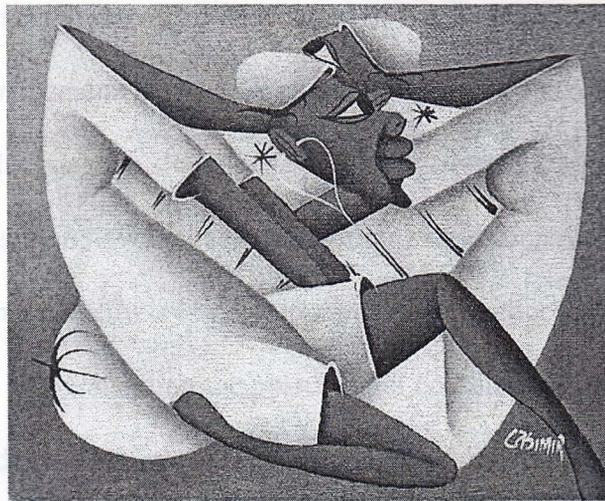




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## Palé Fransé pa Di Lespri pou sa! A Postcolonial Analysis of Language, Identity and Power in the Haitian Context

Item Type	openaccess;article
Authors	Mériné, Vanessa
Download date	2025-07-03 20:39:14
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7612">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7612</a>



*Palé Fransé pa Di Lespri pou sa!*  
**A Postcolonial analysis of Language, Identity and Power in the Haitian Context**

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Master's Thesis

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*Palé Fransé pa Di Lespri pou sa!*

**A Postcolonial analysis of Language, Identity and Power in the Haitian Context**

In line with the Haitian proverb within my title, I will attempt to reveal that “*to speak French does not necessarily mean that you are smart!*” by using a postcolonial analysis to elaborate on the role of language in shaping identity and power in Haiti. This broader objective will require that I elucidate on how language constructs and is constructed by modern society through its usage as both a constitutive and communicative practice and as a geo-political and cultural identity marker. Understanding the postcolonial condition of language in the Haitian context is a complex endeavor because it requires a broader understanding of the strategic function and engagement of language with various eurocentric, global discourses, namely colonialism, nationalism and development. These discourses are central to the language, identity and power construct because they have had and still continue to bear a lasting impact on the way in which we conceptualize and categorize the world order. Furthermore, each evolved and were deployed based on eurocentric rationalities that were substantiated by claims of power, knowledge and domination. Lastly, the constellations of power that shaped these discourses continuously placed the Haitian nation in a subaltern position, first as a slave colony, then a Third world nation and finally, as under-developed. Hence, I will argue that these systems of power, knowledge and representation when contextualized, result in a postcolonial condition for language that binds identity and power within racial/ethnic ideologies of power. In the case of Haiti, an examination of the socio-historical construction of the political and educational discourses revealed a direct engagement with the global ideologies of power. Consequently, within these systems, French symbolically embodied the dominant facet of the classifications of power while Creole absorbed all of the subaltern positions that the systems produced. Thus, the linguistic landscape of the country reveals a direct engagement with both global and local

relations of power or discourses and thus elucidates the complexities and complicities within them. This recognition provides a complex and grounded appreciation of the social relations that exists within the country and the role of language in shaping and maintaining these structures and conversely, the role of society in producing and upholding the linguistic dualism within Haiti.

### **I. Conceptual Framework: The Coloniality of Language**

Language is a multi-faceted issue and when applied to society, it becomes ever more complex and slippery. For those reasons, this chapter will propose a postcolonial conceptual framework for language and explore the continuities, discontinuities and contradictions inherent in several global discourses. Through this endeavor I want to introduce language, identity and power as a unit of analysis within a postcolonial and socio-historical domain. First, I will elaborate on the aspects of language that will be omitted from this undertaking. My intent throughout this is not one based on comparing or judging languages for their linguistic attributes and/or capabilities, on that point, I completely agree with Wright (2004) when she says that

We should reject a very common argument that languages have intrinsic qualities that make them particularly suited to the language of science, philosophy and so on. ... Any language used extensively in the same domain will acquire the same vocabulary and range (p. 121).

This analysis will not address the varied forms of linguistic patterns nor will I suggest that they are all systematically the same. However, I will treat language as a communicative, constitutive tool that through practice shapes people's worldview and provides a sense of solidarity and common knowledge base. Moreover, my objective is to elaborate on the role that spoken language has and still plays in 'modern' society. I will attempt, through the Foucaultian concept of an "ontology of the present", to reveal the 'coloniality' of language and its varied

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object/subject representations by exposing the eurocentric structure inherent in both the colonial and the postcolonial projects use of language. Quijano (2000) coined the term coloniality as a eurocentric “imposition of racial/ethnic classification on the global population” (p. 342).

According to Quijano (2000), coloniality was produced within colonialism but has outlasted the system and evolved as a distinct set of power of relations and representations. In this case, I will explore the coloniality found within the discourses of colonialism, nationalism and development in order to reveal the ‘myth’ of decolonization and make ‘visible’ the continuities between the colonial past and the current global racial hierarchies. Finally, based on these arguments, I will show that these projects all canonize European forms of knowledge at the detriment of subaltern ways of knowing and hence, result in a standardization of the languages affiliated with such knowledge productions.

#### **A. Elaborating on a definition of language**

I will begin by defining language and elaborating on the varied ways in which it is used as a practice, a tool and marker. Language, as a practice, co-exists with social reality and actively constructs meaning through a system of material and symbolic representations. Language also inhabits a particular worldview and therefore, acts within that construct to engender distinct forms of knowledge. As a tool, language is objectified and reified and for those reasons, is often considered a form of social currency with significant exchange values (Rassool, 1998). As a marker, it establishes socio-political and cultural boundaries and inevitably identifies who ‘belongs’ and who is ‘other’. As such, language is simultaneously constitutive and restrictive, inclusionary and exclusionary, a sign and a signifier. These conflicting dispositions often result in creating complex social relations because of the symbolic and cultural power they engender.

As a constitutive tool and practice, language is dynamic and unstable. As Wright (2004) contends “new facts, ideas and events necessitate new language” (p. 3), therefore, language is not a passive player in the construction of knowledge and reality but is instead an active and essential actor. Meaning is constantly negotiated *through* language in expressing cultural reality and shaping it through knowledge. Similarly, Ashcroft (1995) argues that the struggle for ownership of reality places language and meaning in a “discursive site in which they are mutually constituted” (p. 300). People and cultures both form and are formed by language. In that sense, language is limitless in its ability to create and build new realities, and new forms of knowledge. However, language also presents restrictive qualities in its ability to prohibit further negotiations with the outside world. Aside from its meaning making capabilities, language is also a socialization tool and practice that tends to identify and limit who can speak, who can listen and who can understand. It represents a means by which differing groups can selectively be enfranchised or disenfranchised based on their linguistic practices. On that note, Rassool (1998) maintains that language rights are “integrally linked to human rights” (p.91) for they determine whose reality and temporality will be represented and acknowledged in any given society.

As a result, language as a discursive practice is also both inclusionary and exclusionary for it has very explicit membership rules. When defined through its qualities of identity construction, language serves not only to define who ‘belongs’ but it also clearly marks who is ‘other’. These linguistic identities all represent distinct sites of cultural and symbolic representations and identifications. Therefore, language use is constantly defining and redefining cultural and symbolic boundaries between and within groups of people. Similarly to the concept of identity as fluid, unstable and negotiated, language use takes on various roles in the process of maintaining, stabilizing and disrupting contested boundaries of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. From

this perspective, it acts as a personal link to the social world as it allows individuals to display their personal identities as well as negotiate and affirm their socio-cultural identifications. Hence our linguistic practices are closely aligned with our sense of who we are and where we fit in society.

Finally, language also takes the shape of a marker and is concurrently a sign and signifier. First as a sign, based on Saussure's definition, language mediates the relationship between the signifier, which is a sound/visual image that engenders a certain mental concept or idea, and the signified, which is the mental concept associated with the signifier. Based on this structuralist viewpoint, language as a sign is a finite system of rules that mediates the relation of meaning between the signifier and the signified (Surber, 1998). However, I will also argue that language, as a tool and practice, can also take the shape of a signifier and can thereby give rise to a distinct signified. This categorization further supports the relationship between language and the identities associated with its usage. Saussure also argues that no inherent connection exists between a signifier and its signified, rather that relationship is socially constructed based on societal rules and beliefs (Surber, 1998). Altogether, language is a systematic tool for linking mental concepts to objects in the natural world but through its usage, it can also be objectified and used to label external representations of itself, such as socio-cultural identities.

Accordingly, language as a powerful source of meaning, demarcation and identification, holds a contested role in society. It has historically been viewed as a potent socio-economic currency because of its cultural and symbolic power (Rassool, 1998). And as with most sources of power, language use and control have been at the center of various socio-political 'projects'. In the up coming sections, I will focus on two such socio-political strategies, namely the

colonial/imperialist project and the postcolonial/nationalist/development project in order to further explore the interplay between language, identity and power (*LIP*).

## **B. Language as a Colonial Project**

Understanding the rationalization of the colonial project is directly related and inextricably bound to the role that language played within it. The ideology and literature that supported and guaranteed the colonial project are best understood through a Foucaultian concept of discourse. As such, the colonial project can be described as a system of thoughts or ‘truths’ comprised of ideas, attitudes, courses for action, institutions, all of which result in constituting a specific ‘colonial’ subject and ‘colonial’ worldview, if you will. For instance, one important constituent of the colonial discourse was colonialist literature, which JanMohamed (1995) describes as

...an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of ‘civilization’, a world that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology. That world is therefore perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately evil. Motivated by his desire to conquer and dominate, the imperialist configures the colonial realm as confrontation based in differences in race, language, social customs, cultural values, and modes of production (p. 18).

This configuration of the colonial project was crucial for determining ‘how’ and ‘why’ it should happen. JanMohamed’s (1995) description of the substantiation of colonialism is an important one because it displays the colonial worldview and aptly defines the colonial ‘other’ through a system based on difference. Thereby the categorization of the uncivilized and evil colonial ‘other’ was socially constructed based on perceived differences in race, language, culture and ultimately, identity. This discourse is preeminent for understanding then the relationship between language, identity and power within the colonial project. As we see in the following sections, the colonial discourse provided a substantiated basis for the colonial project, differentiated from discourse as a specific course of action versus a system of thoughts, and language use played an

important role in further constructing, maintaining and reinforcing both the discourse and the project.

Cesaire (1955) describes the colonial project as one based on “thingification” and “progressive dehumanization”, where the colonizer/colonized relationship loses all semblance of human relations and is instead replaced by “relations of domination and submission” (p. 42). Memmi (1965) contends that oppression through the colonial project is fundamentally racist and applied to “a human group as a whole and, *a priori*, all individual members of that group are victimized by it” (p. 73). Consequently, when these ideologies are applied to language, it makes less subtle its relationship with identity and power within this project. As a strategy for dominance, colonialism sought to categorize entire groups of people as inferior and ‘other’, therefore, cultural markers such as language became the means, par excellence, by which these ‘others’ could be identified and discredited.

As a discourse, colonialism had to construct an imaginary/symbolic colonial subject based on visible signifiers; two of the most prominent markers were race or skin color and language. And since race was fixed in the sense that one could not change one’s skin tone, language was not so fixed and therefore, required more regulation and control in terms of maintaining the colonial dichotomy. In so far as language was a form of cultural identity, the language of the colonial subject was viewed as inferior, animal-like and inadequate, whereas the language of the colonizer was considered superior and more appropriate for human interaction.

Fanon (1967) advances this argument bluntly by stating that

The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language (p. 18).

Therein, the struggle for limiting access to the ‘empire’ languages for acquisition of such a tool was directly related to access to power and altered identities.

On that end, the colonial project was systematic and vigilant in its approach to language control and subjugation. Wright (2004) contends that because access to the languages of empire was considered a privilege, most imperial powers, including the French, British, Romans, Spanish, ruled their colonies by recruiting a small, usually the existing aristocracy, class to manage their colonial affairs. For this to happen, that group had to be educated in the imperial language and later placed in strategic administrative positions. Consequently, this imperial strategy served to effectively link the language of empire to increased access to power and increased socio-political mobility, and the local language to just about the opposite. Similarly, Wright (2004) contends that in such a system, over time, a classic diglossia develops whereby

the language of the rulers (H) and the language of the ruled (L) are functionally differentiated with the prestige language (H) employed for all formal functions and conferring prestige on speakers; the L language is only used in informal settings and/or by those in the lower classes of society.... The L language becomes the marker of exclusion, poverty and political weakness (p. 109).

