

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273029460>

St-Hilaire Aonghas, Kwéyòl in Postcolonial Saint Lucia: Globalization, language planning, and national development. (Creole Langu....

Article in *Journal of French Language Studies* · July 2013

DOI: 10.1017/S0959269513000112

CITATIONS

0

READS

100

1 author:



Joshua Nash

University of New England (Australia)

66 PUBLICATIONS 128 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:

Project

Norfolk Island placename research [View project](#)

Project

Vrindavan and Indian environmentalism [View project](#)

Journal of French Language Studies

<http://journals.cambridge.org/JFL>

Additional services for *Journal of French Language Studies*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



St-Hilaire Aonghas, *Kwéyòl in Postcolonial Saint Lucia: Globalization, language planning, and national development.* (Creole Language Library. 40), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011, xv + 316 pp. 9789027252623 (Hardback); 9789027284648 (Electronic).

Joshua Nash

Journal of French Language Studies / Volume 23 / Issue 02 / July 2013, pp 306 - 308
DOI: 10.1017/S0959269513000112, Published online: 20 May 2013

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0959269513000112

How to cite this article:

Joshua Nash (2013). Journal of French Language Studies, 23, pp 306-308
doi:10.1017/S0959269513000112

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

RÉFÉRENCES

- L'Huillier, M. (1999). *Advanced French Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robert, P. (1983). *Le Petit Robert*. Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert.

Monique L'Huillier
School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures
Royal Holloway University London
Egham
Surrey TW20 OEX
UK
monique@elda.demon.co.uk

(Received 8 March 2012)

St-Hilaire, Aonghas, *Kwéyòl in Postcolonial Saint Lucia: Globalization, language planning, and national development*. (Creole Language Library. 40), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011, xv + 316 pp. 9789027252623 (Hardback); 9789027284648 (Electronic).
doi:10.1017/S0959269513000112

Saint Lucian Kwéyòl is a worthy example to examine within French and Creole language studies. Because of its size, cultural history and linguistic past, this small island nation and its current political and linguistic situation provides an example relevant to other small, endangered and unappreciated languages, showing how language choice, education and policy contribute to identity relations and how languages can be managed within a globalised world. St-Hilaire's attempt at summarising these issues is relevant not only to creolistics, language planning and sociolinguistics, but also to research into the linguistic effects of colonisation and (French and Caribbean) postcolonial studies. There are, however, several serious theoretical problems with the book.

The volume provides a comprehensive description of the sociolinguistic situation in the Caribbean vis-à-vis colonial languages and non-standard varieties relevant to Saint Lucian Kwéyòl. However, as the Table of Contents attests, the method of academic scaffolding utilised bears strong resemblance to a PhD thesis and makes for overly short chapter subsections and an often cumbersome, fragmented read. This leads to a more serious criticism: the volume's reiterative and repetitive style and the absence of a clear theoretical question and purpose. The description of Caribbean and specifically Saint Lucian colonisation presented in Chapters 1 and 2, although at times a little drawn out and matter of fact, sets the (socio)linguistic background of the book. Chapter 3 'Kwéyòl cultural nationalism' provides a brief history of postcolonial political and linguistic changeovers and specifically the role of Kwéyòl in boosting national self-esteem and attitudinal change. Some detailed data analysis relating to the perceived (sociolinguistic) status of language varieties on St Lucia would have been welcome here.

St-Hilaire claims in Chapter 4 to be 'An Anglophone country in an English-speaking world' and that while many changes have taken place in Saint Lucia since independence

in 1979, and although Kwéyòl has a higher social and emblematic status than previously, (standard) English is still the language of power, education and politics. The presentation of data and historical facts comes across as a *fait accompli* – Kwéyòl does fare well in some political and sociolinguistic areas, not so well in others. Chapter 5 ‘Francophonie and Créolophonie’ provides the most interest for French language studies. The social status of the various French creoles in the Caribbean is outlined in comparison with the Indian Ocean French creoles. Chapter 6 ‘Government and democracy’ focuses on status planning of Kwéyòl and its changing political status as a national language of St Lucia. In this discussion and the foci of Chapter 7 ‘Literacy, the schools, and higher education’, Chapter 8 ‘The mass media’, and Chapter 9 ‘The changing status of Kwéyòl’, St Hilaire does little more than present secondary research into Kwéyòl corpus planning, grammar, and dictionary creation, literacy, the increased tolerance of Kwéyòl in schools, and some history about the social role of Kwéyòl in television and the print media.

