

Salience on dialect contact: the case of north to south migration in Brazil

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North to south migration

Image 1: Map of Brazil regarding its regions and a flux of migration (based on Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2012).



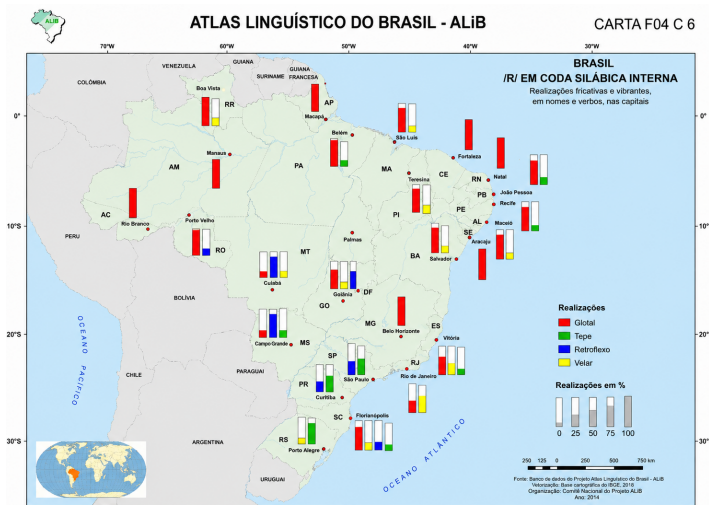
Why this study matters?

(Oushiro, 2020; Oushiro, 2023; Oushiro et al., 2023)

- The Accommodation Project showed that **coda /S/** and **coda /R/** behaved differently from the other variables on migrant's speech. They were the only variables related to both:
 - age at migration;
 - length of residence.
- This result motivate the hypothesis that these variables are highly *salient*.

Coda /R/ variants in Brazil

Figure 2. Distribution of coda /R/ in internal syllable coda in names and verbs across Brazilian state capitals (Cardoso et al., 2014).



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Studies based on São Paulo State

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The retroflex /R/ is a salient marker of the Piracicaba dialect and local *caipira* (“rural”/ “country”) identity.

Oushiro (2015)

Among migrants in São Paulo city, the retroflex indexes *Paulista* identity similarly to the tap.

So... where should we begin?

A gap in dialect contact studies (Oushiro et al., 2023)

For this presentation, we will rely on coda /R/ perceptions – a important variable in contact differentiation in Brazil. We seek to better understand, regarding this north-south contrast:

- How do non-migrant Northeastern Brazilians perceive coda /R/ variants?

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- How do Campinas-SP (southeasterns) residents perceive coda /R/ variants?

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- How do non-migrant Northeastern Brazilians perceive coda /R/ variants?
- How do Campinas-SP (southeasterns) residents perceive coda /R/ variants?
- Do Northeastern migrants living in Campinas exhibit perceptual patterns that converge toward those of Campinas residents, or do they maintain patterns similar to those of non-migrant Northeastern Brazilians?

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A *continuum*:

- indicators: variants below the level of consciousness;
- markers: variants subject to stylistic variation and social stratification;
- stereotypes: variants above the level of consciousness and targets of metalinguistic commentary.

Salience in Sociolinguistics

Across Speech Communities – Perceptual Dialectology (Preston, 1999)

Preston (1999, p. 360) discusses salience for non-linguists in four dimensions:

- availability: degree of attention paid to the variants, as reflected in the frequency of metalinguistic comments;

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- accuracy: the degree to which variants and their distribution are represented correctly;
- detail: the level of specificity in the characterization of variants;
- control: the ability to reproduce linguistic variants.

Methods

- *Corpus*: 40 Alagoan and Paraiban migrants in the Metropolitan Region of Campinas – participants of Projeto Acomodação (Oushiro, 2023); 23 non-mobile northeasterners from Paraíba, from project VALPB (Hora, 2018); and 9 non-mobile southeasterners (Campinas - São Paulo), from Amostra Mourão (Mourão, 2024).

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- Selection of questions from PRODUCTION/PERCEPTION/LANGUAGE ATTITUDES sections of the interview protocol;
- Coding of response patterns (Bento, 2021).

Results: how paulistas perceive coda R?

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- The tap was primarily associated with the São Paulo city dialect: five participants linked it to the capital, two considered it atypical of Campinas speech, and one identified it as part of the Campinas repertoire.
- Seven of the nine participants referred to a perceived “retroflexion continuum”, according to which speech from Piracicaba—an inland city in São Paulo state, west of Campinas—is characterized by a more strongly retroflex realization of /R/.

Results: how paulistas perceive coda R?

