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Spanish-speaking Latin Americans in the market of Cayenne (French Guiana): multilingual practices, fuzzy borders and social positioning

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Introduction

French Guiana is a French overseas department in northern South America and a territory of the European ultra-peripheral region. It offers a unique political and sociolinguistic situation at the crossroads of Europe and Latin America and a fascinating observatory for the study of new language practices in relation to transnational mobility, social inequalities and language contact phenomena (Migge and Léglise 2013). The Guyana Plateau as a whole is a hybrid social space, due to historical and recent cross-regional migration, forced population movements under slavery and indentured labour schemes during colonial times. The same population groups and languages are now part of two or more modern nation states, often straddling the borders of these states (Léglise and Migge 2019). At the same time, French Guiana is clearly identified as a gateway to Europe or as a part of the Global North among Southern countries, and it attracts people from various neighbouring countries in search for a better life (Piantoni 2009). Spanish-speaking Latin American immigration, which officially represents around 2% of the whole population, has been documented poorly, and this chapter is devoted to documenting the life trajectories of these people before their arrival in French Guiana and their multilingual practices and positioning there.

More specifically, we focus on how they interact with other people, what language resources they mobilize, and how they express positionings and negotiate them vis-à-vis others. As a place for observation we chose the Central marketplace in Cayenne, where it is possible to encounter Spanish-speaking Latin American people interacting with many of the other populations. Previous works suggest that South Americans are developing a new Hispanic or 'Ibero-Romance' identity due to the combination of indexical linguistic elements available in the different Spanish varieties present in French Guiana, which they reuse in this context (Patzelt 2018). Although this approach applies to endogenous interactions, observations made in the market indicate that the situation is more complex, since it seems to go beyond the scope of Hispanic or Hispano-American, notably when these speakers interact with people from other social groups.

Instead, we adopt a language-as-social-practice perspective. Social actors use their heterogeneous linguistic resources to create social meaning and stances by drawing on fuzzy

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linguistic borders and linguistic resources (Léglise 2018). This perspective follows the recent work on multilingual resources (Blommaert and Backus 2011, Spotti and Blommaert 2017), and on the expansion of linguistic repertoires (Busch 2012, Léglise 2019). These multilingual resources are available to speakers and constitute the locus of our analysis. We believe that the ethnographic observation of the use speakers make of their linguistic resources in conversation/interaction, combined with the analyses of social positioning (Du Bois 2007, Jaffe 2009, Johnstone 2009, Kiesling 2009, Sánchez Moreano 2018, 2020), can contribute to refining the study of speakers' language practices in contexts of mobility.

The first section presents the context for Latin Americans in French Guiana. Section 2 outlines our ethnographic procedure and data. Section 3 focuses on the migration trajectories and linguistic repertoires of three speakers. Section 4 discusses some particular characteristics of their multilingual practices, namely their fuzzy linguistic borders and the phenomenon of stance as social positioning in interaction.

1. Latin Americans in French Guiana

French settlement along the South American coast in what is today French Guiana began in the sixteenth century in lands originally inhabited by indigenous people. A large area of primeval rainforest (90,000 km²) situated between northern Brazil (ex-Portuguese Guiana, now Amapá) and Suriname (ex-Dutch Guiana) became part of the French colonial empire, and over a century enslaved African labourers were imported by settlers to work on plantations and to increase the population. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, French Guiana became a penal colony where prisoners (mostly from metropolitan France, but also including some political prisoners from East Asian colonies) were sentenced to forced labour. In 1946, French Guiana was incorporated into France as an overseas department within the French Republic. ‘To populate this territory in order to develop it’ was a constant motto of the colonial power, but has also been expressed in contemporary policy (Mam Lam Fouck 2002). The last example of this policy is the resettlement of Hmong people from Laos to French Guiana in the 1970s.¹

Although a large territory mostly covered by forests, French Guiana has no more than 300,000 inhabitants, who mostly live on the coastal strip between the metropolitan area of Cayenne, its capital, and the demographically dynamic town of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni in the western part of the territory. Apart from six indigenous groups, who today amount to only 5% of the overall population, many groups settled here as a consequence of colonization (metropolitan French, Creoles, Maroons of African descent) or as a consequence of migratory movements during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Since the 1990s, around 50% of the population is born outside the department.

¹ The Hmong people showed their allegiance to France during the independence wars in Indochina and were forced to leave Laos. Relocation to French Guiana was proposed in 1977 in order both to help find a solution for them and to populate French Guiana.

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A sociolinguistic survey of the territory showed that 75% of the children do not speak French, the only official language, before they begin school (Léglise 2007). Among the twenty most important family languages spoken, ten received a degree of recognition as ‘regional or minority languages of France’ in the 2000s.² Thirty years ago, acquiring French Creole was a way of integrating into Guianese society (Jolivet 1990), but things have changed considerably throughout the territory. Five languages now play a role as a lingua franca for intercultural communication: mostly French and French Guianese Creole, but also Nengee Tongo and Sranan Tongo in the western part of the territory and Brazilian Portuguese in the eastern part. Although many languages are useful resources in ordinary multilingual communication, French acts as a gatekeeper for education and health access as well as for finding a job in the tertiary sector, which represents 80% of available (formal) employment. But at the same time, informal jobs are easy to find,³ and it is completely possible to live outside the French-speaking world in French Guiana as long as no contact with school, hospital or state services is needed (Léglise 2011).

90% of the migrant population comes from Brazil, Suriname or Haiti, and around 2% comes from Spanish-speaking countries. The first wave of Spanish-speaking Latin American immigration dates back to the late 1960s, when the French – later European – Space Centre and Spaceport⁴ started construction in Kourou. More than a thousand immigrants worked on it, 400 of them Colombians. After its completion, many of these workers returned to Colombia, but some stayed to live in the town of Kourou. In the 1980s and 90s people from Peru, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela arrived, followed by more Colombians in the 2000s.⁵ Peruvians, Colombians and Dominicans, among others, looking for a better life, live mainly in Cayenne, the capital. Spanish is also spreading: 5% of the schoolchildren report Spanish as being part of their linguistic repertoire (Léglise 2017).