Thereby entire groups of people were made inferior, marginalized and oppressed through the use of language as an apparatus for domination and exclusion. From this perspective, and from the standpoint of the colonized, language, more so than skin color, emerges as the major barrier to social mobility and essentially, the defining marker or signifier of one's position in the colonial society. With race being fixed and unchangeable, the colonial subject, apart from resenting his skin color, also becomes "suspicious of his own tongue" (Fanon, 1967, p. 21) because he understands that he undoubtedly "betrays himself in his speech" (p. 24). So then language and speech lose their constitutive, inclusionary qualities and are instead methods by which people can be restricted, excluded and have their knowledge subjugated through the refutation and dehumanization of their language and identity.

Edward Said (1979) in *Orientalism*, introduced the concept of the Orient as discourse and argued that "ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their

force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied” (p. 5). This is a preeminent point for addressing the relationship between language, identity and power within the colonial/imperial/occidental discourse. Therefore, admitting that the relations inherent to the discourse are in effect relations of power is the first step to deciphering the interplay between LIP. And by power, I am appropriating again Foucault’s conception of power as productive and active in shaping ideas, subjects, objects and truths (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). Therefore, this form of power does not only give individuals *power over* others but it gives them to *power to act* based on a supported discourse. These relations of power thus create systems of domination and discipline, whereby language is used as a signifier for excluding and weakening the colonial subject in order to solidify and maintain the symbolic power of the colonial master. Secondly, one must avow that the assumptions inherent to the colonial project/discourse are by no means *natural*, and are instead constructed, temporal and therefore, can and should be criticized at the source of their claims. Meaning that the colonial discourse, just like any other, has a historicity; therefore, it should always be treated as such. If not, then it will be much more difficult to question and contextualize language policies and language rights, especially in the case of disadvantaged groups. And finally, it must be stated that the colonial project was not concerned with forming and supporting ‘human’ relations with its subject, rather as a system it thrived on the objectification of the colonial subject. Thus language was used as a tool speak about the ‘other’, define the ‘other’, confine the ‘other’, exclude the ‘other’ and dominate the ‘other’.

### C. Language as a Postcolonial Project

Now before turning to the role of language within the postcolonial project, I want to emphasize that by no means am I trying to suggest a linear or temporal relationship between the projects at hand nor a break within them. However, they can claim the title of ‘postcolonial

projects' in so much that these discourses were framed as "different discourses" meant to "replace the structure of colonial power with a new order, that of national power" (Chatterjee, 1986, p. 42) through development. But as we will see, the two projects, colonial and postcolonial, are in no way mutually exclusive; in some instances they were concurrent or ran parallel to each other, and in other instances, they reveal critical continuities and interesting discontinuities. However, I felt that it was important to clearly demarcate them for they represent key actors in the role that language plays in society today and further elucidates the language, identity and power relationship. In so much that discourse can be defined as "what is said, what is not said, and what cannot be said" (Ninnes & Burnett, 2003, p. 282) this turn is an attempt to mark a shift in 'how' language was and was not talked about within the emerging postcolonial project of nationalism and development.

As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, western philosophers were engaging with the vision of a nation-state. Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762) and Herder's *Treatise upon the Origin of Language* (1772) both conceptualized a nation united through language and culture but they had differing suggestions on how to get there. In any case, the concept of the nation was adopted and adapted through Europe as a socio-political project and thus was shaped into what we now recognize as a natural configuration of the world. Popkewitz (2001) defines this nationalization project as similar to building a 'national imaginary' whereby

"cultural representations are historically fabricated to produce a 'nation-ness'.... [and the] sense of 'belonging' is dependent on the multiple discourses that form individuals into a collective narrative rather than any 'natural' geographical cohesion" (p. 184).

Consequently, this collective narrative cannot be told without a national language. It must be coherent and unified so that the nation can claim a history, a manifest destiny, and thus an existential purpose. Furthermore, Wright (2004) defines the role of a national language within this discourse a situation where

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“to know and to use the national language is part of the definition of belonging to the nation; to speak the language is a badge of inclusion; to refuse to know the language is to refuse the community and is seen as schismatic and unpatriotic” (p. 42).

Again, this is a changing role for language in society whereby it is a tool for building and creating memories and narratives but also becomes inextricably tied to the concept of ‘belonging’ and national/cultural identity. Therefore, in many ways, nationalism provided one more level of differentiation between the self and the ‘other’. The emergence of nationalism and its spread as socio-cultural model is a testament to the definition and role of language as actively co-constructing social reality.

Accordingly, the very concept of the nation was problematic from the start because once more, at the root of the discourse was a static rationale based on difference and dominance. Chatterjee (1986) contends that nationalism is constituted as a “discourse of power”, which evolved into a discourse of “order and of the rational organization of power” (p. 51). Moreover, Wright (2004) suggests that as a social model, ethnic nationalism claimed that individuals were born into a family *as well* as a nation, and that nations “had natural unchanging frontiers, a special origin and a peculiar character, mission and destiny” (p. 35). From this perspective, language is not only a signifier of your current position in society but also dictates your past and future in the world order. Within this discourse, people’s cultures, ambitions, ideas all became bound within the concept of the nation. And, as a narrative tool and a national signifier, language became ever more important in its role as a carrier of cultural and historical knowledge. So that it was natural to assume cultural homogeneity based on national language, identity and knowledge and to view these terms as interchangeable. And because the nationalism discourse in many ways ran concurrently with the colonial discourse in its origins, the system of power differentiation was still very much based on colonial perceptions of difference, dominance and exploitation. So, accordingly, imperial nations were equated with superior cultures, languages, and citizens; and

oppressed, 'colonized' nations were confined to inferior cultures, languages and unruly subjects.

In all, the power relations inherent in the nationalism discourse gave rise to several language issues as it effectively canonized the language, identity and power/knowledge schema.

As a polemic and a discourse, nationalism still provides a means to talk about the world and act upon and within it. When the nation effectively became a unit of analysis for social relations and political will, it also obscured the colonial relations inherent within the larger discourse. Meaning the 'judging eye' could no longer be cast upon the 'colonizer' and was instead focused inward within this concept of nation. Grosfogel (2007) argues that nationalism was just a "Eurocentric solution[s] to an Eurocentric global problem" (p. 31), in that it essentially privileged a Western perception of what a socio-polico-cultural unit should resemble. Therefore, nationalism as discourse provided a form of Eurocentric rationality that defined, maintained and supported a particular form of knowledge and subjectivity. This allowed for formerly colonized entities as they gained their freedom to be 'encouraged' to build and promote ideologies of "national identity" and later of "national development" (Grosfogel, 2007). In short, the nationalism project is an effort to construct subjectivities and knowledge within the confines of a nation through a common language and identity. Within this discourse, languages began to take on distinctive roles and representations. To a point where a renowned Indian scholar could claim English as representing and supporting his "intellectual make-up" but *not* of his "emotional make-up" (Rao, 1995, p. 296). That is also precisely the point that Grosfoguel (2007) argues regarding the existence of

A linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileges communication and knowledge/theoretical production in the former and subalternize the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture but not of knowledge/theory (p.11).

Because of the power relations tying language to 'the' national narrative, a nation's historical knowledge base came to be 'signified' through language. Therefore, emerging nations in the

Third World, were first violently pushed into first a colonial system that deprived them of their voice and their history and now through nationalism, the circle was complete, with the subjugation of their forms of knowledge through a racial colonial pattern of linguistic hierarchy.

The implications for LIP within this discourse are manifold but in relation to the previous discourse, which provided a means for the colonizer to speak of the 'other' and define the 'other', nationalism *created* and introduce the 'postcolonial self and its Other'. In nationalism, language, identity and power come together to define one's locality, meaning and representation in the world-historical system. Here I use the term of world-historical system to emphasize and affirm the postcolonial call for a *world-historical* perspective of relations of power in order better grasp the global and racial structures and hierarchies of wealth, knowledge, power and language. Within this Eurocentric world-historical system, individuals become obsolete and nations then can *strategize* about language use because as a signifier, language becomes something that is *owned* by the state and can be imposed or brought to the citizenship. As a tool, language is used to shape national identity as well as shape the citizens, and also becomes a validation for the sovereignty of the nation. Thus LIP in this system is contested within the broader global, socio-economy structure and develops into a national strategic apparatus versus just an individual and cultural asset. As nations adopt one language over another they appear to privilege and identify with one culture over another, though not necessarily exclusively. In short, nationalism, as a discourse and practice, successfully integrated language into a new geo-political configuration of power. For instance, Haiti's appropriation of the French language as a national and official language qualifies the country for inclusion in the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)*. Member countries are not only French-Speaking but also commit to valuing all that is French, i.e. culture and education as constitutive of their national identity; the

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OIF even has representation in the UN general assembly for instance as a trans-national linguistic unit. Francophone countries, through this organization, thus seek to create a global, political and cultural conglomerate, solely based on a common language.

Consequently, this linguistic form of geo-politics would soon develop into a new system of categorization and form an additional, or maybe just a differentiated, layer of demarcation. In constructing and coming to terms with their nation-ness, countries simultaneously recognized their relative location within the world-historical system. Nations were formed and came to be defined as either First, Second or Third World nations. The discourse of nationalism thus achieved a delineation of clear power relations within and between nation-states. And it is, in part, thanks to this stratification power and knowledge that the development discourse was able to take hold and evolve into a powerful regime of identification and representation. As a discourse, development had an influential impact on the role of language within both the world-historical system and the nation because it simultaneously engaged both of these geo-political constructs. Altogether, I will explore two distinct roles that development as a discourse plays in the language, identity and power relation. The first involves the geo-political 'problematization' of Third World nations and the second analyzes the hegemonic influence of development as a model of 'progress' as it is deployed by the West.

Though nationalism allowed for the geo-political representation of the 'under-developed' world, colonialism preceded and validated the geo-political relations of power within the new world-historical system. As a discourse, development, placed the 'problem' label within specific geo-cultural centers, i.e. Africa, Third World, Latin America, etc... Similarly, Escobar (1995) contends that the discourse of development began with the "discovery" of poverty in the marked centers, and coincidentally, this politics of poverty regurgitated previous structures and relations

that identified the West, namely Europe and the US as 'developed' and its Other as either 'developing' or under-developed'. This created a discourse whereby solutions for defined 'progress' were in direct relation to a Western model of 'development' and 'progress', and these two words accordingly became interchangeable. Furthermore, development as discourse evolved to 'create knowledge' about the Third World, which was then "utilized and circulated" through various apparatuses and through the "professionalization" of the discourse (Escobar, 1995, p. 45). This in turn resulted in what Quijano (2000) defines as a "coloniality of power" whereby a eurocentric rationality canonizes its own form of knowledge as dominant and constitutes, through a racialization of power relations, new social and geo-cultural identities based on the principles of modern/colonial world system. In this case, the constituted 'postcolonial' subjectivities are confined to the developed/under-developed representation and ascribed roles, responsibilities and 'burdens' accordingly.

Grosfogel (2007) also argues that by constructing these pathological regions and problematizing the Third World, the West effectively "concealed... [its] responsibility in the exploitation of these countries" (p. 27). What this achieves, similarly to the nationalism discourse, is the construction of a new imaginary and narrative, whereby the West was always 'developed' and the Rest was always 'under-developed'. The development discourse, as such can be viewed as similar to the suggestive title of Trouillot's 1995 book: Silencing the Past, meaning that historical continuities are camouflaged and new subjectivities are constructed and put front and center. As Third World nations are 'tasked' with developing, there is neither space nor time for revelation or transformation of the unequal power relations involved within the social, political and economic framework. Instead, development takes the form of what Foucault terms a "disciplinary power" whereby nation states are constantly measured, regulated and disciplined as

they engage with the discourse and its practices, resulting essentially in “docile bodies”, and equally, ‘busy’ bodies (Michoul & Grace, 1997).

Because of its ontological stance, development has serious implications for language, identity and power. The emergence of a geo-cultural identity within the development discourse as well as the problematization of that geo-political/cultural space creates new roles, possibilities and challenges for marginalized languages. In this emerging configuration of power, language as a marker takes on the categorization of the ‘under-developed’. This new representation helped to further standardize the languages and identities associated with development. So that languages such as English and French came to be naturally ‘accepted’ as fully developed (L)anguages and others could be relegated to sub-par (l)anguages in need of further development if they are to become (L)anguages of knowledge, theory, and progress. In other words, within these relations of power, ‘progress’ meant moving closer to the identities and ideologies of the ‘developed’ and their languages as they were idealized and reified as *lingua francas*.

