Jean Le Dû et Guylaine Brun-Trigaud

Paris: Éditions du CTHS.

Lexical description of French-based creoles in America, which has advanced remarkably in the last decades, has made another considerable step forward with the publication of the *Atlas linguistique des Petites Antilles* by Jean Le Dû and Guylaine Brun-Trigaud (ALPA). After Dominique Fattier’s *Atlas linguistique d’Haïti* (ALH, 1998), this is the second linguistic atlas for the region and the fourth for a French-based creole, the first one being the *Atlas linguistique et ethnographique de la Réunion* (ALRé, Carayol, Chaudenson and Barat 1984–1995).\(^1\) Compared to its forerunners, the ALPA is more modest in size: the data were elicited by means of a questionnaire of 466 items and are presented in two volumes with 414 maps and 232 lists, whereas the questionnaire for the three volumes of ALRé comprised more than 4,000 items, set out on 845 maps with extensive lists of additional data (“notices”) in the margin. The six volumes of ALH contain 1,752 maps based on a questionnaire of 2,227 items, the remaining answers being presented in text format or entries in the commentaries in volumes I and II. The limited scope of ALPA is largely compensated by the outstanding quality of its documentation. In my view the number of maps is perfectly sufficient to achieve the specific aims of a linguistic atlas, which will be discussed below. The fieldwork was done under the guidance of Robert Damoiseau by students of the University of Antilles-Guyane, who also transcribed the tapes. A network of 47 points covers the islands of Saint-Martin, Saint-Barthélemy, Guadeloupe (16 points, including the adjacent islands of La Désirade, Les Saintes and Marie-Galante), Dominica (8 points), Martinique (12 points), St. Lucia (8 points), and Trinidad. The original plan to explore French

\(^1\) The second one is the *Atlas linguistique et ethnographique de l’île Rodrigues* by R. Chaudenson *et al.*, of which only vol. III appeared in 1992 (Paris, ACCT). For ALRé and ALH see my reviews in *RLiR* 51 (1987), 249–251 and *JPCL* 18/1 (2002), 134–139.
Guiana as well could not be realized, but Jo-Anne Ferreira has been able to interview two speakers of Karipuna French Creole residing in the town of Oiapoque (point 48) on the Brazilian bank of the river Oyapock, which forms the border between French Guiana and Brazil. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be noted that Oiapoque is not a “ville créolophone” (p. 17): the two informants come from Kumarumã in the state of Amapá, a village which is in fact “créolophone” (see below).

The questionnaire (vol. I, pp. 331–335) was set up by Jean Le Dû. It is ordered according to semantic domains: nature, weather, plants, fruits, domestic / wild animals, time, space, quantity, human body, clothing, qualities, family, house, food and drink, occupations, social relations, beliefs. It consists of basic vocabulary, including names of realities typical of the Antillean environment, as well as simple sentences permitting easy comparison (“facilitant la comparaison”) and providing data for grammatical analyses, e.g. q. 181 “prends un peu de riz”, q. 153: “maintenant, je vais au marché”, q. 209 “il est tombé dans la rivière”, q. 55 “auparavant, on râpait le manioc”, q. 466 “le curé dit que tout le monde ira au cimetière”, q. 429 “si je gagnais à la loterie, j’achèterais une belle moto”. A few “open questions” invited speakers to provide names of “different kinds of beans” (542), “names of known shells” (150), “human phenotypes” and “types of hair” (378–404). The data elicited by these questions were presented in the form of wordlists. The authors stress that the ALPA is conceived as a mainly linguistic atlas (“un atlas principalement linguistique”) and that ethnographic research like that undertaken for the ALRé was beyond their means. However, the ethnographic aspect was not neglected, the wordlists 378–404 of ALPA (“human phenotypes and types of hair”) compare well with the maps 419–424 of ALRé, and the information on obeah, seance leaders, soothsayers, evil spirits, etc. provided on maps 589–596 is not inferior to that found on the corresponding maps of ALRé (e.g. 515 “Un sorcier”, 516 “Un devin”, 518 “Ensorceler”, 520 “Âmes mauvaises”, 521 “Parole de mauvaise augure”).