From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s, French immigration policy was in favour of introducing migrant workers to meet the needs of the labour market and to compensate for French demographic deficits by encouraging the permanent installation of foreign families. Since the 1990s a ‘zero immigration’ goal (meaning zero illegal immigration) has been pursued by various governments. The geographical position of French Guiana, with a river more than 700 kilometres long bordering Brazil and a river more than 500 kilometres long bordering

² These include the six indigenous languages (Arawak, Kali’na, Palikur, Teko, Wayana and Wayampi), French Guianese Creole, two English-based Creoles, namely Nengee Tongo (in its three variants Aluku, Ndyuka and Pamaka) and Saamaka, and lastly Hmong.

³ More than 10% of the adult population declared they had had an informal job in the last six months (Antianécho 2012)

⁴ Also called Europe’s Spaceport, this spaceport is near the equator, so that less energy is required to manoeuvre a spacecraft into an equatorial, geostationary orbit and it has open sea to the east, so that lower stages of rockets and debris from launch failures are unlikely to fall on human habitations. The European Space Agency (ESA), the French space agency CNES (National Centre for Space Studies) and the commercial companies Ariespace and Azercosmos launch spacecraft from there. This was the spaceport used by the ESA to send supplies to the International Space Station using the Automated Transfer Vehicle.

⁵ Probably because of the socio-political and security situation in the country at that time (civil war, drug traffic, etc.)

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Suriname, in a region where free movement across the rivers is an ancestral tradition, makes the implementation of French migration policy almost impossible. The fight against illegal immigration is conducted by the application of exceptional legislation which permits constant identity checks throughout the territory as well as deportation to the borders (Pialou 2007). Each year, the French state’s quantified objectives for deportation of illegal persons (by returning them to their home country) are mostly met through deportation from French Guiana to its neighbouring countries. Although it is part of the French state, French Guiana is not part of the Schengen zone, and special visas are required when coming from outside Europe, for example from Brazil (a visa that is not required when travelling from Brazil to metropolitan France). Residence permits must be held when staying more than 90 days. Identity checks at checkpoints are organized on the only road between Brazil and the coastal strip. Illegal immigration, although impossible to count precisely,⁶ is quite high and might constitute a quarter of the overall population (Piantoni 2009, Cambrézy 2015), since people cross the river on a daily basis and there is regular movement back and forth between French Guiana and the other countries in the region.

There are no exact statistics on Spanish-speaking Latin Americans living in French Guiana. The French statistical institute INSEE states that there were about 533 Peruvians in the department in 2007; however, according to Bechet (2012, p. 116), there were more than 1000 Peruvians at that date. Likewise, official data state that in 2007 there were about 755 Dominicans, while Bechet estimates about 3000 for the same year (2012, pp. 116-117). The number of expelled persons per year (about 9000 from all nationalities) could also help to provide a statistical view of Latin American immigration; however, many of these return to French Guiana through its ‘porous borders’, a term widely used by the state and by external observers to describe the sea and the two rivers which surround French Guiana. Today, French Guiana is home to Dominicans, Peruvians, Colombians, Bolivians, Ecuadorians, Argentineans and Cubans. Generally, like other people (especially those from Brazil) they work in jobs where cheap labour is needed: carpentry, agriculture, handicrafts, gold mining, cleaning, construction and so on.⁷ Some supplement their income with non-formal work in the Cayenne market.

Also in the Cayenne market, the Hmong people⁸ now provide 80% of fruit and vegetable produce. Since they arrived there in the 1980s they have reconfigured this socio-economic space, providing the most significant tonnage of vegetables (Le Berre 1989a, p. 7). This trend is still characteristic of today’s market landscape. According to a sociolinguistic survey in the marketplace in December 2014 (Alby et al. unpublished), which focused on the market’s vehicular languages, seven people claimed to speak Spanish while thirty-eight claimed to speak Hmong. This means that although the Hmong are a minority everywhere in French Guiana, their presence in the market and impact on the local economy are more important

⁶ A comparison between the numbers of officially declared foreigners in the census and the numbers of residence permits given by the prefecture shows, in 2006 for example, that half of the self-declared foreigners in French Guiana are in an illegal situation (Cambrézy 2015).

⁷ However, we have also met people with qualifications working in the hospital and as Spanish teachers in the national education system.

⁸ They live in three villages and represent less than 1% of the overall population.

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than that of the other populations. This presence has implications for the social and economic dynamics of the market with respect to the social reconfiguration of space, new labour dynamics and social mobility processes.

During recent observation in Cayenne, the number of Peruvians, Colombians and Dominicans we encountered was significantly higher than that observed by Alby et al. in 2014: around twenty Spanish-speaking people were stallholders, street vendors or porters. The latter are known as ‘jobbers’ or ‘jobeurs’ (Le Berre 1989b, p. 31), that is, people who lend a hand to the vendors with fixed stalls, mostly Hmong, in loading and unloading goods from trucks in exchange for a few euros. In the 1980s the jobbers were mainly Haitian, but today they are generally Peruvian, Colombian or African. We have also observed that after being porters some of the Latin Americans have attained significant social mobility by moving to permanent stalls. Some work as full-time jobbers, although for others it is an addition to a regular activity (hotel work, construction work, cleaning, etc.) to supplement their income and make ends meet.

Our research questions then were: how do Spanish speakers working in the Cayenne market as stallholders or jobbers manage to enter French Guiana, and once there, how do they interact with others, what language resources do they mobilize, and how do they express social positionings and negotiate these positionings vis-à-vis others?

