Philipp Krämer*, Eric Mijts and Angela Bartens

# Language Making of Creoles in multilingual postcolonial societies

**Abstract:** This article investigates Language Making processes in multilingual postcolonial societies where Creole languages are spoken. It raises the question whether or not Language Making in these settings differs from other contexts given the historical preconditions and social, economic, or political inequalities which persist after the colonial period. The paper discusses the potentials of Language Making to support or impede efforts of decolonization. With the help of examples from several Creole-speaking societies, it shows different approaches to conceptualizing Creole languages as linguistic entities with the creation or emergence of norms, different naming strategies or through language policy and planning. It examines the potential contribution of different agents of Language Making and illustrates cases in which Language Making is countered or languages are un-made. As a conclusion, the article shows that the concept of Language Making may need further expansion or nuancing in order to avoid a "Northern" or "Western" bias.

**Keywords:** Creole languages; decoloniality; language policy and planning; post-coloniality; standardization

# 1 Introduction

Is Language Making (LaMa) in postcolonial societies particular in any way? This article addresses Language Making processes in settings where colonial power structures for a long time shaped the views on language(s) and social stratifications connected to them. Language Making is defined as the "conscious or unconscious human processes in which imagined linguistic units are constructed and perceived as 'a language', 'a dialect' or 'a variety'." (See Krämer, Vogl and Kolehmainen this issue).

***Corresponding author: Philipp Krämer,** Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany,
E-mail: philipp.kraemer@fu-berlin.de
**Eric Mijts,** University of Aruba, Oranjestad, Aruba
**Angela Bartens,** University of Turku, Turku, Finland

LaMa is a widespread phenomenon that can be observed around the globe. In postcolonial societies, language is often a particularly sensitive issue. Frequently, the former colonial languages persist in a position of socioeconomic or political dominance while other languages may remain marginalized or, in other cases, gain a more widespread recognition. In any particular scenario of this kind, processes of LaMa play an important part. The sensitivity of the issue is heightened in Creole-speaking communities where the lexifier language is present to different degrees, ranging from purely phantasmagoric (cf. Lipski 1987: 54) over mythified (Freeland 2004: 111–113) to traditionally diglossic in the sense that Creoles are seen as "broken" varieties of their lexifier (Deuber 2005: 49).[1] Over the centuries, this idea has been assimilated by speakers themselves, hampering their linguistic and cultural emancipation (cf. Bartens 2013a: 137; Hüning and Krämer 2018).

In postcolonial societies, like in any other setting, "[t]he cognitive linguistic entity which we call a named language, dialect or variety is a composite of associations and ideas shaped by individual attitudes." (See Krämer, Vogl and Kolehmainen this issue). The extent to which the LaMa process is explicit and conscious is intimately linked to language awareness. In the societies of the former colonizing powers, LaMa can proceed more under the surface of seemingly self-evident (imaginary) monolingualism. In Creole-speaking societies, however, the problematic relationship between the languages and the power relations they translate are often more obvious, with the consequence that open debate and reflection about the linguistic setup is frequent. An important factor of this debate arises from the fact that parts of the society hold on to axioms of standard language and monolingual ideology in the multilingual Creole context even though these ideologies clearly contradict everyday practices and principles of inclusive participation. Questions of language attitudes, ideologies and awareness are omnipresent in all aspects of LaMa processes and will therefore permeate all sections of this paper.

We question whether or not the mechanisms and ideologies behind the processes in these particular settings differ from those in "Western" societies, also identified as societies of the Global North. To what extent may the ideological foundations targeting languages in the present become the foundations for LaMa of the local language in its own right, shifting away from the inherited colonial hierarchies? We use the term "local languages" as an auxiliary cover term for indigenous, diasporic and Creole languages as opposed to the former colonizers' languages. Calling these languages "local" is, in fact, inaccurate since former colonial languages have become "local" languages and as such are not

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1 See Tabouret-Keller (2006) and Matthey and Elmiger (2020) for a critical review of the concept of *diglossia* and its terminology such as *High* and *Low Variety*, as developed by Ferguson (1959).

"European" languages any longer. Conversely, many of these seemingly "local" languages are now spoken in the most diverse places of the world as a consequence of their speakers' global mobility. A similar restriction applies to the term "colonial language", since both Creoles and many diasporic languages have a distinct colonial history, the difference being that they were not the colonizers' languages.

We will discuss the fundamental elements of LaMa with particular attention to the linguistic characteristics of postcolonial settings, more specifically to LaMa of Creole languages. Through the lens of selected examples, mainly from Atlantic and Indian Ocean Creoles, this article will provide theoretical reflections about postcolonial LaMa. These examples will highlight different aspects of LaMa, encompassing situations in which it benefits local linguistic practices (as a resonance of ideologies that aim at linguistic inclusion) and cases in which present-day LaMa has exclusionary effects and perpetuates language-based inequalities that go back to colonial history.

## 2  Postcolonial or decolonial societies?

A field of postcolonial linguistics with several subfields such as postcolonial sociolinguistics is starting to emerge (cf. Levisen and Sippola 2019; Makoni 2011). A relevant question when adopting a postcolonial approach is whether to conceive of postcoloniality as a time-defining concept reflecting change (cf. Calabrese 2015: 1; Anchimbe 2018: xiii) or from within the framework of power structures with which postcolonial studies in general operate (cf. Warnke 2017). Both the descriptive-causal and the critical-reflective approach share their opposition to Eurocentrism (Levisen and Sippola 2019: 2).

Assuming "postcolonial" is understood as an essentially time-defining concept, it is important to consider the continuum of language ecologies from the past to the present, where the feature pool available through population groups at a given time and the possibility of translanguaging is drawn on (García and Li 2014; Haugen 1971; Mufwene 1996, 2013; Schneider 2007: 22–23). Besides the likelihood of concrete linguistic features being used, language ecologies have an impact on language ideologies and policies, both top-down and bottom-up. As a matter of fact, language policy encompasses not only language intervention, planning, or management, but also community practices and beliefs or ideologies (Spolsky 2004: 5–10, 2014: 14). In a postcolonial context, the importance of the concept of community in the maintenance of language ecologies is highlighted. Community is a highly elusive concept (Mühleisen 2017: xii) and represents "a relation constantly under negotiation" (Brydon and Coleman 2008: 2). But a

(speech) community does not exist without the individuals who make it up. Indeed, Mufwene (2013: 323) stresses the role of the individual in the ecology of language. If, instead of a purely descriptive-causal one, a critical-reflective approach is adopted, the decolonial dimension of LaMa is emphasized. Starting from a descriptive-causal perspective, we will thence move towards a critical-reflective and decolonial understanding of LaMa for Creole languages.

