KREYOL INCURSIONS INTO DOMINICAN SPANISH:
THE PERCEPTION OF HAITIANIZED SPEECH
AMONG DOMINICANS
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Abstract. The Spanish spoken by the fronterizos, Dominicans living along the Haitian border, is often characterized as ‘Haitianized’ by other Dominicans. Whether there are recognizable creoloid features in Dominican Spanish or whether this reflects the wide-spread anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic is the impetus for this study. The findings of the study afford insights into the social attitudes and the likely linguistic correlates that contribute to popular negative perceptions of language varieties spoken by fronterizos. In addition, the findings allow for a deeper understanding of language convergence in contact situations without bilingualism.

1. Introduction

The Spanish of the Dominican Republic, while sharing many properties with other Caribbean varieties, is at the forefront of linguistic innovation, manifesting specific structural features that differentiate this Spanish variety from all others, particularly in the northwestern dialect region of the Cibao. The origins of the unique phonological and morphosyntactic features of the cibaeño dialect are obscure, but among regional dialects, cibaeño speech is the most stigmatized. Various scholars have attributed selected traits to the Spanish spoken by the Canary Island settlers who settled in the Cibao in large numbers in the eighteenth century, to language internal changes ensuing from linguistic isolation, or to Afro-Hispanic influence (see Lipski 1994a for an overview).

Lipski (1994b:1) denies a direct African substrate for Dominican Spanish and instead maintains that “the greatest extra-Hispanic influence in the Dominican Republic has been Haitian Creole.” In the Cibao region, the influence exerted by Kreyol may be felt to be especially strong because a large portion of the western Cibao abuts neighboring Haiti with the bridge crossing the Massacre River at Dajabón constituting the most important and most traversed entry point between the two nations. Given the relatively porous border, many of the villages along the border in the Cibao region have been populated by Haitians whose offspring now ‘pass’ as Dominicans only because they are fully Spanish speakers. So while Dominican speakers generally repudiate any Kreyol influence in their own speech, the Spanish spoken by the border dwellers, the fronterizos, is alleged to be ‘Haitianized’ and, as a consequence, it is held in very low esteem throughout the Dominican Republic. Thus, among cibaeño speakers, the speech of the fronterizos is the most profoundly stigmatized in the popular imagination.

To date there has been no study of the language of the Dominican fronterizos from the Cibao region (but see Ortiz López 2007 on the second language Spanish of the Haitians along the border); therefore, there is no way to untangle whether there does exist a distinctive ‘Afro-Dominican’ vernacular (akin to African-American Vernacular English) or whether such perceptions reflect racial, cultural, and regional stereotypes rather than linguistic reality. Thus, the present investigation seeks to examine whether Dominicans can discern a ‘Haitianized Spanish’ as distinct from other cibaeño varieties of Dominican Spanish, and whether they confer low prestige on such speech. Second, it endeavors to identify those linguistic properties that are characteristic of this stigmatized variety.
Dominican Spanish Phonology

Dominican Spanish, in general, demonstrates a constellation of phonological and morphosyntactic properties that distinguish it from other varieties of Spanish. Widespread are the complete elision of /s/ in syllable rhymes (e.g., transportes → tra[m]-por-te) and the loss of oral closure of nasal consonants (tr[ã]-por-te). There are also attested regional variations in the realization of syllable-final liquids. Persons with origins in the capital city of Santo Domingo are said to hablar con la /l/, those from the southern region hablan con la /r/, and those from the northwestern Cibao Valley hablan con la /i/.

These processes of neutralization (lambdacism, rhoticism, and liquid gliding) are attested alongside elimination: coda liquids and glides may be variably realized or elided altogether. The cibaeño whose speech is transcribed in (1) demonstrates the typical patterns of gliding (1a) and deletion and hypercorrection in (1b), indicating that the allophones of coda liquids are in free variation in his speech:

(1) a. …que salió e[l] so[j] (<sol) y é[j] (<el) se alevantó y no cantó el gallo Quiquiriquí…
   ‘…that the sun came out and he awoke and Cock-o-doodle-doo the rooster didn’t sing…’

   b. …a[∅]mó (< armo) su escopeta de habichuelas y … salió sa[r]tando
      (<saltando)…sale a recoger[∫] (<recoger) leña…
      ‘…he loaded his shotgun with beans and … he went out skipping… he goes out to gather firewood…’

Another striking auditory property in the speech of many fronterizos of the Cibao Valley is their prosody. Up till now, cibaeño intonation, outside the city of Santiago, has not been subject to linguistic analysis nor has it been mentioned in any phonological descriptions of Dominican Spanish (Jiménez Sabater 1984, Henríquez Ureña 1940). Jiménez Sabater (1984:127) makes brief note of the circumflex accent and unusual length that accompanies the affirmative marker sí ‘yes’ in campesino speech throughout the nation. He claims, however, that this accent is deployed pragmatically to denote the speaker’s desire to please or to win over the listener. However, it is our perception that this pitch accent pattern for the affirmative sí is the norm among fronterizos and cannot be associated with any particular pragmatic function.

