



10-17-2013

Morphophonological Variation in Haitian Creole: the Case of 3SG

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Abstract

Among French-based creole languages, Haitian Creole is the one with the highest degree of standardization. The written norm, Standard Haitian Creole (SHC), is based on the speech of monolinguals of the capital area, Port-au-Prince, rather than on the variety (*kreyòl swa*) of the politically and economically powerful Creole–French bilingual minority. For instance, the front rounded vowels and postvocalic /r/ of the latter are absent from SHC, which is spreading to the rest of the country through the media and the educational system.

In order to evaluate the diffusion of SHC, a sociolinguistic study of Northern Haitian Creole (Capois) was conducted in and around Cape Haitian, whose spoken variety diverges most from SHC. In addition to stereotypical features such as the possessive *kin a* + pronoun (vs. SHC *pa* + pronoun), we uncovered several Capois features—some of which were first described in Étienne (1974)—still in widespread use in Northern Haiti. In this article, we focus on the most frequently occurring variable, the third person singular pronoun (3SG), which alternates between SHC *li/l*, and Capois *i/y*.

Using a corpus of 24 speakers, we show that SHC *li* has yet to replace Capois *i*, which is preferred by a large proportion of community members (90%; N=2,823) and used categorically in the existential context *i gen* ‘there is/are’. For both the rural and urban populations, this variable is conditioned by syntactic and phonological factors. In subject position, the Capois or the full SHC variants are favored before a consonant, while the reduced SHC form *l* is the only variant favored before a vowel. In object position, Capois and SHC variants are in near perfect complementary distribution: the Capois variant occurs (near-)categorically after a vowel, and SHC variants occur (near-)categorically after a consonant. Despite these shared tendencies, we found a lower rate of Capois variant use in urban speakers, which may be due to their greater exposure to speakers from other areas of Haiti, to the media (especially television), and closer contact with middle class bilingual speakers who are more influenced by the standard emanating from Port-au-Prince.

Morphophonological Variation in Haitian Creole: the Case of 3SG

Anne-José Villeneuve, Jason F. Siegel and Albert Valdman*

1 Introduction

Among French-based creole languages, Haitian Creole is the one with the highest degree of standardization. The written norm, Standard Haitian Creole (SHC), is based on the speech of monolinguals of the capital area, Port-au-Prince, rather than on the variety (*kreyòl swa*) of the politically and economically powerful bilingual minority (Valdman 2005). For instance, the front rounded vowels and syllable-final /r/ of the latter are absent from SHC, which is spreading to the rest of the country through the media and the educational system.

In order to evaluate the diffusion of SHC, a sociolinguistic study of Northern Haitian Creole (NHC) was conducted in and around Cap Haïtien, the major urban center of Northern Haiti, whose linguistic variety diverges most from SHC. In addition to stereotypical features such as the possessive *kin a* + pronoun (vs. SHC *pa* + pronoun), we uncovered several NHC features, some first described in Étienne (1974), still in widespread use in Northern Haiti. In this paper, we focus on the most frequently occurring variable, the third person singular pronoun (3SG), which alternates between SHC *li/l*, and NHC *i/y*.

2 A Sociolinguistic Research Project on Northern Haitian Creole (Capois)

With a population of approximately 250,000, Cap Haïtien (Cape Haitian) is Haiti's second-largest city. Although it is only about 100 miles from Port-au-Prince, Cap Haïtien is relatively isolated from the capital because of poor road conditions. The major city of the French colony of Saint-Domingue and its capital until 1770, Cap Haïtien (formerly Cap Français) is located in what was the most prosperous region of the colony. It is in that region that Saint-Domingue Creole, the predecessor of HC, first developed; some of the features of that conservative variety are still in use.

To evaluate whether some of the historical particularities of Capois have persisted, we conducted the first large-scale sociolinguistic study in Haiti. In addition to providing empirical data on Capois, the most marked regional variety of HC, this study examines the influence that Standard HC (SHC)—a variety based on the speech of monolingual speakers of the area around the capital, Port-au-Prince—exerts on regional varieties. This standard is reflected in the written norm followed throughout Haiti, regardless of the dialectal particularities of a region.