Regarding São Paulo in-land cities

e.g.1

*The “r” is very distinctive, isn’t it? We kind of extended it, right?
We say po[ɾ]ta (door) to[ɾ]ta (pie/cake) right? And hambu[ɾ]ue[ɾ]
(hamburger) like I told you it’s always... we put emphasis on the...
on the “r” right? (EdmundoS).*

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e.g.2

Campinas Americana Piracicaba the “r” sound will be stronger like “po[ɾ]ta”(door) and the further inland you go the stronger the “r” sound is (AguinaldoB).

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Regarding São Paulo city

e.g. 3

Are you talking about São Paulo city? I think the biggest difference is the “r”. It would be something like abaju[r] (lampshade), má[r]ti[r] (martyr) [...] things like that (Suelen V).

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e.g. 4

I know people from Campinas, born and raised here like me, who say “a po[r]ta está abe[r]ta” (the door is open). But I think they were raised that way. Maybe they choose to speak that way because neither their parents nor the people around them speak like that. So I think it’s really a choice (Rodrigo V).

Results: How non-mobile northeasters perceive coda R?

- **Self-perception:** Paraíba residents did not use coda /R/ to characterize their own speech, instead highlighting prosodic, lexical, and /t,d/ palatalization features – The variable emerged only when participants described speech from São Paulo or other Brazilian southern states.

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- **Self-perception:** Paraíba residents did not use coda /R/ to characterize their own speech, instead highlighting prosodic, lexical, and /t,d/ palatalization features – The variable emerged only when participants described speech from São Paulo or other Brazilian southern states.
- **Coda /R/ references:** Six participants mentioned the variable:
 - Direct imitations: 3 mentions, two retroflex and one vocalization (/R/ → [i]);
 - General descriptions (“extending” or “dragging” the /R/): 3 mentions.

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Regarding São Paulo state

e.g. 5

[...] when someone is from São Paulo it is po[ɾ]ta (door) and so on you can tell as soon as they start speaking that they are not from here (JRC).

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Regarding São Paulo state

e.g. 5

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e.g. 6

The way people from Paraíba express themselves is different from the way people speak in places like Rio de Janeiro São Paulo and Minas Gerais... When someone comes in saying things like “I want ca[i]ne” (meat) and so on... then you can immediately tell where they are from (WASS).

Results: How mobile northeasters perceive coda R?

Inland cities

- **Campinas vs. Northeast:** The most salient difference was coda /R/, mentioned by 26 of 32 participants. The retroflex variant was associated with Campinas, while the fricative variant was linked to Paraíba.

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Inland cities

- **Campinas vs. Northeast:** The most salient difference was coda /R/, mentioned by 26 of 32 participants. The retroflex variant was associated with Campinas, while the fricative variant was linked to Paraíba.
- **Piracicaba and retroflexion:** Three participants specifically mentioned Piracicaba, reflecting the belief that its accent exhibits a stronger degree of retroflexion than Campinas.

Results: How mobile northeasters perceive coda R?

The capital

- **São Paulo city speech:** Participants showed limited awareness of distinctive features. However, coda /R/ was mentioned 12 times:
 - Retroflex realization: 5 mentions;
 - Fricative realization: 2 mentions;
 - Multiple trill: 1 mention;
 - Tap realization: 1 mention;
 - Word-final /R/ deletion: 1 mention;
 - Unspecified comments (“less extended /r/”): 3 mentions.

Results: How mobile northeasters perceive coda R?

Regarding São Paulo in-land cities

e.g. 7

“[People from Campinas] have a doubled “r” po[ɾ]ta (door) ca[ɾ]ne (meat) açúca[ɾ] (sugar). In Paraíba it is po[h]ta (door) ca[h]ne (meat)” (EdileneB).

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e.g. 8

[...] People from Campinas put three “r”s in a word, and people from Piracicaba manage to put two more right? [...] Po[ɾ]ta (door)... I don’t know. I can’t say. but someone from Piracicaba can, man (JoséO).

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Regarding São Paulo city

e.g. 9

[People from São Paulo city]... It's not like Campinas, it's not like Pira... Piracicaba. It's something a little nicer than the Campinas accent... [...] po[t̪]ta is kind of like that right? (JoséO)

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e.g. 10

[People from São Paulo] speak just like people from Paraíba: po[h]ta (door)(RitaS).

Group-comparison

- **Campinas residents:** high availability and accuracy regarding coda /R/ variants; identify the retroflex as characteristic of local speech, although they overestimate its “degree of retroflexion” in inland cities.

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Group-comparison

- **Campinas residents:** high availability and accuracy regarding coda /R/ variants; identify the retroflex as characteristic of local speech, although they overestimate its “degree of retroflexion” in inland cities.
- **Non-migrants from Paraíba:** limited availability of coda /R/ variation; associate Paulista speech only with the retroflex variant and show little knowledge of its distribution.
- **Northeastern migrants:** intermediate level of awareness; associate the retroflex with Campinas speech and the fricative with Northeastern speech, but often confuse the tap with other variants (retroflex and glotal), and also show overestimate degrees of retroflexion in inland cities.