Willis (2003) documents the intonation of speakers from the urban center of the Cibao Valley, Santiago, which is the second largest city in the country. He notes two unusual, although infrequent, patterns of intonation among his participants that have not been attested in other varieties of Spanish. First, some Santiago speakers produced a L+H* prenuclear accent; that is an early pitch peak aligned within the tonic syllable where most Spanish varieties would instead show a late aligned post-tonic peak in prenuclear position (L*+H). Additionally, Willis noted a unique (L+H*+L%) rise-fall, akin to the ‘circumflex accent,’ in nuclear position. He concludes that both of these unusual accents are only used for emphasis or contrastive focus. While Willis’ study provides a valuable comparison of Dominican Spanish intonation relative to that of other varieties, it largely describes the pitch contours manifested in the speech of educated, urban speakers. In our estimation, the speech of the rural, largely illiterate fronterizos of the Cibao differs considerably from that of their city counterparts. As will be discussed below in §4, these speakers deploy so-called rare or pragmatically marked prosodic properties on a normal basis in neutral contexts.

The prosodic characteristics that we have found to be commonplace among rural fronterizo speakers include the L+H*+L ‘circumflex’ pitch accent and elongation of the affirmative sí and the early alignment of a H tone within the stressed syllable in prenuclear, as
well as nuclear position. For instance, a female speaker produced the reply in (2) in response to the question “Se trata bien a los haitianos en Dominicana?” ‘Are Haitians well-treated in the Dominican Republic?’

(2) Sí, porque ello hay haitiano[∅] bueno[∅] y hay haitiano[∅] que son… uté (<usted) ve…cosa, pero ello hay haitiano[∅] que vienen aquí y… uno.. lo[∅], lo[∅] trata bien. ‘Yes, because there are good Haitians and there are Haitians who are… you see, something, but there are Haitians who come here and one treats them well.’ (Working class female, age 43)

It is to be noted that this reply contains many of the features that characterize Dominican speech, including a consistent use of the expletive ello, a complete deletion of the plural morpheme –s, and velarization of final nasals. Moreover, the pitch contour depicted in Figure 1 displays the speaker’s salient prosodic characteristics, including the very elongated stressed vowel in sí with an attendant circumflex pitch contour and the H tone associated to the stressed syllable in prenuclear buen(o) ‘good’. These are consistent traits of this speaker, and of others from the region, rendering the overall impression of a ‘sing song’ intonation pattern.

**FIGURE 1: F0 contour of female Cibaeño speaker: “Si, porque ello hay haitino bueno y hay...”**

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**Linguistic and Social Attitudes**

As noted earlier, the Spanish dialect of the Dominican Republic distinguishes itself from the prescribed norm for the Spanish language. These speech forms are readily identified and recognized as being of low prestige, as reflected both in the negative evaluations of other Spanish speakers (cf., Zentella 1990, García et al. 1988), and in speakers’ own insecurity (Toribio 2000). The excerpt in (3a) attests to speakers’ sensitivity to linguistic norms and to the low esteem in which the dialect is held.² When pressed, Dominicans point most immediately to regional variations based in pronunciation, particularly those noted above. Of the dialectal forms, the lateral liquid of the capitaleño ‘person from the capital’ carries the greatest social capital, as expected, and the cibaeño pronunciation the least, as expressed in (3b).

(3) a. Hay pueblos [hispanohablantes] donde la gente tiene más cuidado en hablar un buen castellano,…Los dominicanos tenemos el problema que hablamos con faltas ortográficas… no, es verdad. Aquí se habla con falta ortográfica, no sólo se
escribe, sino que se habla también.
‘There are towns where people take more care in speaking a good Spanish... We Dominicans have the problem of speaking with orthographical errors...no, it’s true. Here people speak with orthographical errors, not merely write it, but speak it too.’ (Upper class male, age 35)

b. El capitaleño se mofa del cibaeño hasta en las comedias por la <i>. Cae gracioso. ...En la televisión te ponen un cibaeño y le ponen la <i>, y te hace reír. [Y la <l> no?] No... la <l> no... Quizás sean los cheques de la capital.
‘The capitaleño makes fun of the cibaeño even in comedies because of the <i>. It is funny...On television they’ll show a cibaeño and give him the <i>, and it makes you laugh. [And not the <l>?] No...not the <l>...It must be the checks from the capital.’ (Upper class male, age 35)

More generally, Dominican speech is aesthetically undervalued, especially among the middle and upper classes in the Dominican Republic, for lacking certain features of an idealized standard —la lengua original y pura—‘the pure and original language’—of Spain, as evinced in (4). And Dominicans’ exceptionally dim view of the speech of frontierizo communities in the Cibao, where contact with the neighboring nation is most pronounced, may be said to speak more explicitly to the derision of Haitians and Kreyol, as confessed in (5).