Since residents of Cap Haïtien are exposed to SHC daily through interaction with visitors from Port-au-Prince, education, the spoken media and, for those who are literate, writings, one might expect a sort of leveling of particularities of Capois speech with a concomitant encroachment of the Port-au-Prince norm in the North. We might also expect that speakers in the North are aware of these differences. Thus, we examine the following two research questions: 1) Has the contact between SHC and Capois speakers resulted in the leveling of Capois differentiating features, favoring the use of SHC variants?; and 2) If SHC variants appear in Capois discourse, what social and linguistic factors constrain their use?

To examine these questions, we conducted a sociolinguistic study in the city of Cap Haïtien and the nearby village of Thibeau. The full corpus collected in this study includes data from all 126 speakers interviewed; the present article is based on a sub-corpus of 24 speakers, and amounts to around 24 hours of recording.

The study included three social categories: 1) location (urban vs. rural), 2) age group (juniors, i.e., students aged 12 to 18 years vs. seniors, i.e., adults aged 30 and above), and 3) sex (male vs. female). These social categories were chosen based on different likelihoods of exposure to SHC. Urban speakers are more likely than rural speakers to come into contact with the standard variety

* We thank the audience of the NWAV41 conference for their valuable feedback; any remaining shortcomings are, of course, entirely our own. This research was funded by grant No. 0639482 from the National Science Foundation.

since they are more likely to visit Port-au-Prince and to have contact with people visiting from the capital. Schoolchildren and teenagers are not only more likely than adults to be exposed to SHC on a daily basis, but some older speakers would not have been exposed to SHC during their school years since French was the official language of instruction until 1980. Women, especially in rural Haiti, are more likely than men to come into contact with SHC and a wider variety of linguistic forms since, in addition to performing traditional activities such as raising children and performing household tasks, they regularly carry produce to nearby towns and bring back goods such as clothing and manufactured products.

2.1 Selection of Speakers

When the study was launched in 2007, we were fortunate to secure the assistance of Sister Zita Reuben-Charles, dean of the Faculté d'Éducation Regina Assumpta (FÉRA), a teacher training college in Cap Haïtien founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. We recruited as field interviewers FÉRA students, all of whom were Capois natives and primary and secondary school teachers.

Participants were all monolingual native speakers of Capois. Half the study population was adolescents between 12-19 years of age, while the adult population was composed of people aged from 26 to approximately 70; all participants had lived their whole lives in the Cap Haïtien region. Half the participants came from the city of Cap Haïtien itself (termed 'urban' speakers) and half came from the small nearby village of Thibeau (termed 'rural' speakers). The population was split evenly between men and women.

The occupation of participants within each population was somewhat homogenous. For convenience, all adult urban participants were connected to FÉRA, either through direct employment or by knowing someone who worked there. Other participants were recruited by members of the community: principals and teachers for the adolescents, religious officials and workers in the health and social fields for the adults. Urban adults were members of the support staff at the FÉRA, where interviews were recorded. In general, urban men worked as custodians and groundskeepers, while women held a variety of jobs: dispensing food, cleaning, etc. Rural women worked as local *madansara*, i.e. women who go to the city to sell produce and merchandise, and sometimes helped on the farm; rural men all worked as farmers. The parents of urban teens in this sample were generally lower wage workers (drivers, seamstresses). The urban teens themselves were adolescents enrolled in the equivalent of the U.S. middle school; they were completing their ninth year of schooling, thus achieving a relatively high level of education for Haitian teens. The mothers of the rural adolescents were all housewives or local *madansara* while the fathers were all farmers (except for two, whose occupation was unknown). The rural teens themselves were completing the sixth and last year of the elementary school cycle. At the end of that year students take the national test battery that includes the evaluation of written language skills in HC and French and of knowledge in three subject areas using French only: math, science and social studies. The results summarized here focus on a sample of 24 participants distributed almost equally among the three social categories, as shown in Table 1.

	Rural (Thibeau)	Urban (Cap Haïtien)
Juniors (12–19 y.o.)	4 women, 2 men	4 women, 2 men
Seniors (26+)	3 women, 3 men	3 women, 3 men

Table 1: Capois Haitian Creole sample, social characteristics (24 speakers).