This essentially leaves millions of people with marginalized languages outside of the development ‘track’ if you will unless they choose to seek the ‘standardization’ that it proposes. These peripheral languages effectively become devalued and increasingly obsolete as they begin to lose their roles within the limited confines of development and definitions for progress. The people of these languages must choose to remain either in a mono-lingual isolation and castration or to move toward ‘progress’ through standard language acquisition, which in many ways is “the medium through that allows individuals to transcend their group membership” (Wright, 2004, p. 177). However, the power relations involved in this process dictate the direction of this exchange since the marginalized are often too weak to represent their languages, identities and knowledge

as valuable to 'others'; instead they learn to value and accept the common, standard languages for their source of power and altered identification.

The second characteristic of development is also quite crucial to our discussion in that it demonstrates the discourse as a hegemonic eurocentric model for action, practice, language, and ideology. Here again Quijano's (2000) "coloniality of power" would define development as a western rationalization of knowledge. Grosfogel (2007) also claims that

The construction of 'pathological' regions in the periphery as opposed to the so-called 'normal' development patterns of the 'West' justified an even more intense political and economic intervention from imperial powers (p. 27).

Hence he is making an argument for the colonial continuities within the discourse as one of domination and Western hegemony. In any case, development has been 'packaged' as a model that must be *brought* to the under-developed constituents. Though the nationalist discourse places the overall burden to take 'development' and apply it on the nation-state, the development discourse nevertheless, does not support the ideology that development *resides* in the under-developed states. Therefore, these states are not viewed as able to progress on their own, hence the need to *aid* them in doing so. Furthermore, development could not provide a 'model' without processes and these were directly related to the origins of the discourse with eurocentric centers. Escobar (1995) contends that all inquiry must start with the formulation, in the 1940s and 50s, of the development 'process' rationale, in which

The organizing premise was the belief in the role of modernization as the only force capable of destroying archaic superstitions and relations, at whatever social, cultural, and political cost. ... Moreover, it was absolutely necessary that governments and international organizations take an active role in promoting and orchestrating the efforts to overcome general backwardness and economic underdevelopment (p. .

And since the Western states were deemed 'developed' on the first day of the inception of the category, the eurocentric ideology might argue that these nations have the inherent 'gene' of development since its people were able to 'develop' and progress on their own and had not

evolved in a 'backward' pattern. They therefore represented the model of progress that all nations on the path to development must aspire to. This is not to say that there are no local applications of development projects; instead my critique of development stems primarily with the eurocentric source of knowledge from which the discourse emerged.

Development as a hegemonic economic model of progress, as I mentioned earlier, introduces several eurocentric conceptions about language, family, religion, social life, education, and others. In terms of language, the discourse of development as a model of success puts national planners in a quite difficult position. With the world watching them and assessing their progress, the issue of language planning becomes evermore contested as nations engage with both the discourses of nationalism and development. The former asks that governments construct unique and autonomous national identities; the latter proposes a pre-defined model of progress, which leads to more involvement within a modern/capitalist world system. However, within the discourses, the Third World nations and all their constituents are defined as 'backward' so breaking free of these representations might require severing ties with markers such as language that reify these representations. Therefore, it is not surprising that within this discourse, language effectively becomes a global actor within the new world-historical system as a tool for social and spatial mobility and a marker for relative 'development' or exposure and rapprochement to the 'developed'. Here the politics of language come full circle as they in effect engage with the development discourse as a continuity of the colonial discourse and the national discourse. All of which create an "ontology of the present", whereby language, identity and power are entangled within several constructed dichotomies that categorize people as colonized/colonizer, Black/White, Third world/First World, Under-developed/Developed, Western/Restern and Knower/Knowable. Better yet, language is but one unit within

multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies (heterarchies) of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures (Grosfogel, 2007, p. 12).

This claim by Grosfogel brings me to the final point of this chapter and support my argument in calling for a postcolonial analytics of language, whereby we can make visible the continuities and discontinuities within the discourses that shape language, identity and power relations.

#### **D. Towards a Postcolonial Analytics of Language**

In conducting a postcolonial analytics of language, I am suggesting an investigation of the colonality of language as social-historical domain. Lao-Montes (2005) proposes that such a project involves a “genealogical mode of historical research that looks for the specific forms, techniques, rationalities, and practices of power, knowledge, and subjectivation/subjectification” (p. 6). In the previous chapter, I proposed that three distinct discourses have carved out specified roles and purposes for language in society; these roles varied slightly but significantly. The discourses and affiliated projects shared commonalities in their eurocentric origins, their eurocentric narrative constructs and consequent racial/ethnic ideologies of domination and exploitation. And through a definition of language as both a sign or communicative tool and as a signifier or marker of identity, I was able to further dissect the language, identity and power construct through engagement with these discourses/projects.

Hence, having explored the socio-historical role and construction of the language through this larger world-historical perspective, I will argue that these relations of power have resulted in complex language dynamics and successfully introduced and solidified language as source, cause and effect of power and identity. When contextualized, the result is a form of postcolonial condition (or colonality) of language that entangles all of these discourses and attaches values, power and meaning (or identity) to language. Furthermore, when this colonality of language is

deployed and evolves, it creates post(colonial) subjects based on these relations of power.

Finally, I would like to introduce the concept of the Coloniality of Language for understanding and defining these power relations as they constitute and solidify the language, identity and power patterns of differentiation.

## II. Research Methodology and Design

This project is mostly aligned with the principles of Grounded Theory, in as far as it will use data in order to theorize about people's acts and interactions as they relate to language (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Similarly, this research will attempt to derive a contextualized model of the coloniality of language for Haitian society based on a socio-historical investigation. In that sense, there is also an element of historical research within this study in as far as I will elaborate on the meaning and impact of various historical events in shaping the linguistic pattern of Haiti. The Grounded Theory methodology involves a "constant comparative method" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 154), meaning that the data analysis shapes and directs the data collection through an interactional process, hence the necessity for me to first develop an analytical tool to guide my inquiry.

My data analysis and coding methodology thus will be largely influenced by the conceptual framework that I have put forth in the previous chapter, namely the Coloniality of Language. That framework will also provide the rationale and the larger socio-historical context for my research and further direct my data collection processes. Because of the socio-historical aspect of my research, my primary sources of data are official documents such as constitution articles, education policy documents, some historical news items; first hand accounts and subjective pieces gathered from anthologies and auto-ethnographical works; secondary sources mainly involve compiled historical works and other relevant research. My data collection was

initially meant to be a random sample but through the data analysis interactional process, I have selected specific pieces and items that best address and support my argument. My data was collected from various sources both in the field, mainly the Ministry of Education and the National Archives and on the World Wide Web. Some of the main challenges throughout the research process have revolved around the difficulty with finding and securing relevant sources, especially historical documents. In any case, grounded theory methodologies of coding were applied to the data in order to identify themes, categories and later reveal the interrelationships within and between the emerging concepts. Combined, these relational categories, will reveal a contextualized 'story' which will then be framed and proposed as a "grounded theory".

### **C. Researcher Standpoint**

My research standpoint espouses Knight's (2002) contention of a critical theory approach to research as one that "tend[s] to hold that the social order in all its aspects perpetuates inequalities and that research should identify and try to erode them" (p. 34). Similarly, this research project will attempt through a postcolonial analytics of language to deconstruct language use and policies in order to reveal faulty narratives, hierarchies and discontinuities as they emerge from various local, national and global discourses. Through the investigation of the coloniality of language within a socio-historical domain, I will simultaneously seek to reveal the postcolonial condition of language in Haiti as well as its implications for maintaining, reinforcing and/or transforming social inequity. Hence the goal of this inquiry is not grounded in the positivistic acquisition of knowledge but in the inevitable relationship between theory and praxis as informing and feeding one another, even as I espouse more of a post-structuralist stance within my inquiry.

This brings me to further elaborate on my ontological and epistemological standpoints. Given the socio-historical nature of this research study, it is crucial that I highlight my subjective role within the project as well as the underlying assumptions guiding my line of inquiry. As a researcher, I will operate mainly within what Burrell & Morgan (1979) defined as the “Radical Humanist Paradigm” (p. 32). My research concerns similarly will place emphasis on “radical change, modes of domination, emancipation, deprivation and potentiality” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 32). Within this paradigm, researchers seek to change the social order through altered cognitions and a transformed consciousness. Therefore, my ontological claims have a nominalist quality in that I am arguing for a socially constructed world order heavily based on ‘unstable’ individual cognitions of labels, concepts and names. My epistemological stance is anti-positivistic and refutes all notions of the detached ‘observer’ searching for laws, “regularities and causal relationships” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5) between social elements. As a subject and researcher within this study, I will make use of both sources of knowledge in guiding my inquiry and analysis. As a Creole and French speaker, Haitian individual whom resided within the context of study for 18 years, I am invariably tied to the various discourses that I seek to deconstruct. As a researcher having acquired various methodological tools of analysis, I will aim to make my analysis as transparent and descriptive as possible. However, inline with Knight’s discussion on reliability of inquiry within a post-structuralist viewpoint, I will agree that

“quests for reliability and objectivity obstruct attempts to explore meanings and create understandings. The idea that researchers can be objective is ludicrous but descriptions should be honestly based on serious and reflexive inquiries. The notion of accuracy is misconceived in that it assumes a fundamental truth, which this position denies” (Knight, 2002, p. 30)

Therefore, my concerns will not reside with reliability, validity and objectivity but instead will attempt to provide a purposeful and responsible systematic inquiry that can later be the basis for research and praxis within the Haitian context.

Finally, my objective and goal in this research is to elucidate the coloniality of language in the Haitian context and reveal the linguistic duality, ambiguity, and contradictions that we face as a formerly colonized, Third World and Under-developed Nation. Highlighting that official discourses on languages within such a context can not be understood outside of relations of power that shape and organize them; I similarly propose that language policy analysis in Haiti can not be realistically addressed outside of a postcolonial analytics of the language condition. To understand and overcome our present, we must first take a candid look at the past and the route through which we have arrived at the current juncture. The ultimate purpose is to de-link and de-mystify the ‘imaginary’ narrative that historically has tied our mother-tongue to that which is racialized, uncivilized, heretic, uneducated and ‘Other’, in order to look for new opportunities and new subjectivities grounded in our rich, and yet difficult, socio-historical heritage.

### **III. Background and Rationale: The case of Haiti**

Haiti is a land of ambiguities and conflicts characterized by a difficult but triumphant revolutionary past and a still uncertain present. In 1804, Haitian slaves accomplished the first and only successful slave rebellion in the colonized world. Today, more than two centuries later, Haitians continue to struggle to break the chains of their colonial legacy. This reality is most apparent through an exploration of the linguistic situation of the country. Currently, Haiti’s national and official languages are French and Haitian Creole; however, the country is far from being bi-lingual. In fact, Fontaine (1978) argued that historically there has been a “dynamic and antagonistic relationship between French, the “settlers” language, and Creole, the language of the “natives”” (p. 29). But to understand that relationship, it is crucial to also avow that the very appellation of ‘Creole’ in general alludes to languages that have developed during the process of

colonization. Hence, the linguistic situation of Haiti is invariably tied to its colonial past and also reflects the people's struggle to assert their independence and freedom in the face of violent oppression.

In line with our previous discussion about the role of language as constituting knowledge, identity and power; Haitian Creole has shaped and continues to define Haitian identity in meaningful ways. Lherisson (2000) aptly draws this reality when she states that

Although issuing from the slave period, Creole in Haiti is not soiled with the vice of servitude, because the struggle for independence gave it a national significance as the language of a people who liberated itself with arms in its hands and Creole in its mouth (p. 1)

However, historically the language has held a relatively devalued position in Haitian society and was relegated to the functional domain of the informal while French became the official language of the ruling class, government, business and education. Fontaine (1978) described the linguistic situation of Haiti as "profoundly counterrevolutionary" (p.37). That reality is most apparent when avowing that Creole is the mother tongue of the entire population and estimated that between 85% and 95% of Haitian is monolingual in Creole while the remaining 10% French/Creole bilinguals "constitute an elite oligarchy of power with little contact with the masses" (Youssef, 2002, p. 186). Given this situation, the monolingual Creole speakers have historically been socially, economically and culturally marginalized within their own land. Thus While acknowledging that the overall status of Creole has greatly improved during the last couple of decades, it is also crucial to reveal how several discourses and institutions continue to shape the linguistic conflict within the country.

