
Curaçao Sephardic Jewish Papiamentu
in the Context of Jewish Languages

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0. INTRODUCTION

Papiamentu is the Afro-Caribbean Atlantic Creole spoken on the ABC islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, as well as in emigré communities elsewhere. The present article investigates Sephardic Jewish Papiamentu of Curaçao [SJP].\(^1\) The Sephardic Jewish community of Curaçao has a long history, dating back well over 300 years. Following the Dutch takeover in 1634, Curaçao became a haven from the Inquisition for Jews, Crypto-Jews, and Conversos looking to return to an openly Jewish life. By the eighteenth century Jews had become a significant demographic group on the island. The Sephardic population came to Curaçao speaking various languages, mostly Spanish and/or Portuguese, as well as sometimes Dutch by some individuals arriving via Holland (see discussion, below). The Curaçao Sephardim eventually learned Dutch—the language of the colonial elite and ad-

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\(^1\) This article brings full circle a series of professional and personal developments. I apologize to readers for momentarily focusing on myself in this footnote. However, it is relevant in providing context. The present paper is part of a volume in recognition of Professor Robert D. King. I began graduate study at the University of Texas at Austin (where I completed the M.A. degree) because I wanted to combine study in general theoretical linguistics with a focus on Germanic linguistics. It was Bob King’s interest in Yiddish that opened a door for me to look seriously at that language. During this period I also happened to take a course from Professor Ian Hancock on pidgins, creoles, and African American Vernacular English. The intersection of these two stimuli led me to write a paper comparing processes in the origins of Yiddish to those of Atlantic creoles and AAVE (N. Jacobs 1975). (For justifiable criticism of that paper, see Fishman 1981, 3, footnote 1.) I then did my Ph.D. at Columbia University, with a specialization in Yiddish linguistics. Well into a career as a faculty member in the Yiddish and Ashkenazic Studies Program at The Ohio State University, I felt the urge to return to the area that, in part, got me started in Yiddish linguistics—creolistics, and especially the Atlantic creoles. I received funding from the College of Humanities at Ohio State for travel to Curaçao in Summer 2005, both for study of the Papiamentu language and for research on SJP. I subsequently taught twice an introductory course on Papiamentu language and culture for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Ohio State, and presented conference papers on SJP (N. Jacobs 2008, 2016). My focus specifically on Papiamentu was related to the historical importance of the Jewish community in Curaçao and the idea that it would be relevant to my interest in Ashkenazic speech—that is, to compare linguistically and ethnographically Ashkenazic speech and SJP in the broader context of Jewish languages and Jewish speech. Thus, the completing of this circle of academic interests leads back to Bob King—my teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend.
ministration. However, by comparison, within a relatively quick time they had internalized Papiamentu as the Jewish language of home and family, a situation that has continued to the present day.

There exists significant scholarly discussion on the possible role of Sephardic Jews in the formation and shaping of the Papiamentu language in general; see, e.g., Wood (1972); Martinus (2004); Joubert and Perl (2007); Freitas (2016); also Fouse (2002). An important tempering of some of these claims is found in Martinus (2004) and B. Jacobs (2016). At the same time, there are some clear characteristics of SJP which differ from non-Jewish varieties of Papiamentu. Our present interest lies less in the possible role of Sephardim in the origins and/or shaping of Papiamentu, but rather more in the existence of a noticeably Jewish variety of Papiamentu used by members of the community, in many cases up to the present day (or nearly so). Thus, the present article seeks to establish a basic framework for the investigation of SJP as a Jewish ethnolect. Earlier versions of the present article were presented as unpublished conference papers (N. Jacobs 2008; 2016), based on research conducted in Curaçao during summer 2005: interviews with Curaçao Sephardim; discussions with linguists specializing in Papiamentu; the two invaluable books by Henriquez (1988; 1991) filled with data and contextualizing discussion on SJP; as well as other published scholarship.²

² I would like to acknowledge and thank several individuals on Curaçao who were gracious with their time expertise, collegiality, and even hospitality, during my period of research there. First and foremost, I thank Ms. Lucille Berry-Haseth, who was my Papiamentu teacher for several weeks of intensive training. She has also been a long-time major force in the Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma [FPI]—the premiere institution for the standardization and promotion of Papiamentu—and serves as a significant font of information on the social situation of Papiamentu, a guide into the linguistics and sociolinguistics of Papiamentu, as well as the person who brought me into contact with several prominent scholars in the field. I thus acknowledge my appreciation and debt for the insights on Papiamentu shared with me by the late Efrain Frank Martinus, the late Enrique Muller, Sidney Joubert, Debbie Joubert, as well as Ronald Severing of the FPI. I also thank the several members of the Curaçao Sephardic community who graciously shared their time and knowledge of SJP with me in extended interviews—usually in their homes, and usually involving food and coffee. I also wish to thank Sidney and Debbie Joubert, and Lucille Berry-Haseth and Gregory Berry for their gracious hospitality and encouragement. I thank Josette C. Goldish for meeting with my Papiamentu class at Ohio State University for a two-hour videoconference (in Papiamentu and English) to discuss aspects of language and society in her native Curaçao. I also thank Joseph Galron-Goldschläger, Jewish Studies and German Librarian at the Ohio State University, for help accessing sources; and Kathy Taylor, Professor Emerita of Spanish at Earlham College, for valuable discussion on Papiamentu. Any factual errors, misunderstandings, or misstatements that surface in the present article are solely my responsibility.
The paper is structured as follows: (1) historical and linguistic background; (2) Sephardic Jewish Papiamentu: background, approaches, and features (based on Henriquez 1988, 1991 and on Martinus 2004); distinct lexical features of SJP vs. General Papiamentu [PK]; distinct grammatical features of SJP; (3) situating SJP as an ethnolect, including discussion of the role of multilingualism and variation in the maintenance of SJP, and related to this, the role of repertoire in the identification and description of ethnolects (Benor 2010); and finally, an attempt to place SJP within a broader discussion of Jewish languages and the ethnography of Jewish speech.

1. HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

Historical background

Brief historical background on Curaçao is given here in order to provide a context for the arrival of Sephardic Jews to the island, and the development of an important New World Jewish community. Much of the following overview is based on Fouse (2002), and Martinus (2004). Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao—often referred to collectively as the ABC Islands—are located close to the northern coast of Venezuela. All three islands were Dutch colonies for a significant historical period, and constituted the Leeward Islands of the Netherlands Antilles. While Aruba formally separated from this group (dated to 1986, as part of a multi-year process), all three islands maintain formal association with the Netherlands.

