

Contrasting Age of Arrival and Length of Residence in Dialect Contact

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1 Introduction

The speech of migrant populations experiencing dialect contact provides insight into one of the key mechanisms of language change (Trudgill 1986, Dodsworth 2017) and patterns of dialect acquisition (Chambers 1992, Tagliamonte and Molfenter 2007, Nycz 2011, Otheguy and Zentella 2012). This social group, however, has received relatively less attention than more “prototypical” members of a speech community within sociolinguistic studies (Dodsworth 2017). In fact, analyzing their speech may prove to be daunting, since their speech patterns are possibly influenced by a larger number of variables. Apart from speakers’ sex/gender, age, and social class, other variables may have a greater role in describing and explaining their language variation patterns: degree of socioeconomic mobility, their social networks, regional and individual identities, stances, and interlocutors at specific interactions, among other factors.

Within this list of variables, Age of Arrival and Length of Residence in a new community have been reported as predictors of successful acquisition of new linguistic variants by migrants (Chambers 2002, Trudgill 1986). However, since it is often the case that speakers who arrived earlier are also the ones who have lived the longest in the host community, their effect may have been confounded in previous studies (Siegel 2010).

This paper thus reports on a systematic analysis of a corpus specially built to disentangle the effects of Age of Arrival and Length of Residence in dialect contact – forty Brazilian Portuguese speakers from the Northeastern states of Alagoas and Paraíba living in the Southeastern state of São Paulo. The analyses cover two phonetic and two morphosyntactic variables: (i) coda /t/, as in *porta* ‘door’; (ii) /t, d/ before [i], as in *tia* ‘aunt’ and *dia* ‘day’; (iii) sentential negation, as in *não vi*, (*não*) *vi não* ‘I have not seen’; and (iv) nominal agreement, as in *os meninos*, *os menino-Ø* ‘the boys’. After presenting the corpus and the methods of this study in Section 2, the results in Section 3 show that each of these variables has a unique set of correlations; overall, they follow patterns broadly defined by type of variable (phonetic or morphosyntactic), as well as by their different geographical indexicalities (Northern-Southern or rural-urban). Section 4 summarizes the main conclusions in this study: Age of Arrival is a better predictor of successful acquisition of host community’s variants than Length of Residence for the phonetic variables, and speakers’ self-reported degree of identity with their home and host community also correlate with the variables according to their geographical indexicalities.

2 Corpus and methods

The analyses focus on the speech of forty Brazilian Portuguese speakers from the Northeastern states of Alagoas (AL) and Paraíba (PB) living in the Campinas Metropolitan Region, in the Southeastern state of São Paulo. These samples are henceforth referred to as ALCP and PBCP. These two states of origin were chosen for being geographically close and for having similar patterns of language variation.¹ Speakers are balanced for their Sex/Gender (females, males), Age of Arrival (before 19 years old; 20 or more years old), and Length of Residence (less than 9 years; 10 or more years). Although treated as categorical variables during data collection, Age of Arrival and Length of Resi-

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¹Other Northeastern states have quite different patterns for different variables, especially the realization of /t, d/ before [i]. See Cardoso et al. (2014).

dence were analyzed as continuous predictors, as speakers were quite evenly distributed between 9 and 45 years of age upon arrival and between 0 and 46 years of residence in Campinas.

Care was taken to ensure that all speakers were within working age (most were between 25–45 years of age), came from rural areas, and had no more than a high school diploma. This is important in order to control for the effect of possible *confounding variables* (Gries 2013), whose effects may mask the influence of the predictors under analysis (the three stratifying variables). For instance, it is often the case that Northeasterners who migrated in their teenage years have also dropped out of middle or high school and are consequently less educated. Thus we decided to homogenize speakers’ level of education in order to be able to observe the effect of Age of Arrival. The focus here is on working class speakers of rural origin and with lower levels of education, most of whom report having migrated to the state of São Paulo in search of better life conditions.