Consequently, a postcolonial analytics of language is necessary for the Haitian context because of several factors. First, Haitians and Haitian Creole are direct descendants of the colonial project and both continue engage with that discourse in the modern world. Secondly, the relationship between language, identity and power in Haiti is closely aligned with our current

## A. Post-Independence Era

The post-independence era of Haiti was crucial for shaping the fate of language ideologies within the newly free nation. The country's first century of freedom was characterized by the emergence of a politics based on skin color and the struggle for recognition. The first Haitian Constitution of 1804, drafted by Dessalines, proudly boasted that "All Haitians were to be known as Blacks, whatever their color" (Article 4) and Nicholls (1996) asserts that "race was throughout the nineteenth century a uniting factor among Haitians" (p. 2). However, the colonial legacy of color differentiation was a salient factor in the post-independence era.

However before engaging with the said era, I must briefly elaborate on the social politics of Haiti's colonial period. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the social class differentiation in the colony consisted of the White colonists, the Affranchis or Freed men and the slaves. The Affranchis group consisted mainly of interracial children born of white males and female slaves whom had been granted freedom by their fathers/masters. Nicholls (1996) highlights these children were often adulated by their mothers and raised to feel superior to their black family as they represented "the insurance policy of the family" (p. 13). However, some Affranchis were also former black slaves whom had been able to purchase their freedom or received it due to extraordinary service of some kind. Through the Code Noir (Black Code) of 1685, Louis XIV acknowledged the Affranchis as a social class and granted them equal rights with the Whites but "in practice, [they] were the victims of serious social and legal disabilities" (Nicholls, 1996, p. 20). In time, the Affranchis became quite numerous since White women continued to be largely absent in the slave colony; by 1789, the Mulatto Affranchis outnumbered the whites and were just as wealthy. Hence by the post-Independence era, many Mulatto Affranchis had not known slavery for generations and truly formed an elite, educated and, most importantly, slave owning

class of individuals whom for the large part espoused European values and adopted the lifestyles and tastes of the White colonists.

These racial dynamics in the pre- and post-independence era resulted in binding color and class and formed a complex of color prejudice, whereby one's value was based on the proportion of White blood running through his/her veins. Paquin (1983) argues that as a group,

“The Mulatto Affranchis were becoming lighter and lighter in complexion by scrupulously avoiding any marriage with darker people, wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Black ancestry. ... They became the most rigid proponents of the color line, ruthless enemies of the Black slaves” (p. 14)

However, they were forced to align themselves with Black Affranchis in order to guarantee independence since the White colonists were firmly opposed to joining forces with the Mulattoes under any circumstances. Consequently, both Blacks and Mulattoes agreed that the White colonists were a common and solid threat and out 33 generals and officers whom signed the Act of Independence “twenty were Mulattoes and thirteen were Blacks” (Paquin, 1983, p. 24).

Haiti in the post-independence era was a symbol of anti-colonialism and an assertion of racial equality but most importantly, this era would reveal major concerns regarding internal power relations within the country and external power relations with foreign nations. Gaffield (2007) argues that these relations were evermore intensified since “the first successful slave revolution in the Americas occurred in such a profitable European colony” (p. 2). The first of the emerging internal conflicts in nineteenth century Haiti was geo-political and color-based; it was essentially a struggle between “a mulatto, city-based, commercial elite, and a black, rural and military elite” (Nicholls, 1992, p. 8). However, the Mulattoes ruled the country for most of the nineteenth century with the longest reign in all of Haiti's history being Boyer's 25 year term from 1818 to 1843. Paquin (1983) asserts that it was during this long period of Mulatto rule, 36 years including Petion (1807-1818), “that class distinction became crystallized on the basis of

color” (p. 35). Furthermore, Boyer’s legacy was marred by his enforcement of the Rural Code of 1826, which was by all means the most despised tool of domination used by the Mulattoes. The Rural Code, in practice, was a feudal land system that bound peasants to specific plantations and punished them for vagrancy. This was seen by many Blacks as the ultimate attempt by the Mulattoes at dominating the black population and made color an ever-present element of the political game (Paquin, 1983).

Several Haitian historians agree that politics in the post-independence era was characterized by this power struggle between the two elite groups whom were mainly differentiated by skin color and political ideology. Hence, the struggle for domination in this era was not strictly class-based but was much more an issue of two color-based factions of a single class battling for power. The Mulattoes generally espoused European liberal and democratic ideals but felt that these rights should be restricted to a very small population, whereas the Blacks argued for an authoritarian, populist type of government with a strong role for the army (Paquin, 1983). Yet, despite these fundamental differences, Nicholls (1996) contends that “it should be stressed that mulatto and black intellectuals of the nineteenth century agreed that in cultural matters the European pattern of civilization was the one which Haiti should follow” (p. 10), furthermore, Haitian intellectuals in this era still regarded Africa as a “barbarous continent in need of civilization” (p. 6). Hence the political scene was very much imbued with colonial ideologies and the foundations of Haitian politics supported eurocentric ideals of identity, culture and power.

These colonial and eurocentric beginnings heavily impacted the linguistic dilemma in post-independent Haiti. They helped to create and reinforce a coloniality of language within the country by naturalizing and fixing the linguistic divide through geo-political, class and race-

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based distinctions. Though politics in this era did not explicitly show a concern for the language issue, it nevertheless, shaped and set future language policies. In fact, between 1804 and 1915, twelve constitutions were drafted and not one made any mention of a national or official language. So during this era, the internal relations of power were very much based on differentiations of color, class and political ideology but a broader eurocentric ideal kept all that was “French” including language within the domain of the elite intellectual, both Mulatto and Black. Furthermore, these political domains extended to include the government, commerce and education thereby limiting the socio-economic and political functions of the languages within the country.

This era reveals a close engagement with the colonial discourse of racial/ethnic ideologies of power and hence, helped to elevate and maintain the French language to superior status within Haitian society. Language as a tool and a marker in this era served several purposes. For the Mulatto intellectual, the French language was an additive distinction that further aligned them with Western civilization and effectively, disassociated them from their black roots. For the Black intellectual, the French language was a sign of class distinction, which validated his right to rule and lead the masses; it was also an assertion of his intellectual parity with the Mulatto. For the masses, the French language became evermore foreign and elusive as Creole began to define their everyday life experiences and to define them as socio-economic group. Language, identity and power came to signify and delineate the socio-economic groups of Haiti, as French was used within the political sphere as a marker of authority, validation and respect while Creole became a casualty of the power struggle and as such we used to ridicule and discredit political opponents. The latter was often the case with Black presidents such as

Soulouque (1874-1859) who was often the “butt of jokes because of notorious social gaffes” (Paquin, 1983, p. 42) because of his lack of knowledge of French and perceived ignorance.

Within this linguistic framework, the French/Creole dichotomy engendered colonial representations of power based on geographical location (urban/rural), skin color (mulatto/black), socio-political position (ruler/governed) and ultimately, cultural ideology (European/African). During this era, these subject representations were maintained through a heavy engagement with a colonial discourse that validates one group’s superiority over another based on intrinsic values. And these representations of the Other were crucial for maintaining the internal relations of power within the country especially during the tumultuous post-independence era. However, this reveals a distinct contradiction for the Haitian context because while most Haitians saw themselves as “a symbol of black dignity and black power in a world dominated by European Nations” (Nicholls, 1996, p. 41) they nevertheless, espoused eurocentric ideals of civilization. This is reminiscent of Fontaine’s (1978) argument about the linguistic situation of Haiti being “counter-revolutionary” (p. 37). Because though at the time of independence, Mulattoes and Blacks recognized the Whites as their common enemy, they nevertheless, in the post-independence era, tried by all means to closely identify with the social, political and cultural ideals of that shared enemy. The only difference was in the varied degrees of rapprochement and identification whether by skin color, mastery of French language, culture and values. Thus, they effectively took colonial tools away from the Europeans and applied those very same tools within their own society.

But they were not only concerned with the internal relations of power, there was also heavy emphasis in Haiti’s relative position within the world order. Hence, during the post-independence era, Haitian politics was also characterized by a concern with recognition. Haiti’s

foreign relations were an issue for both factions of the elite class and resulted in two major events during the post-independence era: the recognition of Haiti's independence by France in 1825 and later, by the US in 1862. These events are important for the analysis of the coloniality of language because they reflect the government's engagement with the nationalist discourse while revealing the inherent colonial legacy within these courses of action. Furthermore, they shaped our own conceptions regarding our position in the world order and also determined the role that language would play within these relations.

Paquin (1983) describes the struggle for recognition as an obsession on the part of the Mulattoes as "Haitians were craving for legitimacy" (p. 38). Nicholls (1996) contends that Boyer was more interested in acquiring French protection to fend off possible revolts from the black populace. In any case, through the decree of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1825, signed by Charles X, France officially recognized Haiti as an independent government with the condition that the new nation pays an indemnity of 150 million Francs to the French government in five yearly installments (Nicholls, 1996; Metellus, 1996). Threats to occupy a portion of the island if the debt was not repaid in a timely fashion loomed over Haiti for years to come. Historians disagree on when the debt was finally repaid, some accounts claim that it took close to 100 years others contend that it was paid towards the end of the nineteenth century (Metellus, 1996). In any case, this open agreement further increased and multiplied the unequal power relations between Haiti and other 'colonizing' nations. Metellus (1996) argues that "one by one, Germany, Great Britain, France and the United States demanded compensation for their nationals, backed by the threat of armed force" (p. 218) resulting in the inauguration of "Third World debt" (p. 218). Later, on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1862, the U.S. would send its first full-scale envoy to Haiti after Abraham Lincoln famously declared that "If any good reason exists why we should persevere longer in withholding our

recognition of the independence and sovereignty of Hayti and Liberia, I am unable to discern it” (Heinl & Heinl, 2005, p. 206). Of course, it was not long before the U.S. was allowed to establish a naval base on the north coast.

These events effectively delineated a road map for present and future relations of power between Haiti and Western powers. They opened the door to foreign economic and political penetration by these superpowers in a new and unprecedented way. These events effectively marked the beginning of a new era of neo-colonialism in Haiti. As a nation not only had they fought for independence, they later had to ‘purchase’ it and symbolically ‘obtain’ it from it’s former colonizer. This reality reveals the coloniality of power inherent in Haiti/US/France relations and institutes a racialization of power relations and new social and geo-cultural identities based on the principles of a modern/colonial world system. Furthermore, I would like propose that these emerging relations of power were only made possible through a simultaneous engagement with both the colonial and the national discourses and the eurocentric ideologies that bind and define them. This allowed for a seamless and continuous relation of power profoundly informed by racial/ethnic patterns of differentiation between first the White colonists and the Haitian slave and later the national entities of France/US and Haiti. The nation’s independence was a affront to the established colonial system but the narratives and assumptions which supported the system did not disappear with independence rather they were redefined and reconstructed within a new discursive schema, that of ‘postcolonial’ nationalism.

Hence within this schema, language became a crucial tool for maintaining positive relations with foreign nations. In seeking French recognition, it was also argued the Haitian rulers, simultaneously hoped for protection by France (Nicholls, 1996), to guard against possible interventions by the US, Spain, Germany or Great Britain. Language then was a source of

allegiance, deference and identification with one of the Western superpowers. French language then serve both a functional, communicative purpose and a symbolic, illusory role. In the struggle for recognition, the Haitian government sought to redefine its relationship with its former oppressor; they sought to break the colonial chain and build a national bond based on common language, values and culture. However, the latter could never be achieved within the postcolonial nationalist discourse but that did not prevent the Haitian elite of the nineteenth century from trying to reach equal, if not, favorable relations with France. Mastery of language was the most visible sign of one's allegiance and effort at reaching such relations and that privilege was fiercely guarded and maintained by the Mulatto elite. So language in the post-independence Haiti, in terms of external relations of power, took on a role of preservation, allegiance and emerged as a strategic tool for engendering, maintaining and supporting better foreign relations. Finally, the subject representations of French and Creole within this framework were characterized by validity (legitimate/illegitimate) and perceived threat (friend/foe). Paquin (1983) argued that Haiti, at the time of negotiations for recognition, was like a child "having been born out of wedlock" (p. 38). By seeking approval from the West, they sought to legitimize their position in the world order and present themselves as a pleasant neighbor/friend. Language had to be an important means through which they could achieve this goal. By maintaining and mastering the French language, the Haitian elite could claim legitimacy as a former child of France and reclaim or announce its new position as a sibling or friend of France. Creole was thus further marginalized as illegitimate and unfriendly within this system of representation.

