Language Contact

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Mobility, Borders and Urbanization

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this publication is to stimulate the discussion about the various theoretical and methodological models being developed to describe the phenomenon of language contact. It focuses mainly on the contact resulting from mobility and borders situations, mostly in Brazil, which depicts a picture of complex contacts between peoples and languages.

The focus is on the social effects of language contact, resulting from mobility, linguistic and social practices, representations and identities in continuous construction. Migration movements, both from and to the country, cause multiple forms of multilingualism from whose linguistic, social and cultural effects should be analyzed.

Much work remains to be done regarding the description of these phenomena and their modality. Therefore we propose to discuss the relationship between language, culture and identity from different concepts. One of the perspectives is that of linguistic representation, understood as a fundamental sociolinguistic factor for determining policies of official languages as well as for determining maintenance and revitalization policies of minority languages.

This publication assembles eleven articles by researchers in the area, each developing theories and methods around distinct objects and fields, although they all hold discussions within the thematic scope of the book.

In the article *Brazilians in French Guiana: Types of bilingual talk in family interactions*, Sabine Gorovitz and Isabelle Léglise report the linguistic integration of Brazilian families living in Cayenne, analyzing how their family members use the language and the type of linguistic mix they produce. Their research suggests that some speakers tend to produce a particular type of mix that reveals a prototypical mode of switching. Considering extralinguistic factors, they conclude that there is homogeneity within neighbourhoods, which acts as a conservative force that prevents a small mix and linguistic change.

The interaction between linguistic and extralinguistic variables reveals some of the speakers profiles: those who produce preferably in their mother tongue, considering their bilingualism as a factor of social mobility; those who are asymmetrically competent in both languages; and those who have a use of languages divided into functions depending on the specificities of the task, whether at work, school, home, or administration. Thus switching is part of a framework of resources deployed to meet the specific needs of each interaction situation, in which a cooperative agreement regulates the discursive positions and relationships among interlocutors, collectively and individually.

Beatriz Christino, in the article *Definite articles in Huni-Kuin Portuguese*, states that average Brazilians believe that their country is monolingual. Because of decades of invisibility and glotocide, they do not take into consideration the existence of nearly 200 languages spoken in Brazil. Along with 30 immigration languages (which include Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Pomeranian, German dialects, Italian dialects), there are nearly 170 indigenous languages.

In Brazil, the amount of research on Portuguese as a second language or as an additional language by indigenous communities has increased. The Portuguese spoken by the Huni-Kuin ("authentic men"), also known as Cashinawa, who live in the Amazon basin, is the object of this paper.

In the article *The practice of language alternation on the border between Brazil and Uruguay: aspects found on the Brazilian side of Jaguarão-Río Branco border*, Dania Pinto Gonçalves, Isabella Mozzillo and Sílvia Costa Kurtz-dos-Santos describe the aspects of language practice on the southern border of Brazil. The authors analyze the context in Jaguarão, a city in Rio Grande do Sul, which is separated from the city Río Branco, in Uruguay, by the International Bridge of Mauá.

On the Uruguayan side, there is language contact between Spanish, Portuguese and Portuguese dialects in Uruguay, which causes, in the north of the country, a situation of bilingualism with diglossia, since the Spanish and the Portuguese dialects have different functions and have different social status. On the Brazilian side, Portuguese and Spanish coexist in code-switching practices. This situation is analyzed by speech samples from Brazilian street sellers from Jaguarão who interact with Uruguayan buyers in their shops employing linguistic alternation.

Laura Pérez Arreaza, in the article *The Language of Caribbean Hispanic Youth in Montreal,* studies the Hispanic language of the youth in multilingual and multicultural context due to Spanish varieties that coexist in Montreal along with two major languages, French and English.

Recently, studies about the language of the youth have presented it as an "independent" system with its own characteristics, which implies new ways of collecting speech corpus to ensure greater spontaneity in language production. Hispanic Caribbean youth is studied to determine the categories that appear in this situation of bilingualism, in which the speakers are proud of their language and identify themselves by their dialectal varieties. They seem to be determined to maintain the Spanish language.

Marcos Moreira, in the article *The Borrowed Language: Dialogues Between Marx And Derrida,* demonstrates that Jacques Derrida, in his book *Specters of Marx,* adapts to our days the concept of borrowed language, which is the expression used by Marx in his book *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

Derrida's book deals with the fate of Marxism after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Marx is concerned with the fate of the French Revolution after the second coup by Second Bonaparte.

In both authors, the relationship between language and revolution appears not only as a subject, but also as a strategic allegory to understand the revolution. Through language and history, Marx dreams of the future and of the novelty. Derrida also connects language to history, analysing what remains from the past and what is its destiny.

Fernanda Alencar Pereira, in *Language Contact in Novels by Chinua Achebe and Pepetela*, investigates the use of language within the tense territory of postcolonial African literatures. The author explores the linguistic choices made by the Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, and by his Angolan counterpart, Pepetela.

Even though coming from different historical and linguistic contexts, the literary texts produced by these two writers demonstrate how African cultures and languages prior to the colonization process still survive in the literary texts. Igbo and Kimbundo are present, modifying the written English and Portuguese and forcing the linguistic discussion.