Martinus (2004, 3–6) provides a valuable succinct overview of the population history of Curaçao up to 1713. Elaborated general historical discussion is found in Fouse (2002). Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in Curaçao in 1499, the population of the ABC Islands consisted of Caiquetio Indians, who had originally come to the islands from present-day northern coastal Venezuela (Fouse 2002, 37). As part of their colonial activity, the Spanish “discovered” and took over the Leeward Islands in 1499.

However, the ABC Islands, lacking the desired natural resources or conditions for mining or agriculture, were soon after, in 1513, described by the Spanish as islas inutiles ‘useless islands’, leading to the evacuation of “the whole population of the three islands, some 2000 Indians...to Hispaniola in that year” (Martinus 2004, 3, citing Hartog 1961, 49). In 1526 an attempt was made to repopulate the islands, “not to create a stable agricultural enterprise, but to cut Brazilian wood and have a base to hunt Indian slaves on the continent” (Martinus 2004, 3). Martinus provides further dis-

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1 Fouse (2002, 37) writes that the Caiquetio Indians migrated to the islands “thousands of years before the Europeans arrived.” The Caiquetio language is classified within the Arawak language family and is considered extinct (Fouse 2002, 37).
cussion of the ensuing developments on the islands, including attempts at
cattle ranching using Indian slaves, and citing Cardot (1982, 54), notes that
there were no black slaves until approximately 1569. After 1569 the islands
reverted to direct control of the Spanish crown, and “further colonization
was forbidden” (Martinus 2004, 3, citing Hartog 1961, 66). Thus, a picture
is painted of less-than-promising conditions for successful exploitation of
the colonial holdings on the ABC Islands during this period. By the time of
the Dutch conquest in 1634, the total Amerindian population of the islands
67) further states that black slaves were not brought to Curaçao during the
period of Spanish rule. Thus, the description of *islas inutiles* was fitting
from the perspective of Spanish interests and activity.

With the arrival of the Dutch in Curaçao in 1634, the 32 Spaniards
present, and all but 75 of the Indians, were expelled to Venezuela (Martinus
2004, 4, citing Hartog 1961, 132). Martinus continues by outlining the or-
ganization and activity of the Dutch West Indian Company that in fact was
in charge of the islands. It was under the Dutch WIC that the importation of
African slaves set forth, at first tentatively, eventually reaching a massive
scale. Martinus (2004, 4–6) places the growth of slavery on Curaçao into
the larger historical context—including, e.g., the fall of the Portuguese A
Mina fort off the coast of Africa (Ghana) in 1637, as well as the rising and
falling fortunes of the Dutch in Brazil around this time. It was the develop-
ment of Curaçao as a transshipment location to which African slaves were
first brought for subsequent sale and relocation elsewhere in the New World
that made Curaçao prominent. The rise of a slave presence in Curaçao also
fits in with the overall development of plantations on the island, the in-
flux of WIC officials, and the in-migration of other free persons. Martinus
(2004, 5) writes: “The rapid development of plantations was also furthered
by the enterprise of the Portuguese Jews, who started to arrive in Curaçao
around 1660.”

The historical discussion of Papiamentu crucially involves the histo-
ry of the Atlantic slave trade. An unfortunately durable, racist trope focuses
on, and often singles out, Jews as the sole or main driving force responsible
for the Atlantic slave trade. This can be observed through a quick internet
search of topics which include the word “Jew” or “Jewish”—these search-
es often yield results which include uninvited links to racist, anti-Semitic
websites, texts, and videos. Thus, a certain amount of energy and space is
often required to rebut these types of claims. In his chapter on “The Seph-

4 Curaçao became “the largest Caribbean transshipment point for slaves destined to the
Spanish Indies” (Fouse 2002, 58).
ardic Jews of Curacao” (109–24), Fouse devotes a subsection to the topic of slavery. He begins (2002, 117) by addressing matters directly: “To what extent did the Jews of South America and the Caribbean participate in the slave trade? Since they were prominent as land owners, merchants and traders, it would be pointless to argue that there was no Jewish involvement, though the traffic was controlled by the Dutch.” Fouse continues with some more specific historical description of Jews and slave ownership in Brazil and Curacao. Based on other sources (Emmanuel and Emmanuel 1970), Fouse (2002, 117–18) states: “Jews accounted for a lesser percentage of slave owners compared to Protestants.” This statement is followed by supporting numbers and statistic based on records for Curacao for several periods starting in the 1740s up until emancipation in 1863, showing Jewish involvement at levels lower than that of the society at large.

Linguistic background
There exists extensive scholarly and popular discussion on the linguistic origins and development of Papiamentu, which will not be the focus of the current paper. However, it is important for our purposes to provide a basic sketch of this. The Papiamentu lexicon is clearly predominantly of Romance origin, containing words of both Spanish and Portuguese origin, as well as elements from other languages (see below). The main area of contention is whether Papiamentu is to be seen in terms of a Spanish-based creole that later incorporated Portuguese elements, or a language which originated as an Afro-Portuguese-based creole that later incorporated Spanish elements. B. Jacobs (2016, 143–44) presents a clear outline of the two main logical possibilities of Papiamentu origins:

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5 Thus, one can often encounter, in scholarly works on Papiamentu, explicit statements on the lower percentage of Jewish vs. Protestant slave ownership on Curacao. To some degree, it seems to this author that such statements are in response to anti-Semitic discourse. For similar discussion of slave ownership on Curacao, with Jewish slave ownership at lower percentages than Protestant slave ownership, see Joubert and Perl (2007, 46).

6 While the singling-out of Jews as bearing sole or main responsibility for the slave trade needs to be called out for the racist trope it is, at the same time the history of Jews involved in the slave trade—along with the history of a long list of other groups involved in the slave trade—can and should be studied. Thus, Martinus (2004, 2) notes a connection between Jewish slave traders in the Royal African Companies, Jewish settlements, and the presence of Portuguese creoles. See also Martinus (2004, 142–45).

7 The reader is referred to discussion and bibliography in Martinus (2004), Fouse (2002), B. Jacobs (2016), and Freitas (2016).
(i) Papiamentu emerged as an originally Portuguese-based creole language which was subsequently (partially) relexified towards Spanish (e.g., Martinus 1996);\(^8\)

(ii) Papiamentu emerged as an originally Spanish-based creole language which was subsequently (partially) relexified towards Portuguese (e.g., Munteanu 1996).