The enquête was conducted from 2000 to 2007 with 92 informants, 60 men and 32 women; the oldest persons were born in 1904 and 1905 respectively, 14 in the 1920s, 21 in the 1930s, 19 in the 1960s and 10 in the 1970s (see the list in vol. I, pp. 24–28). There was one principal informant in each locality; some were assisted by members of their family or neighbours. Some informants were

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2 Numbers refer to maps or wordlists.
monolingual or had difficulties speaking French, but the majority had attended primary school and there were only a few illiterates (5 in Guadeloupe). The younger ones had a good level of education, some of them a university degree. The most frequent occupations were farmer, fisherman, mason, carpenter, cook, storekeeper, seamstress, but among the interviewees were also five teachers, a librarian and an engineer.

The data obtained in fieldwork were classified in view of their presentation on maps or in the form of lists, the main criterion being the length of the item – the danger of making the maps illegible was carefully avoided; most of them are easy to survey, with a few exceptions: 106 “dirty animals”, 332 “she straightens her hair”, 420 “I have a headache”, 421 “I have a sore throat”, 462 “he sings out of tune”. The decision to present about one third of the entries in the form of wordlists is a great advantage for the user because the data are much easier to scrutinize. The authors then proceeded to separate lexical data from those pertaining to grammar, the latter being treated in chapters XI (vol. I, 289–333) and XXII (vol. II, 609–646). The data are presented on the maps and in the wordlists in a broad transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet. This has the great advantage over the French transcription system designed for the Atlas linguistique de la France (ALF, Gilliéron and Edmont, 1902–1912), used also in ALRé and ALH, in that most potential users are familiar with IPA and that the symbols are available on computers (however, in the following quotations I shall use the orthographic spelling adopted by the authors for their indexes, see vol. I, pp. 29–30 and vol. II, pp. 335–403). On the other hand, it was a good choice to follow the French tradition of presenting the raw data (“les données brutes”) on the maps and in the lists. However, the authors also chose the alternative of interpretative maps (“cartes interprétatives”): “Nous avons souhaité, grâce aux facilités que nous apporte l’informatique, marier les deux perspectives en joignant aux cartes de données brutes des commentaires, voire des cartes interprétatives” (vol. I, p. 30). As a matter of fact, interpretative maps are provided not only for the maps, but also for many wordlists (cf. 37, 149, 163, 164, 168, 203, 207, 258, 277 365, 371, 372, 380, 382, 383, 386, 387, etc.). On the interpretative maps, dots of different colours serve as symbols for the different lexemes, phonetic or grammatical features. The interpretative maps are the most noteworthy feature of the ALPA: I have counted 92 in the grammatical and 437 in the lexical chapters, about one fourth of these illustrating phonetic features, for instance:

- Palatalization: 77 “quenette”: kënet, tjënêt, tchénêt, chênêt; 116 “guêpe”: gëp, djëp, djêp; 140 “requin”: réken, rétjen/wétjen, rétchen; 45 “légumes”: légim, léjim lédjim (cf. also 125, 331, 352).
Nasalization: 222 “tourner”: touné vs Mart.4 tounen (progressive nasalization, also attested in the most Southern point of Dominica and two points in the North of St. Lucia). On map 335 “nez” the emerging picture is less clear: né is the only form attested in Guadeloupe and in Northern Dominica, whereas from the South of Dominica down to St. Lucia nen is the dominant variant, but né also occurs.

Distribution of [r-] ~ [w-]: 105 “rat” and 122 “cafard”: Gua. and Mart. rat, ravèt vs Dom. and StLuc. wat, wavèt.