Linguistic Contact in Brazil: History, Identity, Representation, Politics… written by Mônica Maria Guimarães Savedra, describes the Brazilian linguistic and cultural richness, documented in the National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity. In Brazil approximately 230 identified languages coexist in six categories.

The national multilingualism and multiculturalism reflect on the ethnic and cultural formation expressed in diverse situations of/ in language contact between allochthonous and autochthonous languages, on the borders with Spanish and French, in specific ethnic dialects, such as the Gypsies, in the formal acquisition of foreign languages, in migrations and in government policies and planning. The author emphasizes the importance of the development of studies of language contact in Brazil, considering the need to learn more about the linguistic and cultural mosaic that Brazil is.

The purpose of the article *Languages in contact in a bilingual terminological school dictionary: building the Portuguese-Mundurukú*

(Tupí) dictionary of the Teacher Qualification area, by Dioney Moreira Gomes and Tânia Borges Ferreira, is to present analysis and reflection about the elaboration of the mentioned dictionary. Its terminological and terminographical choices, morphological asymmetries, variations and loanwords, as well as the spelling employed in the dictionary are the focus of the article. For the formulation of bilingual entries, both cultures, social interactions and terminology usage in context should be taken into consideration. In this regard, it is necessary to fully understand who the subjects are in relation to their experience, historicity and insertion within their culture.

Lúcia Maria de Assunção Barbosa and Mirelle Amaral de São Bernardo, in the article *The role of language in social integration of refugees,* affirm that there are more than 4,300 refugees in Brazil, counting those seeking asylum for the first time and those that already had asylum in another country, but that for several reasons, have not adapted themselves.

There are not many courses of Portuguese as a foreign language, even less addressed to an audience in a specific situation such as immigrants and refugee newcomers. Mostly, refugees have financial, emotional and health problems, along with difficulties with the language, culture and customs. Thus, the language should be taught aiming communication and easy adaptation to the social context of their new country. This can be done by comparing the new culture with their own culture, by exchanging experiences and by critically analysing the relationship between language, thinking and construction of group identities.

In the article *A study of the speech of Japanese-Brazilians in the Federal District: A proposed socio-geolinguistic analysis,* Yuko Kawazoe Takano states that Brazil is formed by ethnic groups that brought their own languages, which got in contact with the major language – Portuguese. From this contact, many peculiar linguistic manifestations have arisen, due to accommodation of the original culture.

Japanese immigrants came from several regions and, by their turn, spread over many Brazilian regions, leading to the emergence of a common variety to all of them. The Japanese-Brazilian variety symbolizes the group of Japanese identified with the local culture, which contributes to the construction of an ethno-linguistic identity acquired in this contact.

The standard variety taught in schools remains in its privileged position, although in everyday communication, at home or in the community, speakers chose the variety with which they have more affinity. Thus, switching occurs depending on the interlocutor: Portuguese and Japanese bilinguals use the Japanese-Brazilian variety and the standard variety is used with those who employ it.

In *Religious Translation and Japanese Immigration in Brazil: Field Notes on Language and Culture Contact*, Ronan Alves Pereira discusses aspects of Japanese migration and religiosity in Brazil focusing on who translates, on what is translated and how the process of religious translation occurs.

The author considers that religious translation differs from other types of translation by not having the sole purpose of entertaining, promoting cultural or commercial exchanges. Since it operates within the scope of faith and worldviews, such translation has its own characteristics such as the issue of translation of non-existent religious concepts, from one culture to another. Linguistic and semantic elements of the Japanese language, as well as extralinguistic factors, are addressed in this article in order to analyze the strategies of religious propagation, which show that religious translation conveys cultural values above all.

BRAZILIANS IN FRENCH GUIANA: TYPES OF BILINGUAL TALK IN FAMILY INTERACTIONS[1]

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Introduction

This study sought to understand the phenomenon of language contact resulting from migration dynamics between Brazil and French Guiana, which are marked by strong diversity of population movements. In order to do so, we have observed ordinary discourses produced by speakers in family interactions with the aim of understanding how its members speak, the kind of bilingual conversation or bilingual talk (Auer 1984) they produce and which linguistic and extralinguistic categories are relevant to grasp the phenomenon of bilingual talk in all its complexity.

Field Description: Brazilians in French Guiana

The population of French Guiana has doubled in less than thirty years, both because of its increasing fertility and decreasing mortality, and especially because of migratory waves occurring at different periods. According to data collected by Piantoni (2011), out of 66,700 foreigners (37% of the population), 25% (18,800) are Brazilian, who now represent the second largest immigrant community in the country. Brazilians arrived at different times and for different reasons, mainly from the regions of Amapá and Pará, focusing mostly the capital, Cayenne. Today Brazilian immigration is characterized by its diversified origin, both regionally and socially, with a second or third generation that was born and educated in French Guiana. The proximity to Brazil favors the intensity of border movements and maintenance of linguistic ties and identity of those immigrants.

Object Search

In order to understand how Brazilians living in Cayenne speak, we have searched among which languages they speak and convey; what kind of bilingual talks are produced and by whom. To this end, we crossed to types of bilingual talks with socio-demographic criteria to determine profiles of speakers and families. It is noteworthy that all observed speakers produce bi- or multilingual discourses, in varying degrees and ways.

