

to the informant's attention as a unit, and because he was not bothered by discussions and interruptions that from his point of view were unproductive, it is probable that each of the informants had a rather good idea of the content of what he was translating, despite his lack of previous familiarity with the Bible.

In order to insure accuracy it was necessary to bear in mind constantly the possibility that one might be going over a passage too hastily, simply because the wording of the preliminary rendering was intelligible in some sense or other. By constantly making the informant choose from several possible renderings, and by urging him in all cases to suggest even better ones, it is probable that less of my own peculiar dialect has been perpetuated.

Missionary Linguistics in Surinam

J. Voorhoeve

The Missionary Commission

The missionary linguist proceeds from the missionary command "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . ." He brings the content of the Christian message, as codified in a written document, the Bible, to someone else as recipient of this message. For him the central missionary command can be further formulated: "Go and teach all the people the Bible." He cannot bring the original document to the people. The Bible is not a magic book, and must never become so. The magical formula, however, even when not understood and unanswered, is thought to retain its power. The Bible, on the contrary, is a message given to another people in a special historical situation. This message must be made known, understood, and responded to. The message has no strength of its own, nor in itself, but only in its relation to the one who responds to it.

Therefore the missionary linguist has the special commission to make this message, which, in regard to its form, is bound to a historical situation, intelligible to someone else, so that man may respond to it. He should, therefore, not only know the message itself, both as regards form and content, but also the situation (the language and culture) of the one who is to respond. Only then can he make the message intelligible. But with the introduction of this principle of intelligibility a number of misapprehensions threaten to come into the work of the linguist. For intelligibility would appear to be a pure linguistic problem, so that the linguist thinks that he may and should decide in his own way what is intelligible and what is not.

He rightly presumes, for instance, that the recipient can most clearly

understand the message in his own familiar vernacular. But sometimes, to his sorrow, the experience is forced upon him that the recipient does not want to receive the message in the vernacular. This phenomenon is not, in itself, unknown. We are reminded of the persistent demand in some parts of the Netherlands for the Poeten-Bible¹, of the tenacious adherence to the spelling *heirscharen* (an archaic spelling of the word *heerscharen*, meaning 'hosts'). People do not always want to accept the message in a new translation or modern spelling.

These nonlinguistic factors must definitely be taken into account in the mission field. No translator can afford to cling to a more intelligible word against the express wish of native advisors or consultants. He often gives way reluctantly, however, and deviates with a more or less guilty conscience from the objective principle of intelligibility, and neglects to think out this phenomenon theoretically. However much he may constantly correct himself in practice, in theory he still continues to work with intelligibility as the basic linguistic idea.

We personally felt ourselves compelled to think over the problem once more when we were given the commission to translate the Bible into Surinam (Negro-English), a language medium in Surinam which is only accepted with difficulty by many people. Thinking along the lines of linguistic intelligibility, we should indeed translate the Bible in the native language of Surinam, the vernacular of the Creole lower classes in Surinam, the contact language between the different groups of the population. But this does not alter the fact that a great number of the users of the language regard the true vernacular (thus not the pulpit language, which is very much Dutch and in the churches is used exclusively) as ill-adapted for use as a language medium. We cannot dispose of this problem by a high-handed criticism of this linguistically indefensible antipathy. The criticism is obvious. Every argument can, on linguistic grounds, be easily refuted.² But this does not in the slightest alter the existing depreciation, because this is essentially not a linguistic but a social problem.

We bring a message to someone else, by preference in a form which he can most easily understand, but not in a form which prevents his listening to it. For what is the use of a maximum intelligibility if nobody listens? The form of the message, and therefore also the choice of the language, must not only be determined by intelligibility, but we should definitely take into account the receptivity of others for this form. Now this receptivity depends on many factors, of both a group and individual character. The individual factors need not be discussed here. In the "cure of souls" we have to deal with the individual attitudes of reserve in receptivity toward the message. The missionary linguist,

¹ In Acts 17:21, the Dutch States General Version uses the now somewhat archaic word *poëten* for 'poets'; in later editions this has been changed to *dichters*. Now, when buying a Bible, very conservative people sometimes use this word as a kind of test case, and therefore ask for a *poefen* Bible, leaving out the diaeresis and therefore even pronouncing the word wrongly.

