

# Language use, language attitudes, and identity in Aruba

## Is Aruban Papiamentu under threat?

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This study investigates the language situation in Aruba, a Caribbean island that is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The main home language in Aruba is Papiamentu, a Spanish/Portuguese lexifier creole, but Dutch was the only official language for centuries. English and Spanish are also widely used due to immigration, tourism, and the media.

Carroll (2009, 2010, 2015) observes that Papiamentu has high vitality, but also signals that speakers think that the language is under threat due to the increase in the use of English and Spanish. The aim of this study is to examine to what extent Carroll's findings may be corroborated by a quantitative survey that accessed the views of a large group of people (809) from all over the island. The results indicate that Papiamentu is the most frequently cited language regardless of backgrounds. People hold positive attitudes toward Papiamentu and Aruban identity. Hence, our findings corroborate Carroll's hypothesis that sentiments of language threat are mostly based in perception rather than in actual language use and attitudes.

**Keywords:** Aruba, Dutch Leeward Islands, Netherlands Antilles, Papiamentu, Papiamentu, multilingualism, language attitudes, identity, language threat

### 1. Introduction

Aruba is one of the six Caribbean islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao, Aruba constitutes the Dutch Leeward Islands, or ABC-islands, that are in direct proximity to the Venezuelan coast. The ABC-islands have been under the Dutch crown almost uninterruptedly since 1634 and constituted the Netherlands Antilles since 1954, together with the Dutch Windward Islands Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba, that are located in the



Northern part of the Caribbean. In 1986 Aruba separated from the other islands and acquired *status aparte* as an autonomous country within the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Papiamentu is the most important mother tongue and home language on the island.<sup>2</sup> The origin of Papiamentu as a Spanish or Portuguese-based creole is an issue of extensive scientific debate, often leading to the adoption of the term ‘Iberian-lexifier creole’ in order to refer to the role of both lexifier languages (see Jacobs 2012 for an extensive discussion). Dutch, however, was the only officially recognized language for centuries, dominating all formal domains. English and Spanish play an increasingly important role as well, due to migration, tourism, and the media.

Carroll (2009, 2010, 2015) concludes from document analysis, observation field notes, and interviews with professionals in the education system that attitudes toward Papiamentu are generally positive and that the language is regarded as a strong marker of Aruban identity. He also points out, however, that there is an undercurrent of unease on the island, because some Arubans perceive the extensive use of English and especially Spanish as a potential threat to the vitality of Papiamentu. In this article, we investigate to what extent the results of Carroll’s qualitative research are corroborated by the results of a quantitative survey concerning language use and attitudes toward language and identity on the island.

Section 2 presents a brief summary about the history of Aruba, followed by a description of multilingualism and language ideologies on the island in Section 3. Perceptions of language threat are explored in Section 4. Sections 5, 6 and 7 set out the theoretical framework of our survey, research questions and hypotheses, as well as the methodology of our research respectively. In Section 8 we present the empirical results, which are examined in the discussion in Section 9. Finally, Section 10 contains the conclusions of the article.

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1. The other five islands constituted the Netherlands Antilles up until October 2010. After the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba became exceptional municipalities under European Dutch rule, whereas Curaçao and Sint Maarten became autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

2. Notice that the variety spoken in Aruba is referred to as Papiamentu, whereas the variety spoken in Bonaire and Curaçao is known as Papiamentu. The two varieties are mutually intelligible (Kouwenberg & Murray 1994: 4–5), but they make use of different orthographies. As this article is about Aruba we will refer to the language as Papiamentu most of the time.

## 2. A brief summary about the history of Aruba

To comprehend the language situation in Aruba and the formation of Aruban identity it is important to present a brief summary about the history of the island. Aruba and the neighbouring islands of Curaçao and Bonaire were initially inhabited by a Caiquetio population, before the Spanish arrived at the end of the 15th century. The islands were declared 'islas inútiles' by the Spanish due to the absence of significant natural resources (in particular gold). In the 1630s the ABC-islands came under the Dutch crown. Due to the exceptional conditions of its natural port, Curaçao became one of the most important centers of the Dutch slave trade, which attracted a substantial group of Sephardic Jews who migrated to the island after 1654, when the Dutch lost their settlements in the North of Brazil.

Presumably, Papiamentu/u developed from an Afro-Portuguese creole that was used along the African coast and transferred to Curaçao during the slave trade in the second half of the 17th century (Jacobs 2012), where it was adopted as a *lingua franca* between the three most important groups of the Curaçaoan population: the Dutch, the Sephardic Jews and the African slaves (Carroll 2015:119). As the Dutch did not want to spread their language (nor their religion), the use of Dutch was restricted to their inner circles and Papiamentu served to bridge the communicative gap with other groups in a society that was highly segregated. From early on Papiamentu had a high social prestige as it was spoken by elite groups with economic power: the Dutch and the Sephardic Jews.<sup>3</sup> When these groups colonized Aruba in the 18th century, they brought Papiamentu to the island and formed unions with the indigenous population, creating a hybrid culture (Razak 1995: 448–449).

In the 20th century the demographic development of Aruba was heavily influenced by two immigration waves. In 1929 the Lago Oil & Transport Company established a refinery in the village of San Nicolas, in the eastern part of the island. As the refinery was American-owned it favoured the recruitment of employees from the US, Europe, and Anglophone islands in the Caribbean. The opportunities provided by Lago caused a demographic explosion in the 1930s and 1940s, as entire families decided to move to Aruba (Alofs & Merckies 2001, p.52–64). The Aruban population increased from 1.732 in 1817 to 58.743 in 1960 (p.53, after Hartog 1980).

The second immigration wave was caused by the closure of the Lago refinery in 1985, which led to great expansion of the tourist industry on the island. The

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3. Notice that the first written document in Papiamentu was a love letter written by a Curaçaoan Jew to his mistress in 1775 (Jacobs 2012: 35), suggesting that Papiamentu was the preferred language within the Jewish community in Curaçao at the time.

strong demand for work force attracted many Spanish-speaking immigrants, mainly from Venezuela, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. As a consequence, the number of immigrants in Aruba expanded from 14.044 to 26.916 between 1988 and 1995 (Alofs & Merkies 2001: 205–206).<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Multilingualism and language ideologies in Aruba

Aruba is a multilingual community and many individuals on the island are multilingual as well. Their language skills show different levels of proficiency, but daily contact with (at least) four languages characterizes the life of the majority of the population. Table 1 presents an overview of the main home languages claimed by Arubans over the course of the past decades.

**Table 1.** Languages most spoken in Aruban households in percentages (Pereira 2018: 76, based on Central Bureau of Statistics, Aruba 2013)

	1981	1991	2000	2010
Papiamentu	80.1	76.6	69.4	68.3
Spanish	3.1	7.4	13.2	13.5
Dutch	5.0	5.4	6.1	6.0
English	10.6	8.9	8.1	7.0

Table 1 illustrates that Papiamentu is the main home language on the island, but that its use has decreased since the end of the 20th century, correlating with an increase in the use of Spanish due to the immigration wave mentioned earlier. The use of Dutch and English as home languages is limited and does not show any substantial change over time.

4. A report by the Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba based on the Census of 2010 reveals the following numbers for the major groups of Latin American immigrants according to country of birth:

	Aruba (2010)
Colombia	9.273
Dominican Republic	4.109
Venezuela	3.229
<b>Total population</b>	<b>101.484</b>

Aruba has a long tradition of *diglossia*, if we define this term as societal bilingualism that is characterized by different functional distribution and differential valuing of the linguistic varieties involved (Managan 2016: 265).<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, Dutch was used for ‘higher’ functions in formal domains, such as the judiciary, governance, education and the media, whereas the role of Papiamentu was reduced to ‘lower’ functions such as informal, daily communication within the community. Obviously, this different functional distribution was related to differential valuing of the two languages, although Papiamentu was also spoken by elite groups at early stages.

Notice, however, that the position of Papiamentu has changed over the course of the past decades and the language is no longer used for informal communication only. In 2003 Papiamentu was recognized as co-official with Dutch in the Aruban Official Languages Act (Bröring & Mijts 2017). The language is used in the Parliament, as well as in official documents, and Papiamentu is also prominent in the media. Pereira (2018: 95) mentions 12 radio stations, 5 TV-stations, 4 newspapers, 5 magazines, and 13 Internet sites for news and entertainment that used Papiamentu in 2015. The use of Papiamentu as the language of instruction in the school system is generally limited to kindergarten (*kleuterschool*) and special needs education (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010) and it is also offered as a subject in secondary education. Crucially, Papiamentu plays a central role in the *Scol Multilingual*, a model for multilingual primary education. In this model, Papiamentu is the language of instruction and initial literacy, whereas Dutch, English, and Spanish are taught as second or foreign languages (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010; Croes 2011; Pereira 2012; Croes 2016; Pereira 2018). The *Scol Multilingual* started as a pilot study at two kindergartens in 2009 and at two primary schools in 2012. The project expanded successfully and the government decided that the model would be introduced to all primary schools from 2018 on as part of an education reform (Pereira 2018).<sup>6</sup>

In spite of the increasing importance of Papiamentu in formal domains, the education system in the six islands is still based on the European Dutch model and determined by European discourses that advocate a monolingual language

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5. Notice that the language situation on the ABC-islands does not correspond to the original definition of *diglossia* as defined in Ferguson (1959: 325), because Papiamentu/u and Dutch are not genetically related. As Winford (1994: 45) observed about creole languages of this type: ‘...while they do not stand in an egalitarian relationship with the official language, they generally enjoy more prestige than those creoles that are part of a continuum.’ See Managan (2016) for extensive discussion of the concept of *diglossia* in the context of creole languages.