To understand this diversity, we have observed the types of relationships built during interactions, referring to identity processes (Zimmermann 1998, Garafanga 2001), which can be expressed more or less explicitly. Thus we seek to describe the linguistic practices, taking into consideration the characteristics of the context in which speakers interact.

Methodology and categorization of mixing categorization

We analyzed a corpus of linguistic data collected during a lengthy immersion from 2008 to 2011, in which interactions in ten households (32 speakers) were observed, recorded, transcribed and treated quantitatively. The recordings were transcribed respecting transcription conventions established in accordance with the requirements of the research, in this case, identify alternations of language (codeswitching and language mixing) in the speech of speakers during the interaction.

From initial findings about the wide diversity of bilingual talks, we chose to base our analysis on the concepts defined by Auer (1998). His description model raises a central question about how speakers use and perceive the languages involved in bilingual talks. The author analyzes the phenomena of juxtaposition of languages and presents a typology, we adopted to distinguish the various types of bilingual talks observed in our corpora: codeswitching (CS) and language mixing (LM). Alternation can be labeled as CS when it makes sense for the participants of the interaction, i.e., when it appears as a contextual strategy, a meta-practice, revealing something that is possible to interpret, both because of previous events (linguistic and extralinguistic) and because of characteristics of the situation[2]. On the other hand, language mixing (LM) occurs not when alternation produces a specific and locally defined sense, but when it is the fact itself of mixing that makes sense, maybe corresponding to a personal or group style[3].

Data Analysis

Our goal was to relate types of bilingual talks with a set of contextual and social factors, in order to identify speaker and possibly family profiles. To trace these profiles, it was necessary to select relevant socio-demographic categories[4] from repeated observations and interviews.

From these first categories, we developed a preliminary quantitative analysis of data. We sought at first to illustrate the fact that the speeches in this context show more or less language alternation. To this end, a word counting produced in each language was realized. Although artificial, this quantification provided a graphical representation of the percentage of language alternation produced by each speaker. It showed that generally certain speakers alternate much more than others and that some resemble others in their linguistic behavior. These similarities, which were established from the linguistic categories defined to describe the data, led to the identification of clusters of speakers whose language productions present comparable language alternation. For instance, it was possible to assert that the speakers who alternate the most were born in French Guiana, and conversely those who alternate less had recently arrived in French Guiana or arrived as adults already.

A relevant narrower quantification was then established from the categories defined by Auer (CS, LM, Insertional vs. Alternational LM). In fact, it was not enough to show that some speakers alternate more than others, it was necessary to describe how they alternate from one language to another. Subcategories were used, such as CS1 (change of speaker), CS2 (quotation, translation, explanation, reference to local experience, etc), CS3 (change of subject), CS4 (introduction of a new fact), CS5 accommodation, CS6 (complicity, change of tone), ALM (alternational type) and ILM (insertional type).

Thus we accounted the number of times each speaker switches from one language to another, during the interaction, sometimes on the insertional mode, sometimes on the alternational mode. Then we obtained the average percentage of types of juxtapositions in relation to the total of words produced by each speaker, in each utterance. With these values, it was possible to describe the prototypical attitude of each speaker in terms of language mixing. Some speakers tend to mix preferably using the insertional mode while others use the alternational mode. The results show that speakers who mix more tend to use the alternational mode. For many speakers alternations work as quotes, translations, clarifications or references to a local experience. For others, alternation is much more related to the listener. In addition, others alternate in a more systematic manner, as a kind of personal style, precluding a clear association of their alternations to a specific function.

Thus we conclude that while some speakers mix languages as a matter of personal style, others do it out of necessity or as a strategic additional resource.

Crossing types of bilingual talks and socio-demographic factors

The next step was the examination of the correlation between the quantity and types of bilingual talks and some of the relevant socio-demographic factors. Although many factors had an insufficient correlation rate to be taken into account, others (such as age, place of birth and time living in French Guiana) revealed interesting results that suggest, for example, that speakers who interact the most on a bilingual mode are between 36 and 45 years old. Another significant result indicates that speakers who were born in French Guiana interact on a bilingual mode more than those who were born in Brazil.

Conclusion

The present study revealed a strong presence of bilingual discourse in most observed families and a systematic intergenerational transmission of Portuguese. It has also indicated a wide range of sociolinguistic profiles and individual pathways, making it impossible to generalize the results. The observed variations also indicate different types of bilingual talk, recurrences and idiosyncrasies of each speaker according to the interactional situation. It is necessary to highlight the extreme variability of the analyzed data, due to multiple individual, collective and social factors. Our challenge was therefore to overcome these particularities to find recognizable convergence elements in the set of bilingual talks produced. In order to associate family or speaker profiles to prototypical ways of bilingual speaking, several questions were raised: are there regularities personal or group styles? What kinds of pressure interfere with alternations? Are there moments when alternations are intensified? And which meanings emerge from them? To answer these questions, we identified tendencies characterizing certain behaviors, types of declared postures and ways of bilingual talk for each speaker in their relationship with others. Data interpretation has been therefore established on a case-by-case basis, depending on the interactional event, from a qualitative approach.

