

## IDENTITY YA-YA· EVOLVING ATTITUDES IN CREOLE LOUISIANA

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### 1. Introduction

The confusion which exists concerning the status of the various French groups coexisting in Louisiana is partially attributable to the presence of several varieties of French in the state as well as the mixture of ethnic and racial attributes among the people who speak these varieties. Researchers generally posit the existence of three types of French in Louisiana: Colonial French, Cajun French, and Creole French.<sup>1</sup>

Colonial French is the name given to the variety of French spoken by the earliest inhabitants of the colony, and it is sometimes claimed that this language was identical to the French spoken in France at the time. Historical evidence, however, shows that there were differences in the spoken languages even then, due to the various dialectal regions in France from which the colonists immigrated. While it is generally noted that Colonial French is extinct in the state, it is more accurate to say that the dialect (and the people who spoke it) did not die out *per se*, but rather adapted to other forms of French which were brought into the colony.

The largest existing French-speaking group in Louisiana today is composed of the descendants of the Acadians expelled from *L'Acadie* (present-day Nova Scotia, Canada) during a period beginning in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and continuing for the next fifty years. Some of these exiles were scattered along the east coast of the American colonies, some were sent back to France, others were exported to Haiti, but the majority ended up in the Louisiana territory. Today's Louisiana Cajuns (a phonological adaptation of the word 'Acadian') still speak French, although the number of remaining fluent speakers is the subject of intense debate, and there are few schools and no media or religious services which use French today. Although there are efforts underway to revive the language, they are mostly culturally based, and language attrition is readily apparent in the community.

The third strand of the French ancestry and language groups in the state is the Creoles. As far as the language is concerned, the Creole spoken by this group today is unlike other Creoles around the world because of its unique genesis (Marshall 1990, 1997, Speedy, 1995, Klingler 1997). As is argued in Dubois and Melançon (1998), the French spoken by Creoles in Louisiana today is a mixture of the vernacular spoken by the founding population of the colony and a mixture and restructuring of the multiple French varieties used in the state throughout its history. In the cultural and social domains, the received view of the word 'Creole' in Louisiana is manifold, and encompasses a variety of racial and ethnic attributes. Dominguez (1986: 95) poses a very important question when she asks "how is it possible for there to be no clear consensus about the racial identity of the Creole population in a state as persistent as Louisiana in defining its racial structure?" With the exception of Neumann (1985) and Klingler (1992), very little research has been done on this community. The definitions which follow show how the term has evolved throughout time, the research done for this paper explores the ramifications of this evolution and how it has affected African-Americans claiming Creole ancestry in Louisiana today.

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<sup>1</sup>This division ignores two other groups: the people who have learned or attempted to learn the school-taught variety of French as a second language, as well as the French-speaking Native American populace in the state.

- Larousse dictionary (1869) - 'those born in, or native to, the local populace' (Dominguez 1986)
- Cable (1910) - 'any native, of French or Spanish descent by either parent, whose non-alliance with the slave race entitled him to social rank. Later, the term was adopted by - not conceded to - the natives of mixed blood, and is still so used among themselves'
- Larousse dictionary (1929) - 'used as a noun, Creole correctly designates only a Caucasian population' (Dominguez 1986)
- Lane (1935) - '(this) dialect is spoken by the negro population of French Louisiana and is known as Creole. (This is) actually a misnomer (since the adjective Creole applied properly to persons of pure white race)'
- Mills (1977) - '(A)ny person born in the colony of French or Spanish descent (with the sole exclusion of the Acadian exiles, popularly called Cajuns). The term will not be limited to Louisianians of pure-white descent'
- Dominguez (1986) - 'Creole designates a racially undifferentiated category of all those Louisianians with at least some French or Spanish ancestry. Whites may be Creoles, as may nonwhites'
- Scott (1992) - 'The Creoles, who maintain a dialect and culture separate from that of the Cajuns, are nevertheless erroneously regarded as synonymous with Cajuns'
- Eble (1993) - 'Thus today the term creole has no one agreed meaning. The only element in common among the groups to whom the word applied is an ancestry of non-Acadian French speakers'
- Hall (1992) - 'Creole has come to mean the language and the folk culture that was native to the southern part of Louisiana where African, French, and Spanish influence was most deeply rooted historically and culturally'
- Informant 114 from this study - 'Creole doesn't really have anything to do with race. It's more a difference in culture and heritage'