B. Jacobs continues that adherents of the second hypothesis (ii) see Papiamentu arising when “a restructured variety of Spanish emerged among Spanish settlers and indigenous Amerindians who cohabited on Curacao in the time between 1499 (the discovery of Curacao by the Spanish) and 1634 (the taking of the island by the Dutch West India company [WIC]) and that this early form of Papiamentu was transmitted to the new colonizers, settlers, and slaves.” Furthermore, as B. Jacobs points out, this hypothesis (ii) attributes the presence of Portuguese elements in Papiamentu to the later arrival of Sephardic Jews—dated from the 1650s onward, and thus, after the birth of Papiamentu. B. Jacobs further points out: “The point to bear in mind here is that hypothesis (ii) crucially depends on the premise that the Curaçaoan Sephardim, in the period between ca. 1650–1750, predominantly spoke Portuguese.”

B. Jacobs (2016, 142) writes that Papiamentu “established itself as a lingua franca on Curacao presumably between ca. 1650 and 1700 (see, for instance, Kouwenberg and Muysken 1995, 205) and subsequently developed into the native language of the Curaçaoan society at large...” This timing coincides well with the arrival of the Sephardim from the 1650s onward. However, the situation is more complex, as B. Jacobs makes clear. The arrival of the Sephardim could be used to support either of the main views on Papiamentu origins—that is, as a Spanish-based creole that partially relexified toward Portuguese, or a Portuguese-based creole that partially relexified toward Spanish. As B. Jacobs (2016, 147) writes: “Joubert and Perl (2007, 48) draw attention to the two main difficulties one encounters when trying to identify the languages of the first Sephardic Jewish settlers on Curacao,” noting the lack of historical documents about this, as well as a lack of knowledge on the geographic provenance of these settlers.\(^9\)

B. Jacobs (2016, 142) raises the following question: “what role did the Sephardim play (if any) in the formation of Papiamentu? It has often been claimed that their role was pivotal...” As an example of this view,


he quotes from Sanchez (2006, 157) that it is “likely that Papiamentu was formed during the latter half of the 17th century from the speech of Portuguese-speaking Jewish merchants and African slaves.” B. Jacobs’s (2016) approach flips this very common view on its head by stating that the “principal home language of the Curaçaoan Sephardim was not, as is traditionally and rather uncritically assumed, Portuguese, but Spanish.”

B. Jacobs (2016, 144) further subdivides origins-hypothesis (i), i.e., Portuguese-creole origins, into two logical scenarios:

(a) Papiamentu was formed among Portuguese and Africans on the African West Coast and brought to Curaçao by means of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the second half of the 17th century...

(b) Papiamentu was born *in situ* (i.e., on Curaçao) among the Sephardic Jews and their servants...

He challenges position (i)b. by arguing that the predominant language of Curaçao Sephardim was Spanish, and provides historical and linguistic data to support his view. He addresses in his discussion the known fact that Curaçao Sephardim used Portuguese in certain synagogue-related functions, the fact that these Jews were typically referred to as “Portuguese,” and more. He sees the designation of these Jews as “Portuguese-speaking” to be largely incorrect, based on circumstantial, socially and politically motivated use of the descriptor “Portuguese.” Thus, B. Jacobs aligns himself with view (i) a., with Papiamentu originating as a Portuguese-based creole on or just off the west coast of Africa, and subsequently transported to Curaçao. B. Jacobs (2016, 144) writes: “More precisely, I believe Papiamentu descends from the Portuguese-based creole language of the Cape Verde Islands. It is implied that I think Papiamentu did not inherit its Por-

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10 Henriquez (1988, xii) states that sermons at the synagogue were delivered in Portuguese until the year 1860, as were the minutes of meetings and the majority of the official correspondence. Portuguese continues to be used in certain prayers in the synagogue. She also notes that Portuguese is used to the present within the Sephardic speech community in certain formulaic expressions. While it is clear that Portuguese had a certain status and function within this community, it does not mean that this was the everyday language of the community, any more than a medieval European church might have used Latin in official functions, while the same people spoke a vernacular. For an overarching historical discussion of Portuguese on Curaçao, see Joubert and Perl (2007).

11 The Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam, too, were referred to as the “Portuguese Nation,” even as they were predominantly Spanish-speaking; likewise, the Ashkenazic Jews of the Netherlands were referred to as the “High German” Jews, even if they were Yiddish-speaking Jews coming from Poland.
guese vocabulary from the language of the Curaçaoan Sephardim, but from Cape Verdean Creole.”

Martinus presents an analysis of all of the hypotheses concerning-Papiamentu origins, as well as a wealth of supporting data. Concerning the origins of Papiamentu, Martinus (2004, 7) writes: “As a Portuguese creole Papiamentu developed amongst several other Afro-Portuguese dialects brought to the Netherlands Antilles soon after the Dutch conquest in 1634. In the current study I have identified them basically as Cape Verdean creole, Guiné-Bissau creole, A Mina creole, and Angolan/Congolese creole (ANCC). Sometimes these creoles also contain typical Brazilian (Amerindian) words, which could have been picked up either in Brazil or at A Mina.” More recently, Freitas (2016) has suggested a multiple-causation, or hybrid view, suggesting a confluence of “agency” of both Cape Verdean creole and the speech of Sephardic Jews resulting in the creation of Papiamentu.

On the surface, the Romance component of Papiamentu looks to be largely of Spanish origin. It is thus understandable that some scholars have sought Papiamentu origins in a Spanish-based creole. Martinus (2004) provides basically overwhelming linguistic evidence of Afro-Portuguese origins of Papiamentu. B. Jacobs (2016) follows Martinus’s scenario. Additionally, by challenging the view that Curaçao Sephardim were mostly Portuguese speakers, B. Jacobs suggests a solution to a problematic issue, namely, the mechanism by which Spanish could have become part of a post-1634 Curacaoan Papiamentu. The records indicate that the Spaniards and most of the Caiquetio population were expelled to Venezuela following the Dutch conquest in 1634. While we can assume that there was linguistic interaction between the new Dutch conquerors and the 75 remaining Caiquetios, we can question whether the latter would have been sufficiently linguistically powerful to have imposed or have served as the source for what subsequently became the language of the Dutch conquerors, the European in-migrants, and the African slaves arriving on Curacao (the latter, by the way, already speaking Portuguese-based creoles). Assuming Mar-

12 Martinus (2004, 1) lists the five main hypotheses on Papiamentu origins: “the first and second Spanish hypothesis, the Proto-Afro-Portuguese creole theory (PAPC), the Language Bioprogram hypothesis (LBH), and the Brazilian Creole hypothesis (BCH).”