2. Ethnographic fieldwork and collection of interactional data

Our ethnographic fieldwork covers lengthy ethnographic experience and observations in French Guiana, as well as recent focused observations in the Cayenne marketplace. Isabelle had been working for more than fifteen years on sociolinguistic issues in French Guiana relating to multilingualism and power relations, particularly in schools and healthcare settings, when she invited Santiago to collaborate with her. In the area of transnational mobility, she had been working previously with people travelling from the two immediately neighbouring countries – Maroons living between French Guiana and Suriname (Léglise and Migge 2019) and Brazilian families whose members were living between French Guiana, Brazil and other countries (Léglise 2019). In both cases, as a white metropolitan French researcher she had worked closely with colleagues who were identified more as ‘insiders’ than she was. In the research on Brazilian families, a bi-national, bilingual team proved to be an excellent resource for connecting with people and developing good relations with both legal and illegal people. During their first joint research visit to French Guiana, in 2016, Isabelle introduced Santiago to places and people of special importance to her, just as Santiago had previously done for her during his research in Cali, Colombia.

Santiago, a researcher born in Colombia who had lived in Ecuador and was in 2016 living in France, had no problem with meeting and connecting with Spanish-speaking people in French Guiana. Since he looked like the Spanish speakers, Santiago identified the Cayenne marketplace as a good point of entry to the field. During their first joint research visit Santiago and Isabelle had had the opportunity to meet some Spanish speakers selling goods in the

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marketplace. Meetings and discussions flowed smoothly, even though people were sometimes reluctant because of a fear of police and identity checks. Isabelle, who was first identified as a social worker, was later introduced as an academic, and as such did not want to interrupt the relation of trust that Santiago was able to immediately build with people. Two separate periods of observation and recording took place, both a few weeks long, in 2016 and 2018.⁹

During the first fieldwork period in 2016, Santiago met ten Spanish-speaking people from Peru, Colombia and Venezuela in the Cayenne market (see table below). He was able to conduct first contact interviews with all of them; later on, he was able to hold in-group conversations with the Peruvians, and he gradually moved to more detailed observation of the daily interactions in the marketplace by three of these – Oscar, Lorenzo and Agata.

Speaker ¹⁰	Country of origin	First contact interviews	In-group conversations	Daily interactions	Mobility pathways
Carmila	Peru	X			
Elisa	Colombia	X			
Oscar	Peru	X	X	X	Peru, Argentina, Brazil, French Guiana
Lorenzo	Peru	X	X	X	Peru, Brazil, French Guiana
Tucho	Peru	X	X		Peru, Brazil, French Guiana
Giovanny	Peru/Brazil	X	X		Born in Brazil, moved to French Guiana
Clarisa	Peru	X			
Graciela	Venezuela	X			Venezuela, French Guiana
Leticia	Venezuela	X			Venezuela, French Guiana
Agata	Peru	X		X	Peru, Brazil, French Guiana

⁹ The fieldwork was supported by a public grant overseen by the French National Research Agency (ANR) as part of the programme ‘Investissements d’Avenir’ (ANR-10-LABX-0083). It contributes to the IdEx Université de Paris – ANR-18-IDEX-0001.

¹⁰ Names have been changed.

Table 1: Ethnographic pathway of the focal group

He was able to do this because of his affinity and the relationships of trust built up during the first stage contact and the in-group interactions with the three Peruvians. Although the first contact with people from other nationalities was also based on trust and good relationships, Santiago found it interesting to go further with the three Peruvians because they had similar mobility profiles. Since they had followed a three-country mobility pathway between Peru, Brazil and French Guiana, it seemed at first sight that their mobility corresponds to what has been described as onward migration in European contexts (Montagna et al. 2015; Puppa et al. 2021). Onward migration refers to a ‘continuous and stepwise process’ (Toma and Castagnone 2015, p. 66) in which a person goes from one country to another, and then to a third country, and in the process accumulates symbolic and/or economic capital which increases the possibility of moving further. This might be observed in some cases in which Peruvians living in Cayenne see the possibility of obtaining a *titre de séjour* (temporary resident permit) enabling them to go to metropolitan France, but it is not the case for Oscar, Lorenzo and Agata. Agata and Lorenzo are permanent residents in French Guiana, and decided to stay there because they were at that moment in a good socio-economic situation as stallholders; Oscar, who recently obtained a residence permit, does not consider the possibility of moving to metropolitan France even though he still works as a jobber in the Cayenne market.

Speaker	Age	Job	Civil state
Lorenzo	45-55	Stallholder owner	Divorced, two children
Oscar	45-55	Full-time jobber	Single
Agata	45-55	Stallholder owner	Married

Table 2: Focal group

So, Oscar, Lorenzo and Agata, all in the same age range (45-55), constitute the focal group on which this study is based. Santiago started to do participant observation in the market while helping Lorenzo and Agata with work in the stalls. He also helped Oscar with his jobber activities. Outside the market, he was also able to meet and discuss their life trajectory, biography and aspirations with all three. During the fieldwork, Santiago observed and collected their language practices in different contexts, within and outside the market. More than thirty hours of spontaneous interactions were recorded between them and customers, friends, colleagues, collaborators, other jobbers and market stallholders. These recordings include spontaneous discussions about topics related to work in the market and personal experiences. The recordings were made with an in-pocket recorder and a lapel tie-clip microphone. Oscar, Lorenzo and Agata had to carry the microphone and keep it on during the whole workday to record their activities and interactions with other people, while Santiago was observing and participating in their activities. They found the method interesting and were kind enough to agree to record their daily interactions. In agreement with them, it was decided that each would have a sign saying ‘sociolinguistic work in progress’ and would make

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the recorder and the lapel tie-clip microphone visible at all times. When people, out of curiosity, asked what the recorders were for, they explained the objective and the policy of anonymization of data. In instances in which a third person did not want to be recorded, it was agreed that the device had to be turned off. However, most of the time people felt comfortable with the recorder and the interactions flowed smoothly.