By postcolonial societies, we mean communities in areas which used to be under colonial rule, more specifically under European or "Western" political and economic dominance, in a setting of hierarchization typically upheld by violence and suppression. For our purposes, the term postcolonial is primarily meant to be chronological in order to refer to countries or regions in which the formal colonial rule ended, for example, via independent statehood or other changes in political status.[2] However, the formal end of colonialism does not automatically entail the end of "coloniality". Frequently, institutional and power structures which had been established during colonial times remain in place: Social and economic inequalities, reduced political representation, or cultural and linguistic marginalization have not yet been leveled out; the "coloniality of power" as identified by Mignolo (2000: 17–18, 51–55) still persists in numerous contexts. In other words, an idealized society in which the power structures and mindsets have been processed would be called "decolonial" in our terminology. As Pyndiah (2016: 491, 495) puts it: "Decolonization critically tackles the residues of colonization and post-independence systems of governance, inherited from colonial structures. […] Decoloniality is articulated as a critique as well as a methodology and a set of practices in support of epistemic decolonization. It is an ongoing process of resistance against residual colonialism, such as the post-independence 'coloniality of power' […]."

The numerous postcolonial countries and territories in the world may exhibit certain similarities in broad terms due to shared colonial history, yet the situations always have to be examined individually and in detail. Migge and Léglise (2007: 299–300) remind us of the fact that "while faced with similar issues these communities do not constitute a homogeneous group and consequently blanket solutions are not available to change the asymmetrical social and linguistics system inherited from the colonisers." In what follows, we therefore attempt to

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**2** Contrary to Jansen and Osterhammel (2013), we do not adopt the term decolonization for the moment in history when outside rule is replaced by autodetermination. While the two authors recognize the fact that the end of colonial rule has not brought about a "non-hierarchical coexistence of peaceful nation states", they do regard decolonization as "completed" on the grounds of a permanent transfer of power (Jansen and Osterhammel 2013: 27, 9).

describe general observations about LaMa in postcolonial societies and to illustrate each aspect with the help of selected examples from the literature.

By consequence, LaMa can contribute both to the conservation of coloniality and to decolonization. The profound changes in postcolonial societies often bring about long-lasting public debates about language and the role it is supposed to play in the desired decolonial environment. This makes these settings particularly interesting to study because the controversies bring LaMa processes to the surface to the effect that we can observe them. LaMa can target a multitude of linguistic practices as postcolonial societies usually are highly multilingual and the multifaceted consequences of such processes are particularly visible.

# 3 Language Making and colonial rule

Strict hierarchies and social inequalities, frequently even violence, are core characteristics of colonial rule. They also shaped the linguistic setup of colonial societies. The colonizers' languages were linked to social and economic dominance and access to them was restricted – explicitly or *de facto* – for the colonized (Migge and Léglise 2007). Among other effects, these structures lead to the emergence of Creole languages in many colonial territories. Creole languages are, as it were, the most prominent result of LaMa in colonial times: As linguistic practices and structures took new shapes, speakers and non-speakers gradually developed a conception of a new linguistic entity which was called Creole or received other labels. According to the Founder Principle formulated by Mufwene (1996) for Creole Studies, the input of the cultural-linguistic groups was fundamental in the formation of Creoles and Creole societies (cf. Singler 1996). As linguistic structures started to diverge from the input languages, early speakers provided the cornerstones for what could later become the structural norms of Creoles in the LaMa process.

The strict hierarchical relationship in colonial societies was paralleled by an imbalance of influence in the LaMa processes. Colonial epistemology prevailed in the definition of the qualities of linguistic entities. Properties which allegedly allowed to differentiate between "superior" and "inferior" languages were inscribed in the conception of languages or varieties, their hierarchization was a crucial part of colonial LaMa. In 19th century creolistics, for instance, language descriptions frequently participated in the racialist colonial discourse which sought to present Creoles and their speakers as inferior and therefore bound to be submitted to European rule (DeGraff 2005; Krämer 2014a). With only a few rare exceptions, the making of Creole languages in colonial times was marked by colonial outsiders who claimed to be in possession of the defining force and who

molded the conceptions of these languages for a long period of time: It is in this era that the notion of Creole languages as "simple" and "exotic", as "natural" and "picturesque" came to be established. LaMa of Creoles relied heavily on the constructed contrast to the dominant colonial languages which were presented as their well-structured and rational counterparts and as carriers of "civilization". Similar mechanisms were at play in the documentation and description of indigenous languages in virtually all colonized territories in the world (Errington 2008). Ideas of hierarchic differentiation have been conserved and reaffirmed for a large part in postcolonial societies until present times, but they do not go unchallenged. Such measures to avoid elite closure are part of decolonial efforts of LaMa (DeGraff 2019: x; Myers-Scotton 1993).

The history of the development of Haitian Creole illustrates, par excellence, the concept of elite closure as an important characteristic of coloniality: Although education in Haitian was proposed the very year of the independence, 1804, it took until 1979 for first serious efforts at implementation. In 1983, a year after the introduction of Haitian Creole as the medium of instruction, hardly any effects for the better could be seen and many teachers were not even aware of the existence of an official orthography or the possibility to use it. Chaudenson and Vernet (1983) attribute this to, for example, lack of teacher training and the fact that, unlike in the Seychelles, there was no coherent project to build a Creole nation. As in so many cases, attempts at standardizing Haitian orthography, above all since the 1940s, targeted first and foremost the alphabetization of adults, traditionally felt to be less threatening for the maintenance of the political status quo through lack of opportunities for real socio-political participation (cf. Egbo 2000). As a matter of fact, it can be argued that Haiti is not a diglossic society but consists of two distinct linguistic communities with variable degrees of interaction depending on domains of contact and use (Fattier 2013: 196; Schieffelin and Doucet 1994: 178). Despite the common belief that colonialism is a thing of the past, the everyday realities of postcolonial states and territories suggest otherwise, as can be seen in the diverse aspects of LaMa in such settings.

# 4 Theoretical aspects and practical dilemmas of LaMa in postcolonial territories

## 4.1 Norms and rules

The emergence or deliberate determination of implicit or explicit linguistic norms on a functional and a structural level is a constitutive element of LaMa. The norms

are subject to negotiation and therefore to power structures. In order to understand LaMa in postcolonial societies, we therefore have to consider the extent to which power relations are maintained or shifted. A process of decolonization entails a change in the way members of the society can participate in the negotiation of linguistic norms and, consequently, in LaMa. An understanding of how these norms emerge can allow for a critical-reflective and as such decolonial understanding of LaMa for Creole languages. These intra- and extralinguistic norms can be combined as legally formalized, explicit or implicit, structural or functional sets of norms that determine the contours of a linguistic entity and that are reflective of the process of LaMa.