6. We refer to Pereira (2018) for an extensive description of the language policy in Aruba and the *Scol Multilingual*, including an investigation of language attitudes among teachers and parents of students in primary education.

policy based on the use of Dutch as the language of instruction. Knowledge of Dutch is regarded as indispensable for tertiary studies in the ABC-islands and the European Netherlands, as well as for local government employment. Many speakers are not in favour of the use of Papiamentu in the education system, due to negative attitudes toward multilingualism in general and persistent myths raising doubts about the adequateness of Papiamentu as a full-fledged language to be used for academic purposes. There are also many practical and financial concerns about the availability of school materials and teachers who are sufficiently prepared to implement and carry out a language policy that is different from 'Dutch only'.<sup>7</sup> These negative attitudes, myths, and concerns have been fueling political and societal debates in the media for decades, advocating the submersion of Caribbean students in a European-based system with Dutch as the only language of instruction (Dijkhoff & Pereira 2010; Pereira 2018; Mijts 2021). For most Caribbean students, however, Dutch is a foreign language that they do not encounter outside the classroom. Frequent grade repetition, high dropout rates, and systematically low results characterize the outcomes of the school system, in Aruba and that of the other islands.<sup>8, 9</sup> Put differently, the current language policy excludes the great majority of the Caribbean students from access to formal education and social mobility (Mijts, Kester & Faraclas 2020). Hence, a study on language use and language attitudes in Aruba is not only interesting from an academic point of view, but also urgent from a societal perspective, as it may help to inform the development of inclusive and sustainable language policies that actually take account of the rights of the small island community.

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7. See Mijts (2021) for an extensive analysis of language policy and planning in Aruba in relation to language ideologies and in particular the resistance against the introduction of the *Scol Multilingual*.

8. As pointed out in Van der Linden-Maduro (2012: 129) 27.3% of the students repeat a grade, as compared to 2.8% of the students who are native speakers of Dutch. Only half of the students who go to the European Netherlands for their studies pass their exams and receive their diploma, as compared to 70–80% of those who go to the US or Latin America (Van der Linden-Maduro 2012: 129). Dijkhoff & Pereira (2010: 247) mention high dropout rates and a disproportionate number of children who have been misdiagnosed with developmental delays or disorders due to the lack of fluency in Dutch.

9. See Faraclas, Kester & Mijts (2019) for a community-based research project on the language policy in the education system of Sint Eustatius, one of the Windward Islands that became a municipality of the Netherlands in 2010.

#### 4. Perceptions of language threat in Aruba

Carroll (2009, 2010, 2015) investigated the language situations in Puerto Rico and Aruba, addressing the question as to what extent Spanish and Papiamentu, respectively, were perceived to be under threat in these two multilingual societies. In the case of Aruba, Carroll's research focused on the role of Dutch, English and Spanish as potential sources of threat to Papiamentu. As Carroll (2015:115) observes, the concept of language threat is typically used to describe a situation in which a community is under threat to give up their original language in favour of another, often socially more powerful language. There are numerous examples of indigenous languages on all continents that are overwhelmed and embattled by politically more powerful languages (Hale 1992:1, SIL International 2023). Carroll argues that the situation in Aruba differs from these cases, as the colonial history has led to a strengthening of the local language rather than its demise (p.116). In fact, the position of Papiamentu as a strong marker of Aruban identity has been reinforced by immigration. Over the centuries knowledge and use of the language played an important role in distinguishing the local population from outsiders. Even original Dutch immigrants who acquired Papiamentu used this knowledge to discriminate against newly arrived immigrants from Holland who did not speak the language (p.120). Under these circumstances, the use of Papiamentu could be regarded as '*... acts of identity*, in which people reveal their personal identity and their search for social roles.' (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:14).

Although he believes that the average Aruban does not think that Papiamentu's vitality is under threat, Carroll signals an uncurrent of unease, anxiety and even feelings of inferiority in relation to Papiamentu (p.120). Obviously, Dutch holds a very strong position in Aruban society, because it is the primary language of administration, education and the judiciary, and it is traditionally viewed as the key to power and success. However, Carroll's interviewees did not think that Dutch posed a threat to Papiamentu. The Dutch language never permeated the general Aruban population, as it was regarded as difficult to learn, also due to its absence from local domains of language use (Carroll 2009:135). As a result, Dutch was viewed as the language of 'others' and as a unique symbol of the political circumstances of Aruba (p.110).

Historically, English was the home language of immigrants who came to work for the oil refinery in San Nicolas. As Carroll observes, the English-speaking immigrants were not motivated to learn Papiamentu as they saw little value in it and therefore maintained a peripheral relationship to Aruban culture (p.141). Over the course of time, the English-speaking immigrants and their offspring learned Papiamentu, as they understood its local prestige and its importance to

fit in with the local population (p.141). Although the role of English has become increasingly more important in Aruba due to mass tourism from the US and its power as a global language through the media, Carroll's interviewees did not think that English posed a threat to Papiamentu. They rather regarded the frequent use of English by young Arubans as a stage caused by heavy influence of American television and pop culture (p.142).

The concerns about the survival of Papiamentu and Aruban culture seem to be caused mainly by recent waves of Spanish-speaking immigrants. Arubans are not only alarmed by the sheer number of immigrants, but also by their spread over the entire island (Carroll 2015:122). Negative attitudes toward the speakers of Spanish are further enhanced by the perception that some adult immigrants do not make enough effort to learn Papiamentu.<sup>10</sup> However, as Carroll's interviewees agreed that younger immigrants were very successful in learning the local language, their perceptions of language threat are difficult to understand. Carroll formulated two possible explanations for the concerns among Arubans. They may either protect Papiamentu while being aware that speakers of Spanish will learn the language over the course of time, or they may be fearing that the speakers of Spanish are an exception to the historical trends of immigrants who used to learn Papiamentu (Carroll 2009: 140).<sup>11</sup>

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10. Razak (1995: 454) mentions that the influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants has caused ambivalent feelings toward this group: '...especially because, unlike the Dutch, metropolitans, expatriates and Afro Arubians [*sic*], they cannot visually distinguish them from native Arubians [*sic*].'

11. Notice, that the perception of language threat among Arubans is corroborated by a recent online survey carried out in June 2022 among 185 participants (De Cuba 2022). The following table illustrates that these participants also expressed the opinion that English and Spanish pose more threat to Papiamentu than Dutch, in line with Carroll's (2009, 2010, 2015) interviewees.



As Carroll observes, fear may translate into perceptions of everyday people who feel their language/culture is in some way threatened. Carroll adopts the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF) (Kasperson's et al. 1988), arguing that social agents, such as the media, may magnify feelings of fear and threat that are based on personal experiences. In the case of Aruba, the political rhetoric in the media coupled with the experiences of the average Aruban who witnessed massive influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants over the past decades, has induced the perception that their language and identity are under threat (Carroll 2009: 220–221).<sup>12</sup>

As Carroll's research was mainly based on interviews with 10 professionals who were involved in language policy and planning efforts on the island, we designed an electronic questionnaire in order to strive for a more fine-grained analysis of language use, language attitudes and identity in Aruba, involving a much larger number of participants who belong to a cross section of the Aruban population and represent different age groups, education levels and origins.<sup>13</sup>

**Table i.** Scores for positive and negative answers to the question whether Spanish, English and Dutch pose a threat to Papiamentu, per age group (in percentages)

	18–34	35–54	55+
<b>Positive ('yes')</b>			
Spanish	49.4	65.2	65.6
English	52.6	52.2	53.2
Dutch	36.4	37	29.3
<b>Negative ('no')</b>			
Spanish	33.8	28.3	31.1
English	31.6	32.6	29
Dutch	41.6	41.3	48.3

12. An unpublished study by Kelly (2015) based on a survey filled out by 149 Latin American residents revealed frequent use of Papiamentu (also at home), positive attitudes toward the language and strong motivation to gain further proficiency in Papiamentu. In other words, the perceived fear for the survival of Papiamentu due to the negative attitudes of Spanish-speakers was not justified by the results of this preliminary study.

13. In response to one of the reviewers we observe that several quantitative studies about language use and language attitudes in Aruba were carried out during the past decade. Most of these studies, however, focused on language policy in the education system and involved students and teachers (Leuverink 2012; Kester & Van der Linde 2015) as well as parents (Pereira 2018), whereas our survey intended to target a wider cross-section of the Aruban population and was not specifically focused on language policy.

