Research Article

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The multilingual repertoire of the Haitian community in Chapecó (SC, Brazil): Patterns of linguistic evolution in a South–South migration context

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Abstract: This article provides an initial sociolinguistic and structural characterization of the multilingual repertoire of the Haitian migrant community in Chapecó, Santa Catarina, Brazil, based on a corpus of interviews I compiled myself. The focus is primarily on two languages from the repertoire, French and Spanish, which I consider 'forgotten' in two senses. First, in a scholarly context, since studies in migration linguistics often pay less attention to languages that are neither the in-group language of the migrant population (in this case, Haitian Creole) nor the main language of the host country (in this case, Portuguese); indeed, French is the official, post-colonial language used by the social elites in the homeland, while Spanish is the language of a first country of migration (the Dominican Republic) for some Haitians before their current migration to Brazil. Second, at the cognitive level, because although these languages are part of the speakers' experiential baggage, they are seldom actively spoken in the new Brazilian context. Lastly, the article highlights how speakers *efficiently* utilize the different languages in their repertoire, giving rise to contact-induced linguistic features (which, following traditional criteria, are classified here as the result of transfer or borrowing).

Keywords: multilingualism, migrant varieties, language obsolescence, Haitian Creole, postcolonial French, borrowing, lexical aspect, arbitrary subjects

1 Introduction

This article presents an initial characterization of the multilingual repertoire of the Haitian migrant community in Chapecó (Santa Catarina, Brazil), highlighting the fact that they already possessed a multilingual repertoire upon their arrival in Brazil. It identifies the languages within this repertoire and characterizes them from a sociolinguistic perspective, establishing their contexts of use and commenting on ideological and identity aspects. In addition, I will use this sociolinguistic characterization as a basis for discussing the general processes of distancing from normative pressures and permeability to language contact, which in turn trigger the emergence of certain structural phenomena (this structural characterization does not aim to be exhaustive, though, and a few morphosyntactic phenomena will suffice to illustrate here the multilingual dynamics of the migrant community under study).

Another novelty of this work lies in its focus on two languages within the repertoire, French and Spanish, which I consider to be 'forgotten' in a dual sense. First, they are 'forgotten' in a scholarly sense, as languages

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that have – and, in some cases, always had – a secondary presence in the repertoire of the migrant community have traditionally received marginal (if any) attention in 'migration linguistics' studies (s. Krefeld 2004: 110 ff. on migration linguistics as its own sub-discipline within linguistics; cf. also Borlongan 2023 for further discussion). Such studies have frequently highlighted the relationship – and its social underpinning – between the primary language of the country of origin (in our case, Haitian Creole (HC), also known as *Kreyòl*) and the primary language of the receiving country (in our case, Portuguese). Although considerable work has been done within the discipline focusing on the fate of two or more languages acquired before migration (due to the specificities of migrant communities or driven by practical and political reasons – as in LADO [Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin] studies: cf. Patrick et al. (2019))[1] and despite recent superdiversity studies (Blommaert and Rampton 2012) addressing the internal diversity within newer, inherently diverse societies as a globalization by-product (thus challenging traditional analytical categories about linguistic diversity), much work remains to be done to fully understand how multilingual repertoires and practices evolve over time among individuals who leave their home countries. This entails examining their adaptation to the specific *linguistic ecology* (cf. Mufwene 2001) of the host country, where they not only form a linguistic *community* – often emerging as a linguistic *minority* in its new context – but also maintain connections with communities of compatriots across various other host regions or countries; additionally, the migration experience itself may instill a global awareness and a value for multilingualism that often exceeds what is found in the typically monolingual culture of the host country (apart from other migrant communities settled there). Overall, my study of the Haitian migrant community in Chapecó aims to contribute to linguistic research on South–South migration processes, a field where the work of Vigouroux (2008, 2018) on inter-African migrations stands out.

Specifically, in my research, French represents the official and post-colonial heritage languages that, in many countries of the Global South, are only actively spoken by the economic and political elites and are therefore far from being the main languages of migrant populations, let alone playing any role in the identity of these groups. Spanish, meanwhile, represents those languages that speakers may have been exposed to during a past migratory experience, specifically the main languages of the first countries of migration (in our case, the Dominican Republic), which, for one reason or another, ended up being temporary in the life trajectories of many migrants before they continued their diaspora.

Secondly, they are 'forgotten' in a cognitive sense, as both the official languages of the home countries and the main languages of former host countries often become inactive in the new receiving country, i.e., not spoken on a regular basis, with speakers often losing any further exposure to them. This inactivity has structural consequences, leading to the emergence of *language obsolescence*[2] phenomena (Aikhenvald 2012),

1 To mention a few examples, without trying to be exhaustive, different studies have documented the coexistence and competition between popular spoken Italian and various Italian "dialects" – meaning *historical* or *primary dialects* (Coseriu 1982), which should in fact be regarded as different languages – among Italian migrants in Germany (Krefeld 2004), as well as within Italian communities across the American continent (for publications and references, refer to the *Microcontact* project led by Roberta D'Alessandro: https://microcontact.sites.uu.nl/) (D'Alessandro 2024). Similarly, in discussions about another historical migration process, the predominance of German dialects, including Low German varieties, over High German has been noted in German communities throughout Latin America (Steffen and Altenhofen 2014). Finally, the insights of Mufwene (2017) and Muysken (2019) – a LADO study – regarding the adaptation of African speakers' multilingual repertoires to migrant ecologies in the Global North are particularly relevant to my research.

2 Certainly, one could also speak of *language attrition* in these cases. However, the concept of attrition has been more focused on the individual and their psycholinguistic processes, and even the reference to social or community aspects is made to highlight how these are conditioning factors for individual attrition (*cf.* Köpke 2007 and references therein). In my case, however, the focus is on the speech community itself and on the characterization of what then materializes in possible discursive practices. Thus, attention is paid to the varieties of a language, based on their relation to different groups within a given speech community and to their own and others' perceptions. In this last sense, too, the social function (sometimes symbolic, as we will see) of less-active languages should be assessed from a perspective that is not solely psycholinguistic. Therefore, I prefer to use the term '*obsolescent* varieties' rather than '*attrited* varieties', although I see no obstacle in referring to *attrited speech* (individual, actual), as used by Köpke (2007, 26) and others. It is also true, however, that the term "language obsolescence" is not without (another kind of) issues, as it has generally been used for languages that are moving towards disappearance. Nonetheless, as Aikhenvald (2012) clarifies, one could speak of 'global' language obsolescence for these cases and still accept a broad definition of the concept.

which frequently include the incorporation of features from the stronger languages in the repertoire (i.e., those languages that are actively used: here, HC and Portuguese).

Since migration to Chapecó is a recent phenomenon, occurring mostly in the last 10–15 years, there are linguistic issues – such as the transmission or lack thereof of the L1 to the second generation of migrants in the host country – that will only find clear answers with greater historical distance. The relatively new nature of this migratory process also explains the almost total absence of literature on the topic – except for the notable contributions by Benítez Oviedo (2023) and Krug and Horst (2022) – which contrasts with the extensive literature (from sociological, cultural, and linguistic perspectives, among others) on Haitian communities in other parts of the world (for instance, the studies by Jackson 2011). Throughout this article, I will refer to the members of the community under study, predominantly Haitian-born individuals residing in Brazil, as 'Haitian-Brazilians', regardless of their citizenship status.

This article is organized as follows: Section 2 offers background information and a brief characterization of the Haitian migration process to Chapecó. Following this, Section 3 discusses the fieldwork methodology that underpins the data presented in this study (this article also aims to introduce the corpus and highlight its potential, with the anticipation of further expansion through future visits to the community). Section 4 explores the social roles of the different languages within the repertoire, examining the evolution of the diglossic situation from Haiti to Brazil and the enrichment of the multilingual repertoire through the addition of Spanish. Meanwhile, Section 5 discusses how speakers make efficient use of the repertoire's possibilities (Matras 2009) and examines structural changes – related to transfer from HC and borrowing from Portuguese – that impact French and Spanish. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the main findings and provides concluding remarks on the significance of this study for the field of migration linguistics.

A few final notes on the presentation of the examples: First, they should be read according to the grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence conventions of each language. In line with this principle, words with divergent phonetic features will be indicated graphically and not through phonetic transcriptions, which will be reserved for only a few uncertain cases (for example, writing Sp. *helmana* instead of *hermana* 'sister' aims to reflect the change [ɾ] > [l]). Second, although the boundaries between languages are not always clear – as will be demonstrated repeatedly – and attempting to clearly distinguish between them can be counterproductive, I will identify a base language for each example – the one most used in a given discursive fragment – and mark with angle brackets ⟨…⟩ the frequent insertions and alternations with another language. Third, the age, gender, and occupation of the informant from whom the example is drawn will be indicated after each example.

2 The migration context

Haiti is currently the poorest country in the Americas, with development indices comparable to those of the poorest regions in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the Human Development Report for the year 2021–2022 (UNDP 2022), Haiti ranks 163rd (out of 191 countries surveyed) and, with an HDI of 0.535, occupies a relatively low position among countries classified as having 'low human development'. This situation stands in stark contrast to Brazil, which, alongside Mexico, boasts the strongest economy in Latin America. With an HDI of 0.754, Brazil is positioned precisely on the conventional boundary between 'medium human development' and 'high human development'. The gap between Haiti and Brazil (about 0.2 points) mirrors, for example, the disparity between Brazil and the most developed nations of the Global North. Table 1 highlights these differences in HDI.

However, since both Haiti and Brazil are part of what is commonly referred to as the *Global South* – according to the (Western-centric) criteria of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, utilized by most international institutions, including the IMF – the migratory phenomenon under discussion qualifies as 'South–South migration'.

Table 1 also illustrates that the HDI is calculated based on three primary dimensions: life expectancy, average years of schooling (which includes other forms of state-dependent education), and income.

Table 1: Human development ranking (according to United Nations: UNDP 2022)

		Human dev. index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income per capita
HDI rank	Country	Value (0–1)	(years)	(years)	(PPP in $)
1	Switzerland	0.962	84.0	13.9	66.933
2	Norway	0.961	83.2	13.0	64.660
…					
86	Mexico	0.758	70.2	9.2	17.896
87	**Brazil**	**0.754**	**72.8**	**8.1**	**14.370**
88	Colombia	0.752	72.8	8.9	14.384
…					
162	Togo	0.539	61.6	5.0	2.167
163	**Haiti**	**0.535**	**63.2**	**5.6**	**2.848**
164	Nigeria	0.535	52.7	7.2	4.790
…					
190	Chad	0.394	52.5	2.6	1.364
191	South Sudan	0.385	55.0	5.7	768

PPP = Purchasing power parity.

As anticipated, Haiti's scores in all these areas are considerably lower than those of Brazil (the educational aspect in Haiti, particularly the years of schooling, which has significant linguistic implications, will be discussed further). This discussion should be augmented by noting that Santa Catarina is among the more developed regions in Brazil, holding the fifth position (out of 27) in the HDI rankings among Brazilian federative units (0.769, surpassing the national average), as per *Global Data Lab* statistics (GDL 2021, cf. Smits 2016).

