn ariv lekol laz 5 an. Serten ki sorti dan bann fami pli eze ena enn kapital kiltirel ki permet zot demar zot skolarizasyon avek pli buku sans pu konpran seki pe montre dan lekol, pu reysi program skoler, alor ki zanfàn ki sorti dan bann fami pli mizer, li pena sa kapital kiltirel la. Ek kan nu pe koz kapital kiltirel, faktèr pli krisyal se probableman langaz parski se atraver langaz ki zanfàn pu kapav konpran, donn enn sans a lemond otur li, a so liniver. Donk sa problem langaz la, lefet ki kan enn zanfàn rant dan klas li sipoze kit so langaz maternel, langaz papa-mama, langaz lavi tulezur deor, uswa mem ki li reysi amenn li dan klas, liv la li truv dan enn lot langaz, seki pu lor tablo li pu dan enn lot langaz, sa zanfàn la ena enn gran andikap. Se sa ki explike ki enn sertenn nomb de zanfàn, mo redir, mo insiste, bann zanfàn ki sorti dan bann fami lepli defavorize, lepli mizer, pu devlop byen boner enn degu pu lekol. Sa bann zanfàn la pu dir u "Mo pa kontan al lekol". "Mo pa konpran seki fer dan lekol". E zot pu abandonn lekol. Nu kone ki ena apepre 6 mil zanfàn zordi ki sipoze dan lekol primer ki pa dan lekol primer Moris, e li paret ki lav lame ar zot. Sa bann zanfàn la, mo dir ki ena plizyer faktèr ki explik ki zot pa dan lekol, me enn se alyenasyon kiltirel ki zot resanti ek zot paran dayer, finn resanti avan zot dan mem fason.

Dezyem konsekans se pursantaz zanfàn ki pa reysi zot ledikasyon primer ki, kuma u kone dan Moris, mezire par legzame CPE. Abe kan nu get statistik, nu realize ki omwen 20%, omwen enn zanfàn lor senk, napa reysi, mem kan li sey enn dezyem fwa, pas sa legzame CPE la. E sa kan nu konn nivo ki bizen pu pas legzame, [li] enn nivo byen ba.... [dezyem lanrezistremàn ki kumans omilye enn fraz]...

CPE ankòr enn fwa, se bann zanfàn lepli mizer.

Li danzere sosyalman parski li vèdir enn zanfàn lor senk pa integre dan sosyete.

E si u le get li avek enn rezonnman pirman ekonomik, anterm enn investisman sosyete lor bann depans ledikasyon, abe li enn nonsans.

Donk, seki mo lexpéryans ek mo konesans dir mwa se ki lefet ki inpoz lor tu bann ti-zanfàn, dimoman ki zot rant lekol, enn laprantisaz dan enn langaz etranze (mem si sa langaz la enn gran langaz internasyonal, li res enn langaz etranze). sa faktèr la li ena enn gran par de responsabiltè dan esek skoler. Mo pa konn okenn pei dan lemond ki finn reysi asir skolarizasyon primer iniversel pu tu zanfàn al lekol ek fini lekol san pran kont langaz maternel. Zordi onivo internasyonal, mo rapel li, UNESCO limem rekonet ledikasyon pur tus li pu enn mit si nu na pa get an-fas sa problem ledikasyon maternel. Dan Moris kot esek skoler zordi, li enn skandal, nu pa pu kapav rezud problem la si pa pran kont langaz maternel. Nu sote-pile pandan 50 banane, pandan 100 banane, nu pu redwir esek skoler par 1%, 2%, me leproblem fondamantal li pu reste. Donk mo panse ki sa li kler.

Problem se ki dan Moris kuma dan laplipar bann sosyete post-kolonyal, bann sosyete ki finn kolonize, dimunn ena buku prezize vizavi langaz maternel, langaz nasyonal. Dimunn ena tandans truv bann langaz puvwar kolonyal kuma langaz ki reprezant lavansman sosyal, progre, etc. etc. E [zot] konsidere ki si ena rekur a langaz maternel sa li pu vinn enn obstak pu zanfàn la pli divan aprann langaz internasyonal. E sa bann prezize la li egzist pa zis parmi bann dimunn ki benefisye de sistem prezan me osi parmi sa bann dimunn lepli mizer ki viktim de sa sistem la. E listwar montre nu ki dan ledikasyon zeneral, tu seki apel bann inovasyon dan pedagozi, mem lor kestyon langaz, si u rod inpoze, olye u avanse, u rekile. Donk mo panse chalennj ki ena divan tu dimunn ki anfaver ledikasyon pur tus, ki defann drwa ledikasyon pur tus, anfaver progre sosyal ek ki donk anfaver rekonet langaz maternel so linportans, chalennj se konvenk, explike, informe, konvenk tu seki nu apel "lakominote skoler", savedir, paran zanfàn, metdekol, profeser, e osi bann zanfàn zot mem ki rekur a langaz maternel li enn lavantaz pu tu dimunnn e paralelman devlop bann zuti pedagozik: materyel skoler, liv, etc, bann zwe pedagozik ki permet itiliz langaz maternel.

Alors an 2000-2005, mo panse mo finn fer enn gran pa an-avan avek grafi larmoni, setadir pu premye fwa finn reysi fer tu bann exper de langaz kreol morisyen asiz ansem ek

tom dakor lor enn sel fason ekrir, e finn lans bann proze pilot avek sutyen UNESCO dan plizyer lekol. Li paret ki apre 2005 sa bann lexpéryans la na pa finn purswiv, me zordi avek grafi larmoni, enn pretext ki ti pe servi pu dir "be pa kapav ena rekur a langaz maternel parski pa kone kuma pu ekrir li", abe sa pretext la nepli egzis.

Donk pu konklir mo santiman, mo lexpéryans lor sa size la, mo pu dir ki si nu dakor ki ledikasyon pu tu dimunn se enn drwa imen fondamantal, si nu dakor ki ledikasyon ule dir pa zis met lipye dan lekol, me rest dan lekol pu konplet enn sik ledikasyon primer uswa ledikasyon debaz, pe gayn bann konesans u bann konpetans ki program lekol sipoze donn tu zanfán, si nu dakor avek sa de kitsoz la, ki gayn enn ledikasyon lor 6,7,8 an se enn drwa fondamantal pu tu dimunn nu bizen aksepte ki li tutosi vre ki drwa aprann dan langaz maternel ki permet reysi so ledikasyon, li osi enn drwa imen fondamantal, e lekontrer se enn negasyon de drwa de bann zanfán. Le chalennj dezorme se pu informe, explike, konvenk ek dan lakorite avek bann dimunn konserne onivo enn lekol e odela enn lekol, e onivo enn sistem edikatif, demar enn proze ki kapav donn sans a bann zanfán rezete par nu sistem edikatif, gayn ledikasyon e apartir de sa ledikasyon la, konpran zot lemond pu zot kapav azir pu amelyor zot lavi.

*Mersi buku Misye Obeegadoo.*

AUDIO INTERVIEW

STEVE OBEEGADOO, FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER

*Wednesday 14 October 2009, I, Shabeela Kalla am interviewing Mr. Steve Obeegadoo, ex-Education Minister. Good morning Mr. Obeegadoo!*

**Question:** *My first question, Mr. Obeegadoo is when exactly were you Education Minister.*

**Reply:** I was Minister of Education between the year 2000 and 2005.

**Q:** *So as from 2005 to date, have you done any work in relation to education?*

**R:** I have had the opportunity to work for two years at the international level: the first year, I worked for ALEA, the association working for the development of education in Africa on the basis of a World Bank-funded project. Secondly, I acted as a director in UNESCO responsible for co-ordinating international efforts to ensure “education for all”. I worked in this capacity until I came back to Mauritius a month ago.

**Q:** *I now ask you the most important question Mr. Obeegadoo, that is, what you, in your personal capacity, think about the utilisation of the vernacular at school?*

To answer this question, I believe it is important to get back to the question of schooling, of education itself. Education is recognised today as a fundamental human right. In fact with the adoption of the Human Rights Universal Declaration 60 years ago, the international community recognises education and in particular free primary education as a fundamental human right for all. Why? Because it is education that allows an individual, any individual, anywhere in the world understand things, interact with others, understand the world he lives in, and education gives him the capacities or else the capabilities to change his world, transform his world. So if we see it this way, education in our times, is a fundamental right that gives dignity to a human being, allows him to make a living and allows him to forge a place for himself in society. This is a first point.

I think there is a second fundamental point. If we think that all human beings are equal in law, education is a key instrument to ensure equality in society, social equality. Historically speaking, social progress has wrought this right of education for all people. Developed countries have experienced this in their history and around the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have re-affirmed education as a fundamental right and have fixed clear objectives to be attained by 2015, one of these objectives, for instance, being so that all primary-level school children as from now complete primary school by 2015 in the light of “Education for All”.

The project that I have worked on “Education for All” puts emphasis on this point, that is, that primary school education is not only a question of access, but is also about completing a whole cycle of primary education, and completing it with success. This means that at the end of the cycle, the child acquires knowledge and competence necessary for this child to live like a person should in society.

What do we see happening in Mauritius? We see first of all that there is inequality the moment 5-year old children step into school. Those who come from families that are better off have a “cultural capital” that allows them to start off their schooling with better chances of understanding what is being taught at school, to succeed at school whereas children from poor families do not have this “cultural capital”. And when we talk of cultural capital”, the most important factor is probably language as it is through language that children will be able to understand, and give meaning to the world around him, to his universe. So this language problem is posed when a child enters the school room, he is supposed to leave his mother tongue, the language of his mother/father, his everyday language outside the schoolroom, or even if he manages to get it inside, school books are in another language, what is written on the blackboard is in another language, so this child will be greatly handicapped. This explains that a certain number of children, and I must insist on this, children who come from the most disadvantaged, the poorest of the poor, will develop very early disgust for school. Those children will say to you “I do not like school”, “I don't understand what is said at school”. They will abandon school. We know that there are some 6,000 children in Mauritius today who are supposed to be in primary school and who are not. It seems as though they are not cared about at all. I say that there are several factors that explain their absence from school, but one of them is the cultural alienation that they experience, and that their parents have experienced before them in the same way.

The second result is the percentage of unsuccessful children that in Mauritius is measured by CPE examinations. When we look at the statistics, we realised that at least 20%, one out of five children do not succeed even when that child takes the CPE a second time. And when you know what the standard is to pass CPE (a very low standard) [2<sup>nd</sup> recording – some text missing as the 1<sup>st</sup> recording finishes] (...) CPE, once again, it is the poorest children.

It is dangerous socially as it means that one out of five children will not integrate society.

And if we look at it in a purely economic logic, in terms of society's investment in educational expenditure, it is absurd.

So what my experience and knowledge tells me is that the fact that as from the very beginning when children enter school, schooling in a foreign language is imposed on them (even if this foreign language is a great international language); this is what is for the greater part responsible for failure at school. I know of no country that has managed to ensure universal primary schooling for all children, so that all primary school children go to school and complete primary school without taking into account children's mother tongue. I remind you that at international level, UNESCO itself recognises that education for all will be a myth if we do not confront this question of education and the mother tongue(s). In Mauritius where failure rate at school is a big scandal, we cannot resolve the problem if we do not take into account the question of mother tongue(s). We can do what we like for 50 years, 100 years, we might reduce failure rates by 1%-2%, but the fundamental problem will still be with us. I believe that this is clear.

The problem is that in Mauritius, as in other post-colonial countries, people have a lot of prejudice against the mother tongue(s), national language. People have a tendency to view the language of colonial powers the language that represents social advancement, progress and so forth. And they consider that if the mother tongue(s) is/are used, this will become an obstacle for the child to learn international language(s). This kind of prejudice does not only exist amongst those who benefit from the present system, but also amongst the poorest of the poor who are victims of this system. History teaches us that in education, if anything linked to innovation in pedagogy is imposed, instead of going forward, you go backward. So I believe the challenge is to convince, explain, inform, convince what we call the “school community”, that is, parents, school principals, teachers and children that the use of the mother tongue(s) is/are an advantage for all, and in parallel, develop pedagogical

tools: school material, books, educational games and so on so that the mother tongue(s) can be used.

So in 2000-2005, I believe I have made a big step forward with the “grafi larmoni”, that is, for the first time, Mauritian Kreol language experts have met and reached agreement on a uniform way of writing Kreol and pilot projects were launched with the support of UNESCO in several schools. It seems as though these experiences stopped after 2005, but today with “grafi larmoni”, the pretext that was used to make statements such as “the mother tongue(s) cannot be used because it cannot be in written form”, has disappeared.

So to conclude, I would say that if we agree that education for all is a fundamental human right, if we agree that education does not only mean stepping into schools, but also complete primary school education or basic education, means acquiring knowledge and competence that school is supposed to give the child; if we agree with these two aims, then we must also agree that the right to learn in the mother tongue(s) is also a fundamental human right. The opposite of this would be a negation of children's rights. The challenge now, is to inform, explain, convince, reach agreement with concerned people at school-level and beyond that level, and in the context of the education system, initiate a program that gives opportunity to children rejected by the present education system to acquire education and on this basis, understand their world to be able to act to change their lives.

*Thank you very much Mr. Obeegadoo.*

## LPT TEAM'S SUMMING UP

We presented our thesis at the beginning of the Hearing, and then over the next three days we brought 47 witnesses and one special witness before the Jury Panel. There were five DVD film clips, one audio recording, and three written testimonies. The rest were live witnesses.

We established at the beginning, mainly through written submissions of a formal nature that:

- 93% of people speak Kreol and/or Bhojpuri – “usually at home”, particularly through the last official Census replies.
- That the written language of the schools is English, and that the formal oral languages of the schools are English and/or French. (Relevant sections of the Education Act and its Regulations were submitted).
- That schooling is compulsory from 5 to 16 years of age.
- That there are vested interests that contribute to maintaining this situation, in particular a private lessons racket, and a private lessons book racket.

We did not have to establish that there was harm done; it was overwhelmingly obvious. We therefore established the extreme gravity of the harm done. Many of our witnesses used the word “crime” when referring to the linguistic policy implemented in schools.

We established through witnesses, one after the other, the extent of the harm being done to children as a direct and/or indirect effect of the language policy:

- the failure to bring out children’s full potential in terms of their cognitive development
  - o the emotional/psychological harm done
  - o the related pedagogical harm (chanting, rote learning)
  - o the abysmal literacy rate, given the high level of school enrollment.
  - o The human rights infringements:
  - o Health rights (from AIDS prevention, to diagnosis of any illness)
  - o Democratic rights: the criminal justice system
  - o Political and civil rights: the right to stand as candidate
  - o Children’s rights
  - o Rights to education
  - o The right to protection from cruel and inhuman treatment
  - o The criminal effects of the harm done to children because of the language policy were established as follows:

There is physical harm being done, cruel punishments are meted out, and physical violence is still being perpetrated (reference to live witnesses, film clips, and to written submission of Elsa Wiehe), and there is mental harm being done to the children of the Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone groups.

The State is forcing people to leave their linguistic groups, the Bhojpuriphone group is threatened with extinction, while Kreolophone population is also being forced into Anglophone and Francophone linguistic communities.

Children are denied freedom, creativity and the joy of living.

When concessions are made by the Authorities, there is an attempt to keep the languages trapped in “folklorique”, commercialized, or trivialized domains (fancy fairs).

And inversely, when the children’s languages are used, they are free, creative, joyful, write poetry, can keep their own notes, and are generally both happy and intellectually bright.

The successful recognition of the Mauritian Sign Language has been a trail-blazer that can show the way to the Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone groups.