² See, among others, W. Gs. Hellinga, *De waarde van de zg. mengtalen in de West. Taal en Tongval III*, 1951, pp. 133-37.

however, is forced to concern himself with the group factors. The recipient sometimes seems to be held back, as a member of his group, by the form of the message. He takes part, as an individual, in the group's opinion of the value of the language or form of the language that is used. For instance, we find that many Surinam people are afraid of words which accentuate the *nengresee* (Negro side).

Now these factors are not immeasurable quantities. The missionary linguist working in the field can gauge and judge the reactions of the recipients. He need not work in the dark. Perhaps one hesitates to follow too slavishly the wishes, or even whims, of the majority, even where this latter is obviously in the wrong. There is a danger that in this way the original strength of the message is not shown to its full advantage. I do not mean to say that the translator should try to follow a majority compromise, but that he should know how far he can go without risking the danger that the message will not be listened to. The missionary linguist must, as a missionary, never let the form of the message take precedence over the content. And that is exactly the risk he runs when he continues to make use of the objective norms of linguistic intelligibility.

There is a saying, "The language is the people." Seldom was anything less true. Two different peoples can have a common language; a nation can be divided into different language communities. We must often differentiate within a nation between geographical differences in language (dialects) and social differences (class languages).

It is entirely right that we should try to translate the Bible for the ordinary people, and not for a social upper class or a closed geographical community. But this does not imply that we should therefore translate it in the language of the ordinary people. Think of a preacher in Amsterdam who tries to give the message in the broad Amsterdam vernacular. He sees, to his alarm, that in this way he only amuses a social upper-layer, but does not reach the people of Amsterdam. More or less shocked, they turn away. In the same way, some of the people of Surinam could turn away, shocked, if the message were given to them in the vernacular. Because of the values which exist within such a group, they are only capable of listening to the message either in Dutch or in the very form of Dutch used in Surinam. We must therefore also investigate and know the attitude of the people of Surinam toward their language before we can decide in what form the message must be given.

In this article we will try, in so far as is possible at present, to lay the foundation for this. In doing so, we shall have to touch upon a few apparently self-evident truths. However, every scientist knows how fallible his prognoses are, and certainly every Christian is convinced of the unpredictability of God's intervention in the world. On the other hand, this should not form an excuse for neglecting intellectual analysis. Moreover, since 1940 new developments are beginning to make themselves known. Surinam is seeking a new appreciation of its own culture and language. Perhaps we should also see the demand for a new Bible translation in this light, and with this translation reach ahead to future developments.

The Period Up to 1863 ³

In the period before 1863, the missionary commission, as far as the language question was concerned, could easily be interpreted. When the Moravian Brethren came to Surinam, they found two groups of Negroes ⁴: the free Saramaccans (mulattoes or West Indian maroons) and the slaves (in the towns and rural districts). These groups spoke dialects which differed considerably: Saramaccan and Negro-English. The government did not concern itself with the education and spiritual care of the Negroes, and the Brethren were at liberty to approach them in their own way. In this period they went to a lot of trouble to master the two dialects. A solid foundation of missionary linguistics in Surinam was laid by Christian Ludwig Schumann, the gifted son of the famous Indian apostle in Berbice, Théophile Schumann. During his short stay in Surinam (1776-1783) he got through an inconceivable amount of work. He had received an excellent training for this purpose in Germany. Among other things, he had a command of the original languages of the Bible. He was sent out, in the first place, to work among the Indians in Surinam. As a result of the chronic shortage of mission workers at the mission post Bambey ⁵ among the Saramaccans, he was transferred there in 1777. He did pioneer work there under the most difficult conditions. He wrote his *Saramaccan-German Dictionary* (1778) ⁶ and translated Old Testament stories. ⁷ After returning to the town he further studied Negro-English. He wrote a *Negro-English Dictionary* (1783) which is regarded by us as a standard work on Negro-English. ⁸ Further, he translated the chief contents of the Bible (namely, a wide choice from the Old Testament, a Harmony of the Gospels according to Samuel Lieberkühn, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters, and parts of the Revelation to John) and the detailed catechism of the Congregation of the Brethren (by Samuel Lieberkühn). ⁹

The Brethren hesitated to have the newly translated texts printed immediately. They preferred to wait and see how the language developed after these new impulses. However, when they began printing, the authority of Schumann's translation was found still to be so great that first his translations were published. In 1815 his translation of the catechism was published, ¹⁰ followed in 1816 by the Harmony of the

³ The following is based on an examination of the archives of the Brethren in Herrnhut, Zeist, and Paramaribo. For the information from Herrnhut I must thank R. Träger, the keeper of the archives there; for the information from Paramaribo, Rev. A. Donicie C.ss.R.

