

# Linguistic Expectations in South Florida

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In the culturally and linguistically diverse life of South Florida, three predominant communities – the Spanish, French, and Russian linguistic communities – have established themselves socially and historically. This study draws on “acculturation theory” to provide nuance for how members of linguistic communities in South Florida adapt to dominant linguistic cultures while maintaining their native languages and cultural practices. The research’s primary objective was to analyze the effect Spanish, French, and Russian-speaking linguistic communities have on cultural, business, and social life in South Florida. Based on referral sampling interviews, archival, and media analysis, this paper finds that the three linguistic and cultural communities have created a distinct and lasting socio-linguistic presence in South Florida. Lingering in between the insider-outsider dynamic, some migrants mix their native language with the English of South Florida, which further portrays the diversity present within a single linguistic and cultural community. These communities display heterogeneity of member involvement; rather than including all settlers of a common language enclave, they are targeted or avoided by migrants for individual reasons. This diversity creates an “insider-outsider” dynamic between the newcomers, which is oftentimes misrepresented in the news media. The dynamic further on allows for a variation of effect on local English-speaking businesses and professional services. Some of the settling migrants choose to diversify their selection of services by turning to the local English-speaking ones, while others remain within their enclaves which provide them with services in their mother tongue, thus taking away the necessity to learn English and adapt to the new foreign environment. This study combines aspects of the Spanish, French, and Russian linguistic communities previously covered individually in existing literature, such as historical migration patterns or linguistic issues encountered by migrants in the area. By drawing connections between previously published works’ findings and synthesizing new conclusions, this work fills an existing gap in literature on the diversity of acculturation occurring within each of the three communities. “Linguistic expectations” offers a new framework for understanding tensions between people and the expectations of their linguistic communities.

## Introduction to Linguistic Communities in South Florida

In South Florida, various linguistic communities have had an extensive effect on society and economy, which varies significantly from that of other locations in the United States due to its socio-linguistic diversity. Gaining popularity as a migrant destination throughout the 21st century, South Florida has predominant Spanish, French and Russian-speaking communities, each integrating and influencing the area in distinct ways. The study aims to investigate the influence linguistic contact between the three communities has had on business practices and cultural relations in South Florida, as well as the attitudes and preferences of each of the three communities in regards to their own languages and English. How have contemporary Spanish, French, and Russian-speaking linguistic communities affected cultural, business, and social life in South Florida. The extent of integration and influence depends on factors such as language knowledge, cultural traditions, financial situations, resource availability and career opportunities. Certain variables are highly similar across the three

communities, such as the establishment of ethnic neighborhoods, like the Spanish Little Havana and the Russian “Little Moscow”, while others vary greatly, such as the reach of Spanish businesses versus the concentration of Russian ones in specific areas. This work covers and compares the acquisition and implementation of English-speaking American traditions, language, and business practices, or lack thereof, within the Spanish, French and Russian communities of South Florida. For the purpose of this research, South Florida is not a strictly defined political territory; rather, it is a geographical area that encompasses, but is not limited to, Miami Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. Methods used include scholarly literature review, historical and contemporary archival analysis, interviews, participant observation, and media discourse analysis. These are the most advantageous and practical methods for the research as the sources for literature review and analysis are accessible through Google Scholar, while interviews were conducted with ethnically diverse acquaintances (Russian business owners, French teacher, Spanish teacher). I relied on referral sampling to conduct interviews, utilizing my network to find initial contacts who then referred me to

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other people relevant to my research question. An established rapport with interviewees allowed for an ethical approach in regards to discussing topics such as family, migration, and business. Before conducting interviews, verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants. Interviews were audio recorded. Pseudonyms are used to maintain the privacy of interviewees. Pseudonyms are used to maintain the privacy of interviewees. In particular, when referring to the interviewees Romy, Marianne, Agatha, Alexandra, Maria, and Katherine, I am using pseudonyms to preserve their privacy. The usage of primary and secondary sources originating from people with relevant cultural backgrounds - Russian, French, and Spanish - allows the work to be more credible and relevant in the context of discussion of these groups' business activities. Deeper insight into the reasons behind existent cultural enclaves in South Florida are provided by conducting interviews with people in these communities and analyzing historical sources on the topic.

