



Title	Language Styles, Styling and Language Change in Creole Communities
Authors(s)	Migge, Bettina
Publication date	2021-12
Publication information	Migge, Bettina. "Language Styles, Styling and Language Change in Creole Communities." John Benjamins, December 2021. https://doi.org/10.1075/jpcl.00080.mig .
Publisher	John Benjamins
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/25628
Publisher's version (DOI)	10.1075/jpcl.00080.mig

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Column 4: Language Styles, Styling and Language Change in Creole Communities

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1. Introduction

In my last column, I want to come back to another topic that is dear to my heart, the stylistic repertoire of Creoles, which, in my view, has received far too little attention despite its potential importance for a more holistic understanding of the nature of Creoles and language change. Styles and style shifting in Creoles have mostly been investigated to provide evidence against Bickerton (1975) and DeCamp's (1971) notion of the Post-Creole continuum which argues that language use in Creole communities is characterized by an unusual degree of continuous variation which is part of one seamless grammar. Subsequent research on the English-Official Caribbean (Edwards 1983; Devonish 1992; Escure 1983; Winford 1992; Migge 1996, see also Winford 1997 for a summary overview) has challenged this view, showing that Creole communities consist of two or more co-existing socially and linguistically distinct language systems, namely a (conservative) Creole and a local standard language. Variation can be accounted for in terms of code-switching practices and some internal variation that is found in any language. Having been conducted within the paradigm of first wave sociolinguistics (Eckert 2012), it employed the sociolinguistic interview method (Labov 1972; Tagliamonte 2012) to delimit styles of speaking. Its aim is to elicit vernacular speech along with comparative samples of formal speech. Despite being aware of the rather artificial nature of Labov's notion of style defined as attention paid to speech and his ordering of styles only along a standard-vernacular or formal-informal axis conditioned by attention paid to speech, Caribbean creolists' work within this paradigm has ultimately largely depended on it. Its application showed the greater the degree of formality (e.g. talk to superior or in public), the more the speech is located on the formal or Standard English end

of the axis and the lower the degree of formality (i.e. talking with close friends or equals outside of institutional contexts) the more Creole or vernacular-like it is.

Although this approach was useful to elicit large volumes of spoken language and, in the case of Caribbean Creole communities, to reveal the structural and social independence of Creoles from the lexically related standard language, it has also contributed to certain misconceptions about Creoles. First, it assumes that the Creole-Standard axis of variation is the only one or the most salient one in Creole communities. Second, it portrays Creoles (as well as Standard languages for that matter) as lacking stylistic options. Rickford (2019: 83) also argued that “a one-shot sociolinguistic interview – no matter how ingeniously constructed – does not usually constitute “sufficient” opportunity for us to observe the limits of an individual’s competence” as “assessment of speaker competence requires a broad and varied database.” (ibid 85).

Apart from this linguistic and quantitatively oriented approach to style, there are also linguistic anthropology-based approaches starting with Hymes (1962, 1972) which begin with a consideration of the social aspects of language use and see language as itself a form of social behavior. He proposes to first identify the types of events and contexts that involve verbal interaction within a community, people’s perceptions of them and the relationships that exist between them. The analysis focuses on identifying a range of things for each event such as codes used, salient structural and discursive features, participation rights and management such as turn-taking, preference organization, speaking rights etc. (Hymes 1972). He argues that “speech styles are not mechanical correlations of features of speech with each other and with contexts” and that a significant speech style “can be recognized, and used outside its defining context” (Hymes 1974: 440). Research should also pay attention to the uses to which styles are put to outside of their main context and how they are linked to other styles across contexts. Based on research into these aspects, emic typologies of speech genres

or styles may be developed. “[C]ommunities differ in the number and variety of significant speech styles, and in the principal bases of their delimitation” (Hymes 1974: 440). A community’s emic speech styles typology function as the necessary background to analyzing verbal behavior, including style shifting in interactions. This interaction-based notion of style was at the heart of the challenges to Labov’s responsive notion of style. In brief, Giles & Powesland (1975), Giles and Coupland (1991), LePage & Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) and Bell (1984, 2001) argued that styles of speaking are closely tied up with people’s identities and that people design their speech in relation to their interlocutors. Giles highlighted processes of social accommodation (or lack thereof) between interlocutors as an important variable for determining linguistic behavior. Speakers assess their own and interlocutor’s position in the social space (i.e. group membership) and design their speech to create (dis)alignment with their interlocutor based on their social evaluation, i.e. their desire to (dis)align with the interlocutor’s perceived social group membership. LePage and Tabouret-Keller’s approach emphasizes that styles of speaking are essentially group practices. Bell’s (1984, 2001) audience design argues for a more diversified understanding of the notion of audience, proposing that both the people that are implicitly and explicitly addressed such as the addressee, the overhearer, the by-stander etc. influence how speakers design their speech. Bell also posits an initiative dimension, arguing that language use, or style shifting, may also initiate situational change. He refers to this as referee design where the speaker (dis)aligns their language use with a particular (imagined) group or contextual style and thereby brings about a situation. Bell argues that styles derive, at least in part, their meaning from their association with social settings, groups, identities and topics and play an important role in linguistic differentiation.

In recent decades, this notion of style has come to be linked to the notion of identity as constructed in social interaction (Coupland 2007; Bucholtz & Hall 2010). Eckert &

McConnell-Ginet (1992) investigate how groups that regularly interact (communities of practice) draw on or mobilize existing practices – their own, mediated ones and those of others – to develop group practices or norms through their mutual engagement and how that in turn imbues social meanings to linguistic features – iconization (Irvine & Gal 2000) – and contributes to the creation of interactional and social identities. In this approach, identity and style are co-constructed and identity categories are constituted through situation-based use of linguistic forms or variables. Styles are the linguistic means through which identity is produced in discourse. Styles are part of a system of distinctions “in which a style contrasts with other possible styles and the social meaning signified by the style contrasts with other social meanings” (Irvine 2001: 22). Through the ideological process that erases heterogeneity and variation individual speakers come to be seen as representatives of social groups and individual ways of speaking come to represent bounded languages or styles.¹ Social groups and ways of speaking are connected through stances, activities etc (Ochs 1991). This research heavily relies on ethnography for identifying types of interactional contexts and their social and linguistic indexicalities.

To date there is little research on Creoles within this culturally oriented approach, but see for example Abrahams’ (1983) research on St. Vincent and Jourdan & Angeli’s (2014, 2021) research on Solomon Islands. The latter shows that different ways of speaking Solomon Islands’ Pijin coexist with varieties of English and local Solomon Island languages

¹ Irvine & Gal (2000: 38) define *erasure* as “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away.” For example, “a social group or a language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded.”

and that the English-Solomon Islands Pijin axis of variation is only one of those that are exploited by different social groups when constructing their speech styles and that neither English nor Pijin are only linked to formal or informal speech. People's and community's stylistic repertoires are also dynamic; as people's lives change, the makeup of the stylistic repertoire, the linguistic nature of styles and their social associations are also changing. Based on historical documentation, Roberts (2004) demonstrates how the role of style and identity were central in processes of divergence and convergence in the development of Hawaiian Creole (HC). Styles of HC used in white collar employment and schools were convergent with American Standard English and in interactions with immigrants usage patterns converged with Hawaiian Pidgin English.