Reflexes of the French diphthong <oi> : 174 “soir”: the most widespread forms are swè, oswè; swa occurs in Guadeloupe, but the adjacent islands of Les Saintes and Marie-Galante have the older form swè (see also 124 “oiseau” and 134 “poissons”).

Final consonants: 197 “minuit”: minüi, minwi without final -t in Gua. and Mart. vs minuit, mennüit in Dom. and minwit, mennüit in StLuc. with final -t; 191 “juillet”: jüiyé, jwiyé, jüyé, jiyé in Gua. and Mart. vs jwiyèt, jiyèt, jouyèt in Dom. and StLuc.

The variation [wa] ~ [wɛ] and the retention of final -t in the name of the month j(w)iyèt ‘July’ are among the features which can be traced back to the regional lects of the French colonists, a fact which is illustrated by maps from the ALF. Twelve such maps, chosen and designed by Guylaine Brun-Trigaud, figure in vol. I (18, 28, 114, 134, 174, 181, 188–192, 267). One of them is particularly interesting and deserves a short digression: Map 28 “it’s going to rain” shows that all informants produced the construction type ‘rain will fall’: lapli kay tonbé / ké tonbé / ka tonbé, Kar. i kè tonbé lapli. Constructions of the same type occur also in Louisiana, Haitian (lapli ap tonbé ‘it’s raining’), and Indian Ocean creoles (Reunion Creole la pli i tonb, Mauritian and Seychellois lapli pé tonbè), and a similar construction with the verb ‘fall’ is found in Northern and Western France: il tombe de la pluie, il choit de la pluie, etc., as is shown on the ALF map in ALPA 28. “Raining constructions” are one of the features chosen for the Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (Susanne M. Michaelis et al., 2013, chapter 65). Discussing the “Origins of the different constructions”, Michaelis observes:

As already mentioned, the construction of value 1 (‘rain falls’) is by far the most frequent construction in the APiCS languages and is found in all areas of the world. Eriksen et al. (2010) observe that this construction is also widespread world-wide. Despite this fact, there is good evidence for

4 The abbreviations will be explained at the end of the text.
substrate influence in this particular ‘raining’ construction. Koopman (1986) and Lefebvre (1998) have pointed out the parallel syntactic constructions in West African languages, in particular in Fongbe, which is one of the most important substrates for Haitian Creole [...] Similar constructions are found in Bantu languages, giving rise to the same structures, for instance, in the French creoles of the Indian Ocean (p. 257).

This example shows that the origin of a creole construction “found in all areas of the world”, in West African and East African Bantu languages is not easy to determine, when a similar construction also exists in the regions of France where the colonists came from. It should be noted, however, that Bantu origin for the expression in Reunion Creole is highly unlikely – an important argument for those who might think that this is not a very convincing case of substrate influence after all.

To get back to the alpa: A perusal of the two volumes shows that in many cases the maps visualize a clear-cut geographic distribution, e.g.

27 “nuage”: Gua. and Mart. nijaj vs Dom. and StLuc. nwaj;
340 “menton”: Gua., Mart., and Kar. maton vs Dom. and StLuc. manton; maton is obviously the older form, it stems from a variant attested in Normandy, cf. FEW 6/1, 753a: Andelis, sair. maton, Jersey motô [‘menton’].
112 “araignée”: Gua. zarégné, zarigné vs Dom., Mart., StLuc. zagriyen, zag-wiyé, zagwiyen with [g];
171 “jusqu’au matin”: Gua. jou, jous, jis vs jik on the other islands, where, it is true, sporadic variants with [-s] also occur, whereas no variant with [-k] is found in Guadeloupe.