(4) a. Me gusta como hablan los españoles. ...Para como hablan los españoles y como hablamos nosotros aquí, hay mucha diferencia, para como uno habla. Me gusta la forma de ellos hablar, su acento y todo, eso me gusta….ellos tienen más modalidad que uno hablando.
‘I like the way the Spaniards speak...The way the Spaniards speak and the way we speak here, there is a lot of difference, the way we speak it. I like the way they speak, their accent and all, I like that...they have better form than us speaking.’ (Middle class male, age 30)

‘The Spanish of Spain is more refined.’ (Middle class male, age 54)

(5) a. La región que habla mal, que hablan medio cruzado, es en Vaca Gorda, porque ahí son todos prietos. Es como la lengua que se les cruza, son gente medio haitianados. Ya ellos están aquí como que son dominicanos.
‘The region that speaks poorly, that speaks somewhat tongue-tied, is in Vaca Gorda, because there they are all blacks. It’s as though their tongues are tied, they are somewhat Haitianized. They are here as if they were Dominicans.’ (Working class male, age 70+)

b. Por aquí en El Rodeo había una descendencia haitiana; en esa área del Rodeo no se hablaba bien el español.
‘Here in El Rodeo there was some Haitian heritage; in that area of El Rodeo people didn’t speak Spanish well.’ (Middle class male; age 55)

c. Los prietos ronchuses de por allá hablan como jmmmpf, ¿no es verdad? Como cosa de brutos.
‘The scruffy blacks from there speak like jmmmf, right? The likes of dumb/crude folks.’ (Middle class female, age 50+)

The popular view is that the best Spanish variety approximates the European norm, and the worst is spoken by those Dominicans who are believed to be influenced by an African substratum. In this predilection for the Peninsular Spanish variety and repudiation of the influence of the Haitian language in frontierizo communities, Dominicans make a great deal of
their hispanidad while at once racializing the Haitians. For instance, Dominicans reserve the designation negro ‘black’ for Haitians, believing that the only blacks on the island are Haitians (cf., Torres-Saillant 1998a, 1998b, 1999). In describing their own skin color, Dominicans use terms that fall along a color continuum, including blanco ‘white’, indio claro ‘light’Indian’, indio oscuro ‘dark’Indian’, and moreno ‘dark brown’. Note that negro and moreno generally refer to the same skin color, although their social connotations are quite distinct.

2. The Present Study

As is well known, judgments about language varieties are ultimately assessments of the speakers of those varieties and how they are perceived in the larger society. It stands to reason that if Dominicans identify fronterizo Spanish as ‘Haitianized’, it is presumably because they believe the speakers to be ‘Haitianized,’ i.e., of Haitian descent, black, and poor. These considerations in mind, the present study of Dominican speech is guided by three interrelated questions:

(6) Research questions

a. Can Dominicans reliably discriminate among varieties of cibaeño fronterizo Spanish?

b. Do Dominicans ascribe low prestige to particular forms?

c. What phonological properties characterize the most stigmatized varieties of cibaeño fronterizo Spanish?

Methodology: Materials and Procedure

The study draws on sociolinguistic methodologies, including the elicitation of naturalistic speech samples and the assessment of attitudes towards particular speech varieties.

Speech samples

Spanish speech samples were collected from fourteen informants, of which nine of the best quality recordings were selected for the creation of a data set. The nine speakers were all male, ranging in age from 18 to 43. They included two Haitian immigrants, one speaker from the capital Santo Domingo, and six speakers from the northern border regions of the Cibao Valley. The Haitian immigrants and the six cibaeño speakers all live in one of three towns located within 5 miles of the border: Loma de Cabrera, Restauración, and El Rodeo. The latter is the smallest, least populated, and most rural of the towns and it is commonly believed by other fronterizos to be a village settled by people of descendencia haitiana ‘Haitian descent,’ as attested by the citation in (5b) above. Its closest neighboring village is Vaca Gorda, also identified as having a ‘Haitianized’ population (see 5a).

The men presented diverse educational histories, extending from no formal schooling to completed university degrees, and a range of occupations, from those who held positions as unskilled day-laborers to one who had secured a highly professional position in industry. They also represented diverse skin coloring. Their personal profiles are shown in Table 1, with skin color designated by the researchers according to traditional Dominican classifications; The term moreno is used for individuals of African descent who are not also of apparent European or Amerindian background; Blanco is reserved for individuals of European descent only with no apparent African or Amerindian background; Individuals who are of mixed European-African-Amerindian descent are classified as indio claro, if light skinned, or as indio oscuro, if dark-skinned.