Consequently, the pre- and post-independence era of Haiti political history was crucial for shaping the linguistic condition of the country. This era cemented both the internal and external power relations that shaped the government's behavior towards its people and their

**languages.** Internally, the Haitian government was divided through geographical and color based **distinctions**, which resulted in similar differentiations in the language dichotomy. The internal **function** of LIP in this era served to preserve Mulatto hegemony. External governmental power **relations** also shaped the purpose of language for Haitian society by typecasting French as one of **the only remaining**, friendly link with the West. In all, events during this century, revealed a **strong engagement** with eurocentric ideals of both the colonial discourse and the **nationalist discourse**. Similarly, the government's actions revealed blatant continuities with the colonial past and emerging contradictions in the postcolonial reality. As we will now see, these historical events only set the stage for new and reconfigured relations of power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century starting with the US occupation in 1915 to our current constitution of 1987. These eras will reveal continued manipulation of language, identity and power and further elucidate the current state affairs in terms of the government's role in the linguistic condition of present-day Haiti.

#### **B. US Occupation era (1915 – 1934)**

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a crucial and important moment in Haitian history for it was seen by many as a regression into a new form of colonialism, namely US occupation. In drafting the first constitution of Haiti in 1804, Dessalines declared in article 12 that

“No whiteman of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in future acquire any property therein” (1804 Constitution)

This article was to appear in every Haitian constitution, a total thirteen, until 1918, which evidently marked the beginning of a new era of foreign relations for the nation. The US marched into Haiti in July of 1915 and the occupation dragged on for two decades until 1934. Aside from **shaping** a new form of trans-national political rationality for Haiti, it is crucial to also understand **the significance** of this event in shaping Haitian identity both within the nation and **internationally**. Not surprisingly, this period of Haitian history was marked by the emergence of

**staunch** nationalism from Haitians of all colors but we will later see that the effort was very **much** divided from the start. Paquin (1983) asserts that

“the sight of red neck marines patrolling their streets and making no effort to hide their contempt and repugnance for them was a rude awakening. To be occupied by Europeans would be acceptable, a la rigueur; but not by Americans well known for their racial prejudices” (p. 70)

Hence on the one hand, the Mulattoes accustomed to color differentiations within the Haitian society quickly realized that this status did not stand with Americans, whom considered them all as niggers (Nicholls, 1996). Even though the Mulatto were granted an obvious advantage during the occupation through appointments in the highest positions of government including the presidencies, they still lacked political supremacy, and that was most intolerable for this elite group. So the form of nationalism, which emerged during this era, was one where both blacks and mulattoes had common and valid reasons for discontent in the face of American hegemony. Similarly, Nicholls (1996) argues that this nationalist movement was not only concerned with “political liberation” but was more characterized as an “ethnological movement” (p. 152). Hence framing a national identity became the corner stone for a new political rationality. Pauleus Sannon, a Haitian historian, famously stated at an inaugural meeting on Haitian history in 1925 that

“All peoples instinctively go back to the past in order to search in their history for lessons of collective patriotism, for new rules of conduct, whether it be for the purpose of being able better to defend their threatened existence, or for recovering more rapidly from their fall” (Nicholls, 1996, p. 152)

**This** sentiment of the need for collective identity in the face of an identifiable threat allowed for a renewed and unprecedented identification with the country’s African roots, in religion, culture and language within the Black factions of society. The realization that a declaration of **independence** was not enough for securing that liberty was the foundation for this movement; **this reality** quickly catapulted Haiti into what Chatterjee (1986) identifies as a nationalism

“based on culture and tradition” as opposed to one that was “by and large rational rather than emotional” (p. 18). As such, the period of the US occupation experienced a shift in Haiti’s position as a French ‘Orphan’ to that of an African ‘Orphan’ within the emerging movement and specifically within the government discourse. It was difficult not to be reminded of African and slave ancestry when young Haitian men were ‘arrested’, beaten and forced to work in “labour gangs” also known as *corvées* (Gaillard, 1982, p. 220). The brutal tactics of American soldiers were a visible reminder of Haiti’s ancestry and it was on that basis that many black Haitians, whom up until this point had renounced African roots, found a collective nationalist cry (Paquin, 1983; Nicholls, 1996).

However, this so-called nationalist/ethnological movement did not succeed in championing, at least legislatively, the linguistic identity of Haitian society nor did it have an impact on Haitian Mulattoes’ perception of national identity. In fact, the Constitution of 1918, our 14<sup>th</sup> since independence, was the first official document to mention language *and* it declared French as the sole national language of the Haitian people. This assertion is partly attributable to the fact that the “crux of hostility was racial antagonism between the Americans and the Haitian elite” (Paquin, 1983, p. 76). Hence the threat of American hegemony further propelled at least the Mulatto political rationality towards more of European identification. The overall disdain for all that was American served to revive identifications and bonds with France; and accordingly, language was a most strategic tool for achieving this goal, hence the Constitution of 1918. This I will argue makes visible the difficult juncture that all Creole nations, such as Haiti, must come through. It is the point at which they must contend simultaneously with a colonial discourse in light of a revived nationalist discourse. And in Haiti’s case this is where the European/African national identity dichotomy becomes central to the government discourse. And it is particularly a

point of disconnect and contradiction where they had to define a Creole/hybrid national identity and gauge the inherent power relations affiliated with the multiplicity of subjectivities that emerge. In Haiti, the efforts to build such an identity were doomed from the start, first because of the ambiguous (rationale vs. emotional) nature of the nationalist discourse but also thanks to its inherent system of coloniality. The choice between the rational/political (French) and the emotional/cultural (Creole) within this discourse, automatically translated into a choice between the authentic vs. the counterfeit, the powerful vs. the powerless, the enlightened vs. the backward and the eurocentric vs. the subaltern.

The US occupation and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century effectively re/introduced a multiplicity of familiar subjectivities to the Haitian population. These new subject representations were quite reminiscent of the colonial subject schema but took on a new life within the nationalist discourse. This is most accurately reflected in the following excerpt of a report written in 1928 towards the end of the occupation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the current state of affairs in Haiti:

In Haiti a worse situation faced us. That Republic was in chronic trouble, and it as it is close to Cuba the bad influence was felt across the water. Presidents were murdered, governments fled, several time a year. We landed our marines and sailors only when the unfortunate Chief Magistrate of the moment was dragged out of the French Legation, cut into six pieces and thrown to the mob. Here again we cleaned house, restored order, built public works and put governmental operation on a sound and honest basis. We are still there. It is true, however, that in Santo Domingo and especially in Haiti we seem to have paid too little attention to making the citizens of these states more capable of reassuming the control of their own governments. But we have done a fine piece of material work, and the world ought to thank us (Roosevelt, 1928, p. 584).

This sums up in more ways than one the discourse that shaped Haiti's position in the world-historical order and the consequent power relations inherent in that status. First, the nation is characterized as a 'problem' facing the US, then it is framed within a problematized geo-political zone with the suggestion that the entire region suffered from a 'chronic' illness in need of remedy. Then the people are methodologically and categorically portrayed as violent and

barbarous, keeping an unclean house, un-orderly, dishonest, incapable and definitely, still most ungrateful. This statement in effect sums up the totality of Haiti's relationship with the US at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has shaped much of the current discourse on Haiti within the international arena.

As such, the US occupation introduced the country to a new field of subjectivities that of a Third World nation in a constant state of despair, violence and corruption and hence in need of endless monitoring, discipline and interference. This was quite a change from the rebellious, revolutionary black nation that was begging for recognition in the hopes of gaining equal footing in the world order. Haiti's history no longer became one of successful revolution and black unity in the face of European oppression and dominance; instead, its history became one of manifest and prophetic failure. This shift in discourse was attempting to define the Haitian subject one whom could no longer carry that revolutionary and defiant twinkle in his eye. This discursive shift reminded the world that Haiti as a subject had failed and could not succeed on its own. NAACP leader and staunch critic of the US occupation of Haiti, James Weldon Johnson wrote in 1920,

The unfitness of Haitian people to govern themselves has been the subject of propaganda for the last century. Books and pamphlets and articles have been written, and lectures have been delivered many times over to prove that the Haitians ... were steadily retrograding into barbarism. ... Another point in the propaganda ... is the statement that the people are congenitally and habitually lazy. Not long ago I saw a magazine article on Haiti, and one of the illustrations was a picture of a Haitian man lying asleep in the sun, and under it was the title "the Favorite Attitude of Haiti's Citizens (Johnson, 1920, p. 4)

Hence the image of the Haitian citizen was craftily grafted through various discursive tools such as the media and academia. Here it is important to highlight, Foucault's contention that "the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it" (Rabinow, 1982, p. 173). Similarly, President Roosevelt's statement was possible only because of the US relations of power and knowledge in Haiti, which in turn allowed for the

Haitian subject to emerge as knowable, describable, an immutable subject/object, effectively an 'Other'.

This moment in Haitian history is crucial for understanding not only the current contradictions within the society but also the difficulty with reversing or transforming these challenges. The implications of this event for shaping the language, identity and power dynamics of Haiti is manifold. For one, it introduced French and Creole into the realm of the rational and the emotional. Within the ethnological movement, Creole came to symbolize our heritage, culture and our souls; whereas French continued to hold much of its previous role as the rational, intellectual and worldly language choice. The major shift in the linguistic schema came in the new categorization and open acknowledgement of Creole's value and relationship to Haitian identity. In the post-independence era, French was used as a divisive tool within the society and maintain socio-political power for an elite group. The US occupation forced a re-evaluation of this tactic to some extent, and introduced language in the Haitian context as a unifying tool and a cultural identity marker. However, external power relations made the linguistic condition a much more difficult issue. Haitian identity, through this event, became marred as incapable, inferior and Other. Hence the inherent contradictions not only in Haitian identity formation but also in the development of Creole as a marker for that subjective reality. In part this further promulgated the French language and identity as strategically more counter-hegemonic in the face of Americanism. However, the US occupation marked a salient moment of self and Other representations clashing in the face of a postcolonial discourse of nationalism, which was still wrought with schematic continuities of the not so distant colonial past. In building towards an understanding of the coloniality of language in Haiti, I would argue that the period between 1915 – 1930 marked the peak of this historic formation. It is at this point, that the coloniality of

language emerges as emotionally, culturally meaningful and contingent and is thus made most visible as a source of identity and power.

### C. The Second Independence Era

Because the US occupation had such a profound impact on Haitian history, identity and policy, the country emerged in the 1940s as a newly liberated nation. The aftermath of the difficult impasse was manifold for the Haitian nation. The Second Independence era marked the emergence of the Creole language as a tool of resistance, revolution and subversion as the mother tongue slowly infiltrated an increasing number of socio-political fields and institutions such as the media. However, this era also experienced the concretization of functional role and of language in the Haitian context with increased manipulation of French and Creole at the government level. Hence, in this section, I will elaborate on the politico-linguistic rationales of Elie Lescot (1941-1946), the Griots movement (1946) and Duvalier (1957-1971) for their important and lasting influences on the language condition.

Elie Lescot's (1941-1946) presidency was characterized as the "most exclusive Mulatto regime" (Paquin, 1983, p. 82) of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; he was also coincidentally, the last mulatto to hold that post in Haiti's current history. In those years, Mulattoes held unsurpassed political supremacy and the "question de couleur" (question of color) became the "paramount issue of Lescot's regime, to the exclusion of all others" (p. 82). This was in many ways a return to the old Haitian politics; the 1940s experienced a time of 'business as usual' in terms of maintained and increased antagonism between Blacks and Mulattoes. Lescot's blatant discrimination of Blacks kept them out of positions of representation, specifically in terms of foreign service because he did not believe that the Blacks were sophisticated enough for the diplomatic world. Furthermore, he was convinced that Whites would feel less threatened by the light skin of the Mulattoes

(Paquin, 1983). His presidency was thus marked with increased relations with the United States. Heintl & Heintl (2005) suggest that Lescot's 1943 trip which took him to Montreal, Ottawa, New York and finally to the White House as a personal guest of President Roosevelt was "one of the most impressive and distinguished and surely the grandest, foreign trip ever made by a sitting president of Haiti" (p. 491). Consequently, during his president American hegemony prevailed in politics, education and business methods. Lescot effectively sought to align American interests with Haitian interests and was described as a "Haitian version of an American Pro-consul... Overseer of American interests... the protégé of Washington... [and] as American Governor General of Haiti" (Paquin, 1983, p. 82-83). Lescot in other words built a political rationale that was heavily based on racial/ethnic differentiations of power both internally in terms of Mulatto supremacy and externally in terms of American deference.