These definitions serve to point up the fact that the fluid boundaries of this community, which began with a racially undifferentiated conception of Creole, have since changed, and the term has acquired a variety of connotations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, yielding identity 'ya-ya'. In this paper, the status and identity of African-Americans claiming Creole ancestry are explored and analyzed vis-a-vis the extensive social and economic changes undergone by this group since its inception. A brief history of the evolution of the colony will be presented to aid in interpreting the results of the study. Next, the methodology used to collect the data will be described, and a synopsis of the communities investigated will be given. Finally, significant results are presented and analyzed, and future directions for research are explored.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. History

In 1682, a vast area in the present-day United States was claimed for France by the explorer Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, and named in honor of the French king Louis XIV. The purchase of this area would eventually be acknowledged as the largest (and slickest) real estate deal conducted by the fledgling United State of America. Prior to the American purchase, however, the area was the site of a

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<sup>2</sup>This research would not have been possible the respondents in the two communities investigated nor without the aid of Dr. Sylvie Dubois and graduate students in her field methods class at Louisiana State University. In addition, some of the results in this paper have been published in Dubois and Melancon (2000).

## nonstop struggle between France and Spain

In the beginning of the colony, and before the practice of using only blacks as slaves had been strongly established (prior to this, almost any race or ethnic group could be indentured and used in the capacity of a slave), laying claim to one racial group or another did not have the importance it acquired later. As Hall (1992: 98) so appropriately noted, "French (Louisiana) was a brutal, violent place. Mere survival was on the line, and notions of racial and/or cultural and national superiority were a luxury in the attempt to eke out an existence." As blacks began to be used exclusively in the positions of menial labor and consequently acquired a low social status, however, it became more fashionable and, economically speaking, more sensible, to distance oneself from any possibility of being considered black. This picture was complicated by several issues. The first was that miscegenation between whites and blacks was occurring in the colony from its genesis. Colonial authorities attempted to end the practice, but, with the more permissive attitude of the times, few women available, and social acceptance of the practice, it continued unabated for many years (Fairclough 1995). The offspring of these unions were referred to as 'mulatto', and their addition to the colony led to the establishment of a tripartite racial classification system composed of white, colored and black people (Dominguez 1986, Hall 1992, Fairclough 1995). The mulattos were often manumitted, and comprised the fairly large middle-class of merchants and vendors established in the New Orleans area in the early years of the colony. This group adapted the French customs and language, and began to constitute a sizeable and not unimportant facet of early Louisiana society. It is at this time that the word 'Creole' first appears, and it served to designate first generation, native-born colonists, European settlers, black slaves, free people of color, immigrants and the offspring of racially mixed unions in documents such as marriage, death and birth certificates. So the groundwork was laid for the term to include both races, and, even though whites later viewed it as an impediment to social advancement, blacks never sought to distance themselves from this term, finding instead that it brought them some measure of economic and social prestige.

The process of the establishment of a Creole 'elite' which included both mulattos and whites continued during the brief Spanish reign of the colony.<sup>3</sup> Although the inhabitants reacted with hostility to the taxes and impositions placed on them by the Spanish crown, it was at this point in time that "free persons of African descent made their greatest advances in terms of demographics, privileges, responsibilities, and social standing" (Hanger 1996: 2). In direct contrast to the enslaved blacks, the mulattos, also called the *gens de couleur libre* (free people of color) came to acquire an exceptional degree of wealth, education and freedom. The term Creole at this time applied to both whites and these free blacks, both of whom occupied almost the same rung in the social and economic ladder of colonial Louisiana.<sup>4</sup>

This changed rapidly and radically with the approach of the American rule of the colony. The area was bought from France in 1803 (Spain had traded it back earlier) and achieved statehood in 1812. With statehood came hordes of land-hungry Anglophones and the beginning of a differentiation in the racial classification system in the state. The new Anglophone inhabitants were contemptuous of the native French colonists, and the ethnic gulf was widened by religious, cultural, geographic and linguistic

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<sup>3</sup>The French ceded the area to Spain in 1762 as spoils-of-war.