13 Martinus (2004, 8) notes “A great group of Amerindians from Brazil, including representatives of the Tapoejers, partook in the conquest of São Jorge da Mina by the Dutch Prince Johan Maurits in 1637...”

14 The Caiquetio elements found in Papiamentu are basically limited to lexical items. Joubert and Perl (2007, 43) note that Papiamentu vocabulary includes “Amerindian elements, which play an important role in names of the flora and fauna...” Some Caiquetio-origin
tinus’s model of Afro-Portuguese creole origins, with Papiamentu developing in post-1634 Curaçao, the significant post-1650s in-migration of Spanish-speaking Sephardim (per B. Jacobs’s 2016 model) would provide a very plausible route for a partial relexification of Papiamentu toward Spanish. As time went by, the regional importance of Spanish also served as a further source of continued enrichment in Papiamentu, both lexical and grammatical. Thus, while Sephardim may not have played a role in the origins of Papiamentu, it is reasonable to think that they may have played a significant role in affecting the trajectory of its subsequent development. In any event, Curaçao Sephardim as a group became early (the first?) non-African-origin adopters of Papiamentu as their in-group home language.

2. SEPHARDIC JEWISH PAPIAMENTU: BACKGROUND, APPROACHES AND FEATURES
The earliest known written documentation of Papiamentu has a connection to Jews. Martinus (2004, 9) writes: “The first appearance of written Papiamentu is a proverb that occurs as the name of a Jewish trading ship in 1767...” and “[t]he first extant Papiamentu text is the fragment of a letter of 1775...” He (ibid., 9–11) provides the text and a translation of the letter fragment, as well as discussion and linguistic analysis of the text. However, saying that members of a speech community are native speakers of a language does not mean that they are monolithic in their linguistic behavior. The factors that led Curaçao Sephardim to internalize Papiamentu as their in-group language arose within a constellation of contexts—both internal and external. Furthermore, when we refer to any language, we need to take into consideration the variation, stratification, and demographics that typically accompany that language in its broader sense. In addition to the Sephardim, by the early nineteenth century the Protestant population of Dutch lineage on Curaçao shifted from Dutch to Papiamentu (Martinus 2004, 11). The addition of the Sephardim and ethnic Dutch to the Papiamentu speech community had its own impact on the language’s subsequent path of development. Martinus (2004, 9) writes: “The fact that the creole we nowadays identify as Papiamentu acquired (native) speakers under the Dutch

place-name suffixes are also found (see Fouse 2002, 37).

15 For example, the gerund forms have been borrowed from Spanish into Papiamentu, e.g., kome ‘(to) eat’, komiendo ‘eating’, kaba ‘(to) finish’, kabando ‘finishing’.

16 In one of the earliest academic discussions of the letter fragment, Wood (1972) gives the year as 1776, based on the information found in the first publication of the letter fragment (Emmanuel and Emmanuel 1970). The date assigned was corrected to (October) 1775, as found in Salomon’s (1982, 367) mostly critical response to Wood (1972).
and Jewish population helped create a dramatic gap in prestige and recognition between this Papiamentu, which became the accepted language of the community beside Dutch, and the collection of dialects called Guene. Papiamentu became the language of the city and the community in general and Guene the language(s) of only the countryside and the slaves.”

It is reasonable to state that the Sephardic and the ethnic Dutch populations of Curaçao became, over time, native speakers of Papiamentu through contact with African-origin Papiamentu speakers. Much has been written about the history of social interactions of the black and white populations on the island. Not to be ignored here is the role played by the yayás—the black nannies in white households, who raised generations of white children in Papiamentu. However, the influences of linguistic contact were not unidirectional, as seen in Martinus’s point that the Papiamentu of this social setting diverged over time from the Guene of the countryside and of slaves.

Any linguistic discussion of a Sephardic Jewish ethnolect of Papiamentu [SJP] must necessarily begin with two works by May Henriquez. Part of a prominent Curaçao Sephardic family, Henriquez was active in the cultural life of the island. She was also active in promoting the place of Papiamentu in Curaçaoan society and the development of a standardized Papiamentu. Her two works on SJP make clear that she was acutely aware of it as a dynamic ethnolect rather than simply as a long list of lexical items. The first work is Ta asina? O ta asana? Abla uzu i kustumber Sefardi (1988) [“Like this? Or like that? Sephardic speech habits and customs”]. It was so enthusiastically received that it led to a follow-up book, Loke a keda pa simia (1991) [“That which has remained to be passed on”].

17 Martinus (2004, 193ff.) devotes an entire section of his book—well over 100 pages—to discussion of the history, role, and relevance of Guene to Papiamentu, along with a presentation and grammatical analysis of Guene texts and data.

18 If one adopts the view of Freitas (2016), Sephardic Jews played a shared role along with Cape Verdean creole in the origins of Papiamentu and would have already been speaking a precursor to Papiamentu in an earlier period. However, even in this scenario, one can reasonably assume that Jewish (along with Dutch) interaction with African-origin people on Curaçao helped steer the subsequent shared development of Papiamentu toward its present form, as noted by Martinus (2004, 9).

19 See, for example, Fouse (2002, 114, and passim) for references to May Henriquez. Among other things, she was prominent as a writer and translator, sculptor, and artist. Her former studio on Curaçao is located within Landhuis Bloemhof, which today serves as a main center for cultural events, exhibitions, lectures, etc.

20 See Fouse (2002, 193–99) on the standardization of Papiamentu. Fouse (198) writes: “During the most recent decades, many of the previously-mentioned writers and poets have joined with linguists and educators to establish a standardized Papiamentu.” His list includes Henriquez.
The list of words and expressions in Henriquez’s two books on this topic is in itself impressive. Martinus (2004, 104) puts the total at approximately 1,500. While this is important, what is most impressive is Henriquez’s nuanced approach to her study. She (1988, xi) sets the framework for consideration of the ethnolect of her speech community, and writes:

…tabatin shèrtu diferensha entre Papiamentu ku nos tabata papia na kas i Papiamentu di otro hende. Aki ‘nos’ tin dos signifikashon:
2) Den un sentido mas amplio, tur desendiente di sefardínan ku a yega Kòrsou mas di 300 aña pasá.

Translation:
There was a certain difference between Papiamentu which we were speaking at home and Papiamentu of other people. Here ‘we’ has two significations:

1) The circle of the home: family, intimate friends, Yaya Fina, Shon Polin, Vituél, that is to say, the small group of daily contact

2) In a larger sense, all the descendants of the Sephardim who arrived on Curaçao more than 300 years ago.