At the end of this exploratory journey, and even though the quantitative results have not enabled many generalizations, we can affirm that part of the observed speakers present a clear tendency to produce a particular type of bilingual talk, and those who preferably mix in the alternational mode reveal a prototypical way of performing these alternations. It was also possible to establish links with social characteristics and assert, for example, that speakers that alternate the most in CS1 mode live in more open neighborhoods, occupied by diversified communities. This kind of result suggests, for instance, that heterogeneity inside neighborhoods acts as a conservative force, capable of slowing down the production of mixing and hence forthcoming linguistic changes (Léglise & Chamoreau, 2013).

Another result is that talks on a bilingual mode occur in our data only under certain conditions. Two of these conditions are the regularity of contact between the languages and the frequency of stay in both countries.

Moreover, three main profiles of speakers have been revealed. The first category regards speakers who preferably produce LM and who perceive their bilingualism as a factor of social mobility, because of their socioeconomic situation. The second regards speakers whose competence in both languages is asymmetric, causing the production of typical insertional mixing. The third category regards those whose languages usage is compartmentalized (home language, administration language, school language, work language, etc).

It is noteworthy that, generally, the boundaries between the segments uttered in French and Portuguese (whether lexical or syntactic) are not always clear as showed in other language situation (Léglise & Alby, 2013), both languages often appearing closely intertwined.

In conclusion, speakers mobilize the languages that make up their repertoires and make their choices depending on the challenges and on the situations of interaction. In fact, the results reaffirm that language alternation is a feature “carrying a symbolism, co-built by the agents, and the referent of their sociolinguistic personal or collective universe, constantly recreated" (Dreyfus & Juillard, 2001: 9, our translation[5]). In fact, bilingual talks refer to certain knowledge, which is shared by the interlocutors because it underlies the interaction. It is a pact of cooperation, which regulates the discursive positions and relationships between interlocutors.

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Notes

[1] This work is the result of research developed since 2008 as an institutional partnership between the University of Brasilia and laboratory SEDYL-CELIA (CNRS) in France. This research was financed by the ANR DC2MT "Les Suds Aujourd'hui" (2008-2011) and the AIRD, through PEERS MOBILANG (2012-2013) program.

[2] Meaning and function attributed to alternations can be highly variable: change of subject, speaker, tone, exemplification, quotation, translation, relation of utterance, emphasis, contrast, etc.

[3] Auer describes another sub-categorization to distinguish the insertional type of LM (loans) and the alternational type of LM.

[4] Among others, gender, country of birth, neighbourhood (homogeneous or diversified), frequency of trips to Brazil, social class, etc.

[5] "Le mélange linguistique observé au sein des interactions est un element emergent porteur d'un symbolisme co-construit par les agents, et le référent de leur univers sociolinguistique, propre autant que collectif, constamment en mouvement et recréé".

DEFINITE ARTICLES IN HUNI-KUIN PORTUGUESE[1]

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Introduction: Brazil, a multilingual country

According to Holm (2004) and others (as Lucchesi, Baxter, Ribeiro 2009), Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese (henceforth BVP) is the result of a partial restructuration process related to irregular linguistic transmission. Speaking Portuguese as a second language, enslaved Africans and Natives introduced structures that were absent (and even impossible) in European Portuguese (henceforth EP), such as overtly plural marking only in the article ((1) ***as*** *menina forte* 'the strong girls') instead of in all Nominal Phrase elements ((2) ***as*** *menina**s** forte**s***). The possibility of indicating a third person direct object by the pronoun *ele* and its inflexions (*ela*, *eles*, *elas*) was also brought by this process, since the pronominal series *ele/ela/eles/elas* can only occur in subject position in EP (e.g. BP. (3) *Eu comprei **ele*** x EP (4) (*eu*) *comprei-**o***, 'I have bought it'). All Brazilians acquire the pattern expressed in (3) and only those who achieve a high degree of literacy and schooling are able to produce structures like (4), which can be described as restricted mainly to formal writing.

Obviously, as shown by the two particularities of BVP quoted just above, linguistic contact played an important role in the formation of this variety (or set of linguistic varieties). Beyond this diachronic point of view, there are many language contact situations taking place nowadays in Brazil in which transference of first language can be identified as well as processes that are associated to universal tendencies in second/ additional language acquisition.

The average Brazilian believes that his/ her home country is a monolingual one, due to a myth, built through the generations managing many invisibilization strategies and even strict glotocide procedures[2]. Reality strongly differs from this myth: approximately 200 languages are spoken in Brazil. Immigrants came with their 30 different mother tongues (including Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, German dialects, Italian dialects and even a dead language in present days Europe, Pomeranian). In addition to it, many native peoples strive maintaining their own languages. They reach a significant amount of circa 170 languages, although a lot of them are severe endangered.