⁴ The mission among the Indians in Surinam has been left out of account here.

⁵ One after the other died at this post. From 1777-1778, Schumann lived there, mostly solitary, in the greatest privation, and tormented by disease, until the post was temporarily abolished.

⁶ Published in 1914 by Hugo Schuchardt in his book *Die Sprache der Saramakkaneger in Surinam*. Amsterdam, 1914. Verh. Kon. Ak. v. Wetensch. Afd. Letterkunde NR, dl. XIV, No. 6.

⁷ *Oto va oure fri. Gado bi meki ko sombre* (1778) 'Story of the Old Covenant which God Made with Man'.

⁸ The manuscript will be published by us, in cooperation with the Bureau for Linguistic Research in Surinam (University of Amsterdam).

⁹ These works, often in several copies, can all be found in the various archives of the Brethren.

¹⁰ The only copy known to us is to be found in the archives of the Brethren in Herrnhut.

Gospels which he had translated.¹¹ Schumann's translations are daring in their choice of words, but sometimes a little awkward as regards style. Later, a smoother narrative style developed, largely through Wilhelm Treu. But the daring choice of words has been gradually led along more careful paths. If, however, we compare what has been retained with what, in the course of time, has been rejected, it must be admitted that the key terms in the proclamation of the Gospel still go back to Schumann's finds.

Schumann's work formed the foundation for further work in this domain. Schumann himself never wrote a grammar, although he included several grammatical notes in his dictionary. The first grammar of Negro-English dates from about 1830. Many Brethren, among whom Wilhelm Treu and Johannes Münch must be especially mentioned, further perfected this grammar, until in 1854 H. R. Wullschlägel finally had the *Kurzgefasste Neger-Englische Grammatik* published anonymously, reflecting the result of the grammatical studies of the Brethren in Surinam. In the 19th century linguistic work had a practical aim. Schumann's work was purely descriptive. He described what he found, and sometimes noted in his dictionary with great accuracy the answers of his informant. He never tried to set up a standard of the language. He can be seen in his translations as being occupied as a builder of language, or rather, as a "regauger" of the values of language. After him, and undoubtedly partly as a result of his translation work, a pulpit language begins to develop in Surinam. In the 19th century the Brethren, in particular, wanted to lay down definite standards for this pulpit language. They wanted to teach the Brethren who succeeded them the language (but especially their own pulpit language). We also find this same tendency in the later lexical studies. In the dictionaries of the 19th century we find the many forms which the Brethren had made themselves (and which we look for in vain in Schumann's dictionary). Also very striking is the interest in the German-Negro-English dictionary, which does not proceed from the Negro-English vocabulary, and which aims at teaching especially foreigners the language, and tries to make translation easy. The first dictionary of this kind was written in 1813 by Jacob Blitt. This work was perfected by many Brethren, until once more, in 1856, H. R. Wullschlägel published his big *German-Negro-English Dictionary*, in which he also included the first, and up to the present time largest, collection of 700 Negro-English proverbs.

After Schumann, the work of translation made great strides. We will first mention the Bible translations. A great part of the New Testament (viz. a Harmony of the Gospels, Acts, the Letters, and sections of Revelation) was translated into Saramaccan about 1792-94 by Wietz.¹² Wietz adapted Schumann's Negro-English translation to

¹¹ The only copy known to us is to be found in the library of the Netherlands Bible Society.

¹² Only a part of the Acts was published later by Hugo Schuchardt (see note 6). Schuchardt could not find the other Saramaccan texts, and therefore had to make a limited choice. As we can see from this survey, however, much more can be found in the archives of the Brethren.

