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*Graças a Deusa* –  
(Social) media uses of  
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## *Graças a Deusa –* (Social) media uses of Pajubá, the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ dialect

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Previous research on Brazilian Portuguese shed light on how LGBTQIA+ communities use language. More specifically, they explored how LGBTQIA+ individuals use Pajubá, the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ dialect. However, LGBTQIA+ speak in that language remains underexplored due to the only recent appearance of Queer Linguistics in Brazil. This paper scrutinizes the language attitudes of native Brazilian Portuguese speakers toward using Pajubá on (social) media specifically, given that no studies to date have provided a substantial discussion on the topic. Primary data

come from an online Qualtrics survey completed by 910 participants promoted via social media and through a friend-of-a-friend technique. By analyzing the language attitudes of those speakers toward the uses of Pajubá on (social) media, this paper displays how the online/digital environment helps promote the dialect, contributing to the language variation of Brazilian Portuguese. Moreover, it shows some controversial uses of the dialect, for example, when non-LGBTQIA+ people, companies, and organizations appropriate Pajubá for performative allyship and commercial purposes. Lastly, it explains that the dialect creates a dialogue between people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+, showing how both groups embrace sexual and gender diversity and widely accept the language variation that Pajubá offers.

## 1 Introduction

Since the publication of foundational texts like “Beyond the Lavender Lexicon” (Leap 1995) and “Queerly Phrased” (Livia & Hall 1997), the field of Queer Linguistics (QL) has emerged as a vital area of scholarly inquiry, illuminating the intricate relationship between language and aspects of sexual and gender identity. While QL is firmly rooted in certain regions, notably the United States and other nations within the Global North, its development has been asymmetrical in regions such as those within the Global South (Leap 2021), exemplified by countries like Brazil.<sup>1</sup> This asymmetry partially arises from Brazil’s intricate socio-historical context, characterized by the emergence of queer activism and visibility, which exists in tension with prevailing conservative sociopolitical forces (Alves Vieira forthcoming). Although QL has expanded its focus beyond the lavender lexicon pertinent to LGBTQIA+ communities in different parts of

the world, its epistemological foundations may have overlooked significant linguistic phenomena. To address certain erasures within QL and to reflect the field’s commitment to African American/“quare”<sup>2</sup> linguistics (Johnson 2001), as well as other intersectional matters and endeavors, this study investigates the language attitudes of native Brazilian Portuguese (BP) speakers regarding Pajubá, known by lay people and the media as the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ dialect (Pati 2018).

While previous studies (published primarily in Portuguese) looked at Pajubá, explaining how LGBTQIA+ individuals and non-LGBTQIA+ people use the dialect (Lima 2017, Alves Vieira 2022 and forthcoming), there is a dearth of research about it published in English (Araújo 2022). In fact, the only text I found with substantial information in English about the dialect is Araújo’s (2022) book chapter titled *Pajubá*. Furthermore, although scholars have published exciting and valuable information about Pajubá, its use in more contemporary set-

<sup>1</sup> See Silva & Melo (2020) and Borba (2020) for more information about the development of QL in Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson (2001) reveals that many versions of queer theory tend to overlook issues of race and class or only address their impact in discursive rather than tangible ways. To address this gap, the author introduces “quare” studies as a redefined and practical application of queer theory that includes racialized sexual understanding.

tings, for instance, in (social) media, has been underexplored.

Through a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) of 910 responses to an online questionnaire, this article explores the language attitudes of native BP speakers toward the uses of Pajubá on (social) media, providing more insights into the dialect's current developments. The information provided here stems from a project titled *Is Portuguese becoming queer?*, which studies the factors inspiring the use of Pajubá and how it promotes language variation in BP.<sup>3</sup>

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explains the emergence of Pajubá and its development, discussing relevant literature about the dialect that contributed to the argument developed here. Section 3 describes the theoretical framework on language attitudes and QL used for the analysis presented. Section 4 explains the methodology used for the data collection and analysis, respectively. Section 5 presents and discusses the results, followed by a conclusion in Section 6.

## 2 Pajubá

Although there is no certainty regarding the exact moment that Pajubá emerged, it is clear that the dialect derived from the African culture from the colonial period (Araújo 2022, Barroso 2017). Brazil was the last American country to abolish slavery on May 13, 1888. During its slave trade from 1502 to 1860, it received more than 10 million enslaved Africans (Gomes 2019) who forcibly worked in land cultivation and mining (Mattoso 2001). In the aftermath of that period, African

languages influenced BP (Castro 2005), and Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé consolidated in the country (Araújo 2022).

Previous research showed that Candomblé has been an important channel for the survival of African linguistic and cultural heritage in Brazil since the religion has fostered a cultural and linguistic dialogue between the country and Africa. At times, African traditions and languages have been re-contextualized, re-invented, and re-imagined on Brazilian grounds (Araújo 2022, Capone 2007) – as in the case of Pajubá discussed in this paper. Such dialogue promoted the linguistic contact between BP and African languages of Yoruba or Bantu origins, given that practitioners of Candomblé used these languages during the religious ceremonies (Araújo 2022).

African traditions and religions have been marginalized in Brazil since colonial times because of more conservative ideologies, which, for example, link them to “evil” practices such as voodoo or “black magic” (Alves Vieira 2022; forthcoming). Despite this stigmatization, Candomblé has attracted LGBTQIA+ people to its temples (*terreiros* in Portuguese) due to its openness to sexual diversity, welcoming people from the LGBTQIA+ community who wanted to practice their faiths (Araújo 2022; Fry 1982; Matory 2005). This open-mindedness toward dissident sexualities and non-hegemonic gender identities allows the claim that Brazil's Candomblé has replicated the precolonial Yoruba cultural acceptance of same-sex sexual attraction (Onanuga 2022).

Lima (2017) explained that Candomblé became the place of contact between BP and African languages such as Yoruba – influencing

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<sup>3</sup> See Alves Vieira (2022 and forthcoming) for more information.

how individuals from the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ community spoke. Some LGBTQIA+ individuals who were practitioners of Candomblé acquired an African lexicon during the religious ceremonies that influenced their queer dialect. By codeswitching BP and Yoruba, they created Pajubá, “a practice of queer articulation proper of the Black Atlantic” (Araújo 2022: 297). In other words, the African vocabulary used in the Candomblé temples by those folks can be traced to the origins of Pajubá, also known today as the national LGBTQIA+ dialect.

Barroso (2017) and Cruz & Tito (2016) explained that Yoruba speakers in Brazil used their language in secrecy because of people’s prejudice against their cultural and religious identities. In Brazil, Pajubá was also used in secret when it was first articulated during the military dictatorship in 1964 by *travestis* (Lima 2017), a Brazilian non-normatively gendered community whose embodiment of the feminine gender in a male body is similar to that of trans women but whose linguistic identity is different (Borba & Ostermann 2007, Zimman 2018). These individuals were the first to use the dialect as “secret” or an “anti-language,” which Cameron & Kulick (2006) also described as a linguistic code that those who need to be secretive use to exclude outsiders. Given that the dictatorship’s ideology was homophobic, deeming homosexuals as “harmful, dangerous, contrary to the family, to prevailing morals, and to ‘good manners’” (Araújo 2022: 298), Pajubá was then used to fight against the state’s discriminatory practices and policies (Lima 2017). For example, according to Caio Araújo’s (2022) readings of Gabriela Araújo (2018) and Florentino (1998), *travestis*, sex workers used Pajubá strategically on the streets to ensure in-group communication and exclude outsiders, such as the po-

lice, who could not understand what they were saying. Some of these linguistic strategies of illegibility were constructing a clandestine and creative system of meaning, using the African lexicon, inventing hybrid words, resorting to slang, and reassembling these elements through figures of speech (Florentino 1998 as mentioned in Araújo 2022). At the end of the 70s and beginning of the 80s, readers of *O Lampião da Esquina*, the first Brazilian gay newspaper, popularized Pajubá (Trevisan 2018). In the 90s, the LGBTQIA+ community began to label “gay” slang and expressions by the name *Pajubá*, and magazines such as *G Magazine*, widely known in the country, and *Meio Termo*, popular in the city of Manaus, also helped the popularization and recognition of the dialect as innately LGBTQIA+ (Barroso 2017). In sum, the *terreiros* of Candomblé have served as a religious breathing space for marginalized LGBTQIA+ individuals, concomitantly fostering a code-switch between BP and African languages. More specifically, this cultural and linguistic exchange has provided LGBTQIA+ folks with the opportunity to learn and incorporate the Yoruba lexicon into their dialects, which has then been taken to the streets (Araújo 2022).