It bears mentioning that such classifications are commonplace in the Dominican Republic and that the researchers confirmed their assessments with other Dominicans or with the participants themselves.
Table 1: Speakers’ Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker 1</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Ascribed Skin Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (Not completed)</td>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>blanco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>El Rodeo</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Unskilled laborer</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 3</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (Completed)</td>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>indio claro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 4</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (In progress)</td>
<td>Student, skilled worker</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 5</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (In progress)</td>
<td>Student, unskilled laborer</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 6</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Santo Domingo</td>
<td>University (Completed)</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>indio oscuro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 7</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Restauración</td>
<td>Elementary (Completed)</td>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>indio claro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 8</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Restauración</td>
<td>High School (In progress)</td>
<td>Student, skilled worker</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 9</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>El Rodeo</td>
<td>Elementary (Completed)</td>
<td>Unskilled laborer</td>
<td>indio oscuro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interview session commenced with the elicitation of personal history. Then, each participant listened as the second author, a Dominican, read aloud a brief narrative adapted from Zevallos’ (1997) *Los cuentos del tío Lino*, a book of short folktales for children. The informants were instructed to listen attentively to the story, since they would be asked to retell it. We chose to use an elicited repetition methodology because many of these speakers are illiterate and we could not ask them to read the story for themselves. The narrative was repeated several times, until we were assured that the participant had fully comprehended the text; a sample of the third elicited text, *El Quiquiriquí* ‘The Cock-o-doodle-doo’ is presented in Appendix A. Each participant was subsequently instructed to recount the tale in his own words, aided by a drawing of the main characters portrayed. The oral production of the narratives were recorded, one at a time, using a Marantz PDM660 digital flash recorder and a Shure A-10 head-mounted microphone to reduce ambient noise. If a participant faltered during his recitation, the recording was stopped and erased and then he was allowed to begin again. The procedure was repeated for two additional narratives so that the final data set included three different narrative samples from each of the participants.

The participants were recorded separately in a semi-private environment (the rural nature of the frontera precludes the ideal recording environment of a sound-proof room). The average time for each participant to complete the task was ten minutes. They were remunerated for their participation. From the three narratives produced by each informant, we extracted only the third tale —*El Quiquiriquí*— to prepare for the accent ratings task because the participants improved their performance through each story. Thus, the retelling of *El Quiquiriquí* was the most fluent and comfortable performance across participants. The men each recounted the story accurately, in all its details, within roughly the same amount of time (mean time = 51 seconds).
Accent Rating Task

As has been well-established by researchers in sociolinguistics and the social psychology of language, linguistic varieties can trigger assumptions about speakers’ personal attributes, social standing, and ethnic and national affiliations (cf., The Social Connotations Hypothesis, Trudgil 1983). One means of assessing reactions towards specific linguistic forms, together with the values, prestige, stigma, and stereotypes that these elicit is via attitudes surveys. Like a traditional matched-guise test, the Accent Ratedness Survey employed in this study required listeners to assess speakers on a variety of items that referenced personality and social characteristics. Because we were also interested in the perception of ‘Haitianized’ speech, the survey also comprised items that referenced nationality and skin color. A sampling of survey items appears in Table 2 (and the translation appears in Appendix B).

**TABLE 2: ACCENT RATEDNESS SURVEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Este hombre da la impresión de ser…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inteligente</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capaz</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La forma de hablar de este hombre me pareció:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atractiva</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educada</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La manera en la que este hombre hizo el cuento me pareció:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educado</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El nivel de educación de este hombre podría ser:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ primario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ secundario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ universitario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La profesión de este hombre podría ser:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ obrero no especializado, p. ej., agricultor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ obrero especializado, p. ej., operador de fábrica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ empleado de oficina, p. ej., contable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ encargado o gerente, p. ej., ejecutivo de una empresa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ profesional, p. ej., abogado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La clase social de este hombre podría ser:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ baja</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ media-baja</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ media-alta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ alta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Este hombre podría ser:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ estadounidense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ haitiano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ dominicano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. ___ del campo? ___ de la ciudad? ___ fronterizo?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ___ capitaleño? ___ cibaeño? ___ sureño?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Este hombre podría ser:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ negro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ moreno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ indio oscuro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ indio claro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ blanco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A convenience sample of sixty Dominicans completed the Accent Ratedness Survey. All participants were enrolled at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, and studied either engineering, law, or business. They were tested on the university campus in blocks of 20. Participants listened to the speech samples of El Quiquiriquí played through a laptop and attached speakers. Following each of the nine guises, they were required to render judgments on a variety of perceived attributes of the speaker. The session lasted approximately forty minutes and subjects were remunerated for their participation.

3. Results and Discussion

The means for the assessments of participant judges on continuous variables (e.g., personality traits) and polychotomized variables (e.g., social class) were tabulated and submitted to a series of one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs. Three one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs showed a main effect for inteligente ‘intelligent’ ($F(8)=34.244, p < .01$), capaz ‘capable’ ($F(8)=9.852, p < .01$), and próspero ‘prosperous’ ($F(8)=9.547, p < .01$). Two one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs showed a main effect for atractiva ‘attractive’ ($F(8)=15.570, p < .01$) and educada ‘educated’ ($F(8)=25.394, p < .01$). One one-way repeated-measures ANOVA showed a main effect for Social Class ($F(8)=27.201, p < .01$), and for Profession. In each case, Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that Speakers 1, 2, 7, and 9 are judged to be statistically indistinct from each other but statistically distinct from the other guises. Speakers 3 and 5 are statistically indistinct from each other but different from all other guises, as are Speakers 4 and 6. Finally, Speaker 8 is statistically distinct from all others. Thus, our participant judges are uniform in their assessment of the nine guises, having evaluated Speakers 1, 2, 7, and 9 least favorably and Speaker 8 most favorably on measures of personality, educated manner of speaking, education, profession, and class. Importantly, there were no significant differences in judges’ evaluation of the manner in which the diverse speakers narrated the tale.