In this paper I draw on my own research to shed light on the stylistic fabric of one Creole, the Eastern Maroon Creole or Nenge(e), and how and why it has been evolving over time. Drawing on my initial experiences with the Pamaka and the wider Eastern Maroon community, I first discuss styles and identity in the village context and how I went about identifying them. Section three illustrates salient styles and in sections four and five I explore stylistic changes and the factors that play a role. In the final part I draw conclusions about research on style and insights it provides.

2. Finding styles, defining repertoires

On arriving in Suriname, based on the literature of the 1990s and on talking to members of SIL Paramaribo, I was under the impression that the Pamaka community, like the other Maroon communities, is monolingual, speaking what some publications describe as a variety of Aukan (Ethnologue).² I was aware of the observer's paradox and thus the possibility of getting 'marred data' due to being a community outsider. However, to my surprise, when I

² See Migge & Léglise (2015) for a summary of naming practices for the Maroon Creoles.

got to the village of Langa Tabiki, people encouraged me to ‘come along’ and to participate in all kinds of activities, including to communicate with people using Pamaka. People sometimes made fun of my mistakes and corrected me but in hindsight, they rarely made use of Sranan Tongo-type or Dutch, the two languages of wider communication in Suriname, when addressing me and certainly never shifted to another language due to my presence; I was not important enough to cause people to change their habits. In any case, word got out quickly that I was there to learn the local language. This immersive approach was a bit disorienting but necessary to quickly get a handle on logistical matters (e.g. getting food) and to find out what was going on in the community. Although I had no specific training in linguistic anthropology or ethnography, language learning, both direct instruction from people and observing people talk to and about other people made me realize the alleged monolingual status of the community was a fiction and that things were at odds with what I had read about language in Creole communities.

I was frequently told to stick with certain people for ‘learning’, as they spoke the real Pamaka (*piyo Pamaka*). Predictably, many of these were older and middle-aged men and women who lived a subsistence lifestyle. I was warned about young men and often heard negative comments about their behavior, as they allegedly spoke like town people (*fotonenge*) which I eventually came to understand to be varieties of Sranan Tongo, the national language of Suriname and a widely used lingua franca in the wider region. Although Pamaka and Sranan Tongo are related languages and all people make use of (approximations to) Sranan Tongo at certain times, people were then and still are quite adamant about drawing a clear distinction between them. Discussions indicated that they are linked to separate identities and that Sranan Tongo has socially problematic overtones. More surprising was people’s preoccupation with distinguishing Pamaka from other Maroon languages, predominantly Okanisi or Ndyuka, the language of the largest Eastern Maroon community.

The other Maroon languages, Aluku, Kwinti, Saamaka and Matawai, figured little in warnings or policing but with the migration of many Pamaka to the French commune of Apatou traditionally linked to Aluku, there is more talk about this now.³ Saamaka is rarely discussed but there is evidence of negative stereotypes. European languages (Dutch, French, English) were acknowledged as valuable but were largely associated with the school context (i.e. evidence of being a good pupil) and visiting people. In the 1990s, they were not seen as impacting on Pamaka.⁴

Pamaka (like other Maroon languages) is not seen by its speakers as monostylistic or as constituting vernacular speech defined as ordinary or everyday language which is opposed to standard or formal language (Coupland 2016).⁵ Once my language competence started improving, I noticed different ways of speaking Pamaka in the village associated with specific social contexts, activities and groups of people. The most conspicuous one was found in *kuutu* ‘arbitration’ type meetings (Migge 2004). These meetings, usually taking place in the meeting house or at the *gaanman*’s or village head’s (*kabiten*) residence, were highly

³ Similar concerns about differentiating Aluku from Ndyuka and Ndyuka from both Pamaka and Aluku are common. The intensity of concerns varies between generations and types of contexts.

⁴ Ritual languages such as *Luango* were rarely discussed but were used at specific events.

⁵ Coupland’s (2016: 425) review of definitions of vernacular concludes that nowadays “[i]t becomes harder to associate vernacularity definitely with any of the attributes that have previously been claimed for it – stigma, disadvantage, uneducatedness, locality, purity, naturalness, regularity, eloquence, covert prestige, etc. Instead, in today’s more complex and less stable symbolic markets, we should expect that meanings like these have to be reflexively constructed in situ.”

structured socially (i.e. participation, seating, topics) and linguistically. While the language was recognizably Pamaka, it was often near impossible to follow the content due to many veiling strategies. Over time, I found out that these meetings are the main or core context for this style referred to as ‘speaking with respect’ (*taki anga lesipeki*) or ‘respect speech’ (*lesipeki taki*). However, salient aspects of it such as various veiling strategies are also deployed in other contexts where an effort is made to protect interlocutors’ negative face such as in interactions with in-laws, elders and dignitaries, talking about difficult topics etc. This style is contrasted to two others, typically ‘traveler’s speech’ (*wakaman taki*) linked to young men and hanging around ‘on the edge’ of the village and gossip or everyday speech (*gongosa, kowonu taki*) linked to women chatting while working or relaxing. Both were often cast as problematic. The former was seen as representing otherness (e.g. ‘foreign’ vocabulary and new expressions) and the other was seen as too explicit and sensational (e.g. use of non-veiled expression). Finally, there were two other contexts that appeared to involve ‘different’ speech: church and spirit possession speech (*keliki taki* and *wenti taki*). Both were not talked about by people and my questions about them did not yield much discussion other than that’s the way spirits talk. Both employ a somewhat archaic Sranan Tongo-like speech and the *wenti taki* was generally uttered haltingly and with effort.

Linguistic diversity was thus very much part of the rural villages in the 1990s but only some languages, namely Ndyuka and Sranan Tongo, were seen as relevant apart from Pamaka. While Pamaka (like other Maroon languages) was recognized as a distinct entity coexisting on a par with others, there was and is a sense of some leakiness or overlap with other languages. Although it is used for informal, unobserved talk, this is only one of its functions and the varieties that most closely correspond to that are *kowonu* or *gongosa taki* incidentally linked to women. Men, in contrast, are linked to performance of otherness (*wakaman taki*) and power (*lesipeki taki*). They both function a bit like subcultural styles

linked to particular social functions. While the latter has high overt prestige, the former has some covert prestige and *kowonu taki* is seen as dangerous but does not seem to properly fit a covert/overt prestige distinction. I illustrate them below.

3. Traditional Styles: Linguistic features and Social features

Lesipeki taki's distinctive linguistic features are best described as negative politeness features. Take Extract (1) which comes from a socially representative context in which this style is used, an extended family meeting dedicated to the very sensitive topic of funeral arrangements for an elder. In terms of interaction, this style is strictly dialogical but only one person – the ritual responder (*pikiman*: PM) – engages with the speaker (*takiman*: TM) and the former's replies come from a predefined set of supportive responses and are inserted into the short pauses left by the TM. The PM's responses function to support the speaker's development of their speech and to shield them from interruptions and disharmonious comments. The TMs talk is indirect. For example, in Extract (1) the TM essentially takes 20 turns to express agreement with the previous speaker's suggestions and to accept his guidance; he establishes a case for speaking (lines 3, 5, 7, 9, 11), why he is speaking (lines 13-35), asserts the social order (line 37) and finally agrees (line 39). He presents this using respect vocabulary such as courtesy titles such as *baala*, *omu* and *tii*, little colloquial speech (line 5), replacement of ordinary speech with special forms *wan mofu* 'something (for speech)' instead of *wan sani* 'something' (line 3), non-specific nouns, e.g. *baaka sani* (line 13), *du sani fu en* (line 15). In Extract 1, the use of such items is not very dense probably because the speaker is not frequently engaging in this activity (yet). However, in other such interactions there is also extensive use of figures of speech, metaphors and allusions to historical figures and matters (e.g. Migge & Léglise 2013: 266).