All speakers were recorded in one-hour-long sociolinguistic interviews which included questions about their current neighborhood, childhood in their home state, family, work and leisure activities, as well as the Campinas Metropolitan Area. The schedule also included a reading task, questions about their overt evaluations of different “accents,” and a Questionnaire of Social Network, Habits and Identity, based on Hoffman and Walker’s (2010) Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire, containing 16 multiple-choice and scale questions.

In this corpus, we analyzed two phonetic and two morphosyntactic variables which distinguish Northern-Southern and rural-urban dialects. In Table 1, for each pair of variants, the one on the left may be considered more Northern or more rural, and the one on the right may be considered more Southern or more urban.

	Phonetic	Morphosyntactic
North-South	CODA R <i>porta</i> ‘door’ [R, x, ʁ, h, fi] vs. [r, ɹ]	SENTENTIAL NEGATION (<i>não</i>) <i>vi não</i> vs. <i>não vi</i> ‘I haven’t seen’
Rural-urban	T, D BEFORE [i] <i>tia</i> ‘aunt’, <i>dia</i> ‘day’ [t, d] vs. [tʃ, dʒ, ts, dz]	NP NUMBER AGREEMENT <i>os menino-Ø</i> vs. <i>os meninos</i> ‘the boys’

Table 1: Variables in this study.

The realization of coda /r/ is one of the most salient indices of regional identities in Brazil (Callou et al. 2002, Oushiro 2015) and highly variable, with at least seven different variants, apart from deletion (not included in this analysis). These variants may be roughly categorized into more posterior realizations [R, x, ʁ, h, fi], typical of Northern and most coastal areas in Brazil, and more fronted realizations [r, ɹ], typical of Southern interior areas (Cardoso et al. 2014). On the other hand, /t/ and /d/ before [i] may be conservatively pronounced as stops [t, d] or, in the case of urban areas, almost categorically as affricates [tʃ, dʒ, ts, dz] (Abaurre and Pagotto 2002). This is a near complete change in most metropolitan areas, especially in the Southeastern states, but the stop variants may be found in rural areas of São Paulo, while the affricate variants are becoming more frequent in Northeastern capital cities.

As for the morphosyntactic variables, sentential negation may be realized as simple negation – *não vi*, also called NEG1 –, or as double or post-verbal negation – *não vi não* or *vi não*, respectively called NEG2 and NEG3 (Schwenter 2016). While NEG1 is the most common structure throughout Brazil, NEG2 and NEG3 are significantly more frequent in Northeastern states. Thus Rocha (2013) found only 5.8% of NEG2 and 0.4% of NEG3 in São Paulo, whereas Furtado da Cunha (2001) found about twice as many NEG2 and NEG3 in Natal-RN, just north of the state of Paraíba, at rates of 10.8% and 0.6% respectively.

Finally, NP number agreement is a well studied and ubiquitous variable in Brazilian Portuguese (Guy 1981, Naro and Scherre 2013, Mendes and Oushiro 2015), showing sharp social stratification according to social class, level of education, and the rural-urban continuum. Its standard prescriptive variant holds redundant plural markers in all the elements within the NP (*o-s menino-s*), while the nonstandard variant marks plurality non-redundantly, usually only in the NP determiner (*o-s menino-*

0). In this study, since all speakers have migrated from rural areas, it is initially expected that their rates of the standard variant rise, in contact with an urban variety.

Usage of Paulista and urban variants were compared to the rates of speakers of similar sociodemographic profiles both from the area of origin and from São Paulo. Thus, we also analyzed the speech of 48 speakers from rural Alagoas and Paraíba with data from the PORTAL (Oliveira 2017) and VALPB (Hora 1993) Projects, as well as the speech of 58 speakers of the SP2010 Project (Mendes and Oushiro 2012), as control groups.²

Variables were analyzed in R in proportion tests (for comparisons between the nonmigrant and migrant Northeasterners) and in multivariate mixed-effects logistic regression models including Speaker, and, for phonetic variables, Lexical Item, as random effects.