Brazil has become a significant destination for migrants from Latin American and Caribbean countries with limited job opportunities and bleak future prospects, particularly from Venezuela and Haiti over the last 10–15 years. Haitian emigration has, in some ways, been historically consistent (Audebert 2012, 15–46, Barzen 2022, 67 ff.), yet saw a significant increase following the devastating earthquake in January 2010. As of 2023, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, approximately 160,000 Haitians reside in Brazil (around half of these individuals are in need of international protection, while the others are considered regular migrants: cf. UNHCR 2023, ACNUR-Brasil 2023). Chapecó in Santa Catarina, alongside other cities like Curitiba, Manaus, Porto Velho, and São Paulo (Da Silva 2018, 466–7), has emerged as a notable settlement for Haitian migrants. Data from the *Relação Anual de Informações Sociais*, as analyzed by Krug and Horst (2022), estimated the Haitian population in Chapecó to be around 20,000.[3]

Chapecó is a growing city. However, unlike cities that have been receiving Haitians for decades in other countries (Miami/New York, Montreal, Paris, etc.: Audebert 2012, 100–1), it is of medium size, with around 225,000 inhabitants. This means the Haitian community could represent, according to some estimates, close to a quite remarkable 10% of the local population (Krug and Horst 2022). The city boasts low crime rates and is distinguished as a financial and educational hub, as well as being particularly noted for the food production industry, which includes large *frigoríficos* (meat processing plants). These facilities employ thousands of Haitian workers, who often find themselves working overtime, especially those with children (s. also Da Silva 2018, 468–9 – and references therein – on a general take on the inclusion of Haitians in the Brazilian labor market).

Although the backgrounds of Haitian-Brazilians are very diverse, their profile is clearly different, for example, from the waves of *boat people*, often from rural areas, who emigrated in the 1980s and 1990s from

3 Although the migratory flow to some extent still persists, this number is currently experiencing a decline, as many Haitians have left or are considering or attempting to leave Brazil for countries offering higher salaries. These plans for further migration were, in fact, a relatively common topic of discussion in our interviews.

Haiti to the United States (either directly or using the Bahamas as a transit point) (Catanese 1999, 48 ff.). Moreover, it must be remembered that the migratory leap requires certain initial funding, inaccessible to the poorest Haitians (Audebert 2012, 86). In fact, using the hierarchy of social perceptions among Haitians themselves regarding modes of migration, many Haitian-Brazilians would be more accurately categorized as *plane people* (Audebert 2012, 112, fn 14): in many cases, they arrived (by plane) in Brazil from Haiti, although some had more challenging entry routes (e.g., through Ecuador or Bolivia) and brief stays in relays. Occasionally, Haitians also arrived in Brazil from other countries where they had been residing long before the 2010 earthquake, as I will detail for those coming from the Dominican Republic – one of the most frequent and obviously closest destinations for the Haitian diaspora, which, nevertheless, is regarded with the lowest social esteem among Haitians (this is because a significant part of the migration to this country takes place *amba fil* 'under the wire': cf. Jansen 2013).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that since 2013, the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul (UFFS), in cooperation with the Haitian embassy in Brazil, established a program for higher education access for Haitian students known as the *Programa de Acesso à Educação Superior da UFFS para Estudantes Haitianos (Prohaiti)*, which has welcomed hundreds of Haitian students. This program was later complemented (in 2019) with the *Pró-Imigrante* program to accommodate students from other countries (mainly, but not exclusively, from Sub-Saharan African countries). The Chapecó campus hosts nearly 80% of the Haitian students at UFFS, according to official data on the program's website (interestingly, the program's presentation on the UFFS website includes HC, in addition to English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese[4]). While students are a very small group compared to workers, they are an important part of the Haitian community in the city.

There are different circumstances that contribute to the formation of a sense of community in the diaspora (with typical elements of *dense social networks*: Milroy 1987), which combines with a sense of globality (Section 4.3), including frequent connections to other Haitian communities in the diaspora (both the 'classic' ones – Miami, Montreal, Paris, etc.– and those that have emerged more recently, after the earthquake, such as in several Mexican cities: Coulange Méroné and Castillo 2020, Julien 2019). There are socioeconomic differences among Haitian-Brazilians, which partly replicate those that existed in Haiti, but there is a strong sense of solidarity in the community that somewhat reduces social distance (in this sense, Haitian migration to Brazil might more closely resemble migration to the US than migration to other Caribbean countries or to France: Audebert 2012, 115). Marriages within the community are common, and some types of jobs are created by and for the community, such as Haitian drivers catering specifically to members of the Haitian community, and stores run by Haitians that are frequented mostly by other Haitians. Those who come without family often live together sharing an apartment and, generally, as in other cities around the world that receive Haitian migration (Audebert 2012, 134), their places of residence are concentrated in the same areas/neighborhoods: São Cristovão/Jardim América and, most especially, the Efapi neighborhood (Figures 1 and 2).

3 The fieldwork and the corpus

The only linguistic studies on Haitians in Chapecó come from the linguistics research group at UFFS–Chapecó: Benítez Oviedo (2023)[5] and Krug and Horst (2022). The former work explores the linguistic attitudes of Haitian and Venezuelan migrants in Chapecó, while the latter compares these recent migratory processes with the historical migrations of Germans and Italians to the same region. Although these studies – based on interviews conducted in Portuguese with a sample of Haitian students – have undoubtedly laid the groundwork, there was a need to develop my own corpus to delve specifically into the management of the multilingual repertoire of the Haitian community. This involved gathering data from the other languages in the repertoire and expanding the range of interviewees to cover a broader social spectrum.

4 https://www.uffs.edu.br/institucional/pro-reitorias/graduacao/ingresso/pro-imigrante/apresentacao.

5 A master's thesis supervised by Marcelo Krug, in whose evaluation committee I had the honor of participating (March 2023).

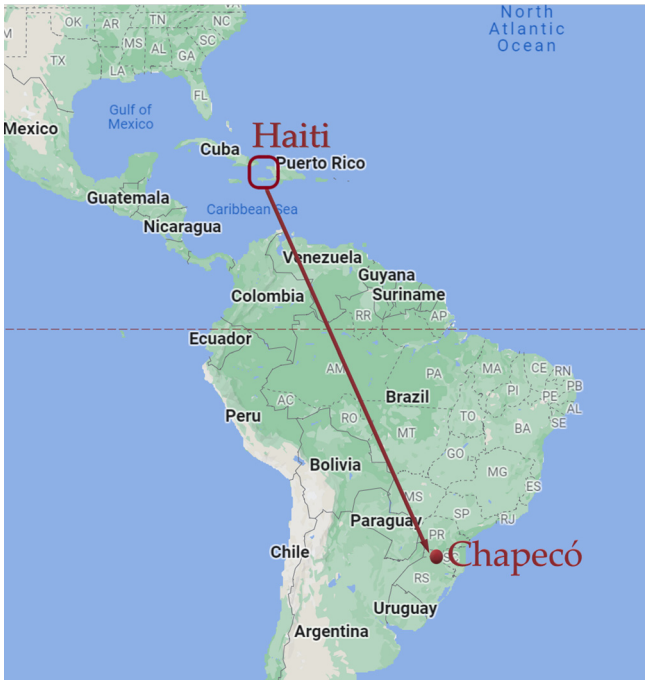

Figure 1: Chapecó (SC, Brazil) as a host city for Haitian migrants.

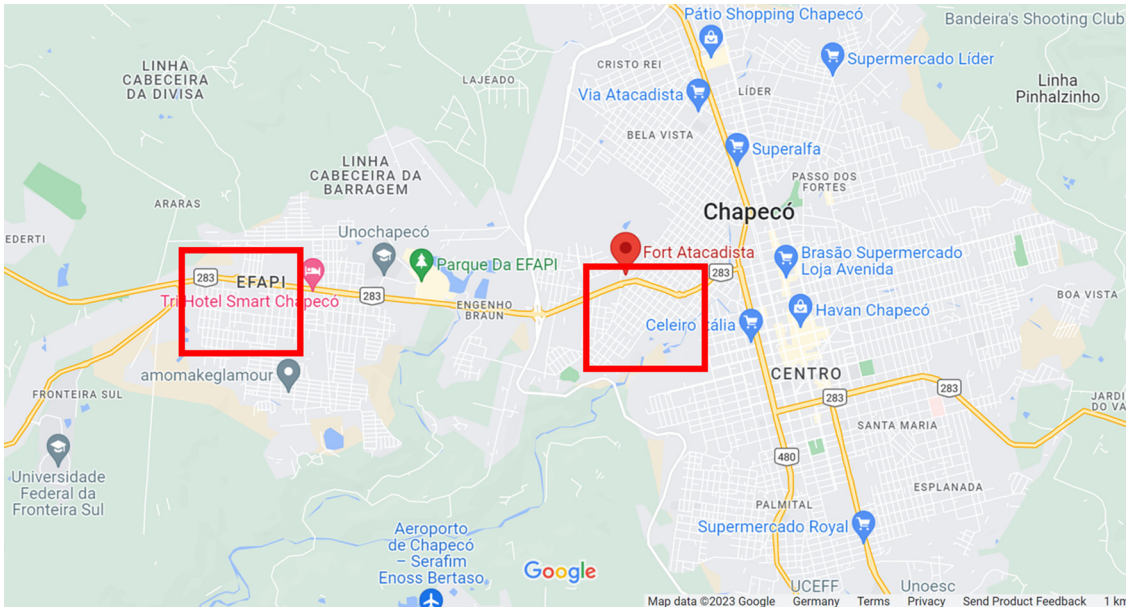

Figure 2: Neighborhoods with significant presence of Haitians in Chapecó.

In March 2023, I conducted interviews, often alongside Leonie Ette, a doctoral candidate at the University of Augsburg. For some sessions, we were joined by Cristiane Horst or Marcelo Krug, both professors at the UFFS and coordinators of the research project *Atlas das Línguas em Contato na Fronteira*. There were no specific criteria for the selection of informants, beyond ensuring a relative balance between men and women and prioritizing workers over students, although the latter also needed to be represented in the sample. The interviews were conducted in French, Portuguese, and, when pertinent, Spanish. In some cases, the interviewers made sure to demonstrate better proficiency in French or Spanish precisely to encourage the

interviewees to speak these languages. Typically, one interviewer would pose questions in one language while the other used a different language. We occasionally alternated linguistic roles or spontaneously switched languages to create a discursive space that allowed interviewees the flexibility to change languages as they felt comfortable.

The search for spontaneity outlined above does not completely avoid the observer's paradox (which does not imply that the data are intrinsically flawed; indeed, they are undoubtedly more reliable than data obtained without any fieldwork). Unlike other projects dealing with multilingual ecologies, such as the *BangorTalk* project (http://bangortalk.org.uk/; cf. Deuchar et al. 2018, 16 ff.), our understanding of how the informants communicate with each other in the absence of the interviewers is, for now, only indirect. According to the speakers' own perceptions, they primarily use HC among themselves, although they emphasize that they sometimes 'mix' (*misturar*) it with Portuguese, suggesting the occurrence of code-switching practices between HC and Portuguese. French and Spanish do not seem to play any significant role at the in-group level, although French still appears in some public contexts relevant to the Haitian-Brazilian community (Figure 3). Consequently, we do not know to what extent, if any, speakers incorporate elements learned from these languages when speaking HC (or, to a lesser extent, Portuguese) among themselves. In these cases, the presence of the interviewers deliberately contributed to the active use of both French and Spanish, as these languages are central to our analysis.