Saramaccan, and thus did not give an independent translation.¹³ Even before the arrival of Schumann (namely in 1776) Stoll had translated the Acts into Saramaccan. Like the other earlier translations into Saramaccan, this work has been lost. In 1798 Thomas Langballe translated the Psalms from the Dutch States General version into Negro-English. Generally speaking, we cannot appreciate Langballe's translations very much. He translated very literally and introduced many unnecessary European words. Together with Hans Wied he produced a translation of Old Testament stories in 1809. In 1829 the first complete New Testament was printed by the BFBS. In it Schumann's original translation was very much altered, although, especially in the translation of the Revelation, we can still clearly notice his influence. The 1846 revision was the work of Treu, which we can speak of as a completely new translation. Wilhelm Treu was one of the most gifted translators of the Moravian Brethren. He has left his mark on every field of missionary linguistics, but we value him most for his translations. He produced a splendid translation of the Harmony of the Gospels (the Passion narrative appeared first in 1841; the whole work appeared in 1843, and was reprinted in 1865). The Old Testament stories also were retranslated by him (first edition 1842; reprints in 1861 and 1886). The most convincing evidence of the force of his translations is the fact that even yet, at the present time, the publication of an unaltered reprint of his work is being considered.

The first translation of the catechism was produced, as we have seen, by Schumann. From 1835-1936 eleven editions of a new translation of the catechism were published. After 1830 comes a clear change of course in the method of catechizing young children. A need began to arise to teach the young slave children to read. From the beginning the reading lessons were coupled with the teaching of the catechism. In this way originated the so-called *A B C boekoe* 'ABC-books', which followed up the first principles of reading by offering the pupils as the first reading material a shortened catechism. The first edition which has been found dates from 1832. Many editions appeared.¹⁴ Slowly, however, the character of this book was altered completely, as we shall describe in the following section. Along with the catechism, the detailed catechetical writing of A. G. Spangenberg, the *Idea Fidei Fratrum*, was translated. Thomas Langballe supplied the Negro-English translation (1793-95), Wietz the Saramaccan translation (about 1797). These translations were never printed.

The Brethren very early did their best to give the slaves a new treasury of songs. We found two collections in Saramaccan dating from about 1800. Much more was found in Negro-English. The church songs were collected under the title *Gesang-buch* (1781), *Psalmbooku* (about 1800), and in the later editions under the title *Singibuku*. There are numerous collections in manuscript in the archives. The successive

¹³ Told by Rev. A. Donicie C.ss.R.

¹⁴ See regarding the alterations in the contents of the books J. M. Van der Linde, *Het visioen van Herrnhut en het Apostolaat der Moravische broeders in Suriname* (Paramaribo, 1956), pp. 177-78. Here is also a survey of other Negro-English literature.

editions were continually enlarged by the addition of a few songs. In 1820 the first edition with the new title *Singi-buku* appeared. Up to the present this name has been kept, but since 1820 the contents have changed completely. Up to and including 1820 the songs have no distinct rhyme, and, moreover, the versification is also indistinct. After 1820 Wilhelm Treu began to move in this field and created a new tradition of songs. The 1837 edition is very small; not a single song has been taken over from the previous edition. The songs now rhyme and have a distinct meter. In the following editions the treasury of songs is continually enlarged. The last edition is that of 1956. It can be said that the Brethren have created a completely new tradition of songs in Surinam, and not only of church songs. Since 1853 the more secular collections of songs have begun to appear under the title *Ariasingi*.

With these *Ariasingi* we have already left the domain of liturgical translation. The printed sermons can still be counted as belonging to liturgical literature, as also certainly the translated letters and news from other missionary fields, which were formerly read in the divine services. Great work was also done by the Brethren apart from liturgical translation. In studies concerning the struggle against illiteracy, the necessity of providing the newly literate with reading matter is continually stressed. This was done in Surinam, among other things, by the publication of a monthly paper such as *Makzien vo Kristen-soemazieli* (1852-1932). Every number contained a short dissertation, a song, a story, and further news and information. Besides this there were published countless pamphlets, tracts, and edifying stories in Negro-English. We have counted about 70 publications, not including the *Ariasingi*, church history, and small periodicals (for instance the Bible Almanac, also called the *dei-boekoe*, published from about 1857 up to the present time). The importance of this supply of reading matter should not be underestimated. Even if these stories seem somewhat sugary, this reading matter has broadened the vision of the Surinamese of former times, has introduced him to other worlds (Europe, America, and Asia), peoples, and cultures. This work has undoubtedly been of the greatest importance for the growing consciousness of the people of Surinam.