3 Results and Discussion

Because of the interest in the effects of social variables on the overall acquisition of the host community's variants, all the results that follow are reported from the perspective of the Paulista or the urban variant. Thus Figure 1 compares the proportions of usage rates of (i) tap and retroflex /r/ (vs. aspirates); (ii) affricate (TD) before [i] (vs. stops); (iii) simple negation (vs. double and post-verbal negation); and (iv) standard nominal agreement (vs. nonstandard agreement) in the three corpora: the nonmigrant Northeasterners (PORTAL + VALPB), the migrants (ALCP + PBCP), and the nonmigrant native Paulistanos (SP2010).

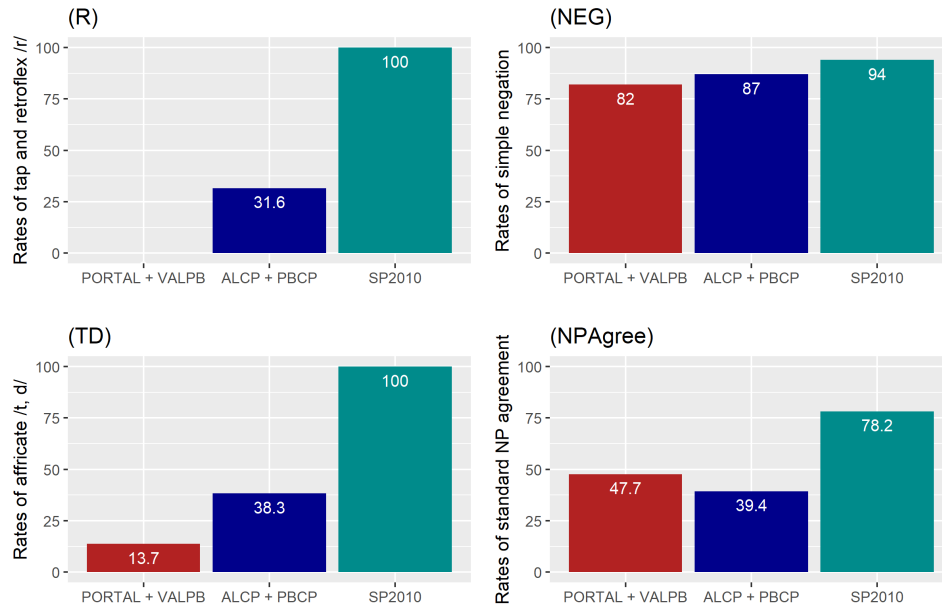


Figure 1: Proportion of use of (i) tap and retroflex /r/ (top left); (ii) affricate /t, d/ (bottom left); (iii) simple negation (top right); and (iv) standard nominal agreement (bottom right) in the PORTAL/VALPB (red), ALCP/PBCP (blue), and SP2010 (green) samples.

(R) exhibits a categorical distribution among nonmigrants: whereas Alagoans and Paraibans never employ tap/retroflex /r/, Paulistas employ these variants 100% of the time. The migrants have generally acquired some usage of these variants (31.6%), and the different rates of usage for each of these groups is clearly different.³ (TD), on its turn, is an incipient change in progress

²These samples were gracefully made available to me by Alan Jardel de Oliveira (UFAL), Dermeval da Hora (UFPB), and Ronald Beline Mendes (USP), to whom I am grateful.