For this chapter, we used two hours of recorded interactions. The transcription of the conversational data was carried out following the methods described in Léglise and Sánchez Moreano (2017) and Vaillant and Léglise (2014) for the coding and annotation of multilingual and interactional corpora.¹¹

Before presenting the analysis, we describe the mobility trajectories and linguistic repertoires of our research subjects.

3. Migration trajectories and linguistic repertoires of Lorenzo, Oscar and Agata

The aim of this section is to give a general idea of mobility across the countries that our focal group crossed to enter French Guiana, and how this mobility affects their linguistic repertoires (Gumperz 1964, Spotti and Blommaert 2017) and makes them more complex. Lorenzo, for example, comes from Iquitos, the biggest city in the Peruvian Amazonian region. He has been living in Cayenne for eighteen years. Before arriving in French Guiana, he had lived in Brazil for eight years. He learnt Brazilian Portuguese there, got married and had two children. His movement to French Guiana follows an onward-like trajectory, typical of many Peruvian and other Latin Americans who often pass through the cities of Manaus and Macapá on their way to Belém in Brazil (Map 1). Once there, they usually hear about the advantages that French Guiana offers (such as a gateway to Europe, a salary in euros and robust education and health systems) and decide to cross the border in search of these ‘advantages’ (Bechet 2012, p. 116) or ‘drivers’ of onward movement (Toma and Castagnone 2015).

¹¹ These methods were developed within the project ‘Computer-based Analysis of Contact Induced Variation and Change Phenomena in Multilingual Settings’ funded by the French Research National Agency (ANR: 09-JCJC-0121-01, Chair Isabelle Léglise SEDYL/CNRS, <http://clapoty.vjf.cnrs.fr>). The researchers adapted the Jaxe XML editor (<http://jaxe.sourceforge.net/fr/>) for a fine-grained annotation of the morphosyntactic level, the parts of speech, the speech turns (Sacks et al. 1974), and the sequentiality of conversation (Auer 1995). In this study, the last two levels were considered for transcription. These are the transcription conventions: / pause 1 second; // pause 2 seconds; /// pause 3 seconds; ↗ ascending pitch; ↘ descending pitch; :: vowel lengthening; [phonetic transcription], {overlapping; xxx : inaudible sequence; (para-verbal sign: laughter, shouting, singing, etc.).

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Map no. 1. Transnational onward movement towards French Guiana

During this trajectory Lorenzo's linguistic repertoire has expanded not only to French, the official language of French Guiana, but also to other languages present in the territory, both majority ones such as Brazilian Portuguese, and minority ones, such as Hmong, Thai and Lao (Table 3).

Spanish	
French	Dominant languages
French Creole	
Brazilian Portuguese	Important numerically
English	
Italian	
Hmong, Lao, Tai	Minority language, but important economically

Having started as a jobber, Lorenzo became a stallholder in the Cayenne market. This is an example of success in social mobility. According to him, this success was partially due to the fact of speaking other languages and having an interest in learning other people's languages. As he had learned Brazilian Portuguese before arriving in French Guiana, he was able to strategically make use of it in French Guiana, where this language is numerically important. Within the onward migration paradigm, this may be construed as symbolic capital that people can accumulate to enhance their mobility towards another destination. He also explains that having learned what he calls the Hmong language (in fact, resources in Hmong, Lao and Thai) has helped him to strategically interact with the Hmong people in French Guiana. We should

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bear in mind that Hmong people provide 80% of fruit and vegetables in the Cayenne market, and that Lorenzo, as a stallholder, needs to negotiate prices and tonnage of food with them during market days. This negotiation, according to him, takes place on an equal basis. Thanks to his diversified repertoire, Lorenzo can participate in various spaces of interaction in which he activates the available linguistic resources which allow him to interact with others. He is able to communicate effectively with others and to assume epistemic and affective postures (stances) of differentiation (alignments and dis-alignments) within interactions, as we will see in the next section.

Oscar is also a Peruvian. He has been living in Cayenne for eight years, having arrived in French Guiana after living in several Latin American countries. He spent some years in Argentina, before being deported to Peru, then began a mobility trajectory through Brazil towards French Guiana. He is not married, but has family in Cayenne who arrived there long before he did. (Family ties and friendship connections provide a common way to enter French Guiana.) Unlike Lorenzo, Oscar never lived in Brazil for a long time, only travelling through it on his way to French Guiana. Once arrived, he started working as a taxi driver but did not manage to keep this job because he did not have a residence permit. Since then he has been working as a jobber in the market, but as time went by he has managed to regularize his administrative situation. He says that he does not speak French well and wants to learn it better to get a formal job and improve his quality of life. However, this does not seem to be an obstacle to communicating with others. In the market, he often interacts with ‘Los Mongos’ (what he calls Hmong stallholders), who ask him to work as a jobber loading and unloading their trucks on market days. Oscar also sometimes helps them to sell at the stall.

Table 4. Oscar’s linguistic repertoire	
Spanish	
French	Dominant languages
Brazilian Portuguese	Important numerically

Although he does not declare that he speaks Brazilian Portuguese, ethnographic observations show that he uses words of Brazilian when he meets a Brazilian, both in the market and outside it.

Finally, Agata is a Peruvian, living in Cayenne for thirteen years, who owns a souvenir stall in the market halls. She studied nursing in Peru but had to leave her country in search of a better life. She is married to another Peruvian who has been living in French Guiana for thirty years. Both have migratory legal status and used marriage as a driver to move to French Guiana. Her linguistic repertoire is similar to Oscar’s.