<sup>4</sup>Although the Acadian settlers fleeing Nova Scotia had arrived by this time, they never adapted to, nor were they ever given access to, the term or the cultural traits of the Creoles. For the most part, they settled in extremely isolated communities where they maintained their former way of life.

divisions between the two groups. In addition, the easy acceptance of interracial relationships and the lack of marked differences between the two racial groups already inhabiting the area did not sit well with the new arrivals. Due both to the influence of the Anglophones and the changing situation in the country as a whole, the division between whites and those with any African ancestry at all became more and more marked. Although the free people of color (referred to as Afro-Creoles in recent research) retained some of their former influence and economic power, both declined rapidly. This rapid 'fall from grace' was aided and abetted by legal sanctions. Laws were passed making interracial unions a crime, and the demand for *sang pur* (pure blood) became the rallying cry for whites seeking to distance themselves from the 'taint' of black blood. The so-called 1/32<sup>nd</sup> law came into existence, requiring proof of pure white blood for at least five generations in order to be classified as white. The approach of the Civil War heightened tensions considerably between the races, and white Creoles in increasing numbers began to dissociate themselves from the Afro-Creoles and to adopt both the language and the customs of the newly arrived Anglophones, leaving those with African heritage as the repository for the Creole language and culture in the state.

The aftermath of the Civil War - the total economic disarray, the massive destruction of social and political institutions, and the inept bungling on the part of the newly installed 'Yankee' politicians - kept Louisiana in chaos for many years. Racial polarization between the white and colored/black populations became even more acute with the emergence and rapid growth of racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and Knights of the White Camellia. The freed slaves and the Afro-Creoles were thrown together in the eyes of the white community and were seen as the 'common enemy' of whites, and both occupied the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder until well after the Civil Rights movement. In addition, as Fairclough remarks (1995: 17), for both the white and black groups in the state, the distinction between Afro-Creoles with French ancestry and the black Americans without French ancestry "became increasingly blurred through intermarriage, social mobility, the decline of the French language, and the sheer weight of white supremacy."

Louisiana's laws of racial classification were expanded in 1940 to say that "any degree of traceability was sufficient for Negro classification" (Brasseaux, Fontenot and Oubre, 1994: 123), and remained in place until 1970, when the state legislature passed an act again stating that 1/32<sup>nd</sup> black blood was sufficient for African-American identification.<sup>5</sup> Between being legally and socially forced into choosing between being black or white, and the colossal effect that the Civil Rights struggle exerted on America's black population during the 1950's, 60's and 70's, an increasing number of Afro-Creoles began to look at black identification as a "badge of honor" (Brasseaux *et al* 1994: 124).

The changes imposed on the Louisiana Creole community have not been without effect. Special tabulations made by the U.S. Census bureau show that, of the 6,310 people who claim to speak Creole French at home, 89% also claim to be black (Dubois and Melançon 2000). This fact, along with the sociohistorical changes described above, led to the decision to use only African-Americans as a basis for this study of the community.

### 3. Methodology

To determine the synchronic effects of the diachronic changes experienced by African-Americans

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<sup>5</sup>The 1970 act was rescinded in 1983 after being contested in court. The Louisiana Bureau of Vital Statistics today relies on racial self-identification and the assistance of social workers and nurses to establish race for newborns (personal communication with the director of LBVS).

with Creole ancestry, a survey was conducted in two Creole communities (Breux Bridge in St Martin Parish and Opelousas in St Landry Parish) in south Louisiana. Census bureau statistics showed that a large proportion of people in these areas claimed to speak Louisiana Creole French (LCF) at home and that each of these parishes (called 'counties' in the other 49 states) contained the largest percentage of African-Americans in the southern part of the state.

Opelousas has experienced many of the changes which larger cities have undergone in twentieth century America. The extended family structure is no longer as strong as it once was. Family members have moved away from farms and into town to have better job and educational opportunities. Dual working-parent households are common and young children are often put in daycare or preschool, rather than being cared for by a family member. The racial situation in Opelousas has also changed considerably. Traditionally considered a white Cajun community, this area has acquired a much stronger black and Creole identity in the past thirty years.<sup>6</sup>

In Breux Bridge French language use among young people and children was and is still much more prevalent than in Opelousas, and a few families have children who are monolingual in Creole French until they attend school and receive instruction in English. Family structure in the Breux Bridge area tends to be more close-knit than that of Opelousas. Several generations often live together in one house, or nearby on family land which has been passed down from one generation to the next. The grandparents or great-grandparents are usually the care givers, yielding opportunities for young children to be exposed to the Creole French spoken by their older relatives. Due to both socially imposed and voluntary isolation from the larger Anglophone population in the state, however, as well as the effects of well-entrenched racial discrimination, both the Breux Bridge and Opelousas Creole communities have maintained their integrity and close social ties.