## Spanish Linguistic Community

From the earliest history of the United States, Florida has been a Spanish-speaking state explored by Juan Ponce de León in 1513. Depending on the time period, the push and pull factors for Latino migration to South Florida have varied from political freedom to economic opportunities. Motivated by the presence of tobacco and sugar businesses up until the 19th century, waves of Puerto Rican and Cuban migrants have historically established communities in South Florida, with half of the total Hispanic migrants in Florida occupying Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties located in the South of the state. Through the 20th century, these Hispanic Americans gained more freedom and ability to participate politically, with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 upholding the principles of the 15th Amendment, thus ensuring equal voting practices even through the discriminatory post Civil-War Southern states. Fleeing the dictatorship of Fidel Castro from 1961 to 1970, 290,000 Cuban migrants, who were better educated and wealthier than previous migrant groups as they were not coming for economic reasons, moved to Miami in this time period due to its proximity and established presence of Hispanic communities<sup>1</sup>. The migrants brought with them their festive culture, establishing in 1978 the “Calle Ocho” celebration that brings together Hispanic Americans in the streets of Little Havana, Miami’s Cuban neighborhood. The availability of a bilingual environment has also been a great pull factor for Hispanic migrants to South Florida, as the Miami-Dade County Public Schools System “forcefully endorsed and advanced bilingual education<sup>2</sup>.” However, it is not due to such Hispanic influence that “Spanglish” has emerged as the unofficial language of Florida, as expressed by interviewees and in news media - Spanish was the dominant language, second to

Native American Timucua, and English was introduced later on<sup>3</sup>.

Compared with historical Cuban and Puerto Rican migrants in South Florida, which are now decreasing in number, the turn of the 21st century has seen a large increase in migration of other nationalities, such as Venezuelans and Mexicans. Since 1998, Venezuelan migration to the United States has grown by 94% by 2008, and the majority of migrants are settling in South Florida<sup>4</sup>. Likewise, Mexican presence in South Florida has proportionally doubled in regard to overall Latino population, from 8% to 16% since the 1980s. Overall, there are close to 6.028 million Hispanic people in Florida as of 2022 (27.1% of the state’s population)<sup>5</sup>, compared with 2.683 million in 2000 (16.8% of the state’s population)<sup>6</sup>. The modern migrants come to the area for job or educational opportunities for their children, mainly staying in Hispanic neighborhoods. As Romy, a 60 year old Puerto Rican migrant stated in an interview, “many people who come... tend to stay with their ‘tribe’” in South Florida. This does not prevent the assimilation of Hispanic people into the English-speaking society, though; in fact, Spanish migrants are unique in their ability to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to the English-speaking one<sup>1</sup>. The exemplified ability is “integration”, also known as “biculturalism”, on the scale of acculturation theory, which focuses on addressing individuals’ value and conservation of their own and their host culture<sup>7</sup>. Depending on the reasons for migration to South Florida, certain Hispanic migrants do not strictly partake in the originally established Hispanic neighborhoods. Romy does not follow the typical pattern of Hispanic people in South Florida; rather, she calls herself “the weakest link of Puerto Rico” because she does not cook Hispanic food, only celebrates Los Reyes Magos (Spanish Epiphany) out of the other holidays native to Spanish-speaking countries, and does not limit her social circle to Hispanic people. Therefore, she is more part of the English-speaking and cultural community rather than the Hispanic one.