LPTs LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER & MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
about HEARING

Dear Sir,

Re: Hearing on Harm Done to Children by the Suppression in Schools of the Mother-Tongue

Our Association is writing to you concerning an International Hearing that we are organizing for October, 2009, for which Mauritian witnesses will come forward to depone on their personal experience of the harm done to children by the suppression in schools of the mother-tongue. There will be a panel of people, with various different domains of expertise, who will listen to the witnesses. It will be an interactive process in that those present as witnesses will also be free to ask questions of the panelists.

We are at present calling for witnesses to come forward. The Hearing itself will be from 20 – 24 October, 2009 at the LPT Hall in Grand River North West. We will have professional interpreters so that our international panelists understand all the witnesses. The Panel will begin with a 30-minute film specially produced for the Hearing by Prof. Derek Bickerton, the world's greatest expert on human language (and also the world's most respected student of the 80 or so Creole languages world-wide), as he is unable to travel at present, being over 80 years old.

Since we have read of your change in position regarding the use of the Creole language in schools, we are writing to you, with a copy to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, rather than to just the Minister concerned himself. We also realize that this issue is one that goes beyond any one Ministry.

We would like very much to invite you to consider, in collaboration with any Ministers concerned, delegating senior civil servants and/or policy advisors to depone before the Panel or, if this is not appropriate, to be present as observers, and also to put questions to the Panel. We also wondered whether it would be appropriate for you to encourage the MIE to delegate pedagogues to participate in the proceedings? It would be an occasion for them to pick the brains of three of the most highly qualified and most experienced experts in the field of mother-tongue based multi-lingual education at a world level, viz. Prof. Skutnabb-Kangas, Prof. Robert Phillipson and Prof. Beban Sammy Chumbow (see below for brief CVs).

We will be very happy to provide you with further details of the conference, details of recent research into mother-tongue multi-lingual education, or any related matter that it is in our capacity to supply you with.

Yours faithfully,

Alain Ah-Vee, President, cc. Minister of Education, Arts and Science, Hon Vasant Bunwaree  
27 August, 2009





# MOTHER TONGUE BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION & NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by Prof. Beban Sammy Chumbow

On 22 October, 2009, Prof Chumbow gave a public lecture at the Council Chamber of the Municipality of Port Louis. The event was organized by activist organizations: Ledikasyon Pu Travayer, Muvman Liberasyon Fam, Confederation Travailleurs Secteur Prive, Government Hindi Teachers' Union, Federation of Preschool Playgroups, ABAIM, Maudesco, Centre Idriss Goomany, Free Art, Rassemblement pour le Progres de Quartier Pailles, Terre de Paix, and each organization had committee members present.

## INTRODUCTION

Prof Beban Sammy Chumbow addressed his argument to people who he knows are grassroots activists. He started by saying in his introduction that “national development” is an ideal pursued by every nation-state, and that it is the single most important objective of governments in the North as well as in the South. No country, he said, is so developed that its government has ceased to pursue the further development of its people. He said that he has defined development from the economic perspective as the nation’s “*human resources acting on the natural resources*” to produce goods that are tangible and intangible so as to improve the welfare of the citizenry. Some of the indicators of social welfare according the UN human development index include, health-care, food security, shelter or housing, he said.

He argued that for the population to be the agents of change, they need education and they need language power. It is only then, he said, that a population become active human resources that can act on natural resources for development and for the produce of development.

But he said, many people are not literate. And literacy is related to the use of the mother tongue.

He said there are some 800,000,000 adults in the world who cannot read nor write. Most are in the developing world, particularly Africa. 60% are women, he added. UNESCO and UNDP are urging the world to eradicate illiteracy by declaring the decade of literacy and the world literacy day September 8 every year. The consequences of illiteracy are that adults cannot participate in development initiatives. And these development initiatives can be crucial life saving initiatives, and they cannot be accessed, he argued, because the initiatives and the knowledge behind them, are in English, and the people cannot read and write.

He said that this means that in much of the world, the masses are therefore living in abject poverty, poverty occasioned by ignorance. He said that ignorance is like a disease, a disease which only knowledge can cure.

Knowledge is available only to a privilege few, he said. The elite class continues, he said, to be educated in English, French or Portuguese, the language of the colonial legacy. And at most, only an estimated 20% to 40 % of the population of any one African country uses the official language. Which means that 60-80% of the population is marginalised, is actually excluded from the development process. A resource is thus excluded.

To mobilize the masses of the rural population for national development , there is a need to democratize access to information, knowledge and technology, make this information available in language the people know best a local language of the nation, the

Mother Tongue. The mother tongue according to UNESCO 1953, is the language by which the child first learns to express himself and his innermost thoughts.

*Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education* is known by several names including Mother tongue Education (MTE) or simply Multilingual Education (MLE).

### Historical Background

Since the historic UNESCO conference on the “Use of Vernacular Languages in Education”( UNESCO 1953), Prof. Chumbow explained, it has become axiomatic that a child learns better and faster when he is taught in his mother tongue in infancy and as far up the ladder of education as possible. Indeed, it has been shown that the early use of the mother tongue or home language in the educational system has significant social, educational and psychological advantages for the maximisation of the intellectual potential of the child.

Over the years, conferences, seminars and workshops organised by UNESCO, non-governmental organisations and voluntary agencies have sought to reflect on relevant issues and offer directions for the adoption and implementation of a mother tongue-based language-in-education policy, he said. Concomitantly, individual scholars and research institutions have sought to verify certain hypotheses associated with MT-based MLE and especially to determine adequacy and efficacy of various educational methodologies putatively compatible with Mother Tongue Education. Thus, in the early years after the UNESCO conference, controlled experiments were designed to compare two sets of students: an experimental group taught by the use of the mother tongue and a controlled group taught by the use of the official foreign language of the colonial legacy. The results in all these cases showed conclusively that students who used the mother tongue outperformed those who used the official language, even where the examination was set in the (second) official language. There were experiments in Mexico published in 1968, and there have been other in the Philippines as well. (See Afolayan 1976 for Nigeria and Tadadjeu 1990 for a more recent experiment in multilingual education in Cameroon.) Following other experimental research on appropriate language teaching materials, teacher education, teaching methodology and relevant challenges and how these can be met in Mother Tongue Education, we are now in a position to synthesise Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education as it has crystallised after the effervescence of over half a century of intensive research and experimentation.

### WHAT IS MT-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION?

There are a plethora of definitions each underscoring the fact that MT-based MLE is a unique reality with many faces, as illustrated by the four definitions that Prof. Chumbow referred to in his speech.

- “Mother tongue-based bilingual education..... means developing the first language and adding a second language in the best possible manner to ensure the successful learning of the second” (Kathleen Heugh 2002).
- “Multilingual Education typically refers to ‘first-language-first’ education, that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages. Typically MLE programs are situated in developing countries where speakers of minority languages tend to be disadvantaged in the mainstream education system.” (Wikipedia online encyclopedia retrieved 05 October,2009).
- “MLE is the use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction. It starts from where the learners are, and from what they already know. This means learning to read and write in their first language or L1, and also teaching subjects like mathematics, science, health and social studies in the L1.” The MLE Primer Ricardo Ma and Duran Nolasco 2008
- “Mother Tongue-based MLE refers to the use of the student’s mother tongue and two or more languages as languages of instruction in school. In other contexts the term is

used to describe bilingual education across multiple language communities-each community using their own mother tongue plus the official school language for instruction.....In some Asian countries, MT-based MLE includes four languages, the Mother tongue, a regional language, the national language, and an international language” Susan Malone, 2007

It follows from the above, that mother tongue-based multilingual education is a language learning situation involving two or more languages, the first and more fundamental of which is the mother tongue.

## WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR MT-BASED MLE ?

### Linguistic diversity and Pluralism

MT-based MLE is a practical way to promote linguistic diversity and pluralism as the ideological basis of nation building. UNESCO’s advocacy for linguistic diversity (See UNESCO 2003) means that national development endeavours should be directed at preserving and developing each ethnolinguistic community so as to achieve pluralism or ‘unity in diversity’. The development and use of mother tongues in a multilingual nation strengthens the linguistic vitality of each language and *ipso facto* reduces its endangerment coefficient or its chances of attrition and loss, or even. MLE can therefore be considered an important *language maintenance factor* because it reinforces language use and therefore strengthens its survival (See Chumbow 2009).

### Maintenance and survival of human knowledge and culture

Why is it important to enhance the survival of all languages?

Following from the above point, (conservation of linguistic diversity), since it is now quite obvious that every language is a reservoir of knowledge and a vector of unique cultural values of the communities which speak the language, is that the loss of any language amounts to the loss of irreplaceable cultural monuments and huge volumes of knowledge. MT-based multilingual education is therefore the best guarantee for the survival, development and use of human knowledge and multiculturalism.

### Valorisation of Ethnolinguistic Identity

Language, especially language in Africa is intrinsically bound to ethno-linguistic identity. Thus, individual speakers of a language display varying degrees of loyalty to the language and the ethno linguistic community. The marginalization of any language is often resented as personal marginalization by speakers of that language and may result in ethno-linguistic polarization and social strife. The development and use of every language by the nation-state through MT-based MLE reinforces a sense of belonging to the nation state by members of all ethno linguistic communities leading to greater participation in national development initiatives and endeavours. In other words, MT-based MLE enhances national integration of the ethno linguistic communities.

### Human Rights

**Language is a right: it is a human right of the same level of importance as all other inalienable human rights.** All languages have the right to be developed and used by those who speak them for their own development. All forms of linguistic discrimination should therefore be fought and countered (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1995)

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 1992 states in Article 2.2 *inter alia*

“....take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national and contrary to international standards” (Quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000.)

The deprivation of linguistic minorities of the right to develop and use their language for access to education and information will under current human rights provision be considered and classified as **a crime against humanity** or even **linguistic genocide** depending on the magnitude of the case (See Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar – 2009).

#### The UNESCO/African Union Advocacy for MT-based MLE

Apart from UNESCO's position in favour of the use of the mother tongue in education clearly emphasized above, the African Union, has three landmark historic documents: the *African Cultural Renaissance Charter* (AU2006a), the *Language Plan of Action for Africa* (AU2006b) and *The Statutes of the African Academy of Languages* (AU 2006c). These clearly require every member state of the African Union to take urgent measures to ensure that African languages are used as medium of instruction in education, and ultimately as languages of administration along with the official languages of the colonial legacy, which henceforth shall become partnership languages to African languages in the enterprise of national development with respect to orientation and access to globalization endeavours. These documents were signed by all Heads of states or their representatives at the Khartoum summit of the African Union in January 2006, including the Mauritian Government, and therefore constitute a commitment, an engagement, an undertaking to ensure the use of the mother tongue i.e. education and eventually for all the various aspects of governance.

#### WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF MT-BASED MLE FOR CHILDREN

Research has shown conclusively and it is now an incontrovertible fact that children whose early education is in the language of their home tend to do better in the medium and long term in the later years of education (Thomas and Collier 1997).

Concretely, the child has a better chance of maximizing the development of his natural endowment, his/her intellectual potential when taught in the mother tongue. What this means, the Professor said, drawing attention to all of us present, is that whatever achievements you and I who did our studies from infancy in a foreign language medium (English/French) have been able to achieve, we could have achieved *more* did we not have the disadvantage of starting the race behind those educated in their mother tongues.

Language is inextricably linked to culture. It is the element of culture par excellence because it is the means by which people who have the same cultural experience express their belonging to that cultural universe, Prof. Chumbow explained. Learning in a foreign language first, at a tender age, creates some socio-cultural problems for the child. Learning in the MT reinforces the socio-cultural experience

Language acquisition and knowledge acquisition in general involves cognitive and psychological variables. The use of the MT first has a positive impact on the child with respect to relevant psychological variables: confidence, self-esteem and so on.

#### The Mother Tongue First medium as a Foundation

The use of the MT as medium has the advantage that the child knows the medium to a reasonable extent at school age. The MT can therefore serve as the foundation of acquiring new concepts, new knowledge including the learning of a second or foreign language.

On the other hand, the use of the second / official language as medium is a situation in which the child does not know the language being used as medium and has to learn the language *before acquiring knowledge in it*. This constitutes a major handicap and a set back which retards the maximization of the intellectual potential of the child.

The MT first situation builds confidence in the learner, the second language medium erodes the confidence built in the acquisition of the home language.

The MT first medium builds the learning on the foundation of the experiential knowledge gained in the home and the home language. With the L2 first medium, the

student learns from an experiential vacuum (as it were). (See Cummins 2001). The learner is treated as if what he /she knows is irrelevant to the learning process.

With the above psycho-social advantages, the MT as first medium leads to positive attitudes to learning and then to a better aggregate performance. While direct introduction to the L2 medium (because of difficulties in mastering the language), leads to negative attitudes to learning and then to a relatively high failure rate, resulting in repetitions of classes and eventually drop out. (See World bank 2005 Report '*In their own Language Education for all*').

### **Mother Tongue first MLE leads to the achievement of "multi-literacy"**

MLE aims to produce learners who are:

- Multi-literate – they can read and write competently in the local language, the national language, and one or more languages of wider communication, such as English;
- Multi-lingual – in that they can use these languages in various situations;
- Multi-cultural, in that they can live and work harmoniously with people of cultural backgrounds that are different from their own

In a pluralistic nation, monolinguals breed linguistic insecurity whereas the products of multilingualism and multiculturalism develop *meta-linguistic awareness* which makes it possible for them to feel secure.

Multilingual children have more and better language proficiency (Heugh 2002: p 189.)

### **MT as Bridge In MT-based MLE**

**A well planned MT Programme is not only a firm foundation for learning, it is also a bridge through which to access the official or second language and any other number of languages as the case may arise.**

A "**Strong Bridge**" involves the inclusion of a guided transition from learning through the mother tongue to learning through another tongue.

### **Stages of an MLE Program**

A widespread understanding of MLE programs (UNESCO, 2003, 2005) suggests that instruction take place in the following stages:

1. **Stage I** – learning takes place entirely in the child's home language
2. **Stage II** – building fluency in the mother tongue. Introduction of oral L2.
3. **Stage III** – building oral fluency in L2. Introduction of literacy in L2.
4. **Stage IV** – using both L1 and L2 for life long learning

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilingual\\_Education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilingual_Education)"

Learning in the home language in stages I and 2 should go on for as long as possible, even if other languages have to be introduced early.

According research findings, the consolidation of all language skills in the mother tongue is expected to take place with a minimum of 6 to 8 years of MT language learning activities to ensure strong cognitive and academic development (Thomas and Collin 2001)

Only then can MT constitute a strong foundation and a good bridge for Multilingual education.

Mother tongue language acquisition can serve as bridge to the acquisition of one or more other languages because knowledge gained in one language transfers readily to any other language we may learn thereafter and also the

Literacy skills acquired in the MT transfer across languages ( Baker 1996:151–161). This is possible because of what Cummins 1976 calls the "*Developmental Interdependent Hypothesis*". What is this? It has been observed that: Language learners develop a common underlying proficiency (CUP) for in their mother tongue and then this can be

transferred into other languages. The academic skills learned in one language (CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) transfer to another language (Cummins cited by Bloch 2006).

### **Two different theories on how to learn languages**

There is the theory of common underlying proficiency and a theory of separate underlying proficiencies. The second theory, the one about separate proficiencies – is WRONG!!!

Only a model that envisages the addition of one or more languages while maintaining the teaching / learning of the MT for at least 6-8 years has a serious chance of success. (See for instance, Thomas and Collin 2001, Malone 2007).

## **CHALLENGES OF MT-BASED MLE**

### **The Challenge of Appropriate Curricula**

A good curriculum depends on the methodology envisaged and on the language objectives defined by policy for the learning situation, therefore cognitively demanding curricula have to be congruent with the methodology options determined and adopted for each situation following principles of curriculum design.