³The proportion test was not applied to this dataset due to the zero instances of tap/retroflex /r/ among

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	
(R)					
Intercept	-1.193	1.134	-1.052	0.295	
Sex = males	0.383	0.570	0.671	0.502	
Age of Arrival	-0.070	0.039	-1.754	<0.05	*
Length of Residence	0.085	0.028	3.032	<0.01	**
(TD)					
Intercept	3.452	0.829	4.162	<0.001	***
Sex = males	-1.202	0.417	-2.88	<0.01	**
Age of Arrival	-0.149	0.028	-5.27	<0.001	***
Length of Residence	-0.032	0.021	-1.525	0.127	
(NEG)					
Intercept	3.024	0.585	5.165	<0.001	***
Sex = males	-0.234	0.282	-0.828	0.407	
Age of Arrival	-0.038	0.019	-1.922	0.055	
Length of Residence	-0.004	0.014	-0.279	0.780	
(NP Agreement)					
Intercept	-0.205	1.112	-0.184	0.854	
Sex = males	-1.102	0.424	-2.599	<0.01	**
Age of Arrival	0.026	0.043	0.599	0.549	
Length of Residence	0.128	0.067	1.911	0.056	

Intercept = sex female, age 0, length of residence 0.

Table 2: Multivariate mixed-effects models of variable R (N = 3,228), TD (N = 7,811), NEG (N = 3,488), and NP Agreement (N = 4,052). Estimates in logodds refer to [r]/[ɹ], affricate [tʃ]/[tʃ̥], simple negation, and standard nominal agreement, respectively.

in the rural areas of Alagoas and Paraíba (13.7%), and a complete change in São Paulo (100%). Here, too, migrants show an intermediate rate of usage of the affricate variants, higher than the one for the nonmigrant Alagoans and Paraibans and lower than the one for Paulistas (38.3%), with a significant difference among nonmigrant and migrant Northeasterners ($\chi^2 = 3.95(1)$, $p < 0.001$). Simple negation, on the other hand, is by far the most common structure employed by all three groups, in relation to double and post-verbal negation; however, the difference in proportion – 82% and 87% for Alagoan/Paraiban nonmigrants and migrants respectively – is also significant ($\chi^2 = 38.39(1)$, $p < 0.001$), with migrants standing in-between both nonmigrant groups. This in-between pattern is not observed only for nominal agreement: while there is a considerable difference among Alagoans and Paulistas of similar social characteristics (speakers between 25–45 y.o. with no more than a high school degree) in the use of standard nominal agreement, the migrants, in this case, have not raised their rates of usage of this variant; in fact, their usage is significantly lower ($\chi^2 = 264.93(1)$, $p < 0.001$) compared to that of their home state counterparts.

Thus, we observe that migrants have generally acquired or increased their rates of usage of Paulista and urban variants, except for nominal agreement. The question, then, is to determine which social variables among those in our sample – Sex/Gender, Age of Arrival, and Length of Residence – correlate with migrants' acquisition of the host community's variants, with a special focus on the latter two.⁴ Additionally, two self-reported “identity” scales from the Questionnaire of Social Network, Habits and Identity are discussed in relation to the sociolinguistic variables.

Table 2 shows the results of four separate multivariate analyses, one for each variable. For coda /r/, there is no correlation with speakers' Sex/Gender ($p = 0.502$), as females' and males' rate of

nonmigrant Northeasterners.

⁴All multivariate analyses also included linguistic predictors, omitted here for concision. For instance, analyses of coda /r/ also included syllable stress, position of /r/ in the syllable, and word class, and analyses of nominal agreement also included animacy and phonic salience of the NP nucleus.

