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Atlas of the languages of Suriname. Edited by Eithne Carlin & Jacques Arends. Caribbean Series 22. KITLV Press. Leiden. 2002. Pp. 345. Soft cover. Euros 37.50; approx \$47.50 USD. [To order, contact kitlvpress@kitlv.nl]
Reviewed by Laurence Goury, IRD (*Institut de Recherche pour le D'veloppement*) Paris

I would like to express my sadness at the untimely death of Jacques Arends, whose work was admired and respected by all. His contribution to the knowledge of the Creoles of Suriname motivated many creolists and deeply influences the work realised in the neighbouring country French Guiana. His kindness and friendship will be deeply missed by those who knew him. The *Atlas of the Languages of Suriname* is not, as the title might suggest, a collection of maps and tables locating and enumerating the languages of Suriname. According to the editors, the term "Atlas" is used here to express "the fact that the present-day population of Suriname is the result of various migrations, from the Amazon, from Africa, India, China, Java and Europe" (Carlin & Arends, p. 1). Amerindian, Creole and Eurasian languages of Suriname, gathered for the first time in the same volume, are described in eleven detailed articles that the editors wanted to make accessible to readers with little or no linguistic training.

Access to the rich information is facilitated by numerous and informative maps, iconographic documents and illustrations. In each chapter, short inserts provide the reader with unusual linguistic facts about the main theme. A glossary of linguistic terms facilitates the reading of the text for nonlinguists. The inclusion of two bibliographies, a general one and a historical one, gives easy access to historical texts written in Sranan and Saramaccan. Unfortunately, equally detailed references for Amerindian languages are not provided. The editors primarily included references to contemporary studies, though a few historical texts, such as travel diaries, are mixed in with the general bibliography.

The book is organized into three parts, in addition to an introduction by the editors, and a prologue by A. Kramp who emphasizes the rich but fragile Surinamese linguistic heritage.

For reasons of space, I will not discuss in any detail the three articles of the first part ("Migrations and identities of the native population of Suriname" by E. Carlin & K. Boven; "The Cariban languages" by E. Carlin; and "The Arawak language" by M-F Patte). However, two points seem worth highlighting here. First, the Amazonian languages, because of their unique morphosyntax that often calls into question the alleged "universals" of language, are of primary interest for understanding human language. The difference between the Amazonian and European perceptions of the world, as expressed in the linguistic structures, give us an idea of "how complex the European / Amerindian encounter actually was, and in most cases still is" (Carlin, p. 51). Second, although discussed only in passing, Maroons and Amerindians in Suriname have been in constant and sometimes very close contact (through trade, conflict, intermarriage, and so on). Evidence thereof is found in the trade language called "Pidgin Ndyuka – Trio" (Carlin, p. 25; Huttar, 1982), and the numerous lexical items that both language groups have adopted from each other. This might shed light on the reasons for the persistence in the Maroon Creoles of several African features (including the large number of ideophones and their semantic diversity, the formal varieties of speech) that, by pure coincidence, also exist in the local Amerindian languages.

The second part is devoted to Creole languages. There is nothing new here to feed the theoretical debates in Creole studies, but this was also not the aim of the book. The authors (Arends, Smith, and Bruyn) present their

divergent theories about the origin of the Surinamese creole languages at some length. While these papers give readers a glimpse of the complexity of the debate, this very complexity may perhaps also confuse readers unfamiliar with the topic.

In “A sociohistorical survey of the Surinamese creoles” (Chap. IV), Arends focuses on the origin of Plantation Sranan and its evolution. This chapter offers a good overview of how multiethnic and multilingual Suriname was, and still is. Arends argues in favor of an English presence in Suriname that would have begun before 1651, and ended after 1680 (see also Arends, 2002). He also favors the view of a mixed origin of the Portuguese element (essentially by the Sephardic Jews coming from Europe, and others from Brazil and Guyana). In this chapter, Arends also revisits the origin of Saramaccan. Contrary to Price (1983), he proposes an English etymology for the name of the main Saramaccan clan: *Matj’au* < *Marshall* (the name of an English Captain),¹ thereby implying that the Saramaccan language formed very early, i.e. before the 1630s. This hypothesis is rejected by Smith in the following chapter, for linguistic and historical reasons. Smith argues that it seems actually very unlikely that the formation of Saramaccan took place before Sranan had stabilized.

In Chapter V “The history of the Surinamese Creoles II: Origin and differentiation”, Smith reasserts his position about the origin of Sranan and the development of the Maroon Creoles (date of birth, origin of the Portuguese elements, incubation period between 1651 and 1665, formation from a Caribbean Plantation Pidgin English).² His analysis is strictly based on linguistic data. In my view, his proposal to date the birth of Plantation Sranan between 1665 and 1670 is the most convincing one, since it takes into account a number of crucial events over an extended period of time (from the very first wave of Maroons – the Karbukrus, whose assimilation to the Kari’na language in Smith’s view proves the non-stabilization of Sranan at that time – to the very last wave of marronage at the beginning of the 19th century). As in Smith (1999, 2000), he shows how the social and linguistic configuration of each present-day Maroon group is intimately linked to the place and the time of their escape.