Martinus (2004, 102–106) provides a valuable summary discussion of Henriquez’s books.22 Many writers have argued for a crucial role for (Portuguese-speaking) Sephardic Jews in the birth of Papiamentu. Henriquez (1988, xii) sees Papiamentu as having already existed in Curaçao upon the arrival of the Sephardim (see also Martinus 2004, 103), and thus, Jews were not part of the creation of Papiamentu. However, Henriquez (1988, xii) does claim that SJP “mester a tin basta influensha riba formashon di papiamentu” (English translation: “must have had quite a lot of influence on the development of Papiamentu”).

21 Martinus (2004, 103) emphasizes the significant fact that Henriquez “explicitly includes in her family circle the house personnel, including the yaya, who most certainly were not of Jewish, but of African origin.”

22 In line with Martinus’s primary interest in the origins of Papiamentu, and less so in the Jewish ethnolect in and of itself, he notes (2004, 103) that the Henriquez’s findings provide valuable evidence relevant to the broader debates on Papiamentu origins. That fact notwithstanding, Martinus’s analysis and discussion of Henriquez’s data provide invaluable information for future investigation focused on the ethnolect.
Part of understanding the parameters within which an ethnolect operates is an insight into the sociolinguistic “soup” present/available/accessible to members of the speech community, individually and collectively. Henriquez discusses the diverse places of origin of the Curaçao Sephardim—present-day Spain, Portugal, France (Bayonne), Holland, and the Mediterranean region. Henriquez (1988, xii) addresses Sephardic multilingualism upon their arrival on Curaçao, writing that their knowledge of Portuguese, Spanish, and French facilitated their rapid shift to Papiamentu, since these languages were so similar to each other. She also notes that up through the nineteenth century many Curaçao Jews—especially women—“never learnt a word of Dutch, notwithstanding the fact that many families reached Curaçao via Holland” (see Martinus 2004, 103). The role of French here is historically important. Martinus (2004, 103–104) is surprised that Henriquez only makes passing reference to Bayonne, in light of the post-1492 prominence of the Sephardic Jews of Bayonne and Bordeaux “in international trade, and their early progress toward full emancipation.”

Some of the languages present and available to the Papiamentu-speaking Curaçao Sephardim were the same as (or at least similar to) those available to the general Papiamentu-speaking population, e.g., Spanish as a source of lexical and grammatical enrichment in modern times; and English in the twentieth century. However, how, what, and to what extent different groups use the external languages available in the “soup” can differ. As mentioned above, Henriquez observes the linguistic division of labor—the diglossic situation—in the Curaçao Sephardic community as concerns the use of Portuguese. It was used for a long time—Henriquez says up to 1860—as the language of sermons in the synagogue, in most official communal correspondence, and minutes. That role changed over time, and by the latter part of the twentieth century, Portuguese was mostly used there in certain synagogue prayer functions, as well as in some formulaic expressions. Henriquez notes that (in her lifetime) congregants preferred

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23 Joubert and Perl (2007, 48) note that although Dutch was “considered the official language of Curaçao since 1634, it was not until 1825 that the members of the Jewish community were compelled to learn Dutch in order to be granted full citizenship.” As noted throughout the Papiamentu scholarship, the Curaçao Sephardim had internalized Papiamentu as their home language well before that—at least half a century before, and likely considerably earlier.


25 It would seem reasonable to view the predominance of tombstone inscriptions in Portuguese in the Beth Haim cemetery, the oldest Jewish cemetery on Curaçao (dated to 1659), as a further example of a specialized symbolic function for Portuguese in this community. Fouse (2002, 114) gives the following breakdown for language of tombstone inscriptions
speaking Spanish. Thus, our interest in SJP as an ethnolect may be broadly divided into the following three areas: (1) lexical items and idioms specific to SJP, either in their existence, or in their use or meaning as differs from general Papiamentu; (2) grammatical issues in the phonology, morphology, or syntax specific to SJP; (3) a general sociolinguistic mapping of SJP—in terms of diglossia, stylistics, and contact with other languages, along with contact and overlap with general Papiamentu, language play, indexicality, etc.

Henriquez (1988, xiii) put together her list of words and expressions through interviews with members of the community. Importantly, she describes her method of inclusion, distinguishing between words or expressions that speakers currently use versus words or expressions that speakers remember hearing from grandparents and others, but don’t themselves use. As described by Martinus (2004, 104), the ca. 1,500 words entered into her list “show five distinctive influences: Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Judeo-Spanish and Guene.” Martinus notes that the largest number of words are from Hebrew and relate to Jewish-specific religious practices and customs. This is followed by words of Spanish origin, as well as words which are of either Spanish or Portuguese origin, and then words of clear Portuguese origin. Martinus (ibid.) writes: “The number of French words is amazingly high, because it nearly equals the number of Portuguese words...” This is important for his focus on the possible role of Sephardim in the genesis of Papiamentu. On Henriquez’s collection of words and idioms, Martinus (2004, 104) further writes: “The reason why a profound analysis of this lexicon is not necessary in this context, is that so few words in it are generalized into common Papiamentu.”

Henriquez’s list is likewise significant for our current focus on SJP as an ethnolect. Thus, Henriquez is less interested in which particular words are uniquely Sephardic Papiamentu and more interested in “nos moda di papia” ‘our way of speaking’ (1988, xiii). As to which words or expressions she chose to include, Henriquez writes that she asked several friends as well as Papiamentu experts whether or not to “include certain words which were difficult to decide” if they were older Papiamentu or Sephardic words. She notes that it is often not easy to classify these as to origin. In asking these informants about whether or not to include a word or expression, Henriquez there: “(as of 1991), 1668 were in Portuguese, 361 in Spanish, 40 in Hebrew, 72 in Spanish and Hebrew, 89 in English, 32 in Dutch, 3 in French, and 1 in Yiddish.” Similarly, the historical predominance of Hebrew inscriptions in Ashkenazic Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe does not mean that these Ashkenazic Jews spoke Hebrew as their daily language.
received two types of answer: (1988, xiii): 1) “I came to hear this word, I myself don’t use it, put it in!; or 2) “I don’t know it, but it is very expressive, put it in!” For that reason, Henriquez writes, she put everything in but sees this as a trial run (“ensayo”), and makes explicit that she is open to and expects to receive reactions to her list, to correct her list, and to add that which is missing.²⁶