Table 5. Agata’s linguistic repertoire	
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Spanish	
French	Dominant languages
Brazilian Portuguese	Important numerically

When she arrived, she did not speak French, but learnt it in the course of time. Like Agata, many Spanish-speaking Latin Americans learn to speak French as they take their first steps in the town, imitating the most common words they hear at this early stage. Moreover, because of repeated interactions with Brazilians, they also learn to speak Brazilian Portuguese, sometimes not being aware of it or not meaning to, as in the case of Agata: *(el portugués) me lo aprendí solito se me metió* ‘Portuguese, I learnt it alone, all alone I learnt it’. Agata states that a lot of Brazilians come to her stall and start talking and talking, and then she realizes that she is also speaking Brazilian Portuguese. As Brazilians are numerous in the territory, due to the movement of transnational families between Brazil and French Guiana (Gorovitz and Léglise 2015, Léglise 2019), Spanish-speaking Latin Americans interact continually with them in and outside the market; some even get married to Brazilians and have children, while others share friendship or economic ties with them.

In a nutshell, Lorenzo, Oscar and Agata’s linguistic repertoires illustrate similar paths of mobility and different linguistic repertoire expansion. Lorenzo has been exposed to Brazilian Portuguese for the long period of time that he lived in Brazil. To communicate with all kinds of social actor, he expanded his linguistic repertoire to dominant languages such as French, but also to languages of other groups who are either numerically significant, such as Brazilian Portuguese, or are insignificant numerically but important for the economy of the marketplace, such as the Hmong. In contrast, like many Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, Oscar and Agata have only been exposed to Brazilian Portuguese since they arrived in French Guiana. As Agata seems to be more exposed to it (she works at a permanent stall in the market with a lot of Brazilian customers), she is more likely to learn it ‘naturally’. For all three of them, as for many of the Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, the expansion of their linguistic repertoire is due to their daily lived experience or *Spracherleben* (Busch 2017) of language. The linguistic resources in their repertoire allow them to negotiate social positioning as stance.

4. Multilingual practices, fuzzy borders and social positioning

For these three speakers, the expansion of their linguistic repertoire enhances the expression of stance, as social positioning in social interaction. Stance is a phenomenon related to social positioning, defined as a unified action performed by speakers to adopt interactionally epistemic and affective positioning (Du Bois 2007).¹² Although the concept may have multiple interpretations, it describes a unified action in which a social actor (the stance-taker) evaluates

¹² The idea of stance, introduced first by Elinor Ochs (1992) to explain the link between linguistic forms and the social world, was later developed by Du Bois (2007) in the field of social and discourse psychology, and then by authors such as Jaffe (2009), Kiesling (2009, 2011), Bassiouney (2015) and Wu (2004) in sociolinguistic studies focusing on discourse analysis, pragmatics and conversational analysis.

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an existing element in the discursive context (stance focus), positions her/himself, and decides whether or not to align with her/his interlocutor. A stance can be epistemic – *I know* – or affective – *I’m glad* (Du Bois 2007, p. 144), and can be observed whenever Spanish-speaking Latin Americans interact with others in the Cayenne market using the linguistic resources from their expanded multilingual repertoires. These resources may at times be fuzzy.

4.1. Multilingual resources and stance

Although French is in many cases the language of inter-ethnic communication and a gatekeeper to social mobility, the vast majority of interactions are multilingual (Léglise 2007, p. 16), as speakers permanently acquire the linguistic resources of the languages and varieties from their interlocutors in order to communicate effectively. Whenever Spanish-speaking Latin Americans interact with others (Brazilians, French Guianese, Hmong and other Latinos), they draw on their linguistic repertoires and use the linguistic forms according to the meaning they want to convey or the person they are addressing.

For example, Lorenzo uses linguistic resources that are socio-culturally associated with Hmong, Lao, French and English. Again, Hmong is the language of a minority group from Laos, living in French Guiana since the 1970s and extremely important to the market economy. In the next interactional example, Lorenzo is interacting with three other speakers in Spanish when a Hmong lady (HL) whose mother has a stall in the market passes by. Lorenzo interrupts the conversation to address the Hmong lady. At that moment the extract becomes multilingual: French is underlined, Hmong is **in bold**, Lao is **underlined bold**, and English is in *italics*.

(1)

- | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 016 | L | nia:::
<i>mother</i> | |
| 017 | HL | wai | |
| 018 | L | wa wa wa | |
| 019 | HL | <u>ma nia</u>
<i>my mother</i> | |
| 020 | L | wa wa wa | (laughing) |
| 021 | HL | <u>ma nia</u>
<i>my mother</i> | |
| 022 | L | wa wa wa | (laughing) |

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- 023 HL **xxx**
- 024 L ↗ là / par là ↘ (smiling) // {**tsis ua cast sis ua cas**} **bo mi banha:::**
that way, over there, you are welcome, you are welcome, no problem
- 025 HL **{tsis ua cas} (tsis ua li tcha)**
you are welcome
- 026 L **bo mi banha:::** *bye bye*
no problem, bye, bye
- 027 HL au revoir (going away)
goodbye

When Lorenzo sees the lady approaching, he asks if she is looking for her mother. To do so, he uses the linguistic form **nia** ‘mother’ (line 016) from Hmong. The lady, pleased, answers affirmatively with an interjection in line 17. Lorenzo finds the situation funny and laughs, using the same interjection several times (lines 018, 020, 022). The lady repeats that she is looking for her mother, using linguistic forms from French and Hmong *ma nia* (lines 19 and 21). Lorenzo answers her using French, Hmong and Lao (line 024) while pointing out where her mother is. The lady replies almost simultaneously in Hmong (line 025) and Lorenzo ends the interaction using Lao and English (line 026) while the lady says goodbye in French (line 027).