Such multilingual scenery (which includes huge borders with (official) Spanish-speaking countries) undoubtedly turns to be a very challenging object of study. A specific subarea of researches involving language contact in Brazil, which receives ever growing attention, deals with the varieties of BVP that are spoken as second/ additional language by Indian communities. Features of one of these varieties, namely Huni-Kuin Portuguese, are analyzed by the present article. The self-named Huni-Kuin (or "authentic men" in English) are also known as Cashinawa and live in the Amazonian Basin, precisely on the Upper Jurua and along the Purus River. This region represents a part of the Brazilian-Peruvian border, therefore, the Huni-Kuin whose villages are located on the Brazilian side speak Portuguese as a second language, while those inhabiting in the Peruvian side have their own Spanish L2 variety.

In the next section, general information about Indian varieties of BVP is given, as well as examples of specific features of some already described ones.

The varieties of Indian BVP

In fact, there are two kinds of Indian BVP: the one which is current the mother tongue for Indian nations who lost their original language (and face, in consequence, severe identity issues) and the other one which is, as mentioned before, a second/ additional language. Even in the case of nations whose children do not acquire an Indian language anymore, their particular varieties of BVP have specific features that are not shared with their (without direct Indian heritage) neighbors.

Nations that conserve their original language, like the Huni-Kuin Indians, need Brazilian Portuguese in order to communicate with the majoritarian national society. Without mastering this language, it is not possible to take part in government social programs, nor to defend their (unfortunately so threatened) rights. Portuguese is also the vehicular language between Indians from different ethnic-linguistic origins. It happens not only when Indians from distinct areas of the country are joined for political, cultural or sportive reasons, but also with groups that are traditional neighbors. The Huni-Kuin Indians, who speak a Panoan language, and the Ashaninka Indians, whose language belongs to the

Aruakan family, live side by side. In Huni-Kuin villages there are even interethnic marriages in which the wife-husband communication occurs in Portuguese.

Works like Maher (1996, 1998) have argued that the specific BVP varieties of Indian nations must be viewed as an important ethnic identity sign. One of the first descriptions of an Indian BVP variety is Silva (1988), whose data were gathered among the Kamayurá Indians in 1969. This Indian group, that speaks a Tupi language, did not differentiate in their Portuguese between voiced and non-voiced consonants, which corresponds to a L1 transfer. Among other particular features, the Portuguese exclusive verbal form for first person singular was also absent in their dialect (so (5) "*Eu **tá** muito esquecido*" instead of (5') "*Eu **tô** muito esquecido*" (p. 86) 'I am very forgetful').

Variation in gender *attribution* and *agreement* was verified in many Indian BVP varieties, such as the Portuguese spoken by the Fulniô (Costa 1993), the dialect of the Kaingang (Christino e Lima e Silva 2012), the contact variety characteristic of the Xingu Park (s. Lucchesi e Macedo 1997), the Parkatejê's dialect (Ferreira 2005) and Huni-Kuin Portuguese (Christino 2012).

Even though the examples presented in this section are only a few, they are able to provide a picture about specific linguistic structures of BVP Indian varieties. Now, we focus on the Huni-Kuin Portuguese.

Huni-Kuin Portuguese

The Huni-Kuin suffered a very tragic past of slavery and genocide. This terrible situation lasted till the early 1980s, when they finally conquered their right to live in 12 Indian reservations (in the State of Acre). Nowadays, they sum up more than 7.600 individuals.

Every day, they face the challenge of finding the (delicate) balance between the preservation of their culture and staying aware of (and being able to handle) the newest technologies. Similarly, they struggle to combine their traditional medicine and a real access to the advances of the 'white men' medicine. A bilingual identity is an answer to one of these dilemmas. A statement of a Huni-Kuin leader during a course, promoted by the Comissão Pró-Índio (an NGO), clarifies it:

> Os índio entendemos o língua do nauá que tão aprendendo junto. É... os índio tão aprendendo com dois língua: a língua de que nosso mesmo, a língua de português. (Ivanildo Paulino)

[The Indians understand the *nauá* [white men] language, which they are learning at the same time. Well… the Indians are learning with **two languages**: the language that are really ours and the Portuguese language.]

It shows undoubtedly that nobody intends to abandon their traditional language during his/her process of learning Portuguese. As other Indian BVP varieties, Huni-Kuin Portuguese (henceforth HKP) has features not shared with L1 BVP varieties. Beyond variation in gender *attribution* and *agreement* (mentioned in section 1.), HKP can express plural in a peculiar way: only on the NP right border (as in (6) *o barro-**s**,* instead of Standard-Portuguese (6') *o-**s** barro-**s*** or BVP (6'') *o-**s** barro*, 'the muds')[3].

We analyze here another specific feature of HKP, namely the use of definite articles. As the two next sections intend to show, non-coincidence involving absence/ presence of definite articles between HKP speakers and L1 speakers occurs very often. In section 3, we search for pragmatic-semantic explanations for that. In section 4, morphosyntactic and syntactic aspects are taken into account.

Absence/ presence of definite articles in HKP: pragmatic-semantic aspects

Contrary to BVP varieties spoken as L1, null article with NPs having definite reference is possible in HKP, as we can see in (7) and (8).