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>papiamentu sefardi</em></th>
<th><em>papiamentu komun</em></th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afora</td>
<td>afó</td>
<td>out, outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arepita</td>
<td>repa</td>
<td>round cornmeal pancake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bañu</td>
<td>baño</td>
<td>bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bisñetu</td>
<td>b isañetu</td>
<td>great-grandson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bizjita</td>
<td>bishitá</td>
<td>visit (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bizjita</td>
<td>bishita</td>
<td>visit (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desparesé</td>
<td>disparsé</td>
<td>disappear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitario</td>
<td>dignatario</td>
<td>dignitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>di repente</td>
<td>di ripiente</td>
<td>all of a sudden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>festehá</td>
<td>selebrá</td>
<td>celebrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>festeho</td>
<td>selebrashon</td>
<td>celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fopá</td>
<td>vupá</td>
<td>misdeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forá (djesei)</td>
<td>fuera (djesei)</td>
<td>besides that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gora, gwera</td>
<td>bora</td>
<td>gore, puncture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goza</td>
<td>gosa</td>
<td>enjoy, amuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>granmèsí</td>
<td>gremesí</td>
<td>live on others’ expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamina</td>
<td>kaminda</td>
<td>road, way, where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kusta (verbo)</td>
<td>kosta (verbo)</td>
<td>to cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lanso</td>
<td>laken, laker</td>
<td>bedsheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mata di roza</td>
<td>mata di rosa</td>
<td>rosebush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noba (notisha)</td>
<td>nobo</td>
<td>news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>òrdi</td>
<td>òrdu</td>
<td>order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pafora</td>
<td>pafó</td>
<td>outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para (di)</td>
<td>stop (di)</td>
<td>stop (from)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasha</td>
<td>pasa, lozjer</td>
<td>spend (time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁶ This is realized in Henriquez’s follow-up publication, *Loke a keda pa simia* (1991).
As the list shows, lexical items can differ between SJP and PK in several respects. The two varieties can employ entirely different words (e.g., festeho vs. selebrashon; Saba vs. djasabra; sementerio vs. santana or kerkòf; tibio vs. lou; lanso vs. laken or laker). They may also be essentially the same item but with a slightly different pronunciation (e.g., afora vs. afó; dignitario vs. dignatario; bizjitá vs. bishitá). Some of these differences in pronunciation can possibly be described in terms of some phonological generalizations (SJP /z/ vs. PK /s/, in, e.g., goza vs. gosa, or mata di roza ~ rosa). Other generalizations can arguably be seen as either phonological or morphological, e.g., the gerund form in items like SJP hasindu ‘doing’, komendu ‘eating’ vs. PK hasiendo, komiendo. Similarly, Henriquez (1998, 98) describes a systematic contrast in participle forms where PK shows a stressed final é, while SJP shows stressed final i, e.g., SJP kómi vs. PK komé ‘eaten’, puní vs. poné ‘put’. Additionally, the same lexical item might have a different usage or connotation in SJP vs. PK; there are also instances where SJP uses one form only, whereas PK uses either the same form as found in SJP, or a synonym (Henriquez 1988, 98).28

27 Thus, in both the gerund form and the participle form, SJP shows a final +high vowel (-u, -i), whereas PK shows a mid vowel (-é, -ó).

28 On the crossover of lexical items from the speech of Sephardic Jews into PK, see Henriquez (1988, viii). Henriquez notes that a number of typically Sephardic expressions and words, including some of Hebrew origin, have been introduced into general Curaçaoan literature through the poems of Pierre Laufer and Luis Daal (see also Martinus 2004, 104).
Henriquez purposely wrote the prose in her front material (acknowledgments; introductory discussion by the author), along with most of the words and expressions in her lists, in SJP—in spelling, in specific use of lexical items from SJP, as well as in grammar. Fortunately, this included some significant points of grammar where SJP and PK differ. The following discussion of SJP grammatical features is taken mostly from Martinus’s book (2004), where he provides discussion and examples gleaned from Henriquez. Martinus (ibid., 104–105) writes: “The syntactic data in Henriquez’s study (1988), although limited, offers several interesting features:

A. The use of the perfective particle a with verbs that do not require ta in the durative, like the verbs ta and tin. The author’s own text, which on purpose is completely SEPH, furnishes two examples:

(3) e grupo sefardí aki mester a tin basta influensha
   ‘this group Sephardic here must PFT have much influence’
   ‘This Sephardic group must have had much influence.’

(4) ku mester a ta relativamente fásil
   ‘that must PFT be relatively easy’
   ‘That must have been relatively easy’”

Martinus (2004, 72, 105) also notes SJP use of taba as a copula for past ongoing action, versus PK tabata:

(5) Bo taba seka Ana awe?
   ‘You were at Ana’s today?’
   ‘Were you at Ana’s today’

(6) Sí, mi taba, mi taba na Rita, kaba m’a pasa seka dje.
   ‘Yes, I was, I was at Rita’s, then I went by her.’

(7) M’a bai na Toni, ma e no taba na kas
   ‘I went to Toni’s, but he not was at home’
   ‘I went to Toni’s, but he was not at home.’

29 On her intentional use of SJP in the introduction to her book, Henriquez (1988, iv) writes: “E introdukshon aki, meskos ku gran parti di e vokabulario ta skibi segun manera di ekspresa sefardí.” (English translation: “This introduction, like (a) great part of the vocabulary, is written following the Sephardic manner of expression.”)
Nan respektivo vokabulario individual taba basta diversifiká
‘Their respective individual vocabulary was fairly diversified.’

Martinus (2004, 105) then discusses Henriquez’s use of the form *mesteriba*
(cf. general Papiamentu modal verb *mester ‘must’*), noting that Henriquez
describes this as a verb form denoting that “Something has to be done, that
is not taking place.” Martinus sees this as a hypothetical form similar to
Barvalento Cape Verdean creole, and gives example sentences from Hen-
riquez, including:

(11) Bo no mesteriba laga e asuntu yega asina leu
‘You should not have let the matter come this far’

Martinus (2004, 105–106) also notes from Henriquez a SJP past hypotheti-
cal construction which uses *biya/viya* following the PK-type subjunctive *lo*
‘future’ + *a* ‘perfective particle’, thus:

(12) lo mi a biya hasié p’abo, pero m’a tende muchu lat
‘I would have done it for you, but I heard too late’

(14) Sin boso yudansa, ken sa ki dia e buki aki lo a
biya sali
‘Without your help, who knows when this book would
have come out’

Another syntactic difference found in SJP concerns the modals *por*
‘can’, *mester ‘must’, and *kier (~ ke) ‘want to’. In denoting past action with
these verbs, SJP permits the following types of constructions, with a perfec-
tive modal in sentence-final position:

**SJP**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mi} & \text{ kier a papia ku Lucille, pero mi no por a} \\
I \text{ want past speak with Lucille but I negation can past} \\
& \text{‘I wanted to speak with Lucille but I couldn’t’}
\end{align*}
\]

**Nan kier/ker (??) a bai ku fakansi pero nan no por a**
They want past go with vacation but they negation can past
‘They wanted to go on vacation but they couldn’t’

They want perfective buy the house but their father negation want perfective
‘They wanted to buy the house but their father didn’t want to’

PK does not allow these bare constructions, and instead must resort to strategies such as using tabata (imperfective particle) and explicit use of the complement; thus:

PK

They want buy the house but their father negation want (buy it)
‘They wanted to buy the house but their father didn’t want to (buy it)’

They want perf go with vacation but they negation past can (perf go)
‘They wanted to go on vacation but they couldn’t (go)’

3. SITUATING SJP AS AN ETHNOLECT

General discussion
There exists a substantial amount of linguistic scholarship on ethnolects in general. Many of these studies deal straight-on with the problematic nature in how one approaches the investigation of ethnolects. Similar to debates on the distinction between language and dialect, the exact demarcation of what constitutes an ethnolect is in part dictated by non-linguistic factors: power, the groups doing the defining, etc. Thus, the denoting of a speech variety or set of speech varieties as an ethnolect depends in part on the degree of distinctness from canonic or metropolitan varieties of the language—in terms of identifiable grammatical features, lexical items, intonation, etc., but also
in part on extra-linguistic factors, such as the social valuation of various groups within the larger society, the *a priori* designation of the metropitan variety of a given language as “unmarked,” as opposed to ethnolects as “marked,” etc. (e.g., Becker 2012). There is ample discussion and criticism of overly rigid approaches to the investigation of ethnolects (e.g., Becker 2012; Fishman 1997). A statement found on an online web source of the Meertens Instituut (meertens.knaw.nl), on the page: “The roots of ethnolects: an experimental comparative study,” provides a very useful basic background orientation: “Ethnolects can be defined as more or less crystallised, highly variable language varieties specific to an ethnic group.” In this view ethnolects are not seen as immutable and monolithic but are regarded in their complexity and variability. Eckert (2008a) shows the internal complexity involved in the cover term “ethnolect,” where the fuller picture can involve social status, the interaction of in-group and external factors, etc.30

A useful approach for the study of ethnolects is that of “ethnolinguistic repertoire” (Benor 2010). Benor (2010, 160–61) points to earlier studies on the broader notion of linguistic repertoire, and then brings this to ethnolinguistic study: “My approach follows Gumperz’s understanding of speakers’ choice from an arsenal. But the repertoire proposed here has a more narrow scope: the arsenal of distinctive resources used by a particular group.” A repertoire approach thus allows for variability to be built into the structure linguists are attempting to describe. Speakers of the ethnolect are not required to use all, or exclusively, the features available in the arsenal, all the time. Rather, here they have access to linguistic arsenals that sometimes overlap fully or almost fully with the arsenals of the metropolitan speech community (or of other ethnolects within that broader community), along with linguistic arsenals not usually (or as) available to the metropolitan speech community. Speakers may thus operate in a multiply connected set of linguistic systems where variation in part is linked to selectively picking and choosing from the arsenal(s) available to them.31

30 A reader of an earlier draft of this paper suggested that I might consider Sephardic Jewish Papiamentu from the perspectives of recent scholarship on multiethnolects (for example, see Cheshire, Nortier, and Adger 2015). (On the term multiethnolect, see Clyne 2000; Quist 2000.) SJP to me does not seem to fit within multiethnolect discussion directly. However, it might be interesting to try out some of the insights and methods of this scholarship in consideration of SJP, in light of the historical role of Papiamentu as a *lingua franca* (see discussion by B. Jacobs, above), and see what new insights this might lead to. Furthermore, the Jewish population that came to Curaçao and eventually became native speakers of Papiamentu was not linguistically homogeneous.

31 Thus, this in several respects resembles the situation described for speakers of Viennese German, who typically have significant competence both in Viennese dialect and in Stan-
In part, a speaker’s choice of features is influenced by social setting, style, etc. However, in part, the notions of enregisterment and indexicality play a significant role here; that is, certain features come to be considered salient markers of group membership and the social meaning of variation (see Johnstone et al. 2006; Eckert 2008b). The fact that a speaker has a choice of when to use or not to use a given feature, and in what frequency, means that variation is part of the linguist’s task of describing the ethnolect. Furthermore, in terms of indexicality, there seems to be a threshold effect, where speakers do not need to use a certain feature all the time, or even most of the time, in order to be recognized as owners of that feature (see Purnell et al. 2009). Finally, at some point there is a gray area, where it becomes difficult to classify speech that uses fewer and fewer features of the ethnolect as a variety of ethnolect speech, or as a variety of metropolitan speech that has incorporated elements—even indexical ones—of an ethnolect.32

Jewish ethnolects
As seen in the history of the field of Yiddish linguistics, there was an evolution in the interest in Jewish speech, from “deviant” versions of the metropolitan language (here: German), to “legitimate” dialects of the metropolitan language, to a language to be recognized and researched on its own terms; thus, from an exocentric to an endocentric enterprise (Borokhov 1913; M. Weinreich 1993 [1923]). This interest evolved further to the investigation of a range of individual Jewish languages within a broader Jewish linguistic context, as seen in the anthology, Jewish Languages: Theme and Variations (Paper 1978). More recently, the scholarly interest in Jewish languages and Jewish interlinguistics has expanded greatly, from Wexler’s 1981 article in Language to the broad and deep activity associated with the Jewish Language Research website (www.jewish-languages.org), as well as conferences and publications. All this has functioned to expand the horizons, goals, and tasks of investigation of the speech of Jewish communities.33 It also functions as an orientation point for many recent studies of

32 For example, the late comedian Robin Williams frequently used multiple features indexical to Jewish English in his comic and cinematic performances. However, observation shows the matrix cultural/linguistic frame for these was non-Jewish, metropolitan American English.

33 The opening two sentences of the introduction on the Jewish Language Research website
Jewish ethnolects on their own terms, rather than solely on the terms of their associated metropolitan languages—that is, recognizing the inherent complexity of intersecting and overlapping internal and external factors.

**Sephardic Jewish Papiamentu ethnolect**

The following observations about SJP as an ethnolect are taken from discussions held during Summer 2005 on Curaçao with linguists and other scholars closely involved with Papiamentu, as well as from interviews conducted with Curaçaoan Sephardic Jews.34 Here, we are focused less on the lexical or grammatical features and more on issues of viability or attrition of the ethnolect, indexicality, ideology, language play, etc. The points mentioned here are not definitive statements, but rather, are offered as an initial list of suggested areas for further research.