LaMa includes the creation or emergence of structural norms. They can be deliberately introduced, e.g. through language planning and standardization, or they come about gradually in a bottom-up process through usage and social interaction. For Creole languages, the latter has been more often the case than the first, even though efforts at standardization are increasing. Within the speech communities, ideas are formed about what constitutes "authentic" speech, that is, variants which are recognized as "truly Creole" and how to deal with effects of contact between Creole and the dominant language. This has been a debate in e.g. Haiti (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994), Martinique (Mantjoly 1985; Seiler 2012), Vanuatu (Tryon and Charpentier 2004: 433–439), or Papua New Guinea (Tryon and Charpentier 2004: 467–471). Notwithstanding the actual linguistic practices that cover a wide range of variation, the forms indexed as "typical" often include those which clearly differ from the European colonial language in terms of grammar or pronunciation – in other words: the non-codified or even implicit structural norm which "makes" the Creole language is frequently determined in relation to the dominant European language. Different levels of acrolectal or basilectal variation may even be conceptualized as entities in their own right. In Haitian Creole, for instance, some speakers make a difference between *kreyòl swa* and *kreyòl rèk*. The two ways of speaking are associated with particular speaker groups, their own criteria of appropriateness and their own labels, with the second one being perceived by many as pejorative (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994: 180; Valdman 2015a: 351–353). *Kreyòl swa* is expected to be used by bilinguals who also speak French and it can be recognized, among other characteristics, from the use of front rounded vowels /y/, /ø/, /œ/, and /œ̃/ occurring in acrolectal varieties but virtually absent from basilectal speech (except for cases of hypercorrection) and therefore not included in the official orthography adopted in 1980 (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994: 188–190). Whereas scholars like Férère (1977: 51) underlined the importance of an "ethnophonemic orthography" for the educational and communicative needs of a mostly monolingual population, multilingual Haitians

may struggle with the lack of representation of, e.g., precisely the mentioned front rounded vowels (Bonnefil 1997: 65–66).

As a result of perceived or real diglossia, there is considerable linguistic insecurity in Creole communities: Whereas we speak of autonomous Creole language systems in terms of linguistic structure (but cf. the reality of Creole continua; DeCamp [1971]), this does not necessarily hold on the sociolinguistic, perceptual level, leading to great linguistic insecurity in speakers (cf. Preston 1989; Bartens 2019: 400). LaMa therefore also occurs in informal contexts through language policing (cf. Muth and Del Percio 2018).

The constant renegotiation of one's identity through acts of identity (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985) certainly occurs in the auto-repairs which can be found, for instance, in interview data, but also in other casual speech. Acrolectal varieties are felt to be more appropriate in more formal communicative contexts but are ridiculed in informal ones. For example, in the Western Caribbean Creole English communities of San Andrés and Providence as well as the Miskito Coast of Nicaragua, "yanking" or "americaning", e.g. by U.S. residents returning home for a vacation, is heavily stigmatized (Bartens 2013b: 116; Edwards 1968: 4; Washabaugh 1974: 151).

Language policing – and thus, the implementation of structural and functional rules in interaction – can therefore be a powerful part of LaMa which stabilizes a linguistic entity in its social position. It can lead to a language remaining reserved for informal use and associated with less prestigious domains of communication. Conversely, language policing connected to established standard languages also fixes their position as an index of social privilege and it restricts access to effective influence on its continuing LaMa. In postcolonial societies, then, LaMa through policing strongly obstructs tendencies of decolonization.

Aside from structural norms, functional norms are reflective of the process of LaMa. Functional norms can be language laws that regulate the use of a language. Language laws perform a variety of functions. Laws can officially name a language, provide status (as official language, national language, language of national identification, …), provide a role or legitimize the use in specific domains such as education, judiciary and governance, officially limit or exclude the use of languages in specific domains, confirm standardization of vocabulary and grammar, confirm institutional support, and officially guarantee linguistic rights and freedom.

Frequently, postcolonial states do not only adopt the languages of the former colonizers but also their state traditions and language regimes as well as their governmental and judicial systems. As such, language laws in young postcolonial states are not a reflection of the multilingual realities, but of the monolingual ideologies of the former colonizer's regimes. The frictions between monolingual

ideologies and the multilingual realities in which Creole languages exist can reflect fundamental issues, "in very basic ways that may be inconsistent with the universal moral values enshrined in international human rights legislation" (Kochenov and de Varennes 2015: 63). In many cases Creole languages have reached – limited – legal recognition in constitutions, official language acts or education acts that regulate the official name, status and role of the language, as in for example article 62 of the 1987 constitution of Haiti: "All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic". This article creates a constitutional status for Haitian Creole as the unifying common language and bestows the status of "official" language on Haitian Creole. However, despite the official status, the constitution makes no mention of the name of the language as "Kreyòl". Another form of providing a role for Creole languages can be recognized in the Cape Verdean constitution (art. 9.1) in which Cape Verdean Creole is described as "the mother tongue", next to the "official language", Portuguese. The constitution of Vanuatu mentions four roles for languages: "national language", "official language", "principal language of education," and "local language". Art. 3.1 states "The national language of the Republic of Vanuatu is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English, and French. The principal languages of education are English and French" and art. 3.2 states "'The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage, and may declare one of them as a national language".

Recognition as an official language does not mean that equality is guaranteed. The Aruban Official Language act of 2003 positions Papiamento as an "official language", next to Dutch, but the same act does not mention and as such excludes Papiamento from use as language of legislation. The 1989 Primary Education Ordinance excludes Papiamento from use as language of instruction beyond the first two years of primary education. In both cases, Dutch is the language that is legally preferred over Papiamento.

Provisions for institutional support are of course present in the establishment of national language academies, such as the Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen: "A Haitian Academy shall be established to standardize the Creole language and enable it to develop scientifically and harmoniously" (Art. 213 of the Haitian Constitution). The Constitution of Cape Verde explicitly mentions "special provisions […] to guarantee the right to culture, including explicitly the Cape Verdean mother tongue" (Art. 78.3.f).

In order to achieve a decolonial effect, norms typically shift in a way to cover domains of use which used to be reserved for the colonial languages, including written use and formal domains such as politics, media, or law. Since Creole languages often conserve their functions also in informal domains, decolonial LaMa usually implies an amplification and/or codification of functional and

structural norms. For instance, Veiga (1982) meant to demonstrate with the help of a comprehensive grammar that Cape Verdean Creole was indeed an independent language and not a dialect of Portuguese, and that it was one language despite its considerable variation across the islands of the archipelago. Notwithstanding the emancipatory effects this can have, the fixation of new norms still frequently implies that they develop with the former colonial language as an omnipresent point of reference.

## 4.2 Glossonyms: labels as norms

With growing awareness for the linguistic particularities of a given colonial or postcolonial society, speakers, and/or researchers tend to adopt a new terminology for the linguistic entities they conceptualize as specific to this society. The emergence of a new and distinct concept leads to the emergence or deliberate introduction of a glossonym, i.e., a "signifier used in the naming of language-like entities" (Cysouw and Good 2013: 339). The widespread use of a label or even its official recognition in constitutions or laws is a strong sign of LaMa.

Naming, and thereby defining, a linguistic entity can be a powerful act of colonial practice. It can also be a powerful strategy to counteract the imposed colonial logic in the postcolonial period and to symbolize disentanglement from colonial structures (Safran and Liu 2012: 279–281). Naming strategies are indeed reflective of coloniality as the choice (even of a formerly "colonial" label) can be a decolonial gesture if it is adopted and accepted by the community itself. We can observe both emic and etic names for linguistic entities, that is, labels which speakers use to refer to their own speech through autoglossonyms, or labels attributed by outsiders – during colonial times, these outsiders would typically include missionaries, researchers or official representatives of the colonial powers. In a similar vein, labels can emerge via bottom-up processes when their use generalizes in the community, or they can be imposed in top-down approaches, e.g. with a particular political impetus.