2.2 Data Collection and Transcription Process

The data for each speaker were collected in dyadic interviews, that is, one interviewer and two interviewees. These interviews, led by local primary and secondary school teachers, consisted of a guided conversation with two participants. Interviews, conducted following the standard sociolinguistic model (Labov 1966, 1972), included metalinguistic discussions in which participants were given the opportunity to make observations and judgments about their speech and that of Port-au-Prince. With adults, the conversation dealt with their means of livelihood, differences in life and

culture between the past and the present, community events (festivals, religious ceremonies), and pastimes. Adolescents discussed their daily activities, favorite school subjects, and games. Most of these speakers gave summaries of the *telenovelas* they watched on television.

The transcription was completed in two phases: an initial transcription by Capois teachers native to the area, and revisions by a native Capois speaker in tandem with one of three non-Haitian linguists highly proficient in Haitian Creole (the authors). Transcriptions were written in the IPN orthography, though adjustments to the canonical spellings were made when pronunciation diverged markedly from the normative SHC pronunciation, e.g. *rimen* (*renmen*) ‘to like’, *zèv* (*zèb*) ‘grass’, and reduced variants, e.g. *s* (*se*) on ‘it’s a’. We made one innovation to the orthography to account for front rounded vowels, often realized in Capois but otherwise not represented in the IPN system: [y ø œ] are represented as <u>, <eu> and <èu>, respectively; we use this convention in excerpts cited in this article.

3 The (3SG) Variable in Northern Haitian Creole (Capois)

In this article, we focus on the most frequently occurring differentiating variable in our corpus: the 3S pronoun. Broadly speaking, the SHC 3S pronoun is *li//ni*, while its Capois counterpart is *i/y/li*.

3.1 Defining the (Socio)Linguistic Variable: (3SG)

To assess the extent to which Capois variants are leveled, we conducted a variationist study of the 3S pronouns found in our corpus. The first step of such an undertaking involves defining the socio-linguistic variable. As shown below, the Capois variant *li* occurs in syntactic contexts where the strong form of the 3S pronoun, i.e., the HC equivalent of the French strong pronoun *lui/elle* ‘him/her’, is expected: after a preposition (e.g., *m konn fè manje pou li* ‘I used to cook **for him**’), in the reflexive and emphatic form *li menm* (e.g., *I kouvri li menm* ‘he covered **himself**’), and in focus position (e.g., *se li ki genyen* ‘**it’s him** who won’). Thus, in these three contexts, because the Capois 3S strong pronoun *li* is homophonous with its SHC counterpart, it is impossible to determine the extent to which SHC is replacing Capois variants.

Because they do not correspond to a single variable, we distinguish strong 3S pronouns, referred to as (3SG-STRONG), from weak 3S pronouns, referred to as (3SG). Table 2 shows that *li* occurs (quasi-)categorically in two of the syntactic contexts where the strong form is expected.

Syntactic context	<i>li//l</i>	<i>i/y</i>	% <i>li//l</i>	Example
After a preposition	42	126	25	<i>m konn fè manje pou li</i>
Reflexive, emphatic	18	1	94	<i>I kouvri li menm</i>
Focus position	133	5	96	<i>se li ki genyen</i>

Table 2: Capois (3SG-STRONG).

Preceding preposition	ALL		Rural		Urban	
	% <i>li//l</i>	N	% <i>li//l</i>	N	% <i>li//l</i>	N
<i>ake</i> Capois ‘with’	0	66	0	27	0	39
<i>avè</i> SHC ‘with’	0	16	0	2	0	14
<i>ak, avèk</i> SHC ‘with’	100	5	100	3	100	2
<i>pou</i> ‘for’	94	18	83	6	100	12
other	12	33	0	10	17	23

Table 3: Prepositions affecting Capois (3SG-STRONG).

Despite the occurrence of the vowel-initial form *i/y* after some prepositions¹ (cf. Table 3), contexts where (3SG-STRONG) is expected are excluded from the analysis. The dependent variable under study is defined as (3SG); this variable can be realized as the local Capois variants *i/y* or as the SHC variants *li/l*.² Because this sociolinguistic variable is both frequent and below the level of consciousness, it allows us to measure the use of SHC variants by Capois speakers, and better assess the influence of social and linguistic constraints using a large amount of data.