Due to the Hispanic presence in South Florida, it is commonly expected of business owners and employees to speak Spanish, while English knowledge is not seen as a “given”. Local Hispanic business life is as tightly knit as the Hispanic neighborhoods themselves. According to the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the state is the second in the nation for the amount of Hispanic businesses present. In fact, in Broward County alone, 27.8% of businesses are Hispanic owned, and Hispanic news media is widely popular, too<sup>8</sup>. For instance, the El Venezolano News, a Miami-based Venezuelan newspaper, was established and has been active in the area since 1992. However, businesses encounter language barriers from both sides – Hispanic business owners and workers struggle to understand their English-speaking customers and vice versa. Quoted in an article by NBC News, Melissa Green, a

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Miami-born flower shop owner, claims that her lack of Spanish knowledge makes it “difficult to conduct business”, while for farmer James McCleary, originally from Vermont, it took seven months to get hired as a cook due to his “inability to speak Spanish”<sup>9</sup>. The regard of these linguistic challenges by a national newspaper suggests their significance to and concern seen throughout the United States as a whole, as such patterns could be represented in other states. Romy claims that certain parts of the English-speaking American patronage are given up to the Hispanic one, as certain native English speakers move north because Hispanic workers and business owners “don’t want to speak to [the customers] in English”. Members of her family, also from Puerto Rico, find themselves not leaving their Hispanic “barrios” when in America, and “they haven’t even learned the language”, in this case, the English language. By maintaining their language and culture, but neglecting English language practices in South Florida, these Spanish-speaking migrants exemplify “separation” behavior in accordance with acculturation theory<sup>7</sup>. This “separation” is likely facilitated by the existence of ethnic communities, which provide the migrants with resources necessary for them to conduct their lives without establishing contact with local English speakers. Thus, despite an array of Hispanic businesses, the language barrier and the linguistic diversity inhibits the smooth collaboration and participation of both English and Spanish speaking businesses in South Florida.

Rather than learning Spanish as a second language, 45% of Miami’s users of Duolingo - the most popular language learning app globally- are “Spanish speakers learning English”<sup>10</sup>. In fact, 69.1% of Miami-Dade County, 32.0% of Broward County, and 23.9% of Palm Beach County residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, only an estimated 25% of the population of Miami are “native English speakers”<sup>11</sup>. Due to this Hispanic presence and the lack of English proficiency in Hispanic Floridians, “Spanglish” has become a common term for the language that surfaces in Miami. Romy, the Puerto Rican interviewee, notes that her Cuban husband “mixes both” Spanish and English when talking to her, or when “he speaks to [her] in Spanish, [she] will answer in English”. Such combinations are not reserved to the older generation - Miami’s teenagers widely use the phrase “pero like”, mixing the English conjunction “like” with the Spanish “pero” to create the Spanglish slang for “but like”. The societal reach of Hispanic culture goes beyond the spoken languages; various modern festivals honor and embrace the culture, such as the annual Miami Salsa Congress, which takes place in July at Eden Roc Miami Beach, where the Latin Salsa is demonstrated and taught to participants, or the Major League Baseball’s Miami Marlins Heritage Celebration, which runs from May to October at the LoanDepot Park in Miami and dedicates days to various Hispanic countries’ cultures. South Florida’s social life is filled with Hispanic festivals, which are com-

monly covered in local and national news media sources; the reach of Hispanic culture is extensive and nationally recognized and celebrated.