On the other hand, in the initial phase of this project, gathering data on HC, the language that likely keeps being the most spoken among Haitian-Brazilians, was not prioritized for two reasons: first, the primary aim was to explore the non-native languages of Haitian-Brazilians; second, adequately capturing the usage dynamics of the community's in-group language would have necessitated a more extended, ethnographic approach. Consequently, an in-depth study of HC – including its potential for incorporating Portuguese borrowings – remains a future objective for subsequent phases of research during later visits to the community. Nevertheless, there were instances where informants naturally conversed in HC amongst themselves in our presence, and moments where they attempted to teach us the language; notably, there were segments of an interview where a respondent answered us in HC to our questions posed in French.

In total, our corpus comprises approximately 500 min spread across 19 interviews, with nearly all of them conducted in more than one language. Our 28 informants, comprising 11 women and 17 men, are relatively young, ranging in age from 20 to 45 years. This age distribution aligns with the well-documented trend that

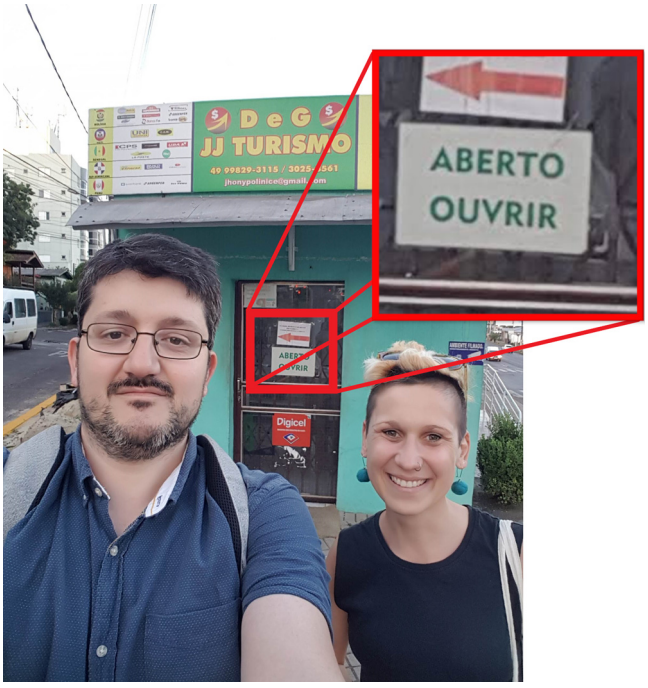

Figure 3: Bilingual sign in a snack bar in Chapecó (interviewers, MG and LE, in front).

labor migration predominantly involves young individuals (Da Silva 2018, 466). Beyond students, the Haitian-Brazilian workers we interviewed are frequently employed in the meat processing industry. However, we also encountered individuals working in a variety of jobs, including cooks, elderly caregivers, drivers for Uber-like services or, in some cases, owners of shops, restaurants and snack bars, as well as human resources employees in meat processing plants. The basic details of the interviews are presented in Table 2. Additionally, I detail the languages that constitute the multilingual repertoire of each informant (for languages that are known at a passive level – those in which the informant possesses substantial comprehension but minimal communicative practice – these are indicated in parentheses).

All interviews were conducted with the informants' consent, aware of the focus of our research (understanding the management of the Haitian community's multilingual repertoire), with our recorder always visible (generally, a ZOOM H5 Recorder; in some cases, a SONY ICD-PX370). The only informant who (we believe, embarrassed by his initial learner variety of Portuguese) did not authorize us to use his data is, obviously, not included in the study. The conversations took place in different locations: on the street, in cafés, on campus benches, or at the informants' homes.

4 Complex multilingual repertoires: Beyond HC and Portuguese

I will consider the following type of trilingualism as the most common or 'standard' case among members of the Haitian migrant community in Chapecó: (1) all speak HC, the language spoken as an L1 in Haiti, which has also achieved co-official status in the home country (although in practice, it is still clearly overshadowed by French in this regard); (2) almost everyone understands, and some speak, French, the main official language of Haiti, present in this country as a result of its colonial heritage and actively spoken by the elites alongside HC (in this sense, Haiti may be more reminiscent of postcolonial scenarios of Africa – where the main official language is handled only by socioeconomic elites – than of Latin America); (3) after a few months of their arrival in Brazil, they actively incorporate Portuguese into their repertoire (initially, it is common for them to be helped by other Haitians with more time in Brazil – relatives, coworkers, roommates, etc. – for any situation where Portuguese is needed). Additionally, I will examine the scenario where Haitians incorporate Spanish into their multilingual repertoire due to their previous extended work residency in the Dominican Republic as a marginal, yet present and thus analytically significant, case.

While the sociolinguistic characterization of Portuguese within the context of the multilingual repertoire lies beyond the scope of this study, some notes on this topic, due to their intrinsic relevance, are warranted. First, despite the long working hours, Haitians in Chapecó often view Brazil as a land of opportunities where they feel comfortable and accept the presence of Portuguese as an indispensable part of their new lives. Consequently, they endeavor to learn it swiftly and are generally unafraid to use it actively. Second, its acquisition occurs primarily through unguided exposure, although some Haitians eventually attend an official Portuguese course for immigrants:

(1) LE: *Et tu as appris le. le portugais (.) où tu l'a appris? après?*
"And you learned... Portuguese (.) where did you learn it? Afterward?"
J: *Euh... j'apprends portugais, par exemple de jour en jour, avec les relations entre les gens ici, au travail, avec les amis... et études aussi, apprends ça à l'école aussi*
"Uh... I learned Portuguese, for example, in everyday life, through interactions with people here, at work, with friends... and also through [active] learning, I also learned it at a school"
(J = 35/m_Worker in the meat industry)

Third, the self-perception of 'grammatical errors' can contribute to an identity issue, as in the example collected by Benítez Oviedo (2023, 70): "Acho que vou falar que eu sou haitiana, porque acho que não sei falar português bem pra falar que sou brasileira, mas sou haitiana" ['I think I will say that I am Haitian, because I think I do not know how to speak Portuguese well enough to say that I am Brazilian, but I am Haitian'].

Table 2: Synoptic view and description of the corpus of interviews[a]

	Interviewer(s)*	Interviewee(s)	Interview location
1	MG	*N* = 36/f_ human resources employee in a meat processing plant HC/FR/PORT** MJ = ca.45/f_worker in a small clothing store HC (/FR/PORT)	in a clothing store
2	MG, LE	Six computer science students at the UFFS (aged 21–24; 3 male, 3 female). Those who spoke the most: J = 24/m; S = 24/m; HC/FR/PORT	on the UFFS campus (park)
3	MG, LE, CH	*J* = ca.25/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR) *L* = 26/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC/FR (/SPA)/PORT	in a café
4	MG, MK	*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner HC (/FR)/SPA/PORT	in a snack bar
5	MG, LE	*M* = ca.35/f_worker in a meat processing plant HC/FR/PORT JE = 36/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR)/PORT *E* = 11/f_JE's daughter (in school) HC (/FR/SPA[b]) PORT	at the interviewees' home
6	MG, MK	*J* = 22/m_student at the UFFS HC/FR/PORT *S* = 24/m_student at the UFFS HC/FR/PORT	on the UFFS campus (hallways)
7	MG, LE, CH	*F* = 32/m_philosophy student at the UFFS HC/FR/SPA/PORT	in a café
8	MG, LE	*N* = 28/f_student at the UFFS HC/FR/PORT	on the UFFS campus (bench)
9	MG, LE	*J* = 35/m_owner of an electronics store HC/FR/PORT	in a snack bar
10	MG, LE, CH	*M* = 24/f_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR)/PORT	in a café
11	MG, LE	CH = 24/m_employee in an electronics store HC/FR/PORT	in an electronics store
12	MG, LE	*E* = ca.30/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR/PORT) *W* = ca.35/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR/SPA)/PORT	on the street
13	MG, MK	*L* = 26/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC/FR (/SPA)/PORT	in a café
14	MG, LE	*R* = 27/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR)/PORT	on the street
15	MG, LE	*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver HC (/FR)/SPA/PORT	on the street
16	MG, LE	JE = 36/m_worker in a meat processing plant HC (/FR)/PORT	on the street + in a grocery store
17	MG	*C* = 28/m_student at the UFFS HC/FR (/SPA)/PORT	on the UFFS campus (cafeteria)
18	MG, LE	*M* = 36/m_driver for an Uber-like app HC (/FR)/PORT	in a car
19	MG	*M* = 39/m_employee in an electronics store HC (/FR)/PORT *D* = 32/m_student at the UFFS HC (/FR/SPA)/PORT	in an electronics store

*MG = Miguel Gutiérrez Maté; LE = Leonie Ette; CH = Cristiane Horst; MK = Marcelo Krug.
**HC = Haitian Creole; FR = French; SPA = Spanish; PORT = Portuguese.

[a]The interviews are freely accessible (see the 'Data Availability Statement' section). The corpus will likely grow in the coming years (including the data in the same repository). The audio files of the original interviews – which, of course, comply with ethical standards (the informants were aware of our research interests, knew they were being recorded, and agreed to our using the data)– have been slightly modified to (1) fully anonymize the interviews, removing informants' last names in cases where they mentioned them upon introducing themselves, and (2) trim parts with excessively long silences or where the interviewers spoke, sometimes conversing among themselves, which did not contribute to the further development of the conversation with the interviewees. In both cases, the deletions are indicated with a one-second underwater sound.
[b]In the particular case of this girl, the acquisition of Spanish was not linked to a previous migratory experience. Instead, it was learned through formal education at school and partially reinforced through interactions with Venezuelan children in Chapecó.

In any case, regardless of how one perceives their learner variety of Portuguese (which, surely, varies from one individual to another), there are other factors that lead Haitians in Chapecó – perhaps with the exception of those who have been there for many years – to continue feeling more Haitian than Brazilian, especially the younger Haitians (Benítez Oviedo 2023, 69–71).

The rest of this section describes the use, social role, and perceptions, often based on the statements made by the informants themselves, regarding the 'forgotten' languages of the repertoire. To understand the role French plays in Brazil, we must begin by detailing the use and attitudes toward this language in the home country, situating it within the context of Haiti's diglossic situation (which also involves discussing attitudes toward HC) and connecting this to the new diglossia that emerges in the host country. Section 4.1 is devoted to these issues, while Section 4.2 addresses the role of another language, Spanish, which some migrants have learned before arriving in Brazil. Finally, in Section 4.3, I discuss the positive perception of multilingualism and the sense of 'global citizenship' among many Haitians.