However, his regime was the first to attempt a move towards standardizing the Creole language. It was during Lescot's presidency that two American linguists, Frank Laubach and Ormond McConnell, were brought in to develop a Creole orthography. Hence, it is during this presidency that the Creole debate definitively emerged as a political concern. The Laubach method, as it was generally known, was vehemently rejected by the Haitian elite, whom felt that it was not close enough to the French language. Fontaine (1978) suggests that the dominant bourgeoisie at the time did not conceive Creole as a method for reaching the masses, rather it was to be "only a temporary instrument for the transition from illiteracy to written French" (p. 41). This reveals a political rationale that acknowledged the widespread use and position of Creole but nevertheless, classified the language as stepping stone or a watered-down version of the superior French. In any case, Lescot's "mulatification" (Nicholls, 1996, p.166) of government coupled with the threat of American hegemony provided a rich ground from which

the 'negritude' movement could emerge. Also known as the *Griots* movement, Haiti in 1946 and later with the rise of Duvalier in the 1950s, experienced a revived identification with its African roots, which I mentioned had begun the ethnological movement during the US occupation.

This period would later be referred to as "La Belle Epoque" (The good years); it was a brief but important moment in Haiti's history when the arts, music, letters and the economy flourished. Paquin (1983) described it as "an incredible display of fireworks" (p. 89) and no facet of Haitian life was left untouched. The Nation at this time appeared to be reacting or emerging from an identity crisis, which propelled the search for the redefinition of Haitian identity and roots. This movement was in part due to a "growing colour and class consciousness on the part of the black middle class" (Nicholls, 1996, p. 190) coupled with a "social and national explosion [of] Black power" (Paquin, 1983, p. 93). This period was significant in Haiti's history because it set a new course for Haitian politics and allowed for the emergence of several Black leaders outside of the typical elite class. For instance, for the first time in Haiti's history, the Washington ambassador post went to a Black man and several progressive laws were enacted to protect middle class workers, which had also been unheard of in Haitian politics (Paquin, 1983). However, one of the most significant undertakings of the *Griots* or negritude movement was the 'development' of a Black legend of Haiti's past. Within this historical perspective, Toussaint and Dessalines were recast as the champions of the Haitian Revolution whom fell pray to Mulatto conspiracy. This black discourse sought to represent and denounce the Mulattoes as "non-authentiques" (Heinl & Heinl, 2005, p. 498) and consequently, non-Haitian. Understanding the significance of this movement is crucial for understanding the evolution of Haitian identity. Trouillot (1995), a Haitian anthropologist, suggests that "the past does not exists independently from the present. ... The past – or more accurately, pastness - is a position" (p. 15). This

assertion effectively describes the stance of the *Griots*; in many ways, their contention for authenticity and power had to be grounded in a historical narrative that validated their position. Hence, Dessalines became the “first Haitian Socialist” (Nicholls, 1996, p. 194) and Ogé, a Mulatto who fought and died for independence, became a the “symbol of affranchi class consciousness and of mulatto colour prejudice” (p. 194). In any case, to the *Griots*, building a strong Black Nation required a strong Black history, and this legend was put forth in direct opposition to the Mulatto legend of Haitian history.

Consequently, this period was also marked by an increased utilization of Creole at various levels. Fontaine (1978) asserts that in 1946 the first Creole-speaking media professionals began to appear. Because that year was one of revolutionary ideas and ambitions, many of the middle class politicians began to acknowledge the value of Creole for mobilizing the support of the masses in their confrontation with the Mulatto, and French-speaking elite. Similarly, Nicholls (1996) highlights that during this negritude movement, politicians were able to use “the instruments of government – particularly the educational system – as a means of propagating their ideas for the first time since 1915” (p. 191). This period hence marked an important shift in Haitian politics; for the first time in over a century, Haitian politicians were directly addressing the masses. Up until this point, the elite class, both Mulatto and Black, had been mainly engulfed in a color-based struggle for power and only made half-hearted at directly engaging the masses. This period thus must be understood within the context of a changing class structure in Haiti and the emergence of a black middle class as politically active and viable. It paved the way for the rise of a black middle class champion, Duvalier and also allowed for him to be the first President in Haitian history to ever make his inaugural speech in Creole (Heinl & Heinl, 2005).

Between 1946, which marked the end of Mulatto political supremacy, and 1957, which saw the rise of a *Griot* President in Duvalier, the Creole language was reborn and recast as the authentic subversive voice of Haitians. This period again was crucial for shaping the linguistic schema of the country mainly in terms of setting and framing a better environment for future legislature targeting Creole. In any case, during this era, the Creole language was effectively introduced to the political sphere as a valuable tool for asserting a revived, Africanized, and newly revolutionized Black identity. It is worth mentioning also that this era experienced a revived identification with the Vodun roots of Haitian society. During the US occupation and up to Lescot's presidency, the Catholic Church and the government supported an anti-superstition campaign; however, from an ideological perspective, superstition often meant "the collection of religious beliefs and practices which came from Africa" (Nicholls, 1996, p. 182). This of course caused considerable controversy within the nation and within the emerging negritude perspective. Hence at this time two distinct socio-political ideologies were made visible. The negritude ideology advocated for an African-based Haitian culture that would embrace Vodun, Creole and the political power of the masses. And the former nationalist ideology sought a French-based Haitian culture that would abide by Catholicism, the French language and maintain political power in the hands of the most educated, capable and more enlightened individuals (Nicholls, 1996). However, the reality lied somewhere in between the two, for all Haitians. Just as the Creole language exists at the intersection or murgence of French and African languages, so does Haitian identity in relation to its mother tongue. The French/African dichotomy has been at the core of Haitian identity debate since 1804 and this period only made it evermore salient in the lives of Haitian individuals.

However, with the Griots' ascension to political power, the Creole language enjoyed a relational increase in status. Particularly through Duvalier's regime, whom according to Heinl & Heinl (2005) was "deeply steeped in the history and folk culture of Haiti and was committed to the proposition that Haiti should wipe away its French veneer and proudly acknowledge its African origins" (p. 540). Though his legacy as a President would be marred by dictatorial fear and repression, his ascension to power nevertheless, symbolized a change in the political and linguistic schema of the country. His presidency also achieved to alienate and isolate Haiti's foreign relations. One small but meaningful concession for language happened with the Constitution of 1964, which stipulated that "the law will determine the cases and circumstances in which the use of Creole can be permitted and recommended in order to safeguard the material and moral interests of the citizens who do not speak French very well" (Article 35, 1964 Constitution). This was the first Haitian Constitution to mention Creole and Creole-speaking citizens, and it was interestingly Haiti's 20<sup>th</sup> Constitution since Independence. However, Fontaine (1978) highlights that it took fifteen years for "the operational law to come into being" (p. 44).

The current constitution of 1987 stipulates in Article 5 that "All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic". This marks quite an advancement at least in the legislative acknowledgement of the Creole but as we have seen throughout this chapter, the journey has been tumultuous one. This Constitution emerged at the end of harsh dictatorial rule marred with fear, aggression and abuse; it is the Constitution of the newly 'democratic' Haiti. However, because the historical construction of Creole and Creole identity has mainly been shaped through Eurocentric ideologies of power; the

language still has a long way to go in achieving socio-political parity with French in the Haitian context.

#### **D. Politics and the Coloniality of Language**

In exploring these three historical political eras, I wanted to elucidate on how the political rationale of the periods have shaped the language condition of Haiti. From Post-Independence to the US Occupation and finally the Second Independence, political parties and rulers have built a French/Creole dichotomy that served as a divisive marker of class and race, and consequently, of Haitian identity. Language as marker within the political rationale was mainly used to differentiate those who were able, educated and enlightened to lead the country at the expense of the Creole-speaking masses. It was a prominent marker of the Mulatto elite class. Within this political framework, French was represented as sophisticated, diplomatic, non-threatening and was used as tool to politically exclude the masses and disenfranchise them. Creole on the other hand was represented as crude, primitive, unfriendly and subversive, and hence useful at least during the later era for countering Mulatto hegemony and mobilizing the masses. But this context, Creole also emerged as the language of conflict, anger and revolution.

The political legacy of Haitian mentality and system of representation is manifold. Paquin (1983) contends that the Haitian politician suffers from “an overriding and constant feeling of “sauve qui peut” (of panic)”, therefore, he is “not community minded. He does not believe in collective effort” (p. 228). It is true that most of Haiti’s political history has been marred by instability and insecurity but is it just another tenet of our colonial legacy? Hypolite Pierre (2006) convincingly argues that “fighting for one’s freedom in the slavery context is clearly an issue of right against wrong. ... The spirit of consensus from that point on, never took roots in our political culture” (p. 3). Based on these accounts, the fight for Independence could

count as the only collective accomplishment of the Haitian people but even our history, which is divided into a Mulatto and Black legend of leadership, reveals no such common or collective revolutionary Haitian consciousness. Here again, Chatterjee (1986) is useful in pointing out that "the question is therefore not one of taking a moral position with respect to nationalism qua nationalism, but one of judging its probable historical consequences" (p. 18). This assertion is useful in judging the Haitian struggle for a political national identity since independence for it highlights the manipulative and strategic tenets of nationalism as a discourse. In Haiti, as well as in other post-colonial states, language has become one such strategic national tool for constructing and shaping identity and informing power relations within the society.

The legacy of colonialism was quite evident in the political rationale of the mentioned eras and resulted in fixating the language condition within a eurocentric power structure. The political and class configurations of Haiti created a coloniality of language that continues to differentiate French and Creole in meaningful ways in today's society. Color politics became entrenched with language politics, hence the coloniality of the former translated into a similar condition for the latter. Furthermore, through an active engagement with both the colonial and nationalism discourse, Haitian politics made visible the inherent contradictions that exist in asserting and constructing a postcolonial national identity. The pre-existing and dichotomous colonial relations of power between the European and the African created a narrow and difficult platform from which to build the Creole Haitian identity. The inherent value of these generic locations had been fixed in the colonial discourse and still existed within the nationalism discourse. Thus the historical consequence of Haiti's engagement with nationalism/colonialism was the emergence, construction and maintenance of their Creole, Africanized mother tongue as politically irrelevant, subversive, heretic and Other.

## V. An Educational Perspective on the Coloniality of Language

Exploring the coloniality of language in Haiti requires a similar analysis of the education discourse within the country. The education system was paramount in shaping the language condition of the country for all the obvious reasons but also through less subservient means. This was done through the careful constitution of rigid dichotomies within the system in terms of differentiating the relationship between the elite and the masses, the urban and the rural, the mulatto and the black, the Catholic and the Vodouist and ultimately, the Francophone and the Creolophone. Similarly to the previous chapter, I will explore the educational tactics and strategies of the post-independence era (1804-1944) and the modern era. Each of these eras will reveal distinct ideologies regarding the role of education in Haitian society and its functional role in constructing, supporting and reproducing the coloniality of language.

### A. Post-Independence Era

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the post-independence era was an unstable period wrought with class and color struggles for power and a concern with building equitable and/or favorable relations with our former colonizer, France. What this meant for the education system of that era was that despite a stipulation in the Constitution of 1804 that “a public school shall be established in each of the military divisions” (Article 5 – my translation), not much was achieved in realizing that goal. Part of the difficulty stemmed from the staggering fact that “in 1804, when Haiti declared its independence from France, there was not one school in Haiti” (Pierre, 2007, p. 1). This is understandable based on the fact that Haiti was a primarily a French slave colony as opposed to a settler colony. Furthermore, Spring (1998) contends that French colonial education policies were particularly divisive and exclusionary. He argues that the withholding of educational opportunities was “a method of controlling indigenous populations”

(p. 22). Haiti was no exception to that rule, Trouillot (2007) reports that correspondence during the pre-independence era reveal a concern for keeping the slaves in absolute ignorance. In fact the Code Noir (Black Code) of 1685, clearly stipulated that slaves in French colonies did not have a right to education except for religious instruction (Heinl & Heinl, 2005). Hence, during this period, education was viewed as the privilege of a very small few, usually the white colonizers and in some instances, their mulatto children whom were often sent to France to study.

Therefore, though education at independence appeared, at least legislatively, to be a priority, this concern did not translate into direct action on the part of the political leaders. The colonial legacy of an elitist and exclusionary view of education was still salient during the post-independence era. This was revealed particularly during the thirty-six years of mulatto rule under Petion and Boyer from 1807 to 1843. The educational achievements during this period were both minimal and stagnant but they had a profound impact on the future of education in Haiti. The education system under Petion was described as “private, semi-organized and absolutely elitist” (Trouillot, 2007, p.36). Thanks to a relative stability during Petion’s reign, several private primary institutions emerged mainly to serve to the small elite class within the urban centers; according to Trouillot (2007), there were no public primary institutions to be found during Petion’s presidency. However, he did allow for the formation of a *Lycée Nationale* by a French educator, Ballette in 1816. Education at the *Lycée* was very much restricted to an elite few since most could not afford the cost of attendance. The curriculum was based on the French educational system and was taught by French professors. The language of instruction was French but English, Latin and other modern languages were also taught as subjects, as well as math, music, French history, astronomy and religion (Trouillot, 2007). Completing the image of the

Lycée was a focus on military training and harsh corporeal and psychological punishments. Common punishments of the times, based on the schools' mandates, were the use of a whip and solitary confinement in a holding cell with a reduction of food privileges, for instance, a student could be confined to only bread and water for days at a time. The education system during this period was also marked by strict control of the students' behavior and attitude towards the rulers. Hence educators were encouraged to mold model citizens whom only held the deepest "sentiments of gratitude, respect and affection" (Trouillot, 2007, p. 75) for the current political leader.