In Chapter VI, “The structures of the Surinamese Creoles”, Bruyn surveys the basic linguistic structures of the Surinamese Creoles. She describes the lexical domain (words’ origins, words’ formation, composition, reduplication), and some syntactic structures: nominal phrase, verbal phrase (form and function of the TMA markers), serial constructions, etc. The two inserts (by M. Mous & V. Haabo) in this chapter present two special types of language: first, a language game based on Saramaccan, the so-called P-language, which reveals the underlying open syllabic structure of that language when p-’V is inserted between each syllable. Second, samples of a slang called *wakaman tongo* (literally ‘traveler’s language’). Based on Sranan, *wakaman* is used by young men from all different ethnic groups in Paramaribo.³

¹ Arends thus discounts Smith’s proposal of *Matj’au* < Port. *Machado* (common Portuguese family name).

² For diverging views, see Arends (1999, 2002), Ladhams (1999), and Jennings (1999).

³ See Migge (2002) for a study of the different varieties of Suriname Creoles and how these are used as identity markers among the Maroon communities.

In Chapter VII, “Early documents in the Surinamese Creoles”, Arends draws up an inventory of early and quite numerous Surinamese Creole publications. Texts written in Sranan and Saramaccan are well documented. The first ones date from the beginning of the 18th century (the early fragments date back from 1707), and were put together by Moravian missionaries. Regrettably, few if any old texts exist for the other Maroon Creoles. Surprisingly, however, Arends does not make any mention of the early 20th-century Ndyuka texts written in the syllabic system created by Afaka, a Surinamese Ndyuka.⁴ The originality of these texts is such that, in spite of their relatively late date, they would have enriched the discussion.

Part III is devoted to the Surinamese varieties of European and Asian languages. The four papers describe the differences between the “original” and the “American” varieties, and the changes that gave rise to them. The reasons for the changes are multiple and include:

- (a) intense contact with a language of the host country, like Sranan in the case of Surinamese Dutch (Chapter VIII, “Surinamese Dutch” by C. de Kleine);
 - (b) loss of contact with the original language: Surinamese Kejia, for example, maintains archaic forms that are depreciated by the recent Chinese Kejia-speaking immigrants (Chapter IX, “Kejia, a Chinese language in Suriname” by P. B. Tjon Sie Fat);
 - (c) development of a new variant of the language in the Surinamese context, like Sarnami – a koiné motivated by the absence of linguistic homogeneity among the Indian indentured labors (Chapter X, “Sarnami as an immigrant koiné” by T. Damsteegt); and
 - (d) social change: loss of a strict social hierarchy in the Janavese community, for instance, led to changes in the speech styles and their lexical repertoires (Chapter XI, “Javanese speech styles in Suriname” by C. Wolfowitz).
- Unfortunately, the editors did not include a discussion of how Sranan has been affected by these other languages: most of the communities adopted Sranan as their first and/or main interethnic contact language. This has given rise to the emergence of several new varieties of Sranan – varieties that have received little or no systematic attention until now.

In the epilogue, “The languages of Suriname today and tomorrow”, the editors briefly describe Suriname’s multilingual situation. They underline the lack of studies on the sociolinguistic situation of Suriname. There are no studies on code-switching between Sranan and other ethnic languages, nor has anything ever been published on the role played by Sranan, Dutch, English, and so on. To date, the only documents widely distributed in Suriname in and about the Surinamese languages had been written and published by SIL.⁵ The publication of the very nice and informative *Atlas of the Languages of Suriname* thus fills an important gap. It is hoped that it will be widely distributed in Suriname and contribute to “cultural harmony and tolerance among the various ethnic groups of the country” (A. Kramp, p. 7).

⁴ See Dubelaar & Pakosie (1993) for a detailed study of the Afaka script.

⁵ These publications include the *Dictionnaires of Carib, Ndyuka, Saramaccan, Sarnami and Sranan Tongo* – now available on the SIL website. The Bible and many biblical texts are available in Ndyuka, Sranan, Saramaccan, Sarnami, and so forth.

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⁴ See Dubelaar & Pakosie (1993) for a detailed study of the Afaka script.

⁵ These publications include the *Dictionnaires of Carib, Ndyuka, Saramaccan, Sarnami and Sranan Tongo* – now available on the SIL website. The Bible and many biblical texts are available in Ndyuka, Sranan, Saramaccan, Sarnami, and so forth.