Regarding the secretive aspect of Pajubá, previous studies also suggested that the word *pajubá* itself originated in West African Yoruba-Nago languages, meaning ‘secret’ or ‘mystery’ (Barroso 2017). Nonetheless, as Barroso (2017) clarifies, Yoruba words can have different meanings when used in BP. For example, according to the author, the word *pajubá* also means ‘news’ or ‘gossip’. I echo Araújo’s (2022) concern that proving the soundness of these assertions is challenging because there is no clear explanation of the etymology and evolution of the lexical item *pajubá*. After consulting the lit-

erature used in this project, I again must agree with Araújo (2022: 295), who claims that the word *pajubá* “[...] has no specific meaning preceding and outside of the queer language practices that it names. Yet [...] the connotation of *pajubá* with ‘secret’ and ‘mystery’ may be productive if interpreted in relation to its social history, rather than as a result of its linguistic genealogy.”

While earlier studies have enhanced the understanding of Pajubá, a definitive agreement on whether it should be classified as a more intricate linguistic code, a dialect, a sociolect, a speech style, a register, or simply the slang used by the LGBTQIA+ community has not yet been reached (Alves Vieira forthcoming). Discussing the precise classification is outside the focus of this paper. For the sake of simplicity, I use the term dialect, following common usage in everyday speech and media (Pati 2018).

Previous studies also gathered information on the lexical items, slang, and expressions of Pajubá. For instance, Vip & Libi published in 2013 a Pajubá dictionary titled *Aurélia: the sharp-tongued dictionary* (my translation of the original title in Portuguese *Aurélia: a dicionária da língua afiada*), which brings 1,300 Pajubá entries. Given that the dialect keeps evolving, for instance, including words from different languages like English (Lima 2017), it is crucial to promote more studies about Pajubá to document its evolution and how it influences the linguistic repertoire of BP speakers, whether LGBTQIA+ or not.

As for more contemporary uses of the dialect, previous research demonstrated that

Pajubá continues to acquire new forms and occupy new settings. In 2018, Pajubá made headlines in the Brazilian media after it was featured in one question on the National High School Exam (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio* in Portuguese, also known as *ENEM*<sup>4</sup>). The multiple-choice question asked what gives Pajubá, the secret dialect of gays and *travestis* of Yoruba origin, the status of a dialect and linguistic heritage. The inclusion of the question was considered controversial by conservatives such as former President Jair Bolsonaro and his family, who discredited *ENEM*’s 2018 edition on social media, claiming that a question on Pajubá had no use in the exam and only served to groom the youth for becoming interested in “that particular language of those people,” the LGBTQIA+ community (Pati 2018).

In two different papers, I present the results and analysis of data subsets from the abovementioned project (Alves Vieira 2022; forthcoming), providing examples of Pajubá expressions used by cisgender straight women in Brazil and people who identify as LGBTQIA+, respectively. The first paper aims to show that because linguistic barriers are permeable, those with hegemonic gender and sexual identities also know and use Pajubá – and not only individuals of the LGBTQIA+ community. Interestingly, the 387 cisgender straight women surveyed for this paper had positive opinions toward Pajubá and how it fosters language variation in BP (Alves Vieira 2022).

The second text is a book chapter on the language ideologies toward the dialect (Alves Vieira forthcoming). This chapter offers three main reasons why people use Pajubá: Because

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<sup>4</sup> *ENEM*’s final grades can give students an advantage by being added to the final grade of the *vestibular*, a competitive examination and entrance system used by Brazilian universities to select students.

it is funny, to socialize, and to create a sense of belonging among members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Remarkably, among the least chosen reasons is to hide their LGBTQIA+ identity from family members and from non-LGBTQIA+ people. These results corroborate what the literature has shown; if Pajubá was used before to conceal people's sexual and gender identity, being used as a secret and anti-language, its usage now indexes funniness and enjoyment, socialization, and belonging. This chapter's results also show the widespread use of Pajubá on (social) media.

Silva (2018) showed that Pajubá users also create internet memes illustrating queer linguistic practices that display LGBTQIA+ representation and how the dialect fosters language variation in BP. Additionally, the dialect is used in TV shows, social media, and podcasts (Barroso 2017; Lau 2017), helping to spread Pajubá online within Brazil and elsewhere.

The online presence of Pajubá in/across (social) media is precisely what motivates the present study, whose objective is to understand how the uses of Pajubá in/across (social) media can explain the dialect's current developments and uses, including the participants' linguistic attitudes toward the dialect. Before presenting and discussing the results of this research, I will now describe the theoretical framework used to analyze the data.

### **3 Theoretical framework: Language attitudes and Queer Linguistics**

The study of language attitudes has its roots in the 1900s (Dragojevic 2017) and has garnered significant attention from scholars across the behavioral and social sciences as well as the humanities since the early 1930s (Kircher &

Zipp 2022), becoming a fundamental aspect of the social psychology of language, sociology of language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and communication studies (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). In recent decades, there has been a notable increase in the volume of studies on language attitudes (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). In the current climate of rapidly escalating globalization and migration, where interactions among diverse linguistic groups are increasingly commonplace, this line of research holds even more prominence (Kircher & Zipp 2022). The highly interdisciplinary framework governing the study of language attitudes has also led to a remarkable trend; researchers increasingly concur that 'cross-fertilization is desirable' in both theoretical and practical applications (Kircher & Zipp 2022). Following these assertions, this paper builds on theories and ideas surrounding language attitudes, encompassing individuals' beliefs, emotions, and actions regarding languages, dialects, varieties, and registers. Additionally, this study applies concepts from QL, a field that examines the interplay between sexuality, gender, and language, to investigate how Pajubá can illuminate ideas regarding Brazilian LGBTQIA+ identities while also examining potential conflicts with cisgender heterosexual counterparts and more conservative perspectives on sexual and gender diversity.

#### **3.1 Language attitudes**

Language attitudes refer to how individuals think about, feel toward, and respond to different languages, dialects, registers, and, most significantly, their respective speakers (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). These attitudes



reflect the evaluative reactions of individuals to a language variety, “a loosely bundled ‘set of linguistic items [e.g., lexical items, sounds, constructions] with similar social distribution’” (Hudson 1996: 22 as cited in Dragojevic 2017). The formation of these attitudes is linked to a two-step cognitive process involving social categorization and stereotyping (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). First, individuals use linguistic cues, such as sounds and lexical items, to identify the social group to which a speaker belongs (Dragojevic 2017). After this identification, they assign stereotypical characteristics associated with those group memberships (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022).