4.1 The shift in diglossia and the new function of French

In Haiti, HC is the language of everyday use, while French takes on the typical functions of a high language (Valdman 2015, 361). Possibly, this HC/French diglossia has been present in Haiti since the nineteenth century (Neumann-Holzschuh 2003, 295). Despite the fact that HC has recently gained official recognition and is also, on paper, a co-official language (and despite the potential for a functional space for hybrid HC/French discourses: Cothière 2016/17), the co-existence of both languages in Haiti can still generally be considered a case of diglossia (Valdman 2015, 14). This was defined by one of my informants in the following terms (cf. also Benítez Oviedo 2023, 73–4):

(2) J: *[le français] c'est une langue scolaire, donc on apprend le français à l'école, nos livres, les discours présidentiels, le tout, < mas > …donc euuh… sont faits en français, mais le créole c'est… c'est maternel, familial, dans les rues […]*
"[French] is a school language, so we learn French at school; our books, the president's speeches, everything, but… so… are done in French, yet Creole is… is the mother tongue, in the family, on the streets"
(J = 24/m_student at the UFFS)

Other accounts leave no doubt that the sociological-identity value comes from HC, while French is often perceived as a foreign language:

(3) N: *no Haiti tem duas línguas oficiais, crioulo e francês, crioulo é a língua matelna, se a pessoa não vai na escola, não vai conseguir falar francês … é uma língua oficial mas não é nossa*
"In Haiti, there are two official languages, Creole and French. Creole is the mother tongue. If someone does not go to school, they will not be able to speak French. … Although it is an official language, it is not our own"
(N = 36/f_human resources employee in a meat processing plant)

Even though there isn't necessarily a negative estimation of French, the Haitian diglossia is indeed accused of being a source of social inequality, to the extent that it creates a 'linguistic barrier' in Haiti (unlike the urban Brazilian reality surrounding my informants, which is strongly monolingual, in Haiti large sectors of the population do not have the opportunity to learn to actively use the language that is then utilized in institutional contexts and at the university):

(4) S: *vous allez à l'école, vous… eh… vous apprenez en français, vous arrivez… eh… à la maison, vous parlez créole*
"you go to school, you learn in French; you come home, you speak Creole"
L: *vous parlez créole*
"you speak Creole"
S: *ça… ça provoque un problème, parce qu'ici au Brésil… eh… l[es] étudiants brésiliens ou les Brésiliens… ils parlent portugais, em… em casa*
"This causes a problem, because here in Brazil, the Brazilian students, the Brazilians, speak Portuguese at home"
L: *(e) na escola*
"(and) at school"
S: *à l'université, ils parlent portugais. Il n'y a pas une certaine ba…barrière, c'est là que surgit cette question d'inégalité sociale. L'enseignement du français, le niveau du français… n'est pas la même chose, ne pensez pas que tous les Haïtiens parlent français*
"At the university, they speak Portuguese. There is no barrier; hence, the issue of social inequality arises. The teaching of French, the level of French, varies greatly. Do not think that all Haitians can speak French!"
F: *somente… eu não falo francês*
"Just… for example, I can't speak French"
(*S* = 24/m; *L* = 22/f; *F* = 20/m_students at the UFFS)

The issue of diglossia in Haiti was emphasized by many students – often 'good' speakers of French – during the interviews. They suggested 'parar com esse negócio de francês' ('stopping this French business/thing') and instead advocated for further promoting HC. Indeed, far from being speculative, the idea that such a measure would likely contribute to increased development in Haiti has been demonstrated in socio-linguistic studies (Hebblethwaite 2012). Moreover, there is a strong sense of solidarity with Haitians who do not speak French (as in the case of F among the group of students in example (4)), as well as a clear perception that this inequality vanishes in the Brazilian context, which is thus viewed as fairer. In Brazil, at least linguistically, all Haitian migrants are on equal footing when it comes to the need to learn Portuguese.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that HC not only constitutes the quintessential identity language but also carries a predominantly positive linguistic ideology regarding its origin. Gone are, at least among my informants, the well-known colonial heritage ideology according to which Creoles are corruptions or deformations of the European languages from which they derive. If remnants of this ideology still exist today, it seems that the youth definitively abandon it upon leaving Haiti. And, in cases where the conception of HC as a deformation of French does emerge, it is accompanied by a sense of pride and attributed to the free will of the ancestors (voluntary deformation as a rejection of French colonization). In this context, the arguments put forward by two Haitian students in my presence are interesting – both computer science students and therefore, we could assume, unaware of the ideas about Creolization that many linguists have been disseminating (in fact, the opinion of the second student clearly aligns with well-known 'anti-exceptionalist' linguistic postulates like those of Chaudenson, Mufwene, etc.):

(5) S: *[o crioulo] é uma deformacão do francês na época de colonização francesa; então essa era uma forma de luta, e deformámos o que os colonos apresentaram para nós, p[a]ra protestá[r]*
"[HC] is a deformation of French from the time of French colonization; so this was a form of struggle, and we deformed what the colonizers presented to us, to protest"

(*S* = 24/m_student at the UFFS)

J: *Eu não posso dizer que o português ou o francês é uma deformação do latim, é uma língua que veio do latim; por isso que não vou dizer também que crioulo é uma deformação do francês.*
[…] a língua é uma cosa viva, que tá todo o dia evoluindo; o francês foi criado muito bem antes que o crioulo, mas o crioulo ta evoluindo também
"I can't say that Portuguese or French is a deformation of Latin; it's a language that came from Latin; that's why I also won't say that Creole is a deformation of French
[…]
Language is a living thing, evolving every day; French was created long before Creole, but Creole is also evolving"

(*J* = 22/m_student at the UFFS)

The linguistic ideologies discussed so far sufficiently explain why HC remains strong in the diaspora, now turned into a minority language for intragroup use, while French, in principle, is abandoned: if this latter language never became part of Haitian identity, even less so in the diaspora in Brazil, where French plays no role in public life. In this country, the position of high language is occupied by Portuguese, so that, simplifying things, we would say Haitian-Brazilians replace a HC/French diglossia with a HC/Portuguese one.

Despite the above, there are two phenomena inherent to the new socioeconomic and ideological context surrounding the Haitian-Brazilian migrant community that allow for a certain presence of French; in a way, claiming to know French (whether or not this is actually the case) acquires new semiotic value, signaling both globality and education. First, as I will further analyze in Section 4.3, Haitians in the diaspora have an open attitude toward other languages and cultures and positively value the knowledge of any language; thus, knowing French implies greater 'globality'. Second, the French language can serve the social function of indicating high status, specifically that corresponding to skilled migration (although it is unclear to what extent Brazilians are aware of the existence of a HC/French diglossia in Haiti and, more importantly, its social implications). In this sense, it is no coincidence that, although French has limited representation in the linguistic landscape of Chapecó, the owner of a Haitian snack bar displays a sign at the door of the establishment indicating that it is open in both Portuguese and French (see Figure 3): *aberto*/*ouvrir* (interestingly, the use of the infinitive *ouvrir* – instead of *ouvert* 'open'– as a translation of the Portuguese past participle *aberto* must be related to the influence of HC[6]).

In the same vein, I interpret the fact that some informants during the interviews start by asserting that they speak French without actually doing so (or, at least, displaying notable insecurity and seeking to switch to Portuguese when asked in French) as an attempt to present themselves – in a sense, market themselves – as qualified individuals (this might also explain the apparent contradiction observed in the responses to the questionnaire about languages spoken at home in Benítez Oviedo (2023, 67–8)). Haitians are aware of the prestige of French as an international and cultural language, and moreover, they grew up in a context where French is a sign of education. The following example showcases this tendency to claim to speak French but avoid using this language in favor of Portuguese during the conversation:

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6 On a sign of this nature, the form *ouvri* (stemming from the French infinitive *ouvrir*) would be used in HC, which is the base form for verb conjugation (aside from TMA preverbal particles) and is also used as a past participle. In Haiti, for example, one can see on the door of a shop examples like the following:

Siw wè nou pa ***ouvri****, ale nan ri 19b*

Si	w	wè	nou	pa	ouvri	Ale	nan	ri	19b
Si	2SG	see	1PL	NEG	open	go	to	street	19b

'if you see that we are not open, go to street 19b'

("Walking around Cap Haitien on a Wednesday Afternoon", 19'48"; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJNXh9KwH3k).

Ouvrir, in the example from Chapecó, would then involve only a minimal orthographic adaptation to French, adding the final -r, but errs in capturing the canonical use in French, where the form *ouvert* would be employed.

(6) MG: *Vous, vous parlez français aussi?*
"And you, do you also speak French?"
M: *<si[m]> oui je* [pa(ɾ)le] *français aussi*
"Yes, I also speak French"
LE: *très bien, beaucoup de langues alors*
"Very good, many languages then"
M: *c'est bon*
"That's good"
LE: *et tu as appris le portugais, c'etait... tu l'as appris où?*
"And you learned Portuguese, that was... where did you learn it?"
M: *eu aprendi aqui, n[ao] é? Quando*
"I learned it here, right? When..."
LE: *dans une école*
"In a school?"
M: *não (.) aprendé por*[...]
"No, I learned through..."
MG: *na rua*
"on the street"
M: *aprendé na rua ... que falava uma coisa... n[ão] é? [...]*
"I learned it on the street ... when people said something... right?"
MG: *que bom!*
"very good"
(*M* = 36/m_driver for an Uber-like app)

Naturally, those Haitians whose knowledge of French is partial (i.e., mostly passive) decide to present themselves or not as 'French speakers' following, in the first instance, idiosyncratic aspects of their personality. Conversely, other informants acknowledged from the start that they do not know how to speak French actively (note the informant's laughter at even imagining if he speaks it):

(7) LE: *et tu parles plus de français ici... ou de créole... ou portugais?*
"and do you speak more French here... or Creole... or Portuguese?"
J: *<não, não,> créole et portugais. Je parle plus créole et portugais. Français...* ((laughter))
"no, no, Creole and Portuguese. I speak more Creole and Portuguese, French... ((laughter))"
MG: *plus ou moins*
"more or less"
J: *<ah... não> "plus ou moins"*
"ah... not even 'more or less'"
(*J* = 35/m_worker in meat processing plant)

4.2 The role of Spanish in the repertoire

In Haiti, many people have had some experience with Spanish, influenced not only by the international prominence of the language but, more significantly, because it is the language of the neighboring Dominican Republic. Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, along with a complex history of both connections and conflicts (Barzen 2022, 66–89). The interaction of Haitians with Spanish can primarily be categorized into three types: first, Haitians who have completed several years of schooling, particularly younger Haitians, have often taken Spanish courses at school. Second, Spanish is somewhat present in Haiti, especially in border areas, due to the interactions between the Haitian population and those living across the border (or *raya*), where Haitians and their descendants also learn to speak Spanish (showing unique features

often resulting from transfer from HC: Ortiz López 2010). Moreover, it is plausible that seasonal workers in Dominican *bateyes* (Jansen 2013, 80–1), as well as those returning after being deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti, help disseminate insights into Dominican reality, possibly including elements of the country's language. Third, there is a significant migrant population that settles more or less permanently in the Dominican Republic – not just near the border, but especially in Santo Domingo – and quickly acquires Spanish. The number of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic significantly outnumbers those in other countries – except for the USA (Audebert 2012, 98–103) – though, as noted, the Dominican Republic is generally the worst regarded among Haitians as a potential host country (Audebert 2012, 112, Martínez 2011, 51–70). Notably, the view of Dominicans as racists by Haitians – a perspective I won't judge here – remains prevalent in the migration context outside the island (indeed, such comments were not uncommon among my Haitian-Brazilian informants).

Generally speaking, Haitian-Brazilians who know Spanish learned it during their time in the Dominican Republic:

(8) *<as pessoa que fala…> que habla español… todo pasa República Dominicana*
"the people who speak… who speak Spanish… all went through the Dominican Republic"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

Among my informants, there are seven people who, for various reasons, have some knowledge of Spanish. Nevertheless, for the considerations of this section and the selection of examples of structural phenomena in Section 5, I will only focus on two of them (not related to each other). Both informants are women who had been working in the Dominican Republic for about a decade (11 years in one case, 8 in the other); in both cases, the current length of residence in Brazil is similar to the time they spent in the Dominican Republic, during which time they had not initially planned to leave the country. The other informants who spoke some Spanish had either studied it in school or learned it after having stayed in the Dominican Republic for short periods, usually a few months, without clear prospects of wanting to settle there definitively.