Extract (1) An extended family discussing funeral arrangements

- 1 TM: *Soo*, a so a de. So, a M. ‘Alright, that’s it. It’s Ms turn to be responder (PM).’⁶
- 2 PM: Ya ‘Yes’
- 3 TM: We da mi o piki wan mofu. ‘Well, I’ll say something.’
- 4 PM: A so a de, baala. ‘That’s it, brother.’⁷
- 5 TM: Bika omu no kan kon a u, ‘because the elder cannot come to us’
- 6 PM: Ya ‘Yes’
- 7 TM: Da a taki te a kaba, da u piki ‘iya’ ‘sets everything out and we just answer ‘yes’’
- 8 PM: Ya ‘yes’
- 9 TM: Efu i an piki wan mofu, da toku da a sabi san de a i. ‘If you do not reply,
then at least he knows what you think.’
- 10 PM: Ya ‘yes’
- 11 TM: Te i piki te a yee da toku da a sabi sa u e du. ‘When you answer him,
then he knows what we are doing.’
- 12 PM: A so a de, baala ‘That’s it, brother.’
- 13 TM: *Soo*, a baaka sani fu gaan papa. ‘Alright, the mourning for our elder.’
- 14 PM: Na so ‘That’s it.’
- 15 TM: A na en u taki u o du sani fu en. ‘It’s for him that we do things.’
- 16 PM: Na so ‘That’s it.’
- [...]

⁶ *Soo* expresses acknowledgement of previous talk and indicates that important new talk is coming.

⁷ *Baala* ‘brother’ here means male person of same age-group/brother/cousin and functions as a courtesy title (see below). It expresses respect.

- 33 TM: A ná ala geheim mi anga en be o taki fu te fa mi kon tan a tap' se ya.
 'We did not talk about all family secrets but when I came to live here.'
- 34 PM: Na so 'That's it.'
- 35 TM: Enseefi go a tap' se e go e kon. 'He also kept coming upriver.'
- 36 PM: Na so 'That's it.'
- 37 TM: Soo, Tii B. na a omu u disi na sisa pikin. 'Alright, Uncle B. is the elder
 [deceased's brother] and we are his sisters' children.'
- 38 PM: Na so a de, baala. 'That's it, brother'
- 39 TM: U ná a wan sani fu taki. 'We do not have anything to add.'
- 40 PM: Kwetikweti 'Absolutely not.' (PM 27)

Socially, interactions using this style are highly stratified and status sensitive. The right to speak and in what function indexes someone's place within the local status hierarchy. Generally, only older men or men with some clout are fully licensed speaker participants; women and young(er) men are represented by more senior men and may function as a silent audience. *Takiman* rights are for people with seniority within the context and people's turns – beginning and end – are formally ratified. In this interaction the oldest of the deceased's sisters' children present acts as the *takiman* but only speaks after his elder (Tii B.) had his turn (line 5). The *takiman* also has to avoid competition with seniors. For example, in lines 17-35 he talks about his close relationship with the deceased, possibly to assert his rights to be involved in decisions on the funeral apart from remembering him, but then quickly declares his subordinate status and the superior status of the previous speaker (line 37) and supports his suggestions (line 39). The *pikiman* comes from among the same or lower status level of the *takiman*, in this case a person who is of the same generation but younger and has fewer external status symbols.

Locals oppose the above illustrated formal talk to *kowonu taki*, typically identified as being explicit or unrefined talk that is feared because it carries the possibility of damaging people's reputation. I have typically encountered it during subsistence work activities such as the work involved in the preparation of *kwaka* 'grilled cassava', such as peeling, grating and baking cassava or at the end of a workday. They are usually carried out in single sex groups, but spouses and siblings join in at times. Participation is not formally stratified and essentially everyone can self-select a turn or be selected by someone else whenever there is a transition relevance place, but people's turns also overlap as is normal in any conversation context. The (many) interactions that I have attended revealed an informal hierarchy of participation. Women with official functions (*basyia* 'village head's assistant) and of a particular seniority (age, number of children etc) often 'hold back' in terms of participation and type of talk. Those present also play a role in managing talk for others because, for example, explicit talk about taboo topics is difficult with very senior women present. Men obviously also talk about others but most of the interactions that I have overheard or attended have largely dealt with organizing or discussing activities during which joking about each other happened but talk about non-present others was comparatively brief. Extract (2) is a representative example (Migge & Léglise 2013: 268-9).

Extract (2) Talking about another woman in the village

1 S: [unclear] a taki a an teki en, a now a o teki en. [...] Bika nae n fosi be abi en man/

'She said she did not have relations with him, but now she will. Because she had the guy before her.

2 D: Oho! A mati ná a syen so. 'Wow, the person is shameless.'

3 S: Mi wani meki a teki en. 'I want to make her have sexual relations with him.'

4 A: Mi an taagi I taki motyo sama ná e habi syen?

‘Didn’t I tell you that sexually loose people do not have shame?’

5 D: Ná wan pikin so. ‘Not even a little bit.’

6 A: Syen, a ná a bisi. ‘Shame she does not know what that means.’

7 D: A den sama konde anda a e go taki den sani de?

‘It’s in other people’s villages that she says these things?’

8 S: Neen, Linda taagi en taki, weeno i o go teki en ma te a be de takitaki den sisa fu Seli

9 an be de anga be, da i be sa, da i be sa teki en, i be do teki en.

‘Then Linda said to her, well you’ll have sex with him but if it was the case that Seli’s sisters aren’ pregnant, then you would have had sex with him already.’

10 D: I be o teki en meki a saay i. ‘You would have had sex with him until it’s enough.’

11 S: ... kande den be subi kon ya. Neen den taki efu den be abi ati fu komoto a La a soo.

‘Maybe they come here when going up the river. If they had the courage to stop at the landing area of the village of La.’

12 D: Den ná o ... Hee! ‘They won’t hahaha.’

13 S: Efu den abi ati fu komoto a La, Nimi an sabi san na goontapu, efu a Sabaaka e kali en

14 efu na en seefi fustan e kali en.

‘If they have the courage to stop at La then Nimi does not know what’s right anymore, or maybe its Sabaaka who is making her come or maybe it’s her own mind that’s making her come.’

15 D: A e koli en! ‘She’s making a fool of her!’

16 A: We meki a koli en namo man. ‘Well, let her make her make a fool of herself.’

17 S: A e si, a e si enka a kaba oo. A koo gi en pii, a so a e si en. A an mu denki taki a koo a

18 mi. Te anga nownow a an koo a mi, ma a an koo a náwan fu den sisa fu mi.

‘She thinks, she thinks it [her fight with me] is over. She has completely forgotten it.

That's how she sees it. She should not think that I have forgotten and none of my sisters have forgotten it either.'