## French Linguistic Community

Competing with the Spanish for an establishment of territory in the New World, French explorers, authorities, and freedom-seeking religious groups turned from Canada and Saint Domingue to Florida in the 16th century. Jacksonville’s Fort Caroline, established in 1564 as a refuge for Huguenots (French Calvinists), was the first, and miserably impermanent, French settlement in Florida. Catholic Spanish settlers did not tolerate French Protestants on their grounds and, bloodily escorted out of the area by the Spanish admiral Pedro Menéndez, French settlers gave up their attempts to secure a permanent land claim in the southeast of the New World. Instead, individual settlers arrived and lived in Florida amongst the Native American and Spanish settlements. In the 20th century, French migration to South Florida took a more luxurious rather than agrarian turn. Sarah Bernhardt, a famous French actress at the time, toured “Tampa and Jacksonville in 1905-1906”, thus contributing to a historically important time period during which, alongside advances in infrastructure, migrant French and local Florida culture were combining<sup>12</sup>. In fact, from 1893 to 1902, the usage of the term “French in Miami” increased by 1525% in digitized books from the time period<sup>13</sup>. Further into the century, French Canadian migration to South Florida began as the U.S. government invested in the building of the Intracoastal Waterway in 1927, which attracted the Francophone workers. Deciding to stay in South Florida after the completion of the Waterway in the area, the Canadians settled in the Miami area, in the cities of Surfside and North Miami<sup>14</sup>. The time period between the end of World War II and 1960 was claimed to be the first Francophone migration wave to South Florida, as well as the origin of “Floribec”, the mix of “Florida” and “Quebec”, as a name for the area. The migrants specialized in the tourism industry as Miami is a popular tourist location and there was an increase in wealthy Canadians visiting the South. Starting from the second wave of migration (1960-1970) of Canadians to Florida, the Francophones began to establish their own enterprises, such as hotels, motels, and restaurants, for their country’s tourists. Targeting common Francophone culture, they created a connection with the community through *Le Soleil de la Floride*, a French newspaper established in 1983 with headquarters in Hollywood, a southern city. This wave also contributed to the dispersion of the French to cities like Coral Gables; the usage of the city’s name in French increased by 262% from 1970 to 1980, showing the increase in popularity of the destination amongst French-speaking people<sup>13</sup>. Haitian migration to the South of Florida, specifically Miami-Dade

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County, has also contributed to the Francophone culture of Miami, as many of the migrants speak Haitian Creole and French. The main push factors for Haitian migration to the United States were economic instability and the dictatorships of Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier starting in the 1950s, and in the 1970s, sailing across the Gulf Stream in simple vessels made Miami a close-to-home hub for Haitians<sup>15</sup>. In 1973, Viter Juste, a Haitian activist, coined the name Little Haiti, and the location became a “home away from home” for thousands of Haitians, as Jean Dondy Cidelca calls it<sup>16</sup>.

As of 2023, Florida is the fourth state in the United States with the highest French-speaking population of 406,057 French people, and 106,621 French Canadians<sup>17</sup>. The state’s French-speaking community is “growing quickly at over 10% per year”<sup>18</sup>. French migration to South Florida often happens from the South of France, where people have a similar “Laissez Faire” style of business, which requires less formalities than that of other American cities<sup>18</sup>. However, a lot of the Francophone settlers in Florida are seasonal Québécois migrants known as “snowbirds”, coming to the state for the colder winter months and leaving for the summer. Most prefer to spend their winters in the Miami area due to its previously established French communities, yet contrary to popular belief, not all of them are over fifty-five years of age – young Francophones come to the Sunshine State due to its popularity of tourism, higher temperatures, and business opportunities. The modern Francophone migrants tend to settle in Hallandale, Hollywood, and Dania<sup>14</sup>; statistically, the usage of “Hallandale” in French has increased by 1350% from 2000 to 2019, “Dania” by 222% from 2000 to 2019, and “Hollywood in Florida” by 759% from 1994 to 2017. As Agatha, a 53 year old Canadian interviewee who has lived in Miami for 10 years, says about the French community in Florida, “they are all together in gated communities, and the majority does not even speak English”. Due to an availability of Francophone services and the presence of such a community, modern French Floridians exhibit a “separation” behavior on the scale of acculturation theory, as they are not limited in their daily life by a lack of language proficiency<sup>7</sup>. Yet, conformity to the French community in Florida is not unanimous; Marianne, a 44 year old Parisian interviewee claims she does not “associate with them” as she does “not feel the need to”, nor does Agatha as she believes it is “better to integrate oneself with [English-speaking] Americans” rather than the Francophones. They both believe they have integrated into the local English-speaking community by 100%, thus proving the existence of “outsiders” of the French South Floridian community. Some people interviewed and cited in other studies report having created bonds over not being a part of the Francophone community in Miami and described feeling “American enough” to conduct their daily lives in English alongside English-speaking Floridians.