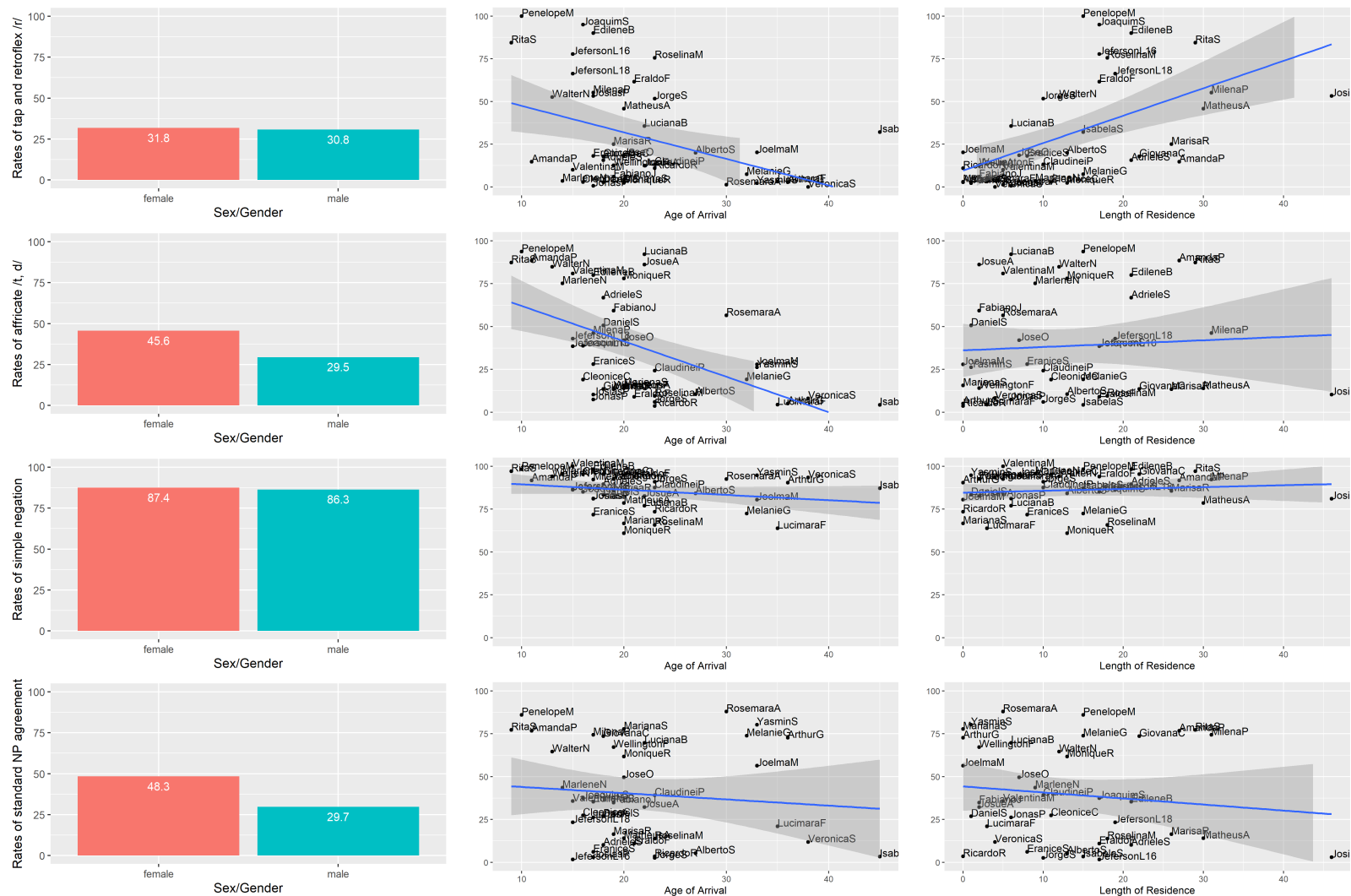


Figure 2: Usage rates of [r]/[ɾ], affricate [tʃ]/[dʒ], simple negation, and standard nominal agreement in relation to speakers' Sex/Gender (left), Age of Arrival (middle), and Length of Residence (right).

usage is virtually the same (31.8% and 30.8% respectively) – see Figure 2. On the other hand, there is a significant correlation with speakers' Age of Arrival (logodds -0.070, i.e., the later the arrival, the smaller the probability of employing tap/retroflex /r/). This descending trend can be better visualized at the top central image of Figure 2, which shows each speaker's rate of usage of tap/retroflex /r/ according to their age of arrival. As for Length of Residence in São Paulo, we observe the opposite trend (logodds 0.085, i.e., the longer the residence, the greater the probability to employ the Paulista variants).