## 5. Theoretical framework

Our research was inspired by the theoretical framework of Baker (1992). Baker (1992: 11) adopts a working definition from Ajzen (1988: 4) assuming that an attitude is 'a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event' and follows McGuire's (1985) insight that attitudes locate objects of thought on dimensions of judgement. In this scenario, research on language attitudes is concerned with dispositions to respond favourably or unfavourably to (the use of) specific language varieties and can be linked to attitude measurement scales. Following Garrett (2008) we measure attitudes toward Papiamentu by evaluating the opinions of our participants about the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out certain activities.

Baker (1992: 31) makes a distinction between the instrumental and integrative orientation of attitudes. An instrumental orientation is mostly self-oriented and individualistic and corresponds with 'a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language' (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 14 in Baker 1992: 32). An integrative orientation is rather social and interpersonal and related to 'a desire to be like representative members of the other language community' (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 14 in Baker 1992: 32). Put differently, instrumental orientation is related to the need for achievement, whereas integrative orientation rather corresponds to the need for affiliation.

We follow Garrett's (2008) notion of identity that was based on Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory. In this framework, social identity was defined on an individual level rather than by group membership: '...individuals must first internalize their group membership as an aspect of their self-concept' (Garrett 2008: 28). Although the strength of one's identity cannot be measured, what can be observed is a self-image as a function of the strength of one's identity in a certain situation (p. 28), as illustrated by the questions of our survey.

Concepts of identity and group membership are difficult to define in Aruba (see the extensive study by Alofs & Merckies 1990, 2001). Razak (1995: 449–450) points out that the Aruban society of today has an internal social structure that consists of three different groups: (i) native Arubans ('insiders'); (ii) Afro Arubans and metropolitan Arubans ('outsider-insiders'); (iii) expatriates and metropolitan Arubans ('outsiders') that belong to different stratification levels and are organized in a complex color-ethnic class pyramid. As observed in Phalen & Powers (1982: 141), the color/ethnic stratification system is an expression of an ideology based upon Aruban perception of color and ethnicity which serves to integrate Aruban society and emphasizes the ideology of Arubans being white and Latin.

According to Edwards (2009: 162): 'Ethnic identity is allegiance to a group – large or small, socially dominant or subordinate – with which one has ancestral

links. There is no necessity for a continuation, over generations, of the same socialization or cultural patterns, but some sense of a group boundary must persist. This can be sustained by shared objective characteristics (language, religion, etc.), or by more subjective contributions to a sense of 'groupness', or by some combination of both. Symbolic or subjective attachments must relate, at however distant a remove, to an observably real past.' Obviously, the objective characteristic of a local language, Papiamentu, serving as a *lingua franca* to all ethnic groups and social strata from early on, has played a crucial role in the formation of Aruban identity, defining boundaries between in-group ('real Arubans') and out-group in Aruba.

Arubans are ethnically distinct from the European Dutch population, but share Dutch citizenship, as the island is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Future research should point out whether Dutch citizenship is truly experienced as part of multiple identities (as assumed in Garrett 2008) or rather a consequence of political circumstances that is valued for practical benefits (such as access to the European Netherlands and in particular to tertiary education). The questionnaire of our survey is an initial attempt to investigate the dual Caribbean/Dutch identity of the Aruban population.

## 6. Research questions and hypotheses

In this article, we discuss the results of a survey about language use and attitudes toward language and identity on the island of Aruba, addressing the following research questions:

1. What is the role of Papiamentu, English, Spanish, Dutch, and other languages with different interlocutors in different domains (inside the family, outside the family, with strangers)?
2. How do the attitudes toward Papiamentu change in relation to its different social functions?
3. How do Arubans position themselves toward the two different macro-identities, that of being a resident of a Caribbean island and that of being a Dutch citizen?
4. Are there any differences in language use and attitudes between groups of participants with different demographic characteristics, such as people of different age groups, education levels or origins?
5. Is the fear of language shift and/or language loss among speakers of Papiamentu in Aruba justified by answers to the previous questions based on the results of our survey?

We formulated the following tentative hypotheses:

- i. The youngest generation of Arubans uses foreign languages, in particular English and Spanish, more frequently than older generations, due to greater exposure to other languages through the media and immigration.
- ii. The youngest generation of Arubans evaluates Papiamentu as less important in comparison to older generations, due to their more international networks.
- iii. Participants with higher levels of education use Papiamentu less frequently and consider the language and Aruban identity as less important, due to their global rather than local orientation.
- iv. Participants of migrant origin use Papiamentu less frequently and regard the language and Aruban identity as less important, due to their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- v. Fear of language shift and/or language loss is justified by negative results of our survey with respect to the use of Papiamentu and attitudes toward the language and Aruban identity, especially among participants of the youngest age group.

## 7. Methodology

### 7.1 Participants

The questionnaire was completed by 809 participants, who divided into different age, educational and origin groups, as illustrated in Table 2.<sup>14</sup>

We subdivided the participants into two education levels: 'higher' and 'lower'. The education system in Aruba and the other islands that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is based on the European Dutch system. The category of 'higher' education levels comprised university education (WO) and pre-university education (VWO), higher vocational education (HBO) and higher

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14. The specific years of birth and ages of the three generations are presented below.

	Min. birth year	Max. birth year	Min. age	Max. age
G1 (older)	1937	1958	56	77
G2	1959	1980	34	55
G3 (younger)	1981	1999	15	33

**Table 2.** Number of participants belonging to different categories of age groups, education levels, and origins (including Means, Standard Deviations, and totals)

<b>Age</b>			
	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD
G1 (older)	115	61	4
G2	139	46	5
G3 (younger)	554	18	3
<b>total</b>	<b>808</b>		
<b>Education level</b>			
lower	469		
higher	333		
<b>total</b>	<b>802</b>		
<b>Origin</b>			
local	663		
migrant	146		
<b>total</b>	<b>809</b>		

preparatory education (HAVO), whereas all other levels were classified as ‘lower’ education levels.<sup>15</sup>

We categorized participants as ‘local’ participants, if:

1. They and at least one of their parents were born in Aruba or
2. They were not born in Aruba, but both of their parents were.<sup>16</sup>

15. The education system of Aruba uses slightly different labels to refer to the different levels and tracks in (preparatory) vocational education than that in Bonaire and Curaçao, but the three systems are based on the European Dutch model. All of these labels correspond to the category of ‘lower’ education levels in our analysis.

16. The parents of the majority of the participants (419) were born in Aruba. The number of Aruban-born participants whose mother (109) or father (126) was born in Aruba was closely similar. In the cases of 9 participants both of their parents were born in Aruba but they were not.

The 146 participants who did not meet these criteria, were classified as ‘migrants’<sup>17, 18</sup>

## 7.2 Materials

The questionnaire was largely inspired by Baker (1992) and by several studies concerning language use, language attitudes, and identity carried out in Curaçao (Garrett 2008; Kester 2011; Kester 2020). It comprised: (i) statements about Aruban and Dutch identity; (ii) statements about the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out certain activities; (iii) questions concerning the use and frequency of use of Papiamentu, English, Spanish, Dutch, and other languages in different domains and with different interlocutors; (iv) questions about demographic characteristics of the participants, such as year of birth, sex, (parental) birthplace, and education level.

## 7.3 Procedure

The questionnaire (in Appendix A) was distributed in 2014 by Aruban, Bonairean, and Curaçaoan students who were enrolled in the Master’s program of Education at the University of Curaçao. The students carried out the survey to prepare a written assignment for a course about multilingualism and language acquisition that was taught by the first author of this article. Most of the students worked as teachers of Papiamentu, English, Spanish, and Dutch in secondary education and distributed the questionnaires in their own classrooms and among friends, colleagues, and family members of older age groups.

As we initially developed the survey for distribution in Curaçao and Bonaire, the questionnaire was adjusted to the Aruban variety of Papiamentu and examined by two students who were teachers of Papiamentu. Data from the paper

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17. In 52 cases neither the participants nor their parents were born in Aruba. 31 participants who were born elsewhere had a mother (14) or a father (17) who was born in Aruba. In 63 cases, the participant was born in Aruba but both of his/her parents were born elsewhere.

18. The questions about (parental) birthplace only addressed whether the participant and his/her parents were born in Aruba or elsewhere, in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants. As pointed out by one of the reviewers, a distinction should be made between birthplace and place of primary socialization. Unfortunately, our questionnaire did not include any questions regarding the years of residence on the island, in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants. As the participants were recruited from the personal networks of Aruban students and the questions were prepared in Papiamentu, it is plausible that the participants were socialized, at least to a certain extent, in Aruba. This hypothesis is also corroborated by their frequent use of Papiamentu as a home language in comparison to other languages (see Table 5).

copies of the questionnaires were entered into an electronic database. In this article, we only present and analyse the results of participants in Aruba, referring to Kester & Buijink (2022) for Bonaire.