The randomly chosen sample of 240 African-Americans was divided by age, gender and geographic region, and is shown in Table 1. Three age groups were established: a) 20-39 years of age, b) 40-59 years of age, c) 60 and older, yielding 80 respondents for each age group. The questionnaires were also equally distributed among the sexes, 120 females and 120 males. In addition, 120 individuals from each area were interviewed, and 75% of the sample (180 people) claimed Creole ancestry.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire which was verbally administered. Since there is a high level of illiteracy in the state, it was felt that it would be less of an imposition to simply ask the questions, rather than assume reading ability. The survey instrument consisted of 46 questions about issues such as education, attitudes toward Louisiana Creole French (LCF), the teaching and learning of LCF and other French dialects, Creole identity, type of social network, and degree of exposure to LCF. The questionnaire was developed using a template from Dubois (1997), it was subsequently modified after analyzing the results obtained from piloting it with open-ended questions and including the suggestions and comments of the pilot respondents. Although xenophobic attitudes have been attributed to the French population in Louisiana by some researchers, none were experienced during this project. Very few refusals were encountered, with lack of time being the most common reason for non-participation. The response to the investigation was overwhelmingly positive, and many respondents

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<sup>6</sup>This is evidenced by the fact that both the Louisiana International Goat Festival and the Zydeco Music Festival are held in the area. Both are sponsored by the Southern Development Foundation, a Creole activist group which pushes for acknowledgment of the African-American heritage of Louisiana's Creoles.

volunteered additional contacts, telephoned relatives and friends, and suggested other areas for investigation. Once the fieldwork was done, the responses were coded and entered into a computer database. StatView 4.5 was used as a statistical tool and results were obtained using cross-tabulations and stepwise regression analysis.

Table 1 The Creole Stratified Sample

THE CREOLE STRATIFIED SAMPLE			
FACTORS	BREAUX BRIDGE	OPELOUSAS	TOTAL
Women 20-39	20	20	40
Women 40-59	20	20	40
Women 60+	20	20	40
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>120</i>
Men 20-39	20	20	40
Men 40-59	20	20	40
Men 60+	20	20	40
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>120</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>240</b>

**4 Results**

Results are presented below from questions about identity (§4 1), the criteria necessary to be considered Creole (§4 2), and the quality of Creole French and type of French best for Louisiana (§4 3)

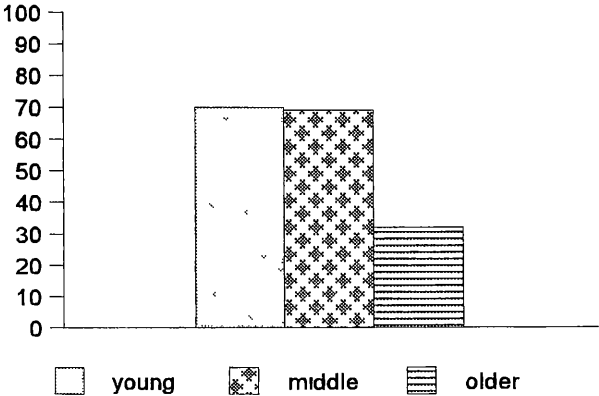
4 1 Table 2 shows the identification chosen by the respondents. 57 percent claim African-American identity, 22 percent chose the American label, 10 percent claim to be Creole-American, while only 8 percent of the respondents claim the label Creole.

Table 2 Self-Identification

Identity Labels	#	%
African American	137	57
American	52	22
Creole-American	25	10
Creole	18	8
Other	8	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100</b>

The results presented in Figure 1 indicate that age has a strong influence upon identification as African-American. There is a clear distinction between those under sixty and those over sixty. The younger and middle age groups tend to adopt the African-American label more than the older age groups.