19 A: [...] a ten di a o de tuutuu, a Sabaaka de kande a ten na en goon ini a ini tabiki ini
20 anda a o de toto gogo. I wawan e faw e dede piiiii.

'At the time that it'll have been forgotten, at Sabaaka's maybe in her field, in the middle of the island there, she will move her buttocks [for him]. You alone will break down and die.'

21 S: Bika Nita taki, di den o kis(i) en, den e fom en te da den koti ala en ede uwii fiya anga
22 sesey puu na en ede.

'Because Nita said, when they'll get a hold of her, they'll beat her and cut all her hair off with scissors.'

The most notable aspect about Extract (2) is that people are openly taking about local taboo topics and employ explicit language (lines 1, 8-10, 20) and open threats (e.g. lines 21-22). Such language is not uncommon but also seen as socially destabilizing.

Finally, there is also what is traditionally referred to as *wakaman* or *yonkuman taki*. It is iconically linked to young men hanging around in public urban spaces such as the street corner (*tapu uku*) or on the fringe of the market or other commercial areas. It traditionally functions as an ingroup subcultural style for young men that embodies modern sophistication; young men who do not use it in ingroup encounters are ridiculed as being naïve (*guun*).

Extract (3), which comes from Migge & Léglise (2013: 273-4) is a good example.

Linguistically, the most notable feature is frequent insertion of elements from other languages and relatively direct speech. In the 1990s and the early part of the new millennium, these elements usually came from Sranan Tongo but also from other languages such as Dutch and English usually transmitted via Sranan Tongo. What is interesting about these linguistic

practices is first that younger people typically do not phonologically integrate elements but adopt iconic Sranan sounds like /r/ and make use of the more ‘racy’ Sranan vocabulary, including coining of subcultural expressions. Second, rather than shifting fully to Sranan Tongo, speakers exploit the overlap with Eastern Maroon varieties and alternate between distinctive and shared Sranan and Eastern Maroon forms. This creates a kind of fuzzy style that is neither really Eastern Maroon nor Sranan and, depending on one’s perspective, Eastern Maroon overlaid by multilingual Sranan or Sranan Tongo with insertions from Eastern Maroon varieties (Migge 2013, 2015).

Excerpt (3) Setting up a hunting trip.

1 Br: Mi nanga A. *nanga ete wan tra man* **be** o go. ‘I and A. and another guy **were** to go.’

2 Pe: No **da** a no *bun. Ma mi kan rey u, mi e rey u, da mi e teki u later, snel, snel, snel.*

‘No, **well** that’s not good. But I can drive you, I am driving you. Then I’ll pick you up *very quickly later.*’

3 P: *Winsi u go wan dri sma tok.* ‘Even if **we** are three people, right.’

4 Br: No **da** *luku dyaso den fisi di w’o kisi, den fisi di w’o kisi den tyaypi.*

‘No look here, the fish that we’ll get, we’ll get lots of fish.’

5 P: *Ok, ley tu rit. Efu i e teki wan taa wagi.*

‘Ok, I’m going to make two trips, if we’ll get another car.’

6 Br: No, no **fanya** a *taki.* ‘No, don’t mess up the discussion.’

7 P: Fustan *san mi e taki, mi no lobi oli u w’woyo, i sabi tok.*

8 Br: A no **oli u wowoyo.** ‘It’s not random talk.’

‘Listen to what I’m saying, I do not like to be part of your disorganized talk, you know.’

Note: bold: Nenge(e), underlined: Sranan Tongo, italics: shared, underlined & italics: Dutch

This kind of talk is also used in other contexts. For example, women might use it to assert power (Extract 4) or older men might use it to signal a non-status sensitive interaction. In the latter case, it is initiated by an elder only after formal greetings and status has been asserted (Migge 2005). In Extract 4, BS who is in conversation with me and another person, switches to a Sranan Tongo-influenced style, not her regular conversational speech, in order to assert knowledge and power on a particular topic. Both the fact that it's about an urban matter and that it creates a clear difference to B's style of speaking appear to be important to assert herself. B's way of expressing herself was judged as aggressive and not typical of women.

Extract (4) Explaining matters

1 B: [...] *I si a buku **di u sikiifi de na a moo, na a nenge di e taki na tapsey** [...] ma mi*

2 ***seefi, mi e luku ala den wakaman fasi anga den ... , a abi omen style** [...]*

*'You see the book **that we wrote there, it's more, it's the language** spoken upriver.*

*But **as for** me, *I'm investigating all the ways and the..., there are lots of styles.*'*

3 Bs: *Ma a wakaman taal, **teki fesi** hem, a wensi i go na Paramaribo, i e **si** taki a Sranan*

4 *sey, i e **si** taki na soso wakaman taal den man e puur kon, den man e tak' in code,*

5 *den man e fringi teki i!*

*'But the wakaman language **has become most important**, even when you go to*

*Paramaribo, you **see** that on the Suriname side, you **see** that it's only wakaman that*

*people are **pull out**. They are speaking in a code, they are not saying things directly!'*

6 B: Ma **umanpikin anga manenge?**

*'But is it **women and men**?'*

7 Bs: Ai, na a sem a de.

'Yes, it is the same.'

8 B: *Ma fosi na a manenge be oli a sani de!*

‘But initially, it was a man’s thing!’

9 Bs: *Den umanpikin moro wreed nownow.*

‘The women are more at it now.’

Her use of Sranan Tongo (underlined) is quite racy, that is strongly marked forms, and dense (e.g. Spitulnik 1999) which is not always the case as both women and elder men tend to generally use Sranan Tongo quite selectively. From a strictly linguistic point of view, there is variation between Nenge(e) with insertions from Sranan Tongo, and speech that is not easily assignable to either language. In summary, the different styles are ideologically linked to certain people within the community but are also used outside of their main contexts constructing certain social identities (e.g. the aggressive woman). The differences between these focal styles cannot be easily summarized in terms of alternate linguistic features that can be easily assessed quantitatively. It is the overall patterns or a bundle of features that make up each style. These features are also present to different degrees depending on the specific context, including purpose, interlocutors and topics of interactions. It is hard to imagine how to elicit the features of these styles using methods like the sociolinguistic interview or elicitation activities.

4. Dynamics of stylistic change

Although the styles discussed above still exist, language use within the community has by no means been static due to macro-level developments in the social and linguistic context. I summarize these developments first before exploring some broader stylistic changes.

4. 1. Changes in the community’s linguistic repertoire

Since the 1950s Maroons have been migrating to urban areas, first mostly to those within Suriname (Albina, Momo, Paramaribo) and since the 1980s, due to the civil war in Suriname, also in great numbers to French Guiana and to Europe. Maroons have essentially become urban populations who, however, retain an ideological attachment to the rural village context in or on the outskirts of the Amazonian rainforest as the mythical homeland and continue to identify as Maroon. Some of the rural contexts in French Guiana have also urbanized but the majority of Maroons have left their traditional villages and relocated to other locations.⁸ In the urban context residence patterns are determined by national planning systems and extended family or clan logics play little or no role.⁹ Maroons therefore regularly interact with people from other Maroon and other *nasi* 'ethnic or racial group', forming new social networks apart from family-based ones and participate in new social contexts such as associations, work places, government agencies, schools, urban cultural events and are exposed to new media and means of communication. All of this is obviously impacting on Maroon's communicative practices. I discuss them in what I see as two phases.