### **The Production of good Language Teaching Materials:**

These materials need to be error free, of course, he said, and culturally relevant

Language teaching materials such as reference grammars, readers, primers, dictionaries, etc. are to be conceptualised taking into considerations the objectives, the methodology, the provisions of the curriculum, etc. It will not do to use materials meant for monolingual situations without at least some form of adaptation.

### **Teacher Training**

There is a need to train teachers to be good and knowledgeable in the content of the MT-based MLE syllabus, curricula and methodology. This means that even trained teachers need specific and special training for the special programme.

### **Participatory Management**

Successful running of MT-based MLE is enhanced if there is participatory management. This means a school-based management approach involving the empowerment of the local community is institutionalised.

### **The Challenge of Cost**

One of the key factors raised by opponent of MT-based MLE is what they call the high cost of using mother tongues, and implementing a multilingual educational system. There are two issues here.

Contrary to popular belief, L1-based education may actually cost less than a system that is based on L2. If we consider the money wasted on drop-outs, repeaters, and failures, as well as other added costs, studies show that L2-based education systems are more costly than L1 systems.

Secondly Mother Tongue-based MLE has significant advantages for the maximization of the intellectual development of the child. This will result in gains which are not quantifiable in monetary terms. In other words, before moving to his conclusion, Prof. Chumbow said, that in the medium and long term, the advantages to the nation far outweigh the costs. Since education is an investment in human capital (Striner1978), given these advantages, all efforts should be made to count the cost! “What worthy cause has ever been achieved without a cost?” ( Chumbow 1987).

# THE CHALLENGE OF CELEBRATING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN A WORLD DOMINATED BY ENGLISH

By Prof. Robert Phillipson  
Handelshøjskolen i København, Danmark  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

A Public Lecture was organized Jointly by LPT and the Department of English  
at the University of Mauritius at the Lecture Theatre I, on Wednesday, 21 October, 2009.

These are the text of the slides of the power-point presentation  
that went with his public lecture.

A lively question and answer-session followed the speech.

## The original Britons

Who the first inhabitants of Britain were, whether natives or immigrants, remains  
obscure: one must remember we are dealing with barbarians.

*Tacitus*, AD 97

## Tacitus on cultural assimilation

Agricola trained the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts... The result was that in place of  
distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it. In the same way, our  
national dress came into favour and the toga was everywhere to be seen. And so the  
Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable – arcades, baths  
and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of such novelties as ‘civilization’ when really they  
were only a feature of enslavement.

## Languages evolve

- English evolved through the merging of a variety of languages: Celtic languages, Latin,  
Norse/Danish, Norman French, etc
- *Old English*, *Middle English*, *standard English*, *National Englishes*, *New Englishes*,  
creoles
- Creole languages evolved through the merging of languages of different families from  
the 15<sup>th</sup> Century: colonising languages and local languages.

## Language identity and evolution

‘The legitimate and illegitimate offspring of English’ I maintain that native Englishes,  
indigenized Englishes, and English pidgins and creoles have all developed by the same  
kinds of natural restructuring processes.

Salikoko Mufwene: *The ecology of language evolution*  
Cambridge University Press, 2001, 113

## Languages, power and social change variables



- A language = a dialect with an army and navy
- State education
- Monolingualism
- Democratisation
- International human rights law
- Free basic education as a human right
- Literacy as access to the neoliberal economy
- Need for a historical and global perspective

### **The worldwide roots of democracy**

In so far as public reasoning is central to democracy ..., parts of the global roots of democracy can indeed be traced back to the tradition of public discussion that received much encouragement in both India and China (and also in Japan, Korea and elsewhere), from the dialogic commitment to Buddhist organization... The first printed book in the world with a date (corresponding to 868 CE), which was the Chinese translation of a Sanskrit treatise, the so-called 'Diamond Sutra' (Kumārajīva had translated it in 402 CE), carried the remarkable motivational explanation: 'for universal free distribution'.

*Nobel Prize for Economics laureate, Amartya Sen, 2005*

### **A history of global Europeanisation and Christianisation**

East India Company 1600

1698, charter renewal included a 'missionary clause' requiring 'the company to maintain ministers of religion on their business premises and take a chaplain in every ship of 500 tons or more.'

**Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge** 1698 plus many denominational missionary bodies.

### **Global = American**

In 1838 the 'Board of Foreign Missions of the USA', 13 'colonies', propounded 'a belief in the manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxon culture to spread around the world'

Joel Spring, *The cultural transformation of a Native American family and its tribe 1763-1995*. 1996, Lawrence Erlbaum.

The whole world should adopt the American system. The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system.

President Harry Truman, 1947 cited in Pieterse, Jan N. *Globalization or empire*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004. 131.

English in the British empire and colonial America English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French in the present age.

*John Adams to Congress, 1780*

A class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.

*Lord Macaulay, 1835*

### **His Majesty's Inspector of Schools, Matthew Arnold, 1853**

Whatever encouragement individuals may think it desirable to give to the preservation of the Welsh language on grounds of philological or antiquarian interest, it must be the desire of a government to render its dominions, as far as possible, homogeneous, and to break down barriers to the freest intercourse between the different parts of them. Sooner or later, the difference of language between Wales and England will probably be effaced,

as has happened with the difference of language between Cornwall and the rest of England.

### **Gandhiji 1908**

“To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave us. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us.”

“A half-naked fakir.”

### **From colonisation to an English-speaking world**

“... the British Empire and the United States who, fortunately for the progress of mankind, happen to speak the same language and very largely think the same thoughts...”

*Winston Churchill*, 24 August 1941, after signing The Atlantic Charter with *President Roosevelt*

### **Project for the New American Century**

*The Cheney-Wolfowitz-Rumsfeld doctrine*

The plan is for the United States to rule the world. The overt theme is unilateralism, but it is ultimately a story of domination. It calls for the United States to maintain its overwhelming military superiority and prevent new rivals from rising up to challenge it on the world stage. It calls for dominion over friends and enemies alike. It says not that the United States must be more powerful, or most powerful, but that it must be absolutely powerful.

D. Armstrong in *Harper's Magazine* 305, 2002.

### **The neoimperial language**

English in Africa: an imperial language, the language of linguistic Americanization, a language of global capitalism, ... creating and maintaining social divisions serving an economy dominated primarily by foreign economic interests and, secondarily, by a small aspiring African bourgeoisie.

*Alamin Mazrui*, 2004, 30, 40

*Linguistic imperialism continued*, Robert Phillipson, Routledge and Orient Blackswan, 2009

### **Jawaharlal Nehru, 1956**

Language is a unifying factor of our society and it is also a factor promoting disunity I am convinced that real progress in India can only be made through our own languages and not through a foreign language. I am anxious to prevent a new caste system being perpetuated in India - an English-knowing caste separated from the mass of our public. That will be most unfortunate.... I cannot conceive of English being the principal medium of education in India in the future. That medium has to be Hindi or some other regional language. Only then can we remain in touch with our masses and help in uniform growth.

### **Ajit Mohanty 2006**

In today's India, English is the language of power, used as an indication of greater control over outcomes of social activities. [...] Over the post-Independence years, English has become the single most important predictor of socioeconomic mobility. [...] With the globalized economy, English education widens the discrepancy between the social classes.

### **Globalisation: English +?**

The modern Third World child, among other things, is the victim of globalisation. (...) By acclaiming English as the only global language and the only chance in life, denying their mother tongues and neglecting their regional languages, schooling distances them from

their culture, their family, their traditional knowledge and vocation. It enhances the distance between haves and have-nots. If Englishes supplemented and complemented different local, regional, national languages, then it would be a tower of strength. As a substitute it is debilitation.

*Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, 2004, 182*

### **The *lingua divina***

It wasn't until he was 18 that Kanchedia Chamaar realized that God spoke and understood English and nothing else. Because unfamiliarity with the *lingua divina* was a matter of intense shame at Delhi School of Economics in the 1970s, he started learning English on the sly, and continues to be consumed by the process to this day. Over a period of three years after his master's degree, no fewer than one hundred and eight Indian firms found him unfit for gainful employment. While doing his PhD in the 1980s, he found that at Universities in the US, even those not fluent in English were treated as human beings, a dignity that not everybody seemed willing to accord him in Delhi. He has been hiding in the US ever since. Kanchedi Chamaar, 2007

### **The *lingua divina*?**

#### **English and Christ for the World**

*United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* Amity [Foundation] has a team of people witnessing at a grassroots level that Christianity is not anti-Chinese or solely western. As missionaries are still banned from China, it represents one of the most effective ways to support Christians in China through the sending of teachers of English from overseas.

<[www.uspg.org.uk](http://www.uspg.org.uk)>

Wong and Canagarajah, eds., 2009

### ***lingua frankensteinia / diabolica*?**

- *Louis-Jean Calvet*: glottophagie
- *John Swales*: *lingua tyrannosaura*: some languages of scholarship on the way to extinction
- *Tove Skutnabb-Kangas*: killer languages, language murder, linguistic genocide, minority education as a crime against humanity
- *Amos Key*, Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario: languages as existential

### ***lingua franca* : pernicious, misleading, false**

- A *pernicious*, *invidious* term if the language in question is a first language for some people but for others a foreign language; asymmetrical.
- A *misleading* term if the language is supposed to be neutral and disconnected from culture.
- A *false* term for a language that is taught as a subject in general education.

*Historical continuity*: term for the language of

1) the Crusaders, Franks (from Arabic / Persian)

2) the crusade of global corporatisation and English, marketed as 'freedom' and 'democracy'.

### **English - A global mission**

Teaching the world English may appear not unlike an extension of the task which America faced in establishing English as a common national language among its own immigrant population.

*Annual Report of the British Council 1960-61, cited in Phillipson, Linguistic imperialism, Oxford University Press, 1992*

**The imperialism of 'international' tests: Educational Testing Services, Princeton, NJ**

- As ETS's wholly-owned subsidiary, ETS Global BV is structured to bring ETS's expertise and experience with tests, assessments, and related services to educational and business communities around the world. ETS Global BV now has subsidiaries in Europe and Canada, and it will be expanding into other countries and regions as well.
- Our subsidiaries offer a full range of ETS products, services and learning solutions, including
  - English language learning products and services
  - Training and technical assistance
  - Design, development and delivery of large-scale assessments
  - Test design and delivery.
- Our global mission goes far beyond testing. Our products and services enable opportunity worldwide by measuring knowledge and skills, promoting learning and performance, and supporting education and professional development for all people worldwide.

**Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead & Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, 2002**

The British Council has developed relationships with arts administrators, scientists, civil servants, academics, teachers, journalists, policy advisors, and even military personnel through language tuition, training and capacity building, arts projects, school exchanges, and managing the Chevening scholarships on behalf of the FCO. More could be done to build relationships with the 350,000 people who are taught English in British Council offices every year, and it should also be a priority to carry out clear profiling of the 800,000 people who take exams administered by the Council every year. Anecdotal evidence shows that these are all highly educated, skilled individuals who would make good targets for public diplomacy activity (p. 81)

**Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead & Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, 2002**

Diplomacy by Stealth: Working with others to achieve our goals. Trust is essential for effective public diplomacy, and yet, for a series of reasons, foreign governments find it increasingly hard to gain ... The general lesson is ... make sure it appears to be coming from a foreign government as little as possible. Increasingly, in order for a state to have its voice heard, and to have influence on events outside its direct control, it must work through organisations and networks that are separate from, independent of, and even culturally suspicious toward government itself. The contribution of NGO's ... demonstrates the potential benefits that can come from partnerships with such groups.

**Gordon Brown, 17 January 2008**

<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page14289.asp>

... It is in part an accident of history - a wave of knowledge and commerce, which gathered even greater global force in the post-war era, that gave the world the English language... the world is recognising the role of English - ensuring it is taught at primary level as a core skill. In total, 2 billion people worldwide will be learning or teaching English by 2020... with more teachers, with more courses, more websites and now a new deal involving the publishing media and communications industries, we will open up English to new countries and new generations... English is our heritage, but it is also becoming the common future of human commerce and communication.... the bold task of making our language the world's common language of choice.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article701093.ece>

- Gordon Brown will today pledge to export the English language to the world – and boost our economy by billions.

- The PM believes an extra BILLION people around the globe will be speaking English in the next few years.
- *And he will vow that by 2025 there will be more Chinese who can speak the language than the native speakers in America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.*
- Mr Brown believes teaching English will quickly become one of Britain's biggest exports. It could add a staggering £50billion a year to the UK economy by 2010.

### **Linguistic imperialism**

- a variant of linguisticism
- structural: resources, infrastructure, ...
- ideological: beliefs, attitudes, imagery
- internalised as normal and 'natural'
- interlocks with culture, education, media, communication, economy, politics, military
- exploitation, hierarchy
- unequal rights for speakers of different languages
- subtractive, consolidating some languages at the expense of others
- contested and resisted

### **Resistance**

- Asian and African examples
- European Union recommendations
- Nordic examples
- University policies for multilingualism

### ***Gandhi, 1942***

I am afraid our universities are the blotting-sheets of the West. We have borrowed the superficial features of the Western universities, and flattered ourselves that we have founded living universities here. Do they reflect or respond to the needs of the masses?

### **Naz Rassool and Sabiha Mansoor**

Pakistan: the use of English as the sole medium of higher education (for only 2.63% of the population) ensures the cultural alienation of the elite from the rest of the population. 'The global cultural economy is interdependent and, despite the dominant position occupied by English, in practice, it has an organically interactive multilingual base. A narrow monolingual nationalism (a reference to Urdu, RP), an underresourced educational system as well as unequal access to English as international lingua franca, therefore, is counter-productive to national growth.' (ibid., 240).

cf. South Africa (*Webb, Katunich, Kamwangamalu*)

### ***Amartya Sen, 2005***

Different cultures are thus interpreted in ways that reinforce the political conviction that Western civilization is somehow the main, perhaps the only, source of rationalistic and liberal ideas – among them analytical scrutiny, open debate, political tolerance and agreement to differ.... science and evidence, liberty and tolerance, and of course rights and justice. [...] Once we recognize that many ideas that are taken to be quintessentially Western have also flourished in other civilizations, we also see that these ideas are not as culture-specific as is sometimes claimed.

### **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**

#### ***Decolonising the mind***

- ... there can be no *democracy* where a whole people have been denied the use of their languages, where they have been turned strangers in their own country.

- There can be no real *economic growth and development* where a whole people are denied access to the latest developments in science, technology, health, medicine, business, finance, and other skills of survival because all these are stored in foreign languages.

### ***Rubagumya, Casmir 2004***

#### **English in Africa and the emergence of Afro-Saxons: globalization or marginalization**

- European languages were *imposed* on Africa in the colonial period. African people as communities did not *choose* to learn those languages. [...]
- Individual Africans do not necessarily *choose* to learn these languages (French, English, Portuguese). Since the language of instruction in almost all African countries is the language of the former colonial power, going to school does not leave any choice.
- Individuals who do not go to school, and therefore do not learn European languages, do not choose not to go to school. They do not have access to schooling (2004: 134).

#### **Rubagumya of Tanzania: World English is unethical**

In the global village there are 'a few chiefs – very powerful economically and militarily – and a lot of powerless villagers. [...] The market has indeed replaced imperial armies, but one wonders whether the effect is any different. [...] It is therefore not the case that more English will lead to African global integration; the reverse is more likely.[...] Giving false hopes that everybody can have access to "World English" is unethical' (ibid.: 136-139).

#### ***Neocolonial monolingual pedagogy***

Monolingualism: the five tenets elaborated in *Linguistic imperialism* (Oxford 1992, Shanghai 2001, New Delhi 2007)

- English is best taught monolingually,
- the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker,
- the earlier English is taught, the better the results,
- the more English is taught, the better the results,
- if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop.