In both cases, as with many Haitians around the world, the connection with the Dominican Republic remains to some extent present since they continue to have family in the Dominican Republic. The account below offers a striking example of what Audebert (2012, 77–81) terms *famille transnationale* ('transnational family'), where siblings from the same family are spread across different countries (in this case, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, with the latter country hosting the most family members):

(9) *La República Dominicana yo <tem> tres helmana, tres helmana yo te… yo tengo, eh… Chile, tengo una, Chile, eh… México, <tem também>*
"In the Dominican Republic, I have three sisters, three sisters I have; in Chile, I have one, in Chile; in Mexico, I also have one"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

The experience with Spanish is strongly influenced by the Dominican context. The prominence of exposure to the Dominican variety of Spanish is such that the Spanish spoken by Venezuelans – who are notably present in Chapecó (Krug and Horst 2022, Benítez Oviedo 2023) – can be considered *enredado* ('tangled, confusing'). This attribute was also applied to European Spanish (my native variety, which I used during the interviews in Spanish). This leads to a perception that sets Dominican Spanish (the 'normal' variety) apart from all other Spanish varieties (seen as somewhat confusing):

(10) *Tienes venezuelanos, tiene mucho dominicano, porque los venezuelanos habla español un poco enredados ¿eh? igual como tú*
"You have Venezuelans here, there are many Dominicans, because the Venezuelans speak Spanish a bit confusing, right? Just like you"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

Although these informants may have taken some Spanish courses in the Dominican Republic (one of them explicitly stated this), it is reasonable to assume that the acquisition of Spanish – as would later happen with Portuguese in Brazil – predominantly occurred in an informal manner, through daily contact with the surrounding environment.

4.3 Global identity

Generally, Haitian-Brazilians expressed a very positive attitude toward multilingualism as part of a personal growth process in relation to their internationalization experience. As is clear from the testimony of the following informant, embedded in a part of the conversation where we alternated between French and Portuguese, languages are, above all, means of communication with other people.

(11) MG: *Quelle langue est-ce que vous préférez? […]*
"Which language do you prefer? […]"
K: *Je préfère tous langues*
"I prefer all languages"
MG: *"Tous langues". <Porquê?>*
"All languages. Why?"
K: *Parce que c'est un moyen de communication. Par example, si je parlais seulement le français […]*
"because it is a means of communication. For example, if I only spoke French […]"
MG: ok
'ok'
K: *<Como a gente já consegui conver… Não. Si eu fal* só o crioulo, que a língua maternal, não fale o francês ou o português […]>*
"So, as we have managed to converse… No. If I only speak Creole, which is my mother tongue, and do not speak French or Portuguese […]"
(*C* = 28/m_student at the UFFS)

In the words of another informant, Haitian people like to speak several languages, which is related to the fact that they are a traveling people, spread all over the world:

(12) *[A gente] gosta de falar mais que um língua, dois língua… porque a gente gosta de viajar… os haitiano sempre… No mundo enteiro você vai encontrar haitiano*
"We like to speak more than one language, two languages, because we like to travel… Haitians always… Everywhere in the world, you will find Haitians"
(*J* = 35/m_owner of an electronics store)

This ideology, highly positive about the knowledge of several languages, should, in my view, be linked to two factors inherent in the diasporic context of Haitians that promote the idea of inclusion in a global society: on one hand, the significance of the 'transnational family' (Section 4.2), which can foster a global awareness as well as a feeling of closeness to countries with a strong Haitian presence – and, indirectly, to the languages spoken in these countries; on the other hand, the entrepreneurial mindset of those who leave their country under the assumption that they likely will not return does not tie them to a host country; that is, they do not, on principle, close themselves off to possible new opportunities elsewhere. In the words of a student, one becomes a 'global citizen' the moment they obtain their first visa to leave their country:

(13) *Aí eu acho que… meu prime[i]lo visto, desde que eu deixo o meu país eu acho que já sou cidadão do mundo*
"Then I think that… since my first visa, since I left my country, I think that I am already a citizen of the world"
(22/m_student at the UFFS)

5 Linguistic features across language boundaries

In this section, I will address the joint management of a multilingual repertoire, without delving deeply into which specific variety constituted the main target variety of the non-native languages of the repertoire. However, a few notes on this latter issue are essential: at the diatopic level, the Portuguese spoken by Haitian-Brazilians aligns with the Southern Brazilian sub-variety, while the Spanish, as mentioned, is Dominican. Regarding French, school education has traditionally been oriented toward the European standard (Lubin and François 2017), which does not mean that school teachers always master it. As for the place of the target varieties within the *spoken-written continuum* (à la Koch and Oesterreicher 2011), the case of French stands out: while the speakers of the studied community have predominantly learned Spanish and Portuguese in an informal manner, through daily contact with people in their environment, they never actively used French outside of school, which means that the variety they speak reflects the written standard taught in schools. This is evident, for example, in their generalization of features typically reserved for written or planned language, such as the discontinuous negation *ne…pas* (instead of using *pas* alone: Koch and Oesterreicher 2011, 172–3), in informal communication.[7]

This section is dedicated to examining the (types of) linguistic contact phenomena observable in the specific linguistic utterances of my informants. This begins with some reflections on the nature of having a multilingual repertoire and the linguistic manifestations that can be expected from it.

5.1 What can be expected from a multilingual repertoire?

When speakers possess a multilingual repertoire, the emergence of code-switching within their discursive practices becomes an option. We have observed examples of *extra-sentential* code-switching interspersed throughout this work (6, 7), as well as some instances of *inter-sentential* code-switching (8, 11). Additionally, there is *intra-sentential*[8] code-switching, such as in example (14), where the switch also signals the transition from French to Portuguese for the remainder of the answer.

7 Here are some examples from my corpus:

L'enseignement du français, le niveau du français, ***n'est pas*** *la même chose*
'The teaching of French [and] the level of French, is not the same thing'
(*S* = 24/m_student at the UFFS)

Moi, je ***ne sais pas***
'Me, I don't know'
(*J* = 35/m_worker in meat processing plant)

Je ***ne suis***[= sais] ***parler pas*** *beaucoup… beaucoup… de portugais*
'I don't know how to speak much… much… Portuguese'
(*E* = ca.30/m_worker in a meat processing plant)

8 The concepts of *extra-/inter-/intra-sentential code-switching* (which I fundamentally equate with the corresponding *extra-/inter-/intra-clausal c.s.*) are relatively clear intuitively. However, given the partial divergences in the use of these and other related concepts within the code-switching literature (*cf.* Deuchar 2020 for an updated overview), I will briefly explain them. Extra-sentential code-switching occurs when an element from another language appears at the sentence margin (e.g., elements with a phatic function, discourse markers and connectors, adverbs of affirmation/negation used as responses – as seen in examples (6) and (7) – question tags, etc.). The sentence in a given language and the extra-sentential element in another language, combined together, constitute a single utterance. Inter-sentential code-switching involves a switch of language within a given discourse fragment, such that this switch respects the boundaries between sentences (including, for example, cases where the matrix clause is in one language and the embedded clause is in another). Examples (8) and (11) fall into this category, even though the new sentence may be reformulating something that had begun to be formulated, either entirely or partially, in the other language (as in (8)). Lastly, intra-sentential code-switching takes place within the boundaries of a sentence (e.g., separating the subject and the predicate, the verb and the direct object, or even separating smaller constituents within the sentence).

(14) a) Entire context:

LE: *Et c'est difficile pour toi de trouver, de rentrer ici à la faculté depuis Haïti? Tu savais déjà le portugais avant? Où tu l'as appris[…]?*
"Is it difficult for you to come from Haiti to the university here? Could you speak Portuguese before? Where did you learn it…?"

N: *<Não,> non, non, non, j'avais eu un ami et ma mère, elle a… appelé… <ele p[a]la ele me ajuda para quando a gente chega aqui p[a]ra alugar uma casa, p[a]ra fazer tudo isso>*
"No, no, I had a friend and my mother, she called him… so he could help me when we arrived here, to rent a house, to do all that"

b) Instance of intra-sentential code-switching (French/Portuguese) in the example above:
elle a appelé <ele>

elle	a	appelé	ele
3SG.FEM	PRF	call.PART	3SG.MASC(OBJ)

"she called him"
(*N* = 28/f_student af UFFS)

In the example above, the object pronoun is taken from Portuguese, whereas the first part of the sentence (containing the subject and the verb) is in French. Interestingly, the morphosyntactic properties of the object pronoun result from a combination of grammatical rules from both (Brazilian) Portuguese and French. First, this object pronoun does not take the form of an object clitic, as would have been the case in French (if the example had been entirely formulated in French, we would have had *le* 'him': *elle l[e]'a appelé*). Instead, it takes the form of the 'independent' subject pronoun (Haspelmath and the APICS Consortium 2013): *ele*. This is a regular feature of spoken Brazilian Portuguese, where, for example, a sentence like 'I saw him' would be formulated as *eu vi ele* rather than *(eu) vi-o*, the typical European Portuguese variant, or *eu o vi* (in either of the latter two cases with the clitic *o* 'him'). Second, this object pronoun, being formulated in Portuguese, is used as an accusative object, as would be expected in French, where *appeler* is constructed with accusatives (this is why the accusative clitic *le* would have been used, but never the dative *lui*: **elle lui a appelé*). This is a substantial departure from Portuguese, where the equivalent verb *ligar* 'to call' is constructed with an (analytical) dative/oblique object, preceded by the preposition *p(a)ra*: *ela ligou p(a)ra ele*/**ela ligou ele*.

However, in this and the following sections I will address cases where the use of multiple languages does not occur through code-switching (the most iconic way to utilize the different possibilities of the repertoire), but through other means, such as the combination of elements formally belonging to the inventory of one language with the semantic and syntactic properties of (partially equivalent) elements in another language.

Multilingual speakers can use all the resources of their repertoire, either consciously or, more often, unconsciously. In other words, speakers do not always 'comply with social norms and context-appropriate selection of features' but often make 'efficient use of a variety of elements in a multilingual repertoire' (Matras 2009, 10). Thus, features from one language can filter into discourses or sentences primarily conducted in another language, even more frequently in the case of minority languages (Barzen 2022, 221–2 and references therein). In managing a complex repertoire globally, it is also necessary to consider the idiosyncratic aspects, namely, the impact of informants' experiences with different languages throughout their unique life stories (cp. Dombrowsky-Hahn and Fanego Palat 2024), as well as to take into account the momentary and situational nature of efficiently producing a specific linguistic formulation at a given point in discourse.

While, theoretically, it is not necessary to further classify linguistic contacts (other than as an organizational tool for upcoming sections), such classification can be explored based on the direction of linguistic influence, which presupposes a sequence in which languages were acquired. Thus, adopting the now classical perspective of Thomason and Kaufman (1988), we could examine *substrate interference* (or *transfer*, according to the terminology used by Selinker 1969, 1972, originating first from psychology) for the influence of the L1 on the L2 (or other non-native languages: L3, L4, etc.) and *borrowing* for the influence of the L2 (or other non-native languages) on the L1 (see also Clements 1996). This approach is illustrated (and applied to the migrant community under study) in Figure 4.