Recapitulating, we can say that before 1863 two great figures dominated missionary linguistics in Surinam: the linguist Schumann and the translator Treu. Schumann laid the necessary foundation both for Saramaccan and Negro-English. Since 1800 the Brethren have further neglected Saramaccan. That is why nothing has ever been printed in this language. The work on Negro-English, however, shortly afterwards made great strides. In 1815 the first printed text appeared. The slave children were quickly taught to read, and reading matter was supplied on a large scale. The study of language, after Schumann, took on a more standardizing character. One did not try, in the first place, to learn the language of the slaves, but to communicate, by means of textbooks, experience gained in the language by the European missionaries.

The Period Since 1863

The emancipation of the slaves has been of real importance as regards the language situation in Surinam. In the first place, the mass exodus of the former slaves from the large agricultural concerns compelled the government to recruit Asiatic contracted labor on a large scale. Because of this the cultural and linguistic unity in Surinam was broken. Besides Negro-English, we now hear Chinese, Hindi, and Javanese spoken among the lower classes of Surinam. Negro-English has developed into the contact language between the different groups of the people. Used by the Asiatics, Negro-English gains an Asiatic tint. Just as important for the linguistic development is certainly the fact that the former slaves now, for the first time, have the chance to work themselves up into higher positions. The first condition in this respect is the command of the official language, Dutch. Through the emancipation, therefore, a greater demand for the Dutch language has arisen in the lower classes of Surinam.

This development was very welcome to the government. Even before the emancipation in 1856, both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries received a protest from the governor against the fact that in a Dutch colony only the Negro-English vernacular was used in teaching the freedmen and the slaves. At that time it was possible to ignore this protest. Moreover, at the time of the emancipation the government also had to address the population in Negro-English in order to inform them of their rights and duties. Even in 1879 some articles in the police regulations were published by the government in Negro-English. Any other language was apparently not understood by the population. However, the government's pressure in the direction of the Dutch language increased. In the 20th century a lengthy campaign was set up to bring about the disappearance of Negro-English from Surinam. This was done by the educational authorities, who were of the opinion that the children's native Negro-English prevented their learning good Dutch. In the interests of the children, the help of the parents was invoked, and it was thought that in this way, after one generation, Negro-English would have been displaced. This argument is at present obsolete, and the practical impossibility of the attempt has become obvious, but the psychological effects have not remained unfelt. Through this educational policy (which also affected other native cultural values) a European standard of values was thrust upon the population: European language and culture came to be considered as of higher value than the language and culture of the Negroes. The speaking of Negro-English slowly became a distinguishing class feature. The upper classes pretty well succeeded in assimilating the European culture. The lower classes did not succeed, but tried just as hard to achieve the same ideal. Negro-English thus became a despised and hardly tolerated language, at any rate in circles which considered themselves educated (i.e. in competition with the European standard).

The pressure of the government was, of course, not in itself a reason for altering the original missionary method. The teaching policy, however, was decided by the government. And even without this pressure,

for the mission it had become a fact that mastery of the Dutch language was the key to social success. The mission, therefore, could hardly restrain the population from developing as it wished, for the sake of greater intercommunication. We see that slowly, first in secular education, but soon also in catechism and preaching, there was a switch over to Dutch as a language medium. The mission became uncertain as to which language policy should be followed. On the one hand, they wished to convey the message in an intelligible form; on the other hand, they understood that it could hardly be conveyed in a language that was despised and scarcely tolerated. They got out of this difficult situation, although probably unconsciously, by encouraging the development of a "sacred language." This form of Negro-English contains only a few archaic words. The "sacred" element is found chiefly in the pronunciation. Negro-English (especially since 1824) was spelt etymologically by the Brethren. The third person singular pronoun (pronounced [ɛ]) was spelt *hem* (like the Dutch word *hem* 'him'). The new mission workers learned the language from the printed textbooks of the Brethren and acquired a spelling pronunciation. Thus they said [hem] instead of [[ɛ]. The population probably did not correct them because in this way they would accept the despised Negro-English as a language medium. So not only in the churches, but also outside them (for instance, in official speeches) a tradition of "sacred" pronunciation has originated, a sort of "high Negro-English," of artificial extraction, to which, for reasons easy to understand in such a situation, one has become singularly attached.