Language attitudes can be examined through two evaluative dimensions: status, which includes traits like intelligence and educational background, and solidarity, which encompasses attributes such as friendliness and warmth (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). Additionally, according to the tripartite perspective on attitudes articulated by Dragojevic (2017), language attitudes consist of three fundamental components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension pertains to individuals’ beliefs concerning various language varieties. The affective dimension encompasses their emotional responses towards these varieties, whereas the behavioral dimension relates to individuals’ tendencies or intentions in response to the use of different language varieties. A person’s attitude towards a specific language variety may encapsulate any combination of these components, which may manifest with varying prominence at different times. Furthermore, as asserted by Dragojevic (2017), prior studies have predominantly focused on the cognitive dimension of language attitudes, a tendency that is evident

within the literature on language attitudes and the analysis proposed in this paper.

According to Dragojevic (2017) and Kircher & Zipp (2022), language attitudes are socially constructed and developed through experience, typically occurring in early life and from multiple sources. Some examples are family, peers, neighbors, and those we meet as online acquaintances, journalists, and television personalities. Moreover, language attitudes can be expressed in multiple ways, one of which is through the representation of languages in media. This representation radically influences the development and manifestation of individuals’ attitudes toward languages, their varieties, and speakers. Given that language is a crucial marker of social identity, alterations in linguistic behaviors can reflect changing perceptions of specific groups. Due to this inherent relationship, individuals often respond to language as if it reflects the personal and social attributes of the speaker.

With this in mind, this paper contends that Pajubá, a once-secret dialect that developed as a means for communication among the LGBTQIA+ community in Brazil, is experiencing a transformation in both its recognition and applications, becoming increasingly acknowledged and utilized by a variety of social groups beyond that community (Alves Vieira 2022; forthcoming). As the dialect has evolved from a state of historical marginalization to one of increased acceptance and visibility, particularly evident across various media, it becomes crucial to analyze how this transformation is reflected in the language attitudes of individuals interacting with Pajubá. Furthermore, this examination reveals insights into the broader attitudes of Brazilians toward their LGBTQIA+ communities.



### 3.2 Queer Linguistics

Among its various projects and initiatives, QL investigates the construction of normativities, including cis-heteronormativity (Leap 2021), homonormativity (Duggan 2002), and trans-normativity (Zimman 2018). These normative frameworks establish regimes of intelligibility that shape the understanding and recognition of bodies, genders, and sexualities (Butler 2003). Considering that these normativities establish categorization and stereotyping of sexually and gender diverse groups, integrating QL with the theories explained above concerning language attitudes can illuminate the sociolinguistic processes that influence the changing perceptions of Pajubá and its speakers in Brazil. Furthermore, QL promotes intersectional frameworks in the examination of language, sexuality, and gender. This perspective underscores the importance of recognizing the interactions among various social categories and their effects on linguistic behaviors and attitudes.

In addition to analyzing the discursive construction of normativities, QL emphasizes the subversive potential of language (Motschenbacher & Stegu 2013). It particularly focuses on how marginalized groups, including the LGBTQIA+ community, strategically utilize linguistic resources and variables to contest hegemonic ideologies and affirm their identities. In other words, research in QL covers various themes, such as investigating how social experiences relate to normative practices and the regulatory limitations that come with them (Leap 2021). It recognizes that language, along with desire and different aspects of sexuality, acts as a crucial platform

where normativity and regulatory influence appear in daily life (Leap 2021).

Since its inception, Pajubá has served as a linguistic resource for self-expression, community affiliation, and resistance against cis-heteronormative ideologies within Brazilian society (Alves Vieira 2022, forthcoming; Araújo 2022). Given its historical function as a coded language for LGBTQIA+ communities in the country, Pajubá's evolving use and recognition offer a critical lens through which to explore how marginalized groups leverage language to navigate sociopolitical landscapes and confront normative perceptions toward sexual, gender, and linguistic diversity (Alves Vieira 2022, forthcoming; Araújo 2022).

In sum, this study also uses QL as a theoretical framework to analyze language attitudes toward Pajubá across media, recognizing the intricate relationship between language visibility in online settings and the construction of social identity (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). This theoretical cross-fertilization between QL and language attitudes scholarship allows this paper to emphasize how those dynamics influence not only the recent development of Pajubá but also the perceptions and representations of its users, particularly LGBTQIA+ communities in Brazil.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Data collection

An online survey was used to collect data on the project *Is Portuguese becoming queer?*. It was created on Qualtrics, an online platform that helps with the design and distribution of questionnaires and the analysis of the data, which also possesses an interface suitable for smart-

phone and PC users. This method was chosen because of its broad reach and ability to garner both quantitative and qualitative data (Sue & Ritter 2012).

Sue & Ritter's (2012) three-step Survey Process Flow was essential for the design of the survey: 1) delineating the objectives of the study; 2) revising the literature on the case study; and 3) launching and advertising the survey on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp), via email, and to personal contacts. Before launching the survey, a few colleagues who are native speakers of BP tested the questionnaire to ensure its validity, and the Ethics Committee of Leiden University reviewed and approved the methodology proposed.

To design the Qualtrics survey, I adapted some of the questions Kinyua (2017) used to analyze a queer community in Nairobi, Kenya. The author provides three main reasons for how such a community use their dialect(s): to create a sense of belonging; to conceal their identity from straight people; and to conceal their identity for fear of being arrested, oppressed, and stigmatized. Some of Kinuya's results reiterate the secretive aspect of languages and dialects like Pajubá in Brazil. However, the results presented in the publications mentioned above (Alves Vieira 2022; forthcoming) indicate that Pajubá is mainly used for different purposes in Brazil.

The survey starts with an introduction to the overall project, including an overview of the factors that influence the use of Pajubá in BP and how it helps to queerize the language. Additionally, before answering the survey items, survey takers were required to consent to their participation, which was anonymous and voluntary.

The first section of the questionnaire asks participants to share information about their background, such as age, gender, sexuality, and region/country of residence. The second section contains questions regarding their knowledge of Pajubá, its usage, and opinions toward the dialect, for example: 1) if participants know any Pajubá expressions typically used by the LGBTQIA+ community; 2) how often they or people they know use Pajubá; 3) why they think people use Pajubá; and 4) if they consider Pajubá expressions offensive in any way – this to name just a few. Specifically, this paper examines the qualitative output from question 22 of the online survey, which asks participants to provide reasons why people use Pajubá across media.

Methodological triangulation was applied in the survey with closed and open-ended questions to increase the internal validity of the research. The open-ended questions come in the last part of the survey, which was predominantly quantitative, with the aim of discouraging participants from dropping out prematurely.

The participants answered questions that applied to their individual situations, with follow-up questions aligned with their answers. For example, the first question after the consent screen concerned participants' ages. Only participants aged 18 and/or older were allowed to complete the questionnaire. If a participant gave their age as younger than 18, they were immediately directed to the last page, thanking them for their interest in participating. Besides being aged 18 or older, participants were required to be native speakers of BP, independent of the place of residence.