A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA also showed a main effect for racial classification ($F(8)=8.038, p < .01$). Evaluations of Speaker 8 are shown to be statistically distinct from those of Speakers 3 and 5, and both are distinct from all others.

**FIGURE 2: JUDGES’ DESIGNATION OF SPEAKERS’ SKIN COLOR**

![Skin Color Designation](image)
Two one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs showed a main effect for nationality—haitiano ‘Haitian’ ($F(8)=9.497, p < .01$) and dominicano ‘Dominican’ ($F(8)=25.394, p < .01$). As shown in Figure 3, all guises were consistently and largely identified as having been produced by Dominican. Speaker 4 was correctly identified as Haitian with a frequency of 14.2%, but Speaker 5, also produced by a Haitian, was correctly assessed at only 2.1% while several guises produced by Dominicans (Speakers 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9) were equally or more frequently identified as having been produced by Haitian speakers.

**FIGURE 3: JUDGES’ DESIGNATION OF SPEAKERS’ COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

![Country of Origin](image)

Figure 4 presents the descriptive results of judges’ evaluations of speakers’ regional origin. Although no statistical analysis was carried out, the results appear to follow the trends attested. As shown, speakers for Speakers 1, 2, 7, and 9 are thought to be from rural areas; in contrast, Speaker 8 was thought to have been produced by a speaker from the urban capital.

**FIGURE 4: JUDGES’ DESIGNATION OF SPEAKERS’ REGION OF ORIGIN**

![Region of Origin](image)

4. **Discussion**

Drawing together the above measures, participant judges’ evaluations of the nine speakers may be summarized within a continuum. Speakers 1, 2, 7, and 9, produced by unskilled workers of Dominican origin with little to no schooling, were evaluated as having significantly
lower levels of education, employment status, and social class, and to be of significantly darker skin color than the others. And Speaker 8, produced by a student, was evaluated most positively, as being of higher social class and educational and professional attainment, and lighter-complexioned than the others—in fact, he was judged to be nearly ‘white’ even though few Dominicans would actually rate themselves as blanco. Between these two extremes, Speakers 3 and 5 were judged relatively favorably on all measures and Speakers 4 and 6 moderately on measures of education, class, and profession. Reprising the speaker’s actual profiles from Table 1, an overall summary appears in Table 3, where shading indicates judges’ evaluations from negative (light shading) to positive (dark shading) based on the combined results of the survey with respect to personality traits, speaking manner, skin color ratings, nationality and region of origin.

**Table 3: Hierarchy of Guises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (Not completed)</td>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>blanco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>El Rodeo</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Unskilled laborer</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>El Rodeo</td>
<td>Elementary (Completed)</td>
<td>Unskilled laborer</td>
<td>indio oscuro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (In progress)</td>
<td>Student, skilled worker</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Santo Domingo</td>
<td>University (Completed)</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>indio oscuro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Loma de Cabrera</td>
<td>High School (Completed)</td>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>indio claro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Restauración</td>
<td>Elementary (Completed)</td>
<td>Skilled laborer</td>
<td>indio claro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Restauración</td>
<td>High School (In progress)</td>
<td>Student, skilled worker</td>
<td>moreno</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It merits noting that Speakers 4 and 5 are Haitian speakers. Speaker 5 was raised in the Dominican Republic and speaks Spanish with no discernible foreign accent. On the other hand, Speaker 4 would be characterized as a childhood late-learner of Spanish (age of onset = 10) and, at least to the authors, he does speak with a slight but perceptible foreign accent although his narrations were fluent and engaging. A particularly striking trait was that he produced the imperfect tenía with initial stress [ténía] rather than with penultimate stress. While, among our speakers, he was the most often correctly identified as Haitian (14.2% of the time), it is significant that his average skin color rating in not distinct from that of Speakers 1, 2, 7, and 9. These latter speakers, who were consistently rated negatively on personal and linguistic traits, were also consistently judged to be darker (i.e., generally moreno or indio oscuro answers) than those judged favorably.³

The results of the Accent Ratedness Survey indicate that the answer to each our first two research questions is affirmative. That is, Dominicans do discriminate between varieties of cibaeño fronterizo Spanish. They ascribe low prestige to the speech of those whom they judge
to be *campesinos*, that is, rural Dominicans. However, although they also believe these speakers to be of African descent from their speech forms, our results show that the judges could not accurately guess the skin color of the speakers. Instead, they judge speakers who are, in reality, laborers of low socio-economic class and education to be darker (thus, presumptively of African/Haitian heritage) than those to whom they attribute more linguistic (and social) prestige. It is to be noted that the judges, all university students from Santo Domingo, consistently discriminated the speech of rural, less-educated *fronterizos* (Speakers 1, 2, 7, 9) from those with more education who come from larger towns (Speakers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8).

Given that assessments of low prestige speech forms relate directly to the perception (but not the reality) of the speaker as dark-skinned, it is reasonable to conclude that Dominicans do perceive certain speech forms as ‘Haitianized’ although the speakers themselves are not frequently judged to be Haitian. Note that the term ‘Haitianized’, in fact, is not applied to Haitians’ use of Spanish. Indeed, from our many interviews in the field over the last four years, we have ascertained that there is a widespread consensus among Dominicans and Haitians throughout the Dominican Republic that Haitians are much better language learners than Dominicans.