The initial phase was characterized by increased migration and settlement of Maroons in coastal areas resulting in rapid and ongoing urbanization. Urban languages became more important in people's lives. In Suriname, given that the overwhelming majority of Maroons

⁸ Several settlements (*kanpu*) have become French administrative units (*commune*) which has led to the development of government services (schools, medical centers, civil administration etc) and commercial and new employment opportunities (Bilby 1980; Léobal 2013).

⁹ A possible exception is the Saint Laurent neighborhood La Charbonnière which was originally constructed to accommodate Maroon's lifestyles or what western architects read as such, but attribution of lots is still externally managed. For details, see Léobal (2014). Both countries also have a number of illegal, unregulated housing estates.

did not have formal training or a qualifying educational trajectory, Maroons largely acquired or enhanced their knowledge and use of Sranan Tongo, Suriname's national language. This was facilitated by Sranan Tongo's relatedness to Nenge(e) and the fact that it has a long history as an outgroup language for Maroons. In western coastal French Guiana, which since the 1980s has become an important place of migration for Maroons and nowadays houses the largest urban Maroon population, the same process was taking place in the 1990s. There was intense circular migration with urban Suriname and the villages along the Maroni and Tapanahoni Rivers due to close family contacts and small-scale commercial activities. Sranan Tongo was also used for interethnic communication as many Native Americans (Kali'na and Arawak) and people of Chinese background in western French Guiana also spoke a type of Sranan Tongo as an outgroup language or also as the sole or one of the local community languages.¹⁰ At the same time, French Guiana also became the center of attraction for people from the wider region, such as Suriname, Guyana, Haiti, Brazil and metropolitan and Antillean French also started arriving in greater numbers to man government services. Overall levels of competency of French though variable were quite low for most adults and French Guianese Creole did not have much of a reach as many of its speakers were moving eastwards propelled by better employment opportunities and due to anxieties about the population changes (Jolivet 1990). The practices involving Maroons and Native Americans that lay somewhere on a continuum between Sranan Tongo and Nenge(e) and came to be referred to as *Takitaki* were probably the most accessible to newcomers to French Guiana at the time given the numerical presence of its speakers. It thus became an important lingua franca (practiced with varying degrees of competence) for managing communication between people of different linguistic backgrounds (Migge & Léglise 2013).

¹⁰ Many Chinese worked in the commercial sector as shop keepers, for example.

The second phase, which is in its late stages now, is best characterized as involving growing social integration or establishment and, in the case of French Guiana, combined with increased engagement towards European France, more recently. Starting in the first decade of the new millennium, a new generation of Maroons was emerging who had had a relatively continuous education. Crucially, their competence in the ex-colonial official language was much higher, giving rise minimally to bilingualism between a Maroon language and an official language or, trilingualism also including Sranan Tongo.¹¹ Many more of these graduates than before managed to find more professional employment which further enhanced the importance and engagement with the official languages and they also call coastal urbanized French Guiana or Suriname their home. Especially in French Guiana, many young school leavers were encouraged to take up further educational opportunities, both university and vocational training, which was often in part or entirely delivered in metropolitan France or eastern French Guiana. This made many discover metropolitan France in particular and spurred work-related migration and greater engagement with France for many Maroons. Despite increased integration into mainstream society, assertion of Maroon identities continues to be common particularly in French Guiana but also in Suriname. In both contexts, pan-Maroon identities while slightly different in the two constituencies (Léglise & Migge 2019) exist and are fully compatible with being bilingual in a Maroon language and the respective official language. We now also see efforts in French Guiana to discursively assert distinct French Guianese Maroon identities.

¹¹ Note that younger Maroons generally present themselves as bilingual (Maroon language and official language) and Sranan Tongo is not validated as a separate language for various reasons. If people mention other languages, they are typically other European languages such as English and Spanish which are taught at school (Léglise & Migge 2014).

4. 2. Changing stylistic repertoires and new social identities

In the first phase, wider exposure to, acquisition and greater use of Sranan Tongo in the urban context facilitated the emergence of a mixed code or what is locally sometimes called light Nenge(e) (*basa(a) taki / fasi*). Due to their relatedness, Maroons exploited the overlap between Nenge(e) and Sranan Tongo and variably approximated Sranan Tongo's distinctive features particularly in public interactions where performance of a certain urban self was important. Over time, this led to the variable integration of Sranan Tongo features into Eastern Maroon speech or the emergence of an Srananized Nenge(e) style of speaking. For instance, Borges (2017) and Borges et al (2017: 325) briefly discuss changes and variation in some areas such as modality, verbal negation and the realization of the nominal coordinator based on data mostly from Ndyuka. In Migge (2007) and Migge and Léglise (2013) we discuss similar phenomena from the perspective of codeswitching, conceptualizing it as a dynamic process. People were (more) frequently codeswitching or variably inserting certain Sranan Tongo forms for various purposes and, over time, for at least some people such practices led to more permanent changes. We also show that this mixed style became a target of acquisition for newcomers and people with tangible links to Maroon networks. Initially, this urbanized mixed speech was largely judged as inferior or non-proper, even by its main users. It was closely linked to outgroup interactions, men presenting their urban prowess and to passing as urban, namely what is traditionally referred to as *wakaman taki*. While this Srananization was seen as a way to address discrimination in the urban context, it is also in opposition to the traditional ideology which values modesty, Maroon traditions and suspicion towards outsiders, particularly urban Creoles and Europeans. Its performance or external behavior leveled over time due to various concurrently happening social changes: continued depopulation of the rural villages and concomitant growth and establishment of an urban Maroon population that identifies as urban, decreasing reach of village-based governing

structures.¹² There was also progressive destigmatisation of Maroons since the first decade of the new millennium due to a rise in popular music and Maroon's greater financial means due to the gold mining industry. This 'light code' became normalized as a separate way of doing Nenge(e) side by side with older styles. Popular Maroon music and radio programs run by Maroons for Maroons (see below) and improved transportation and communication between the villages and urban centers helped to spread it.¹³ It became the style of the enterprising modern Maroon or wannabe who selectively respects Maroon traditions and takes pride in its history but does not fully submit to traditional power. Regular village speech has become increasingly restricted to face-sensitive contexts, a marker of proper womanhood and elderhood and also functions to index subsistence-based rural populations.

In western coastal French Guiana seemingly contradictory processes have been happening more or less concurrently. First, this mixed style was also gaining currency and normalizing from the late 1990s. As discussed in Migge & Léglise (2013), it functioned to display modernity and was a tool for (temporary) backgrounding of traditional Maroon

¹² For example, regular people can now be buried on the coast, certain rituals could be carried out on the coast, elders were less involved in resolving smaller transgressions, state social services pick of some social issues. Many young people born from the mid 1990s onwards have either never been in the villages or left them very early on.

¹³ Maroons have large families and that at any given time a large proportion of the community are people below 30 years of age.