This interaction shows that Lorenzo and the Hmong lady share linguistic resources from several ‘languages’ they deploy to communicate effectively. They do not draw only on French to communicate, which would be a possibility. Instead, they draw on the resources available to both of them. The Hmong lady, for example, uses a Hmong noun **nia** with a French possessive ma (019, 021) in the same utterance. As she knows that Lorenzo shares the same resources, she is sure that she will be understood by him. Lorenzo, for his part, uses Hmong and Lao to address Hmong people without being aware that there might be socio-cultural differentiations between Hmong and Lao that could be relevant in other social contexts. For him, these linguistic resources simply allow him to create social bonds with this social group. Further to this, the use of linguistic resources socio-culturally associated with Hmong and Lao, besides indexing specific group belonging, seems to be a strategy for building relationships of trust with those who dominate business in the Cayenne market. From Lorenzo’s perspective, we interpret this as a strategy for doing business in the market. When Lorenzo observes the Hmong lady arriving, he adopts an interactional stance which is both affective and epistemic. Lorenzo’s affective stance is enhanced by his friendly attitude towards the Hmong lady and by the Hmong and Lao linguistic forms he uses. At the same time, the certainty of what he is saying reinforces his epistemic stance: 1) he is sure that the linguistic forms used (Hmong and Lao) are going to be understood by his interlocutor, and 2) he seems certain that the linguistic forms he uses are ‘actual’ Hmong expressions. These stances, enhanced by the linguistic forms in Lorenzo’s expanded repertoire, enable him to negotiate his positioning as someone who is at the same socio-economic level as the Hmong vendors in the market.

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Another example of an affective stance enhanced by multilingual resources is observed in the next interaction, which takes place in the stall at the end of the market day, when there are almost no customers. In this interaction, Lorenzo (L) is talking to his mother (M) in Spanish (001-005, normal font) while, a little further away, Nacho (N), a thirty-year-old man from Guinea-Bissau who works in the market as a jobber, is talking to a friend (F) in Guinea-Bissau Creole, a Portuguese-based Creole (002, **bold**). Lorenzo is one of the stall tenants he works for. In line 006 Lorenzo is still speaking to his mother in Spanish when he hears Nacho and his friend talking and laughing instead of working. He stops speaking Spanish and, after a two-second pause, addresses Nacho, saying **cabanito**, which, according to Lorenzo, stands for a kind of lazy, good-for-nothing person. He repeats it twice in a louder voice.

(2)

001 M dónde está ↗ la Susi que no la veo ↘ //

where is Susi, I don't see her

002. N and F (Nacho and his friend are speaking in Guinea-Bissau Creole, they are laughing)

003 L allí en sentada qué quiere más ↗

over there, sitting, what else

004 M como ::: no se ve ↗

because I can't see her

005 L ca:::nsa este trabajo ha de decir (sarcastic, while Nacho and his friend are still laughing)

maybe she says this job is so tiring

006. L imagínese com (como)// **caba'nito** (out loud) / '**cabanito** ///

imagine how...you lazy...good-for-nothing

007 F c'est ça le patro:::n (smiling)

that's the boss!

008 L ouais voilà c'est ça ↗

yes, of course, that's it

In fact, to give work instructions Lorenzo usually addresses Nacho in Brazilian Portuguese, and sometimes uses Guinea Bissau words such as ‘cabanito’. Nacho’s friend reacts in 007 using French (underlined) and nodding to legitimize Lorenzo’s positioning: ‘that’s the boss!’. Through this specific linguistic resource, available in his linguistic repertoire, Lorenzo adopts an affective and epistemic stance which indexes his social status as a boss and reinforces the

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hierarchization and the asymmetry of relationships among some stall tenants and jobbers in the Cayenne market.

The final example of stance and the use of multilingual resources is provided by Oscar. Again, he works as a jobber in the market and sometimes helps with selling fruits and vegetables in the stalls. In the following interaction he is helping a stallholder to sell his fruits and vegetables, and addresses some potential customers. We observe that he starts speaking in French (normal font) with some particular phonetic realizations which may index his ‘Hispanic’ origins (001, 006, and 007). Then, in almost all the lines (except 001 and 005) he uses Spanish linguistic forms (**bold**).

(3)

- 001 O bonjour [bõ'lu] monsieur [me'sjɛ]/le meilleur [me'lor] citron de la Guyane
aie, aie, aie
Good morning sir, the best lemon in French Guiana, ay ay ay
- 002 O 001. **hola amiga / buenos días / agarra** **agarra tu ajicito amiguita /**
Hi my friend, good morning, take, take your little pepper my friend
002. **no tengas miedo** **sin temor**
don't be afraid, no fear
- 003 O oh mon ami **mi hermano / el grande / el artista / el único**
Oh my friend, my brother, the greatest, the artist, the only one
- 004 O oui madame / ça / **un** euro madame pour toi
yes madam, this, one euro madam for you
- 005 O oui madame / viens madame /
yes madam, come madam
- 006 O **el** meilleur [me'lor] citron de la Guyane madame/prend citron prend plateau
the best lemon from French Guiana, madam, take lemon, take the tray
- 007 O **cómo estamos / cómo estamos por aquí** oui madame / bonjour [bõlu]**amigo**
How are we doing? How are we doing here? yes, madam, good morning my friend

We see that Oscar can make himself understood by the potential customers by using linguistic resources associated with Spanish (in bold) and French (in normal font). If we were to analyse his statements from the perspective of languages as discrete entities, we would merely say that Oscar does not speak French well since he does not manage to pronounce some phonemes of French, for example in the case of [me'lor] instead of [me.jœʁ], or that he does

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not manage to differentiate between the formal and informal forms of address in French (he uses informal ‘prends’ instead of formal ‘prenez’). He uses his linguistic resources fluidly, although he believes that his French is not good enough to communicate; this is a consequence of the linguistic regime which operates in the Cayenne market (French as the official language and as a gatekeeper to social mobility), and not the consequence of a lack of competence, which could ‘incapacitate’ any speaker (Blommaert et al. 2005, p. 118) from interacting effectively. What we see is that Oscar is using the linguistic resources available in his repertoire in a meaningful way, probably to convey or negotiate a social stance vis-à-vis his potential customers. The use of linguistic forms socio-culturally associated with his ‘Hispanicity’ conveys an affective stance which enables the speaker to present a positive image. Of course, we do not possess enough data to confirm that this is how the other social actors see him.