#### **Professional fallacies**

- the monolingual fallacy
- the native speaker fallacy
- the early start fallacy
- the maximum exposure fallacy
- the subtractive fallacy.

Central to the US-UK 'English Language Teaching' business, and World Bank activities.

#### ***Thiru Kandiah, 2001***

... the written English prose medium which, in some 'standard' form, is the staple of the global medium is hardly a neutral or innocent instrument. It defines a discourse whose conventions of grammar and use are heavily vested ideologically, affirming and legitimising particular ways of seeing the world, particular forms of knowledge and particular relations of power, all of which work decidedly against the best interests of the disadvantaged countries.

#### **African Academy of Languages**

N'utiliser dans l'enseignement formel de base que les langues nationales et les maintenir tout au long de la scolarité, aussi bien comme langues d'enseignement que langues enseignées, sans préjudice pour les langues officielles (les langues du Nord pour la plupart), objets d'enseignement.

**ACALAN, Bamako, January 2009**

[www.acalan.org](http://www.acalan.org)

### **Schema directeur du partenariat entre les langues du Nord et les langues africaines dans les systèmes éducatifs**

Mener des actions de plaidoyer auprès des organisations linguistiques internationales (anglophones, francophones, lusophones et hispanophones), ainsi que des institutions internationales pour promouvoir l'enseignement multilingue fondé sur la langue maternelle suivant les principes énoncés par l'UNESCO (*L'enseignement dans un monde multilingue*, 2005) pour obtenir un accompagnement à la fois politique, technique et financier.

### **EU Commission Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006, 24 July 2003**

- learning one lingua franca alone is not enough
- English alone is not enough
- in non-anglophone countries recent trends to provide teaching in English may have unforeseen consequences on the vitality of the national language.

### **EU Commission Framework Strategy for Multilingualism 2005**

- Mother tongue plus two
- National plans to give coherence and direction to actions to promote multilingualism (including the teaching of migrant languages)
- Teacher training, early language learning, CLIL
- Multilingualism in higher education
- Academic competence in multilingualism
- European Indicator of Language Competence
- Information Society technologies
- The multilingual economy

### **Swedish 2008 White Paper, 265 pages**

legislating on the status of Swedish; linguistic human rights of minority language users (five legally recognised minority languages, Swedish Sign language); maintenance of the languages and cultures of immigrants:

- declaring Swedish the *principal* ('huvud' = main, chief) language of the country, a formulation that deliberately avoids the terms *official* and *national*, Swedish being the language that unites all residents of the country, irrespective of mother tongue;
- creating obligations for the society, including its agents in all sectors, its legislators and administrators, to see that language rights are realized;
- in higher education and in dealings with EU institutions, ensuring that Swedish should be used whenever possible;
- institutions having a duty to work out how best the preeminence of Swedish can be maintained (e.g. ensuring terminology development).

### **Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy signed by the Ministers of Education of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden ...**

We in the Nordic countries consider all languages to be equal. [...]. All Nordic residents have the right

- *to* acquire a language of international importance so that they can take part in the development of world society
- *to* preserve and develop their mother tongue and their national minority language

A Nordic language policy should therefore aim:

- *that* all Nordic residents having a basic knowledge of linguistic rights in the Nordic countries and the language situation in the Nordic countries [...]

***University of Helsinki, Finland, Language policy, 14 March 2007***

... University Language Policy is based on the following strategic precepts: *Languages are a resource within the academic community*

- The University's bilingual and multilingual environment and internationalisation are sources of enrichment for all and are a necessity for the international comparability of its research performance.
- Language skills are a means to understanding foreign cultures and for making Finnish culture known to others. The university promotes the language proficiency of its students and staff as well as supports their knowledge of different cultures. Multilingual and multicultural communities promote creative thinking.

**Follow-up**

personal website:

[www.cbs.dk/staff/phillipson](http://www.cbs.dk/staff/phillipson)

*Linguistic imperialism continued*

Orient BlackSwan for seven South Asian countries

Routledge



The Mahatma Gandhi Institute & Ledikasyon pu Travayer  
have pleasure in inviting you to a

**Public Lecture**  
**by**  
**Prof. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas**  
**on**

**LITERACY & ORACY**  
**IN MOTHER-TONGUE BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION**

Friday 23rd October, 2009

*2:00 pm*

Soobramania Bharati

Lecture Theatre

MGI

For Power Point presentation of the speech, please visit the site:

[www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org](http://www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org)

## SART LOR LANG MATERNEL DAN LASOSYASYON

Sa *Sart lor Langaz* ti siyne par 14 organizasyon.  
Nu konteste lalwa ki obliz nu sumet riterens ek minits  
divan Rezistrar Lasosyasyon  
an Angle ubyen Franse.

Etan done ki

- Parol ekrit li enn medyom inportan pu stokaz nu memwar individyel ek kolektif;
- Minits enn lasosyasyon, li enn form inportan sa memwar kolektif-la;
- Minits kontenir saki enn lasosyasyon anvi garde kuma so memwar;
- Dapre Resansiman Guvernman an lan 2000, 93% popilasyon Moris servi langaz Kreol ek/ ubyen Bhojpuri;
- Li enn drwa imin pu servi nu lang maternal an ekri, e sa drwa-la aplike kan nu zwenn kuma enn lasosyasyon, pu tu laspe nu travay lasosyasyon;
- Leta, ikonpri Rezistrar Lasosyasyon, ti devet rekonet langaz maternal ki gran mazorite sitwayen servi dan lasosyasyon;
- Minits konstitye enn rapor fidel seki finn traverse dan reynion, e kan sekreter re-lir minits dan prosen reynion, manb cheke ki li enn refleksyon fidel seki finn pase dan dernye reynion, propoz amandman, vote, avan apruv minits;
- Lalwa aktyel antrav nu drwa gard liv minits ofisyel dan langaz dan lekel reynion derule, setadir dan nu langaz maternal;
- Kan pa servi nu langaz maternal pu gard minits, sa antrav derulman nu lasosyasyon;
- Li pa enn “vre minits” kan tradir li apre leku pu Rezistrar dan enn lot liv, e lerla lir minits dan prosenn reynion dan enn langaz etranze, avan apruve ek siyne, me sanki dimunn konpran, e ki sa pratik-la, asontur, mem si li respekte lalwa teknikman, li kapav nuri dan Moris enn fos lide lor ki “minits” anfet ete;
- Li pa enn “vre minits” pu nu lasosyasyon nonpli, kan Sekreter pe ekut derulman nu reynion an Kreol ubyen Bhojpuri e lerla fer kustik pu tradir prosiydings anplas-anplas dan enn langaz etranze; lerla re-tradir sa minits an Angle an langaz maternal dan prosenn reynion, e lerla apruve ek siyne lor baz enn versyon ki pa finn kapav apruve aköz li dan enn langaz etranze;
- Represyon kont nu langaz maternal li antrav nu kapasite fer nu lavwa tande dan lasosyete, alor li limit partisipasyon e li fos demokrasi;
- Antan ki Lasosyasyon, nu selman gayn drwa kominik avek lotorite lor kondisyon ki nu fini metriz enn langaz etranze, an okirans Angle ubyen Franse;
- Represyon kont langaz maternal dan lavi asosyativ li enn sinbol enn represyon pli zeneralize kont langaz maternal,

E etan done ki

- Dan gran lasosyasyon, nu pa gayn drwa elir enn Prezidan, Sekreter ubyen Trezorye de nu swa, me selman sa bann manb ki metriz Angle ubyen Franse; e etan done ki sa antrav derulman nu lasosyasyon;

Nu fer demand ki:

1. Amand GN 230 ki dir: *“Every Association shall: 8(a) keep its books, documents or records in English or French or such other language as the Registrar may approve; (b) Where the book, documents or records have been kept in a language other than English and French, cause such book, documents or records as the case may be, to be translated into English or French for the purposes of enabling the Registrar to exercise his functions”* pu inkliir Kreol ek Bhojpuri, 2 langaz maternel Moris lor lalist langaz akseptab pu Rezistrar. Sa vadir GN 230 pu dir: Sak lasosyasyon pu 8(a) gard so liv minits, dokiman ubyen rapor an Angle, Kreol, Franse ubyen Bhojpuri; (b) Si enn lasosyasyon gard so liv dan enn lot langaz, li bizin sumet enn tradiksyon a Rezistrar dan enn sa kat langaz-la.
2. Revok seksyon 25 (b) *Registrar of Associations Act* ki dir: In the case of a large association, no person shall be qualified to be a President, Treasurer or Secretary, unless he can read and write English or French.

Lalis lorganizasyon ki finn ader a sa Sart -la:

Alain Ah-Vee pu **Ledikasyon pu Travayer**  
Ragini Kistnasamy pu **Muvman Liberasyon Fam**  
Marie Réla André pu **Women’s League for Alternative Feminist Action**  
Bertie Beeharry pu **Confederation Travailleurs Secteur Prive**  
Rajesh Seewoosaha pu **Government Hindi Teachers’ Union**  
Lyndsay Aza pu **Groupe ELAN**  
Vimala Lutchmee pu **Federation of Pre-School Playgroups**  
Vima Bundhoa pu **Maudesco**  
Samad Dulloo pu **Centre Idriss Goomamy**  
Veda Munian pu **Les Abeilles Playgroup**  
Michael Lafleur pu **Rassemblement pour le Progres de Quartier Pailles**  
Marousia Bouvery pu **ABAIM**  
Selven Govinden pu **Free Art**  
Alain Muneean pu **Terre de Paix**  
Marie Claude Jolicoeur pu **Association Ecole Maternelle de Rodrigues**  
Leonita Perrine pu **Femme Entrepreneur, Rodrigues**  
Jacqueline Leopold pu **Groupe Jeunes Region 6**  
Jacqueline Perrine Farla pu **Association Feminine, Rodrigues**  
M.-Thérèse Perrine, Anne Louise Jean, M. Louise Jean, ek M. Perule Edouard pu **AEMR**.  
Pamela Perrine pu **AAF**  
Nathalie Edouard ek Francone Félicité pu **Rodrigues Befrienders Association**  
M. Lourdes Begue pu **Syndicat Sector Prive**  
Marie Dianola Prudence pu **La Danse**  
M. Claude Stephanie Volbert pu **AREF, Rodrigues**  
M. Danielle St. Pierre pu **Theatre, Rodrigues**  
M. Joyce Pacquerette pu **Chorale, Rodrigues**

2009

## CHARTER ON USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN ASSOCIATIONS

This language charter was signed by 14 organizations  
all of which contest the existing law that forces associations  
to submit their returns and their minutes to the Registrar of Associations  
in English, or French.

Given that

- The written word is an important means of storing our individual and collective memory
- Minutes of proceedings of associations are an important part of that collective memory;
- Minutes of proceedings contain what an association wishes to keep as its memory;
- According to the last Government Census 2000, 93% of the population in Mauritius speak Creole and/or Bhojpuri;
- It is a human right to use our mother tongue in written form; and this right holds when we meet as associations, for all aspects of our work as associations;
- Minutes of proceedings constitute a faithful record of what happened in meetings, and when the secretary reads the Minutes at the next meeting, members can then verify whether they reflect accurately what happened in the meeting, propose any amendments, vote on them, before approving the minutes.
- Existing legislation hinders our right to keep our official minutes book in the language in which meetings take place that is in our mother tongue;
- When we are not allowed to use our mother tongue to keep our records, this hinders the day to day life of our associations;
- It is not a “true minutes” when it is translated afterwards for the benefit of the Registrar into some other book, and when it is then read at the next meeting in a foreign language, before being approved and signed, but without anybody understanding anything; such a practice, in turn, even if it respects the law technically, ends up entertaining, in Mauritius, a false idea on what minutes really are.
- Conversely, it is not a “true minutes” for our Association, when our Secretary has to listen to our meetings being conducted in Kreol or Bhojpuri and then has to do all sorts of intellectual acrobatics on the spot to translate into a foreign language and to write in this foreign language at the same time; then at the next meeting, the secretary has to do another impossible task of re-translating that same minutes from English into the mother tongue while reading them, and then getting them approved and signed on the basis of a version which could not be approved because it is in a foreign language.
- Repression against our mother tongue hinders our capacity to make our voice heard in society, thus it limits our participation and perverts democracy;
- As associations we only have the right to communicate with the authorities on the express condition that we already master a foreign language, namely English or French;
- Repression against the use mother tongue in associations is a symbol of a more widespread repression against the mother tongue,

- And given that
- In large associations we cannot elect and choose our President, Secretary or Treasury, but only those members who master English or French; and given that this hinder the normal proceedings of our association;

We demand that:

1. GN 230 saying that: *“Every Association shall: 8(a) keep its books, documents or records in English or French or such other language as the Registrar may approve; (b) Where the book, documents or records have been kept in a language other than English and French, cause such book, documents or records as the case may be, to be translated into English or French for the purposes of enabling the Registrar to exercise his functions”* be amended to include Kreol and Bhojpuri, two Mauritian mother tongues as being acceptable to the registrar. So GN 230 will say: *Every Association shall: 8(a) keep its books, documents or records in English, Kreol, French or Bhojpuri (b) Where the book, documents or records have been kept in another language, a translation should be submitted to the Registrar in any of the Four languages mentioned above*
2. Revoke section 25 (b) *Registrar of Associations Act* which says: *In the case of a large association, no person shall be qualified to be a President, Treasurer or Secretary, unless he can read and write English or French.*

List of Associations that adhere to this Charter:

Alain Ah-Vee for **Ledikasyon pu Travayer**  
 Ragini Kistnasamy for **Muvman Liberasyon Fam**  
 Marie Réla André for **Women’s League for Alternative Feminist Action**  
 Bertie Beeharry for **Confederation Travailleurs Secteur Prive**  
 Rajesh Seewoosaha for **Government Hindi Teachers’ Union**  
 Lyndsay Aza for **Groupe ELAN**  
 Vimala Lutchmee for **Federation of Pre-School Playgroups**  
 Vima Bundhoa for **Maudesco**  
 Samad Dulloo for **Centre Idriss Goomamy**  
 Veda Munian for **Les Abeilles Playgroup**  
 Michael Lafleur for **Rassemblement pour le Progres de Quartier Pailles**  
 Marousia Bouvery for **ABAIM**  
 Selven Govinden for **Free Art**  
 Alain Muneean for **Terre de Paix**  
 Marie Claude Jolicoeur pu **Association Ecole Maternelle de Rodrigues**  
 Leonita Perrine pu **Femme Entrepreneur, Rodrigues**  
 Jacqueline Leopold pu **Groupe Jeunes Region 6**  
 Jacqueline Perrine Farla pu **Association Feminine, Rodrigues**  
 M.-Thérèse Perrine, Anne Louise Jean, M. Louise Jean, ek M. Perule Edouard pu **AEMR**.  
 Pamela Perrine **pu AAF**  
 Nathalie Edouard ek Francone Félicité pu **Rodrigues Befrienders Association**  
 M. Lourdes Begue pu **Syndicat Sector Prive**  
 Marie Dianola Prudence pu **La Danse**  
 M. Claude Stephanie Volbert pu **AREF, Rodrigues**  
 M. Danielle St. Pierre pu **Theatre, Rodrigues**  
 M. Joyce Pacquerette pu **Chorale, Rodrigues**

LPTs LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER,  
MINISTER OF LABOUR & REGISTRAR OF ASSOCIATIONS  
on the LANGUAGE CHARTER FOR ASSOCIATIONS

Dear Sir,

We have pleasure in submitting to you for your urgent consideration a “*Charter*” signed by fourteen different organisations on the issue of mother tongue rights. This “*Charter*” is the fruit of two half-day Seminars held in May and July respectively.