3.2 Methodology

All instances of a third person singular pronoun were extracted from the transcriptions. We included in our analysis cases in which the pronoun appears before a verbal (1a–b), adjectival (1c) or nominal (1d) predicate; included in this category are cases where 3S is preceded by the complementizer *pou* and followed by a predicate (1e). We also considered tokens of the third person singular pronoun in object position, alone (2a) or with another object (2b).

- (1) a. *Anvan* ***l*** *ale,* ***i*** *kite* *yon* *kasèt* (UJF7)
 before 3S go 3S leave INDEF tape
 ‘Before he went [left], he left a tape.’
- b. *Bouki,* *depi* *ou* *pale* ***y*** *ap* ***pale*** (UJM5)
 Bouki since 2S talk 3S PROG talk
 ‘Bouki, as soon as you’re talking, he’s talking.’
- c. *Syèl* *la,* ***i*** *blan.* ***l*** ***nwa.*** (RSF1)
 Sky DEF 3S white 3S black
 ‘The sky, it’s white. It’s black. It’s yellow.’
- d. *Depi* *lè* ***i*** *te* ***demwazèl*** (USF18)
 Since when 3S ANT young-woman
 ‘Since she was a young woman’
- e. *i* *pa* *fasil* ***pou*** ***i*** ***vini*** (UJM4)
 3S NEG easy COMP 3S come
 ‘It’s not easy for him to come here’
- (2) a. *Gen* *pafwa,* *solèy* ***bat*** ***li,*** *i* *pa* *bon.* (RSM15)
 have sometimes sun beat 3S 3S NEG good
 ‘Sometimes, the sun beats it, it’s not good.’
- b. *Se* *Bondje* *ki* ***bò*** *w* ***li.*** (RSF1)
 it’s God who give 2S 3S.
 ‘It’s God who gave it to you.’

Ambiguous tokens, where a final /l/ or /n/ in the preceding word cannot be distinguished from the potential initial consonant of the 3S pronoun (3a–b) or where a word-final /i/ in the preceding word may be interpreted as the vowel-initial 3S pronoun (4), are also excluded from the data.

¹Phonological constraints explain some of the variation found after prepositions: vowel-final variants of the preposition ‘with’, Capois *ake* and SHC *avè*, co-occur with the vowel-initial strong form of the 3s pronoun, (i), while the consonant-final SHC variants *ak* and *avèk* co-occur with the consonant-initial strong form of the 3s pronoun; the vowel-initial variant of (3SG-STRONG) is homophonous with the Capois variant of the weak 3s pronoun (iii).

- (i) *L* *ap* *mach* *ake* *y*
 3s prog walk with 3s
 ‘He’s walking with him.’
- (ii) *i* *marye* *ak* *li*
 3s married with 3s
 ‘She’s married to him.’
- (iii) *l* *mete* *y* *deyò*
 3s put 3s outside
 ‘He put it outside.’

²As for the Capois possessive construction NP + *a* + NP, the Capois variants of (3SG) coincide with the dominant form found in Guadeloupean Creole (Hazaël-Massieux 2002, 2005).

- (3) a. *Paske* *Brezil, i/li* *renmen* *Ayisyen.* (RSM15)
 because Brazil 3S like Haitians
 ‘Because Brazil likes Haitians.’
- b. *Aprè sa yo desann* *i/ni.* (USM17)
 after this 3P go-down 3S
 ‘Then they take it down.’
- (4) *Epi i/Ø gen rènn tou ki defile.* (UJF8)
 and 3S have queen also who parade
 ‘Then there is the queen who parades too.’

All tokens were coded for the dependent variable, i.e., (3SG) realized as either Capois *i/y* or SHC *li/ni/l*, and for various social and linguistic factors. As described in Section 2, social factors included the speaker’s origin (urban vs. rural), age group (junior vs. senior) and sex.