Concluding Remarks

- Coda /R/ is a highly salient marker of the North–South dialect contrast in Brazil;
- Dialect contact appears to reshape speakers' perceptual repertoires;
- Future research will test these findings experimentally through perception tasks with controlled acoustic stimuli, assessing the extent to which coda /R/ variants are perceptually distinguished.

Thank you very much!

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Participants from Projeto Acomodação (N= 40)

Gender	Migr. age	≤ 9 years	10+ years
Female	19–	EraniceS, ValentinaM (n = 2)	AdrieleS, AmandaP, CleoniceC, EdileneB, GiovanaC, MarisaR, MilenaP, PenelopeM, RitaS, Lucial, MarleneN (n = 11)
	20+	LucianaB, LucimaraF, MarianaS, RosemaraA, VeronicaS, YasminS (n = 6)	IsabelaS, MelanieG, MoniqueR, RoselinaM (n = 4)
Male	19–	DanielS, FabianoJ, JonasP, WellingtonF (n = 4)	JoaquimS, JosiasP (n = 2)
	20+	ArthurG, JoseO, JosueA, RicardoR (n = 4)	AlbertoS, ClaudineiP, EraldoF, JorgeS, MatheusA, WalterN (n = 6)

Participants from VALPB/Paraíba (N= 23)

Age group	Male	Female
15–25 years	WASS, WPS, DMTS (n = 3)	MES, EMS, RBV, MAXS (n = 4)
26–49 years	L, CLM, M, ENC (n = 4)	JRC, RPS, TLS, MCMA (n = 4)
50+ years	SRA, JFS, JCS, VSN (n = 4)	MFF, EDMS, MJ, QSS (n = 4)

Participants from Amostra Mourão ($N = 9$)

Age group	Male	Female
18–29 years	RodrigoV (n = 1)	AliceS, NadiaM, SuelenV (n = 3)
30–49 years	AndersonS, EdmundoS (n = 2)	AndreaB (n = 1)
50+ years	AguinaldoB, JoaoF (n = 2)	—

Excerpt from the Data Spreadsheet

Campineiros Sample

A	B	C
COMMENTS_ON_RETROFLEX	FEATURES_OF_CAMPINAS_SPEECH	WHO_USES_RETROFLEX
Campinas speaker	R_CODA, lexicon	Campinas speaker, countryside speaker
NA	prosody	NA
Campinas speaker	lexicon	Campinas speaker
Campinas speaker	Caipira, R_CODA	Campinas speaker
natural, normal	NA	Campinas speaker, countryside speaker

Excerpt from the Data Spreadsheet

Mobile northeasters Sample

A	B	C
CAMPINAS_WORDS	CAMPINAS_NE_DIFFS	METALINGUISTIC_COMMENTS_NATURE
"a[tʃ]itude", "po[lʃ]ta", "ca[r]ne", "a	R_CODA, ALVEOLAR_PLOSIVES	PHONETICS
"ve[lʃ]da[di]", "po[lʃ]co", "po[lʃ]ta", "	R_CODA, ALVEOLAR_PLOSIVES	PHONETICS
"cer[r]veja", "mulhe[r]", "e[r]gue[r]", R_CODA		PHONETICS
"po[r]ta", "ca[r]teiro"	R_CODA	PHONETICS
"açuca[r]", "an[tʃ]igo", "a[tʃ]itude", R_CODA, ALVEOLAR_PLOSIVES, DEPALATALIZATION		PHONETICS

Excerpt from the Data Spreadsheet

Non-mobile northeasters Sample

A	B	C	D
TIME	OTHER_STATES_SPEECH	TIME	PAULISTA_SPEECH
00:23:48.960 / 00:25:12.060	because the accent, expressions, and way of speaking vary from one state to another. Cariocas, for example, also have their own way of speaking. They pause differently and often say mermo instead of mesmo.	00:24:13.540	A paulista, for example—especially someone from the countryside, I think—who says ca{ɫ}ne, po{ɫ}ta.
00:54:20.976	Why? I notice that the way people speak is different. Some speak with a hissing quality, others pronounce a stronger /r/, and so on. Everyone has their own way of speaking and expressing themselves.	NA	NA
00:46:40.000	It's because of the regions, right? Some regions use a more drawn-out /r/. People say we speak in a sing-song way, while in Rio the accent is more hissing. I think that's what makes Brazil interesting—we don't all have to speak the same way. It's regionalism. Just like each region has its own food and culture, each also has its own way of speaking.	NA	NA