The Charter, as you will see, sets out our demand for two amendments, one in the *Registrar of Associations Act* and one in a specific *Government Notice*. Both amendments are argued in the text. These amendments will contribute, we believe, to assuring the dignity of the two main mother tongues of the country, as well as to protecting the right to their full use, in oral and written form, in Registered Associations.

Prior to the two Seminars, the Registrar of Associations was approached by the LPT President to enquire formally as to whether he would use the discretion to accept “returns” and “minutes” in the mother tongues, a discretion that the existing Government Notice gives him. He formally said he would not.

We are aware that you have recently said that you are now in favour of the use of Mauritian Kreol as medium in schools, and we, the undersigned, welcome this change. We hope that, in the same spirit, you will give due consideration to initiating the amendments we propose concerning mother-tongue use in Associations.

Yours faithfully,

Alain Ah-Vee  
For Ledikasyon pu Travayer  
Muvman Liberasyon Fam  
Women’s League for Alternative Feminist Action  
Groupe ELAN  
Federation of Pre-School Playgroups  
Maudesco  
Centre Idriss Goomamy  
Confederation Travailleurs Secteur Prive  
Les Abeilles Playgroup  
Government Hindi Teachers’ Union  
Rassemblement pour le Progrès de Quartier Pailles  
ABAIM  
Free Art  
Terre de Paix

Sent to: Hon Navin Ramgoolam, Prime Minister,  
Hon Chaumière, Minister of Labour;  
Mr. Hookom, Registrar of Associations; Press. Date 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009



Josian Zoile, signing in Mauritian Sign Language before the International Hearing

## LET A DEPITE LASANBLE NASYONAL

Sa li enn kopi let ki LPT finn ekrir tu depite pu revandik  
enn amandman Konstitisyon pu permet servi lang maternel dan Lasanble Nasyonal.

Lonorab Mamb Lasanble Nasyonal  
Port Louis

Ser Madam/Misyè

Nu lasosyasyon pe ekrir u pu ki u donn lasirans lider u Parti e u Wip ki u dakor pu vot  
anfaver enn amandman Konstitisyon pu permet servi lang maternel dan Lasanble  
Nasyonal, si zame enn tel proze delwa prezante. Kan u pe exprim u volonte politik dan sa  
fason-la u pe asir Premye Minis, antan ki Lider Haws, ki li ena mazorite nesesser. Nu fini  
ekrir li ek Aterne Jeneral depi semenn dernye, pu ki zot gayn letan prepar proze delwa-la.  
Nu pe ekrir sa let-la dirzans pu ki enn tel amandman konstitisyonel kapav pase atan pu ki  
Diskur Bidze ki pe vini kapav fer dan langaz Kreol Morisyin pu premye fwa dan listwar.  
Nu pe travers enn kriz ekonomik, e lamas dimunn bizin kapav konpran ki sa guvernmman ki  
zot finn eli-la ena lintansyon fer fas a kriz, ki bann depite bakbenncher pe dir e ki  
Lopozisyon pe propoze.

Nu lasosyasyon ki promuvwar lang maternel, finn pran konesans nek semenn dernye enn  
sondaz profesyonel ki nu ti komandite mwa dernye. Sa let uver-la enn fason pu anons  
rezilta sa sondaz-la. Sondaz-la demontre ki 67% Morisyin anfaver servi lang Kreol  
Morisyin dan Lasanble Nasyonal. Savedir ki 2/3 popilasyon pu sutenir u lor sa size-la.  
Selman 18% kont net, 9% plizumwin kont, 7% pa kone ki panse.

Kuma u kone Konstitisyon Moris ankor tuzur marke par nu lepase kolonyal. Kan fors  
depote koz zis dan lang kolonyal li enn vestiz sa prezidis rasis kolonyal, enn prezidis ki  
pena okenn fondman syantifik. Okontrè li lozik pu asime ki tu dimunn reflesi pli vit, pli  
byin, pli kreatif, pli konplex, pli efikas e pli rasyonel dan so lang natirel.

Dan LPT depi nu fondasyon, pandan 33 an, nu finn batir sutyin pu sa sanzman nu pe  
propoze. E nu pa tousel. Parti *Lalit*, finn konstaman dibut pu sa demand-la, parey kuma  
plizir lorganizasyon sosyal ek sindikal.

Premye fwa ki sa kestyon-la ti suleve dan Parlman ti atraver enn Mosyon par lonorab  
Azize Asgarally an 1977. Depi lerla, finn ena kestyon parلمانter par Sylvio Michel e pli  
resaman par Eric Guimbeau osi. Premye Minis, Lonorab Navin Ramgoolam, lider  
lopozisyon Lonorab Paul Berenger, tulede finn koz anfaver konsider introdiksyon lang  
Kreol dan Lasanble Nasyonal.

**Ki amandman nu pe dimande?**

***Premye amandman: Langaz ki servi dan Lasanble Nasyonal.***

Seksyon 49 Konstitisyon dir: “*Lang ofisyel Lasanble Nasyonal li Angle, me ninport ki  
mamb kapav pran laparol an Franse*”. Nu premye demand sinp: Seksyon 49 bizin dir:

“*Lang ofisyel Lasanble li Angle e Kreol Morisyin, me ninport ki mamb kapav pran laparol*



*an Franse u Bhojpuri*". Kuma u kone dan Moris 70% dimunn koz Kreol Morisyin laplipar ditan, 12% koz Bhojpuri e 11% koz tulede ubyin enn parmi sa 2 lang-la plis enn lot lang, seki donn nu sif 93% ki koz Kreol e Bhojpuri. (Get tab anba)

Kreol	826,152	70.0%
Bhojpuri	142,387	12.0%
Bhojpuri e Kreol	64,106	5.4%
Kreol ubyin Bhojpuri plis enn lot lang	66,658	5.7%
<b>TOTAL Kreol &amp; Bhojpuri lang maternal</b>	<b>1,099,302</b>	<b>93.2%</b>
Angle, Franse, Oryantal e lezot	76,453	6.5%
Pa dir	3,093	.3%
TOTAL Popilasyon Repiblik Mauritius	1,178.848	100.0%

*Biro Statistik, Resansman Popilasyon 2000*

**Dezyem amandman nu pe dimande: Kalifikasyon pu et depite.**

Ena enn lot kloz lor langaz ki bizin revoke. Kuma u kone demokrasi vedir pa selman ki sak dimunn ena drwa devot, me li osi vedir sakenn gayn drwa poz kandida dan eleksyon. Dan Konstitisyon ena selman 2 kalite kriter kalifikasyon pu vinn mamb Lasanble Nasyonal. Premye-la pa konsern nu isi, e li plito teknik (sitwayennte e rezidans), alor ki dezyem-la li konsern nu direktman. Li exiz konpetans dan koze ek lektir enn lang etranzer, enn konpetans ki kikenn kapav al konteste Lakur Siprem. *"Enn dimunn ...pu kalifye...selman si li...33(d) kapav koze ek osi, amwen si li dan inkapasite aköz li pa truv kler ubyen pu lezot rezon fizik, lir Angle sifizaman byen pu ki li kapav partisip aktivman dan travay Lasanble."*

Pena okenn dut ki sa kalite imilyasyon-la, setadir pu met an kestyon an piblik kikenn so kapasite dan enn langaz ki pa pu li, fer ki lamwatye popilasyon pa mem anvizaz poz kandida. Etan done ki fam suvan ena mwens konfyans dan zot kapasite, zot pli afekte. Buku kandida ki sorti dan klas travayer exkli depi prosesis demokratik aköz sa kloz-la.

Donk, seksyon 33(d) bizin revoke. Bann Parti Politik ki swazir pu aliyn enn kandida, ubyen dimunn ki anvi vot enn kikenn, ki pa konn lir ek ekrir Angle, ubyen ki pa konn lir ek ekrir ditu, ti bizin lib pu fer li.

Nu pe fer apel a u antan ki mamb Lasanble Nasyonal pu servi sa lokazyon inportan prezantasyon Bidze le 22 Me pu permet sa bann amandman-la. Kumsa tu Morisyen ki get televizyon ubyen ekut radyo, pu kapav tann Bidze an Kreol Morisyin pu mark sa premye zur ki sa amandman Konstitisyonel anviger. Erezman, kestyon lortograf pu Hansard finn deza rezud.

Pu konklir, nu panse ki sa bann amandman ki nu pe propoze-la pu donn lang maternal ki lamas dimunn servi so ful dinite kuma tu langaz merite.

Salitasyon sinser,

Alain Ah-Vee  
Prezidan  
6 Me 2009

Lindsey Collen

Sekreter

## LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

This letter was sent by LPT to all MP's  
to demand a Constitutional Amendment  
to allow the use of the mother tongue in the National Assembly.

Dear Madam/Sir,

Our Association writes to request you to assure your party Leader and Whip that you agree to vote to amend the Constitution, so as to allow the use of the mother tongues in the National Assembly, should such a Bill come before you. By expressing your political will this way, you can assure the Prime Minister, as Leader of the House, of the necessary majority. We have last week already written to him and to the Attorney General, so as to allow them time to prepare the Bill. We write urgently so that such a Constitutional Amendment can be passed in time for the coming Budget Speech, which could then be delivered, for the first time in history, in Mauritian Kreol. We are in a period of economic crisis, both a local systemic crisis and an international financial and economic crisis, and people need to be able to understand what the Government they elected intends to do in the face of the crisis, what backbenchers are saying, and what the Opposition proposes.

Our Association, which promotes the mother tongues, only last week took delivery of a professionally conducted Survey commissioned last month. This Open Letter is a way of announcing the findings. The Survey shows that 67% of Mauritians are in favour of the use of Mauritian Kreol in the National Assembly. This means over two-thirds of the population will support you on this. Only 18% are strongly against, 9% somewhat against. 7% do not know what they think.

As you are aware, the Constitution today still bears the scars of a colonial past. Forcing MP's to speak only in colonial languages, is one of the vestiges of this colonial race prejudice, a prejudice which has no scientific foundation whatsoever. On the contrary, it is logical to assume that groups of people think faster, better, more creatively, more complexly, more efficiently and more rationally in their own natural language.

In LPT we have been building up support for the change we are proposing for some 33 years, since the founding of our Association. And we are not the only ones. The political party, *Lalit*, has consistently stood for this demand, as have a number of Associations.

The first time the issue came to the notice of Parliament was by way of Private Member's Motion in 1977, when Hon Azize Asgarally raised it. There have, over the years, been PQ's by Sylvio Michel, and more recently one by Eric Guimbeau as well. The present Prime Minister, Hon. Navin Ramgoolam, and the present Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Paul Béranger, have both spoken out in favour of considering the introduction of Kreol into the National Assembly.

### **Requested Amendment One: The language of the National Assembly**

*"The official language of the Assembly shall be English, but any member may address the Chair in French,"* Section 49 of the Constitution reads. Our first demand is simple:

Section 49 should read as follows: “*The official languages of the Assembly shall be English and Mauritian Kreol, but any member may address the Chair in French or Bhojpuri.*” As you are aware, Mauritian Kreol is spoken most of the time by 70% of the people, Bhojpuri by 12%, and both or one together with another language some 11%, which brings us to the figure of 93% for Kreol and Bhojpuri (see table).

Kreol	826,152	70.0%
Bhojpuri	142,387	12.0%
Bhojpuri & Kreol	64,106	5.4%
Kreol or Bhojpuri plus another language	66,658	5.7%
<b>TOTAL Kreol &amp; Bhojpuri mother tongues</b>	<b>1,099,302</b>	<b>93.2%</b>
English, French, Other Oriental and other	76,453	6.5%
Not stated	3,093	.3%
TOTAL Population of Republic of Mauritius	1,178,848	100.0%

*Central Statistics Office, Census of the Whole Population 2000*

#### **Requested Amendment Two: Qualification for becoming an MP**

There is another language clause that needs simply to be revoked. As you know, democracy means everyone can not only vote but also stand for election. In the Constitution, there are only two sorts of qualification for membership of the National Assembly. The first does not concern us here, and is technical (citizenship and residence), while the second concerns us directly. It demands proficiency in speaking and reading a foreign language, a proficiency which can be challenged by a litigant in the Supreme Court. “A person ... shall not be qualified unless, he – 33(d) *is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.*”

The humiliation of having one’s language ability questioned in public, of course, scares off half of the population from even contemplating running for office. As women are often less confident of their ability, women are more deeply affected. Many working class candidates are excluded from the democratic process by this clause.

So, Section 33 (d) should quite simply be revoked. If parties wish to field candidates, or people want to vote for people who cannot read and write English and French, or cannot read and write at all, they should be free to do so.

We call on you as elected Members of the National Assembly to make use of the important occasion of the Budget of 22 May to enable these amendments. This way the Budget, which is televised, will be able to be read in Mauritian Kreol, to mark the first day that the Constitutional amendment takes effect. The issue of orthography for Hansard has fortunately been resolved.

In conclusion, we believe that the amendments, if you bring them in as we propose, will give peoples’ mother tongues the dignity all languages deserve.

Yours faithfully,  
Alain Ah-Vee, President

Lindsey Collen, Secretary

## SECOND LETTER TO MP's

**This second letter was necessitated by the refusal of the Authorities to acknowledge receipt of our letters delivered by hand.**

Hon. Member of the National Assembly,

Dear Madam/Sir,

Our Association is writing you this second letter on the issue of your full support for any amendment of the Constitution that introduces the mother tongues into the National Assembly. We are not sure our first letter reached you.

As you probably know now, last month, on 11 May members of LPT and a number of artists demonstrated in front of the National Assembly on this issue. On that day two Executive Committee Members of our Association, Alain Ah-Vee and Ragini Kistnasamy, delivered an urgent petition to each Member of the National Assembly. These petitions, we mention in passing, were neatly piled in 70 envelopes, respectfully addressed to each individual Member of the National Assembly, and placed on an open rattan-ware basket for easy checking. Each envelope contained the same 3 pages: the duly signed petition in English, a Kreol translation, and a synopsis of the results of the recent SOFRES survey that our Association commissioned. We were petitioning individual Members to support any Bill to Amend the Constitution urgently, in time for the Budget Speech to be read in Mauritian Kreol, in this time of economic crisis.

But unfortunately our delegation could not deliver the petitions because both the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr. Dawlatteea and then the Police officers at the Police Post, refused to take delivery of them. So, our delegation resorted to leaving the 70 letters in our basket on the floor just inside the Gate. This is why we say we are not sure you received our letter left at the National Assembly.

On the same day, 11 May, we wrote to the Speaker to inform him of this curious problem. How is it that MLA's cannot receive letters delivered by hand to the National Assembly? Surely this is unique in the world. Petitioning those in power is part of an ancient tradition dating at least from around 1215 in England, when the Magna Carta was issued in response to, amongst other things, a petition. The Speaker did not reply to us, by the way.

As we really don't know what happened to our first letter, we are sending you this second one. In it we re-iterate our demand that you support any Amendment to the Constitution that introduces the people's mother tongues into the National Assembly.

In the SOFRES survey we found that 67% of Mauritians are in favour of the use of Mauritian Kreol in the National Assembly. This means over two-thirds of the population will support you on this. Only 18% are strongly against, with 9% somewhat against. 7% do not know what they think, so with a good communication strategy we should be able to assume that 73% can easily become in favour. Since only 18% are strongly against, and they have nothing to lose because English and French can still be used, we believe that you have a very powerful mandate for change.

As you are aware, the Constitution today still bears the scars of a colonial past. Forcing MP's to speak only in colonial languages is a vestige of colonial race prejudice, a prejudice which has no scientific foundation whatsoever. On the contrary, it is logical to assume that groups of people think faster, better, more creatively, more complexly, more efficiently and more rationally in their own shared natural language.