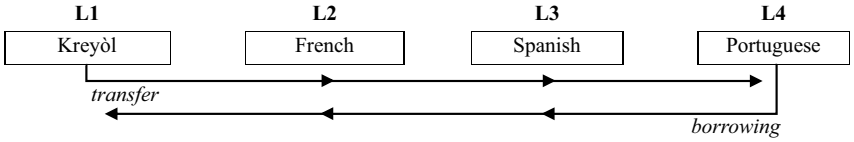

Figure 4: Linguistic features moving across languages in the repertoire of Haitian-Brazilians.

The recipient languages are not only those represented at the ends of the scheme: that is, HC also interferes with French or Spanish, in the same way that these two languages also borrow elements from Portuguese. Additionally, languages in intermediate positions can influence the others; most importantly, languages learned first can influence those learned later, as Riehl (2014, 92) concludes after reviewing the existing literature on L3 acquisition that "die Sprachen im Gehirn nicht nur alle untereinander vernetzt sind, sondern auch dass beim Erlernen von weiteren Sprachen bereits bekannte Sprachen effektiv genutzt werden" ('the languages in the brain are not only interconnected but also that when learning additional languages, already known languages are effectively utilized').

Lastly, it is crucial to highlight the emergence of two additional processes related to the development of a multilingual repertoire. First, languages acquired in adulthood, as well as those learned during childhood or adolescence exclusively in school settings – especially when the exposure time is quite limited – can be considered 'non-native' (L2, L3, L4, etc.) and thus are susceptible to phenomena associated with the fossilization of interlanguages (Roche 2013, 82–6, Selinker 1972). These phenomena, which in our case affect all languages except for HC, extend beyond substrate interference to encompass processes of simplification, regularization of patterns, and overgeneralization of a specific form across an entire paradigm. Second, language obsolescence (Aikhenvald 2012) triggered by disuse – which may incidentally result in structural consequences partly analogous to those observed in interlanguage grammar – affects the two types of languages that, throughout this work, have been identified as 'forgotten' within the biography of migrants, namely French and Spanish. The erosion of such languages, as Riehl (2014, 93) describes, constitutes an "umweltbedingte Attrition einer Zweit- oder Drittsprache, die nur teilweise beherrscht wurde" ('environmentally induced attrition of a second or third language that was only partially mastered')

5.2 Interlanguage grammar

When speaking non-native varieties, among other processes, "strategies of second-language learning" (Selinker 1972, 269–70) occur, involving simplifications and overgeneralization in the use of certain linguistic forms. I highlight only two of the phenomena that, as a result of these strategies, are more recurrent in my corpus. First, it is common for the masculine form to prevail over the feminine in words that in French and Spanish have gender inflexion:

(15) Fr. [tulɑ̃g] ***Tous*** [=**toutes**] [les] *langues*
'all languages'
(*C* = 28/m_student at the UFFS)

(16) Sp. *Yo viene solit**o*** [=solit**a**]
"I came alone"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

As expected, the same phenomenon also occurs in Portuguese (to facilitate comparison, I provide examples with the corresponding cognates of the non-canonical forms presented in the previous examples):

(17) Port. ***o*** [=***a***] *língua que a gente fala*
"the language that we speak"
(*J* = 35/m_owner of an electronics store)

(18) Port. *mi esposo vai deixar eu aqui sozinh**o** [=sozinh**a**]*
"my husband will leave me here alone"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

Second, one of the most characteristic features of interlanguages – the overgeneralization of 3SG verbal forms across the entire grammatical person paradigm, leading to an 'agreement mistake' effect from the perspective of canonical monolingual varieties – is quite prevalent in my data. This phenomenon has been observed before, for instance, in interlanguages of Spanish spoken by Chinese migrants in Clements (2005, in press), and Schuchardt as early as 1888 noted that *jargons* – which correspond to both *fossilized interlanguages* (Selinker 1972) and to what today would be called *pidgins* – often overgeneralize the 3SG, unlike Creoles, which tend to overgeneralize INF forms (Schuchardt 1888, 251). These latter forms can also appear in migrants' interlanguages, particularly in their earliest stages (cf. Ortiz López 2010, 81–2), but in my data, cases where the resulting form from the simplification of the verbal paradigm is the 3SG predominate.

(19) Fr. *Les industries ici produisent… pro…produ**it** moins…moins de aujourd'hui*
"The industries here produce… pro…produce less… less than today"
(*J* = 35/m_owner of an electronics store)

(20) Sp. *Yo trabaj**a*** [=trabajo] *en… yo es trabaj**á** cuidando idosa*
"I work in… I work in caring for elderly people"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

Example (19) is noteworthy for displaying the alternation – typical in my data – between the overgeneralization of 3SG (*produit*) and forms with the morphology proper to the corresponding grammatical person (3PL *produisent*). Example (20) seems to alternate a 3SG form *trabaja* [tɾa'baha] (<Sp. *trabaja*) with an INF *trabajá* [tɾaba'ha] (< Sp. *trabajar*, with loss of *-r*, likely influenced by Portuguese). Further research is required to evaluate this issue, particularly focusing on how the prosodic and tonal properties of HC are transferred to Spanish and the other languages in the repertoire. These properties often make it challenging to distinguish between 3SG forms and infinitives, except in cases with irregular verb morphology, such as the 3SG form in example (21). On the other hand, a form like *veni[r]* in example (25) clearly displays INF morphology.

Once again, the same phenomenon is widely documented in the varieties of Portuguese spoken by Haitian migrants (the predominance of 3SG forms over INF is more evident here, but it should be noted that the overgeneralization of 3SG morphology is a marginal yet possible variant in some diastratically low, native varieties of Brazilian Portuguese[9]: Castilho and Elias 2011, 458, Koch et al. 2011, 450–6, Steffen 2021, 144):

(21) Port. *eu não **vai*** [=vou] *estudar*
"I am not going to study"
(*M* = 24/f_worker in a meat processing plant)

Lastly, in several examples interspersed throughout the work, we observe the most evident manifestation of simplification processes, namely, the absence of some elements – in this case, prepositions (or any other equivalent strategy for introducing adjunct NPs). This absence cannot be traced back to the syntax of either of the contributing languages:

9 Even though it is extremely marginal, overgeneralization of 3SG forms has also been recorded in Dominican Spanish among monolingual speakers (Ortiz López 2010, 76–9).

(22) Fr. <*ou*[10]> *veni[r] [au] Brésil* <*aqui*[11]> *Chapecó [avec] passapol* (cp. (25))
"you come [to] Brazil, to Chapecó, [with] the passport"
(*J* = 36/m_worker in a meat processing plant)

(23) Sp. *todo pasa [por] República Dominicana* (cp. (8))
"all people go [through] the Dominican Republic"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

(24) Sp. *[en] España habla* <*bem*> *bien bien* (cp. (34))
"[in] Spain, people speak [Spanish] very well"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

5.3 Transfer from Haitian Creole

HC continues to be widely used in the diaspora and generally dominates the space of intragroup language, which means its influence on the other languages in the repertoire can spontaneously appear at any moment in discourse. Some of these transfer phenomena will be analyzed in this section; however, it is important to note two methodological issues regarding my data.

First, it is often challenging to determine whether a specific transfer phenomenon was already present in the learner's variety before arriving in Brazil, that is, if it was already established in the L2 French varieties circulating in Haiti or in the L2 Spanish varieties of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic (cf. Ortiz López 2010). For example, one might wonder whether the use of the infinitive *ouvrir* with the meaning of an attributive participle, as discussed above (Section 4.1), was a relatively stable feature of 'Haitian (L2-)French' or emerged spontaneously in a Brazilian context.

Second, in terms of French, I mainly focus on those speakers who have had regular experience actively using this language. I reserve for future studies the utterances produced by those who are not accustomed to actively speaking French but who were forced to briefly engage in it with us. Here is just an example of such utterances, where the influence of HC is so pronounced that one could discuss a hybrid French/HC variety or an *acrolectal* or *debasilectalized* variety (Mufwene 2004) of HC, which, given the diasporic context I am addressing here, may feature code-mixing with Portuguese. In the example, a speaker attempts to switch from Portuguese, the language predominantly used in the prior conversation, to respond to a question posed in French (regarding how Haitians arrive in Chapecó); uncertain about the appropriateness of continuing in Portuguese – which one of the interviewers asserts not to understand – he temporarily shifted to French. Although he managed to articulate the idea, recognizing his inability to express himself effectively in French, he seizes the opportunity to request switching to HC.

(25) <*você*> *ou veni[r]…* <*você*> *veni[r]…* <*eu falá*> *créole, moi palé créole… ou veni[r] Brésil* <*aqui*> *Chapecó… passapol*
"you, you came… you came… I am going to speak Creole, I am going to speak Creole… you come to Brazil, here in Chapecó… with the passport"
(*J* = 35/m_worker in a meat processing plant)

10 2SG pronoun in HC, originated from French *vous* (Section 5.3).

11 Locative adverb in Portuguese ('here'), perhaps used spontaneously as a preposition ('in/to'). This usage is likely a creative development of the interlanguage, given that it is alien to the contributing languages, including HC. Interestingly enough, this strategy does appear in other Creoles; for example, in Palenquero, *akí Palenge* (< Sp. *aquí [en] Palenque* 'here [in] Palenque') should simply be translated as '*in* Palenque': Maglia and Moñino 2015, 211, 213, etc.).

Setting aside the lexical insertions from Portuguese (the pronouns *eu* and *você* – see further below – the non-canonical form *falá* – stemming either from a 3SG form with accentual shift or from an infinitive form[12] – and the adverb *aqui* – perhaps used creatively as a preposition meaning 'to/in'), each element of the French/HC parts merits separate analysis:

1. *ou* [u] originates from HC (deriving from and cognate with the French *vous* [vu]).
2. *veni[r]* [ve'ni] is from French, specifically from the infinitive *venir* [vəniʀ], but adapted to the phonetics of both HC (where there is no /ə/ and the final *-r* of French infinitives was never transmitted) and Brazilian Portuguese (which also lacks [ə] and where, dialectally, the deletion (*apagamento*) of final -r is common). There is no doubt that *veni[r]* is a French form, as in Portuguese the equivalent is *vir* [vi(ʀ)], and in HC, it is *vin~vini* [vin(i)] (Valdman 1988, 264, Valdman et al. 2017, s.v. *to come*); the Spanish form *venir* [be'niɾ] could not have played any role, as this particular speaker did not speak Spanish.
3. *moi* [mwa] is a French form, clearly different from the HC cognate *mwen* [mwen] (retaining the old realization – general in French until the eighteenth century – of today's diphthong [wa]). However, *moi* adopts the syntactic properties of HC *mwen*, thus being used as a dependent subject pronoun (in HC, French subject clitics like *je* do not exist, and the originally independent/topicalizer pronouns like *moi* were adapted as dependent subjects; moreover, a new cliticization process occurred, giving rise to *m'*, which can be used as a variant of *mwen*) (cf. Haspelmath and the APICS Consortium 2013).
4. *palé* can correspond to both HC *palé* (the basic verb form, derived from the French infinitive *parler*) and the French infinitive *parler* itself (with a slight phonetic adaptation in the interlanguage – the loss of /ʀ/ in implosive internal position of a word).
5. *créole* [kʀeɔl] is a French form, distinct from the corresponding cognates in Portuguese (*crioulo*) and in Creole (*kreyòl* [kɾe'jol]).
6. *passapol* [pasa'pɔl] diverges from the HC form (*paspö*) and seems to be based on the French *passeport* [pɑspɔʀ]; however, the inclusion of the second [a] likely comes from Portuguese *passaporte* [pasa'pɔʀʧi], while the articulation of the final rhotic [ɾ] as [l] is a phonetic feature typical (in Chapecó, even stereotypical) of interlanguages spoken by Haitians, resulting indirectly from a transfer from HC (which lacks the rhotic consonants of French/Spanish/Portuguese: Fattier 2013, §4) (see also Swiderski (2019) on similar changes affecting Spanish rhotics in the learner varieties of Haitian migrants in Mexico).