## 4.2 Participants

From February 2 to 16, 2021, Qualtrics registered 910 complete responses, which were used in the project. The results presented here broadly represent these participants' opinions. Participants were required to provide their gender or sexual identity during the survey. However, in this paper, I analyze everyone's responses regardless of their gender and sexual identities. As such, the responses discussed below comprise a generalized view of the participants in this regard. This includes all participants regardless of any other identity markers given other than age and native-speaker status. I am not cross-analyzing the data, for example, according to the different age categories or any other demographics.<sup>5</sup>

## 4.3 Thematic analysis

Employing Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, an inductive approach was applied to describe the themes within the data extracted from question 22 of the online questionnaire. The six steps proposed by the authors were also followed: 1) familiarization with the data; 2) coding; 3) generating themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) writing up. Section 4 also presents the data semantically and latently for theming, with the latter level applied only if further explanation of participants' ideas is required.<sup>6</sup>

The thematic analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti, a computer-assisted software

that aids in analyzing qualitative data for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research. First, I used Atlas.ti's artificial intelligence coding feature, available in languages like Portuguese, to identify main and sub-themes within the data. Then, I checked all the codes and recategorized them when necessary for accuracy. Each central code/theme was divided further into sub-codes/themes for more specificity. For example, *casual/informal*, *offensive/mockery*, and *digital communication*, to name a few.

## 5 Results and discussion

In this paper, I report on a data subset of the project to highlight views on the use of Pajubá on (social) media, specifically. I do not distinguish between the opinions of Pajubá users and non-users because although one may not use the dialect, they can still verify its presence on (social) media and beyond. Consequently, the discussion below comprises answers from all participants to the primary research question of this study: What are the language attitudes of BP native speakers toward the use of Pajubá on (social) media?

Of 910 participants who completed the survey, 11 left this question unanswered, and 32 wrote: 'I do not know.' From the participants reporting not knowing, some provided extra pieces of information. For example, one respondent mentioned that although they did not have an answer to this specific question, they wanted to participate in the survey to learn

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<sup>5</sup> As explained before, I already reported on the Pajubá knowledge, usages, and linguistic attitudes and ideologies toward the dialect by two groups, cisgender straight women and people who identify as LGBTQIA+, respectively, in Alves Vieira 2022 and forthcoming. Although the data presented here also comprises the answers from those participants, it has not been published anywhere, given that the present study focuses on the reasons why people use Pajubá on (social) media, specifically.

<sup>6</sup> See Braun & Clarke (2006) for more information on every step of thematic analysis.

more about Pajubá and help [the project, the researcher]. Despite ‘not knowing,’ another participant suggested that people use Pajubá on (social) media to mark group identity, in this case, the LGBTQIA+ community or because the dialect is already part of Brazilian people’s lives. The following analysis includes more specific answers.

### 5.1 Pajubá’s informality as a communicational purpose on (social) media

To the question, *Why do people use Pajubá slang and expressions on (social) media?*, a minority of respondents answered that they have not seen the dialect on such channels. However, most participants reported seeing people use Pajubá expressions on (social) media and further offered that because these channels allow for more informal communication, informality is an intrinsic trait of the dialect. These responses indicate that Pajubá is well adapted to the digital world precisely because of its informality, implying that people expect Pajubá to be used in informal contexts such as the entertainment online/digital world. For example, (social) media communicators who identify as LGBTQIA+ use the dialect more than their non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts.

- (1) “Porque o Pajubá é uma linguagem que se adaptou bem ao meio digital. Algumas palavras não seriam tão expressivas se ditas de outro jeito.”  
‘Because Pajubá is a language that adapted well to the digital medium. Some words

would not be that expressive if said in a different way.’<sup>7</sup>

- (2) “Para demonstrar uma forma de comunicação informal e descontraída.”  
‘To demonstrate an informal and casual form of communication.’
- (3) “Para descontração de determinados assuntos.”  
‘To relax certain subjects.’

### 5.2 Quick channels, quick language

The participants also emphasized that using expressions from Pajubá or any other (informal) dialect is quicker to convey information, making it more suitable for digital environments that require faster communication, such as social media platforms. Likewise, some participants reported that using slang and expressions generally can be more effective than expressing ideas with more formal and complex sentences.

- (4) “[...] Nas redes, vejo usos mais democráticos; gírias são úteis e divertidas porque condensam muitas infos, então, trazem agilidade à comunicação nas redes sociais.”  
‘[...] On social media, I see more democratic uses; slang is useful and funny because it condenses much information, so it brings agility to communication on social media.’

### 5.3 Pajubá’s funniness as a stylizing linguistic tool

Some participants reported that Pajubá is a funny, warm, welcoming “language” that

<sup>7</sup> For the sake of legibility, I corrected the punctuation, accentuation, and orthography. No words were added or substituted by synonyms in the original quotes. Additionally, I translated all the sentences into English.

makes communication “lighter” and “more relaxed,” which relates to its informal aspect shown above. The funniness/enjoyment that Pajubá brings to communication became evident in the data, with participants reporting that it helps them to stylize themselves comically, for example, in their writing or speaking. The humor of Pajubá can also be found in viral social media posts, spread through memes and LGBTQIA+ videos to users with different levels of fluency as well as to non-users across the country and beyond.

- (5) “Porque são bem conhecidas e em sua maioria são engraçadas.”  
‘Because they are very well-known, and most of them are funny.’
- (6) “Porque é um dialeto que possui algumas gírias que são engraçadas e geram comentários cômicos.”  
‘Because it is a dialect with some funny slang and generates comical comments.’
- (7) “Essas gírias deixam o assunto mais leve ou até mesmo mais divertido, deixando claro quem é o locutor do assunto.”  
‘This slang makes the subject lighter or even funnier, making clear who the speaker of the subject is.’
- (8) “Para sinalizar que são/simpatizam com LGBTQIA+, porque falam assim normalmente, para tentar criar identificação com o público, porque dá estilo ou humor à escrita.”  
‘To signal they are/sympathize with LGBTQIA+ [people/topics], because they normally talk like this, to try to create identification with the public, because it gives style or humor to the writing.’
- (9) “Acho que elas utilizam mais por influência de memes ou vídeos LGBTQIA+ que virali-

zam, porque acham divertidas/engraçadas as expressões.”

‘I think that they use it mostly because of the influence of LGBTQIA+ memes or videos that go viral; because they think the expressions are funny.’

The language attitudes that highlight Pajubá’s humorous use in various media provide valuable insights into humor’s role as a form of identity expression. As mentioned in my previous work (Alves Vieira forthcoming), the humor of Pajubá enables its users to navigate intricate social environments and challenge linguistic conventions, yet it can also reinforce harmful stereotypes and ideologies concerning the LGBTQIA+ community, as discussed below. While Pajubá’s humor can make “the subject lighter or even funnier,” it is essential to critically assess it to prevent the endorsement of prevailing power dynamics. In the end, the humor inherent in Pajubá reflects both a challenge to oppression and the potential risk of upholding dominant narratives about LGBTQIA+ identities in Brazil. Such duality also relates to the questions of stereotypes and normativities that both the language attitudes and QL literature discuss.

#### 5.4 Pajubá, media, and stereotypes

According to these participants, people also use Pajubá in other media like TV, news programs, soap operas, series, and films with an LGBTQIA+ thematic – which sometimes portray stereotypical, pejorative ideas of LGBTQ-ness. As exemplified in the responses below, Pajubá is also used to mock or offend LGBTQIA+ individuals. For example, Pajubá is used to create a caricature of these people,

which is sometimes an artificial portrait of their identities. One participant mentioned that some non-LGBTQIA+ people overuse the verb *lacrar* 'to slay'<sup>8</sup> to ridicule queer people.