Financial opportunities in the gold mining industry have attracted urban Maroons to the villages and nearby mining fields and enabled rural Maroons to spend more time in town. This brought urban and rural Maroons into much closer contact and promoted the spread of urbanize speech forms.

identities among youngsters and for interethnic communication. It was and is also a target of learning for new arrivals to western French Guiana at an important time of demographic expansion. The term locally used, *Takitaki*, is strongly underspecified and can refer to traditional, new and foreigner speech, depending on speakers and context. Second, at the same time, Maroons in French Guiana did not feel the same pressure as in Suriname to adopt a common national identity, because it does not exist – being French continues to have overtones of whiteness and being Guyanais overtones of being French Creole. Due to western French Guiana's closer geographical connection to the rural villages and relative disconnection from eastern French Guiana (French Creole and French culture), people have continued to practice and assert ethnic Maroon cultures too. This has, obviously, been promoted by the fact that Maroons are numerically dominant but also by the existence of ethnic discourses that enhance group identities – (western) French Guiana is generally represented as a mosaic of cultures in popular and official discourses. Third, there has for some time been a growing desire for differentiation from Suriname. Avoidance of stigmatization of being a refugee prominent during the 1990s and early 2000 has been weaning with Maroon's increased establishment. People's lives have also increasingly become different from those in Suriname, making people not want to remain 'satellites' of Paramaribo. Analysis of language naming practices (e.g. Migge & Léglise 2015; Léglise & Migge 2019) suggests that more traditional community-based speaking styles continue to coexist with the mixed variety (called *Takitaki*) functioning primarily as an outgroup or public code and a local pan-Maroon variety often referred to as (Busi)nenge(e) Tongo. This contrasts with Suriname where Eastern Maroons align mostly with their version a pan-Maroon variety/identity that they refer to as Aukans and Sranan Tongo is the main outgroup code. The language practices associated with the two pan-Maroon identities can look quite similar but are ideologically distinguished by their users.

In recent years, as knowledge in the official languages, Dutch and French, has been rising among younger Maroons in both countries, codeswitching between a Maroon language and an official language has also been rising. Especially in the case of French (Guianese) Maroons, it is noticeable that French is now the main source for lexical forms in the public domain for younger people and that Sranan Tongo is less and less present, suggesting that Sranan Tongo's function as a source for status is decreasing. Businenge(e) Tongo is now widely used in the urban public domain and people are asserting new French Maroon type identities for which codeswitching with French is one of the resources; codeswitching with Sranan Tongo is linked to older generations (of men) and seems to be reserved for certain contexts (further research is needed).

In sum, while migration and urbanization initially led to a social normalization and expansion of *wakaman taki* type speech (e.g. insertion and mixing of Nenge(e) with Sranan Tongo) in both Suriname and French Guiana, we also see processes of divergence. In French Guiana, the traditional styles have continued to have currency and at the same time, new styles of doing Nenge(e) now with French insertions are emerging. This is paralleled with a Nenge(e)-Dutch/Sranan style in Suriname. These new styles involving mixing with European languages are also much more freely practiced by (younger) women. Their emergence is part and parcel of the processes of social differentiation that are taking place. Younger generations who are heavily engaged in westernized lifestyles and their languages display language use that is convergent with European languages at least in some contexts to index their difference from both early urban and village dwellers. As European languages are also gate-keepers for professional employment, these mixed Nenge(e)/European speech styles are also functioning as indexes of being middle-class. In contrast, mixed Nenge(e)/Sranan Tongo ways of speaking index both older urban generations and people engaged in manual labor or

working-class identities. Traditional village talk, finally, has become gentrified as ‘proper language’ but equally marks people as rural and traditional. Some people are able to deploy all of these broad styles to perform different kinds of identities. More work is needed on the types of hybrid practices with European languages and their discursive indexicalities.

5. Traditional styles and change

While the more widespread use of or mixing with non-Maroon elements is the most prominent type of linguistic change, there are also other changes particularly in the area of linguistic politeness, that are possibly less visible at first sight. However, they are happening across the society, being most noticeable in the speech of younger people.¹⁴ I will focus on the latter as they receive less attention in the literature. These changes are partially due to relative lack of consistent exposure to traditional (negative) politeness practices outside of the village context but other factors such as larger social changes, the recontextualization of practices in new domains and issues of identity management also play a significant role.

5.1. Changes in negative linguistic politeness

In terms of general social changes, we see a change from a very hierarchically organized and gendered society towards one that is increasingly more egalitarian in outlook.¹⁵ This has led to a change in the use of linguistic social status and hierarchy marking practices. One area that is affected are courtesy titles. Traditionally, Maroons distinguish three broad status levels

¹⁴ They do not seem to represent age-grading because as people get older, they continue with that usage and it is also variably used in some contexts by older members of the community suggesting that there is qualitative and quantitative change.

¹⁵ There are also changes in the attributes that confer a certain status that I leave aside here.

for adults: high status, intermediate status and low status. There are gendered forms for each as presented in (1):

(1) Traditional Easter Maroon courtesy titles

Female	Male	gloss
Sa +Name	Baa (+Name)	‘title for lower social status’
Tiya (+Name)	Tii/Tiyu (+Name)	‘title for intermediate social status’
Ma (+Name)	Da/Pa/Papa (+Name)	‘title for higher social status’

(adapted from Migge & Léglise 2013: 285)¹⁶

Although these forms correlate with age in that *Sa/Baa* are usually employed when addressing or referring to people in their 20s and 30s, they can also be used for other age groups to underline or invoke notions of youthfulness or to reduce or increase the formality of an interaction, depending on the people involved. For example, after a use of status-befitting titles to assert the proper hierarchy, older men might then switch to level 1 courtesy titles (*Baa*) to construct an informal interaction, in a sense reminiscent of their youth. A younger woman who is very virtuous and has a lot of children or has important external achievements (an important post) might also be ‘conferred’ the title of *Ma* in some contexts. Some of these forms can be used without a name but others such as *Sa* and *Baa* are replaced by *Sisa* ‘sister, cousin’ and *Baala*

¹⁶ Note that there are also function titles such as *Gaanman* ‘paramount chief’, *kabiten* ‘village head’ and *basya* ‘assistant to village head/paramount chief’. They are still regularly used though the latter might be used interchangeably with the courtesy titles in (1).

‘brother, cousin’.¹⁷ The level 3 titles are realized with what can be described as long initial consonants when used without names: *Mma, Dda, Ppa*. Especially, when attempting to be indirect and not wanting to use a person’s name, these titles are regularly used together sometimes with deictic forms *a dda de* “that elder” both when addressing and referring to someone in a negatively polite manner.¹⁸ Traditionally, titles are regularly used in all kinds of contexts when referring to people as a way of indexing someone’s status. They may also be an integral part of a person’s name; this is still the case with local names.

A number of changes have taken place in urban contexts, see Table (1). Titles are still considered to be appropriate for formal and status or face sensitive contexts and purposes where the local social hierarchy and public personae or reputations are at stake. In these situations, people also continue to use traditional courtesy titles (and reference forms) and misuse may be pointed out as any other offense. The main change that is observable is the greater use of *Tante* ‘aunt’ and *Omu* ‘uncle’ also used in Sranan Tongo and derived from Dutch forms. This term is used for people of high(er) status but is less hierarchical than the traditional forms. It is used with interlocutors with whom one has a cordial or mentor-type relationship or with someone who has a relaxed personality. For example, in one case, a man in his thirties was sitting down to discuss

¹⁷ *Baa* is only used among Alukus to mean ‘brother, cousin’; it is intonationally distinguished from the courtesy marker though.