#### 7.4 The statistical analysis

The analyses of the data were performed using SPSS. Many of the participants had one or more missing values, due to the fact that they answered the questions about the frequency of use (part 3) by means of X's instead of the intended numbers 1–5. As there was a large number of participants with only a few missing values, we performed a pairwise elimination of these participants from the corresponding parts of the questionnaire. Consequently,  $n$  varies across the analyses of the different parts of the questionnaire, which is indicated in the tables of the following sections.

For the analysis of the results about language use we grouped speech partners together and computed an average score in these domains per language. Subsequently, the score was compared by a multivariate ANOVA with groups of different ages, education levels, and origins as fixed factors. We performed a Kruskal-Wallis test to analyse single items (like the category 'strangers') that correspond to nominal data. For the comparison of more than two groups we used the Mann-Whitney test as a post-hoc test. Moreover, a Bonferroni correction was applied to ensure that all reported effects corresponded to a .0167 level of significance.

The effect size is expressed in partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ). The larger the effect size, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. Using the rules of thumb, we consider  $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$  a 'small' effect size, 0.06 a 'medium' effect size, and 0.14 a 'large' effect size.

We also conducted a principal component analysis (PCA), with Varimax rotation abstracting factors with Eigen value higher than 1, on the parts of the questionnaire that addressed language attitudes (the importance of Papiamentu) and the attitudes toward Dutch and Aruban identity.

A reliability test (the Cronbach's Alpha) was executed for each cluster of items in a component, computing the average scores of the clusters of items in addition to the factor scores. The factor scores were then analysed for statistical differences by a GLM univariate ANOVA (A.K.A. three-way independent ANOVA or independent factorial ANOVA), comparing groups of different ages, education levels, and origins (specified by (parental) birthplace). For the comparison of more than two groups, a Bonferroni post-hoc test was performed. Overall, we accepted communalities above .450. Variance explained per factor was set above 10% and together above 60%, with a Reliability above .550 (Cronbach's alpha).

## 8. Results

In this section, we present the results of the survey about language use (8.1), language attitudes (8.2), and Aruban/Dutch identity (8.3), respectively. The individual sections also comprise the results of the statistical analysis in accordance with the age group, education level, and origin (defined by (parental) birthplace) of the participants.

### 8.1 Language use

This section presents the results of our survey regarding the use of Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish, and other languages in different domains.<sup>19</sup> The domain ‘within the family’ includes the categories mother, father, brother, and sister, whereas the domain ‘outside the family’ corresponds to the categories friends, fellow students, teacher, colleagues, and boss. The third domain presents the results concerning language use in contact with strangers, referring to people not known to the participants (*hende desconoci* in the survey). The structure of this section is based on the characteristics of the participants corresponding to their age group (8.1.1), education level (8.1.2), and origin (8.1.3).

#### 8.1.1 Language use among participants of different age groups

In Table 3 we present the average scores for the use of Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish, and other languages in different domains according to participants that belong to different age groups.

The results in Table 3 clearly show that Papiamentu was the most frequently used language by the three generations in all different domains. A statistical analysis of the data using inferential statistics revealed the following, more specific, results regarding the use of the different languages.

#### *Language use within the family*

Comparing the results of language use within the family, a difference was found in the use of English ( $F(2, 373) = 3.057$ ,  $p = .048$   $\eta_p^2 = .016$ ) and Spanish ( $F(2, 373) = 7.441$ ,  $p = .001$   $\eta_p^2 = .039$ ) by the participants belonging to different age groups. Notice, however, that a Bonferroni post-hoc test did not reveal any statistically significant *pairwise* differences between the age groups for the use of English at home. Hence, the combination of means of the three groups were statistically different, yet the differences could not be interpreted pairwise. A Bon-

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19. Pereira (2018: 148) mentions the following other home languages spoken by the students of the *Scol Multilingual*: Chinese, Portuguese, Haitian Creole and Italian.



**Table 3.** Average scores for language use in different domains by participants of different age groups, including Means, and Standard Deviations (0=no use, 5=frequent use)

	G1 (n=56)		G2 (n=69)		G3 (n=249)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
<b>Within the family</b>						
1 Papiamentu	3.93	1.91	4.06	1.68	3.87	1.64
2 Dutch	0.61	1.32	0.36	0.97	0.62	1.14
3 English	0.62	1.37	0.59	1.33	0.98	1.45
4 Spanish	0.25	0.66	0.32	0.93	0.82	1.38
5 Other languages	0.20	0.51	0.17	0.73	0.24	0.72
Outside the family	(n=87)		(n=117)		(n=476)	
1 Papiamentu	3.84	1.56	4.10	1.28	4.08	1.19
2 Dutch	1.40	1.62	1.25	1.60	1.16	1.28
3 English	0.59	1.10	0.67	1.21	1.33	1.59
4 Spanish	0.29	0.60	0.40	0.87	0.65	1.11
5 Other languages	0.14	0.44	0.12	0.38	0.19	0.58
With strangers	(n=102-109)		(n=115-125)		(n=472-508)	
1 Papiamentu	3.18	2.17	3.90	1.84	3.92	1.77
2 Dutch	0.96	1.60	0.81	1.50	0.85	1.51
3 English	1.28	1.85	0.84	1.48	1.39	1.97
4 Spanish	0.79	1.41	0.72	1.31	0.91	1.65
5 Other languages	0.46	1.17	0.42	1.14	0.48	1.29

ferroni post-hoc test revealed that the third (youngest) generation used Spanish more often as a home language than the first ( $p=.002$ ) and second generation ( $p=.007$ ). No differences were found between the generations for the use of Papiamentu ( $p=.863$ ), Dutch ( $p=.090$ ), and other languages ( $p=.916$ ) within the family.

#### *Language use outside the family*

The statistical analysis revealed a difference between the generations with respect to their use of English ( $F(2, 679)=23.636$ ,  $p=.000$   $\eta_p^2=.065$ ) and Spanish outside the family ( $F(2, 679)=6.345$ ,  $p=.002$   $\eta_p^2=.018$ ). A Bonferroni post-hoc test pointed out that the third generation used English more often than the first ( $p=.000$ ) and second generation ( $p=.000$ ). Likewise, the third generation used Spanish more often than the first generation ( $p=.008$ ). No differences were found

between the three age groups in their use of Papiamentu ( $p=.583$ ), Dutch ( $p=.238$ ), and other languages ( $p=.803$ ) outside the family.

#### *Language use with strangers*

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a difference between the three generations in their use of Papiamentu ( $H(2)=12.022$ ,  $p=.002$ ) and English ( $H(2)=6.092$ ,  $p=.048$ ) with strangers. A Mann-Whitney test served as a post-hoc test. The second ( $U=4768$ ,  $p=.008$ ) and third generation ( $U=19620$ ,  $p=.001$ ) used Papiamentu more frequently with strangers than the first generation. Additionally, the third generation used English more frequently with strangers than the second generation ( $U=81922$ ,  $p=.000$ ), but not more often than the first generation. No differences were found between age groups with respect to their use of Dutch ( $p=.576$ ), Spanish ( $p=.989$ ), and other languages ( $p=.948$ ) with strangers.

#### 8.1.2 Language use among participants with different education levels

In Table 4 we present the results of the use of Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish, and other languages in different domains by participants with different education levels.

As shown in Table 4, Papiamentu was the most frequently used language in the different domains by the participants with different education levels. A statistical analysis of the data provides the following insights.

#### *Language use within the family*

Participants with higher levels of education used Dutch more often within their family than participants with lower levels of education ( $F(1,373)=4.421$ ,  $p=.036$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.012$ ). No differences were found between participants with different levels of education and their use of Papiamentu ( $p=.108$ ), English ( $p=.195$ ), Spanish ( $p=.823$ ), and other languages ( $p=.783$ ) within the family.

#### *Language use outside the family*

In the domains outside the family, participants with lower levels of education used Papiamentu more frequently than participants with higher levels of education ( $F(1,680)=6.950$ ,  $p=.009$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.010$ ). Participants with higher levels of education, however, used Dutch ( $F(1,680)=48.970$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.068$ ) and English ( $F(1,680)=15.242$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.022$ ) more frequently. No differences were found between the participants of both categories and their use of Spanish ( $p=.365$ ) and other languages ( $p=.156$ ) outside the family.