Figure 1



4.2 Table 3 illustrates criteria deemed necessary to be considered a true Creole by the informants. Creole ancestry has been selected by a majority of the respondents as the most important defining characteristic of Creole identity (78%). Having grandparents and parents who speak French is also considered a major criterion. A majority also list having some sort of linguistic ability in French as relatively important, as is shown by the fact that 60 percent claimed this, of these, only 53 percent claim that speaking specifically Creole French is necessary as a criterion for identity. Interestingly, having learned Creole French as a first language is seen as important by only 36 percent of the informants. Living in a Creole area or in Louisiana seems to be relatively unimportant as criteria for Creole membership.

Table 3 Criteria

<b>IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED A TRUE CREOLE, IT IS NECESSARY TO</b>					
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	
have Creole ancestors	188	<b>78</b>	52	<b>22</b>	240
have parents/grand-parents who speak Cr French	180	<b>75</b>	60	<b>25</b>	240
speak some form of French	145	<b>60</b>	95	<b>40</b>	240
speak Creole French	126	<b>53</b>	114	<b>47</b>	240
live in Louisiana	102	<b>43</b>	138	<b>57</b>	240
learn Cr French as a first language	86	<b>36</b>	154	<b>64</b>	240
live in a Creole town	80	<b>33</b>	160	<b>67</b>	240
to be a certain race	48	<b>20</b>	192	<b>80</b>	240
to be a member of a certain religion	18	<b>7</b>	222	<b>93</b>	240

As is also shown in Table 3, the criterion of race is viewed by 80 percent of the respondents as being an unimportant facet of Creole membership. These results show that the informants do not attach a specific race label to the Creole identity, and are rather striking given the history of the term 'Creole' in the state. Of the 48 respondents who replied 'yes' to the question of race, 32 people (13.4% of the total sample) said that a marker of being Creole was to be mixed racially, 16 people (6.6% of the total sample) said that only African-Americans can identify themselves as Creole. In a secondary research project undertaken in the Acadiana region around Lafayette, Louisiana, 70 white people were asked about the race criterion. Of these, 90% (63 of the 70) said that claiming to be Creole meant that one was mixed racially or was African-American, and only 10 percent (7 people) stated that to be considered Creole one has to be 'white'.

Some researchers have claimed that religion was and still is a very necessary part of the Creole identity. In fact, some even claim that this is the *only* vestige of Creole identity remaining in the populace. According to the results shown in Table 3, however, 93 percent of the respondents selected the criterion of religion as being the least important. The 18 people who said it was important said, as expected, that being Catholic was necessary to be considered Creole. Many respondents did note, however, that 'in the old days' being a Catholic would have been considered a very important marker of Creole identity.

4.3 The already small population of fluent Creole speakers is shrinking, there are no schools which teach this variety, and, although results have not been completely tabulated, very few of the older, fluent speakers use the language with the younger relatives or friends. There has been no overt language revival effort, and very low visibility of Creole activists in general, other than those attempting to preserve and



expand Zydeco music.<sup>7</sup> Given these factors, one would expect the attitude of this populace to be one of uncaring. In fact, the results of this study show just the opposite. When asked about the quality of Creole French, responses given indicate that Creole French is considered as good as the school taught variety by 154 of the informants (67%). Contrary to results presented in Dubois et al (1995), in which the respondents claimed that Standard French was more highly valued, the informants in this study showed a more relaxed attitude toward other varieties of French (with the exception of Cajun French) than did the Cajuns in that study. When asked about what type of French was best for Louisiana, 64% of the respondents chose Creole as the best, followed by 27% who chose standard, and 8% who chose Cajun.

## 5 Discussion

Dominguez (1986) discusses the current situation of Louisiana's Creoles and echoes the historical tripartite division of races (discussed in Section 2) when she suggests that three key terms come into play when working with labels of identity in Louisiana today: black, creole and white. Her claim is that "Louisianians manipulate their own and other peoples' identities by playing with the available labels *subject to their current meanings*" (Dominguez (1986: 265)). This claim is borne out in the research presented here. It has been shown that the traditional definitions of what it means to be Creole no longer hold. There has been an evolution of the term throughout time and those who self-identify as Creole today no longer hold to the traditional definitions assigned to Creole in the early days of the colony. Instead, they have reformulated their identity based on current perceptions of their culture and language. The fact that their language is not being passed on to the younger generations and that correspondingly fewer people speak it, along with acceptance of the reduced role of religion in their society (and society in general) has led to Creole *ancestry* assuming primary importance in self-ascription as Creole.