**Linguistic correlates of ‘Haitianized’ speech**

The results of the Accent Ratedness Survey indicate fairly clearly that Dominicans do perceive the speech of some *fronterizos* from the Cibao region to be ‘Haitianized.’ However, given that each speaker related his own version of *El Quiquiriquí* so the narratives varied in linguistic form, it is unclear what linguistic trait or traits provoked such an assessment. Thus, it is necessary to overview the most salient properties of the oral narratives produced by the speakers before focusing on the aspects that we believe to be most indicative of the less prestigious forms of *fronterizo* speech, namely, the segmental phonology and prosody.

**Lexical Variables**

The methodology of elicited repetition of the narratives allowed us to largely control for lexical variation. Each participant correctly referred to the main actors of the story (*el Viejo, el gallo, el lobo*) and employed by and large the same types of predicates (*buscar* ‘to look for’, *sacar* ‘to take out’, *cantar* ‘to sing’, *dar un machetazo* ‘to give a machete blow to’, *salir* ‘to come out’, *oír* ‘to hear’, *callarse* ‘to be quiet’, *hacer seña* ‘to give a sign’, *estar debajo de un árbol* ‘to be underneath a tree’). There was some salient but minor variation in the use of substantives by the various narrators that occasioned strong (humorous) reactions from the judges. Specifically, Speaker 4 referred to *el ano* ‘the anus’ rather than to *el trasero del lobo* ‘the rear of the wolf’. Additionally, speaker 7 used the vernacular Dominican word *colín* pronounced with a very salient velar nasal, rather than the elicited *machete*. Three speakers (Speakers 2, 7, and 9) used a novel form *alevantar/alevantarse* ‘to raise/to arise’, with a prosthetic [a], rather than the correct *levantar*. Overall, the lexical variation within these texts was minimal and it is doubtful that lexical choice alone motivated the perception of ‘Haitianized’ speech in any robust manner. However, it is possible that the novel verb form employed by Speakers 2, 7, 9 contributed to their low assessment in the Accentenedness Survey.

**Morpho-syntactic Variables**

All the texts produced by these speakers were grammatically correct; there were no errors of agreement, no missing inflections (aside from the total deletion of word final [s] which is standard in Dominican Spanish) and no syntactic deviations from what could be considered normative Spanish. Speaker 2, however, produced an unusual number of overt subject pronouns. In fact, the only environment in which he did not produce an overt subject pronoun was in a conjoined verb phrases with no switch reference:
(7) Cuando él se acercó al lobo el gallo sacó la cabecita. Cuando ahí él se incomodó, cogió su machete y rajó el lobo y sacó su gallo y se lo llevó.
‘When he got close to the wolf the rooster stuck out his little head. When then he got upset, took his machete and sliced open the wolf and took out his rooster and took him.’

It is possible that his nearly automatic use of subject pronouns, compounded by his use of them as discourse markers (see below) may have augmented the judges’ tendency to assess his speech as of very low prestige. All other narratives were morpho-syntactically well formed.

**Discourse Variables**

Several of the speakers made use of specific discourse markers multiple times in their retelling of the story. Interestingly, each speaker who employed a discourse connector used the same one throughout his narration with no variation. The only marker in the original version they were taught was *en eso* ‘meanwhile’, which was repeated three times by Speaker 9. However, Speaker 3 instead used *pues* ‘well’ five times throughout his rendition of the story while Speaker 4 used *cuando* ‘when’ five times. Speaker 8, judged to use the most prestigious speech used *y* on five occasions at the beginning of matrix clauses as a discourse connector. Other connectors employed in these narratives include *de repente* ‘suddenly’ used twice by Speaker 1 and, unusually, *él* ‘he’ articulated twice as a discourse marker by Speaker 2. The speakers’ choice of discourse connectors, even repetitive ones, or their lack of such markers seemed to have no correlation with the judges’ perception of ‘Haitianized’ speech.

**Phonological Variables**

As overviewed in section 2 above, the *cibaeño* dialect is specifically characterized by liquid neutralization, usually via gliding or the deletion of coda /l,r/. As expected, this characteristic was manifested within the speech of some speakers. Specifically, speakers 1, 2, and 7, all of whom were classified among those with the most stigmatized speech forms, consistently neutralized coda liquids, as illustrated by the citation in (1) above, quoted from Speaker 1. Thus, the application of liquid neutralization may have marked their speech as strongly dialectal to the ears of the judges who may have been unused to hearing this trait except as a satire of rural *cibaeño* speech (cf. the quotation in 3b above).

However, Speaker 9 was likewise judged as among those who speak in the most stigmatized fashion yet he does not make widespread use of this variable in his recorded narrative. In fact, Speaker 9 manifests a very small proportion of vocalized codas in his narrative, vocalizing only one time and maintaining the correct liquid coda in the other ten possible environments. This ratio exactly parallels that of Speaker 8 who received the most favorable judgments. If usage of the ‘*cibaeño* [i]’ alone accounted for negative assessments, then it would be unlikely that Speakers 9 would have been categorized among the group with the most stigmatized speech form or that Speaker 8 would have been assessed so favorably.