4.2. Fuzzy borders and bivalency as a resource for stance

Interestingly, in Lorenzo’s and Agata’s multilingual practices some linguistic resources appear to be fuzzy or bivalent (Woolard 1998), since they may be construed as belonging to either Spanish or Brazilian Portuguese. To show this, we decided to annotate these elements following the methodology used by Ledegen (2012) for transcribing floating predicates.¹³ Several speakers participate in the following interaction. Lorenzo is first talking to customer 1 (CL1), a Brazilian lady who is one of his regular customers. We do not know for how long she has been living in Cayenne. Then other customers, CL2 and CL3, arrive at the stall and interact with Lorenzo. In lines 004, 006, 008, 0020, 0022, we can observe linguistic elements transcribed on two levels, in which ‘ele’, ‘obedece’, ‘não’, ‘horas’, ‘passa’, and ‘toma’ are Brazilian Portuguese (normal font), and ‘**el**’, ‘**obedece**’, ‘**no**’, ‘**horas**’, ‘**pasa**’, and ‘**toma**’ are Spanish (**bold**).¹⁴ We have added a phonetic transcription for these elements [el], [o.βe.ˈðe.se], [no], [ˈo.ras], [ˈpa.sa], [ˈto.ma] in the first level to show their actual phonetic realization/pronunciation, which is different from standard Brazilian Portuguese [ˈe.li], [obɨˈdesɨ], [ˈnẽw], [ˈo.rej], etc.¹⁵

(3)

001 CL1 é essa balança?
and that weighing scale?

002 L é minha
it is mine

¹³ Although Ledegen (2012) uses the term to describe de-Creolization processes in the case of contact between French and Réunion Creole, the concept has also been used to describe contact with nearby languages such as English-based Creole (Migge and Léglise 2013) and varieties of Spanish in contact (Sánchez Moreano 2018), and in multilingual contexts with typologically distant languages such as Wolof, Casamance Creole and French (Nunez 2015).

¹⁴ French is underlined.

¹⁵ In cases where the linguistic forms produced by Brazilian Portuguese speakers are orthographically similar to Spanish, as in the case of ‘porque’ (line 021), we do not consider them to be ambivalent, since they are pronounced according to the phonetic characteristics of Brazilian Portuguese.

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- 003 CL1 d'accord
okay
- 004 L é minha / ele [el] não obedece [o.βe.'ðe.se] pra trazer //
el obedece
it is mine, (he doesn't agree to bring it)
- 005 CL1 é que ele não tá entendendo **usted** ↗
but he is not understanding what you say
- 006 L 01. ele entende ele [el]escuta entende mas ele [el] analisa [a.na.'li.sa]
el el analisa
he understands, he listens, he understands, but he analyses
02. depois meia hora ['o.ra] eu acho
hora
after half an hour I think
- 007 CL1 pra (para) fazer o quê? cada um tem seu gemido
what's that for? everyone has his own (way of speaking)
- 008 L não [no] tem cing minutos mas ele [el] tem ho :::ras ['o::ras] a :::ños
no el ho :::ras
he doesn't have five minutes, but he has hours, years
- 009 CL1 ele não sabe
he doesn't know
- 010 L não tá (está) buom **enton (entonces) yo..** (a friend of Lorenzo's passes by, singing a Spanish song)
no, it's okay, so l...
- (...)
- 016 CL2 **compañero** ↗ /// /// (scale beeping)
my friend
- 017 L bonsoir // (in a low voice as if to show disregard for CL2)
good evening
- 018 Friend ↗ pile poil ↘
exactly
- 019 CL2 ce :::rto eu já tirei essas duas aqui oh ↗ (taking some peppers out of the basket)
it is true, I have already taken some (chilli peppers) out of here (the basket)
- 020 L passa ['pa.sa] passa ['pa.sa] boa tarde { ↗boa ↗tarde} (not being friendly with her)
pasa pasa

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give me, give me, good afternoon, good afternoon

- 021 CL2 {xx} porque estava / não estava muito verde ///
because it was not ripe
- 022 L toma ['to.ma] toma ['to.ma] /// (as if he wanted to stop trading with her)
toma toma
take it, take it
- 023 L oui madame, vous voulez combien? (addressing another customer louder in French)
yes, madam, how many do you want?
- 024 CL2 obrigada (leaving)
thanks
- 025 CL3 c'est combien?
how much is it?
- 026 L c'est deux ↗ euros le kilo madame ↘
it's two euros per kilo madam
- 027 CL3 c'est deux euros le kilo? (CL3 is surprised because of the price) ///_
two euros per kilo?
- 028 L he ouais (proudly)
oh yes

For the ambivalent elements, this transcription on two levels allows another analysis. Instead of saying that Lorenzo and CL1 speak Brazilian Portuguese and insert words of Spanish, which could be a code-switching approach (Myers-Scotton 2001), we prefer to say that these elements are bivalent in the sense of Woolard (1998) – that is, they may belong to two or more languages or varieties. We believe that the use of bivalent elements by multilingual speakers may be seen as a performance (Léglise in press). Further, this approach raises the problem of language borders (Makoni and Pennycook 2005, Léglise and Migge 2006, Léglise 2018). In addition to illustrating the problem of borders between languages, this transcription makes visible several possible interpretations of a linguistic element on two, three or even more levels. This in turn prevents the researcher from ‘deciding’ whether this or that element belongs to one or another language or variety of language in contact or part of the speaker’s linguistic repertoire. In this case, instead of saying that Lorenzo positions himself as a Spanish speaker or as a Brazilian Portuguese speaker, we may say that he performs his ambivalence, that is, his ability to use common linguistic resources socio-culturally associated with both Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese.