For variable (TD) (Table 2), differently from coda /r/, there is a significant correlation with speakers' Sex/Gender: men (logodds -1.202, $p < 0.01$) tend to disfavor the use of affricate variants ([tʃ, ʈʂ, ts, dz]) – 29.5% – in relation to women – 45.6%, or favor the use of stops. Speakers' Age of Arrival is also significantly correlated with (TD) (logodds -0.149, $p < 0.001$), as the descending line in Figure 2 shows: the older the age of migration, the smaller the probability of employing the urban variants. However, there is no correlation with speakers' Length of Residence, observed both by an estimate close to zero (logodds -0.032, $p = 0.127$) and a curve which is relatively parallel to the x-axis in Figure 2. This means that there is no significant difference between speakers who have lived in São Paulo for short or long periods, and that Age of Arrival and Sex/Gender are more important for determining the acquisition of affricate TD.

Sentential negation, on its turn, does not exhibit significant correlations with any of the stratifying variables of the sample. Table 2 shows that none of the estimates is significantly different from zero, and Figure 2 indicates that women and men behave similarly and that both regression lines are relatively parallel to the x-axis, i.e., there is no ascending or descending trend according to speakers' Age of Arrival or Length of Residence.

Table 2 also presents the correlational results with variable nominal agreement. Among the three social predictors, only speakers' Sex/Gender exhibits a significant correlation: men (logodds -1.102, $p < 0.01$) tend to disfavor the use of the standard form relative to women. This result for nominal agreement follows that of several sociolinguistic works about this variable (see Mendes and Oushiro 2015 and Scherre 2008 for general reviews). Interestingly, however, this result is opposite to that observed by Bortoni-Ricardo (1985), about the speech of rural migrants from Minas Gerais living in Brasília, and by Rodrigues (1987), about the speech of slum dwellers in São Paulo (many of whom were rural migrants), both from the 1980s and both on verbal agreement. These authors had come to the conclusion that, in “rurban” migrant communities, men tend to favor the standard variant due to the fact that, in general, they work outside the local community and have more contact with the standard norm, differently from women, who normally get jobs as housemaids or are stay-at-home housewives. In the present study, the initial expectation was to see a similar pattern for nominal agreement. The results, however, show that Alagoan and Paraiban migrants in the Campinas Metropolitan Region follow the same pattern of urban Brazilian communities: higher usage of the standard form by female speakers.

Finally, two “identity” questions from the Questionnaire of Social Network, Habits and Identity were also analyzed: (i) *On a scale of 0 to 10, how much do you consider yourself to be Alagoan/Paraiban today?* (i.e., their self-reported degree of identification with their home state); and (ii) *On a scale of 0 to 10, how much do you consider yourself to be Paulista?* (i.e., their self-reported degree of identification with the host state). Figure 3 shows that participants, in general, self-attributed high grades on the state-of-origin scale, with most answers from 7 to 10. This result is expected in a certain way, since “denying one's origins” or “forgetting one's roots” is generally frowned upon. But the overall high degree of self-reported identification with the state of origin does not necessarily entail maintenance of one's own dialect, as has been observed with the rates of usage of Paulista and urban variants in Figure 1. On the other hand, participants self-attributed different grades on the Paulista scale, with answers quite well distributed from 0 to 10.

Table 3 shows that the home state identity scale significantly correlates with two variables, (R) and (NEG), the ones that differentiate broad Northern-Southern dialectal areas. Both of these correlations are negative (logodds -0.753, $p < 0.02$; and -0.414, $p < 0.05$ respectively), which means that the higher the self-attributed degree of state identity, the smaller the probability that the speaker uses the Paulista variants tap/retroflex /r/ and simple negation. Interestingly, the state scale does not correlate with (TD) and (NP), the two variables related to rural-urban indexicalities.