- (10) "Acredito que, na maioria das vezes, para compor personagens, no caso de filmes, séries e novelas. Porém, acaba sendo quase sempre um instrumento de reafirmar estereótipos e não de retratar a comunidade."  
'I believe that most of the time, to compose characters, in the case of films, series, and soap operas. However, it almost always ends up being an instrument of reaffirming stereotypes and not of portraying the community.'
- (11) "Eu acho que é para estigmatizar a comunidade LGBT. Eu nunca vi um programa de TV utilizar Pajubá sem ser em um contexto discriminatório."  
'I think it is to stigmatize the LGBT community. I have never seen a TV program utilize Pajubá without it being in a discriminatory context.'
- (12) "É comum em filmes, principalmente ligados a temática LGBTQIA+. E, infelizmente, em programas humorísticos."  
'It is common in films, mainly linked to the LGBTQIA+ theme. And, unfortunately, in comedy programs.'
- (13) "Normalmente, como uma forma de chacota, construção de personagem caricato."  
'Normally, as a form of mockery, construction of a caricatured character.'
- (14) "Na mídia, geralmente, observo a utilização para identificar um indivíduo

homossexual, de forma a estereotipar este grupo."

'In the media, generally, I observe its use [as a way] to identify a homosexual individual, as a way to stereotype this group.'

- (15) "Pessoas LGBTQ+ usam por fazer parte de sua maneira de falar. Héteros usam, muitas vezes, para estereotipar."  
'LGBTQ+ people use it because it is part of how they speak. Straight people use it, many times, to stereotype.'
- (16) "Para parodiar as gays, estereotipá-las."  
'To parody the gays, to stereotype them.'
- (17) "Para reforçar estereótipos da comunidade LGBTQIA+."  
'To reinforce the stereotypes of the LGBTQIA+ community.'
- (18) "1- Para se comunicar com o público LGBTQIA+. 2- Para debochar das ações desse público (muito claro no uso do termo 'lacrar' atualmente). 3- Em alguns casos, até para dar um tom cômico à fala."  
'1- To communicate with the LGBTQIA+ public. 2- To mock this public's actions (currently very common in the use of the term 'lacrar'). 3- In some cases, even to give a comical tone to the speech.'

The earlier discussion on language attitudes (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022) reveals that minority groups utilize in-group language to foster unity, identity, and a sense of community. Conversely, the dominant group might exploit these same language varieties to ridicule, stereotype, and discriminate. This trend can be observed in the responses regarding the use of Pajubá in media and popular culture.

<sup>8</sup> Similar to the verb 'slay' in English, *lacrar* is used to express admiration and to praise someone who has done something exceptionally well. For example: *Ela lacrou naquela dublagem*. [She slayed in that lip sync].



Overall, participants indicate that Pajubá serves dual functions in the Brazilian media environment, being used for both empowerment and stigmatization. When people do not know each other well, their assumptions about how the other person is likely to communicate can influence their perceptions (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). Using a less esteemed language style than expected typically results in harsher evaluations, while using a more esteemed language variety than anticipated generally results in more favorable assessments (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). Consequently, the ambiguous usage of Pajubá in media illustrates the intricate social dynamics related to linguistic diversity. Additionally, it illustrates broader language ideologies that favor certain communication practices – and the individuals who use them – as more valid and appealing than others (Alves Vieira forthcoming).

Dragojevic (2017) also suggests that regular exposure to stereotypical media representations can affect the development of language attitudes in at least two ways. First, such media exposure can contribute to the formation of language-related stereotypes by influencing how viewers perceive the typical traits linked to different linguistic communities and by providing concrete examples through characters that embody various language forms. Second, it can reinforce pre-existing language stereotypes by making them more readily retrievable from long-term memory. Media acts as a significant socializing influence for individuals who are beginning to establish or have yet to create stereotypes concerning various linguistic communities, including the LGBTQIA+ groups discussed here. For many individuals, media may serve as their main or sole means of encoun-

tering a particular language variety, in this case, Pajubá. Consequently, it holds substantial significance in shaping stereotypes about language varieties that individuals may not frequently encounter daily; in this case, it is assumed that if one identifies as LGBTQIA+, one must speak and act in a certain way.

### 5.5 Pajubá in vogue: “everybody uses it”

The survey takers also explain that using Pajubá can index trendiness and modernity. Moreover, the dialect is used online to catch people’s attention because it is “cool” and “in vogue.”

- (19) “Virou moda.”  
‘It became trendy.’
- (20) “Por diversão, por achar que isso as torna ‘cool’, descoladas e pertencentes a um grupo social diferenciado.”  
‘For fun, to believe that this makes them [...], cool and belonging to a different social group.’
- (21) “Pra se sentirem em comunidade e estar em vogue.”  
‘To feel they are in a community and be in vogue.’
- (22) “Para se sentir ou se mostrar como parte de uma comunidade ‘descolada’.”  
‘To feel or show themselves as part of a ‘cool’ community.’
- (23) “Para atingir a todos os públicos, parecerem descolados, modernos e não se identificarem como preconceituosos.”  
‘To reach every public, to look cool, modern and to not identify themselves as prejudiced.’
- (24) “Para se reconhecerem como ‘pessoas descoladas’.”



‘To recognize themselves as ‘cool people.’

- (25) “Para parecerem descoladas, especialmente se forem hétero. Os LGBTs usam como forma de pertencimento/identidade (todo mundo usa).”

‘To look cool, especially if they are straight. The LGBT [people] use it as a matter of belonging/identity (everybody uses it).’

In addition to the communicative functions of Pajubá discussed earlier, two significant social-structural factors influence how language attitudes toward a language variety develop and are expressed: standardization and vitality (Ryan et al. 1982 as cited in Kircher & Zipp 2022). Standardization involves creating formal norms that define the ‘correct’ use of a language, often outlined in dictionaries and grammar books recognized by the relevant speech community (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). This process is frequently supported and legitimized by institutions like the government, educational systems, and mass media (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). Consequently, the standard language becomes associated with these institutions, the typical interactions that occur within them, and the values they represent (Kircher & Zipp 2022). Furthermore, the degree of linguistic similarity between the standardized variety and the emerging standard significantly affects speakers’ attitudes (Kircher & Zipp 2022). The second structural factor affecting language attitudes, vitality, refers to the level of interaction networks that employ a specific variety for essential purposes (Dragojevic 2017; Kircher & Zipp 2022). As explained by Ryan et al. (1982 as cited in Kircher & Zipp 2022), “[t]he more numerous and important the func-

tions served by the variety for a large number of individuals, the greater its vitality.”

Regarding Pajubá’s standardization, one could argue that this dialect exists outside the recognized frameworks and institutional support that confer status and prestige to standard BP and its various dialects. Nevertheless, the development of *Aurélia*, the Pajubá dictionary, Pajubá’s inclusion in the ENEM exam, and its increasing presence in media and popular culture indicate efforts to document and legitimize the dialect. Regarding vitality, the survey findings highlight that both LGBTQIA+ communities and individuals beyond these groups commonly use Pajubá. Although Pajubá does not possess the formal recognition or widespread use that standardized dialects of BP enjoy, and despite facing opposition from more conservative branches of Brazilian society, including institutional politics, it still retains importance and relevance for those who speak it. As a result, when participants indicate that Pajubá is in vogue and that everyone uses it, they refer to its linguistic vitality and its increasing presence within the broader linguistic landscape of Brazil, more specifically (across) media.

Regarding the theoretical perspectives from QL, the data discussed here indicates that linguistic diversity can be utilized either to challenge or reinforce existing social hierarchies. For instance, while the use of Pajubá may signal trendiness and modernity for some individuals, it can also lead to the marginalization and stereotyping of gender and sexual minorities, particularly when controversially adopted by individuals from the dominant group, such as those who are non-LGBTQIA+. Interestingly, the perceptions of Pajubá as fashionable illustrate a complicated interplay of language, identity, and power within Brazilian society, as

these perceptions represent broader and more nuanced language ideologies that cannot be simply categorized as straightforward (Alves Vieira forthcoming).