Colonial or postcolonial labels often coexist with original appellations which predate colonial times. This is frequently the case with languages that had been in use in a given area since before the colonial expansion, and these labels show a wide range of etymologies and morphosyntactic properties (see e.g. Newman and Schuh [2016] for glossonymic word formation in Hausa, Lusakalalu [2003] for *Rukavango* and related labels in Southwest Africa). As a result, the multilingual settings of many postcolonial societies, for example in Africa, exhibit complex combinations of emic and etic glossonyms, partial overlaps or conflations of the two which bear the marks of categorizations introduced by colonial outsiders

(Ndhlovu and Kamusella 2018). One such example is the term *Fulfulde* or *Pulaar* used by many of the speakers, while the English glossonym *Fulani* or the French *peul* are adopted from the glossonyms used by speakers of neighboring languages.

Several strategies of labeling can be observed:

(1) Compounds or nominal phrases with the former colonial language and another noun or an adjective specifying the local context, e.g. a demonym or a toponym. This is a strategy frequently used with pluricentric languages. Examples include *Surinaams Nederlands* ('Surinamese Dutch'), *Português angolano* ('Angolan Portuguese') or *français burkinabé* ('Burkina Faso French'). In some settings, such naming strategies also include localized diasporic languages which are connected to colonial history but were not the colonizer's language, such as those which used to be spoken by indentured laborers, e.g. *Fiji Hindi* or *Basa Jawa Suriname* ('Suriname Javanese').

(2) Compounds or nominal phrases which specify a type of language or variety rather than an original colonial glossonym, again using demonyms or toponyms for specification, e.g. *Trinidad and Tobago Sign Language*, *Bahamian dialect*, *Nigerian Pidgin*, *Sranan tongo* ('Surinamese language') or *kreol morisien* ('Mauritian Creole').

(3) Derivatives based on toponyms such as *Bajan* ('Barbadian'), *Seselwa* ('Seychellois'), *Afrikaans* ('African'), *Shimaore* ('Mayotte language') or *Kabuverdianu* ('Capeverdean'). Such terms are often rejected by parts of the community – or outsiders – or gain little traction when introduced deliberately, because they can be seen as strongly linked to statehood or nation building and are sometimes connected to particular political aspirations or affiliations. Local language activists state that the term *Saintandruan* for San Andrés Creole is unacceptable to the Colombian Government (Bartens 2019: 399). A subclass is constituted by traditional autoglossonyms which make reference to the immediate topological environment of the speakers, e.g., *Lung'Ie* 'language of the Island' for Principe Creole Portuguese (cf. Bartens 2002b).

(4) Labels which derive from etic pejorative terms, for example as a result of a colonial mindset conceptualizing Creole languages as "babble" or "gibberish". Some of them subsequently lost their pejorative connotation or were even reclaimed with emancipatory intentions. Examples of such labels include *Chabacano*, *Papiamentu* or *taki taki*, with the latter being perceived by many as deprecative whereas the other two are not.

(5) Underspecified labels. In many Creole-speaking societies, speakers would refer to their language simply as *Creole*, *Pidgin*, or *dialect*. In many settings, this is sufficient to mark the conceptual boundary towards other languages in the society or the area; no further determination is necessary. Yet, this follows the same general mechanisms of naming as part of LaMa as speakers make use

of a distinct signifier for a conceptualized linguistic entity. We have to consider that the denomination of a linguistic entity as Creole does not necessarily coincide with its classification as such by linguists, or vice versa. For instance, in The Bahamas, what linguists do describe as *Bahamian Creole* is usually referred to by speakers as *Bahamian dialect* whereas the term "Creole" is usually used as a label for Haitian Creole, equally present in the Bahamian society (Hackert 2004: 55; Krämer 2014b: 78). Highly underspecified labels include very frequent naming strategies like "language of the people" (e.g., *Runa Simi* for Quechua) or "foreign language/tongue" (e.g. *lengua* for Palenquero).

None of the naming strategies mentioned above are exclusive to colonial or postcolonial contexts. The extensive shifts in the linguistic setup during colonial rule and subsequent efforts of decolonization, however, may make the need for new glossonyms more palpable. As LaMa processes advance in coincidence with the desire to gain distance from old colonial structures, they trigger the emergence of new labels to designate what is now seen as an independent linguistic entity. The extent of this linguistic independence is often reflected in the type of label preferred by the community: It is less marked in cases where the original colonial glossonym remains visible (such as in type 1) and more so in situations where a label with a separate etymology is adopted. The acceptance of a given glossonym within the speech community may vary largely depending on its connotations, particularly its perceived coloniality, and its quality as an emic or etic term. For example, type 5 underspecified labels are frequently abandoned for terms mentioned under type 3 as part of a nation building project.

## 4.3 Standardization

For a long period of time, the former colonial languages went on to fulfill all the functions of the formal domain in society for which a standardized form was deemed necessary: politics and media, education and economy etc. As a consequence, this perpetuated the LaMa processes in which languages such as French, English or Portuguese were constructed as suitable for "serious" matters. In contrast, the concepts of local indigenous languages or Creoles included the notion that they were inherently unsuitable for standardization as per their qualities as supposedly "natural" and therefore highly variable languages. The idea that these languages need to unfold without the constraints of structural norms forms an important part of today's LaMa in postcolonial societies.

As standardization of former colonial languages very often has been and is a state effort of the former colonial powers, it is also recognized as a characteristic of progress of a language. Standardization is frequently underpinned by what we call standard language ideology (Milroy 2001; Vogl 2012): the idea that standardized languages are in some way more performant or developed than non-standardized ones. When this ideology benefits the lexifier, it often excludes its related Creoles as non-standard forms and subsumes them as varieties under the entity of the European language, which ultimately marks them as deviations from the standard. The non-standardized Creole languages would, in that perspective, be ideologically constructed as less progressed and also less adequate for use in more formal domains. However, standard language ideology can also benefit the Creole language itself in a standardization process. It then stabilizes the structural norms and the functional ones associated with the domains of use typically reserved for standard languages. In many cases, local initiatives and also efforts by institutions from the Global North to support this aspect of standardization have led to the development of grammars, orthographies, and lexica that served the LaMa process. At the same time, these processes have not always led to an inclusive development of appreciation of the newly standardized language, as they were perceived as exogenous interventions in the development and appreciation of Creole languages and varieties.

Efforts to standardize Creoles, indigenous and diaspora languages are well underway in many countries and territories (see e.g. Francard [2017] and Stein [2017]: 77–84 for French-based Creoles). In these cases, we can observe a shift in LaMa, away from the deterministic view of these languages supposedly being "non-standardizable".