Linguistic coding consisted of grammatical and phonological factors; grammatical factors are shown in (5-6). We distinguished three syntactic contexts for the 3S pronoun: in the existential construction *i gen* ‘there is/are’ (5a), as a subject (5b) or as an object (5c). For 3S object pronouns, we further coded the number of verbal objects: one if the 3S pronoun was the only object of the verb (6a), or as two if another pronominal or NP object was present (6b). Since phonological environment influences the choice of 3S variants in SHC (Cadely 1995, 1997), we also coded for the immediate preceding and following phonological environment, in which we differentiated between vowels, consonants, glides and pauses. Data were then submitted to GoldVarb 2001 for a multivariate analysis.

- (5) a. *lè i gen vòt* (RSF7)
 when 3S have vote
 ‘when there is a vote’
- b. *I leve byen bonè* (RSM9)
 3S get-up well early
 ‘He got up really early’
- c. *m renmen y plis pase tout peyi* (UJM5)
 1S like 3S more than all country
 ‘I like it better than the whole country’
- (6) a. *m pa di m renmen y pou sa* (USM19)
 1S NEG say 1S like 3S for that
 ‘I don’t say I like him for that’
- b. *ou mèt pa di y sa...* (RSM9)
 2S can NEG say 3S that
 ‘you may not tell him that’

4 Results

The overall analysis of all tokens of the (3SG) variable shows a global rate of Capois variant use of 90.8% (N=2,823) as well as categorical use of Capois variants in the existential context *i gen* ‘there is/are’ (N=165).³ This categorical context was excluded from the multivariate analysis, so that only variable contexts are considered. After excluding these data, the rate of use of Capois variant drops slightly to 90.2% (N=2,658).

Table 5 presents the results of a multivariate analysis of social factors performed on the remaining data set. As a global measure of the rate at which the variable rule applies (Guy 1988:126), the input value of .910 shows that the overall probability that Capois variants *i/y* will be used instead of *li/l* is high, even after the exclusion of existential tokens.

³It is noteworthy that in SHC, the null form is almost categorical in this context (Vinet 1991, Law 1994): although it appears to be possible, the overt pronoun *li/l* is extremely rare. Similarly, in the French equivalent *il y a* ‘there is/are’, the liquid is (quasi-)categorically absent from the 3s impersonal pronoun *il* (Ashby 1984, Poplack and Walker 1986, among others). In our corpus, there is variation between the Capois variant and the null pronoun, though such variation is beyond the scope of the present study.

Factors	Weight	% ⁴	N
OVERALL		90.2	2,658
Locality			
Rural	.643	94.8	1,096
Urban	.398	87.0	1,562
<i>RANGE</i>	245		
Sex			
Men	[]	91.7	1,029
Women	[]	89.1	1,629
<i>RANGE</i>	---		
Age			
Juniors	[]	89.8	1,376
Seniors	[]	90.6	1,282
<i>RANGE</i>	---		

Input: .910; Significance = .000; Convergence at Iteration 5

Table 5: Social factors affecting Capois (3SG) variants.

Table 5 shows that locality is selected as the only significant social factor group: rural speakers favor the use of Capois variants (.643) while urban speakers disfavor it (.398); the difference in rate of Capois variant use between the two groups is highly significant ($\chi^2(1) = 44.35$; $p \leq .001$). Although sex is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level, based on a chi-square test ($\chi^2(1) = 4.40$; $p = .036$), it is not selected as significant in GoldVarb's multivariate analysis. A difference in age does not appear to affect this variable ($\chi^2(1) = 0.498$; $p = .480$).

To determine whether rural and urban speakers share a similar system, data from each group were analyzed separately in GoldVarb. From these parallel analyses, a strong interaction emerged between syntactic context and the other linguistic factors. For instance, the following phonological environment plays a significant role when the pronoun is used as a subject—for both speaker groups, a following consonant favors the Capois variant more than a following a vowel ($p \leq .001$ for both rural and urban speakers)—but the following environment does not affect variant choice when 3S is used as an object. Conversely, the preceding phonological environment appears to condition 3S when it is used as an object, but less so when it is used as a subject. Given this interaction, we analyzed each syntactic context separately.

4.1 (3SG) in Subject Position

Table 6 presents the results of a multivariate analysis of (3SG) in subject position; separate analyses were performed for urban and for rural speakers. The input values of .971 for rural and .953 for urban speakers indicate that the use of the Capois variants *i/y* in subject position is high for both populations.