In LPT we have been building support for the change we are proposing for some 33 years, since the founding of our Association. And we are not the only ones. The political party, *Lalit*, has consistently stood for this demand, as have a number of Associations.

The first time the issue came to the notice of Parliament was by way of Private Member's Motion in 1977, when Hon Azize Asgarally raised it. There have, over the years, been PQ's by Sylvio Michel, and more recently one by Eric Guimbeau as well. The present Prime Minister, Hon. Navin Ramgoolam, and the present Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Paul Bérenger, have both spoken out in favour of considering the introduction of Kreol into the National Assembly.

#### Requested Amendment One: The language of the National Assembly

*"The official language of the Assembly shall be English, but any member may address the Chair in French,"* Section 49 of the Constitution reads. Our first demand is simple:

Section 49 should read as follows: *"The official languages of the Assembly shall be English and Mauritian Kreol, but any member may address the Chair in French or Bhojpuri."* As you are aware, Mauritian Kreol is spoken most of the time by 70% of the people, Bhojpuri by 12%, and both or one together with another language some 11%, which brings us to the figure of 93% for Kreol and Bhojpuri (see table).

Kreol	826,152	70.0%
Bhojpuri	142,387	12.0%
Bhojpuri & Kreol	64,106	5.4%
Kreol or Bhojpuri plus another language	66,658	5.7%
<b>TOTAL Kreol &amp; Bhojpuri mother tongues</b>	<b>1,099,302</b>	<b>93.2%</b>
English, French, Other Oriental and other	76,453	6.5%
Not stated	3,093	.3%
TOTAL Population of Republic of Mauritius	1,178,848	100.0%

*Central Statistics Office, Census of the Whole Population 2000*

#### Requested Amendment Two: Qualification for becoming an MP

There is another language clause that needs simple revocation. As you know, democracy means everyone can not only vote but also stand for election. In the Constitution, there are only two sorts of qualification for membership of the N.A. The first does not concern us here, and is technical (citizenship and residence), while the second concerns us directly. It demands proficiency in speaking and reading a foreign language, a proficiency which can be challenged by a litigant in the Supreme Court. "A person ... shall not be qualified unless, he – 33(d) *is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.*"

The humiliation of having one's language ability questioned in public, of course, scares off half of the population from even contemplating running for office. As women are often less confident of their ability, women are more deeply affected. Many working class candidates are excluded from the democratic process by this clause.

So, Section 33 (d) should quite simply be revoked. If parties wish to field candidates, or people want to vote for people who cannot read and write English and French, or cannot read and write at all, they should be free to do so.

We call on you as elected Members of the National Assembly to do everything in your power to get these Amendments introduced and passed. The orthography issue (for Hansard) has fortunately been resolved.

In conclusion, we believe that the amendments, if brought in as we propose, will give people's mother tongues the dignity all languages deserve.

Yours faithfully,

Lindsey Collen, Secretary, 16 June, 2009.

## BACKGROUND TO LPTs MOTHER TONGUE CAMPAIGN

There is a long and rich background before LPT's most recent campaign in 2009 for mother tongue rights.

It started in 1976 when a group of 12 young people, mainly young women and girls, began auto-education in new pedagogies for teaching adult literacy. This was the preamble to launching an adult education association which would later be registered and called *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*. The methods our founders were learning and teaching themselves were intricately linked with the mother-tongue of the adult learners. So, the literacy teaching began with courses in Rose-Hill, Port Louis and the villages of Bambous and Surinam in 1977. Very soon it became clear that the association would need to promote the mother-tongues at the same time, and also produce written material, including books. Without this, the literacy programme would not be sustainable.

So this was how LPT's long and rich struggle for the mother tongues began. Throughout these past 30 years, we placed emphasis on the dual strategy of pushing for official recognition and of simultaneously promoting the languages, ourselves. Our recruitment of members and supporting members has been on the basis of these two aims: adult literacy and promotion of the mother tongues. Our aims are part of a general philosophy of emancipation of working people. The actions we have successfully carried out on mother-tongue promotion include the following (to name only perhaps the most noteworthy):

- \* Adult literacy courses in Kreol every year in different neighbourhoods all over Mauritius from 1977-2008, including five courses with fishermen for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and jointly with unions and management for Mauritius Telecom.
- \* A teachers' training course in Kreol for volunteer teachers (our members and for other associations like Institut pour le Developpement et le Progres, Bahai Society, Federation of Pre-Schools Playgroups, Adventist Church, Comite Quartier Cite Kennedy, Chemin Grenier Unesco Club) at least once a year in Mauritius, and also on three occasions in Rodrigues.
- \* Training in Kreol of teacher-trainers for literacy once every two years since 1980.
- \* The holding once or twice a year of a course on "How to Write Kreol Properly", and publication of booklet with same name.
- \* Conducting in Kreol of a survey on the prevalence of literacy in Mauritius, 1981.
- \* The holding on average once a year of a course on "Kreol as a Foreign Language" for non-Mauritians (including for the famous Anglican Bishop and anti-apartheid hero, Trevor Huddleston), plus publication of the booklet "Mauritian Kreol in Seven Easy Lessons".
- \* The holding of a Language Congress and Exhibitions on Kreol in 1977 at the Plaza in Rose-Hill.
- \* The holding of a 4-day conference and Exhibition to celebrate the Kreol language at the CDMO, Port-Louis in 1982.

- \* The holding of a week activity consisting of forums, books exhibitions, poster campaigns in Kreol to celebrate World Kreol Language Day in collaboration with the Municipality of Beau-Bassin/ Rose-Hill (1994, 1995), the Municipality of Port-Louis (2000).
- \* Developing an orthography for Kreol over the years.
- \* The holding of five public Literary Prizes in Kreol (1987, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2004 ) – for plays, poems, novels, translations of classics, short stories in Kreol.
- \* The holding of a Colloquium on Language in 2001 (Papers published in a book, *Langaz Kreol Zordi*).
- \* The publishing of around 100 books and periodicals in Kreol – on social, scientific, literary, news subjects.
- \* The preparation, running and printing of 40 issues of the ‘Dorad’ newspaper mainly in Kreol from 1996 to 1997.
- \* Publishing of translations of three Shakespeare plays into Kreol, Othello, Macbeth and Much Ado About Nothing.
- \* Organization jointly with University of Mauritius and the Playgroup Federation a Public Lecture by Derek Bickerton on the Creole Languages at the University of Mauritius.
- \* Organization of a public lecture in Curepipe by Prof. Derek Bickerton on the Creole Languages.
- \* Organization of a public lecture by Dr. Neville Alexander, Chairman of new South Africa’s Langtag on Language Policy.
- \* Held Creative Writing Course in Kreol.
- \* As early as 1977 we produced booklets in Kreol to be used in literacy courses by hand and cyclostyled.
- \* Published and printed the first novella in Kreol, 1980 and the first full-length novel in Kreol (1996).
- \* The research for and publication of a Kreol-English Dictionary in 1984, with three reprints.
- \* The publication of a Kreol-Bhojpuri Dictionary .
- \* The publication of a Literacy Teacher’s Kit with the help of UNICEF.
- \* The publication of 3 Teachers’ Guide to Adult Literacy Teaching in the mother tongue namely Liv Profeser (1977), Alfa Ennbuk (1981) and Gid Profeser Literesi (2007).
- \* The translation from French into Kreol and publication of a Comics on the problem of Food Crisis in the world in partnership with Freres des Hommes (France).
- \* The preparation, publication and distribution of a Charter on the Kreol language endorsed by Prof. Derek Bickerton and Dr. Neville Alexander.
- \* Organization and running of a campaign “Knowledge for All” on Globalisation which included the holding of workshops, conferences, publication of books, public lectures by world renowned speakers namely Tove Skutnabb-Kangas on linguistic genocide.
- \* Set up and run a Translation Unit.
- \* Publication of *40 Poet*, an anthology highlighting that there are (at least) 40 poets who write in Kreol, 2008.

Our adult literacy experience with courses run in the mother tongues taught us that adults who had been to school for 6 to 7 years and were either totally or very nearly totally illiterate, learnt to read and write in our course within 30 hours. 30 hours is the equivalent of just ONE WEEK’S SCHOOLING. Hardly any of our adult pupils fails to learn to read and write by the UNESCO definition, and our ex-pupils mainly go on to read and write fluently. Some then became office bearers of associations and unions, others teach their own children to read and write, others join up with Alliance Francaise and became fluent in French as well, and one even writes novels. Our pedagogy is different from traditional Mauritian school pedagogy, and implies the use of the mother tongue. This is the only factor that could explain such amazingly positive, even “shocking” results. We use the word “shocking” to expose the damage being done by schools in failing people who should

never have been failed, in continuing to fail 30% of children who should not be failed. And many of those who pass the Primary School Leavers CPE examination end up falling back into illiteracy soon after leaving school, so they might as well have “failed”.

We do not believe that any child should “fail” to learn to read and write at school.

When on 18 May, 2004, we read the official UNESCO citation when *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* was awarded the UNESCO WORLD LITERACY PRIZE which said that LPT had been awarded the prize “for its adult literacy programme, which places emphasis on women, its respect for cultural context *and the use of mother languages*”, we had our highest recognition so far of the effectiveness of our campaign, of the correctness of our promotion of the mother tongues.

Another form of recognition is a statistical one. The official Census of 2000 states that 36,152 (or 3.9%) respondents out of 937, 520 respondents (i.e. total population over 12 years of age), said that they read and wrote only Kreol or Bhojpuri. Since we were, until recently when the Bureau Education Catholique (BEC) began courses in Kreol, the only institution that consistently taught literacy in the mother-tongues, we take some of the credit for this percentage, as people directly or indirectly taught by us.

Over the years we have built up active support for the use of the mother tongues amongst Associations and Trade Unions. As *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* has over the years become a kind of resource centre (doing printing work, translations, joint working class actions) for and with other organizations, we have sensitised them to the mother-tongue rights issue.

By 2009, sensitization was already quite high. The poor educational achievements of so many pupils is only very recently of grave concern to everyone in the country. The lack of jobs for those who cannot read and write is of even more concern to everyone in the country. The lack of creative thinking and second-language competence to a high level amongst young people has also been deplored loudly over the past five years or so, with employers from abroad sometimes closing their enterprises for this reason.

Since the 1999 uprising after the death of Kaya, one of the responses of the Catholic Church was for its Bureau Education Catholique to introduce Kreol as medium in some 12 of its pre-vocational schools. This has been a resounding success.

The private radio stations have since 2003 increasingly popularized spoken Kreol and Bhojpuri, and developed the formal registers of these languages.

Ministers and Parliamentarians have increasingly spoken out in favour of the mother tongues.

The Privy Council has handed down a judgment to the effect that an accused must have all of the proceedings translated for him/her into a language s/he understands.

The University of Mauritius in 2007 had its first course in and on Kreol, called “Introduction to Creole Studies” and this year will have another such course.

In 2004, the Government set up a Committee which produced a consensual “Grafik Larmoni” which is a major step towards an official orthography.

The work by Dr. Dany Adone has produced a series of studies of the grammar and syntax of Mauritian Kreol.



There are now four different major dictionaries of Mauritian Kreol.

This was how in 2009 there were three places where the iron was right for striking:

- \* That the mother tongues be introduced in schools as medium, and as subjects.
- \* That Kreol and Bhojpuri be permitted for the formal aspects of running associations, unions and co-operatives.
- \* That Kreol and Bhojpuri be declared languages that can be used in the National Assembly.

Our aim in the long-run is to have everyone accept and use the mother tongue in all spheres that it is appropriate.

Our specific objective until today is to have the State recognize the mother-tongues of the people as fully-fledged languages that can, firstly, be used as medium in schools, studied in schools, that can, secondly, be used for Minutes and all the books of Associations, Unions, and Co-operatives and that can, thirdly, be used in the National Assembly. Our campaign has contribute towards this coming true.

When we succeed, this will be to the advantage of everyone, not just of the “slow learners” or adults with little or no formal education. We make this claim of its *general* value (that is to say, its value for the most advantaged of our people as well as those suffering vulnerability or educational difficulties) following *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*’s 15-session study group on Prof Derek Bickerton’s seminal book, *Language and Species*, which informs of the total interconnection of our human language-capacity with our human thinking-capacity. We are born with the capacity for our mother-tongue/s acquisition. It is our species-specific means of interpretation of the world. Since the development of the mother-tongue coincides with a child’s acquaintance with the world around her, both intellectually and emotionally the building blocks for a child’s intellectual capacity also come through the mother tongue. If we are forced to disrupt this intellectual development in the mother-tongue and stumble in school and society in a foreign language that we do not initially have the basic knowledge of, this may limit or at least slow down our intellectual development. But if we can continue our intellectual (and emotional) development also in school, through using the mother-tongue as the teaching/learning language, and study the second language as a subject in school taught by competent bilingual teachers, we can reach a very high level in a second and even in a third language, especially if the second and third languages are heard and used in the environment and if some teaching in a few subjects through the medium of them later in the school accordingly to a well thought-through plan. We cannot limit our intellectual capacity to our stumbling in foreign languages. In Mauritius it is a total misnomer to say, as the cliché goes, “We Mauritians are bilingual because we speak English and French”. Bilingual means one’s mother tongue plus another language. Many of us are bilingual in Kreol and Bhojpuri. Others of us, despite the education system, are bilingual in Kreol and English. Others of us are trilingual in Kreol, Bhojpuri and English, and even multilingual in all three plus the French we learn at “additional language level” for SC and HSC and in the daily press’s limited list of platitudes.

Three of our LPT Committee members have also over the past decade years followed post-graduate level courses on “Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education” (MLE) at the University of Cape Town’s *Project for Alternative Education in Southern Africa* (PRAESA). We now know that there are hundreds if not thousands of studies, ranging from really big ones (with over 200,000 children) to small ones, from many countries, with many languages, about the best ways to educate children whose mother tongues are not

official power languages in the countries where they live. They all show clearly that the longer the mother tongue is the main medium of education, the better results children get not only in the mother tongue but also in general school achievement and in the dominant second language.

With no knowledge of how to write the mother tongue, they may also have to have to reduce their cognition to the level of a patchy, thread-bare knowledge of a foreign language, English, or sometimes French as well. Forcing children to accept education in a foreign language with a higher status than the mother tongue, with all the negative consequences that this may have, prevents access to education and can be seen as linguistic genocide and a crime against humanity, as these are defined in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

And yet, bolstered by all kinds of prejudice, the home languages are totally banned in written form, and are discouraged strongly in spoken form in all Government schools. This obviously causes both grave emotional problems and problems of stigmatization. This has been known to be the case for decades, and even from as early as the mid 1700s. It has also been known over 100 years that this failure to use the mother-tongues can, and often does cause cognitive underdevelopment. It can prevent the full development of the children's intelligence. Especially now that there is compulsory education, the State and other educational institutions are responsible for damaging some 92% of children emotionally, forcibly changing some 92% of the peoples' language group from Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone to Anglophone and Francophone, and causing serious mental harm to children. This forcible changing from one language group to another and this serious mental harm fall, at least sociologically and educationally under the definition of genocide in the 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The latest interpretations of the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights (to which Mauritius is not only a signatory, but an adherent to the Optional Protocol, making its decisions binding) can also be used to show that this lack of language rights is a violation of several human rights instruments (including the Convention of the Rights of the Child). The argumentation in two Expert papers for The UN Permanent forum on Indigenous Issues on the violations of the right to education through non-use of mother tongues (Magga et al. 2005, Dunbar & Skutnabb-Kangas 2008) can be applied to the situation in Mauritius as well. This non-use of the mother-tongues has also been criticized by the National Human Rights Commission in both its 2006 and 2007 Annual Reports.