¹⁸ For example, it varies with *sama* ‘person’ which is less polite and not suitable for important persons. Courtesy titles also function as a sort of politeness marker when juxtaposed with non-human objects or body parts to help mitigate face-threat. For example, in a discussion among men about sexual prowess, the men kept referring to penis as *Da Woon* ‘Elder Worm’. When I asked later why they were not using *Baa*, it was argued that *Baa* has overtones of aggressiveness and rudeness.

historical accounts with an elder of his family who he regularly meets in different places and who has lived in Paramaribo. In this context, the younger man consistently addressed the elder using *Omu*. In informal contexts, the traditional titles are most prominently used among elders but also with elders (by non-elders). In the latter case, they alternate with *Tante* ‘aunt’ and *Omu* ‘uncle’ and overall *Tante* ‘aunt’ and *Omu* ‘uncle’ are more frequently used than the traditional forms. The formal titles are frequently used for complimenting someone, to request something, to underscore warnings (*Sa* and *Baa*) and for expressing irony. Adults that have not yet attained any special status typically do not regularly use titles when conversing with each other. However, elders conversing with non-elder adults alternate between traditional titles and absence of titles. This suggests that the traditional titles are becoming restricted to specific formal contexts and that a two-level status system is emerging in the urban context which essentially indexes high status and leaves non-high status mostly unmarked outside of very formal contexts. These changes in status and status marking are happening across many societies due to processes of democratization of communication. Contact-induced change and social change together are giving rise to new opportunities for representation. Elders can be styled as traditional public personae (and as being aligned with the traditional system and hierarchy) using traditional titles or they can be invoked as of higher social status but approachable and in line with the current (urban) context through the use of other status-marking elements. The latter status typically also correlates with higher use of non-Maroon insertions.

Table 1.: The distribution of courtesy titles in the urban context¹⁹

1. FORMAL SETTING:

+ face-sensitive

Female	Male	gloss
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a. elder about/to elder

Ma / mma	Da/Ppa / dda/papa	‘title for higher social status’
Tiya	Tii/Tiyu	‘title for intermediate social status’
Sa / sisa	Baa/Baala	‘appeal to common friendship’

b. elder about/to non-elder adult

Sa / sisa	Baa/Baala	‘title for lower social status’
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c. non-elder about/to elder *new*

Ma / mma	Da/Ppa / dda/papa	‘title for higher status & distance relationship’
Tiya	Tii/Tiyu	‘title for intermediate status & distance relationship’
Tante	Omu	‘title for people with high and intermediate status & non-distance relationship’

d. non-elder about/to non-elder adult

Sa / sisa	Baa/Baala	‘title for age-mates’
∅	∅	‘reference to self: humility’
		‘reference to others: overtones of diapproval’

2. INFORMAL SETTINGS:

- face-sensitive

Female	Male	gloss
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a. elder about/to elder

¹⁹ I’ve observed these changes most closely in urban French Guiana but they are also present in urban Suriname and have been spreading to the village context.

Sa	Ba	‘title among age-mates’ ²⁰
Ma / mma	Da/Ppa / Dda/Ppa	‘title for people of higher social status & for status sensitivities among age-mates’
Tiya	Tii/Tiyu	‘title for intermediate status & if status sensitivities among age-mates’

b. elder about/to non-elder adult *new*

Ø/Sa	Ø/Ba	‘title for people of low social status’
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c. non-elder about/to elder *new*

Tante	Omu	‘title for people with high & intermediate status’
Ma / mma	Da/Ppa / dda/papa	‘title for higher status’
Tiya	Tii/Tiyu	‘title for intermediate status’

d. non-elder about/to non-elder adult *new*

Ø	Ø	‘title for age-mates & low social status’
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5. 2. Emergence of new styles

Apart from linguistic changes that affect language use across several domains and styles, styles also undergo change when they are recontextualized to a new social and/or geographical context and start being used for related purposes. The contemporary French Guianese context, like many other places, provides rich examples. I briefly discuss two examples, communicative practices in association meetings and in the media.

In the French Guianese context, associations are an important part of social life as they allow bringing people together around matters of interest, officializing their activities in that

²⁰ It has an overtone of relating to each other as mates.

domain and accessing public funds or engaging in paid (legal) activities. Many younger Maroons have become members or have founded associations. Associations can range from those that promote cultural matters (dance, music, traditional crafts etc) to those that deal with social issues such as literacy, support for the elderly or children in difficulty. Depending on their activities, they might involve people from very similar or rather diverse linguistic backgrounds. Over the years, I have attended association meetings of a dance group and of a larger local culture promotion group. Although the former nowadays also has a few non-Maroon members, meetings mostly take place in Nenge(e) and mostly among the core members. The meetings are usually held in a member's yard, in the shade of a large tree. As in the traditional meetings (*kuutu*), people usually sit in a semi-circle, but the head person does not always sit in the middle facing the others and people at times also appear 'to hang around' rather than to focus on the talk. Men are the main speaker participants, but some women also take the floor at times. Linguistically, what is quickly noticeable, is that speakers do not select a *pikiman* for their talk and while they puncture their talk with short gaps where the *pikiman*'s responses could be inserted, the gaps and responses do not occur as systematically and if someone self-selects as *pikiman*, the responses come more irregularly and often take the form of conversational backchannel, e.g. *mhmm*. However, speakers still formally open their turn, e.g. *Da mi seefi o pikin wan sani* 'then I'll also contribute something.', and close them, e.g. *Kpolon, mi kaba*. 'I've finished.', rather than self-select as in conversations. In contrast to traditional *kuutu* speech, speakers directly address or refer to people and their actions and may pose direct questions. The use of lexical insertions from other languages such as Sranan Tongo, Dutch, French and a bit of English, may be quite common, depending on the topic. In traditional *kuutu* these features are seen as face-threatening, inciting social disharmony and showing lack of proper alignment with the community. As speakers foreground their public persona in these meetings, their urban

speech practices, an integral part of that persona, also appear in these kinds of meetings. As some men once said to me: “we are not elders or do burial work so why talk like that?”. Respect speech and behavior remains the underlying norm for such interactions, but practices are adapted to suit what is felt to be contextually (more) appropriate. This process of adaptation driven by contextual contingencies then is giving rise to a new type or new way of doing formal meeting talk. It gives greater room for variation and suspends certain negative politeness practices, creating a new variant within an existing genre which sits next to more traditional options.