All things considered, when we examine instances like example (25) and specifically note the transfer from HC to French fragments – keeping in mind the informant's initial intent to communicate in French – we indeed identify certain phonetic and syntactic-phonetic transfer phenomena, such as changes in rhotics and the usage of *moi* as a dependent subject pronoun. Nonetheless, it is clear that instances like these effectively showcase how multilingual speakers utilize various elements from their linguistic repertoire (HC, French, and Portuguese), often merging phonetic forms from one language with syntactic properties of another, or even combining phonetic material from multiple languages, while blending these with interlanguage phenomena (such as the simplification of verbal paradigms and the omission of prepositions). Although such hybrid utterances warrant further analysis, I will instead focus here on examples where transfer phenomena from HC can be identified more straightforwardly. The remainder of this section will focus on two such phenomena:

12 It is clear that *falá* replicates – and translates – the use of the form *palé* from HC, which appears immediately afterward in the text. Thus, theoretically, two interpretations emerge. First, *falá* may conceal the 3SG form (*fala*) with an accentual shift due to the influence of *palé* or, more broadly, as a copy of the oxytone stress pattern typical of HC verbs. Second, it could represent an infinitive form (*falá[r]*) spontaneously chosen as a basic form for verb conjugation (a feature also seen in interlanguages, as noted). Further consideration is warranted on formulating this latter hypothesis: While it might be tempting to attribute this process to HC's influence, given that Creoles have historically overgeneralized the infinitive as a basic form – combined with preverbal TMA markers to shape verb conjugation –, it is important to remember that for current HC speakers, this is not an "infinitive" form in the traditional sense (despite its historical derivation from what is considered an infinitive in French grammar!). It merely serves as the basic verb form upon which the entire verb conjugation is built. Thus, the replication in non-native languages simply involves selecting and overgeneralizing a verb form from the grammar of these languages (meaning the 3SG form could also be a valid replication).

one documented in the context of French, and the other observed across all non-native languages in the repertoire.

A notable phenomenon in French as spoken by Hatian-Brazilians is the use of *vous* 'you(V)' and the practical absence of *tu* 'you(T)' in non-formal situations.[13] This points to the overgeneralization of *vous* as a neutral 2SG pronoun in terms of T and V (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960). Even more significant is that the common strategy in the oral varieties of many languages worldwide to use 2SG with a generic meaning (similar to the English *one*) is carried out among my informants through the use of *vous*, unlike canonical varieties of French, which would use *tu* with this same meaning[14]:

(26) ***vous*** *allez à l'école,* ***vous****, eh…* ***vous*** *apprenez en français,* ***vous*** *arrivez à la maison,* ***vous*** *parlez créole*
"[when] one goes to school, one, uh… one learns in French; [when] one comes home, one speaks Creole"
(*S* = 24/m_student at UFFS)

This use would be hard to explain without acknowledging that the meaning of *vous*, as the sole 2SG pronoun, neutral in terms of T/V distinctions and thus the only possible 2SG form used for generic reference, replicates the use of HC's cognate *ou*:

(27) *Se yon magazen kote* ***ou*** *kap achte tout kalite bagay*
"it's a place where one can buy everything"
(Valdman 1988, 74)

Regarding the potential influence of HC on this grammatical aspect in Spanish and Portuguese as spoken by Haitians, further research and data collection are necessary before drawing definitive conclusions.[15]

Another phenomenon that may be related to HC is the use of present indicative verb forms with a perfective past meaning, which I only find in my data with aspectually dynamic verbs, but never with stative verbs. This phenomenon occurs across all languages in the repertoire (for ease of comparison, I provide examples with the same verb – fr. *apprendre*/sp. *aprender*/port. *aprender* – prototypically dynamic):

(28) Fr. *[A: Et tu as appris le. le portugais (.) où tu l'a appris?] B: j'****apprends***$_{[PRES]}$ [=ai appris$_{[PRF]}$] *portugais, par exemple de jour en jour* […]
"[A: and you learned Portuguese… Where did you learn it?] B: I learned Portuguese, for instance, in everyday life […]"
(*J* = 35/m_worker in a meat processing plant)

(29) Sp. *Porque yo estuda na República Dominicana; yo más* ***aprende***$_{[PRES]}$ [=aprendí$_{[PRF]}$] *español*
"[…] because I studied in the Dominican Republic; I learned more Spanish"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

(30) Port. *Você* ***aprende***$_{[PRES]}$ [=aprendeu$_{[PRF]}$] *onde? aqui ou…*
"Where did you learn [German]? Here or […]?"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

13 There are exceptions, though, as demonstrated by example (36).

14 The generic use of *vous* is extremely unusual in today's French, especially in informal speech. When used at all, it is primarily as an object (*ça vous va bien comme ça*) and it stands out as elegant and/or archaic (see Rolin 2013 and references therein); most importantly, its reference seems to end up including the hearer in some way (directly or indirectly).

15 First, I have yet to document instances of the generic 2SG pronoun in Spanish (which typically manifests through *tú*, including in the L2 varieties of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic: Ortiz López 2010, 131–5). Second, while the overgeneralization of *você* in Portuguese, including its use as a generic 2SG pronoun, is prevalent among my informants, additional data are required to definitively preclude the use of *tu* (which remains in use in the Chapecó area, as well as other parts of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul: Coelho and Souza 2020). Furthermore, even if this phenomenon is confirmed, its direct linkage to HC influence remains uncertain, given the widespread use of *você* and the marginalization of *tu* across large areas of Brazil and in the media.

In HC, there is a basic dichotomy between marking or not marking the past tense – considering that TMA marking in this language (as in many other Creoles) occurs through the addition of preverbal particles. Unlike stative verbs, where a bare verb (without preverbal TMA markers) is interpreted as present tense, it is more common for the bare verb to be construed as perfective past in the case of dynamic verbs (Valdman 2015, 218):

(31) HC *Li **aprenn** li bonè*
"She learned to read early"
(Valdman et al. 2017, s.v. *learn*)

(32) HC *mwen **aprann** ke li pa nesesè pou bay elèv egzamen difisil*
"I learned that it isn't necessary to give difficult exams to the students"
(Baker and Riches 2018, 567)

The hypothesis suggests that multilingual speakers predominantly choose the present indicative form (and, to a lesser extent, the infinitive[16]) in French, Spanish, and Portuguese as a replication of the bare verbs from HC. While the equivalence between bare verbs and the present indicative morphology with stative verbs matches the canonical varieties of French, Spanish, and Portuguese, the spontaneous extension of the present indicative to cover the other meaning of HC's bare verbs, that is, the perfective past tense with aspectually dynamic verbs, represents a linguistic innovation by multilingual speakers. Schematically, this linguistic innovation could be represented in four steps (a type of schema that would naturally apply to other transfer phenomena where the L1 expresses through the same word or construction meanings that in the target language are expressed separately).

While future quantitative analyses will be required to confirm this hypothesis, the distinct behavior observed between dynamic/processive and stative verbs in the non-native varieties studied here is unlikely to have arisen by chance (Figure 5). Furthermore, the influence of HC is suggested, too, by the rarity (or even impossibility) of other tense alternations within the non-native varieties of my informants: for instance, focusing again on past tenses, it is noteworthy that the present indicative never substitutes for the imperfect tense, which is consistently used in its canonical form to express non-perfective or continuous past.

Finally, the implications of the hypothesis are interesting for another reason: if we accept that HC has a predominantly West African linguistic substrate (Lefebvre 1998, which highlights the role of FonGbe), and we remember that the joint expression of the perfective past for dynamic verbs and the present for stative verbs is a very common feature in West African languages and even in a significant part of Niger-Congo languages (Maurer and The APICS Consortium 2013, §4; Lang 2023, 151; Dom et al. 2018),[17] we might be observing an African matrix linguistic feature that has indirectly, through HC, been transferred to French, Spanish, and Portuguese varieties.

5.4 Borrowing from Portuguese

Throughout this work, examples have been interspersed in which some Portuguese elements are inserted into mostly French or Spanish fragments. In these cases, they are generally elements classifiable as 'function words' (Matras 2007, 35), such as affirmation and negation adverbs (pro-sentential, as in answers to questions) (*sim* 'yes', as in example (6), *não* 'no', as in examples (7) and (14)), connectors (such as the conjunction meaning 'but' – Port. *mas* – the one most easily borrowed in universal terms – Matras 1998, 2007, 54, Stolz et al. 2021–; see

16 Marginally, the infinitive can also appear as a direct replica of the bare verbs: this is the case with *aprendé[r]*, which appeared in example (6). In fact, in the data from Ortiz López (2010, 81) regarding Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, the majority of infinitives in their non-canonical use (replacing conjugated verb forms) appear with aspectually dynamic verbs; in any case, in this author's data, there are about four times as many non-canonical uses of 3SG verb forms as there are of infinitives.

17 In many languages of the so-called "Macro-Sudanic belt" (Güldemann 2011) even expressed by zero marking (bare verbs).

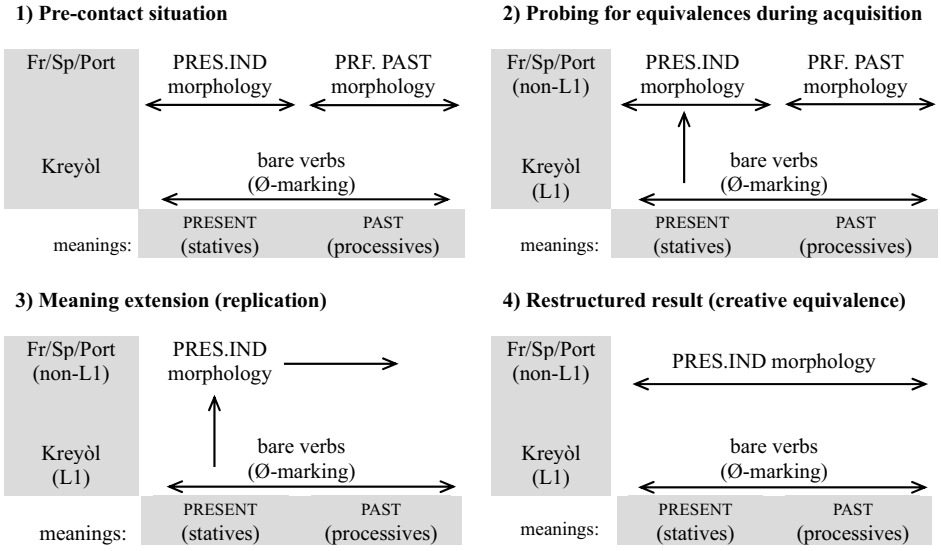

Figure 5: Language replication (transfer) in four steps.

example (2)), etc. On the other hand, we have seen that in phonetically similar cognates, there seems to be a greater permeability to the adoption, total or partial, of the Portuguese element: this was the case of the [a] in the predominantly French form *passapol* (ex. (25)), to which could be added – according to reported evidence from Haitian students – the substitution of French *différent* [difeʀɑ̃] by Portuguese *diferente* [ʤife'ɾẽʧi] even when speaking French. Since French and Spanish are the least active languages in the repertoire, it would be particularly difficult to empirically determine the actual degree of integration of elements inserted from another language (this issue has traditionally been central to the discussion on whether such elements are borrowings or switches: see Haspelmath 2009 for conceptual issues concerning lexical borrowings, Matras 2009, 111 on the codeswitching-borrowing continuum, and Deuchar 2020 on the particular role of 'peripheral' types of integration in shedding new light on the distinction between these categories). As discussed in Section 5.1 (see especially Figure 4), the concept of *borrowing* is deliberately broad and encapsulates any kind of influence (matter/pattern replication) of later-acquired languages on earlier-acquired languages. This includes, of course, examples of syntactic borrowing, which this section aims to further elucidate to complement the preceding observations.