First, the rural and urban populations share the same linguistic constraint hierarchy: the following phonological environment is selected as the most significant factor group, followed by the preceding environment. A following consonant favors the use of the Capois variant, with a stronger effect for urban speakers (.702), while a following vowel strongly disfavors it.⁵ The effect of the preceding environment is equally strong for urban as for rural speakers: a preceding vowel slightly favors the Capois variant while a preceding consonant disfavors it. In addition to the phonological conditioning, sex is the only social factor selected as significant, and only in the rural population: rural men (.614) favor the Capois variant while women disfavor it (.415). This pattern is consistent with Labov's (2001) observation that for stable sociolinguistic variables, women show a lower rate of vernacular variants than men.

⁴Percentages represent rates of use of Capois *i/y* variants, unless noted otherwise.

⁵Due to small Ns, tokens in which (3SG) is preceded or followed by a glide or a pause are excluded from the multivariate analysis.

Factors	Rural			Urban		
	Weight	%	N	Weight	%	N
OVERALL		95.8	798		85.6	1,155
Following segment						
Consonant	.564	97.2	628	.702	97.7	929
Vowel	.247	89.6	145	.018	27.5	200
<i>RANGE</i>	<i>317</i>			<i>684</i>		
Preceding segment						
Vowel	.533	96.8	596	.533	85.7	848
Consonant	.290	92.1	89	.308	84.0	138
<i>RANGE</i>	<i>243</i>			<i>225</i>		
Sex						
Men	.614	97.6	339	[]	86.2	414
Women	.415	94.5	459	[]	85.2	741
<i>RANGE</i>	<i>199</i>			---		
Age group						
Juniors	[]	96.0	427	[]	84.8	607
Seniors	[]	95.6	371	[]	86.4	548
<i>RANGE</i>	---			---		

Rural: Input: .971; Sig=.044; Conv. at It. 6. Urban: Input: .953; Sig=.015; Conv. at It. 8

Table 6: Locality and factors affecting Capois (3SG) variants in subject position.

4.2 (3SG) in Object Position

In object position, the use of the Capois variants *i/y* remains high for both populations, based on input values of .969 for rural and .909 for urban speakers. However, as shown in Table 7, in this syntactic context, the following segment no longer plays a significant role in the selection of the (3SG) variant. Instead, the only significant phonological factor is the previous segment, where Capois and SHC variants are in near perfect complementary distribution: the Capois variant occurs (near-)categorically after a vowel, and SHC variants occur (near-)categorically after a consonant. As with (3SG) as a subject, when (3SG) is used as an object, social factors play a secondary role to linguistic factors, and only for the rural population.

For rural speakers, the preceding phonological environment is selected as the only linguistic factor: the use of the Capois variant is strongly disfavored after a consonant—out of eight post-consonantal tokens, only one exception was found (7)—while it is slightly favored by a preceding vowel. Among the social factors, age is only significant in the rural population, with younger speakers (.541) slightly favoring Capois variants more than older speakers (.453).

- (7) *Pou m renmèt i pou m pèmèt pou demen.* (RSF1)
 For 1s give-back 3s for 1s allow for tomorrow
 ‘So that I give (it) back to Him, so that I can go on tomorrow’

For the urban population, given that the use of standard variants is categorical after a consonant, the preceding phonological environment could not be included in the multivariate analysis, leaving the number of objects as the only significant factor group selected by GoldVarb. In addition to the phonological environment, urban speakers are sensitive to the number of objects selected by the verb. When (3SG) is the only object, it is likely to be Capois (.523); when it is one of two objects, especially with the verb *bay* ‘to give’, the Capois variant is disfavored (.249), although it is clearly possible (76.6%) in this context, e.g., *yo moutren wen y* ‘they showed it to me’.