In all, the emerging characteristics of the education system during the post-independence era revealed an elitist system aimed at educating a small minority of the upper class. Also, the system was primarily a private endeavor as the government, despite clear articulations in the constitutions of the time for free, public education, completely disregarded these responsibilities. Furthermore, the system during this period was exemplified as a site of discipline and punishment as opposed to learning and socio-emotional development. This system primarily focused on urban centers as the only sites in need of formal education at the expense of the majority of the Haitian population living the rural areas. The devastating results of these educational policies are reflected in the following educational census in 1844:

Population	1,104,042
School aged children	331,216
Net Enrollment (public & private)	2,000
Net Enrollment Percentage	0.6%
	(Trouillot, 2007, p. 82)

This reveals a system that is by no means 'national' despite it being labeled and promulgated as such. And because of its private, elite, urban and political function, education in this period became defined through class and color. As a marker of such distinctions, education took on a

divisive role within the newly formed nation and was thus used, similarly to French colonial policies, to keep the majority of the Haitian people outside of the learning system. Thus the leaders of time were still quite enmeshed within the colonial discourse and used these colonial tools within their own administration. In fact, Boyer (1818 – 1843), according to Trouillot (2007) once declared that “*Semer l’instruction, c’est semer la révolution*” (To spread education is to spread revolution) (p. 60). This colonial discourse continued within Haiti the tradition of marginalizing the racial Other but using access to education and language as barriers and markers of socio-economic status.

Through this system, education became the only means through which Haitian students could gain access to the French language. And based on these arrangements, less than 1% of the population would be privileged enough to acquire the language. Hence from the very beginning, Creole did not hold an value within the education system and it fact, the language became representative of all that was ‘outside’ of the education system. This effectively then served to symbolically bind and merge the ties between education and the French language. There were no other avenues for acquiring the language since it was not spoken outside of the school, business and government settings, which were heavily regulated to keep the majority out. Fontaine (1978) effectively argues that “the connection with language [and class] is clear when one realizes that mastery of French is closely correlated with education and, therefore, with class” (p. 33). Consequently, this is reflective of a close engagement with a colonial discourse, in that the education system was build on a system of difference, which relegated the Other to subject positions as inferior, uneducated, rural and Creolophone. By doing so, the elites and rulers of the countries, effectively closed the circle of color, class, education and language and created a society that was very much defined through eurocentric and colonial categories of difference.

Though much of the Haitian education system remained unchanged for 150 years after independence, another important event in the post-independence era marked and changed the system in meaningful ways. This variation came with the signing of the 1860 Concordat between the Haitian government and the Vatican in Rome. Based on this Concordat, religious orders would be sent to the Haiti to ensure the spiritual development of the Haitian people as well as their education. The first of such schools were opened in 1864-1865 in the Capital of Port-au-Prince. According to Civan (1994), the Concordat allowed for much of the Haitian education system to fall “under the control of the Roman Catholic Church” (p. 19). These schools were semi-private, in that the Vatican financially supported the clergy/educators, and the Haitian government bore some of the other school costs. The schools were of course modeled after the French system of education with a focus on classical studies, which emphasized literature. However, what was most characteristic of this shift in the Haitian education was the further alienation of the schools with the Haitian people and their needs. As the religious orders came and opened new schools, the image of the educator/teacher increasingly came to signify a foreign, French, Catholic and White individual. Civan (1994) suggests that

Not surprisingly, these clerics promoted an attachment to France and a respect for all that was French. At the same time, they emphasized the backwardness of all that was Haitian and denigrated Haitian capacity for self-rule. Since the urban elite had the most access to education – few priests [and nuns] went to the rural areas to educate peasants – this attitude served to widen the social gap between the upper and lower classes (p. 19).

In short, these educators were not Haitian and probably did not understand the culture and as Trouillot (2007) suggests often thought that they were providing a great service by divorcing the students from their Haitian and African roots. She also agrees that due to the limited capacity of the government to build schools, the religious orders managed to take hold of most of the primary school system and some of the secondary.

The impact on the language situation was detrimental because through the Concordat's educational goal, Creole and all that was considered Haitian/African based, was strictly and absolutely cast as inferior, backward and unwanted. This sentiment was aggravated by the fact that the foreign educators did not speak the language and hence, could only communicate with students through French. These schools, thus sternly protected the sanctity of the French language in education and students were often punished for speaking Creole on school grounds (Fontaine, 1978). This shift in the education system removed any consideration there might have been about bringing Creole into the classroom and the education system became evermore bound to the French language. This is despite the fact that the Constitutions of 1843 and 1867 both stated in articles 31 and 29 respectively: "the languages used within the country should be taught in the schools". However, it was not the first time a legislative claim did not translate into action in Haiti, notwithstanding the fact that up until 1918 there was no stated official or national language. Being that the language use articulation was quite broad and unspecified, it allowed for private and semi-private institutions to claim any language of instruction, and in almost all cases the choice was French with a couple choosing English.

This increasing French and Catholic influence on the Haitian education system would set the tone for the next 100 years; effectively implanting a foreign and eurocentric hegemonic system within the young black nation. The Concordat and its consequences introduced schooling as an increasingly alienating experience for the Haitian child and reinforced eurocentric values regarding the production and location of knowledge and power. Within this education system, knowledge came to be valued as a foreign artifact and power came to be signified through the acquisition or rapprochement to that source of knowledge. Furthermore, the language dichotomy was exponentially widened with the arrival of Francophone, and predominantly anti-Creole,

education workforce. Hence, the practices of the first rulers of the post-independence era coupled with the advent of French religious orders served to set the tone for the development of an elitist, urban, foreign and French education system. Fontaine (1978) states conclusively that

by and large, the effect, if not the goal, of the education system is not to educate the largest number of people but rather to weed out the largest number of undesirables and squeeze through a French-speaking elite of *philosophes* (p. 35)

This statement illustrates what the education system accomplished during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The goal to 'weed' out individuals is reflected in the fact that in 1944, only 9.27% of school-aged children were enrolled in school compared to 0.6% in 1844 that represents a less than 10% increase in a century! Hence 140 years after independence, the Haitian education system was still excluding and marginalizing the majority of the population and schools remained a foreign and unattainable goal for most. As we will see later, efforts to fundamentally change the system did not happen until the 1970s.

In conclusion, the education system of the post-independence era up until the end of the US occupation did not reflect a philosophical break with the colonial discourse, on the contrary, many of the ideologies within the discourse came through and imbued the system as a whole. Even as Haitians struggled to create a national identity in light of their position as a new nation, their educational ideals remained tied France as the center and absolute source of knowledge. Furthermore, the education system aside from providing an alienating experience, was also characterized as an unfriendly and disciplinary institution where students had to unlearn their Haitian religion, language and culture. Language, identity and power within this system was signified through the close relationship between the elite and access to education and language. For instance, Pierre (2007) argues that "language, not color, is the true class marker in Haiti" (p. 1). This is due to the fact that the Haitian education system successfully accomplished the task of merging class and/or social status with access to education and language so that they became

system is elitist and negligent of individual differences, it only serves a minority whom too often abandon [leave] the country” (Reforme, 1982, p. 5 – my translation). The reform also elaborated on specific linguistic objectives:

1. The promotion of the Creole language
2. An easier eradication of illiteracy – An easier transition into written French
3. The study of Creole and its literature and the diffusion of national culture
4. The possibility, in the long term, to teach any discipline in Creole, at all academic levels (Trouillot, 2007, p. 184 – my translation)

These objectives reveal the need to promote Creole both as a language and as a symbol of national identity. Among other things, the reform proposed a pedagogical shift from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered one. It allowed for automatic promotion from grade 1 through grade 4 as well as an elaborated list of capacity objectives for the social, emotional, psychological and cultural development of the student (Reforme, 1982). However, they would soon realize that this was easier said than done. Opposition to this reform came from several factions of society despite its child-centered approach to learning (Trouillot, 2007). The crux of the debate was the Creole issue particularly because to many education had become synonymous with French language acquisition. And on the other hand, Creole, despite its upgraded status as a written and formalized language, was still viewed as belonging ‘outside’ any system aimed at educating the Haitian youth. Part of the problem stemmed also from the perception that the government was “promoting education in a language that [had] been identified as an inhibitor to success” (Lherisson, 2000, p. 5).

The conflict emerged as one between the need to support and build a strong national identity founded in our Creole/African roots and the need to ‘develop’ and succeed as a nation.

In Haitian society, the meaning of success had been long associated with acquisition of the French language, social mobility and the ability to travel outside the country as a Francophone, and hence, refined and civilized individual. Creole had no functional role in this image of success and development, and even less value. Even though this reform was supported by the *Griots* movement of the 60s, it did not go far enough in challenging perceptions of the academic value of Creole. The education system for more than a century had been canonized as a site of French indoctrination as opposed to one of socialization and learning. This reform was proposing to reverse the role and meaning of education on all levels, but unfortunately, it only made visible the ambiguities within the linguistic situation of the country, primarily by revealing the strong aversion to linking Creole and education within the middle and lower classes (Lherisson, 2000). Therefore, even though the government gave approval for the use of Creole in the classroom in 1979, as late as the 1980s, there was still some doubt as to whether this should happen, partly because “implementation of government approval was not wholeheartedly carried out” (Haiti: Creole, 2006, p. 2).

However, there was a breakthrough in 1987 with the recognition of Creole as an official and national language alongside French. Article 5 of the constitution of 1987 states that “All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic”. This statement again represents the ambiguity of the situation where Creole is represented as a unifying language constitutive of Haitian identity with the assumed knowledge that the same could not be said for French. In any case, since the passing of this law, not much progress has been done in reversing or equalizing the functional role of both languages within the school system. For instance, many educators still argue for curriculum development and faster publishing Creole materials (Haiti: Creole, 2006) while others still claim that “there is a

persistent disregard for the strategic revamping of the educational system as it relates to promoting the native language of Haiti” (Pierre, 2007, p.2). In any case, history will reveal whether this was the turning point for the promotion of Creole to its rightful place in Haitian society because current conditions still reveal strong continuities with the not so distant past. A full implementation of this constitutional law will require a complete transformation of the purpose, role and function of the education system in Haiti for it still maintains several traces of the characteristics that defined it during the post-independence era. For instance, according to the 2003 World Bank educational report only 8% of the school system is public while the remaining 92% are private, tuition-based and predominantly religious based. But these capacity and resource issues are only part of the struggle for Haiti’s education system and in the end, most of the timidity involved with support for Creole language in schools revolves predominantly around the issue of Haitian identity and the difficulty with reversing the privileged position of French within the society.

### **C. Education and the Coloniality of Language**

In investigating these two historical eras of Haiti’s education system, I wanted to reveal the role and function of education in constructing and maintaining the coloniality of language. Schools, during the post-independence era, only served a small minority of wealthy individuals in the major cities of the country. Furthermore, education became synonymous with para-military discipline and foreign indoctrination. The modern era brought about some efforts to redefine education within the country as accessible to all and as a tool for social equity. However, these efforts had limited success in addressing the linguistic and educational challenge of Haiti, particularly, because of the system’s infiltration into all aspects of Haitian society.

Consequently, the language, identity and power relationship becomes salient and historically contingent within the educational system of social reproduction and representation. The historical eras reveal a careful manipulation of language as a means to exclude and differentiate class identity. Lherisson (2000) clearly describes this phenomenon when she highlights that “French language drips easily and flawlessly from the lips of the educated and elite Haitians. Whereas their uneducated brethren stumble painfully through a conversation in French” (p. 4). Hence, French language was a visible and unavoidable marker of class and education level and it also translated into inherent power relations. In fact, the language dualism which exist in post-colonial Haiti reveals staggering continuities with the colonial linguistic pattern. And I will argue that these continuities were systematically reproduced and maintained in large part through the education system, which allowed and provided for a constitutive and inextricable relationship between French language, class, knowledge and power.