## 5.6 Pinkwashing, pink money, and misappropriation

Given that Pajubá is considered trendy, modern, current, in vogue, and cool, it is frequently appropriated by companies and organizations for the purposes of seeking profit by targeting the purchasing power of LGBTQIA+ individuals, also known as “pink money.” Indeed, companies worldwide try to attract pink money through “pinkwashing,” which entails presenting businesses as supportive and inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community in marketing or public relations while also supporting or engaging in policies and activities that directly compromise LGBTQIA+ rights. Survey participants were critical of using Pajubá in such a performative manner,<sup>7</sup> which is very common during Pride Month (Kane 2022).

- (26) “Para ganhar dinheiro. Pink money.”  
‘To earn money. Pink money.’
- (27) “Pink money/engajamento.”  
‘Pink money/engagement.’
- (28) “Para atráírem o público LGBTQIA+, o famoso pink money.”  
‘To attract the LGBTQIA+ public, the famous pink money.’
- (29) “Para atingir o público LGBTQIA+. Porém, alguns usam para conscientizar e trazer informação, enquanto outros buscam somente o Pink Money.”  
‘To reach the LGBTQIA+ public. However, some use it to raise awareness and bring

information while others only look for the Pink Money.’

- (30) “Se por pessoas gays: representatividade e sensação de pertencimento. Se por pessoas héteros ou empresas: tentativa de chamar atenção (vergonha alheia) da comunidade ou gerar lucro.”  
‘If [used] by gay people: representation and sense of belonging. If [used] by straight people or companies: to try to draw attention (vicarious embarrassment) from the community or generate profit.’

Additionally, the resignification of some Yoruba lexical items commonly used in the *terreiros* of Candomblé is mentioned in the data, raising controversies concerning religious uses and cultural misappropriation. One participant reported that, at times, the original meanings of some Yoruba words can change outside the *terreiros* when used as Pajubá, and this makes them uncomfortable. The example provided here is the word *padê*, which in Yoruba refers to one of the Candomblé’s rituals that offers food and drinks to Exu, a Candomblé deity. According to the participant, *padê* is used outside the *terreiros* of Candomblé by some Pajubá speakers as a synonym for drugs, specifically cocaine.

- (31) “Para mostrar que conhecem, que estão por dentro, que são irreverentes, mesmo sem conhecer. Muitas dessas gírias são usadas em terreiros de candomblé [...] quando vejo alguém falando padê, que é oferenda a Exu, como se fosse droga, a cocaína, eu fico um pouco desconfortável.”  
‘To show that they know, that they are on top of the situation, that they are irreverent, even if they don’t know. Many of these

expressions are used in the temples of candomblé [...] when I hear someone saying *padê*, which is an offer to Exu, as if it was a drug, cocaine, I get a little uncomfortable.'

The literature on language attitudes discussed above explains that language attitudes are acquired and thus susceptible to change. These attitudes can shift due to alterations in intergroup dynamics or due to the social context in which they are activated. When these attitudes are triggered, they can lead to various behaviors, often resulting in negative outcomes such as prejudice, discrimination, and challenging social interactions. This reflection sheds light on the ambivalence and complexities surrounding how Pajubá is perceived within Brazilian society. For instance, the literature reviewed for this paper (Section 2) indicates that Pajubá has faced both appreciation and stigma since its historical roots in Candomblé temples and its popularization by *travestis* on the streets of Brazil during the dictatorship, resulting in a variety of uses and attitudes towards the dialect and consequently its users. The participants surveyed for this research recognize the ambivalence and complexities involved as they deal with the conflicting feelings of celebrating the linguistic innovation promoted by Pajubá while also criticizing the misappropriation, stereotyping, and commercialization of the dialect in present Brazilian society. It seems that since its emergence, Pajubá has been a site of contestation, where language attitudes, identity affirmation, and dynamics of power have intersected in complex and various ways (Alves Vieira forthcoming).

## 5.7 Welcome to the valley!

Aside from being used for socialization and to attract individuals of the LGBTQIA+ community through controversial means, as in the case of pink money, Pajubá is used on (social) media as a way to increase the community's visibility. In other words, the use of the dialect is interpreted as a conscious political choice to bring awareness to LGBTQIA+ issues. Some Pajubá speakers use the dialect to communicate and reaffirm their queerness online, for instance, by showing that they proudly "belong to the valley," a phrase in Pajubá which means to identify as LGBTQIA+ (*pertencer ao vale* in Portuguese). Trans folks and *travestis* were also reported to be at the forefront of such a fight for identity recognition and promotion, which the specialized literature of this project has confirmed (Araújo 2022, Barroso 2017, Lima 2017).

(32) "Mostrar que fazem parte do vale."

'To show that they belong to the valley.'

(33) "Por se sentirem incluídos no vale e para se comunicar com os iguais, além de desmistificar a comunidade."

'To feel they are part of the valley and to communicate with their equals, besides demystifying the community.'

(34) "Vejo como resistência. É um dialeto que carrega todo um histórico cultural da vivência LGBT+, em destaque as trans e travestis que carregam esse movimento nas costas."

'I see it as resistance. It is a dialect that carries an entire cultural history of the LGBT+ experience, especially trans [women] and *travestis* who carry this movement on their shoulders.'

Some participants also suggested that LGBTQ-ness is more acceptable online, in contrast with the offline world. This suggestion becomes more evident when consulting the literature used in the project that described Brazil as one of the most LGBTQIA+phobic countries worldwide and the most violent place for transgender folks specifically (Simpson 2022). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that some LGBTQIA+ individuals feel safer expressing their sexual and gender identities online.

- (35) “Usualmente nas redes sociais e em círculos sociais onde há uma forte presença da comunidade LGBTQIA+. Por serem parte da identidade da comunidade e por estreitar os laços sociais dos indivíduos da comunidade e também daqueles que simpatizam com ela.”

‘Usually on social media and in social circles where there is a strong presence of the LGBTQIA+ community. For being part of the community’s identity and to strengthen the social bonds of individuals of the community and also of those who sympathize with it.’

- (36) “Acho que as pessoas da comunidade estão alcançando um lugar de fala e saindo dos próprios círculos, então, suas gírias estão chegando a outros grupos de pessoas. Assim, na internet, as pessoas pegam as expressões que fazem sentido pra elas e

as incorporam no seu vocabulário. Talvez uma forma de acolher ou ser acolhido pela comunidade LGBTQIA+!”

‘I think that people in the community are reaching a ‘place of speech’<sup>9</sup> and leaving their own circles, so their slang is reaching other groups of people. So, on the internet, people take the expressions that make sense to them and incorporate them into their vocabulary. Maybe, a way to welcome or be welcomed by the LGBTQIA+ community!’

The survey answers also highlight the secretive aspect of Pajubá. Participants reiterated that Pajubá users sometimes do not want outsiders to understand what is being communicated or discussed.

- (37) “Para truncar a comunicação e selecionar apenas um pequeno grupo que vai entender o que está escrito.”

‘To restrict communication and select only a small group of people that will understand what is written.’