As a result, the LaMa process surfaces in public debates as different opinions about the efforts of standardization are articulated, revolving around the question whether or not a standard is desirable, and if it is, which forms are to be included in the standard. Efforts to create new standards are among the most visible forms of LaMa as the deliberate fixation of functional and structural norms can be observed in the open. Establishing new domains of use and creating visibility of local languages through, e.g., written or formal use is often seen as an important step towards linguistic decolonization. The gradual and slow advancement of LaMa becomes apparent, as Francard (2017: 218) puts it, from the fact that "in ongoing processes of codification for written language, collective acceptance can manifest itself by a temporary coexistence of several different systems." Even in cases where norms are deliberately created, LaMa involves long periods of negotiation. Indeed, it is arguable that allowing for the coexistence of distinct variants, e.g., in writing, can be important for not alienating speakers from the LaMa process (cf. Koskinen [2010] on Nicaraguan Creole; da Silva [2014]: 132–138 on Cape Verdean Creole).

The developments in Mauritius in the past two decades are a case in point. The introduction of Mauritian Creole in education was preceded by a systematic process of standardization, especially in terms of spelling (Carpooran 2017; Floriny 2015). Several systems had been suggested over a longer period of time, but none of them had gained official recognition or widespread use; in other words: individual efforts to steer the LaMa process in a particular direction had failed. Eisenlohr (2007) analyses the discourses about Mauritian Creole in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, showing that the desire to preserve affiliation with the French-speaking world competes with the intention of turning Creole into the linguistic basis of postcolonial nationhood: "[T]he campaign for the officialization of Mauritian Creole integrated elements of both class struggle and nationalism, which in turn rested on intense highlighting of linguistic boundaries between French and Mauritian. […] Originating as a rejection of the image of Mauritian Creole as part of the francophone world, credibly fashioning Mauritian Creole as an autonomous language emerges as a key element in a postcolonial nation building project" (Eisenlohr 2007: 982, 984; see also Pyndiah (2016) on spelling choices and the creative use of written Creole as a means of linguistic decolonization).

A standardized form was deemed by many as a necessary step towards achieving these objectives. With the clear purpose of providing a basis for the use of Creole in schools, LaMa was then channeled into a structured and officially mandated procedure in which linguists, teachers, and politicians came to be the primary Language Makers. The results – a fully elaborated spelling norm, a monolingual dictionary and a state-endorsed grammar – were disseminated in public from the year 2011 onwards; the implementation in education followed one year later when Creole was introduced as a school subject in primary schools.

Debates about the exact form of spelling to adopt for Creole languages often revolve(d) around the use of particular graphemes. For Creoles with a Romance base language, the use of <k>, <w> or <z> is often preferred by those who would like to clearly mark a difference from the colonial language where these graphemes are rare. The desired product of LaMa, then, is supposed to be visibly distinguishable in writing through a structural norm that represents decoloniality. The choice for this type of spelling, however, is by no means a matter of course. While Curaçao and Bonaire opted for a similar solution with a more phonemic spelling when standardizing Papiamentu, the neighboring island of Aruba chose to write its Papiamento following a norm much closer to that of Spanish (Pereira 2018: 13). Even though speakers still largely perceive the two named languages as one, the processes of LaMa took different paths in the societies that use it. As a result, speakers conceptualize one single entity labeled as *Papiamentu* or *Papiamento*, but the (visible) representation segment of this concept operates with separate norms. This example can also serve to illustrate the recursive nature of LaMa. The

conceptualization of one linguistic entity does not exclude that this entity may at the same time be construed as part of another superordinate entity. The communities in Aruba or Curaçao, for instance, conceptualize their own linguistic entities, associated with their particular norms such as differing spelling conventions, while at the same time contributing to the joint construction of the language.

In certain communities, decolonization through graphic choices may actually reinforce original coloniality: In the Western Caribbean, Creoles coexisting with Spanish phonemic spellings are frequently rejected for "looking too Spanish" and San Andrés Creole speakers prefer <w> and <y> in word final position for "looking better" (Bartens 2021). By consequence, we find <kow> [ˈkɔʊ] 'cow', <sity> [ˈsiti] 'city' which both break with and maintain the link to the original colonial language, English. Therefore, while San Andresan stakeholders accept the need for a phonemic orthography, decolonization from Spanish requires the reintroduction of colonial patterns from the original colonizer's language, English, the legacy of which is indeed very strong, albeit on a partially mythified level just as in, e.g., the Nicaraguan Creole community.

## 4.4 Language policy and language planning

Language policy plays an essential role in LaMa of Creole languages. In this discussion of language policy and planning (henceforward LPP) we follow a narrow interpretation of the concept as "active efforts that involve political or legislative processes which result in the official establishment or recognition of norms" (see Krämer, Vogl and Kolehmainen this issue) and the way in which these are implemented in projects and executed by institutions and organizations. LPP can touch upon all domains of language use, ranging from education to media, to language use in the public sphere, in religious services, in health care and in government communication; and LPP can originate from governmental institutions at local, regional, national, and supranational level. For instance, a French overseas department has relatively little political competence in LPP matters, whereas an independent state can act in full autonomy. This multifaceted character of LPP limits us to making the point that it effectively contributes to LaMa and language un-making processes.

However, language policies do not always benefit the status and use of Creole languages, nor are they beneficial to all members of the communities in which they are in effect. Creole languages coexist with the former colonizer's language, e.g., Haitian Creole coexists with French, Papiamento coexists with Dutch, Cape Verdean Creole coexists with Portuguese, and Mauritian Creole coexists with French and English. When the colonizer's language coincides with the lexifier language,

language minorization is more advanced, whereas those Creoles with a lexically clearly distinct H language tend to fare better (Bartens 2002a). The difficulties faced by Papiamentu/o development despite its long history as a literary language demonstrate the challenges even the Creoles not coexisting with their lexifier(s) face in decolonization.

The status of the languages in these communities is not equal. "[M]ost people assign low overt prestige to P/Cs and focus […] all of their efforts on the mastery of the European language" (Migge et al. 2010: 4). This low overt prestige is more often than not exacerbated by language policies that favor the European language(s) over Creole languages. As language policies can serve to regulate the domains of use and the status of languages, they can be powerful tools in the LaMa process for Creole languages. The implementation of language policies that envision a shift away from dominance of the colonizer's languages are hampered by the persistent ideologies of superiority of the colonizer's institutions, cultures, and languages (see Krämer [2017] for examples of such ideologies as they come to the surface in online debates in Réunion, Mauritius, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago).

The multilingual and multicultural postcolonial, predominantly young nations, have to come to terms with language policies that echo the colonial ideologies and structural positioning of the superior status of the former colonizers' languages as the ideal to be achieved, and the Creole languages as lower prestige languages. Language policies that favor the former colonizer's language include language policies that secure exclusive use as the legal language (e.g., Aruba, Curaçao, Mauritius), exclusive use as the language of (higher) education (e.g., Aruba, Cabo Verde, Haiti) and administration (e.g., Cabo Verde, French overseas departments and territories, Mauritius). These exclusive language policies contribute to the conscious and unconscious human processes of LaMa as they feed the ideologies of inferiority of Creole languages and the superiority of the former colonizers' languages in society. However, there are also language policies that promote the use of Creole languages (e.g., Haiti, Seychelles, Vanuatu).