A feature present in L2 varieties of French and Spanish, attributable to contact with Brazilian Portuguese, is the use of null generic/arbitrary subjects:

(33) Fr. *là en Haiti* **Ø** *parle deux langues, créole et français*
"In Haiti, people speak two languages, Creole and French"
(*J* = 35/m_owner of an electronics store)

(34) Sp. *España* **Ø** *habla <bem> bien bien*
"[in] Spain, people speak [Spanish] very well"
(*E* = 42/f_snack bar owner)

As is well known, French is conventionally classified as a non-pro-drop language. While no Spanish variety can be clearly classified as such, Caribbean Spanish, especially Dominican Spanish (cf. Morales 1999, Gutiérrez Maté 2013 and references therein), exhibits some characteristics of non-pro-drop languages, including a notably high pronoun expression rate. Therefore, theoretically, null subjects might assume interpretations other than the conventional ones in canonical pro-drop languages (generally, referential elements recoverable by context). However, this is crucial: neither in monolingual varieties of French nor in Dominican Spanish have null subjects been observed to take on a generic/arbitrary meaning. Conversely, Brazilian Portuguese is

often categorized as a 'non-consistent null subject language' (Holmberg et al. 2009), due to its tendency to use overt subject pronouns while still permitting their omission in certain contexts, including those with an impersonal, i.e., generic or arbitrary, interpretation. Impersonal subjects that potentially include the speaker – equivalent to *one* or *you* in English – are considered 'generic', while those excluding the speaker – equivalent to *people* or *they* in English – are considered 'arbitrary' (Holmberg et al. 2009, 63–4). Specifically, in the examples provided, since the speaker seems to be excluded from the referential scope of the null subjects, these subjects should be classified as arbitrary: in (33) the informant is not in Haiti at the time of making the statement; in (34), the informant is not – and has never been – in Spain. The source structure for these examples is very common in Brazilian Portuguese (for better comparability, consider the following example, which also involves the verb 'to speak'):

(35) Port. *olha., na televisão* **Ø** *fala muito isso, né?*
"Listen, they often talk about that on television, see?"
(Duarte and Marins 2021, 12)

Interestingly, in Brazilian Portuguese, it is the younger and middle-aged generations – thus, those with whom the interviewed Haitian migrants (recall, aged between 20 and 45 years) are most likely in more contact – who most frequently use generic and arbitrary null subjects (Duarte and Marins 2021, 11–4).[18]

Future research will need to determine whether this phenomenon has also made its way into the local HC used in Chapecó (HC being a language inclined toward overt subject pronouns that licences some null subjects – cf. DeGraff 1993 – but seems to avoid generic/arbitrary null subjects).

On the other hand, I frequently find the formation of responses to yes/no questions by repeating the main verb of the interrogative sentence, a feature characteristic of Portuguese (Santos 2009) but not traditionally of French and Spanish (example (38) deviates even further from the canonical pattern, as the speaker spontaneously repeats the verb without altering its ending to the 1SG morpheme *-o*):

(36) Fr. LE: *et je peux te demander quelque chose en français?*/F: ***Tu peux***
"LE: and can I ask you something in French? F: (yes,) you can"
(*F* = 32/m_student at the UFFS)

(37) Sp. MG: <*¿Podes tirar uma foto do meu número?*>/F: ***Puedo***
"MG: Can you take a picture of my number? F: (yes,) I can"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

(38) Sp. LE: *¿Y extrañas tu país?*/F: ***Extrañas***
"LE: And do you miss your country?/F: (yes,) I do [lit. 'you miss']"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

Generally speaking, the presence of Portuguese elements in Spanish is particularly intense. In this regard, I highlight another recurrent syntactic phenomenon in my data: the existential use of the possessive verb *tener*, following the pattern of Brazilian Port. possessive/existential verb *ter*. This type of linguistic change is relatively common worldwide. However, within Spanish dialectology, it seems to be activated primarily in contexts of linguistic contact with languages that constructionalize existence and predicative possession together (this has been demonstrated before for the case of Misiones Spanish, specifically due to language contact with Brazilian Portuguese: Cerno et al. 2021):

18 The study by Duarte and Marins (2021) defines individuals aged between 18 and 35 years as the "younger generation." However, this categorization is based on empirical data from 2010, meaning that those informants would be aged between 31 and 48 at the time of my interviews with Haitians in 2023. Currently, I am not aware of any sociolinguistic research specifically targeting the present younger generation.

(39) Sp. *Aquí no **tiene** más haitianos, se fue todos*
"Here there are no more Haitians, they all left"
(*F* = 45/f_elderly caregiver)

In fact, the insertion of Portuguese elements into Spanish discourse is consistent, and it might even appear that transitioning from one language to another is a manifestation of *congruent lexicalization* (Muysken 2000). However, this notion is complicated by the fact that speakers may deliberately employ certain linguistic features to differentiate themselves from Portuguese and signal their ability to speak Spanish (using *yo* instead of *eu*, *hablar* instead of *falar*, [we] instead of [ɔ], etc.). Hence, it can be argued that some of these discourses in Spanish utilize a Portuguese base interspersed with distinct Spanish markers.

6 Conclusions

This article has explored the evolution of the linguistic repertoire of a group of speakers within a South–South migration phenomenon: the diaspora of predominantly young Haitians to Brazil, specifically to Chapecó, where they have established a significant community. This evolution encompasses more than the apparent complexity added over time by new languages. A comparison of the repertoire from the homeland with that developed in the new country reveals some continuities (the status of HC as the socially less favored language in a diglossic context, its role as an identity marker, and the perception of French as foreign) along with several adaptations to the new ecology:

(1) The distance from the homeland may intensify both the positive ideology toward HC (and its dignified history) and the negative perception of French (as a source of inequalities).
(2) Depending on the individual and their context, French either loses all social significance – holding, if anything, only a marginal presence in the linguistic landscape – or becomes a symbol representing 'qualified migration'.
(3) In the new diglossic context, Portuguese emerges as the new high language, transitioning from being the language of socioeconomically privileged minorities (as French was in Haiti) to the majority language of the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, HC moves from being the societal majority language to a minority and in-group language.
(4) For Haitians who had an extended stay in the Dominican Republic before arriving in Brazil, Spanish almost entirely loses its status and relevance. It finds minimal use, primarily for communication with another prominent migrant community in Chapecó, the Venezuelans.
(5) The inherent international experience of the migration process may foster a global awareness where multilingualism is positively valued as a source of new opportunities and as a testament to lived experiences that speakers tend to embrace.

The current research phase has primarily concentrated on French and Spanish, which make a fascinating contribution to understanding the repertoire's overall evolution and help us contextualize the primary languages in the repertoire (HC and Portuguese). Unlike HC, there would not initially be a compelling reason to preserve French and Spanish within the Brazilian migrant community; however, these languages still find marginal use and can certainly carry symbolic significance, showcasing higher status, international/global experience, or serving as reminders of past lives.

In Section 5, I have focused on the multilingual dynamics of the Haitian community in Chapecó, presenting structural characteristics of French and Spanish within their new context. The informants' life experiences and their perception of languages as primarily tools for communication result in minimal concern for adhering to linguistic norms prescribed by institutions and media. Consequently, speakers frequently combine elements from various languages in their utterances, leading to contact-induced linguistic innovations. I have analyzed these phenomena using traditional classification criteria for organizational purposes, relying on well-known concepts such as transfer and borrowing. However, the main takeaway is that speakers can

effectively utilize their entire repertoire. The effects of language contact may be particularly prominent in French and Spanish – languages experiencing partial obsolescence – which are often supplemented with features from other languages in the repertoire.

Throughout Sections 5.2–5.4, I have aimed to classify the phenomena according to what I considered the most relevant contributing factor (interlanguage grammar, transfer, borrowing) to explain their origin. However, the interplay of other factors cannot be dismissed, and indeed, it is presumed that it is the convergence of factors that facilitates the emergence of a given linguistic innovation at a particular point in discourse. Often it is not about guessing which factor is most decisive but recognizing that the more contributing factors there are, the more likely the innovation is to appear. For instance, it cannot be ruled out that the grammar of HC has facilitated a typically interlinguistic feature such as the neutralization of grammatical gender. Similarly, the use of a common verb form (3SG) for the present of stative verbs and the past of dynamic verbs, which appears to follow the HC model, or the use of generic null pronouns, reminiscent of the Brazilian Portuguese model, may be underpinned by universal factors related to L2-acquisition (and the subsequent functionalization of the difference between canonical and non-canonical variants).

A further illustrative example is observed when an informant, in sentences like Sp. *comidas mucho caro* ('the food [is] very expensive'; 45/f_elderly caregiver), uses *mucho* instead of the allomorph *muy* (the canonical form used as an adjective intensifier, as in *Juan es muy alto*, which contrasts with the form used when the adjective is omitted, as in *A: ¿Juan es alto?; B: Sí, mucho* 'A: Is Juan tall?; B: Yes, very'). This phenomenon could arguably be attributed to structural simplification, specifically the generalization of one allomorph over another, a trait typical of both interlanguages and the obsolescent use of a language. However, when also considering that the two predominant languages in the repertoire use the same intensifier form irrespective of its syntactic context (*anpil* in HC and *muito* in Portuguese), it becomes clearer why the innovation eventually takes place.

This work should be viewed as ongoing, as HC and Portuguese still require the level of attention afforded here to French and Spanish. Moreover, examining the Haitian community in Chapecó is pertinent for its potential to facilitate comparisons with other Haitian communities globally: to cite just one example, the substitution of one diglossia for another has also been studied in the Haitian community in Miami (in this case, HC/French > HC/English), as has been the fact that French may retain a residual use as a 'status marker' in the same community (Spears 2014, 183). Additionally, grasping South–South migration processes, which often precede South–North migrations, is crucial, especially since some Haitian-Brazilians later move to the United States, Canada, or Europe. Understanding their integration into potential new host countries requires a deep comprehension of their past Brazilian experiences.

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