Factors	Rural			Urban		
	Weight	%	N	Weight	%	N
OVERALL		91.9	298		90.9	407
Preceding segment						
Vowel	.539	97.5	280		97.6	379
Consonant	.004	12.5	8		0.0	23
<i>RANGE</i>	535					
Following segment						
Consonant	[]	93.0	173	[]	91.2	252
Vowel	[]	90.8	87	[]	88.8	90
<i>RANGE</i>	---			---		
Number of objects						
One object	[]	92.3	260	.523	91.5	357
Two objects	[]	85.0	20	.249	76.6	30
<i>RANGE</i>	---			274		
Sex						
Men	[]	93.6	126	[]	92.0	150
Women	[]	90.6	172	[]	90.2	257
<i>RANGE</i>	---			---		
Age group						
Juniors	.541	92.8	139	[]	89.6	203
Seniors	.453	91.1	159	[]	92.1	204
<i>RANGE</i>	88			---		

Rural: Input: .969; Sig.=.000; No Conv. Urban: Input: .909; Sig.=.019; Conv. at It. 4

Table 7: Locality and factors affecting Capois (3SG) variants in object position.

4.3 (3SG) and Choice of SHC Variant: Full Form Versus Reduced Form

While the results above offer some insight into the factors that condition the variation of (3SG) in both subject and object, pointing to phonological constraints, a more detailed picture can be painted by differentiating the full (i.e., *li*) and the reduced (i.e., *l*) forms of the SHC variant, which both alternate with the Capois variant. Cadely (1995, 1997) described the phonological alternation between the full form and the reduced form of pronominal clitics, including 3S, in the standard variety of HC. When used as a subject, the reduced variant of the SHC 3S pronoun, *l*, occurs in pre- or postvocalic environments while the full form *li* occurs before a consonant. As an object, the full form appears after a consonant, while the reduced form appears after a vowel.

	Subject	Object
Full form	<u>li</u> rele Mari 3S call Marie 'she calls Marie'	f <i>i</i> a vag <u>li</u> nèt girl DEF ignore 3S completely 'the girl completely ignores him'
Reduced form	<u>l</u> al nan sinema 3S go in cinema 'he goes to the cinema'	Mari b <i>a</i> <u>l</u> liv la Marie give 3S book DEF 'Marie gives him the book'

Table 8: Alternation of full and reduced forms in SHC (based on Cadely 1995).

To test whether the SHC phonological rule may be contributing to the sociolinguistic variation of (3SG) in Capois, we recoded all SHC variants for the dependent variable, differentiating between the full CV form *li* and the reduced consonantal form *l*. Again, data produced by urban speakers (N=1,155) and data produced by rural speakers (N=798) were analyzed separately. Results of multivariate analyses, with each variant as the application value, are presented in Table 9.

Factors	Rural			Urban		
	<i>i/y</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>i/y</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>l</i>
INPUT	.971	.018	.003	.953	.011	.006
Following segment						
Consonant	.564	.713	.316	.702	[]	.212
Vowel	.247	.466	.966	.018	[]	.998
<i>RANGE</i>	317	259	650	684	---	786
Preceding segment						
Vowel	.533	[]	[]	.533	.442	[]
Consonant	.290	[]	[]	.308	.808	[]
<i>RANGE</i>	243	---	---	225	366	---
Sex						
Men	.614	.352	[]	[]	.707	.329
Women	.415	.611	[]	[]	.380	.598
<i>RANGE</i>	199	259	---	---	327	269
Age group						
Juniors	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	.381
Seniors	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	.631
<i>RANGE</i>	---	---	---	---	---	250

Table 9: Locality and factors affecting the choice of (3SG) variant in subject position.

Parallel analyses, with each variant as the application value, reveal the same overall constraint hierarchy (i.e. following then preceding phonological environment, then social factors), but paint an even more detailed picture. For instance, we note that either the Capois or the full SHC variants, both of which are vowel-final forms, are favored before a consonant, while the only SHC variant favored before a vowel is the reduced form *l*. The preceding phonological environment is also selected as significant: both groups of speakers favor the Capois variant in postvocalic contexts, while urban speakers strongly favor the full SHC variant *li* in post-consonantal contexts.