The racial and ethnic characteristics seen as important by the respondents for claiming Creole identity are also a reflection of the historical evolution of the group. The admixture of racial and ethnic groups in Louisiana is a well-accepted fact and has existed since the founding of the colonies in the 1600's. Though not legally recognized by law, marriage between blacks and whites occurred throughout the history of the state, and many couples who were never legally married produced children. In addition, first generation immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Spain, and various South American and Caribbean countries intermarried with Louisiana's colonial populace, as did the surviving Native Americans in the region. Although whites in the state today may choose to attach the requirement of African heritage to the term Creole, due to the social pressures exerted on them since before, during, and after the Civil War, blacks see no need to claim that race is a necessary and sufficient condition for being considered Creole. Rather, the emphasis is on ancestry. It may be that, due to the historical processes previously described, the very fact that one has Creole ancestry ensures that one also has had an African admixture into his or her genotype, leaving aside the necessity to claim that one has a particular race in order to be Creole. This is confirmed by the results showing that only 6.6 percent of the total sample said that one has to be African-American to identify as Creole.

This also helps explain the dichotomy presented by the fact that the respondents in this survey

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<sup>7</sup>This musical style is perhaps the most visible symbol of the Creole community in Louisiana. It is heavily promoted, and even those with Creole ancestry but who are not involved in the Creole community claim this as an important facet of their heritage.

overwhelmingly identify themselves as African-American rather than Creole, even though Creole ancestry was the defining reason for their participation in the survey. Although the informants were willing to ascribe certain attributes as necessary in order to claim Creole identity, they themselves did not personally adopt this label. A majority of the respondents seem to attach no racial connotation to the term Creole, and apparently view it as a cultural trait, whereas the African-American label serves to differentiate racial traits. Undoubtedly another driving force behind the choice of identifying as African-American is the tremendous effect exerted on the black population in the United States since the Civil Rights movement. This was shown clearly in the results of those claimed black identity in this survey. The younger and middle age groups who were raised in the environment of pride in black heritage are reflecting the social changes which the American society at-large has undergone in the past thirty years. The older respondents, who see no value in buying into the black pride movement at this point in time, are content to call themselves Creole. The fact that so few African-Americans with French ancestry see the need to be geographically based in Louisiana is probably due to the fact that a substantial number of Louisiana Creoles have out-migrated (particularly to California) in recent years for economic and social reasons.

The pride evinced in Creole heritage, however, is shown by the results on the quality and importance of the Creole French language, although these results are surprising given that so few people claim to speak Creole French in the state (6,310 out of a total population of 4,219,973). Favorable attitudes toward a language are necessary for its maintenance, but their presence does not guarantee the continuity of the speech community. Preliminary results using this research to establish the linguistic environment of the respondents in this study (Dubois and Melancon 1998) have been verified, although anecdotally, by the respondents themselves; these results show that it is the older speakers who use the language most often. The linguistic network of the older speakers includes French-speaking relatives, friends, siblings and offspring, whereas the network of the younger speakers is much more restricted. Restriction of linguistic domains, although not necessarily a harbinger of language death, certainly points to language attrition, which is only exacerbated by the small number of speakers and the lack of language transfer between generations.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The overall results of the survey show that a majority of the respondents believe that Creole French is quite acceptable and should be included in some fashion in the teaching of French in the state. In addition, Creole French is viewed as being as good as Standard French and is seen as being the best type of French for the state by those who speak the language. Creole identity seems to hinge most of all upon ancestry, having older relatives who speak or spoke Creole and speaking some form of French, and least of all upon a particular race or religion. In spite of these apparently positive feelings about the language and culture, the smallest percentage of the sample actually identifies as Creole despite the fact that 75 percent of the sample could identify as Creole, if they chose to. The age-gradation shown in the choice of identity as Creole (the younger and middle age groups chose this label more often) is undoubtedly due to the strong effect which the Civil Rights movement has had upon the people in those age groups.

An extensive study of the language should be undertaken as soon as possible. It is evident that without considerable and rapid reinforcement of the language (and culture) that one or both will be gone within the next generation of speakers. Results from a language study could be correlated with the analyses presented in this study in order to gain a more complete picture of the Louisiana Creole community and the fluid boundaries encapsulating this group.

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