For example, we see in line 005 that CL1 uses linguistic elements from Spanish like **usted**, and in 016 that there is a Brazilian customer (CL2) who says **compañero** to get Lorenzo’s attention.

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This could be construed as *companheiro* in Brazilian Portuguese, but it seems that this word is not used as a form of address as it is in some varieties of Spanish. It looks like a typical local form of address used among Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, or a term that French speakers also use to address them (with Cubans in mind first), which is being reemployed by this Brazilian speaker; however, we do not have enough data to affirm that this use is widespread among Brazilians when they address Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. We assume that, in addition to Brazilian Portuguese, CL2 knows French. Despite that, she resorts to Spanish, probably because she knows that Lorenzo is a Spanish-speaking person or simply because she heard him speak Spanish when she arrived. In fact, she categorizes him as a Spanish speaker. However, Lorenzo does not follow her language choice and rejects this categorization. He replies to her in French (line 17), in a low voice, as if to show a degree of disregard for her. Lorenzo explains later that CL2 is a Brazilian lady who has lived in Cayenne for several years. She likes touching the vegetables that she wants to buy, but Lorenzo does not like this very much because ‘it spoils the vegetables’. In lines 019 and 021, she tries to explain why she has taken some peppers out of the basket, but Lorenzo replies in 020 and 022 with an unfriendly attitude, using ambivalent linguistic resources (Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish). The use of these ambivalent resources reinforces his positioning vis-à-vis CL2, as it seems to convey more clearly the idea that he wants to stop trading with her: Lorenzo uses the language resources that CL2 shares with him. However, in line 023, taking advantage of the arrival of another customer (CL3), Lorenzo decides to address the new customer in French. This switch contributes to reinforcing Lorenzo’s dis-alignment with CL2. This example shows how the use of the official language (French) may contribute to enhance affective stances of exclusion, whereas Spanish and/or Brazilian Portuguese linguistic elements contribute to negotiating and conveying more clearly a different affective stance.

Ambivalent linguistic resources are therefore, for some Peruvians, a powerful tool for negotiating social positioning through stance in the Cayenne market. The final example shows how these linguistic resources may reflexively contribute to a larger affective stance, namely confidence in being able to negotiate with Brazilians. In a spontaneous conversation with Agata and Rosemary (another Peruvian, but one who was not part of either the focal or larger group), Agata talks about how easy it was for her to learn Brazilian Portuguese in daily interactions in her stall and how confident she feels about it.

1. Agata: el portugués no me gusta y ese portugués lo aprendí solito, solita me lo aprendí
I don't like Portuguese, and I learnt it alone, all alone I learnt it.
2. Santiago: ¿sí? ¿Y usted habla portugués también?
Really? Do you speak Portuguese too?
3. Agata: sí, pero me lo aprendí solito se me metió
Yes, but I learnt it all alone, it got into me.
4. Rosemary: estoy aprendiendo también
I am also learning.
5. Santiago: portugués también
Portuguese as well.
6. Rosemary: mm (asserting)

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7. Agata: porque, ¿sabes? Hay muchos brasileiros que vienen, tonces ellos hablan, hablan y cuando yo me doy cuenta es que yo también ya estaba hablando y cuando una brasilera me dice: ah, ¿tú eres brasilera?
Because, you know, there are lots of Brazilians that come here, so they talk, talk, talk, and when I realized I was speaking it, and when a Brazilian lady said to me: ‘ah you are Brazilian?’.
8. Rosemary: ¿ah sí?
Really?

She says that the Brazilian Portuguese got ‘naturally’ (*solito*) into her (lines 1 and 3), to the extent that Brazilians think she is also a Brazilian, which makes her confident and proud (line 7).

5. Concluding remarks

Within the situation of extreme diversity that French Guiana represents, our question was how Spanish speakers working in the Cayenne market as stallholders or jobbers expand their language repertoires through transnational mobility (onward migration), and what language resources they mobilize in the market. As a result of the ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the market with a focal group of three people (Lorenzo, Oscar and Agata) and the interactional data collected, we observed that Spanish-speaking Latin Americans follow differentiated paths of mobility and linguistic repertoire expansion. In addition to French, some speakers expand their linguistic repertoires to the other majority and minority languages such as Brazilian Portuguese and Hmong. In each case, the interactions draw upon multilingual resources. We observed that the speakers, as social actors, tend to ‘maximize their communicative potential’ (García 2009) in the interaction, drawing on diverse and varied linguistic resources of their languages and varieties of language and those of their interlocutors. These linguistic resources may often be bivalent when the interactions take place between Peruvians and Brazilians. The use of multilingual and bivalent resources is construed as performance, since it allows speakers to express social positioning through epistemic and affective stances which index positions of hierarchization and asymmetries, as well as strategic positioning of socio-economic parity (mainly with the Hmong people). In other words, the mobilization of multilingual and bivalent resources contributes to social positioning and its negotiation vis-à-vis other social actors in the market. It is a powerful tool of which the speakers are aware.

Markets are particularly appropriate spaces for catalysing the emergence of vehicular languages (Calvet 2001, p. 58). Most of the previous work in urban sociolinguistics focusing on marketplaces has shown the use of vehicular languages among speakers. In Senegal, for example, Louis-Jean Calvet and his collaborators observed that marketplaces were the best places to identify which urban vehicular language varieties enabled interethnic communication. Other works focus on the relationships between dominant languages in the market and the emergence and representations of vehicular languages (see Juillard (1995) for a global study in Ziguinchor in Senegal). Instead, we have concentrated on what happens at

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the individual level, between Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, Peruvians in particular, and other social actors in the market, as an example of micro-alignments and micro-adjustments which illustrate the ongoing construction of social relations. Of course, this is only one particular picture, and there is still a great deal left to do. For example, it would be interesting to observe how widespread forms of address such as *usted* and *compañero* are among Brazilians, and how these forms contribute to the negotiation of stances when they interact with Spanish-speaking Latin Americans.

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