The implementation of state-mandated institutional efforts for the recognition and promotion of Creole languages is often a painfully slow process. The constitutionally mandated establishment of the Haitian Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen took 28 years. It was constitutionally mandated in 1987 and became a reality in 2015. In the Seychelles, LPP after independence in 1976 was part of a larger project of nation building. The first resolutions to recognize Creole were passed relatively quickly, even though the subsequent implementation took a longer while to be accomplished (Anacoura 2014).

In Aruba, the 1988 report of the Directorate of Education, *Towards bilingual education in Aruba: policy advice on the introduction of Papiamento in Aruban education* described the government-supported implementation plan of primary

education in Aruba that would include Papiamento as language of instruction. It took 30 years, until 2018, before the minister of education ordered the gradual introduction of Papiamento as language of instruction in primary schools. And yet, as observed above, Papiamentu/o is a Creole with an extremely long tradition of writing going back to the second half of the 18th century (Mijts 2021).

In Cape Verde, a first coherent – and phonemic – orthography proposal was made in 1979, four years after independence, yet this cornerstone of moving Creole into H language domains was rejected, especially by speakers of the more acrolectal Barlavento (northern) varieties. This first orthography was based on the basilectal Sotavento (southern) varieties, especially the one of the most populous island Santiago which also constitutes the political center of the republic. The ALUPEC (Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Caboverdiano) was created in 1994 on the basis of the 1979 proposal and promoted by the Massachusetts-based Cape Verdean Creole Institute. It has been used in bilingual Massachusetts schools, institutionalized by the Cape Verdean Government, but is still not being widely endorsed despite the existence of an important body of literature since the second half of the 19th century. It has also to be born in mind that the ALUPEC is indeed only a proposal which facilitates the spelling dependent of a person's individual variety, so it does not give priority to one guiding variety over others but rather makes it possible that people write their own varieties with a unified set of instruments (cf. Baptista and Bandura 2010).

The delays in the introduction of these institutional efforts for the recognition and promotion of Creole languages is exemplary for the lack of prioritization and the lack of recognition of the emancipatory and decolonial importance of these efforts. LPP measures to enhance LaMa are processual and frequently not linear since repeatedly taken back almost to the starting point in what seem conscious efforts to hamper emancipation by some of the gatekeepers such as privileged speakers of the dominant language whose interest is to preserve their defining access to LaMa. This was the case in San Andrés Creole development until the recent past as well as during the difficult debates about the CAPES Créole (Certificat d'aptitude au professorat de l'enseignement du second degré, 'high school teacher training diploma') in the French overseas departments (Prudent 2001). On the other hand, a decolonial approach demands for the reciprocity between the speech community and the policy makers throughout the LaMa process.

An interesting case of LaMa through language policy has been the choice of the new, semi-sovereign state of Aruba to officially label the language of the population as Papiamento, and as such creating a new language that was set apart from Papiamentu, the most spoken language of Bonaire and Curaçao. This was a political act of the new state of Aruba, in which an orthographic choice was a state

performance that demonstrates the capacity of the state to determine linguistic identity. However, this claim has not led to recognition for the language in itself: It took until 2003 for Papiamento to gain status as one of the two official languages in Aruba without, however, obtaining an equal status with that of Dutch.

We can observe that language policies that exclude Creole languages from key areas of use persist; we can observe that there is a lack of prioritization of the development and implementation of inclusive language policies; and we can observe that language policies that are state performance for the establishment of national identity do not automatically lead to recognition and emancipation of the Creole language itself. These processes reflect the colonial nature of the ideologies that foster language policies favoring the former colonizers' languages over Creole languages. We can conclude that language policies are instrumental in the LaMa process but can be an obstacle to decolonial LaMa.

## 4.5 Agents of Language Making

According to the introduction of this volume, stakeholders and agents of LaMa "can contribute to a process of LaMa as soon as they engage in the use of the language or present metalinguistic ideas about it." (see Krämer, Vogl and Kolehmainen this issue). These can be local or external individuals, groups, and institutions.

There is a spectrum of potential individual contributors to the LaMa process for Creole languages. As gatekeepers and role models, journalists, teachers and academics, politicians, and artists can contribute to LaMa, not only when they merely use the language in reporting, teaching, public communication, or in artwork, but also by introducing that language in settings where it is not expected. For example, some years ago, the San Andrés Creole phrase *dat dah dat* (and variable spellings) 'that's it/that's how it is/this is the end of the discussion' became very popular in the community after having been used in a radio call in-show and may have contributed to the popularity of the Creole itself. The contribution of individuals to LaMa processes may also have negative effects for the Creole in question and stabilize the position of the colonial language. Teachers, a traditionally conservative force because of their acquired position in society through literacy in and the traditional agenda to diffuse and implement the colonizer's language, are a good example of this kind of gatekeeper.

Lopes (2016: 345) reports that teachers in Cape Verde are particularly skeptical towards a further promotion of Creole and an extension of its domains of use. The same occurred with some teachers involved in the 1999–2004 San Andrés trilingual project described in Morren (2010). An added difficulty was constituted by the

fact that, in its initial phase, Creole literacy was meant to lead first to English, then Spanish literacy. It has to be recalled that the presence of English in the community is minimal, although increasing through LPP measures by the Colombian central government initiated in the mid-2000s. Nevertheless, English is assumed to constitute the *Dachsprache*, justifying the refusal of implementing Creole teaching in the classroom. In a 2008 interview, an important gatekeeper expressed their views on the possibility of reformulating the curriculum to explicitly mention Creole: "Creole is included in English. Therefore, there is no reason to introduce it into the curriculum." (cf. also Bartens 2019: 396). The difficulties faced by the implementation of the French CAPES Créole have also largely depended on the negative intervention of individuals in the educational sector.

Among the groups or individuals who may have a large influence in LaMa processes are families or parents. Their linguistic decisions in personal communication with their children, their children's education or media consumption can have lasting effects on the way future generations conceptualize Creoles and other languages in the society. Parents are sensitive to the socioeconomic power relations that the languages in their surroundings carry, the chances they provide for their children's social participation, but they may also value the potential of Creoles for social cohesion and its potential to access new functions in society. In Cape Verde, and the "well-to-do families made up of Europeans and their descendants […] educated their children in Portugal, imitated the English life style and used Portuguese almost exclusively as a way of demarcating their social status" (Swolkien 2015: 97). Socioeconomic power relations co-define "language choice, the socio-cultural status of the interlocutor is an important factor" (Swolkien 2015: 114).

Among the potentially most influential Language Makers are linguists and researchers in related fields. Their expertise can be seen by some as particularly authoritative – or it can be rejected as "too academic" or an undesirable political intervention by others. Taking into account the postcolonial settings we are studying, the last stance is fully understandable since LaMa used to be performed by outsiders during colonial times and after (witness all the works of missionaries produced in Creole-speaking areas and beyond, cf. de Sousa et al. 2019). At times the scenario that researchers have personal gains and objectives at stake also concerns community members.