While the Papiamentu spoken or written by Sephardim certainly received attention in earlier works by others, Henriquez’s two books (1988, 1991) constitute milestones in scholarly interest in SJP as a dynamic ethnolect. Since then, there seems to have been a growing academic interest in SJP in and of itself. The use of the term “Sephardic Papiamentu” occurs rather regularly in the literature. The two conference papers I presented (N. Jacobs 2008, 2016) attempted to move discussion, based on Henriquez and Martinus, further into the context of ethnolect scholarship. One can even find popular social media discussion of SJP as its own ethnolect, relating it to the broader domain of Jewish languages.35

It is clear that the SJP ethnolect has undergone attrition. This was already noted in Henriquez’s (1988) differentiation between (1) words

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34 I repeat my disclaimer that any errors of commission or omission are solely my responsibility.

35 A recent casual internet search of “Sephardic Papiamentu” yielded a link to the subject header “a Jewish language born of a Caribbean creole” (collectanea linguistica), dated February 12, 2016, with an article written by Timothy McKeon. Within his posting, McKeon discusses the relevant work by May Henriquez (1988), from which he derives his discussion of the Papiamentu of the Sephardim. Thus, McKeon brings nothing new here to the data or specifics. However, he then explicitly states: “The extent of May Henriquez’ work brings up an important question: could this be considered a Jewish language unto itself?” Further down the blog, McKeon writes: “Searches for the term Judeo-Papiamentu (or the alternative spelling Judeo-Papiamento) reveal nothing, but I propose that such a language indeed exists, and that the work of May Henriquez has already documented a significant amount of its vocabulary and usage.” (A web search on “Sephardic Papiamentu” would have yielded my posted query from 2008.) While McKeon’s blog posting is not a formal academic work, it can be recognized as a welcome popular call to examine Sephardic Papiamentu on its own terms, and to relate it to the field of Jewish languages.
or expressions that are still actively used by Curaçao Sephardim, and (2) words or expressions that the current generation heard from the previous generation and still recognize but do not actively use. This goes further in that there are words that were historically used in SJP, but which the current generation claims not to have heard and no longer understands. Discussions with Papiamentu scholars confirmed the general sense that the ethnolect was more distinct and viable several generations ago than it is today. During interviews, the Curaçao Sephardic informants frequently did not recognize several of the words from Henriquez’s list. There was some variation in which words were or were not recognized; some words were almost universally recognized, while recognition of other words seemed less predictable. However, significantly, informants seemed to show a high degree of recognition of the grammatical features described above as indexical to SJP. Several of the younger generation of informants reacted to hearing these structures (e.g., ending a sentence with a past perfect modal form and no complement) by saying that that was the speech of their parents or grandparents, but not their own speech; yet they frequently reacted to hearing these structures with an immediate smile and a readiness to talk about how their forebears used to speak.

So what can we say about the current (as of 2005) situation of SJP? Even if the ethnolect has undergone attrition and shows fewer distinct features and less viability than it did a century ago, there is still reason to view SJP as a distinct ethnolect. It demonstrates indexicality in that specific words and grammatical features are used by members of the community to demarcate their ethnic boundaries linguistically. Spelling can also be used as a tool of indexicality. May Henriquez’s use of spellings for SJP often distinct from PK is a definite way of staking out ethnolinguistic turf, for example, her SJP spellings such as *shertu* ‘certain’, *Znoa* ‘synagogue’, vs. standardized PK *siertu, snoa* (at the same time as her full involvement in the general Papiamentu standardization movement).

SJP also demonstrates some areas of sociolinguistic distinction from general Papiamentu [PK] in the area of register or style. Thus, it was reported that in the production of affected or fancy speech, PK speakers will incorporate more elements from Spanish (and more recently, from English), whereas SJP speakers will incorporate more elements from French (Enrique Muller, p.c.). SJP speakers will often show an access to a distinct (from PK) repertoire of remnant phrases, especially from Portuguese (Sidney-Jobert, p.c.).

Moreover, one can speak of an awareness among Curaçaoan

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36 Whether this is because the Curaçao Sephardim were historically native speakers of Portuguese, or whether Portuguese simply came to occupy historically a symbolic high
Sephardim of (a constellation of) Jewish contexts—familial, cultural and linguistic—that contributes to an ongoing basis for the continuity of a Jewish ethnolect of Papiametu. SJP can also be influenced by Jewish-Jewish communication networks spanning across the Caribbean, as well as the types of educational upbringing which Curacao Jews typically received (Sidney Joubert, p.c.), language of instruction, etc. Furthermore, similar to many Jewish cultures, SJP has a coded “insider” way of asking if someone is a Jew. Henriquez (1988, 20) notes the specialized use of famia ‘family’ in SJP in this coded function, e ta famia? ‘Is s/he a Jew?’ Similarly, a longstanding coded way for Dutch Jews in the Netherlands to ask if someone is Jewish has been, bent u Mexicaan? ‘Are you a Mexican?’ A coded expression within Jewish speech in the United States has been “MOT” (Member of the Tribe); significantly, the English loan tribe has made it into Curacao Jewish speech (Henriquez 1988, 89).37

While SJP is not a thriving ethnolect today, it maintains enough viability to warrant further investigation. There remains enough distinctness in features available in the ethnolinguistic repertoire, and there remains enough of a sense of indexicality of features and elements. For the future research of SJP it may prove interesting to investigate more closely issues of generational differences in codeswitching, and language play, and performativity.

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function within Curacaoan Sephardic culture is not the point here. Rather, the point is that Portuguese in more modern times was more accessible to SJP speakers than to the PK community. A similar difference based on accessibility by one subgroup as opposed to another subgroup of speakers of the “same” language is seen in a comparison of how Semitic-orig

in elements are structured or used in the speech of Jewish vs. Christian cattle dealers in Germany. It is well known that in the German-speaking territory, the Viehhändlersprache ‘cattle dealers’ language,’ as well as other Sondersprachen, thieves’ cant, etc., contained significant Semitic-origin vocabularies. For the Christian Viehhändler, the Hebrew/Aramaic origin lexical items stood on their own, not directly connected to the larger linguistic context of the Hebrew language; for the Jewish Viehhändler, there was an ongoing connection to knowledge of Hebrew/Aramaic as full languages, for cultural, religious, and/or sociolinguistic reasons; see Matras (1996).

37 I thank Debbie Joubert for informative discussion of famia and tribe in SJP.
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