(7) "cada vez tô mais conseguindo de melhorá mais [Ø] **trabalho**"
each-time-AUXverb-more-to achieve-to improve-more-[Ø] work[4]
'Each time I am more achieving to improve more [Ø] work'

(8) "[Ø] importância do mapa pra nós é pra nós segurar a [...]"
[Ø] importance-of-DEFart.m.sg-map-for-PPRON1sg-to be-for-PPRON1sg-to avoid-DEFart.f.sg
'[Ø] importance of the map for us is for we avoid the […]'.

Although occurring not as often as the absence of the definite article in PHK, represented in (7) and (8), there are contexts where only HKP speakers insert definite articles. This process can be seen in (9) and (10):

(9) "eu não tenho mais **a dúvida**"
PPRON1sg-not-to have-anymore-**DEFart.f.sg**-doubt
'I don't have **the** doubt' (instead of 'I have no doubt').

(10) “a miração como surgia pé entrando dentro **do** nós”
DEFart.f.sg-ayahuasca vision-like-to come-foot-to get in-inside-of-**DEFart.m.sg**-PPRON1sg
‘the ayahuasca vision used to come like a foot getting into **the** us’

Regarding its case system, Huni-Kuin’s mother tongue Cashinawa[5] shows a kind of split-ergativity. 1st and 2nd personal pronouns follow a nominative-accusative system and NPs an ergative-absolutive one (v. Dixon 1994: 86, Camargo 2005). Just like the other Panoan languages, Cashinawa does not allow prefixation, presents an agglutinative nature and does not have a linguistic category similar to the Portuguese (or English) articles. There is neither a syntactic nor a morphosyntatic process in order to express definiteness in that language. Thus, Cashinawa bare nouns are neutral in matter of definiteness.

Adopting a cross-linguistic perspective, we can recognize semantic and pragmatic categories that possibly play a decisive role in L2 definite articles’ acquisition. As Guella, Déprez and Sleeman (2008) indicated, there are languages with articles based on definiteness, like English, French, Arabic, Dutch (and Portuguese) and languages with specificity-based articles, like Samoan, Turkish and some Creoles. These researchers analyzed how Dutch learners of Arabic use L2 articles and verified a systematic misuse of articles in [±specific] contexts. The Arabic indefinite article ‘Ø’ was misinterpreted as encoding the feature [-specific]. Analogously, the Arabic definite article *él* was wrongly perceived as encoding the feature [+specific].

Ko, Ionin and Wexler (2009) investigated how L1-Korean speakers acquire the semantics of L2-English articles. They concluded that the definite article *the* was misused in specific indefinite contexts, as well as the indefinite article *a* was misused in non-specific contexts. It was considered by them as an evidence for the relevant role of specificity and led them to argue that

> [i]n the absence of articles in their L1, L2-learners have no *a priori* reason to categorize English articles on the basis of definiteness rather than specificity.

Depending on the language, animacity can also be a relevant feature in the articles’ system. According to Baxter and Lopes (2009), the Portuguese based-creoles spoken in Cape Verde and São Tomé associate definite articles absence with animate referents. Based on our HKP corpus[6] (that contains 560 NP tokens involving L1 coincident use of definite articles and their over/ misuse), we intend to determine the influence of definiteness, specificity and animacity for presence/ absence of definite articles in this Indian BVP variety. Being known to the hearer, or being definite, is probably the most important feature in examples as (11) and (12). In such cases, the definite article is expressed in the same way as in L1 Brazilian Portuguese varieties.

(11) "**O** espírito **das** floresta é agora é famoso"
DEFart.m.sg-spirit-of+ DEFart.f.pl-forest-to be-now-to be-famous
'The spirit of the forests is now is famous'

(12) "**A** explicação dele é muito ótimo"
DEFart.f.sg–explanation-POSS PRON3sg.m-to be- very-excellent
'His explanation is very excellent'

Even though NPs like those expressed in (11) and (12) are the most frequent in our corpus, there are examples showing that HKP speakers do not always build the semantic-syntax-pragmatic interface exactly like L1 BVP speakers. For instance, some definite articles' tokens follow demonstrative pronouns. Since these two categories are in complementary distribution in Portuguese, an L1 speaker clearly would not adopt such structure.

(13) "e derruba **aquele o** pau que serve"
and-to droop-DEM PRON.m,sg-DEFart.m.sg-tree-REL PRON-to serve
'And (someone) droops that **the** tree which serves'

(14) "mas eu amo muito **essa o** conhecimento"
but-PPRON1sg-to love-a lot-DEM PRON.f.sg-DEFart.m.sg-knowledge
'But I love this **the** knowledge a lot'

On the other hand, it is easy to verify that HKP speakers do not consistently associate [+definiteness] with presence of definite articles. In fact, exactly the same referent can be mentioned with or without a definite article. We can verify that in the excerpt transcribed below, where the main subject is an art workshop (Port. *oficina*) organized by and for young Huni-Kuin artists.

"Tá legal. [(15a)] **Oficina** foi o encontro dos artistas de desenhistas dos jovem huni kuin [...] Então [(15b)] **oficina de desenho** que nós fizemos o desenho produção significado das música [...] Então, [(15c)] **a oficina** foi realizado [...] na aldeia Mãbaná, onde eu mora e realizemo durante dez dias realização [(15d)] **de oficina** com encontro de... das pessoas jovens artistas. [...] Então, foi isso **[**(15e)] **o oficina**".