Because the gravity of the harm done to children by the suppression in school of the mother-tongues has only recently been shown to be a crime against humanity, it is essential to raise awareness about this human rights abuse.

It remains our objective to change this state of affairs. The aim is not only to get better results in examinations (which all the studies show would be an inevitable result of the change we propose), but also to promote the kind of creative thinking that would help children, as they grow up, take part in associative life, and help them create social, economic, environmental and political alternatives to some of the policies now known to be dangerous for the survival of human civilization, and this work involves becoming able to use advocacy more effectively. Once the mother-tongues are established as medium in the schools, it is likely that all the people (not just the children) would benefit from the new dignity that this brings when an end is put to the stigmatism of one's language being treated as being inferior. A further step in de-colonization would also have been achieved. Mauritius' international obligations under the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights would be respected. The National Human Rights Strategy would also have been heeded.



HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

ORIGINAL 2003 LETTER TO MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
ON MOTHER TONGUE SUPPRESSION IN SCHOOLS

To: Minister of Education, Hon. Steve Obeegadoo.

Dear Sir,

We are writing this letter to you about the medium used in schools. We would like you to take this letter as a formal notice that your language policy is harming children.

You have been in charge of the Ministry of Education for the past three whole years now. As the Minister in charge of education, you are responsible for children who go to school in Mauritius, Rodrigues, and Agalega. In particular you are now *legally* even more directly liable for any harm that children come to, once education has become compulsory, and after your recent hard-hitting campaign to *force* parents to send their children to school. Your Department therefore doesn't provide education only to parents who *choose* to send their children to school now, but actually compels parents to send their children to school, failing which you can bring criminal charges against them.

It is, thus, imperative that school does not do any harm to children.

If children do suffer harm from attending school, whether the harm is inflicted on purpose or through negligence, or even ignorance, and especially if the harm has long-term effects, it is you that will be liable for damages. It is you that will be liable for reparations. And more importantly, it is you that will have been responsible, and thus you who will have this harm on your conscience for the rest of your life.

Hence, this letter is to warn you that your politics on the medium of education amounts to no less than "linguistic genocide" being perpetrated in schools.

And today, in the context of the World Kreol Language Day, we are making a formal and public appeal to you to stop killing children's mother tongues in school, through the politics of excluding Mauritian Kreol and Mauritian Bhojpurian from schools, thus forcing children to change from their own linguistic group to the group of another. We are formally making an appeal to you to stop making children suffer the severe mental harm that is provoked by the constant insinuation in schools that children's mother tongues are inferior, are of no use or are not real languages. The damage done is inestimable.

This letter is to explain to you in detail the harm that you are causing to children in Mauritius. This letter is to explain to you that everywhere in the world all linguists and all human rights activists agree with us when we accuse you of the crime of 'linguistic genocide'. And once you have been formally informed by this letter, you cannot then continue the same harmful policies.

We are writing because maybe you don't know about the genocidal effects of your policies. Maybe in the future you will plead "ignorance". Maybe the Government will plead ignorance.

We note that you had announced that you would decide about the use of mother tongue in school *after consulting UNESCO*. It depends, you announced, what UNESCO tells you is best. Then in an interview in *Le Mauricien* of Saturday 27th September, you say that UNESCO says that the mother tongue/s must be used. Naturally, UNESCO says that. All experts in the world have been saying this for a very long time now.

Then, when UNESCO gives you this reply, you change your story. You now announce, in that same interview, that you will not listen to UNESCO. You will not heed UNESCO's advice. You will, instead have two small "Obeegadoo pilot projects", just one school in Mauritius, one in Rodrigues, where you will study the question yourself, because UNESCO's advice is suddenly not good enough.

This means that you intend to continue pretending, though UNESCO has informed you of the contrary, that you are unaware of the harm that school is doing to EVERY CHILD because of an erroneous policy on the use of the medium of education.

The issue of what medium to use in school is not just a question of "Which medium will get children better test results". No, this is not the only question. Although we should put on record that clearly all studies in the entire world, as you well know, have already proved beyond all doubt that mother tongue instruction produces better results in all subjects, from science to additional languages, from subjects that involve creativity to subject that demand reasoning. We have a section on all this research later in this "Open Letter". What is much more important in the use of mother tongue (and here we are speaking, in the first instance, of Kreol and Bhojpurian) is that it permits all children to *develop their intellectual skills better*. Their cognitive progress is very much faster and gets to a higher level (throughout the rest of their lives) if they learn through their mother tongue at school. It is not just a question of exam results.

Human language is a natural capacity that all human beings have. It is our means, par excellence, of understanding *the world around us*. Our linguistic capacity develops before we ourselves even realize it in small babies, and then during all their childhood, and on for the rest of their lives. If we develop a child's mother tongue well, and if there is no policy forbidding or hampering this development, if the child becomes high-level literate, he or she will be able to operate up to a high level, he or she will be able to study to a high level, he or she will be able to make an academic contribution to a high level. Language is thus like a dynamic natural "template" or "scaffolding"; it is not just something we can describe by the mere cliché: "language is a means of communication". Birds' chirping, too, and even telephones, for that matter, are a "means of communication." Human language is much more than that.

There is a world of difference between what, in the education profession are called *Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills* (BICS) and *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP)<sup>1</sup>. In Mauritius, most children, even those who get as far as University, show signs of having severe problems in cognition, that is to say in CALP. A university lecturer attests to this difficulty with her students.<sup>2</sup> In a second or even third language, we cannot pretend to outstrip our development in our mother tongue. Put another way, our cognitive developed is being handicapped by being continually brought back to the level of our knowledge (BICS-level) of foreign-languages used in writing in schools. Thus, you are responsible for systematically hampering the crucial natural development of children's intelligence through their own mother tongue. If we develop this capacity (i.e. high level cognitive and academic proficiency) in our mother tongue, then we will be able to become equally capable in other languages. This is what is called high-level bilingualism. It means the mother tongue to a high level, plus another language that can develop to the same high level, too, that is to the level of CALP. High-level trilinguals are those who have developed their mother tongue to a high level plus two other languages to the same high level. High-level multilingualism means the ability to operate at a high level in the mother tongue and then in many other languages almost as well.

Your school system, M. Obeegadoo, is continuing making our children "demi-lingual".

What do we mean by this "demi-lingual"? You are making children suffer serious incapacity as a result of harming the natural development of high-level linguistic skills *in any language*. What we are accusing you of is of preventing children from developing high-level cognitive and academic proficiency.

If somebody is "mono-lingual" to a high level (that is, they have CALP only in Kreol or only in Bhojpuri), that person will still, theoretically, be able to get along in terms of cognitive and academic proficiency. How many Anglophones manage with just one language? But, more to the good, he or she can then become a high level bilingual or trilingual (CALP), provided that he has reached *a high level in his or her mother tongue*. In LPT, as far as we are concerned, we are in favour of all our children becoming high level multilingual. And all the studies show that those who are high-level bilinguals or multilingual have a cognitive advantage over high-level uni-linguals. Mauritius could stand to gain immensely by changing this retrograde policy of stifling the mother tongue.

If someone does not develop his linguistic skills in his mother tongue up to a high level, then, after formal schooling, it can take up to an *additional* seven years of formal education to compensate for the loss of the reduced development of the child who has been subjected to education not in his mother tongue.

We also accuse certain high up officers at the Ministry and at the MIE and some academics at the University of having a fawning attitude towards you as Minister of Education. They pretend that they think that Kreol and Bhojpuri are not good as the medium because they "get the signal" from politicians in power, like you, that this is what they must say to be in your good books. But, when Prof. Derek Bickerton<sup>3</sup> was here, at a seminar with high-up officers, all of them agree with him vocally that the only possible medium of instruction is the mother tongue. The same thing when Prof. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas<sup>4</sup> was here. All sorts of lecturers and top academics agree with her when she says that Kreol and Bhojpuri must be medium of instruction. When Dr. Neville Alexander<sup>5</sup> was here, no linguistics academic in Mauritius challenged him, when he said we must use the mother tongue. There is a simple reason for this. *No linguist anywhere in the world can say in front of a panel of his colleague linguists, that it is advisable to use a language which is not mother tongue as medium in schools*. In fact, anyone who maintains this is suffering from a severely colonized mind.

The prejudice against the Kreol and Bhojpuri languages, that they are supposedly inferior languages, comes directly from colonial times, when the colonists and their academia, the civil servants and even the religious hierarchy, believed and spread the false belief that these languages are inferior. They believed they were inferior for the simple reason that they believed that the people who spoke them were inferior. The people who spoke the languages were slaves. They were indentured labourers. So, their language was, thus, inferior. Do you, Minister, still think this?

Or you just apply your politics as if you still think this?

<sup>1</sup> Jim Cummins' definition

<sup>2</sup> Veena Balgobin, lecturer University of Mauritius has expressed her concern on this subject

<sup>3</sup> From classical book of Professor Bickerton is *The Roots of Language, and Language and Species*.

<sup>4</sup> Classic book from Prof. Skutnabb-Kangas is *Linguistic Genocide in Education*.

<sup>5</sup> Chairperson Language Commission, South Africa

## Human Rights

Sir, imposing either totally or partially unknown (or erroneously grasped) languages as medium in education flies in the face of all established pedagogical principles that have been established and continue to be established. But more gravely it flies in the face of the human rights principles that have been established, and that are continually widening their scope as the struggle for more respect for the fundamental human rights of everyone on the earth continues.

No child's mother tongue is inferior to any other language.

We say that your Department is, by the following policies and practices, giving the clear and harmful signal that Kreol and Bhojpuri-speaking children's language is inferior:

1. Absence of any text books in either Kreol or Bhojpuri.
2. Failure to teach even literacy and numeracy through Kreol or Bhojpuri. Instead you force young children to learn foreign languages at the very moment when they are being forced to learn literacy and numeracy through these languages, thus ruining the Songs and games, all forms of play are the ideal pedagogical tools for children to learn through, and these should be in Kreol and Bhojpuri, too, and should be used scientifically. teaching of literacy, numeracy, French and English.
3. Absence of books to read, failure to develop songs and games, in Kreol and Bhojpuri.
4. Absence of any examinations in Kreol or Bhojpuri
5. Absence of Kreol and Bhojpuri as subjects in schools.
6. Tendency, because of your language policy, for teachers to transmit to children a feeling of disaffection for their parents' language.
7. Failure to train teachers in how to use the children's own language so that children understand with any precision in class, and express themselves with the precision necessary.
8. Tendency for children to be forced into rote learning as a last resort, in the effort to continue to exclude Kreol and Bhojpuri.
9. Tendency to flaunt all pedagogical principles by creating an immense and useless social distance between the child's home and the school, by imposing a language hierarchy.
10. Tendency to increase the trauma of school and to cause moral damage to children, and this, in turn; works to hamper full development during schooling, and even long after a child has left school.
11. Tendency to flaunt the basic pedagogical principle of starting with the known and moving to the unknown. Instead you encourage the ridiculous practice of using the unknown to learn the unknown.
12. Tendency to consciously increase the linguistic distance between teacher and books, on one hand, and the pupil, on the other, instead of making the relationship into one of trust.
13. Mr. Minister, you cannot just continue with the old colonial interpretation of language rights. Your department must also begin to show a little respect for the science of linguistics, which has, for over fifty years now, proven that Kreol and Bhojpuri are the equals of any other language.

If you do not, you are showing disregard for the elementary rights of the child.

Some aspects of linguistic human rights are even already in the Mauritian Constitution and in the International Human Rights Conventions, even if they are, so far, still in an embryonic form.

It is in the spirit of all the human rights legislation that all human languages are "equal". This is independent of their written status, the number of people who speak them, whether they are spoken or sign languages, or any other factor whatsoever. We would like to point out that Kreol and Bhojpuri, incidentally, are amongst the "big" languages of the planet, i.e. those spoken by over a million speakers.

It is in this spirit of human rights that we must stop the colonial prejudice that allowed education to be dispensed in languages the children do not speak naturally. We must change, so that the best education for the child is given, and this is the best education for humanity as a whole.

Through generations of heroic struggles against colonization and through the struggle for Independence, we have gained a number of Constitutional Rights. Section 12, for example, of the Constitution protects and guarantees our freedom of expression, which includes the right to receive and impart information and spread ideas and information without any interference. Using the wrong language is an impediment to free expression.

Internationally, the struggle for children to be free to learn through their maternal language has, so far, culminated in Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention, ratified by States including the Mauritian State (in 1990), assures children the right to education, and the freedom to seek, receive and spread information and ideas orally and in written and printed form without any discrimination. Despite this, you continue in your discriminatory policy of blocking the children's use of their own language.

Sir, we remind you that in 1994, the United Nations *Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* (ECOSOC) in its Report on Mauritius noted with concern that Kreol and Bhojpuri, the languages used by a vast majority of the population, were not being used in the Mauritian education system, and that the Government was actively discouraging the use of these languages in all its institutions. Are you going to continue to flaunt the concern of this august body?

In 1996, the UN *Human Rights Committee* under the Convention on Civil and Political Rights in its Report on Mauritius recommended that measures be taken to at once begin to publish educational materials, especially for children, in the vernaculars, i.e. Kreol and Bhojpuri. Your predecessors did nothing about this

– with the notable exception of Mr. Kadress Pillay, who in the first draft of his Plan, did address the issue, but later capitulated. In your three years, until today, you have done nothing whatsoever. And now you come and say you will start two tiny little pilot projects?

Sir, you will remember that the May 1975 students strike was a rebellion whose main thrust was for the decolonization of education, and for the use of Kreol in schools. The strike did have one positive effect, when it directly brought in free secondary education, but otherwise the degree of colonization in education is still overwhelming, especially as concerns the medium of instruction.

At the level of the African continent, the process of decolonization is more advanced. In 1987 the *Language Plan of Action*, initiated by the OUA (now incorporated into the African Union, one of its documents) spoke out for the use of African languages as official language and as medium in education. Mauritius, which is a signatory to the *Language Plan of Action*, has an undertaking, therefore to introduce Kreol and Bhojpuri as medium. But the Government has never respected its commitment.

Today you are announcing the construction of schools all over the country, which is a good thing, and you are imposing compulsory education, while at the same time continuing the measure of forcing a foreign medium on Kreolophone and Bhojpuri phone pupils. Your actions make you act against the spirit of both the Constitution and the International Conventions adhered to by Mauritius. And of course, you continue to harm generations of children, generations of peoples.

### **Linguistic genocide**

The State is, in fact, hindering our people in the natural expression of our languages, Bhojpuri and Kreol. It is this that makes the Government responsible, through the schools in particular, for a crime against humanity, the crime of linguistic genocide. That is what we are accusing you of, Mr. Minister.

Any authority or any individual in a position of power that hinders a people in the natural expression of his language, is responsible for linguistic genocide, and we will explain exactly how.

There are two instances.

Firstly, linguistic genocide is when the State forces children to abandon the language of their parents, through, for example, a wrong language policy at school.

Government is forcing children to acquire additional languages in a way that is called “subtractive”, and it is this “subtracting” of the natural language of our people, that causes the Government to be guilty of “linguistic genocide”. When we use the term “linguistic genocide”, we are using United Nations definition on linguistic genocide, crime against humanity. Children are learning the language that school teaches *at the cost of the mother tongue* and this represent linguistic genocide, because it is removing a child from his or her group (Kreolophone or Bhojpuriphone linguistic group) and placing him or her in a different linguistic group (Francophone or Anglophone).

Article II (e) of the United Nations Convention on Genocide reads: “*Genocide is forcibly transferring children of a group to another group*”. Government is forcibly transferring children from their own group to another linguistic group through education of children being dispensed in a dominant and foreign language, English and French, at the expense of their mother tongues, Bhojpuri and Kreol, as medium of education.