At the same time, the inner uncertainty made an end of the enthusiastic linguistic work of the Brethren. About 1900, the Prophets were still printed in translation and other Old Testament books were also translated (e.g. Deuteronomy in 1906). In the same period, a new translation of the Passion was published by Renkewitz. But that is all in the way of the Bible translations. The translation of the New Testament already mentioned (now bound together with a translation of the Psalms) went through three reprints (the last in 1949). The *ABC-boekoe*, as mentioned above, developed through the various editions into a pure reading method, without the catechism. The last edition, of 1932, had as title *Mi fosi lesiboekoe* 'my first reading book'. According to the foreword, this book was finally only used in the interior, where Dutch has as yet hardly penetrated. The Brethren did not produce any great linguist in this period. This was also not really possible, now that the old linguistic initiative was breaking down still further, and thus little room remained for new plans. Only the tradition of songs in Negro-English has managed to survive up to the present time.

It is an extremely gloomy picture that we see here. As a result of changing circumstances, a splendid tradition, built up with dedication and fervor, is being literally choked. Up to 1940 the breaking-down process gained ground rapidly. As an unbiased onlooker one can only record that Negro-English is indeed a language that is dying out. Many publications of this period also indicate this, and one is almost inclined to sigh, along with the writers: the sooner the better. A few years later,

the request for a new Bible translation in this dying and despised language reaches the Dutch Bible Society. At first sight one is inclined to think of a last despairing effort. Whoever reads the Negro-English Bible nowadays? And especially, who now feels the need to breathe new life into the "sacred" language which proved necessary after 1863 (and which isolates the message still more from the real life found in market and street)? Are we here not fighting against the stream, and may we, with an appeal to intelligibility, ignore the fact that the people are no longer receptive to the message in this form?

A New Perspective

But since 1940 things have altered in Surinam. In the first place, Surinam has been given political autonomy, and can make its own decisions about its own cultural development. But there is also a great change in the spirit of the people. Many Surinamese people who have lived abroad have noticed, for instance in Curaçao, the completely different attitude of the people of that country toward their native language. They saw that, for instance, in Europe the teaching of the native language was accepted as a self-evident right, and was defended for educational purposes. What, therefore, in former times had been accepted without questioning is now considered anew. It is characteristic that the first reaction to the colonial policy in regard to language came from educational circles. The teacher J. G. A. Koenders felt dissatisfied that he could only educate his pupils by means of language which was only partly understood. He began on his own a campaign against illiteracy in Negro-English, which he called Surinamese. In 1943 he drew up a new spelling for Surinamese which undermined the "sacred" pronunciation. In this spelling he published a book about biological subjects and a collection of songs. From 1946 on, his monthly paper *Foetoe-boi* has been published in Surinamese. In all his publications he works with great enthusiasm for a new evaluation of the native language and culture in Surinam. With a really splendid translation of a sonnet of Willem Kloos, a well-known Dutch poet, he has tried to focus attention on the poetical possibilities of Surinamese. He has also written original poems, of which one in translated form has been included in a German anthology of Negro poetry. Lastly, he gave the impulse toward the development of a people's theater in Surinam.

His initiative in many directions has not been without result. The people's theater prospered, and the performances are also followed with interest by the higher classes. Sophie Redmond and Paula Velder developed into gripping dramatists. What was most important for future development, however, seems to us to be the response which his efforts aroused among young intellectuals. Under the leadership of the young lawyer E. Bruma, a language and culture movement in the intellectual sphere developed under the significant name *Wie Eegie Sanie* 'Our Own Things'. Branches are found among the Surinamesian Creoles in Surinam, Curaçao, and the Netherlands. Intellectuals and laborers work together in this cultural movement in the interests of a native culture. On the basis of an acceptance of native language and

culture they try to educate each other to be free people, conscious of their own worth. One important result, among other things, has been that from this movement a native literature in Surinamese developed spontaneously, not only among the intellectuals, who could if necessary also have expressed themselves in Dutch, but also among the laborers, who discovered in Surinamese the only means of expression. In the September 1952 number of the Frisian cultural paper *De Tsjerne* translated Surinamese poems and stories were published. One of the most talented representatives seems to be E. Bruma himself; we know some splendid poems and stories written by him. Outside this movement, also, Surinamese poetry by Trefossa has been published recently.¹⁵ This poetry is of such a high quality that in our opinion it proves the usefulness of Surinamese as a literary and cultural language.