[OK. [(15a)] **Workshop** was the young Huni-Kuin artists meeting. […] So, [(15b)] **drawing workshop** in which we did the drawing [about] the songs' meaning […] So, [(15c)] **the workshop** was realized in the Mãbaná village, where I live and we realized during ten days of realization [(15d)] **of workshop** with meeting of people that are young artists. […] So, that was [(15e)] **the workshop**]

The young artists' workshop (*oficina*) is known by both speaker and hearer, presenting undoubtedly the feature [+definiteness]. The speaker refers directly to it 5 times. It is worthy pointing out that only in the third (15c) and fifth references (15e) there are definite articles. Actually, even (15e) does not coincide with L1 speakers' use of definite articles, since the usually feminine noun *oficina* was associated with the masculine definite article *o*.

Considering the NPs containing the noun *oficina* which lack definite articles, we can recognize different NP structures: in (15a) there is only the head of the NP; in (15b) there are the head and a modifier (*de desenho*) and in (15c) *oficina* is part of an oblique argument (*realização de oficina*). This multiplicity of structures makes evident that the absence of definite articles with definite referents takes place in contexts with prepositions (15d) and without prepositions (15a and 15b). (16) is another example presenting a definite referent without definite article in an NP without preposition, while the NP in (17) follows a preposition:

(16) "nós fizemo mais é **identificação**"
PPRON1pl-to do. past-above all -to be (cleft structure)-identification lit. '
'we did, above all, is identification'

(17) "**em** ano dois mil e onze só tem dez maracujá e manga"
in-year-two thousand eleven-only-EXIST-ten-passion fruit-and-mango
'in year 2011 there are only ten passion-fruit and mango'

In the next section, we will give more attention to those syntactic aspects. As argued before, our concerns are now related mainly to semantic and pragmatic issues. Returning to the roles of the features [+/-specificity] and [+/-definiteness], we could distinguish one clear overuse of a definite article that relies on specificity, in a context characterized by [-definiteness]. In (18), the speaker does bear a specific uncertainty in mind, which is not shared with the hearer.

(18) "eu não tenho mais **a dúvida**, qualquer momento, qualquer hora"
PPRON1sg-not-to have-anymore-DEFart.f.sg-doubt-every-moment-every-hour
'I don't have **the** doubt anymore, any time, any hour'

In order to analyze another case of overuse of a definite article, considering cultural aspects of the Huni-Kuin society can be useful. Huni-Kuin names appear with an interval of one generation. Grandsons and granddaughters are commonly named after grandparents or grandparents' siblings, what is a great honor for both namesakes. According to this solid tradition, the spiritual and cultural leader Ibã Sales Huni-Kuin has a lot of namesakes among their cousins, as well as among their grandsons and grandnephews. Thus, he is far from being the only man named Ibã in his community. When he introduced himself in an interview of our corpus he, surprisingly, included a definite article before his name, building a structure that would not be the choice of an L1 speaker.

(19) "Meu nome é **o Ibã**"

POSS PRON1sg.m-name-to be-DEFart.m.sg-Ibã (proper name)
'My name is **the** Ibã'

We can suspect that Ibã established a relation between unique reference (considering the only possible referent in such context to be the speaker himself) and the presence of the definite article. In this sense, (19) "*Meu nome é **o Ibã***" (*my name is **the Ibã***) could be understood as similar, in both meaning and structure, to (20) *Eu sou **o Ibã*** (*I am **the Ibã***), sentence in which L1 speakers do use the definite article.

Could be the semantic feature [+animate] also an explanation for the option for a definite article in (19)? Our analysis suggests that the answer should be no. We observed systematically how eight different speakers use (or not) definite articles in their free speeches. Four of them inserted definite articles in contexts presenting the feature [+animate], where L1 speakers do not, just like in (19) and (21), previously numbered as (10). (21) sounds really puzzling in consequence of apparently presenting a definite article before a personal pronoun.

(21) "a miração como surgia pé entrando dentro **do** nós"
DEFart.f.sg-ayahuasca vision-like-to come-foot-to get in-inside-of-**DEFart.m.sg**-PPRON1pl
'the ayahuasca vision used to come like a foot getting into **the** us'

Indicating that animacity is probably not a decisive factor for the HKP speakers' choice between absence or presence of definite articles, the amount of speakers not expressing definite articles in [+animate] contexts was also four. An example can be found in (22), where a definite [-animate] noun, *caminho* ('way'), occurs also without a definite article.

(22) “**pessoa** só colocô caminho”
person-only- to put past-way
‘person has only put way’

In fact, three speakers belong to both groups, since they overuse and omit definite articles with [+animate] referents. Hence, at this point of our research, we cannot really trace a pattern involving the choice between absence/ presence of definite articles in HKP and the semantic feature [+/-animate]. Showing other partial results of our inquiry, the next section tackles morphosyntactic and syntactic factors that can influence the way speakers of HKP handle definite articles.