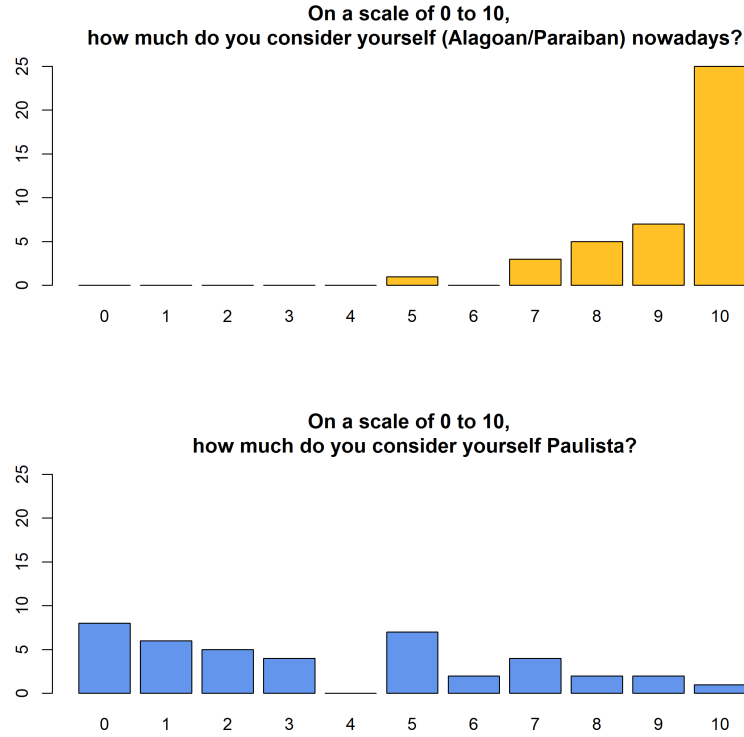


Figure 3: Distribution of self-reported degrees of identification with home state and São Paulo.

	(R)		(TD)		(NEG)		(NPAgree)	
	Estimate	<i>p</i>	Estimate	<i>p</i>	Estimate	<i>p</i>	Estimate	<i>p</i>
Home state	-0.753	0.013*	-0.226	0.063	-0.414	0.042*	-0.111	0.596
São Paulo	0.256	0.015*	0.020	0.778	0.0228	0.623	-0.161	0.056

Table 3: Correlational analyses with identity scales.

The self-attributed rates of how “Paulista” the speakers consider themselves, on the other hand, correlates only with speakers’ usage of (R), in a positive direction: the higher the self-attributed degree, the greater the estimate for usage of tap/retroflex /r/ (logodds 0.256, $p < 0.02$). The result for this variable is similar to the one for Length of Residence, which suggests that identification with the host community may be related to the proportion of life the speaker has spent in the new community.

Table 4 summarizes the results for the three social stratifying variables and the identity scales. For speakers’ Sex/Gender, significant correlations were observed with variable TD and NP Agreement. For both of them, men tend to disfavor the most frequent variant in the Campinas Metropolitan Region, the affricate realization of /t, d/ and standard nominal agreement. Both of them also refer to variables that differentiate rural and urban dialects rather than Northern-Southern dialects. As previously seen, participants tend to discursively value their Alagoan and Paraiban identities by self-attributing high grades in the home state identity scale. It is thus possible to infer that, regarding the social prestige of variables, these speakers – especially women – are particularly tuning into the stigmatization against *rural* variants, but not against Northeastern ones: it is ok to sound Northeasterner, but women tend to avoid sounding “rural.”