However, there are many entries where the absence of an interpretative map suggests that cartographic presentation was not worthwhile: On the one hand, several maps do not show any significant lexical or phonetic variation (e.g. 14 “savannah”: savann; 44 “coconut palm”: pyékoko; 47 “tamarind”: tamaren; 66 “pineapple”: zannanna; 71 “shaddock”: chadék; 74 “tangerine”: mandarin; 83 “ox”: bèf; 110 “gecko”: mabouya). On the other hand, there are many maps where different, sometimes numerous lexical types do not form any discernable patterns, e.g. 118 “mosquito”: moustik and marengwen occur on all islands, often given as synonyms; 3 “coast”: kòt, lakòt, bò(đ)lammé, kay, rivaj, litoral, etc.; 21 “it is very hot”: ka fè tèlman / trè / byen cho, ka fè cho menm / anpil / toubònman / bon mak la, ni bon chalè, chalè la lévé, chalè la rèd, etc.

All maps and lists are accompanied with annotations (“commentaires”), highlighted with different colours: green for lexical, blue for phonetic, grey for grammatical explanations. The lexical notes refer to the distribution of word types on the map and to etymology, with numerous references to the FEW; in
some cases detailed encyclopedic information on plants or animals is added, e.g. *kolibri* ‘humming bird’ (127; cf. also 43, 50, 65, 72, 75, etc.). “Exotic” fruits and animals are illustrated with photos. Another praiseworthy feature of the ALPA are its indexes: each volume contains an index of concepts (“index des notions”) in three languages (French, English, Portuguese), vol. II a French-creole index with card titles in bold type (pp. 335–358) and a creole-French index (pp. 359–403) of remarkable exhaustiveness, compiled with particular attention to the numerous phonetic variants of the lexical entries. There are very few errors; e.g., for the word *cloison*, seven variants are listed at their alphabetical place: *kwazon, ktwazonn, klazon, klazonn, klowizon, kwazon, krazon* – the last one should have been *krazon*, and *kwason* occurring at one point (40) in St. Lucia, is missing. The Gua. word *klendenden* ‘firefly’ appears in the index as *klenklenklen(g)*, but this error does not prevent the user from getting access to map 123 and etymological and ethnological information on the term in the annotation.5

Historically, the aim of linguistic atlases from Guilliéron and Edmont (1902–1912) onward was to settle the debate on the existence of dialect boundaries, opposing Hugo Schuchardt and the neogrammarians. The answer is well-known: dialect boundaries do exist in the Old World (France, Italy, England, Germany, etc.); however, they manifest themselves not as sharp lines, but as bundles of isoglosses. Are there any isoglosses to be established in creole speaking areas? In Bollée 2003 and Bollée and Nembach 2006 we have tried to show that by analyses of the maps of ALRé and ALH a few isoglosses can be discovered, but no dialect boundaries emerge if they are presented on synthetic maps (cf. Bollée, 2003, 21). The maps of ALPA yield a different picture. A remarkable number of features form clusters and show clear patterns of spatial distribution, much to the surprise of the authors themselves: “Nous sommes à chaque fois émerveillés de constater que des zones cohérentes se détachent de tout ce qui pourrait passer, au premier abord, pour un fatras où des variantes apparemment aléatoires semblent semées au hasard” (vol. I, p. 30). Still, we cannot speak of clearly definable dialects comparable to those in France or Italy because the patterns (“zones cohérentes”) are not always the

5 The authors quote from the treatise on *Les Élatérides lumineux* by R. Dubois (1886, 48): « ... les Nègres de la Guadeloupe leur ont donné des noms qui rappellent parfois le bruit que font ces Taupins avec le ressort de leur corselet et avec leurs ailes quand ils prennent leur vol : labelle, clindindin, clincinbois ». They add : « La nuit du 1er novembre s'appelle dans cette île ‘la nuit des clindindins’, quand les tombes sont éclairées la nuit d’une multitude de bougies qui remplacent les insectes lumineux d’antan et les enfants fabriquent des chalumbos, sortes de fanaux contenant des bougies. »
same: while Guadeloupe is quite often separated from the rest (cf. maps 41, 46, 51, 52, 117, 125, 175, 175, 178, 181, 185, 347), it can also unite with Martinique against the “îles ex-anglaises” Dominica and St. Lucia (cf. maps 73, 87, 185). The reason for this can be that the latter have preserved an older form whereas the “îles françaises” have adopted recent borrowings from the high variety in the sociolinguistic context of diglossia, cf. map 1 “waves” showing lanm and vag, the latter “visiblement un emprunt récent, venu par l’école, puisqu’il ne se rencontre que dans les îles françaises” (cf. also 25, 32, 85, 94). On several maps, isoglosses separate the North (Guadeloupe and Dominica) from the South (Martinique and St. Lucia), for instance:

113 “trapdoor spider”: the term matoutou occurs only in Mart. and StLuc.;
124 “bird”: Gua. zwazo, zozyo, Dom. zwèzo vs Mart. jibyé, zibyé and StLuc. jibyé;
127 “humming bird”: foufou is found only in Gua. and Dom., kolibri in Mart. and StLuc. (but is also given as a synonym by four informants in Guadeloupe).

There are also cases where a word or a variant is attested only on one island, e.g. prin sité ‘ambarella’ (65) and griyav ‘guava’ (76) only in Martinique and fwitaj ‘fruit’ (63) and bèt-lajan ‘ladybird’ (120) only in St. Lucia.

To sum up: It can be said that all the islands, especially Guadeloupe, have their own identity, but that the phonetic, grammatical and lexical features which separate their speech are of minor importance and by no means comparable to the dialectal differences observed in France, Italy or Germany. The ALPA is a very remarkable achievement not only because it illustrates a unique and fascinating case of linguistic geography, but also for other reasons:

– It provides important information on variation not found in dictionaries which, like those existing for Antillean creoles, are intended for the general public and have to adhere to a certain amount of normalization / standardization; for instance for “topinambour” the forms Gua. toupinanbouk, topinanbouk and Mart. topitanbouk are attested in dictionaries, whereas in ALPA 48 we also find: toupinanbouk (06), tonpinanbouk (06), topinannou (07), toupidanbouk (14, 18), tüpinanbouk (17), topinanbou (26, 30, 34, 37, 38), topilanbou (27), topinanbouw (29), toupinanbou (31).
– The same observation can be made as to grammar; the chapters XI and XXII provide a wealth of information on variation and distribution of variants, which cannot be appreciated in the frame of this review, for instance 298–301: forms of the indefinite article: an, on, yon, œn;
615–16: future marker: kalé, kay, ka, ké; 637: “il ne fait que... – he does nothing but”: point 36 in Martinique has r yenki, a form close to the French etymon (rien que), the others yenki, whereas in Guadeloupe we find anki, enki, yenka, yenk, yenki.
The authors of the *Dictionnaire étymologique des créoles français d’Amérique (DECA)* under preparation (www.uni-bamberg.de/romging/deca) are very grateful for the data of Dominican Creole for which no adequate source has been available up to now. A quick glance at some of the maps shows that they offer many expressions unique to this creole or rarely attested elsewhere, e.g. *pyé yanmpen* (*< igname pain* ‘breadfruit’ (42), *plim zyé, pwèl zyé* ‘eyebrows’ (333), *tab jounou* ‘knee’ (356, hapax legomenon at point 26), *kadav* ‘body’ (360, also found in Trinidad).