Similar to Hispanic migrants, Francophone migrants in South Florida have had an extensive influence on businesses. In fact, the modern French in Miami created utilities for themselves that allow them to operate in their habitual lifestyles without integrating into the English-speaking society, such as The French American School of Miami, an elementary school founded in Miami Shores in 1995; the International Studies Charter School, an upper school founded in Miami in 2004; hundreds of French bakeries; and the French District, the first French website in the United States created in Florida in 2008. The website facilitates Francophone life in the United States as it provides an array of Francophone services, such as lawyers, doctors, and real estate agents in various U.S. states, and has over 9 million users. Therefore, rather than influencing English-speaking businesses and taking away customers from those, French entrepreneurs have simply recreated parts of their homeland, whether that be France or Canada, in South Florida. Despite the historical popularity of tourism businesses amongst Canadians in Florida, with motels located on Hollywood’s “Broadwalk”, there has been an unexpected decline in business ownership by the Francophones due to the purchase of such businesses by richer Latin-American real estate developers and the destruction of such businesses for the purpose of building luxury condominiums. Thus surfaces one other push factor for those Canadian Francophones who chose South Florida as their destination: economic opportunities. Marianne, the Parisian interviewee, notes that “when you’re French, there is not really that economic need” to move out of the country to, for instance, the United States. However, with Floribec settlers and their choice of small businesses which get ousted by grander ones, it can be seen that economic prosperity is not always at hand, and it can be assumed that the choice of location is made due to poorer business conditions in the motherland. In regard to service selection by Francophone migrants in South Florida, both interviewees named Trader Joe’s, the Californian grocery store chain, as one of their main sources of French food; Marianne chooses it because “there is more variety of French cheeses” compared to regular grocery stores, and Agatha states that unlike Trader Joe’s, “Publix, for example, was not for [her and her family]” due to its greater “Americanness”. Nevertheless, both Francophone interviewees stated that “everything is always easier” (Marianne) and “everything is easy in Florida” (Agatha) in comparison with France or other U.S. states. Therefore, even for those who do not reside in a French community in South Florida, services are available up to their liking and are provided in both French and English.

Many of the Francophone settlers in South Florida lack English proficiency. Therese, a Québécois snowbird interviewed in the 2017 case study conducted by H el ene Blondeau, a professor of French at the University of Florida, notes that within her mobile home complex in South Florida where she lives for

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half of the year since her retirement, most of the inhabitants are snowbirds from Quebec, just like her, but many “speak little to no English”<sup>19</sup>. However, in contrast to the Spanish-speaking population of Florida, of which only 58% speak English “very well”, 79.3% of the French population have that English proficiency. Concluding from interviewees’ responses and this data, the “outsiders” of the French community tend to be the ones learning English, as they need it in order to participate in the English-speaking lifestyle. According to Jacynthe, another Québécois snowbird in this case study, snowbirds other than her “are not involved enough in the larger community”<sup>19</sup>. In fact, as previously mentioned, the modern Francophone community of South Florida is so tightly knit that participation of snowbirds in the English-speaking community is not common, either by choice or for linguistic reasons. Nevertheless, native Francophone culture is an important aspect of social life for both permanent and seasonal French Floridians. The French are able to preserve their artistic culture with the presence of French art in certain museums in South Florida, such as The Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, which features artworks by Matisse and Bonnard, and whose director is a French man called Ghislain d’Humières<sup>20</sup>. The French also pay tribute to France’s Bastille Day on July 14th with a celebration hosted by “French & Famous”, a French event hosting company established in 2015 in Miami. Marianne, the Parisian interviewee, who has lived in South Florida the last 20 years and is an American citizen, confesses that “France is in [her] heart”, and she maintains her Frenchness by visiting her family and friends in Paris every summer. For her, the French Floridian services do not fully replace those from her motherland. Haitian culture is celebrated with events such as the Sounds of Little Haiti at the Little Haiti Cultural Center, where Haitian singers and bands perform every third Friday, or Copa Cabana, celebrated in June for Caribbean Heritage Month at the Historic Virginia Key Beach park. Permanent French, Haitian and seasonal Canadian migrants are able to preserve their culture in South Florida with certain limitations, as the variety and availability of cultural events is not as great as it is for Hispanic events.