The results show that both phonetic variables correlate with speakers’ Age of Arrival, and that there is no correlation with either morphosyntactic variable. For the phonetic variables, the earlier

	Phonetic		Morphosyntactic	
	(R)	(TD)	(NEG)	(NP Agree)
<i>N</i>	3,228	7,811	3,488	4,052
Sex/Gender	–	✓	–	✓
Age of Arrival	✓	✓	–	–
Length of Residence	✓	–	–	–
Home state identity	✓	–	✓	–
São Paulo identity	✓	–	–	–

✓ significant correlation; – nonsignificant correlation

Table 4: Summary of results.

the arrival, the greater the tendency for the speaker to employ the Paulista (tap/retroflex) and the urban (affricate TD) variants. As for Length of Residence in São Paulo, the only significantly correlated variable is (R): the longer the residence, the greater the probability to employ the Paulista variant. This raises the question of why (R) is different from the other three variables. Trudgill (1986) and Chambers (1992) raise the hypothesis that a variable's *salience* – regarding speakers' level of awareness and metadiscourse on the variants – has a crucial role for the eventual acquisition of a new linguistic trait. Qualitative analyses of the corpus, as well as previous studies (Callou et al. 2002), point to coda /r/'s salience for dialectal differentiation in Brazilian Portuguese, which may explain its long term acquisition as speakers continue to live in the host community.

Thus in the case of phonetic variables, Age of Arrival is a better predictor for dialectal accommodation and the acquisition of new variants than Length of Residence. Britain (2010) and Trudgill (1986) suggest that this pattern is likely related to the social network that migrants establish upon arriving at the host community: while teenagers generally go to a new school, tend to develop friendship relations and are more subject to peer pressure into conforming to linguistic patterns, adults tend to develop work relations, spend more time with other migrants and not suffer the same amount of pressure from peers. In the present data, however, this is not always the case. As observed earlier, many of the speakers in this sample who arrived during their teenage years are school dropouts who migrated to the state of São Paulo to work. It will be interesting to further analyze these speakers' social networks and other factors, in order to better explain the correlation between Age of Arrival and phonetic variables.

Patterns of dialectal accommodation also show interesting patterns according to speakers' self-reported identities on a 0 to 10 scale of how Alagoan/Paraiban and Paulista they regard themselves. The home state identity correlates with (R) and (NEG), the two variables that also divide Northern-Southern dialects. The São Paulo identity, however, only correlates with (R), similarly to what was observed for Length of Residence.

4 Final remarks

Most of the population in urban areas today consists of internal migrants. The analysis of their speech may shed light onto patterns of language variation and change, as well as on patterns of language acquisition across a speaker's lifespan. The study of their speech, however, poses challenges to sociolinguistics, as a greater number of variables come into play. This paper has systematically analyzed the role of Age of Arrival and Length of Residence, in order to disentangle their effect on patterns of dialectal acquisition.

The results show that whereas both phonetic variables correlate with speakers' Age of Arrival, neither of the morphosyntactic variables do. Length of Residence, on the other hand, only correlates with coda (R), possibly influenced by this variable's salience. Finally, speakers' Sex/Gender correlates with (TD) and (NP Agreement), two variables that do not differentiate Northern-Southern dialects in Brazil, but rather the rural-urban continuum. Speakers' self-reported identity with their home state and the host community also reveals different patterns according to each of the vari-

ables' indexicalities: state identity correlates with (R) and (NEG), the Northern-Southern variables, and (R) correlates only with the São Paulo identity. Hence, while Age of Arrival and Length of Residence distinguish phonetic and morphosyntactic variables, dialect acquisition also involves a complex web of differently defined regional identities.

This paper shows that different variables undergo distinct processes in dialect contact and acquisition, making it evident that any work on this topic needs to examine multiple sociolinguistic variables. In addition to analyzing patterns for other variable phenomena, future work should also look into the intricacies of speakers' self-reported identities in relation to sociodemographic data such as Sex/Gender, Age of Arrival and Length of Residence. Moreover, analyses of dialect contact that control for speakers' social networks, degree of socioeconomic mobility, regional and individual identities, stances, interlocutors at specific interactions, etc. can also be further developed.

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