

Carolin Patzelt, Katrin Mutz & Magnus Fischer (Eds.)

## Creole Languages in Diasporic Contexts

### Language Biographies and Plurilingual Identities

# INPUTS

Kritische Beiträge  
zum postkolonialen und transkulturellen Diskurs

Schriftenreihe des Instituts  
für postkoloniale und transkulturelle Studien  
der Universität Bremen

Herausgegeben von  
Kerstin Knopf, Carolin Patzelt und Karen Struve

Band 8

**institute**  
institut für postkoloniale  
& transkulturelle studien  
**inputs**

Carolin Patzelt, Katrin Mutz & Magnus Fischer (Eds.)

# Creole Languages in Diasporic Contexts

Language Biographies and  
Plurilingual Identities

 **Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier**

**Creole Languages in Diasporic Contexts.**

**Language Biographies and Plurilingual Identities /**

Carolin Patzelt, Katrin Mutz & Magnus Fischer (Eds.). -

Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2025

(INPUTS. Kritische Beiträge zum postkolonialen und transkulturellen Diskurs. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für postkoloniale und transkulturelle Studien der Universität Bremen; Bd. 8)

ISBN 978-3-98940-067-2

Cover illustration: created by Carolin Patzelt with Leonardo AI (<https://app.leonardo.ai/image-generation>)

Cover design: Brigitta Disseldorf

© WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2025

ISBN 978-3-98940-067-2

No part of this book, covered by the copyright hereon, may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without prior permission of the publisher.

WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier

Postfach 4005, 54230 Trier

Bergstraße 27, 54295 Trier

Tel.: (0651) 41503

Internet: <https://www.wvttrier.de>

E-Mail: [wvt@wvttrier.de](mailto:wvt@wvttrier.de)

Contact: [www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/inputs](http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/inputs)

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
<i>Carolin Patzelt, Katrin Mutz &amp; Magnus Fischer</i>	
Norms and Styling in (diasporic) Creole communities .....	7
<i>Bettina Migge</i>	
African Diasporic Consciousness and Haitian Vodou's Lexical Field: Historical Linguistic Approaches to Religious Language and Diasporic Identity .....	29
<i>Benjamin Hebblethwaite</i>	
Naijá: A Mobile Pidgin in the Process of Becoming an Informal World Language? .....	55
<i>Christian Mair</i>	
French-based Creoles in Montreal: First answers to language use and language attitudes of Haitians and Mauritians .....	81
<i>Magnus Fischer &amp; Katrin Mutz</i>	
Haitians in Rio de Janeiro: Linguistic Representations in the Construction of New Identities .....	109
<i>Débora Amaral da Costa</i>	
Capeverdean-Portuguese language contact in urban Portugal .....	125
<i>Ronny Beckert</i>	
A Return to Roots: Researching and Documenting the French Creole Foundations of Trinidadian Speech .....	153
<i>Jo-Anne S. Ferreira</i>	
Contributors to this volume .....	175



Carolin Patzelt, Katrin Mutz & Magnus Fischer

## Introduction

The collection of papers included in this volume represents a selection of the talks given at the International Symposium on “Language biographies and plurilingual identities in diasporic contexts”, which took place from March 28<sup>th</sup>-March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022. The Symposium was organized as part of the project “Creole languages in diasporic contexts”, realized by the three editors at the University of Bremen (2017-2021) and funded by the ZF (*Zentrale Forschungsförderung*).

Due to the complex social developments in a globalized world, studies on migration, mobility, multilingualism and language contacts in diasporic contexts are highly up-to-date and necessary (Blommaert 2010; Gugenberger 2018; Márquez Reiter/Martin Rojo 2015; Patzelt 2018). However, while plurilingual contexts and language contacts resulting from migrational movements have received increasing attention in linguistics over the past years, the particularities of language contact and linguistic developments in diasporic contexts have not yet been extensively studied. Thus fundamental questions remain largely unanswered, e.g., in what way does the development of languages that enter diasporic contexts differ from that of non-diasporic ones? What are identifiable factors that produce divergent developments of a given language in different diasporic settings? The Symposium intended to address these and related questions by drawing on an interdisciplinary perspective: It brought together methods and results from linguistics, anthropology and social sciences, where diaspora studies have a longer tradition, and discussed in what way linguistics can benefit from such an interdisciplinary perspective.