The same can be said with regard to Karipuna French Creole. Jo-Anne Ferreira deserves our gratitude for collecting data of this less known language, and the authors of ALPA for putting it on the map. Karipuna is the cover term denoting two varieties of a French-based creole closely related to Guayanais; it is the first language of two Amerindian groups living in the *Reserva do Uaçá* south of the river Oyapock: the Karipuna in several small villages near the river Curipi, and the Galibi Marworno (misspelt *Marwono* on pp. 22 and 28) further south in Kumarumã, a *vila* on an island in the river Uaçá, and in a few small villages near the river. Both speakers interviewed by Jo-Anne Ferreira in Oiapoque, A. d. S. and L.F. d. S., are from Kumarumã; the father of A. d. S. is Karipuna, his/her mother and both parents of L.F. d. S. are Galibi Marworno. Karipuna is of great interest for comparative diachronic analyses; it may, therefore, be permitted to add some information on the social history of its speakers. The Galibi Marworno are a group of Indians of different ethnic origin, among them the *Maraones* who, together with Indians of different ethnic (and linguistic) background, had settled around the Jesuit mission of Ouanary, which was founded in 1738 and abandoned after the departure of the Jesuits in 1763. Creole became the mother tongue of this mixed population in the neighbourhood of the Jesuit mission. An important argument for this hypothesis is the name of a mountain range in the vicinity of the river Ouanary in French Guiana, Coumarouman, which the Maraones gave to their village when they migrated to their new habitat (Röntgen 1998, 57). The social history of the Karipuna is more complicated. According to the literature, they were originally Tupi-speaking Indians who fled from the Breves Strait in the mouth of the Amazonas after the Cabanagem Revolt of 1835–37 to the Ouanary River and later migrated further south to the Oyapock area, where they finally settled in their present

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7 For the role of the Jesuits in the development and spread of French Guiana Creole see Wiesinger, 2013.
habitat on the Curipi River. This scenario, which has raised many questions, seems unfounded and has been refuted by Karl-Heinz Röntgen (1998) with a painstaking analysis of historical documents, toponyms and ethnonyms. According to his findings, the nucleus of the ethnic cluster adopting the name of Karipuna stems also from the Ouanary area where it emerged in the years from 1770 to 1820, a period of great political and social instability after the exodus of the Jesuits and the first abolition of slavery in 1794 (restored in 1802/03). In the 19th century, when the region between the Oyapock and the Amazonas was contested between France and Brazil, the Karipuna migrated to the south of the river. Röntgen’s hypothesis is plausible and makes it unnecessary to account for the presumed language shift of the Karipuna which previous researchers have not been able to explain.

Since the formation of the Karipuna and the Galibi Marworno groups can be traced back to the ancient Jesuit missions and migrations after their break-up in the 18th century, their language provides evidence of an early stage of French Guiana Creole, for instance in ALPA 4 and 296 occurrences of the plural marker yé la (< French eux là) which became ya in modern Guyanais, or the form nana ‘pineapple’, identical with the Amerindian etymon nana (ALPA 66).

In the introduction to the second volume, the authors express the wish that their successors, “Antillais natifs de préférence”, will continue their work and undertake “un inventaire plus large des variations d’ordre ethnologique concernant la culture antillaise” (p. 9). This raises the question: Do we need another volume of ALPA? I do not think so. As mentioned above, the linguistic geography of the Lesser Antilles is well illustrated by the raw data and interpretative maps in the two volumes. It would certainly be rewarding to collect more material pertaining to Antillean culture, but the results of extensive field work do not necessarily have to be displayed on maps, the method of presenting the data in lists of words or phrases adopted for chapters XI and XXII in ALPA seems preferable and would be much appreciated by users. Of course, more data are needed for descriptions of phonetics, grammar and lexicon, but a linguistic atlas is not the best method to fill the gaps of our present knowledge, because even if another volume or two were added to ALPA, the authors would in any case be forced to use a restricted questionnaire. Should, as the authors

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8 Cf. Ferreira and Alleyne (2007: 251): “They [i.e. the Karipuna] are a probably unique case of a creole language having been adopted by an indigenous population as a second language and then becoming the native language of that population.”
suggest, linguistic atlases be planned for Louisiana and French Guiana, I can strongly recommend the ALPA as a model for collecting and presenting the data.

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Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Dom.</td>
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<td>Gua.</td>
<td>Guadeloupean</td>
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<td>Kar.</td>
<td>Karipuna</td>
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<td>Mart.</td>
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<td>StLuc.</td>
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References