Linguistic genocide means prohibiting the use of language of the people, either in every day life, or as concerns us in this letter, *in schools*, or prohibiting the printing, circulation or publication in the language of the people. Government is responsible for this “linguistic genocide” by refusing to prepare and publish books for school in Bhojpuri and Kreol. Government is prohibiting the use of Bhojpuri and Kreol by failing to make it an official language, while imposing other official languages in school.

Bhojpuri and Kreol do not have official status nor political status and are not used as the principal medium in education.

There is a second way in which you are committing linguistic genocide, according to the UN definitions, M. Obeegadoo. Last year *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* invited a linguist of international reputation, Prof. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, to give a Public Lecture on this theme, and this is what she said: “*If a child does not learn in his mother tongue and is forced to learn in a foreign language [what you are doing], this will do serious mental harm to the child.*” Article II (b) of the United Nations Convention definition says that “genocide [also] means causing serious physical or mental harm to a group.” In our case in Mauritius this means that Government is causing serious mental harm to up to 93% of the population, all those who speak Kreol and Bhojpuri.

### **Testimony in Mauritius**

Now we are going to take three examples in Mauritius, our country, where many intellectuals congratulate themselves that “we are a country of multi-lingual people”, but who would do better to admit that your policies are making us a “country of demi-lingual people”. We hope that these three brief testimonies will help you and your advisors understand the gravity of your error, Minister Sir.

#### **First testimony (woman now 30 years old):**

*In my family we all speak Kreol, and my mother and father never spoke French or English at home. My father never went to school. He is a thinking and intelligent man, who can hold conversation in Kreol, English and French. (As if he is an example of “additive” apprenticeship of languages). I went to school in Richelieu Cité for my first two school years, and every thing went well. When my parents moved house to Port Louis, I had to change school. This was upsetting, but inevitable.*

*One day, in Standard 3, I felt sick at school hours. My tummy was sore. I urgently needed to go to the toilet. When I went to ask the teacher permission to go to the toilet, she said no because I must address her in French. She told me that I would have to write 200 lines of "Je dois m'adresser a mon Miss an Francais." That day, when I was not permitted to go to toilet, I excreted in class. For the next year, I was bullied and mocked for two things: that my French was poor and that I had "tata dan lenz".*

*My father was very angry and wanted to take me out of school. And sometimes, until today I wonder if that would not have been better for me, because I remained miserable at school right through to college. I am, like my father, self-taught, really.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> testimony (man now 43 years old):**

*In French,, when I was in Standard 6, the teacher (a man called Mr. I.D.) made us to this remarkable exercise, supposedly to develop our capacity to speak French with a good accent. He made us put a pencil inside our mouths, cross-wise, like a horses' bit, and then read aloud. With a pencil in your month like that you look like an animal being trained. It was terrible; violence against children to force us to speak French.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> testimony (a child 11 years old now):**

*When I was in Standard I, my teacher told us that we must speak French so as to seek permission to go to toilet. This made me unhappy in class.*

These three testimonies show, to what extremes this "mental harm" can go. But in fact, every day, when your policies serve to insult children's mother tongues, it, too, is extreme "mental harm" being caused.

Government is continuing to encourage English and French to be "killer languages" in Mauritius, instead of additional advantages. English and French are the two biggest "killer languages" in the world. In Mauritius too. This is because of your policy to force children to learn these languages subtractively i.e. at the cost of the mother tongue, rather than additively i.e. in addition to the mother tongue.

Now that we are making this grave accusation against your policies, it will be clear to you that we are going to step up our campaign for the use of Kreol and Bhojpuri in schools, and for other languages to be introduced additively, so that we can put an end to this linguistic genocide.

**Research and studies on medium and schooling**

Since 1953 UNESCO has publicly recognized that "*It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his (or her) mother tongue*". This UNESCO position is based on scientific research by expert pedagogues of international repute. Right up today, UNESCO has continued re-affirming this position.

Recent studies have again and again continued to confirm the UNESCO stand. All thinking experts are in agreement. Let us look at the major findings of the recent research.

1. All researchers agree that use of the mother tongue, especially in the first years of schooling, is unquestionably of benefit to the cognitive development of the child.

The conclusions of the research by Nadine Dutcher read: "*The most important conclusion is that, when learning is the goal, including that of learning a second language, the child's first language should be used as the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling. For optimum results, the first language should be continued as the language of instruction through primary school. If feasible, the first language of the student should be included among the subjects in secondary school when the language of instruction has changed. The first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading, and for comprehension of subject matter.*"<sup>6</sup>

2. Many researchers openly claim, and they almost all agree implicitly, that mother tongue education gives the child self-confidence and a stable identity. Children are known to participate more and with more enthusiasm in class if the mother tongue is used. The degree of personal assurance and critical engagement with teachers is greater when the mother tongue is used.<sup>7</sup>

Studies in 64 different classes in Mozambique in 1997<sup>8</sup> and in two Provinces of Bolivia where children speak Quechua<sup>9</sup> have confirmed this.

3. Development at school in the mother tongue helps in the acquisition of new languages. The research shows that if children are forced to learn through a language that they are not at ease in or do not master, that they suffer immense disadvantages and that the disadvantage can almost never be compensated for later.

The clearest study is that of David Ramirez in the USA.<sup>10</sup> He did an eight-year longitudinal study, 1983 to 1991 in 51 different primary schools in the States of California, Texas, Florida, New York and New

<sup>6</sup> The use of First and Second Languages in Education- A Review of International Experience by Nadine Dutcher in collaboration with G.Richard Tucker published in Pacific Islands Discussion paper Series No. 1 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in "Research Project: Mother Tongue and Third Language Tuition, 2002" Neville Alexander with assistance from PRAESA staff.

<sup>8</sup> Carol Benson, in "Mother Tongue Schooling for Pluralism and Participation- January 2003", Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University.

<sup>9</sup> Urzagaste, 1999: 145.



Jersey. In all 2,000 students whose mother tongue was Spanish took part in the study, which also involved their parents. The aim was to compare three groups of children relative to how they were using Spanish and English in education and then to compare their academic competence after 6 years of following their progress:

- (i) Where at school the children were taught entirely through English;
- (ii) Where at school the children had up to 40 minutes a day until the end of the second or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of primary school;
- (iii) Where at school the mother tongue was used as medium for at least 40% of the time every day until the end of 6<sup>th</sup> year of primary school.

This study showed that the longer the mother tongue was used, the better the child performed academically. Those who learnt through the mother tongue until the 6<sup>th</sup> Standard did much better than the other two groups, even in the English language itself. The children not only caught up with the Anglophone children, but tended to do better than them *See attached graph*.

Other studies in Haiti, for example show that Creolephone children who learnt through Haitian Creole in school developed a better competence in French, their 2<sup>nd</sup> language, than those who learnt through French<sup>11</sup>, plus naturally they did better in cognition and other non-language subjects.

What the studies show is that the development of a child's mother tongue is more important for later acquisition of a second language, than using a second language for teaching. Many people used to think that using the medium of a second language (say English or French) was an advantage, and that the earlier this started the better. But all the studies only go to prove that this was a myth. A harmful myth at that. A famous study in Nigeria showed that children who speak Yoruba and who were taught through their mother tongue from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Standard do much better than the children taught through English, in all subjects, including in English.<sup>12</sup>

We read the same results from a study by the Guatemala National Program for Bilingual Education. Children taught in their mother tongue have a better performance in all subjects including second language learning.

#### **An example from Papua New Guinea**

The population in Papua New Guinea is around 5 million, and it is the country, which has the highest number of languages in the world. There are more than 850 different languages. Before, education was mostly through the medium of English. But, there has been a great development, and during the year 2002, education in the pre-school, and the first two classes in school were made in 470 languages. Not 2, as we are asking, Kreol and Bhojpuri, but 470.

Papua New Guinea is not one of the richest countries in the world.

What are the results? They started this experiment in 1993, or 10 years ago. I will read the results from David Klaus's study. "Children become literate more quickly, and easily. They learn English very quickly and easily than their siblings did under the old English-medium system. They do not drop out. Children including girls stay in school. After the first six years, the children have an obligatory examination. In those provinces, which started first in 1993, children who had mother tongue media education had much higher results, in the end-examination, in English, than those provinces, which still taught, through the medium of English from Day I."

#### **A comparison from neighbouring countries, Zambia and Malawi**

There is an example from Zambia and Malawi, according to a study made by Edward Williams where there was a study with 1,500 children in grades I-VII, from 6 to 14 years.

The study showed that all the Zambian children were educated through the medium of English. The study concludes that there was large numbers of Zambian children (all educated in English) have very weak or zero reading competence in 2 languages.

In Malawi the children were taught in various local languages, which were mostly their mother tongues.

During the first four years of school they had English as a subject, and from fifth year they started learning all in English.

When Edward Williams compared their English language competence to that of the Zambian children, he could see that the Malawi students had a better test result in English than the Zambian students.

#### **Statistics on Languages usually spoken in Mauritius**

There are an overwhelming number of Mauritians who speak Kreol and Bhojpuri in Mauritius. This means the scope of the problem of linguistic genocide is immense. Here are the figures.

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<sup>10</sup> J.David Ramirez, Director Centre for Language Minority Education and Research California State University Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90840. Phone: 310 985 4544. Fax: 310 985 4528.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from "The use of First and Second Languages in Education" - A Review of International Experience by Nadine Dutcher in collaboration with G.Richard Tucker.

<sup>12</sup> Ife and River Readers Project- Six Year Primary Project quoted in "Language and Exclusion- The consequence of language Policies in Africa" par Ayo Bamgbose, Hamburg: Lit,2000.

**Languages usually spoken at home in the Republic of Mauritius according to the government Census of 1990 and 2000**

	1990	2000
Total population	1,056,660	1,178,848
Creole	652,193 ( 61.7 %)	826,152 (70.1%)
Creole & another language	93, 899 ( 8.9 %)	123,118 (10.4%)
Bhojpuri	201,618 ( 19.1 %)	142,387 (12.1%)
Bhojpuri & another language	21,953 ( 2.1% )	7,645 (0.6 %)
French	34,455 ( 3.3%)	39,953 (3.4%)
English	2,240 (0.2%)	3,512 (0.3%)
Other	49,208 (4.6%)	32,190 ( 2.7%)

Extracts of figures from official Census on language usually spoken at home in 1990 and 2000.

**Comments**

These figures show the extent of the use of Kreol and Bhojpuri.

They also show the immense progress of Kreol. Whereas in 1990, 70.6 % people said they speak Kreol or Kreol & another language, in 2000 80.5% said so.

In 2000 those who say they speak Kreol and Bhojpuri has progressed from 91. 8 to 93.2%. Only 5% of the population even claims the high status languages English, French and Other Oriental Languages.

**What Ledikasyon pu Travayer proposes**

*Ledikasyon pu Travayer*, says that the Ministry of Education must stop interfering with the development of the natural linguistic skills of children.

1. We propose that the Ministry of Education once and for all begins to use the mother tongue of children, Kreol and Bhojpuri, as the medium of education.

2. *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* is proposing that all necessary measures be taken for the gradual introduction of Kreol and Bhojpuri as medium from 2004.

4. We propose that the Minister of Education organizes a series of “National translation Competitions” for all the textbooks used. Government must offer prizes of (Rs 100,000 or more) to the teacher who does the best translation of each text into Kreol and Bhojpuri.

5. We propose that the Minister of Education offers Kreol and Bhojpuri language as a subject as from when children go to primary school.

6. *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* proposes that government recruit a group of professional linguists with experience to draft a full-length Mauritian Kreol grammar, and to continue to develop the scientific study of the Kreol language. The same thing for Bhojpuri.

7. We propose that government create a Department for the Study of the Kreol language, and another Department for the study of Bhojpuri at the University, MIE, MCA, MES.

The fact that many teachers, through their trade unions have already taken a stand in favour of the introduction of the Kreol language as medium of instruction, the fact that many teachers already use the mother tongue when they are teaching children because it is most efficient means that the co-operation of teachers can be expected.

This change will also permit parents to contribute to the education of their child.

**A second type of genocide**

In conclusion, we would like to draw your attention to another serious problem once schooling has become compulsory. Till today, there are many regions where there is only an RCEA primary school and no government school. This means, if we understand Government’s position, that an education of a religious “specificity” is dispensed. Once you make it legally compulsory for parents to send their children to school, how can you force parents in Tamarin or St Pierre (or any number of other areas) to send their children to have religiously “specific” education dispensed? This will, we are obliged to inform you, be another form of genocide, this time based on transferring children from one religious group to another, by way of conscious Government policy.

As you can see, once schooling becomes compulsory, you as Minister have additional responsibilities not to hard children. You are legally and morally bound to build secular schools in all areas. If not, you will be liable to pay reparations for genocide. And, more importantly, you will be responsible for an immense harm done to children.

You must, as from now, since we have made you aware of the problem of linguistic genocide, immediately make preparations to introduce the mother tongues as medium in schools.

We hope that you will immediately start a process to put a stop to the persistence of these colonial policies, which have gone on too long.

We wish to assure you that we in *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* will continue the fight for the liberation of children from the domination you are continuing to impose on them.

Yours sincerely,

Alain Ah-Vee, Secretary & Lindsey Collen, President



SONDAZ LOR LATITID ANVER LANGAZ KREOL & BHOJPURI  
E LOR DEGRE KI DIMUNN INFORME LOR AMENAZMAN LANGAZ  
MATERNEL

**Results of "SURVEY lor Lang Maternel"**  
[conducted by SOFRES (Maurice) Ltée, March 2009]  
(See page 141 for entire survey)

**EXTRACTS TAKEN VERBATIM FROM REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

"1.2 The survey covered Mauritian adults, aged 18 years and over, selected across the island..."

"1.3 A nationally representative sample of 600 Mauritians aged 18 years and over has been selected based on the 'Quota' methodology. The sample has been randomly and proportionally allocated according to the target population by sex, region, age, ethnic group and profession. The stratification and allocation of quotas have been based on the latest figures published by the Central Statistics Office.

**"1.4 Data collection**

Fieldwork was conducted through face-to-face interviews by a pool of 20 trained interviewers, working under the supervision of four Supervisors from 7 to 20 March 2009. Strict quality control procedures have been adhered to throughout the data collection process. Random back-checks for at least 20% of completed questionnaires have been carried out through either face-to-face or telephone interviews."

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

**2.2 "Use of Kreol in Parliament"**

"Respondents were asked whether they are in favour that Kreol becomes an official language in Parliament at par with English. 39% are totally in favour and 28% more or less in favour. Among the males, 68% are in favour compared to 64% among female respondents."

**Brief Analysis by LPT of SOFRES tables on the question**

The results tables show that 67% of respondents are in favour. 7% reply that they do not know. And 9% are more-or-less against, while only 18% are strongly against.

LPT believes that this is an overwhelming mandate for the Government to act upon, and to introduce a Constitutional Amendment. It is also a mandate for both Opposition Parties to vote in favour.

What is also important is that the more underprivileged people in society are the most in favour, while the elite are less in favour. We quote from the SOFRES report on this:

"Among the working population, the lower the job category, the higher the proportion in favour. Thus 74% of interviewees of the lowest job categories are in favour compared to only 46% among professionals and managers.

"The same type of association has been noted with respect to academic qualification. 74% of respondents with only primary schooling are in favour of making Kreol an official language in Parliament compared to 40% among those who have followed tertiary education."

LPT notes that, even in the elite, less than half are strongly against, i.e. only 30% top professionals, and only 42% of graduates.

Ledikasyon pu Travayer, 11 May 2009