While the linguistic conditioning, specifically the phonological environment, is clearly key to understanding the nature of the variation in (3SG), we must not overlook the role of social factors, especially that of location. As we demonstrated in Table 5, the rural and urban populations follow similar but not identical linguistic patterns. In fact, a cross-tabulation of the preceding and following environment shows that it is in prevocalic environments that rural and urban linguistic systems differ the most (cf. Figures 1–2): the difference between the two groups is significant ($p \leq .001$) in prevocalic environments only. For rural speakers, the Capois variant is overwhelmingly preferred in all environments: SHC variants, i.e., the full form before a vowel, the reduced form before a consonant, occur in less than 20% of potential cases. Urban speakers have a strikingly different system in prevocalic environments, where the reduced SHC form *l* is clearly the preferred variant. Thus, our analysis suggests that if urban speakers are adopting SHC variants, they are doing so mostly in prevocalic environments; in preconsonantal environments, the vowel-final Capois form resists the pressure of the vowel-final full SHC form *li*. Figure 2 shows that rural speakers display a similar, albeit less standardized, system.

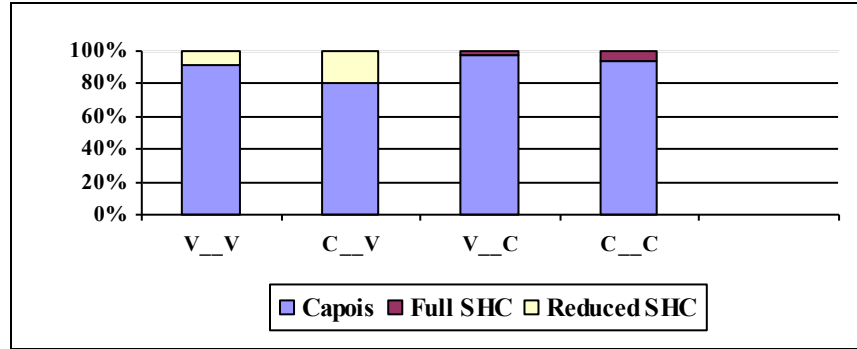


Figure 1: Phonological environment and subject (3SG) variant choice, rural speakers.

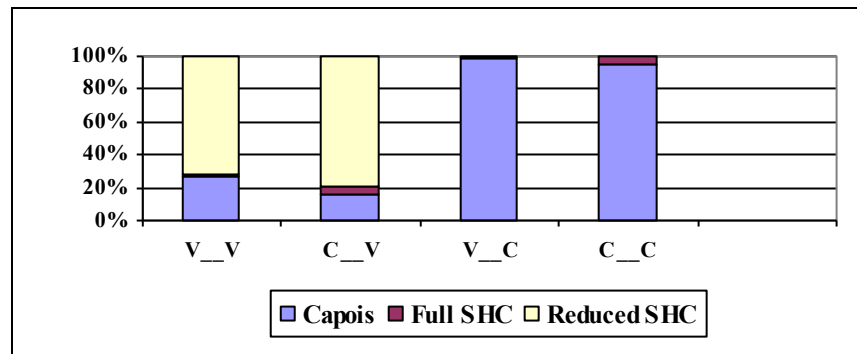


Figure 2: Phonological environment and subject (3SG) variant choice, urban speakers.

We attribute these differences in the grammar of the speech communities to the different levels of exposure to the standard. As Trudgill (1986) points out, dialect contact proceeds when speakers of different dialects interact and accommodate to each other's speech. As Haiti's second-largest city, the urban area of Cap Haïtien receives many more visitors from the capital than does the small rural village of Thibeau; this gives the residents of the city more chances to accommodate their speech to the standard. Since the SHC forms are heard and used more there, it is unsurprising that we find a significant difference between the speech of urban and rural speakers. Additionally, our sampling might have contributed to the differences we see. The urban adults were generally employed by an institute of higher education (FÉRA), where the standard is used and where some people who grew up outside the North are employed. The urban adolescents are generally further along in their schooling than their rural counterparts, which means that they have had a few more years of direct exposure to SHC in educational materials.

5 Conclusion

This variationist study of HC indicates that the Capois variety is withstanding the leveling pressure of SHC. Our results show a limited influence of SHC in the third person singular pronoun, but one that appears to be making inroads in certain environments. We also searched for factors, both social and linguistic, which constrained this variation. In this regard, locality is by far the most important social factor, so much so that it justified running side-by-side analyses to discover whether they constitute separate speech communities, each with their own grammar. In both communities, the variation is constrained largely by the phonology, namely the preceding and following segments.

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