#### *Language use with strangers*

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that participants with lower levels of education used Papiamentu more frequently with strangers ( $H(1)=5.413$ ,  $p=.020$ ) in com-

**Table 4.** Average scores for language use in different domains by participants with different education levels, including Means, and Standard Deviations (0=no use, 5=frequent use)

		Low ( <i>n</i> = 227)		High ( <i>n</i> = 147)	
Within the family		Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
1	Papiamentu	3.73	1.78	4.15	1.53
2	Dutch	0.54	1.13	0.63	1.15
3	English	0.87	1.42	0.83	1.45
4	Spanish	0.75	1.39	0.49	0.97
5	Other languages	0.25	0.79	0.19	0.53
Outside the family		<i>(n</i> = 401)		<i>(n</i> = 279)	
1	Papiamentu	4.14	1.23	3.92	1.32
2	Dutch	0.95	1.22	1.60	1.51
3	English	1.09	1.50	1.18	1.51
4	Spanish	0.59	1.09	0.52	0.93
5	Other languages	0.20	0.62	0.13	0.38
With strangers		<i>(n</i> = 402–433)		<i>(n</i> = 278–301)	
1	Papiamentu	3.87	1.86	3.68	1.87
2	Dutch	0.70	1.39	1.10	1.67
3	English	1.16	1.84	1.48	1.95
4	Spanish	0.82	1.57	0.91	1.54
5	Other languages	0.45	1.22	0.49	1.27

parison to participants with higher levels of education. However, participants with higher levels of education used Dutch ( $H(1)=9.416$ ,  $p=.002$ ) and English ( $H(1)=4.315$ ,  $p=.038$ ) more frequently than participants with lower levels of education. No differences were found with respect to the use of Spanish ( $p=.265$ ) and other languages ( $p=.776$ ) with strangers.

### 8.1.3 Language use among participants of different origins

Table 5 shows the average scores for the use of Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish, and other languages in different domains by participants from different origins, which we refer to as ‘local’ and ‘migrant’.

Again, the results point out that Papiamentu was the most frequently used language in the different domains. A statistical analysis of the data provides the

**Table 5.** Average scores for language use in different domains by participants of different origin, including Means, and Standard Deviations (0=no use, 5=frequent use)

	Local ( <i>n</i> = 315)		Migrant ( <i>n</i> = 59)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
<b>Within the family</b>				
1 Papiamentu	4.31	1.32	1.88	1.93
2 Dutch	0.49	1.01	1.03	1.61
3 English	0.75	1.32	1.40	1.83
4 Spanish	0.49	1.01	1.42	1.91
5 Other languages	0.19	0.65	0.37	0.88
<b>Outside the family</b>	<i>(n</i> = 557)		<i>(n</i> = 123)	
1 Papiamentu	4.15	1.15	3.61	1.62
2 Dutch	1.17	1.33	1.44	1.61
3 English	1.08	1.49	1.27	1.58
4 Spanish	0.51	0.98	0.77	1.20
5 Other languages	0.17	0.55	0.15	0.44
<b>With strangers</b>	<i>(n</i> = 557–601)		<i>(n</i> = 129–138)	
1 Papiamentu	3.84	1.85	3.63	1.92
2 Dutch	0.81	1.49	1.04	1.64
3 English	1.22	1.84	1.53	2.02
4 Spanish	0.80	1.50	1.14	1.81
5 Other languages	0.46	1.24	0.52	1.29

following insights into the language use by participants of ‘local’ versus ‘migrant’ backgrounds.

#### *Language use within the family*

Participants with a local background used Papiamentu more frequently within the family than migrants ( $F(1, 373) = 124.511, p = .000 \eta_p^2 = .252$ ). Participants with a migrant background, however, used Dutch ( $F(1, 373) = 13.682, p = .000 \eta_p^2 = .036$ ), English ( $F(1, 373) = 12.307, p = .001 \eta_p^2 = .032$ ), and Spanish ( $F(1, 373) = 36.806, p = .000 \eta_p^2 = .091$ ) more frequently within the family, as compared to ‘local’ participants. No differences were found between local and migrant participants in the use of other languages ( $p = .059$ ) within the family.

#### *Language use outside the family*

In the domains we categorized as ‘outside the family’, local participants used Papiamentu more frequently than migrant participants ( $F(1, 679) = 13.541, p = .000 \eta_p^2 = .020$ ), whereas migrants used Dutch ( $F(1, 679) = 9.325, p = .002 \eta_p^2 = .014$ ) and Spanish ( $F(1, 679) = 7.380, p = .007 \eta_p^2 = .011$ ) more frequently. No differences were found between local and migrant participants with respect to their use of English ( $p = .052$ ) and other languages ( $p = .484$ ) outside the family.

### *Language use with strangers*

No differences were found between the two groups of participants with respect to their use of Papiamentu ( $p = .126$ ), Dutch ( $p = .133$ ), English ( $p = .144$ ), Spanish ( $p = .104$ ), and other languages ( $p = .751$ ) with strangers.

## 8.2 Language attitudes: The importance of Papiamentu

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of items to study attitudes toward Papiamentu. Following Garrett (2008), we measured the evaluations of our participants regarding the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out certain activities. We included a list of 20 activities into this part of the questionnaire. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) indicated low communalities of 7 items that were excluded from the analysis.<sup>20</sup> Four factors, found by the PCA in the remaining 13 items, were abstracted for further analysis.

Our analysis identified four components (see Appendix B). The first component (C<sub>1</sub>), which we referred to as achievements, comprised the items ‘...becoming smarter’, ‘...getting a job’, ‘...passing exams’, and ‘...earning plenty of money’. The second component (C<sub>2</sub>), labelled as socializing, contained the activities ‘...talking to friends in school’, ‘...talking to people out of school’, ‘...talking to teachers in school’. The third component (C<sub>3</sub>), leisure, comprised items such as ‘...making phone calls’, ‘...going shopping’, ‘...singing’, and ‘...playing sports’. Finally, the fourth component (C<sub>4</sub>), literacy, corresponded to the two items ‘...reading’ and ‘...writing’.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Q13: Making friends; Q17: Watching television/video; Q20: Being liked; Q21: Living in Aruba; Q22: Going to church/chapel; Q25: Bringing up children; Q29: Being accepted in the community.

21. Unfortunately, we did not make a distinction between traditional versus online reading and writing at this stage of our research project, but acknowledge the relevance of this differentiation and included different domains and activities related to literacy in subsequent work for future publications.

### 8.2.1 Language attitudes among participants of different age groups

As indicated by the results in Table 6, the participants evaluated Papiamento overall as important and particularly for the activities of component 4: literacy, corresponding to reading and writing.

**Table 6.** Average scores for clusters of items regarding the importance of Papiamento in carrying out different activities, according to age, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 4 (1=important, 4=unimportant)

	G1 (n = 119)		G2 (n = 139)		G3 (n = 554)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
1 Achievements	2.46	0.82	2.22	0.81	1.94	0.73
2 Socializing	2.13	0.85	1.87	0.79	1.90	0.74
3 Leisure	2.53	0.77	2.33	0.83	2.39	0.70
4 Literacy	1.82	0.92	1.62	0.78	1.87	0.80

A statistically significant difference between the scores of the different age groups was observed in the case of C1: the importance of Papiamento for achievements ( $F(2,737) = 3.109$ ,  $p = .045$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .008$ ). A Bonferroni post-hoc test indicated that the third generation found Papiamento more important for achievements than the first generation ( $p = .000$ ) and the second generation ( $p = .000$ ), but the first and second generations were not different from each other. Also, a statistically significant difference was found with respect to C2: socializing ( $F(2,737) = 3.459$ ,  $p = .032$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .009$ ). A Bonferroni post-hoc test, however, did not reveal any statistically significant *pairwise* differences between the different generations. That is, the combination of means of the three age groups were statistically different, yet the differences could not be interpreted pairwise. No statistically significant differences between the age groups were found with respect to the importance of Papiamento in carrying out activities related to C3: leisure ( $p = .474$ ) and C4: literacy ( $p = .342$ ).

### 8.2.2 Language attitudes among participants with different education levels

The results in Table 7 illustrate that the participants with different education levels evaluated Papiamento as most important in carrying out activities related to C4 (literacy).

Participants with lower levels of education found Papiamento more important for C1: achievements ( $F(1,737) = 4.458$ ,  $p = .035$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .006$ ) and C2: socializing ( $F(1,737) = 6.377$ ,  $p = .012$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .009$ ) than participants with higher levels of education. No statistically significant differences were found in the scores regarding the

**Table 7.** Average scores for clusters of items regarding the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out different activities, according to education level, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 4 (1=important, 4=unimportant)

	Low ( <i>n</i> =469)		High ( <i>n</i> =333)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
1 Achievements	1.84	0.68	2.36	0.81
2 Socializing	1.92	0.76	1.94	0.77
3 Leisure	2.34	0.71	2.49	0.75
4 Literacy	1.81	0.79	1.85	0.86

importance of Papiamentu for activities related to C<sub>3</sub>: leisure ( $p=.908$ ) and C<sub>4</sub>: literacy ( $p=.829$ ).

### 8.2.3 Language attitudes among participants of different origins

In Table 8 we present the results with respect to the importance of Papiamentu according to participants from different origins. Again, Papiamentu was regarded as most important for component 4: literacy.