Absence/ presence of definite articles in HKP: morphosyntactic and syntactic aspects

As we mentioned before regarding (15), (16) and (17), the NPs wherein definite articles were used (or not) by HKP speakers in a particular way have different kinds of structure. Four speakers recorded in our corpus omitted a definite article in NPs following a preposition, as in (17). One of these tokens involving PPs is especially challenging, since the speaker left out the definite article and added the plural morpheme *–s* directly to the preposition:

(23) “pa cuidá da floresta, das caça, **de-s** pesca”
in order to- to take care-of-DEFart.f.sg-forest-of-DEFart.f.pl-game-**of-pl-**fish
‘in order to take care of the forest, of the games and **of fishes’** (lit. **of-s fish**)

The quantity of speakers omitting definite articles in NPs which are not introduced by prepositions is bigger than the first group and amounts to six individuals. In some cases, expressed by two speakers, a whole PP is missing. By such contexts, as (24) and (25), we can hardly say something specifically about absence / presence of definite articles.

(24) “Eu sou **pesquisador espírito** da floresta”
PPRON1sg-to be-researcher-spirit-of-DEFart.f.sg-forest
‘I am researcher [of the] forest spirit.’

(25) “Esse caminho **vai picada**”
DEM PRON.m.sg-way-to go-trail
‘This way goes [to the] trail.’

There are sentences in HKP in which a preposition is missing in an oblique argument, while a definite article is expressed. This situation can be related to a transfer of absolutive case arguments in Cashinawa (as suggested by Baxter and Christino (2013)). Being exclusive of NPs that function as subject of an intransitive clause or as direct object of a transitive clause, the absolutive case has no specific ending or mark in Cashinawa. It is normally associated to the semantic role of theme, which is the same semantic role of the oblique arguments with missing prepositions in HKP. The ergative case, on the other hand, characterizes exclusively NPs that are subjects of transitive clauses. A nasal ending and other less common allomorphs, like *–na* and *–ni*, indicate this case, which plays the semantic role of agent. In (26) and (27), we can verify examples of this possible transfer from L1 absolutives.

(26) "Eu esqueci de falar **o lixão**"
PPRON1sg- to forget past-to tell-DEFart.m.sg-dump
'I forgot talking [about] the dump'

(27) "nós temo que cuidar **o nossos** caminho"
PPRON1pl-modal verb-to take care-DEFart.m.sg-POSS PRON1pl-ways
'We should take care [after] our ways'

(27) has particular interest for our investigation, due to the presence of a definite article that does not overtly agree in number with the head noun. The masculine definite article ***o*** (without the plural marker *–s*) is followed by the possessive pronoun *nosso-**s***, with explicit plural ending. In BVP (L1) varieties, it is extremely common that only the first element of an NP is overtly plural marked (as in (28) *os carro novo*, 'the new cars'), but there is no chance of not expressing the plural marker on the article ((28')**o carros novo*).

Taking L1 speakers' linguistic behavior as a point of reference, we have tackled, so far in this section, the process of definite article's omission in HKP. Now, we consider examples, wherein a HKP speaker inserts a definite article while an L1 speaker would not. In our sample, six speakers 'added' a definite article in NPs, while only two inserted a definite article before a noun belonging to a PP. Three speakers included a combination of preposition and definite article in the sentence (as in (29) below):

(29) "Índio cumpriu a lei dos **pu** branco"
(pra +o)
indian-obey past-DEFart.f.sg-law-of-DEFart.m.pl-for-DEFart.m.sg-white man
lit. 'Indian obeyed the law of the **for the** white man.'

In fact, the speaker probably does not recognize a combination of the preposition *pra* and the masculine singular definite article *o* in *pu*. Like other similar contexts suggest, some HKP speakers presumably do not identify a definite article in every context of *pro* (*pra* + masculine singular definite article *o*) or *da* (*de* + feminine definite singular article *a*). Thus, instead of being aware of the contrasts – based on definiteness – like that between *de* (without article) and *do* (with definite article), they understand prepositions like *de* and contractions like *do* and *da* as, loosely speaking, free variants of a preposition. This process explains what happens in (21), where we can consider that there is a kind of fake definite article. In other words, the speaker did not really link a definite article to a personal pronoun. He simply chose the 'variant *do*' of the preposition.

Maybe considering the relation between absence/ presence of definite articles in HKP and the number category can help us at this point. We assume that this 'free variation' between pairs like *de/ da* or *pra/ pro* does not include plural number forms, such as *do-**s***, *pra-**s***.

It is worthy to remember that in BVP (L1) varieties the most common strategy of indicating plural number is adding the *–s* marker exclusively to the first NP element (usually an article). Not surprisingly, that is also the mostly adopted strategy for marking plural number by HKP speakers. Despite of the fact that they can express other plural possibilities (even some that are not possible for L1 speakers, like plural marking only in right-sided NP elements, see (6)), the Huni-Kuin put *–s* only in the articles in the absolute majority of the sentences.

Therefore, it is plausible to conclude that HKP speakers strongly associate plural marking and presence of definite articles, i. e., the plural number can help to 'keep' them. On the other hand, definite articles in singular contexts can be considered easier to drop. In fact, in our corpus only two speakers omitted definite articles in plural NPs. In contrast, seven speakers out of eight did not express definite articles in singular NPs, which substantiate our conclusion.

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