Another consequence of the education system on the coloniality of language is the legitimization of power and identity both within the country and outside. The foreign characteristic of the system and curriculum allowed first for the equation of knowledge and power with exteriority. No value was placed on varied forms of local knowledge as a source of power within the education system. Secondly, this source of knowledge being fixated as a foreign acquisition further legitimized the status of the educated elite within the country and therefore, allowed for unchallenged claims of authority and superiority within this class. These circumstances, in effect, blurred the irrationality behind such a racialized system of power of relations and served to naturalize Haitian perceptions of knowledge and power within a eurocentric value pattern. This was effectively revealed in the strong opposition to reform from the middle and lower classes because they believed that learning French was the only means

through which “they could escape the poverty trap of Haitian rural peasantry” (Haiti: Creole, 2006, p.1). In other words, the education system and language were not only means for social mobility but also means of detachment and alienation from present realities and identities. In all, education in Haiti has had an influential impact on the coloniality of language mainly by providing a system for reproducing and maintain unequal linguistic power relations and naturalizing the socio-economic hierarchy based on eurocentric forms and sources of knowledge and power.

## **VI. On the Coloniality of French/Creole in Haiti**

My objective in this research project so far has been two-fold: the first goal was to develop an analytic tool for understanding language in society and the second was a historical investigation into the socio-linguistic dualism of Haitian society. Hence, my first chapter proposed a postcolonial conceptual framework that sought to understand the relationship between language, identity and power through two distinct and historically contingent projects: the colonial and the postcolonial. This conceptual framework allowed me to arrive at a specific theoretical tool of analysis, namely the Coloniality of Language, which then guided my inquiry into the Haitian context. With the coloniality of language as a theoretical and analytical lens, I then explored the discursive institutions of the government and education systems and looked for evidence of coloniality or eurocentric patterns of power relations and their impact on language in the country. In doing so, my goal has been to make visible coloniality of the French/Creole linguistic dichotomy in Haiti based on the country’s colonial past and postcolonial past/present.

In conclusion, an examination of the coloniality of language in Haiti required that I search for discursive evidence of eurocentric patterns of domination and representation within the government and education systems. It required that I look for traces of these patterns in

constructing and reinforcing the French/Creole dichotomy and elaborate on the meaning and consequences of such ideologies. Thus the following findings reflect both visible and not so visible relations of power with the linguistic schema of Haiti and will be useful deriving the Coloniality of language in the Haitian context, in order to elaborate the broader social implications of this research.

## **A. Key Findings**

### **1. The French/Creole dichotomy is grounded in racial/ethnic ideologies of power**

One of the main threads of this research was to trace colonial ideologies as they emerged in new and 'repackaged' discourses such as nationalism and development. In examining the Haitian context, I found that the dichotomous relationship, which placed French in a superior position to Creole, could easily be traced to our colonial history. In the post-independence era, French retained its position as the language of the 'master' and hence the language of power. However, the power structure of both the colonial and the post-independence era, was essentially a racialized one whereby a small elite of Whites and Mulattoes, respectively, lead the country and spoke French. The underlying ideology that has survived to the present is one whereby French is opposed to Creole as a superior, White, civilized and privileged language of a few. The dichotomy, by quality of being an oppositional relation of power, allows for no neutral space of meaning and thus naturalizes and fixates differentiated qualitative values to the languages. Within this dichotomy, all that was affiliated with French enjoyed a rapprochement with the European race as opposed to Creole and its roots in the Black/African race. And since, the colonial project had effectively deployed and canonized the unequal power relations between these races, the stage was set for a seamless translation of this racial hierarchy onto the linguistic

patterns of these generic racial categories. In all, the French/Creole dichotomy creates unequal power relations within Haitian society primarily on the basis of racial/ethnic ideologies of power.

2. Language, Identity and Power can not be conceptualized as separate categories in Haiti

Understanding the language dichotomy in Haiti presupposes an awareness of the inherent power relations involved. Hence, this second finding supports the first in affirming and confirming the impact of language in Haitian society. In other words, Haitian language politics is inseparable from Haitian identity politics because of the power relations that shape and define them. To ignore this relationship and treat these categories as distinct social formations is to vastly underestimate and misinterpret their roles in shaping Haitian reality as one coherent, constitutive and historically contingent unit. Furthermore, separating these categories effectively blurs what exists at the intersections. In this case, the 'what' is a eurocentric narrative of knowledge and power based on racial differentiation. Both the government and the education system were fundamental in constructing and binding this relationship so that the Haitian individual's language ability and capacity immediately conveyed his/her subject position, role and power in society.

3. Language is the true marker of socio-economic class in Haitian society

This contention builds on the previous argument for understanding LIP in Haiti, and further elucidates the linguistic schema of the country. In fact, it is in large part due to the tight interrelation of LIP that this statement can hold true as a key finding of this study. The socio-historical investigation of this project revealed in many ways that language capacity was not only limited to a small class and color-based minority but that the education system allowed for the systematic reproduction of this social stratification based on language. A powerful individual, meaning in a high government position, can still be made to feel inferior if he/she does not have

a handle on the French language. We saw this in the way that President Soulouque (1847-59) was ridiculed for his language handicap. Hence, language and class are inextricably tied in Haiti with the former in many cases overriding or predetermining the latter. So that language acquisition could provide some social mobility while belonging to an upper class with low or no French ability could exclude you from certain social and/or political class-based activities. Hence, language provides the final stamp of approval and confirmation ones status and potential future in Haitian society.

4. *French continues to play a foreign and colonizing role in Haitian society*

This research project reveals the continued unsuccessful attempts for taking ownership of the French language in the country. It also reveals that French has mainly been used as a tool of exclusion and marginalization as opposed to communication. In fact, I am contending that French no longer has any value as a communicative, linguistic tool within the Haitian context; instead, the language remains solely as a marker of identity, social status and power. From this perspective, French's role as a linguistic apparatus has in fact *decreased* since its use during the colonial era. Thus its persistence in the Haitian context is solely based on its dominant social status via Creole, its Other. It is foreign still because less than 10% of the population is functionally bi-lingual in French and Creole while all Haitians speak Creole fluently. And it plays a colonizing role still because it is still used as tool of repression, exclusion and domination in the Haitian context, especially through the education system. In short, French has completely **shed** its linguistic purpose in Haiti and is now reified as a foreign, superior and colonizing object of power.

5. *Creole is affiliated with various racialized/colonized subject positions*

Language in Haiti, as I have tried to show, is part of a larger system of representation and subjectification that creates identities based on eurocentric and colonial ideologies of power. Through this socio-historical investigation, I wanted to directly engage with the subject positions that have characterized the Creole language. As I mentioned earlier, by virtue of being a dichotomous relationship, the French/Creole pattern of differentiation has deployed and canonized various representations of Otherness onto Creole. Since within this system, French serves as a superior norm, Creole then absorbs all the oppositional views and positions the dichotomy has to offer. What I have tried to show throughout this research is the consistency with which Creole has represented the Slave, African, Black, Uncivilized, Subversive, Rural, Uneducated, Heretic, Unfit to rule and Backward Other. These subject positions emerged at various times during the various discursive periods but they, most importantly, have their origins in the eurocentric discourse of colonialism. Hence, much of the difficulty with reversing some of the perceptions and identities linked to the Creole language stem from the deeply rooted (ir)rationalities of the colonial/imperial project. In any case, these subjective realities are still salient in the Haitian society and represent a major part of the struggle for redefining Haitian identity and Creole on new terms.

**B. A Grounded theory: The Coloniality of the French/Creole dichotomy**

Since this is a grounded theory research project, these findings all essentially serve as tenets for supporting a theory on the coloniality of language for the Haitian context. Based on my tool of analysis and the collected data, I am proposing that the linguistic condition of Haiti is predominately the result of a coloniality of the French/Creole language dichotomy. With this assertion, I am arguing that the socio-linguistic dichotomy is founded on a dichotomous value system based on race-based differentiation. This theory advances that language, identity and

power are inextricably bound as one coherent and meaning making unit within the Haitian context and hence, result in French/Creole being the definitive markers of socio-economic identity and status. Furthermore, the coloniality of the French/Creole dichotomy proposes that French, having shed its communicative purpose, is currently operating in Haiti as a tool of exclusion, domination and representation and consistently reproduces and maintains oppositional images of the Creole-speaking subject as a devalued Other. In short, the Coloniality of language in Haiti is a dichotomous system that operates on the tenets of eurocentrism to create meaning, naturalize power relations and engender relative subject positions. Finally, I will purport that any initiatives aimed at transforming, reforming and/or supporting the political, educational and social sectors of Haitian society must take the aforementioned arguments into serious consideration. The debate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Haiti will revolve around language, identity and development, at which point an understanding the coloniality of language will be useful for providing a socio-historical tool of analysis for effectively engaging with these challenges.

### **B. Broader Implications the Coloniality of French/Creole**

The implications of this research for addressing social change in Haiti are manifold. As a decolonization project, this thesis provided a historicity and contextualization of the linguistic dualism that currently exist in Haitian society. In arguing for a historically contingent understanding of language, identity and power in Haiti, it also provides a guiding tool for navigating through the social, political and educational sectors of this particular socio-linguistic context.

The first of these broader contentions would argue that language policy analysis and implementation can not be realistically addressed outside of an understanding of the coloniality of French/Creole in Haiti. As I have revealed through this project, language as a category should

not be conceptualized as separate from identity and power. Hence, policy-makers and educators looking to change or implement language policies must also assess the influence of such policies in shaping perceptions of Haitian identity and the inherent power relations that exist within the coloniality of French/Creole. The consequences for discounting the *LIP* schema in the Haitian context could result in further supporting social inequity based on language and could also hinder positive and supportive identity development within the target group. Thus, this research suggests that language politics are inextricably linked to identity and power politics and therefore, can have reproductive or transformative effects on the unequal social relations of power within the country.

Secondly, and similarly, Haitian identity is invariably tied to perceptions of language and cannot be divorced from it. In providing a socio-historical account of the construction and shaping of French/Creole subject positions, I wanted to simultaneously expose these subjectivities as temporal, socially constructed and based on unequal power relations. Thus the project of nationalism and supporting Haitian identity must emerge from these historically dichotomous positions and effectively transgress them in order to find new meaning in a decolonized Creole identity. This research project is thus also an attempt to demystify dichotomous colonial and postcolonial representations of identity in order to argue for hybrid subject position that embrace multiplicity instead of dichotomy. Finally, this thesis shows that language will be the most powerful tool for achieving these altered realities for the Haitian people.

Thirdly, this research reveals a close complicity between the Haitian education system and the reproduction of unequal socio-linguistic relations within the country. However, the coloniality of French/Creole because of its temporality and irrationality can and should be

directly addressed by the education system. Meaning that the system is well positioned to affect meaningful change within the LIP schema but to do so will require it to change its role and function within Haitian society from an institution of French language acquisition to an institution of learning dedicated to Haitian identity development. This would thus require new pedagogical tools for Haitian instructors that seek to break down faulty assumptions about Haitian language and identity; curricula that effectively ties Creole language learning with identity development and social change and amongst other things, the incorporation of Creole literature into the national curriculum.

Lastly, this research shows the contested role of language in Haitian society and reveals a much more difficult challenge for the government in achieving linguistic equity within the country. Meaning that language policies or constitutional articulations alone will barely begin to dislodge the coloniality of language in Haiti. This research calls for a socio-political approach to language that would take these proposed challenges into consideration in transforming the LIP pattern. For instance, though both French and Creole are currently official and national language, the presence of Creole is still not felt on the official level. Official document translations have been happening at a snail's pace, signs all over the country are still mostly written in French and the business sector, which is predominantly Mulatto and French speaking, has not made any visible efforts to increase parity between the languages. Hence because of the power inherent in the coloniality of French/Creole, as well as its apparent immutability, a strong political will is needed to begin to affect change within the dichotomy. As a socially reproductive system, the coloniality of language, forms and is formed by society thus any effort at breaking it down must target all factions of society.

Finally, I began this research by elaborating on a definition of language and its purpose in shaping people's reality and culture. Thus I will conclude by confirming the prominent role that Creole has played in molding the Haitian identity and reality. Unfortunately, the historical representations affiliated the language have marginalized and excluded the Haitian and Creole-speaking people from all sorts of social, political, economic and/or educational discourses. However, in validating the ability for language to create new meaning, new forms of knowledge and representation, I am also confident in stating that the Creole language will and should be the primary basis for redefining Haitian identity. Just as language is unstable, limitless and constitutive so then must the devalued linguistic subject representations of Creole be destabilized, transformed and re-constituted through language. So that speaking and language once more become the means through which we **communicate and share** instead one by which we differentiate and dominate others.

THE END...For now...

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