**Table 8.** Average scores for clusters of items regarding the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out different activities, according to origin, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 4 (1=important, 4=unimportant)

	Local ( <i>n</i> =663)		Migrant ( <i>n</i> =146)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
1 Achievements	2.06	0.77	2.05	0.84
2 Socializing	1.90	0.75	2.02	0.83
3 Leisure	2.36	0.73	2.55	0.74
4 Literacy	1.81	0.82	1.88	0.82

Participants of local origin found Papiamentu more important for C<sub>2</sub>: socializing than migrants ( $F(1,737)=7.659$ ,  $p=.006$   $\eta_p^2=.010$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups with respect to the importance of Papiamentu for C<sub>1</sub>: achievements ( $p=.171$ ), C<sub>3</sub>: leisure ( $p=.295$ ), and C<sub>4</sub>: literacy ( $p=.117$ ).

### 8.3 Attitudes toward Aruban and Dutch identity

In this section we present the results of the items about attitudes toward the identity of Arubans, who are members of a Caribbean, insular community, and citizens of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This part of the questionnaire comprised a list of 12 items (corresponding to 3 positive and 3 negative statements to investigate the respective identities). One item was excluded by the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) due to low communality.<sup>22</sup> The PCA found four components that were abstracted for analysis (see Appendix C). The first component (C<sub>1</sub>), which we referred to as Aruban identity, corresponded to the items ‘I am a person who is happy to be Aruban’, ‘I am a person who considers himself to be Aruban’, ‘I am a person who identifies with other Arubans.’ The second component (C<sub>2</sub>), labelled as Dutch identity, comprised the items ‘I am a person who considers it important to be a Dutch citizen’, ‘I am a person who is happy to be a Dutch citizen’, and ‘I am a person who feels strong ties with the Netherlands.’ The third component (C<sub>3</sub>) was not further analysed due to a low reliability score on Cronbach’s Alpha test.<sup>23</sup> Component 4: critical attitudes consisted of the statements ‘I am a person who is critical about Aruba’ and ‘I am a person who is critical about the Netherlands.’ We interpreted the last two statements as negatively formulated items about the two identities with ‘reversed’ scores (as compared to the other statements in this part of the questionnaire).

#### 8.3.1 Attitudes toward identity among participants of different age groups

Table 9 shows that the attitudes toward Aruban identity were very positive across the three age groups, as the participants (strongly) agreed with the statements referring to individual and group identity. Scores for attitudes toward Dutch identity were neutral (between 2.0 and 3.0) and the participants did not express very critical opinions about Aruba and the Netherlands.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the three age groups concerning C<sub>4</sub>: critical attitudes ( $F(2, 761) = 11.840, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .031$ ). A Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that the third generation is less critical about Aruba and the Netherlands than the first ( $p = .000$ ) and second generations ( $p = .000$ ), and that the second generation is less critical than the first generation

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22. This item was Q9 of the questionnaire: I am a person who feels held back because I am Aruban.

23. The third component consisted of three statements: Q1: I am a person who is bothered to say that I am a Dutch citizen; Q3: I am a person who tends to hide the fact that I am Aruban; Q7: I am a person who makes excuses for being a Dutch citizen.



**Table 9.** Average scores of the participants of the three age groups on clusters of items regarding their Aruban identity, Dutch identity, and critical attitudes toward Aruba and the Netherlands, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

	Age groups					
	G1 ( <i>n</i> = 119)		G2 ( <i>n</i> = 139)		G3 ( <i>n</i> = 554)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
C1 Aruban identity	1.58	0.85	1.48	0.72	1.81	0.88
C2 Dutch identity	2.22	0.85	2.40	0.86	2.70	0.80
C4 Critical attitudes	3.78	0.91	3.44	0.98	2.83	0.96

( $p = .001$ ).<sup>24</sup> Put differently, the first generation is most critical about Aruba and the Netherlands. We did not find any statistically significant differences between the scores of the participants of different age groups with respect to C1: Aruban identity ( $p = .066$ ) and C2: Dutch identity ( $p = .187$ ).

### 8.3.2 Attitudes toward identity among participants with different education levels

As shown in Table 10, the scores for attitudes toward Aruban identity were (very) positive across the participants with different education levels. Scores for attitudes toward Dutch identity were neutral (around 2.5) and the participants did not express very critical attitudes toward Aruba and the Netherlands.

Participants with higher levels of education held more positive attitudes toward C1: Aruban identity than participants with lower levels of education ( $F(1,761) = 4.844$ ,  $p = .028$   $\eta_p^2 = .006$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the scores of participants with different education levels concerning C2: Dutch identity ( $p = .503$ ) and C4: critical attitudes ( $p = .904$ ).

### 8.3.3 Attitudes toward identity among participants of different origins

Table 11 reveals that the participants held (very) positive attitudes toward Aruban identity, especially the participants of 'local' descent. The scores for attitudes toward Dutch identity were neutral and the participants did not express very critical opinions about Aruba and the Netherlands.

24. Notice that the statements of component 4 are linked to 'reverse' scores, as they contain negatively formulated statements about Aruba and the Netherlands. This implies that higher scores correspond to more critical attitudes.

**Table 10.** Average scores of the participants of the three age groups on clusters of items regarding their Aruban identity, Dutch identity, and critical attitudes toward Aruba and the Netherlands, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

		Education levels			
		Low ( <i>n</i> = 469)		High ( <i>n</i> = 333)	
		Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
C1	Aruban identity	1.80	0.92	1.62	0.77
C2	Dutch identity	2.68	0.84	2.43	0.81
C4	Critical attitudes	2.93	1.04	3.27	0.97

**Table 11.** Average scores of the participants of different origins on clusters of items regarding their Aruban identity, Dutch identity, and critical attitudes toward Aruba and the Netherlands, including Standard Deviations. The results correspond to a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

		Origins			
		Local ( <i>n</i> = 663)		Migrant ( <i>n</i> = 146)	
		Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
C1	Aruban identity	1.60	0.77	2.26	1.05
C2	Dutch identity	2.60	0.84	2.47	0.83
C4	Critical attitudes	3.11	1.02	2.95	1.05

Local participants had a more positive attitude toward C1: Aruban identity than migrant participants ( $F(1,761) = 48.937, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .061$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between participants of different origins concerning C2: Dutch identity ( $p = .478$ ) and C4: critical attitudes ( $p = .657$ ).

## 9. Discussion

In this section, we will answer the first three research questions from Section 6, integrating differences between participants in accordance with the demographic characteristics mentioned in question 4 (age group, education level, and origin) into the answers based on the results of our survey. Subsequently, we will answer question 5.

- (1) *What is the role of Papiamentu, English, Spanish, Dutch, and other languages with different interlocutors in different domains (inside the family, outside the family, with strangers)?*

The results of our survey revealed that Papiamentu was the most frequently used language for all participants in all domains. Papiamentu was even the most frequently used home language by far among participants with a migrant background, pointing to a general language shift within this group. There were some statistically significant differences between the scores of participants with different demographic characteristics, though.

Analysing the patterns of different age groups, we concluded that Papiamentu was used more often with strangers by participants of Generations 2 and 3 as compared to Generation 1 (Table 3). This may be explained by the sociolinguistic situation that characterized the Aruban community up until the 21st century when Papiamentu was mainly used in informal domains related to communication with family and friends. Papiamentu was also used more frequently outside the family and with strangers by participants with lower levels of education than by those with higher levels of education (Table 4). Participants of local origin used Papiamentu more frequently inside and outside the family as compared to participants of migrant descent (Table 5). These findings may be explained by the fact that participants with higher levels of education and migrants shared a more international background and orientation unlike participants with lower levels of education and with a local background, respectively.

The use of Dutch, English, Spanish, and other languages was much more restricted. The differences in the use of Dutch between the age groups were not statistically significant, but Dutch was more often used by participants with higher levels of education in all domains (Table 4) and by migrants inside and outside the family (Table 5). These results point to the traditional role of Dutch in formal domains (and, hence, its relevance for highly educated strata in the community) and to the presence of Dutch-speaking migrant families.

In the case of Spanish we observed a more frequent use among the youngest generation (Table 3) and by migrants (Table 5), both inside and outside the family, but not with strangers. This may be related to the high number of people of Spanish-speaking origin, corroborating the insights of Carroll (2009, 2010, 2015) who highlighted the rise of Spanish as a home language signalled in Table 1. These immigrants speak Spanish at home as well as in their personal social (and professional) networks, but not with people unknown to them (Table 5). There were no differences in the use of Spanish between participants with different education levels (Table 4).

The use of English showed a more complicated pattern, as this language was used more frequently by the youngest generation (Table 3) and by participants with higher levels of education (Table 4) outside the family and with strangers, but not as a home language. English was only spoken more frequently at home by participants with a migrant background (Table 5). These results point to the importance of English as a second language throughout the Aruban community to communicate with people within and outside personal networks.<sup>25</sup>

The use of other languages was very limited and not connected to any differences between the participants regarding their age group, education level or (parental) birthplace.

(2) *How do the attitudes toward Papiamentu change in relation to its different social functions?*

The different groups of participants found Papiamentu most important for reading and writing (C4: literacy) and there were no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the different groups in this respect. The youngest generation (Table 6) and participants with lower levels of education (Table 7) found Papiamentu more important for achievements (C1). These results may be explained by the increasing role of Papiamentu in the public sphere and in the education system, as illustrated by the expansion of the *Scol Multilingual*, which is more relevant for the youngest generation and for participants with lower levels of education who have a more local orientation toward tertiary studies and the job market.