**Prosodic Variables**

Although Speaker 9 does not deploy the ‘classic’ marker of rural, *cibaeño* speech, he does share with speakers 2 and 7 an unusual pattern of intonation. Specifically, the intonational phrasing of the majority of the Dominican speakers perceived to be the most *moreno* (i.e., blackest) is characterized by multiple prenuclear pitch accent contours that are more like nuclear accents or edge tones, sounding very much as if the speaker has come to the end of the phrase even where there is no focus or contrast. An illustration of such an utterance, produced by Speaker 9, is shown in Figure 5. There are several unusual aspects of this utterance. First, there is very little declination in pitch across the utterance; instead, the pitch contour on the verb *llamaba* reaches nearly the same point as that of the prenuclear *tenía un gallo*, where the
H is aligned with the clitic (u)n and perhaps even with the onset of gallo. This may be because the post-tonic syllable of gallo is severely reduced both in duration and in intensity with respect to the stressed syllable. Thus, from the onset of the articulation gallo through the offset of the word there is an apparent drop in pitch and in intensity that gives the auditory impression that the speaker has reached the end of a phrase only to continue with what sounds like a pitch reset in the subordinate clause. Although it is clear from this image that the speaker pauses between the object and the relative clause, nearly all his utterances show similar ‘lilting’ contours, irrespective of pauses.

**Figure 5: Speaker 9**

Compare the pitch contour of Speaker 9 given above to that of Speaker 8, articulating the exact same utterance as illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Speaker 8**
Here, in contrast to the speech contour of Speaker 9, the prenuclear pitch peak aligns with the offset of the posttonic vowel in *tenía* then declines gradually through the object, *un gallo*. Unlike in Fig. 5, there is no evidence of a severely reduced posttonic vowel in *gallo*. Instead, the pitch contour from the posttonic syllable in *gallo* plateaus until the expected rise on the verb.

The unusual prosodic patterns of Speaker 9 are also characteristic of Speakers 2 and 7. Each of these speakers manifests short falling or rising-falling intonation contours where either rising or steady ones would be expected. They, along with Speaker 1, also manifest clearly reduced posttonic syllables where not only the length and intensity of the syllable is diminished but the vowel quality is reduced as well. Specifically, items like *Quilo, lobo, gallo* are realized with a final raised vowel *Quil[u], lobu, gallu*. Figure 7 provides an additional illustration of the 'sing song' intonation and the reduced posttonic vowels, produced by Speaker 2.

**Figure 7: Speaker 2**

The speech of Speaker 2 is similar to that of Speaker 9. They share the characteristic of producing short phrases with rising-falling or falling intonation contours where rising intonation contours would be expected. They also both manifest prosodically reduced posttonic syllables. The overall auditory effect of their speech is like an exaggerated reading intonation but we must emphasize here that these particular speakers cannot read and that this is their normal speech pattern.

A full investigation of the intonation of rural *fronterizos* is a matter for future research. At this point, we can tentatively conclude that there appears to be a conspiracy of prosodic and segmental properties in the speech of all of those judged to be ‘Haitianized’ that are largely absent from those whose speech is assessed more favorably. Specifically, the speech of the uneducated, rural Dominicans may be characterized as stigmatized by the presence of one or more of the following traits: a salient use of liquid neutralization (Speakers 1, 2, 7), the prosodic reduction of posttonic syllables (Speakers 1, 2, 7, 9), and the production of prenuclear pitch accents with patterns more likely to be understood as nuclear or edge tones (Speakers 2, 7, 9) rendering a sing-song type of intonation pattern.
5. Conclusions

While this study has shown that Dominicans naively ascribe the use of stigmatized speech properties among the rural fronterizos to the influence of Haitian Kreyol, it would be premature to conclude that there is any single clearly identifiable Kreyol substrate feature in fronterizo speech. Urban Dominicans may believe that they can reliably perceive traits of an Afro-Dominican basilect yet only one of the speakers they identified as using these traits, Speaker 2, is black and of clear Haitian descent. In fact, Speaker 1, who was likely assessed negatively on the sole basis of his liberal use of the cibaeño [i], was the only ‘white’ person in the sample. Thus, the linguistic traits that Dominicans stigmatize as ‘Haitianized’ properties are actually features of the speech of rural, uneducated cibaeños of all racial designations.

It is nonetheless legitimate to inquire whether the peculiar prosodic properties described in this study could indicate a Kreyol substrate among the border population. Unfortunately, there is, at this point, no research on the prosodic and intonational patterns of rural Haitian Creole to serve as a point of comparison. However, studies on the intonation contours of Spanish in contact with Quechua (O’Rourke 2003), with Italian (Colantoni and Gurlekian 2004), with Basque (Elordieta 2003, Elordieta and Hualde 2003), and with German (Llóo, Rakow, and Kehoe 2004) are informative about the possible effect of contact on Spanish prosody. Specifically, all contact varieties of Spanish studied so far tend to show early peak alignment patterns in unfocused prénuclear positions. These results converge with the description of the speakers judged to be most ‘Haitianized’ in the present study. It is possible then that in contact varieties of Spanish, speakers adopt a default pattern of peak alignment, accounting for early peak prominence in all positions.