The final three chapters address the influence of English (Chapter 10) and French (Chapter 11) as lingering colonial languages and conclude the work (Chapter 12). The amount of anecdotal evidence and the lack of a synthesised theoretical standpoint in relation to these anecdotes give little to suggest that St Hilaire’s knowledge of the sociolinguistic situation in Saint Lucia is any more than the ability to present large amounts of secondary archival research. This has resulted in a lengthy bibliography, but with little primary empirical linguistic analysis which could support the claims made throughout the book, it is not clear how this bibliography could be used. The final chapter summarises the work and what few implications have been found are presented. Like most other studies of (island) creoles and their social and political status, this volume makes no mention of the role of creole toponyms, creole place names and processes of creole place-naming in creating and maintaining introduced colonial or indigenous connections to land through language. The significance of place names in creole speech communities was put forward by Berleant-Schiller (1991) for Barbuda in the Caribbean. Although possibly an oversight by St-Hilaire, considering ‘creole toponymy’ and ‘creole place-naming’ on Saint Lucia as a means to understand postcolonial national development and linguistic change would have been welcome.

A major conceptual criticism: there are no obvious links between the chapters, and the book as a whole lacks a coherent thread and development of a theoretical core. In addition, there is a lot of repetition of concepts, information, geographical divisions and language groups, which makes the reading of this book tedious and predictable. As a sociolinguistic study focusing on language planning and nation building, the topic of this volume in principle is commendable. However, the absence of any technical analytical methods common in sociolinguistic research and creolistics does this work a great disservice. Reflecting on the concepts presented in the title of this book, ‘language planning’ is the key which should have drawn ‘Kwéyòl’, ‘postcolonial’, ‘globalisation’, and ‘national development’ together, especially considering this work was directed towards a French language studies and creolistics audience. Because this work does not critically account for how it has added theoretically to language planning studies nor in any way to postcolonial readings of language and cultural change, it remains unclear how this volume contributes to creolistics and French language studies in the Caribbean and elsewhere. This book was unsuccessful at sustaining a cogent theoretical point and research contribution and thus failed to live up to its potential.

REFERENCE

Berleant-Schiller, R. (1991) Hidden places and creole forms: Naming the Barbudan landscape. *Professional Geographer* 43 (1). 92–101.

Joshua Nash
Discipline of Linguistics
University of Adelaide
SA 5005
Australia
joshua.nash@adelaide.edu.au

(Received 2 April 2012)

De Serres, Linda and Prévile, Christine, *Se donner le mot*. Montréal: Groupe ECP/ Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 2nd edn, 2008–2009. Trousse pédagogique: two DVDs. 978-2-9810284-7-1
doi:10.1017/S0959269513000124

Se donner le mot is a multimedia set of interactive activities for intermediate or advanced level learners of French as a second or foreign language (or for first-language speakers). The materials consist of two DVDs, one containing 52 2-minute capsules, in which an actor and his theatre director act out a scene illustrating and explaining an everyday expression, such as *accorder ses violons* and *avoir du pain sur la planche*; the other DVD contains 52 'Entractes', in which the linguist Jacques Laurin explains the meaning and origin of these and related expressions, 208 'Jeux interactifs', and four Guides pédagogiques as PDF files totalling 578pp. There is also a student website, www.sedonnerlemot.tv, offering access in stages to a wide variety of related materials and activities. On the first DVD, the sketches are lively and varied; the two main actors are sometimes augmented or replaced by two or three others (only one of whom is female). The acting is lively and engaging, and although the need to include the featured expression and explain its meaning sometimes leads to awkward dialogue, effective use is made of verbal and visual associations, including plays on words (*la Palice/la police*) and physical gestures and props (playing Monopoly to illustrate *pauvre comme Job* and *riche comme Crésus*), to reinforce retention of the target phrase. Two of the three minor characters have a strong English accent, which would perhaps serve as a useful reference point to Anglophone learners showing where they are on their own learning curve. On the second DVD, the '208 jeux interactifs' are lively and inventive, even addictive, benefitting from a particularly ingenious interactive on-screen presentation; the activities for each set of expressions come in a good variety of formats. On-screen help is available throughout: 'Besoin d'aide', 'Antidote', and also a 'Carnet d'abonné' where the learner can read and/or hear an explanation of each of the 40 featured expressions. The four 'Guides pédagogiques', by Linda de Serres, are based on the same principles as for those in *Loft hanté* (see above), and follow a similar format: the pedagogical *raison d'être* for each activity is set out clearly, ample photocopyable material is provided, and there are several pages of suggested teaching sequences for each expression. The first three Guides provide, respectively, '13 jeux pour s'amuser', '20 jeux pour apprendre' and '13 jeux pour exceller'; the fourth Guide offers '12 expressions idiomatiques' and '72 jeux éducatifs reproductibles', and includes full transcripts of 12 of the sketches from the