In this context, a particular area which has received only few attention so far is the development of creole languages in diasporic contexts – even though the majority of creole speakers live in the diaspora (cf. Wah 2013). The collection of papers at hand thus seeks to connect creole studies and diaspora studies in a way that brings about a systematic exchange between two fields of research which have hardly been interlinked up to now.

The migrational backgrounds and contexts in which creole speakers reside are largely unknown up to now; there are but rather few case studies on particular creole languages (e.g. Fischer 2019; Hebblethwaite 2010; Hinrichs 2014; Mair 2003; Mutz 2017; Pereira/Amaral da Costa 2016), which have hardly received each other, so that an interdisciplinary discussion and the elaboration of crucial theoretical foundations represent a clear desideratum in linguistic research.

During the last decades, contact linguistics has been characterized by the fact that contact languages and hybrid varieties are studied *in situ* (cf. Stehl 2011, 2012), i.e. in regions in which they originated in colonial and postcolonial contexts. In these analyses, the focus has been on the position of linguistic varieties within the autochthonous

space, as well as on their contact with other autochthonous languages or with higher-level, more prestigious language varieties. In relation to these, the contact varieties concerned are often located in a diglossic situation or in a (double) continuum (cf. e.g. Ludwig 1996; Pustka 2009; Reutner 2005). However, in the contemporary, postcolonial and globalized world situations of multilingualism and ‘superdiversity’ (cf. Blommaert 2010), there does not always seem to be a clear diglossic situation in the home country, and a large proportion of speakers of contact languages, especially the majority of creole speakers, live in diasporic contexts. This situation has hardly been systematically investigated by linguists to date, and Romance linguists in particular have not paid much attention to this situation.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, the principles of the sociolinguistic and structural development of contact languages *in motu* have remained largely unexplored (cf. Stehl 2011). Fundamental questions such as the following are still largely unanswered, but are becoming increasingly important in a mobile, globalized world and urgently need to be addressed by creolistics and sociolinguistics:

- What happens from a sociolinguistic perspective when contact languages, which are often already stigmatized in their society of origin, enter a situation of ‘double’ stigmatization in the diaspora?
- Do the developmental trajectories of French- (English-, etc.) based creole languages in a Francophone (Anglophone, etc.) migration environment differ from those in a non-Francophone (non-Anglophone, etc.) environment?
- Is it possible to identify fundamental differences between the diasporic development of contact languages and non-contact languages?

Research on *in motu* situations as a result of immigration (cf. Gugenberger 2010) has neglected to examine the further development of already hybridized idioms in the diasporic migrational context. Diaspora situations with regard to creolophone population groups have so far been examined primarily from the perspective of literary studies (cf. Martínez-San Miguel 2014), sociology (e.g. Robin Cohen / Oxford Diasporas Program) or anthropology (cf. Labache 2002) and are only gradually moving into the focus of linguistics. As a result, there is a lack of both broader empirical studies as well as the systematic implementation of a solid theoretic-methodological basis in the field. Some first empirical analysis come primarily from English linguistics (cf., for instance, the works by Lars Hinrichs or Christian Mair) and are initially limited to specific case studies (cf. for example the studies on Jamaicans in Toronto by Hinrichs (2011, 2014)); studies on French-based creole languages are also limited to individual case studies (e.g. Hebblethwaite 1999; Mutz 2017).

Based on the presentation of concrete case studies, the aim of this volume is to develop fundamental research desiderata that creole studies should address in relation to diaspora studies. A major focus is on the conditions under which a creole language

---

1 A first project to address this desideratum has been the ZF-funded focus project “Creole languages in the diaspora” (2017-2021) at the University of Bremen.