## 5.8 Pajubá building bridges between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ speakers

If Pajubá was a secret language before, used only “in the valley,” it is now a cultural and linguistic heritage available to any BP speaker,

<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese meaning of *lugar de fala* cannot be translated accurately into English, for example, as ‘place of speech’, although this is a possible translation. Djamila Ribeiro, a Black Brazilian feminist philosopher, popularized the Portuguese term. In short, Ribeiro proposes that *lugar de fala* refers to a social locus in the world ‘inhabited’ by a speaker/social subject, discursively constructed by their own lived experiences, which allows them to share such experiences the way they perceive it. For instance, the *lugar de fala* of queer folks gives them the authority to narrate their firsthand experiences, such as what it means to be a Brazilian LGBTQIA+ person and how to deal with prejudice, LGBTQ-phobia, stigmatization, etc. Contrarily, non-LGBTQIA+ folks who have not lived those experiences cannot discuss them with the same level of knowledge and accuracy, given that they have never ‘inhabited’ that *lugar de fala*. The term has connotations similar to ‘positionality’, ‘standpoint’, and ‘point of view’ in English.

as I showed in Alves Vieira (2022). According to some answers, the interaction between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ cultures has become more fluid, and in particular, the increased interest that (presumably) non-LGBTQIA+ people have in learning Pajubá facilitates this. In other words, Pajubá helps to connect both groups.

- (38) “O Pajubá, nascido no meio LGBTI+ tem a cada dia conquistado espaço e respeito, assim como a própria comunidade. Acredito que também seja uma das formas de aceitação pela sociedade. Uma forma não apenas de aceitar/respeitar o indivíduo, mas como também seu mundo. A disseminação/uso do Pajubá tem ajudado a aproximá-los.”  
 ‘Pajubá, born in the LGBTI+ community, has gained space and respect each day, as the community itself. I believe it is also a form of acceptance by society. A way of not only accepting/respecting the individual but also their world. The dissemination/use of Pajubá has helped bring them closer.’

As previously discussed, on the one hand, participants highlight that the dialect is intrinsically LGBTQIA+ and, therefore, used by the LGBTQIA+ community to create a sense of belonging (online), asserting that the community is “coming out of its circle” because there is more acceptance and tolerance “outside of it.” Moreover, it is used to interact with friends and family who also opt to use

the dialect as a way to make LGBTQIA+ folks feel welcome and comfortable. In other words, using Pajubá can construct a (queer) identity that embraces sexual and gender diversity, even if it is not always “consciously”<sup>10</sup> adopted for this purpose. Those who know Pajubá, whether users of the dialect or not, have always understood it to be the “language” of the LGBTQIA+ community.

On the other hand, participants also reported that Pajubá expressions are already part of the day-to-day communication of BP speakers regardless of gender and sexuality, suggesting that using the dialect across media has become natural and inevitable. For instance, the participants suggest that some Pajubá expressions are easy to learn and understand, and these represent examples that “everyone” uses the most. One participant provided a specific example with the word *viado* (similar to ‘faggot’ in English), affirming that cisgender straight men no longer take offense when addressed with such a word. Elaborating on the answer, this participant demonstrated awareness of the semantic and pragmatic evolution of the term *viado*, explaining that its use is contextual and may vary depending on the interlocutors’ relationship, sexuality, and gender identity. In sum, one can use *viado* to either offend someone or show closeness, familiarity, intimacy, and friendship. This participant’s answer raises interesting questions regarding the evolution of Pajubá and its pragmatics, such as if other slang and expressions have expanded

<sup>10</sup> The participant here used the word *racionalmente* ‘rationally’, but based on the context of their answer, I translated it into ‘consciously’. The exact words in Portuguese are: *É uma questão de construção identitária, de se sentir parte de um grupo e por isso adotar, nem sempre racionalmente, a linguagem que o identifica*. Translated into English as: ‘It is a matter of identity construction, to feel that one belongs to a group and therefore adopts, not always consciously, a language that identifies such a group.’

upon their original meanings and uses; and if so, which ones?

- (39) “[...] Viado, utilizado na comunidade gay, soa diferente do usado na comunidade hétero. Já vem sendo usada como forma de chamar, principalmente, homens amigos e héteros. Tenho percebido isso no dia a dia, porém, não afeta/gera revolta no caso de ser conhecido.”  
‘[...] Faggot, used in the gay community, sounds different from how it is used in the straight community. It has already been used as a way to address, mainly, male friends and straights. I have noticed this on a daily basis, however, it does not affect/generate anger in the case of [the interlocutor] being an acquaintance.’

Some non-LGBTQIA+ Pajubá users use the dialect in allyship with the LGBTQIA+ community by embracing sexual and gender diversity. However, a few participants showed discomfort in seeing non-queer people using Pajubá because it can sometimes come off as an appropriation of queerness. They suggest that some non-LGBTQIA+ people use the dialect to convey open-mindedness while also holding prejudice against LGBTQIA+ individuals; this practice resembles the performative allyship employed by companies and organizations during Pride month, as discussed earlier.

Kircher & Zipp (2022: 11) state that when studying language attitudes, it is crucial to recognize that they typically encompass two primary evaluative aspects: status and solidarity. Kircher and Zipp, drawing on the insights of Woolard (1989) and Ryan et al. (1982), clarify that the difference between status and solidarity is rooted in the inclination to progress somehow

(status) versus the wish to be accepted by a social group (solidarity). In other words, a prestigious language variety is inherently associated with power, enhanced economic opportunities, and the possibility of social mobility. As a result, perceptions regarding the status of such a variety are linked to its tangible advantages. Conversely, a variety that is positively regarded in terms of solidarity tends to evoke sentiments of connection and belonging, encapsulating significant social connotations. It serves as a symbol of the social group with which individuals align themselves. Therefore, attitudes pertaining to the solidarity dimension are closely related to a sense of loyalty within the group. This theoretical framework allows for an analysis of how both LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ individuals perceive and use Pajubá through the concepts of status and solidarity. For LGBTQIA+ individuals, employing Pajubá may serve to affirm their identity, foster community ties, and demonstrate their relationship with a queer culture, which reflects group solidarity. Conversely, when non-LGBTQIA+ individuals use Pajubá, it may be seen as a way to showcase their progressive attitudes and acceptance, highlighting status-driven reasons for their language choices. This is particularly relevant as Pajubá is linked to marginalized sexual and gender identities and has been increasingly recognized in Brazil, appearing not only in everyday conversations but also in national educational assessments and notably on social media.

The participants stressed that social media platforms are democratic spaces where anyone can express themselves as they wish, allowing Pajubá and other dialects to flourish. In their words, Pajubá and other dialects are no longer restricted to in-group settings, and social media



makes language variation more evident and approachable. Interestingly, these participants substantiate their answers by naming different communities that also contribute to the language variation of BP, such as youth, 'punks,' 'preppy boys,' 'playboys,' 'straight boys,' *caipiras* ('from the countryside' in English, which can also be derogatory, similar to 'hillbilly' or 'redneck'), and those from the *quebrada* (similar to the 'hood' in English). One participant who mentions the *quebrada* offers the word *mano* as an example (the short for *hermano* in Spanish, and similar to *bro* in English). The participant explained that the word *mano* is no longer used only by people from the *quebrada*; its use has been popularized, and the same has happened with Pajubá expressions. By discussing how a dialect can travel online, reaching different parts of the country, these participants explained that anyone from any region could use any dialect, such as Pajubá.