## Russian Linguistic Community

Despite the fact that there is little to know research on Russian migration to South Florida, there is literature on Russian migration to the United States. This literature provides an estimate of contextual evidence of Russian speaking migration. Paul Robert Magocsi, a New Jersey professor, historian, and Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, is the author of a public history forum about Russian-speaking migrants in the United States; despite not being a peer reviewed article, this website assembles information from various sources, and is one of the only digitally available databases

on the topic. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, over 3.2 million Russian speaking migrants, of whom about half were Jews from the Pale of Settlement, arrived in the United States from the Russian Empire, which encompassed many modern western European, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries<sup>21</sup>. The primary push factor for the Jews was religious freedom, as the Pale of Settlement was the only place in the Russian Empire where they could live without being persecuted. Further on in the 20th century, in the 1920s, 30,000 Russian speaking migrants fled the Bolshevik regime in the USSR for the U.S.<sup>21</sup>. These political refugees were called the “Whites”, contrary to the “Reds”, the communists of Russia. Another 14,000 arrived prior to World War I in the 1930s, and 20,000 more as an effect of World War I’s displacement of Russians. The 1920s and 1930s Soviet government made emigration illegal, thus migrants had their Russian citizenship taken away for being “traitors” of the communist regime. Yet, starting in 1969, Russian Jews were legally allowed to leave the USSR for Israel, as part of the détente established between the Western and the Communist powers, later on moving to the United States. Beginning with Mikhail Gorbachev’s rule in 1985, all restrictions on Russian emigration were removed, which did allow more Jewish and non-Jewish Russian speaking migrants to come into the U.S., but the process was slower till the 2000s as they no longer could “justify” their migration “on the grounds of political or religious persecution” as Russia became an independent, and somewhat democratic nation<sup>21</sup>. While the first decades of Russian migration to the United States were primarily concentrated in the Northeast and California, the last four decades saw Russian settlement grow in Florida, mainly by migration from the North.

As of today, Florida is the state with the third largest population of Russians (31,310) after California (69,953) and New York (79,742)<sup>22</sup>. Estimates of Russian-speaking people in Florida come between 250,000 and 350,000 people, of which 70% are said to reside in its Southwest part, however there is no definite number yet, in possibility due to the broad definition of “Russian speaking”<sup>23</sup>. Nevertheless, these people have now asserted their presence in South Florida, settling primarily in the cities of Palm Beach, Aventura, Bal Harbour, and Sunny Isles Beach, which is known as “Little Moscow” in popular news media, and has an estimated Eastern European population of 2,624 people<sup>24</sup>. As they move to the United States, the majority of these Eastern Europeans first prefer to live in these tightly-knit communities where they’re surrounded with Russian speech, traditions, and businesses in order to acclimate to the new country in an environment which is a close simulation of their home countries. Upon improving their English and establishing themselves financially, they move out of Russian speaking communities into primarily English-speaking American suburbs. Regardless of where they choose to live in South Florida – within or outside of