The other case that is becoming increasingly more visible is the use of Maroon languages in mediated contexts. Writing is mostly restricted to educational and religious contexts but oral mediated use in radio and internet-based media, emanating from Suriname, French Guiana and France and being consumed in all of these locations and in the Netherlands, has certainly seen an important growth over the last decade. Some of the programs have a monologue nature, such as the presentation of news and death notes, while others are dialogical in nature, such as discussion with invited guests or callers and among co-presenters. All of these oral mediated performances are created by Maroons for Maroons though they are often also consumed by others.²¹ Local notions of respect and thus formal speech norms are upheld in these contexts as speaker’s/organiser’s and the program’s acceptance and reputation are at stake as well as their entertainment value. Comparing programs across the two main radio stations, *Koyeba* and *Loweman Paansu* (Migge 2011) and the YouTube channel, *Radio Wie Loetoe*, adherence to these norms differs depending on the program type. Presentation of news, information provision, death notices and warnings

²¹ Some Arawak Maroons in living in Saint Laurent du Maroni have told me that they listen to one of the shows, *Loweman Paansu* because they find it interesting.

more closely resemble more traditional meeting talk. Speakers emulate punctured speech without formal responding and speak in a slower or planned manner. The more important the topic, the more monotone it appears. However, especially in recent *Koyeba* monological emissions (*toli na bon ondo* ‘talk under the tree’)²² about social and political events, which can last 15 minutes or more, the speaker uses pitch alternation and even sound quality changes to foreground issues, to imitate someone’s speech, for example, when recalling someone’s talk or to convey their own stance. At times they resemble a live stand up performance. I have heard similar types of performances in the village at the end of some *kuutu* where a *basiya* summarizes the most important issues. These monologues use very few non-Maroon lexical forms outside of names for government agencies and widely used terms and some might still be phonologically adapted to Nenge(e) phonotactics (e.g. CV). We also see the use of other traditional Maroon forms besides special polite lexical forms which are associated with the village context. In the current, urban dominated context they are important markers of respect because, unlike traditional respect speech, people make little use of extended metaphors and sayings in order to veil face-threatening issues. Respect is also encoded through the regular repetition of respect assertions, e.g. *lobi alikiman* ‘beloved listener’, *lesipeki alikiman* ‘respectful listener’, *anga lesipeki* ‘with respect’, that are appended to statements and use of traditional courtesy titles.

Programs also involve dialogue style interactions. In *Radio Wie Loetoe* the bulk of the program is interactive while in the case of the other audio programs they only represent a proportion of the content that is broadcast. In these interactions, the interactional style can be quite informal. Interlocutors mostly speak at a normal pace and directly respond to each

²² This alludes to a practice where people, usually men, congregate in the shade of a tree and discuss events.

other, or the moderator to the caller and vice versa. In the case of taboo or socially charged topics guests and callers may be reminded to avoid language that is too direct, vulgar or explicit and thus face threatening. In these kinds of interactions, depending on how the speakers want to position themselves, alternation with other languages may be quite significant in the case of some speakers. As discussed in Migge (2020), it may go as far as people using short episodes entirely in another language or using a large number of lexical insertions. The lexical insertion or languages used can also vary quite a bit from interaction to interaction and from station to station. While Sranan Tongo is more prominent in the Suriname-based shows, the French-based ones show much less of it and it is generally strongly linked to Suriname or Dutch-based guests. There is discussion about this phenomenon on *Radio Wie Loetoe* in terms of facilitating all listeners with their different language repertoires. On the radio shows there is less overt talk about it, but listeners at times remark on it, framing it in terms of proper language use. Essentially, in the interactive part of the programs both the moderator and their interlocutors have to walk a tight rope between being authentic and dynamic and not undermining their public reputation and being called *bakaanenge(e)* ‘(overly) westernized’ and language plays an important role here.

The discussion in this section suggests that traditional speech genres, in this case *lesipeki taki*, are being adapted due to processes of recontextualization or their transplantation to new but related contexts. These new options or subgenres do not just differ from the traditional source genres in terms of insertion of material from other languages. Crucially, fundamental features that function to reduce face-threat and open disharmony and are celebrated features of speech-making are being replaced with conservative everyday speech in more mundane contexts where speakers nevertheless target formal-type speech practices.

6. Conclusion

Creoles do not only often exist in multilingual ecologies but are also stylistically rich. Traditionally Nenge(e) has several regional or communal varieties (e.g. Aluku, Ndyuka, Pamaka) in addition to focal situational styles that are linked to types of contexts and people closely associated with them. The linguistic features of these styles are linked to the social functions of these contexts and use of these styles is socially layered based on social attributes such as gender, age, social roles etc. Socio-pragmatic features (linguistic politeness related properties, including lexical choices) rather than typical structural features (e.g. TMA markers, copulas) are core in their differentiation. Styles are indexed by a bundle of features and the presence or absence of one such features is not necessarily indicative of one or the other style. The density of available *lesipeki taki* features is, for example, indicative of the social features of the context such as types of interlocutors and purpose. Stylistic repertoires have been expanding over the years due to changes (or expansion) in social identities spurred by the larger changes in the social and linguistic context. The changes are best described in terms of ongoing adaptation of existing options. First, there has been the social expansion and normalization of an older urbanized style characterized broadly by greater use or insertion of Sranan Tongo-type options with people's move to the urban context where people's social networks expanded. Second, as Maroons have become established as urban dwellers and have become bilingual (to varying degrees) in the official languages of their political constituency new styles of doing Nenge(e) involving mixing with these languages and new pragmatic options (e.g. courtesy titles) have been emerging, giving rise to the emergence of pan-Maroon practices (i.e. de-emphasis of communal and emphasis on ethnic practices) and what could be described as different class or group styles; traditional community speech indexes rural subsistence identities but also respectfulness and authenticity, srananized speech embodies urban and working class identities but also a sort of roughness or vulgarity and finally Frenchified or Dutchified speech indexes professional (urban) identities but also

carries connotations of being inauthentic. Third, expansion of the language to new social domains has, in parallel, led to the creation of sub-genres through adaptation of traditional situational styles. This is most visible in relation to the most highly regimented style, *lesipeki taki*. Adaptation may involve greater use of overt mixing with other languages. Equally important are changes in linguistic politeness practices. We see a greater use of less indirect communicative options (e.g. direct address or questions), the reduction of marked, cultural features (e.g. *piki-taki*) and the replacement of others (e.g. use of figures of speech to veil speech) with more transparent options. More research is needed on why certain features are omitted and what ideologies spur these changes.

The discussion challenges the traditional scenario of stylistic development in Creoles which assumes that stylistic diversity in Creole communities emerges due to contact with the local standard language or another dominant language when access to the latter increases.²³ While contact plays a role in the evolution of stylistic repertoires of Creoles that exist in multilingual contexts, as in the case of any other language, contact is not a prerequisite for the emergence of styles. Different ways of speaking always exist in all communities and as these communities are involved in social and linguistic change, new ways of speaking become added to existing ones sometimes leading to the loss of prior ones, but not generally or over very short periods of time. New styles emerge as part of the construction of new identities, shining a light on ongoing social change in the community. Newer ways of speaking typically emerge from adapting existing ways of speaking rather than radical change. This process is not random but takes account of the functions and needs of communication, how individual people want to position themselves within such contexts and

²³ Transplantation of varieties of the colonial language (or contact languages involving it) from one location to another is another option.

also rely on communities social and language ideologies. It also does not happen instantaneously but gradually and is accompanied with often unfavorable meta-talk. When the radio sector started taking off in Saint Laurent, many people commented negatively on how these *biya* 'young guys' were talking. A year later, everyone was tuning in, finding it a useful source for information and entertainment and it had just become another way of doing Nenge(e). Creators of the program draw on existing models and adapted them to suit the contingencies of the contexts they wanted to create, drawing on resources that they had available (e.g. other languages, other styles).

This discussion suggests that language change, both the processes and sources involved, can be usefully studied through a community's styles as they are intimately linked to social identities. It requires a holistic, ethnographic approach which includes attention to a community's changing language ecology and how it maps onto language, including language ideologies and ways of constructing social identities, in addition to analysis of the nature of language practices in different contexts.

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