- (40) "Talvez pelo mesmo motivo que punks, por exemplo, se comunicam de acordo com seus próprios termos. Fomenta uma relação de correspondência e familiaridade."  
'Maybe for the same reason that punks, for example, communicate among themselves according to their own terms. It fosters a relationship of correspondence and familiarity.'
- (41) "Acredito que seja uma forma de comunicação e de identidade, assim como os jovens tem gírias que fazem parte do cotidiano de suas 'tribos'."  
'I believe it is a form of communication and identity, as the youth have slang that is part of their daily lives and their 'tribes'.'
- (42) "São gírias, como outras quaisquer. Conheço pouco, eu me perco nessas conversas,

mas acho natural que isso exista. Há gírias de 'playboy' e de 'hétero-padrão' também."  
'They are slang, as any other. I know a little; I get lost in these conversations, but I think it is natural that this exists. There is the 'playboy's' slang and 'conventional straight man's,' too.'

- (43) "Acredito que utilizam como marca identitária de um grupo, já que o pajubá é uma variante social, da mesma forma que em contextos adequados o grupo de certas regiões interioranas utiliza a variante caipira, por exemplo."  
'I believe they use it as a group's identity marker, given that Pajubá is a social variety, the same way that, in adequate contexts, the group from certain countryside regions use the *caipira* variety, for example.'
- (44) "Pq acham engraçado e acabam trazendo o universo glbt para fora do grupo... ex: quando alguém que não é da 'quebrada', 'mano', usa uma gíria deste grupo."  
'Bc they think that it is funny and end up bringing the glbt universe outside of the group... i.e.: as when someone that is not from the 'quebrada', 'mano', use a slang from this group.'
- (45) "O dialeto Pajubá já se tornou parte da expressão oral da população. LGBTQIA+ utilizam por fazer parte de sua identidade."  
'The Pajubá dialect has already become part of the population's oral expression. LGBTQIA+ [people] use it because it is part of their identity.'
- (46) "Mostrando mais respeitos pelas pessoas, podendo demonstrar que qualquer pessoa, independente de região, pode falar."  
'Showing more respect to people, being able to demonstrate that anyone, regardless of [their] region, can speak it.'



(47) “Porque elas se tornaram parte da linguagem nacional.”

‘Because they have become part of the national language.’

(48) “Em geral, para se expressarem na sua comunidade de amigos e familiares? Eu não vejo muito na mídia, apenas em personagens caricatos, o que parece artificial. Mas no dia a dia, nas redes, várixs amigxs e amigues usam naturalmente, como acontece com qualquer outra gíria cujo uso remete suas relações de linguagem cotidianas. Eu cresci na favela e muitas gírias que fazem parte do meu vocabulário cotidiano só são entendidas no morro mesmo. Então é uma forma de se comunicar com seu grupo, mas não se restringe a ele.”

‘In general, to express themselves in their community of friends and family? I don’t see it much in the media, just in caricatured characters, which seems artificial. But in everyday life, on social media, many friends<sup>11</sup> use it naturally, as with any other slang whose use reflects their everyday language relationships. I grew up in the *favela*,<sup>12</sup> and many expressions that are part of my daily vocabulary are only understood in the *morro*<sup>13</sup> itself. So, it is a way to communicate with one’s group, but it is not restricted to it.’

As the literature and analysis of the results showed, Pajubá’s uses have changed

throughout the years, and (social) media has contributed to the evolution and diffusion of the dialect. Whether in more open or conservative settings, Pajubá has undeniably occupied its place as a dialect of Brazil, marked by social controversies such as discrimination and exclusion but also by acceptance due to its current, vibrant, humorous aspects and various communicational purposes (Alves Vieira 2022). Given its history and the fact that it is no longer used exclusively by LGBTQIA+ folks, could we think of the dialect as a linguistic performance that expresses a non-conformist progressive identity in a broader sense? In pursuit of an answer, future research could investigate how Pajubá indexes progressiveness beyond the realm of sexual and gender identities.

## 6 Final considerations

This paper described linguistic attitudes toward the use of Pajubá, the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ dialect, on social media. It explained that after being subjugated as a minority anti-language throughout its history, the dialect established itself in the country, firstly in LGBTQIA+ communities and, more recently, in non-LGBTQIA+ ones. Such establishment has been further strengthened by the use of the dialect across media.

This paper utilized a theoretical framework that integrates perspectives from Pa-

<sup>11</sup> Please note that the participant used the inclusive form of the word *amigos/as*, including in their discourse non-binary identities that are usually neglected by Portuguese grammatical gender binarism. Such practice is common amongst the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ community, allies, and speakers of Pajubá.

<sup>12</sup> Similar to *shantytown* in English, *favela* is a Portuguese word used to describe low-income neighborhoods in the peripheries of Brazil. Some people dislike the word due to its association with criminality and stigmatization. Nowadays, many Brazilians prefer the word *comunidade* (‘community’) instead to refer to such neighborhoods, a word with more positive connotations.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Hill’ in English, a synonym of *favela*.

jubá literature with language attitudes and QL research. It examined the transformation of Pajubá from a subcultural code into a wider linguistic phenomenon that reflects more progressive sociolinguistic and cultural values in Brazil. Through an online survey and a thematic analysis, this study investigated the language attitudes of BP speakers toward using Pajubá on (social) media, given that, to my knowledge, no studies to date have provided more substantial information on the matter in Portuguese or English. Particularly, informed by the theoretical perspectives offered by QL (Leap 2021; Motschenbacher & Stegu 2013; Zimman 2018), this analysis helped uncover the intricate relationship among language usage, the formation of sexual and gender identity, and power dynamics within the Brazilian context.

The data illustrates how sexual and gender minorities utilize language to construct and express their identities while some members of dominant groups (i.e., cisgender straight people) exploit the same linguistic practices to marginalize and stereotype these individuals (Alves Vieira forthcoming). This aligns with QL's emphasis on understanding how language functions as a mechanism for affirming or challenging social identities and structures of power, reflecting the discussions proposed in the literature concerning language attitudes. According to the participants, the dialect is used in (social) media for different communicational purposes, ranging from creating a sense of belonging to LGBTQIA+ folks to establishing a dialogue between these and non-LGBTQIA+ communities. Additionally, using the dialect online index humor/funniness, coolness, and trendiness due to its modern aspects that help spread the dialect within Brazil and beyond.

Some participants reported negative attitudes towards the uses of Pajubá in (social) media, such as for marketing and commercial purposes and appropriating the dialect through pinkwashing and other forms of disingenuous allyship. However, most of the survey responses reported positive attitudes toward it.

According to the above analysis, the participants accept that language, in this case, BP, constantly changes, and embracing it is the most reasonable response. Different dialects foster such a change. Pajubá is no exception because it has become popular among Brazilians, occupying informal settings such as social media platforms and formal ones like the National High School Exam, *ENEM*.

This study also showed that anyone can use Pajubá, regardless of their location, since it is spread nationally and quickly diffused via (social) media in LGBTQIA+ memes, videos, podcasts, and other sources of information. These findings lead to a few unanswered questions that deserve greater attention. For instance, is Pajubá present in other Portuguese-speaking countries and Lusophone communities? Do speakers of Portuguese as a second language use Pajubá? If so, how and for which purposes? What is its reach if Pajubá can travel online as any other dialect? Does it influence LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ communities beyond Brazil? In other words, studying Pajubá is a promising endeavor within a variationist or linguistic anthropological project.

On this note, I end this study with one participant's answer to the primary research question of this paper, which, in my opinion, symbolizes the struggle to recognize Pajubá as a dialect and linguistic heritage as proposed in the *ENEM*'s question. Although the dialect is not fully accepted in Brazilian society and cre-

ates a stir when it enters more formal and institutional spaces due to ongoing prejudice against sexual and gender diversity, it is undeniable that Pajubá is a part of the Brazilian linguistic landscape and “graças a deusa, estamos lentamente naturalizando o uso” (‘thank goddess, we are slowly naturalizing its use’).

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