Future studies on the intonation patterns of rural Dominicans from border villages with a majority Haitian settlement may help elucidate the role of language contact in the frontera. Further, it would be instructive to examine the perception of the speech of uneducated, rural populations away from the frontera and from the Cibao to determine if judges similarly ‘racialize’ all rural speech forms. Still, it would impossible to rule out the possible substrate effects of Kreyol. Given several centuries of extensive language contact on the island and given the absorption of a large number of Haitians into the Dominican populace, some degree of substrate transfer is highly likely throughout the island. As Lipski (1994b:45) reminds us, “[T]he interpenetration of Spanish and Haitian Creole in Santo Domingo has been so thorough that most Dominicans themselves are unaware of the true extent of Haitian/creole influence on vernacular Dominican Spanish.”

6. References


Endnotes

1 Lipski (1994a) notes that liquid gliding is in recession in the Cibao Valley except in the speech patterns of rural residents.

2 Moreover, Dominicans’ linguistic insecurity is heightened in the U.S.; for example, Dominicans in New York characterize their speech as campesino while they describe other dialects as merely ‘different’ (see Toribio 2000).

3 Four of the recordings were discarded because the participants recounted them haltingly or inaccurately. A fifth was discarded because the participant was over 70.

4 These are broad classifications. In actuality, Dominicans employ an elaborate range of terms for racial classification (e.g., prieto ‘very black’, amarillo ‘yellow’, canela ‘cinnamon’), not all of which may be easily translated (e.g., trigueño, jabao).

5 Of the eighteen traits considered, nine were positive (inteligente, cariñoso, trabajador, capaz, próspero, generoso, cumplidor, divertido, amable) and nine negative (desleal, aburrido, frío, bruto, mezquino, ambicioso, perezoso, pobre, incompetente). Five of the traits rendered significant differences among the judges evaluations of the nine guises: inteligente, capaz, próspero, bruto, pobre. Of the eight adjectives describing each narrator’s form of speaking, three descriptors returned significant differences among the guises: atractiva, inculta, educada.

6 We thank our colleague, Nuria Sagarra, for her generosity in carrying out the statistical analysis.

7 It is also noteworthy that Speaker 6, a college educated, professional from Santo Domingo did not receive the most favorable ratings. We speculate that this may be because the volume of his recorded narrative was very low, much lower than all the others, and the judges may have assigned him average scores by default because they had difficulty perceiving his voice clearly.

8 We are grateful to Aaron Roggia for having conducted the research that led to this observation.

9 Our thanks to Karen Zagona for this suggestion.
Appendix A: Narrative sample

El Quiquiriquí: El Viejo Quilo tenía un gallo que se llamaba Quiquiriquí porque así cantaba. Una mañana se despertó el viejo cuando el sol ya estaba afuera, pero el gallo no había cantado. Salió a buscar su gallo y sólo encontró plumas. En eso oye un cantico: qui…qui…ri..quíiiiiiiii. El viejo busca que busca. El canto parecía salir de un lobo que estaba tendido debajo de un árbol. El gallo sacó la cabeza por el trasero del lobo, y el viejo le hizo señas que se callara. El viejo dio un golpe de su machete y le partió la barriga al lobo y sacó a Quiquiriquí sanito.

‘The Cock-o-doodle-doo: Old Man Quilo had a rooster that was named Cock-o-doodle-doo because he so sang. One morning, the old man awoke when the sun was out, but the rooster had not sung. He went out to look for his rooster and only found feathers. Just then he hears a little song: cock-o-doodle-doooooo. The old man searched and searched. The song appeared to come from a wolf that was laid out under a tree. The rooster took out his head from the wolf’s backside, and the old man signaled for him to be quiet. The old man gave a blow with his machete and split the wolf’s stomach and took out Cock-o-doodle-doo safe.’
APPENDIX B: ACCENT RATEDNESS SURVEY

This man gives the impression of being…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Yes, very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>1   2  3  4  5  6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capable</td>
<td>1   2  3  4  5  6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This man’s manner of speaking seems…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Yes, very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attractive</td>
<td>1   2  3  4  5  6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educated</td>
<td>1   2  3  4  5  6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This man’s level of education could be…

__primary school
__high school
__university

This man’s profession could be…

__non-specialized worker (e.g., agricultural worker)
__specialized worker (e.g., factory operator)
__office employee (e.g., accountant)
__administration (e.g., company executive)
__professional (e.g., lawyer)

This man’s social class could be…

__low
__low-mid
__mid
__mid-high
__high

This man could be…

__U.S.American
__Haitian
__Dominican
__from the country?
__from the city?
__from the border?
__from the capital?
__from the Cibao?
__from the south?
__black
__dark brown
__dark ‘indian’
__light ‘indian’
__white