D-Lab: Haiti

Fall 2003

Creole Alphabet and Pronunciation

Sources:
http://www.ebenezermissions.org/GrmBasics_nn4.html and
Word by Word English/Haitian Kreyol
S. Molinsky and B. Bliss

Haitian Creole orthography has four fundamental principles:

1. One sign for each sound
2. The same sign for the same sound
3. No silent letter
4. Each letter has its own function

Most consonants in Haitian Creole are pronounced the same as in English.

b	as in bed
ch	as in machine
d	as in dandy
f	as in fork
g	as in go
h	as in hockey [but I can't think of a single Creole word with h without c in front of it]
j	as in orange
k	as in kind
l	as in label
m	as in master
n	as in no
p	as in pet
r	as in read (but pronounced in the back of the throat as if gargling), but like w as in win before vowels o, ò, on, ou
s	as in sink
t	as in table
v	as in vase
w	as in win
y	as in yard
z	as in zone

Creole vowels often show the influence of French. Speakers fluent in French pronounce some vowels differently than those who speak only Creole.

a	as in father
an	a cross between sounds as in control and under

e	as in say
è	as in get but longer
en	as in lens
i	as in sea
o	as in go
ò	as in ought
on	as in don’t
ou	as in two

an, en, on, and ou always function as single vowels with one sound each. The grave accent (ˋ)modifies the sound of a, e and o (i.e. separates it from it’s know vowels an, en, on, ou)