In the mentioned cases, the work of linguists contributes to LaMa, either by providing grounds for the construction of linguistic conceptualizations, or by providing a background against which competing ideas can be projected. It is apparent from the history of linguistics in colonial contexts that scientific work, especially if carried out by outsiders, can trigger strong effects of coloniality as etic categorizations prevail in LaMa over the views and practices of local speakers. As

Seiler (2012: 179–186) and Schneider (2017: 393) show based on their own work as German creolists in Martinique and Belize respectively, it is of a particularly high importance for researchers to reflect on their own position as Language Makers when doing fieldwork with speakers. Even with a high level of critical self-reflection, interactive methods will always entail a certain degree of co-constructive LaMa between researchers and informants. A way of mitigating the bias of an outside researcher put into practice in postcolonial settings is giving back to the community (Bowern 2015) and/or involving local researchers in terms of the paradigms of Participatory Action Research (Benedicto et al. 2007) or Community Based Research (Faraclas et al. 2019a; Mijts et al. 2017). A case in point is the MIT-Haiti Initiative which can be considered a bridge between insider and outsider stakeholders in the Haitian LaMa process. Founded in 2010, the MIT-Haiti Initiative promotes Creole language education in Haiti, especially in STEM. The MIT-Haiti Initiative demonstrates how insiders, insider-outsiders, outsiders, and institutions can be committed to a LaMa process in which relevant progress in the sense of decolonization is made (DeGraff 2014). One of the slogans of the initiative is: "Men anpil, chay pa lou" 'Many hands make light work'.[3]

Language ownership is an increasingly important issue in postcolonial settings and it needs to be addressed urgently when scrutinizing LaMa processes. "Ownership" can be conceived of as the legitimate claim that speakers have over the development of their language (Wee 2002: 283). It is tied to conceptions of legitimate, native, and mother tongue speakers, and ultimately the question of membership of a speech community (O'Rourke 2011: 327). Whereas drawing on less competent or so-called peripheral speakers (Labov 1972) is fundamental when new communities of practice are created or existing ones are reshaped through LaMa (cf. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464), the question of language ownership can become a very sensitive issue in certain postcolonial contexts such as the Creole communities of San Andrés and Old Providence where the input of peripheral speakers, e.g., family members and long time residents, might also be needed in order to maintain the vitality of the language. Native speaker ideologies, i.e., who is a "legitimate speaker", even if a "new speaker" (Costa 2015), become further complicated in settings with varieties of variable prestige, as can be seen in Sint Eustatius with a whole range of lects spanning from Creole to Caribbean English (Aceto 2015).

As secondary indicators which may suggest changing attitudes and concomitant shifts in LaMa, we can observe changes in language use by the media. While the written use of Creoles in the press remains relatively limited, the main evening news of, for example, Aruba, Seychelles, and Vanuatu are usually broadcast in the

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**3** https://haiti.mit.edu/, accessed 1.11.2020.

respective Creole languages. Social media have become a particularly prolific domain for the written use of Creoles. While the traditional media are important in terms of overt prestige, it could also be argued that social media are at least as powerful tools. Considering the continuum between orality and literacy (Ong 1982), new technology such as text messaging, chats, Twitter, and Facebook enables minority languages including Creoles to enter, albeit "through the back door", into the domain of literacy, crucial for perceived H language status. This results in the decolonization of the traditional power relationships between language varieties and their speakers as well as the democratization of former elite practices (Mair 2019: 372).

As another example of non-traditional "media", linguistic landscapes can be considered as manifestations of discourses of authenticity or language ownership as well as mostly bottom-up LPP (Blommaert and Varis 2013). Besides the linguistic resources employed, factors such as size and typeface as well as spatial emplacement and possible stratification play a role. For example, from a sample of 378 pictures taken on San Andrés Island in October 2015, the following observations can be made: (1) Spanish is the politically dominant language of the community; (2) English and/or Creole are used for complementing functions; (3) other languages are used to obtain specific, above all commercial effects. The ambivalence of "English and/or Creole" testifies to the linguistic insecurity of speakers addressed above. However, the mere fact that Creole is present in the linguistic landscape also demonstrates that decolonization of the linguistic landscape is taking place. In Aruba, the most used written language in the public sphere is English, followed by Papiamento. Dutch is also present in the linguistic landscape. However, it is almost exclusively used for top-down communication. Dutch is often accompanied by another language, usually English or Papiamento. Spanish is least used, and almost exclusively so for bottom-up communication (Bamberger et al. 2016). These findings point at the institutionalized nature of the use of Dutch and confirm its status as a foreign language. With the presence of Creole languages in the linguistic landscapes, they receive an important new characteristic in their LaMa viz. the fact that their visible public representation for broad communication is increasingly socially acceptable.

Agents contribute in different ways to projecting the language in the world beyond the community as part of LaMa. Jamaican Creole arouses the interest of non-speakers and language learners far outside the Caribbean space as a result of the popularity of reggae music (Farquharson 2015). In Aruba, the Papiamento word *dushi* (noun, adjective, and adverb) is used in tourism branding as (part of) the name of tourism companies and in advertising, legitimizing the use of Papiamento as a symbol of a truly Aruban experience. Authors of travel guidebooks provide descriptions of Creole languages which frequently reproduce and perpetuate

colonial stereotypes and this way contribute to LaMa by shaping the way non-speakers conceptualize the languages (Krämer and von Sicard 2020).

Institutional agents are supposed to support LaMa processes for the education system and the media, but they can also be bodies which have the distinct mission to produce linguistic norms, chiefly structural ones. For this purpose, in numerous postcolonial nations norm-creating organisms were founded, for example language academies. In an effort to reduce the normative influence of Spain, many Latin American states created their own academies after independence. Not only their work, but also their mere existence underpins the conceptualization of separable norm varieties which are commonly labeled *Mexican Spanish*, *Argentinian Spanish* or *Peruvian Spanish*.

Several Creole-speaking countries such as Haiti, Aruba, or Mauritius founded academies or similar planning bodies in order to coordinate and implement the standardization of the respective Creole languages (Pereira 2018: 59–60; Stein 2017: 189; Valdman 2015b). The idea of an academy itself is modeled on the original European institutions so that the instrument of LaMa is very similar to those supporting the former colonial languages. Yet, the mission of these institutions is to be a driving force of decolonial LaMa by providing the community with the linguistic backbone to reduce dependency from the former Eurocentric norms. The case of the multiple academies for Spanish highlights that this decolonial effort of emancipation does not necessarily entail a direct antagonism to the norm-regulating institutions in the former colonial nations. Instead, they create a network of co-creation whose joint norms contribute to the concerted making of Spanish (Ridruejo 2019: 202–203).

Aside from national or regional institutions established by the respective postcolonial states or territories, supranational and external institutions participate in LaMa efforts, especially in those targeting the former colonial European languages. The promotion of "worldwide" languages like French by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie or of Dutch by the Taalunie adds to their construction as influential and prestigious. The same holds true for bodies of international cultural diplomacy which are active agents in language teaching and, therefore, LaMa, for instance the Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, or the Instituto Camões. To some extent, the organizations' activities may include the promotion of Creole languages as well. Yet, this often places them in a direct context of the promotion of the former colonial language, which can lead to Creoles being constructed as their linguistic sub-entities – a notion which stands in opposition to emancipatory efforts of LaMa. The potential coloniality of such initiatives by international and external institutions mirrors that of individuals from outside the community who come to contribute to the Creole's LaMa.