Participants with lower levels of education (Table 7) and local origin (Table 8) found Papiamentu more important for socializing (C2), which may be explained by the fact that their social networks were local rather than international. The scores for the importance of Papiamentu in carrying out leisure activities (C3) were the lowest for the different groups of participants and did not reveal any statistically significant differences.

(3) *How do Arubans position themselves toward the two different macro-identities, that of being a resident of a Caribbean island and that of being a Dutch citizen?*

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25. By using the term 'second language' we generalize over many individual differences concerning the acquisition and use of English. For some Arubans English will be a second language, acquired through informal exposure within the community, whereas others learned English as a foreign language at school. For both groups, the massive exposure to English as a global language through the media will be relevant as well.

The results of the survey indicated that attitudes toward the Aruban identity of the participants were (very) positive and scores for attitudes toward their Dutch identity were neutral. The older generation (G1) was more critical about both the Netherlands and Aruba as compared to the younger generations (Table 9). Participants with higher levels of education (Table 10) were more positive about their Aruban identity than participants with lower levels of education, which may be explained by their more privileged backgrounds.<sup>26</sup> Future investigation should examine whether participants with lower levels of education perceive their Aruban identity as a potential source of social disadvantage. Participants of local origin (Table 11) were also more positive about their Aruban identity, presumably because participants with a migrant background have a weaker orientation toward an Aruban identity.

- (5) *Is the fear of language shift and/or language loss among speakers of Papiamentu in Aruba justified by answers to the previous questions based on the results of our survey?*

The results of the survey indicated that Papiamentu is a vibrant language, as it is widely used and considered important by the participants from different backgrounds, who also shared positive attitudes toward Aruban identity. Crucially, it was the most frequently used language among the participants of the youngest generation, among those with higher levels of education and also by those with a migrant background, indicating that Papiamentu is a vibrant language in Aruba.

The hypotheses presented in Section 6 are repeated below to discuss the findings in more detail.

- (i) *The youngest generation of Arubans uses foreign languages, in particular English and Spanish, more frequently than older generations, due to greater exposure to other languages through the media and immigration.*

This hypothesis was only partially corroborated. The youngest generation used Spanish more frequently within and outside the family and English more frequently outside the family and with strangers (Table 3). As Spanish was also more frequently spoken within and outside the family by migrants (Table 5) our findings may be due to the fact that a subset of the youngest participants belonged

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26. As pointed out by one of the reviewers, the result that participants with higher levels of education were more positive about their Aruban identity deserves closer investigation. As an initial step we observe that participants with higher levels of education are in a more privileged position than participants with lower levels of education, which may affect their respective self-images and perceptions of Aruban identity in a context where unequal power relations between the Caribbean and European parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands play an important role. Obviously, this hypothesis deserves more in-depth investigation.

to Spanish-speaking families, who used Spanish at home and in their social (and professional) networks. A more frequent use of English among the youngest generation is, however, not necessarily related to their home language, but reflective of the overall growing importance of English as a second language for communication within the community.

- (ii) *The youngest generation of Arubans evaluates Papiamentu as less important in comparison to older generations, due to their more international networks.*

This hypothesis was falsified. There were few differences between the results of the participants of different age groups. The youngest generation (G<sub>3</sub>) considered Papiamentu to be **more** important for activities related to achievements (C<sub>1</sub>) in comparison to older generations (Table 6) and this may be explained by the increasing role of Papiamentu in the education system, as illustrated by the *Scol Multilingual*.

- (iii) *Participants with higher levels of education use Papiamentu less frequently and consider the language and Aruban identity as less important, due to their global rather than local orientation.*

This hypothesis was partially corroborated: participants with higher levels of education used Papiamentu less frequently, but only outside the family and with strangers (Table 4). Hence, the use of Papiamentu as a home language was not related to the education levels of the participants. Participants with higher levels of education only considered Papiamentu less important for achievements and socializing (as compared to participants with lower levels of education, Table 7), which may be due to their more international orientation. The hypothesis was also partially falsified because participants with higher levels of education found their Aruban identity more important than participants with lower levels of education (Table 10).

- (iv) *Participants of migrant origin use Papiamentu less frequently and regard the language and Aruban identity as less important, due to their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.*

Hypothesis 4 was partially corroborated because participants with a migrant background used Papiamentu less frequently within and outside the family. There was no difference, however, between the two groups regarding the use of Papiamentu with strangers (Table 5). Local participants only found Papiamentu more important for socializing (C<sub>2</sub>), not for the other categories of activities (Table 8). Local participants unlike those of migrant background also found the Aruban identity more important (Table 11).

- (v) *Fear of language shift and/or language loss is justified by negative results of our survey with respect to the use of Papiamentu and attitudes toward the language and Aruban identity, especially among participants of the youngest age group.*

Hypothesis 5 was clearly falsified by the results, as Papiamentu was the most frequently used language by the participants belonging to different categories, who also shared (very) positive attitudes toward Papiamentu and Aruban identity. Hence, the fear of language shift and/or language loss that was experimented by a part of the Aruban population (Carroll 2009, 2010, 2015) was not justified by the results of our survey.

Since the time of our survey Aruba has been facing political changes that may have affected ideologies and attitudes on the island. As pointed out by Pereira (2018:70), a new government proclaimed in 2017 that the model of the *Scol Multilingual* would be implemented in primary education in Aruba and discussions would start on the renewal of secondary education. These initiatives have fueled the longstanding debates about language policy in the local press and on social media (see Mijts 2021 for an extensive study). Although Pereira & Römer-Dijkhoff (2020) reported that the preparations to implement the model of the *Scol Multilingual* were in full swing at the time, the process is currently suffering delays due to political changes and a decline in financial resources, which was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Joyce Pereira, personal communication).<sup>27</sup>

## 10. Conclusion

In this article we investigated the characteristics of language use and attitudes toward language and identity on the island of Aruba. Papiamentu, the local Iberian-lexifier creole, is the mother tongue of the majority of the population and has been a language with high social prestige as it was spoken by elite groups from early on. Papiamentu spread as a *lingua franca* across speakers of all ethnic groups and social strata of the population and developed into a strong symbol of Aruban identity, defining boundaries between ‘real Arubans’ and outsiders. Carroll (2009, 2010, 2015) observed that, in spite of this strong position of Papiamentu, some Arubans fear for the survival of their language due to the pressure of other languages.

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27. We thank dr. Joyce Pereira for sharing this information about the current situation of the *Scol Multilingual* with us.

We presented the results of a survey that was carried out among 809 participants in Aruba to study the language situation on the island and to find out if Aruban Papiamentu may be in danger of language shift due to the use of Dutch, English and Spanish. Our findings clearly corroborate Carroll's (2009, 2010, 2015) conclusions concerning the vitality of the Papiamentu, as it was the most frequently used language by far in all domains by participants of different age groups, education levels, and origins.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, the use of Dutch, English, and Spanish was very restricted, even as home languages among participants with a migrant background. Moreover, attitudes toward Papiamentu were generally (very) positive across the different categories and the participants considered the language very important for reading and writing. In summary, our findings are in line with Carroll's observation that sentiments of language threat among speakers of Papiamentu in Aruba may be based in **perception**, in particular caused by the number and omnipresence of Spanish-speaking immigrants, rather than in the actual use of Papiamentu and potentially negative attitudes toward the language and Aruban identity.

The findings of our study are relevant to understand the complexity of languages, identities and ideologies in (post-) colonial societies. In many of those societies, creole languages co-exist with the languages of the former European colonizer in a situation that is characterized by a strong contrast in prestige and function connected to the social stratification of the respective speakers. Political change, such as the independent status of the territories where creole languages are spoken, may induce changes in language policy and planning, such as standardization and initiatives to use creole languages in education, although many of these activities are constrained by practical and financial concerns as well as ideological resistance among policy makers and speakers.

In creole communities that are under European rule, we see that language planning and policy are firmly determined by traditions of the former colonizer, in spite of the important role of the creole language as a first or second language and as a marker of local identity. This is not only the case in Aruba, as illustrated by the results of our survey and the literature review, but also in the French Over-

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28. Although a profound assessment of the vitality of Papiamentu is beyond the scope of this article, we point out that Aruban Papiamentu meets many of the criteria for language vitality as defined by UNESCO (2003) and assessed by Severing & Weijer (2010) and Bak-Piard (2016) for Papiamentu in Curaçao and Bonaire, respectively. On the three ABC-islands, the vitality of the language is mainly severely challenged on the level of two criteria: (i) Materials for education and literacy; (ii) Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use. Obviously, although these challenges have been pervasive in the history of the islands and Papiamentu/o has survived under difficult circumstances, they may still have consequences for the vitality of the language over the course of time.



seas Departments, where the creole question has frequently been aligned with autonomist or independentist movements in opposition to French domination leading to attempts to distance the creole language as far away from French as possible (Prudent & Schnepel 1993: 8, Prudent 1993: 141).<sup>29</sup>

Obviously, specific characteristics of local communities are key to understanding the complexity of these matters. For example, in the case of the French Overseas Departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe, Schnepel (1993) points out that demographic differences play a crucial role in the distribution and use of the creole language. The population of Guadeloupe has been much less racially mixed compared to that of Martinique where a numerically large and socially influential mulatto class developed and where assimilation to and penetration of French culture is more pronounced (p. 119). A climate of revolutionary violence has characterized Guadeloupe, whereas prudence and calm have ensued in Martinique (p. 119).