In scientific circles there is increasing interest in Surinamese. Even before 1940 studies by the Surinamese R. D. Simons and Lou Lichtveld were published. After the second world war, the American Robert A. Hall and the Austrian Hans Eberstark wrote about the Surinam language.¹⁶ The linguistic investigation in Surinam (1949-50) under the leadership of Prof. Dr. W. Gs. Hellinga and Prof. Dr. Willem Pée exposed all the language problems in Surinam (also their often very painful aspects) and forced many people to find an answer to the problems. Apart from publications by the aforementioned professors themselves, there were published, also as a result of their influence and in the series edited by them, Publications of the Bureau of Linguistic Research in Surinam (University of Amsterdam), studies by the Surinamese L. L. E. Rens, the Dutchman J. J. Voskuil, and the present writer. Many other studies are being prepared.

On the part of the Roman Catholics, renewed interest in the vernacular has begun to develop. Their first missionary publication in Negro-English dates from 1822. With them, missionary linguistics did not make such strides in the past, although in the course of the years many studies and translations have also been published. Through the work first of Rev. J. Mols and later of Rev. A. Donicie a distinct revival can be perceived. In 1954 an excellent grammar by Rev. Donicie appeared, while we are also awaiting from him the publication of a study about Saramaccan, a Negro-English dictionary, and, in cooperation with the present writer, a critical bibliography of the publications in and about the Surinam language.

We can therefore say that since 1940 the interest in Negro-English has suddenly revived. As a reaction to the former language policy of the government, there is growing among the people a strong feeling in favor of the vernacular. Negro-English is beginning to be used with remarkable success as a literary language, and scientific interest is growing. We should not, however, overestimate the perspective which has here been sketched, since the pessimistic picture shown in the

¹⁵ The collection appeared in the series Publications of the Bureau for Linguistic Research in Surinam, with a stylistic analysis, translations, and notes made by us.

¹⁶ Hans Eberstark graduated in Vienna on a thesis about Surinamese which has not yet been published.

previous section still holds good, to the full extent. Even now, Negro-English is still a hardly tolerated language medium. Only, in recent times, there are unmistakable signs that point to a greater appreciation by the Creole population of their own language and culture. The leading figures in *Wie Eegie Sanie* are trying to prevent this language movement becoming choked in a particularistic Creole undertaking, but they have not yet succeeded in a convincing way to build a bridge toward the Asiatic population, which as yet shows little interest in their efforts. And it is just these Asiatic groups of the population which must not be neglected in the general picture, for Surinam has become a half Asiatic land.

But what significance has all this in regard to the new translation of the Bible in Surinam? The older generation of Creoles, brought up in the tradition of the so-called "sacred language," would like to keep it. For them Negro-English is only acceptable in this form for liturgical use. The younger generation is divided. Statistics show that among the younger generation in the towns a growing desire for Dutch can be observed.¹⁷ At this moment, the majority will be most receptive to the message in a Dutch translation. A pure Negro-English form, however, is expressly desired by a very self-assured minority. The "sacred language" tradition, as far as we can judge at present, will have to go, because it is not supported by a young generation. There are here only two possibilities: the Bible can be brought out exclusively in a Dutch translation, as the majority does seem to desire; or one can draw on the self-assured minority in the expectation that it will be able to carry with it in its enthusiasm the Creoles of the same age. In that case we should try in a careful way to break with the "sacred language" tradition without in doing so estranging the older generation. Courage and faith are necessary for an undertaking on such an uncertain basis. The Moravian Brethren, who have preceded us in this field, have, however, given us a heartening example of courage and faith which did succeed in an undertaking contrary to all the expectations of the pessimists.

¹⁷ See the graphs in W. Gs. Hellinga and others, *Language Problems in Surinam. Dutch as the language of the schools.* (Amsterdam, 1955), p. 104.