# 5 Counteracting LaMa and un-Making Language

The hierarchization of languages along with their speakers during colonial times and the deliberate devaluation of local languages that ensued may seem like an act of un-Making Language. However, we have to bear in mind that even the colonial efforts to mark the languages of the colonized as "less evolved" or "unfit for civilization" are indeed processes of LaMa: They construct conceptual entities out of a set of (alleged) properties. Positioning these entities on a scale of value in relation to other entities – the colonial languages – is an essential part of the LaMa process as this position on a scale is a constitutive element of the characteristics ascribed to the entity. For instance, even though colonial linguists or philologists denied Creole languages the status of languages and labeled them dialects or jargon, this nevertheless is an act of LaMa.

Developments which we can call "counteracting LaMa" or "un-Making Languages" are those which challenge the conceptualization of linguistic entities altogether (Makoni and Pennycook 2006). This does not necessarily happen through open metalinguistic discourse, but it rather becomes apparent in linguistic practices. Many postcolonial societies are highly multilingual, and so are the communicative habits in them. Speakers flexibly move through their linguistic repertoire, disregarding the boundaries of what might be conceptualized by linguists or other speakers as separate linguistic entities and thereby defying the ideological construction of the idealized speaker and their community as monolingual or perfectly diglossic.

Mutz and Patzelt (2018) show how speakers in French Guiana blur the lines between Haitian Creole, French Guiana Creole and French as they activate linguistic resources to signal multipolar dimensions of belonging. As the boundaries between the three languages wane, the speakers challenge long-standing processes of LaMa which constructs them as distinguishable units. Tirvassen and Ramasawmy (2017: 48–49) show effects also in written use which similarly blur the lines between Mauritian Creole and French and thereby challenge the notions of the two as separable linguistic entities. Similarly, they report that "the actual language practices of teachers are far from being guided by the strict categorization of languages" (Tirvassen and Ramasawmy 2017: 48–49). This way, the process of LaMa for standardized Mauritian Creole, specifically intended to be used in education, is subverted by a group of speakers who are usually regarded as prominent carriers of that same process.

Finally, it could be hypothesized that Atlantic English-lexifier Pidgin/Creole is on its way to becoming one of the most widely spoken languages in the world (Faraclas et al. 2019b; Faraclas 2021). This postulate is supported by the existence

of shared linguistic features, impressionistic observations, and speaker perceptions, as well as initial results from testing the claim of pluriareality (as opposed to pluricentricity) with different diagnostic tools (Bartens et al. 2021; Bartens et al. Forthcoming). However, this un-making of labeled languages by linguists and a partially observable community based remaking into a greater entity also constitutes an intervention in terms of academic theory formulation. At the same time, the linguistic practices of this imagined community (Anderson 1983) are already largely made use of at present and can counter elite closure by enabling alternative routes in the flow of information (cf. DeGraff 2014: 284, 311).

## 6 Conclusions

The processes of LaMa as such and the mechanisms behind it are largely similar throughout the world. The specificity of Creole languages in postcolonial societies does not lie in a particular type of LaMa which would be absent from other societies. What is different, though, is the context in which LaMa takes place. It is often perceived as a pressing matter, speakers show a high level of awareness for the dimension of power it carries. Moreover, LaMa in postcolonial societies happens against the backdrop of the former colonial powers: LaMa has been ongoing in Europe for a long time, significant parts of these processes have been institutionalized and the way they pan out provide a strong point of reference for the LaMa processes in postcolonial societies. There is a considerable level of tension between the objective to wrench postcolonial LaMa processes away from influential discourses in Europe and aspirations to preserve the connection for the sake of a desired linguistic unity.

Broadly generalizing, we can distinguish two opposite approaches to LaMa in Creole-speaking societies: measures to maintain the former colonial languages as a means of communication, primarily for formal and prestigious functions, and measures to promote Creole languages so they replace or join the former colonial languages in their functions. In the first case, LaMa either benefits the traditional conception of the dominant languages or it supports the emergence of new, local varieties of henceforth pluricentric languages. In the latter, language policy and planning are frequently employed instruments of officially endorsed processes of LaMa targeting the Creoles. Both types of LaMa can appear at the same time, competing or complementing each other. When comparing the different approaches, it becomes apparent in many postcolonial and Creole-speaking societies that the ideologies of monolingualism or linguistic separation which supports the colonial LaMa processes and which was adopted from the European

ideal of the linguistically homogenous nation, does not fit the needs and realities of the speakers (Blackledge 2000).

LaMa can be decolonial if and when it recognizes the multilingual conditions in which it takes place and incorporates them into the conceptions of linguistic entities it constructs. In many cases, this may lead to the making of linguistic concepts which have fuzzy boundaries and accept multiple effects of contact and variation as part of the norms which emerge in the process. Decolonial LaMa presupposes the constant questioning of one of the concept's core assumptions: the idea of neatly delimited entities or at least the acceptance within the community that these delimitations are arbitrary and permanently renegotiable – in other words, speakers' critical language awareness is a crucial aspect in decolonial LaMa. Decolonial LaMa always requires what Makoni and Pennycook (2006) call the "disinvention" of languages.

An important factor of coloniality of LaMa lies in the fact that Creoles or other local languages are constantly being compared to the established European standard languages. This way, the ideologically entrenched habit of measuring the language against another one – usually one which is constructed as "superior" – is inscribed as a constitutive element of LaMa for the Creole. We can observe, however, that this element of comparison decreases in some settings. The more a LaMa process for a particular language disassociates itself from the former dominant language as an intrinsic point of reference, the more we can speak of a truly decolonizing tendency: The Creole language will then be conceptualized as an autonomous entity whose functional and structural norms are not defined in a dialectic dependency from the former colonizer"s language. Still, where this is a case, deliberate LaMa of Creoles, for instance their introduction in education, does not necessarily serve the sole purpose of expanding the range of its functional or structural norms for the sake of the languages in their own right. Instead, it is often a stepping stone which ultimately facilitates the making of the dominant European language. In these cases, the recognition of the Creole is supposed to pave the way for its speakers (preferably at a young age) towards a better acquisition of the dominant language which maintains its position in society and thereby perpetuates its long-standing LaMa process as the language of privilege and prestige.

While postcolonial societies present prolific opportunities to observe LaMa in process, they may also benefit from a thorough investigation of the ongoing developments. If the practices and reflections behind the LaMa processes are understood and transparent so as to increase metalinguistic knowledge and critical language awareness, this can help support efforts which indeed have decolonizing effects and avoid those which contribute to preserving the long-standing colonial structures. An important question which remains to be discussed is the following: Is LaMa an intrinsically "Western" concept? Does it perform the

description of linguistic conceptualizations with a culturally-bound perspective which falls short of the way speakers in the Global South conceive their own linguistic repertoire? In order to further consolidate the validity of the concept of LaMa – or to determine its shortcomings – the input of scholars with more diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be needed.

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