Obviously, our findings are not only interesting from an academic perspective, but also urgent from a political and societal point of view, as acknowledgment of the importance of multilingualism and in particular of creole languages is key to the development of sustainable, inclusive language policies in the communities where these languages are spoken. In Aruba, the *Scol Multilingual*, a model for multilingual primary education in which Papiamentu is the language of instruction and initial literacy and Dutch, English, and Spanish are taught as second or foreign languages (Croes 2011; Pereira 2018), can play a key role in this respect, providing access to formal education and social mobility to a larger share of the Aruban population and serving as a model to other creole communities.

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29. The French Overseas Departments, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique and Réunion were politically assimilated by France in 1946 (Schnepel 1993: 120). As *départements* of France, the islands had to submit to the same laws and decrees as France as well as to the same social and administrative organization. French was established as the only official language (Colot & Ludwig 2013).



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## Appendix A. The questionnaire

### Cuestionario

E cuestionario aki ta relaciona cu e programa di Master of Education di University of Curaçao. E studiantenan tin cu prepara un ensayo, cu ta forma parti di un curso tocante contacto entre diferente idioma, cu e estudiante ta sigui cerca señora dr. Ellen-Petra Kester di Universidad di Utrecht.

E cuestionario ta trata di bo opinion riba importancia y uzo di Papiamentu y e identidad dobel como Arubiano y ciudadano Hulandes.

Nos ta pidi pa contesta tur pregunta sinceramente. No tin contesta corecto of incorrecto; ta trata unicamente di bo opinion personal.

E cuestionario ta anonimo y lo trata tur informacion confidencialmente. Si tin interes pa e temanan di e cuestionario of e resultadonan di e investigacion por tuma contacto cu señora Kester atraves di [ellenpetrakester@gmail.com](mailto:ellenpetrakester@gmail.com). Masha danki pa bo cooperacion!

## Parti 1

Aki bou ta presenta ponencia tocante identidad como Arubiano y ciudadano Hulandes. Por favor, indica si bo ta di acuerdo of no di acuerdo cu e ponencianan, marcando bo contesta cu un circulo.

CA = Completamente di acuerdo	(marca CA)
DA = Di acuerdo	(marca DA)
NE = Neutral, ni di acuerdo, ni no di acuerdo	(marca NE)
ND = No di acuerdo	(marca ND)
CD = Completamente no di acuerdo	(marca CD)

Mi ta un persona cu....

1. tin dificultad pa bisa cu mi ta un ciudadano Hulandes.	CA DA NE ND CD
2. ta sinti conexion fuerte cu Hulanda.	CA DA NE ND CD
3. tin e tendencia di sconde e echocu mi ta un Arubiano.	CA DA NE ND CD
4. ta contento di ta un Arubiano.	CA DA NE ND CD
5. ta identifica su mes cu otro Arubiano.	CA DA NE ND CD
6. ta considera e echo di ta ciudadano Hulandes importante.	CA DA NE ND CD
7. tin berguensa pa e echo cu mi ta un ciudadano Hulandes.	CA DA NE ND CD
8. ta considera mi mes un Arubiano.	CA DA NE ND CD
9. ta sinti cu mi ta wordo teni abou paso mi ta un Arubiano.	CA DA NE ND CD
10. ta critico cu cosnan relaciona cu Hulanda.	CA DA NE ND CD
11. ta contento di ta un ciudadano Hulandes.	CA DA NE ND CD
12. ta critico cu cosnan relaciona cu Aruba.	CA DA NE ND CD

## Parti 2

Con importante of no importante Papiamento ta pa e siguiente situacionnan? Por favor, marca bo contesta cu un cruz den e hoki.

PA HENDE:	Basta importante	Poco importante	No importante
1. cera amistad			
2. gana hopi placa			
3. lesa			
4. skirbi			
5. wak television/video			
6. haña trabou			
7. bira mas sabi			
8. gusta bo			
9. biba na Aruba			

PA HENDE:	Importante	Basta importante	Poco importante	No importante
10 bay misa				
11 canta				
12 haci deporte				
13 educa mucha				
14 cumpra cos				
15 haci yamada telefonico				
16 pasa examen				
17 keda acepta den comunidad				
18 papia cu amigo na scol				
19 papia cu docente na scol				
20 papia cu otro pafo di scol				

### Parti 3

Cua idioma bo ta uza den e siguiente situacionnan?

PP = Principalmente Papiamento

PH = Principalmente Hulandes

PI = Principalmente Ingles

PS = Principalmente Spaño

VI = Varios idioma mescos hopi

1. Na bo cas cu bo famia PP PH PI PS VI
2. Na trabou cu bo coleganan PP PH PI PS VI
3. Na trabou cu bo hefe PP PH PI PS VI
4. Na scol cu bo compañeronan PP PH PI PS VI
5. Na scol cu bo docentenan PP PH PI PS VI
6. Cu bo amigonan PP PH PI PS VI
7. Cu hende desconoci PP PH PI PS VI

Cua idioma bo ta uza diariamente ora bo ta papia cu ...

(Pone un cifra entre 1 y 5 den e hoki cu bo scoge. 5 kiermen hopi, 1 kiermen tiki. Ta posibel pa uza e mesun cifra mas cu un biaha.)

	Papiamento	Hulandes	Ingles	Spaño	Otro idioma
bo mama					
bo tata					

	Papiamentu	Hulandes	Ingles	Spaño	Otro idioma
bo ruman muhenan					
bo ruman hombernan					
bo yiunan					
bo amigonan					
bo compañeronan di klas					
bo docente					
bo coleganan					
bo hefe di trabou					
hende desconoci					

#### Parti 4

Por favor, contesta e preguntanan aki of marca e contesta corecto cu un circulo.

1. Aña di nacemento: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sexo:                                    homber    muhe
3. Bo a nace na Aruba?                Si            No
4. Bo mama a nace na Aruba? Si            No
5. Bo tata a nace na Aruba?        Si            No

#### Pa studiante:

6. Educacion: VSBO SBO HAVO VWO
7. Klas:                                    \_\_\_\_\_

#### Pa hende grandi:

8. Nivel educativo: BO VSBO HAVO SBO VWO HBO WO

Masha danki pa bo cooperacion!

### Appendix B. Principal Component Analysis (importance of Papiamentu in carrying our certain activities)

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
P2: become smarter	0.785	0.183	0.109	0.191
P2: get a job	0.784	0.154	0.105	0.149
P2: pass exams	0.752	0.052	0.102	0.215
P2: earn plenty of money	0.712	0.087	0.148	0.007
P2: talk to friends in school	0.106	0.857	0.237	0.068



## Appendix B. (continued)

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
P2: talk to people out of school	0.069	0.852	0.209	0.063
P2: talk to teachers in school	0.333	0.696	0.098	0.199
P2: make phone calls	-0.018	0.193	0.742	0.117
P2: go shopping	0.320	0.086	0.725	0.010
P2: sing	0.110	0.201	0.683	0.154
P2: play sports	0.509	0.133	0.522	0.029
P2: read	0.179	0.109	0.121	0.904
P2: write	0.209	0.142	0.130	0.889
variance explained	22%	16%	15%	13%
reliability – Cronbachs Alpha	.810	.804	.709	.870


## Appendix C. Principal Component Analysis (attitudes toward identity)

I am a person who ...	Component			
	1	2	3	4
4. is happy to be Aruban.	0.850	0.002	0.138	-0.025
8. considers himself to be Aruban.	0.844	0.007	0.124	-0.082
5. identifies with other Arubans.	0.712	0.167	-0.198	-0.061
6. considers it important to be a Dutch citizen.	0.129	0.759	0.119	-0.031
11. is happy to be a Dutch citizen.	0.043	0.744	0.239	0.046
2. feels strong ties with the Netherlands	-0.001	0.665	-0.064	-0.109
1. is bothered to say I am a Dutch citizen. (r)	-0.103	0.239	0.694	0.072
3. tends to hide the fact I'm Aruban. (r)	0.240	-0.229	0.672	-0.076
7. makes excuses for being a Dutch citizen. (r)	-0.011	0.378	0.661	0.142
12. is critical about Aruba. (r)	-0.090	-0.017	-0.033	0.830
10. is critical about the Netherlands. (r)	-0.043	-0.070	0.125	0.816
variance explained	19%	17%	14%	13%
reliability – Cronbachs Alpha	.736	.624	.484	.563

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