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the Russian speaking community – these migrants feel fully integrated into the life of the area, as suggested by three Eastern European interviewees, Alexandra from Lithuania, Maria from Russia, and Katherine from Belarus, who have lived in South Florida for 22, 10 and 3 years, respectively. Similarly to other Russian-speaking migrants in the area, the three interviewees demonstrate “integration” into their host culture, while maintaining their own values and culture<sup>7</sup>. The primary push factor for modern Russian speaking migration to South Florida is “the location – it is the ocean and the sun”, says Alexandra, the 44 year old Lithuanian interviewee. Many Russian-speaking celebrities, like Leonid Agutin, Igor Krutoy, and Anna Kurnikova, who are attracted to South Florida for the same reason, own some of the most expensive waterfront apartments in Sunny Isles Beach or Fisher Island. They also serve as an example of luxury life for Russian speaking migrants in the U.S.. Besides the weather, Alexandra says other push factors include “opportunities, work, income, education, growth, personal opportunities, beauty, and lifestyle” of South Florida. For these reasons, since the start of the 21st century, the usage of “South Florida” in Russian has grown by 361%, and Russian speaking migration to South Florida has continued to increase even more following the Russia-Ukraine War<sup>13</sup>.

To make themselves feel at home in South Florida, Russian-speaking migrants have established several businesses in the most densely populated Russian-speaking cities. For instance, Matryoshka and Kalinka are two popular Eastern European grocery stores, both located in “Little Moscow” (Sunny Isles Beach) and run by Russian-speaking employees. There is also a Russian-speaking kindergarten called Pushkin Academy in Hallandale Beach, and a variety of Eastern European beauty services around the Russian community, such as body clinics, and hair and nail salons, which acquire customers of all nationalities due to their high quality. To spread these resources, a Facebook group with 51,600 members called “Pomozhem V Miami”, which means “we will help in Miami”, has been running since 2016. There, a lot of requests and ads about Russian-speaking services are published. There is a certain pattern that Russian-speaking migrants tend to follow in regard to their service selection. Upon and within a couple of years of their arrival, the newcomers tend to stick to Russian-speaking professional services; Katherine says that although she does not specifically look for Russian speaking doctors or nail salons, when it comes to “specifics like accounting or lawyers, more professional”, which would require deeper knowledge of English, she “leans towards Russian speaking” ones. However, as they become more accustomed to the language and the business environment of South Florida, the Russian-speaking migrants, as Alexandra does, having lived in South Florida for over 20 years, “prefer, on the contrary, to have a professional of a different nationality”. A

vast amount of literature and news articles on Russians in Miami talks about Russian businessmen and oligarchs purchasing property in Sunny Isles Beach, specifically in the Trump Towers or Aqualina buildings; it is said that in the Trump Towers, 63 Russians have “bought at least \$98.4 million worth of property”<sup>25</sup> and “60% of units are owned by shell companies”, which “can be involved in money laundering”<sup>26</sup>. Besides the large investments in waterfront apartments, real estate is a flourishing business for Russian-speaking migrants in Miami, with dozens of individual realtors offering their services for U.S.-born and international newcomers. A popular modern wave of Russian-speaking migration to Miami is that of expecting mothers, who seek better healthcare and a U.S. citizenship for their newborns, as well as a green card for themselves upon their child’s 21st birthday<sup>26</sup>. They are offered bundles, which include labor, living, and transportation among other services, and this motive of migration is growing amongst Russian women as the process of receiving a U.S. Visa becomes more challenging due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Although Russian-speaking migrants have established their presence in South Florida through business life rather firmly, their knowledge of the English language lacks proficiency. Similarly to the Spanish and French migrant groups, the Russian-speaking one often relies on usage of its native language, especially upon their arrival. However, the conformity to the usage of Russian is not uniform; some, like Katherine, the Belorussian interviewee, admits that despite having lived in Miami for 3 years, English words often slip into her Russian speech because her brain “always has to switch from Russian to English”. Due to the availability of Russian-speaking resources in the area, the migrant parents are not pressured into learning English. All three Russian-speaking interviewees noted that their closest friends, and in some cases work partners and clients, in South Florida are also Russians speakers. However, these parents’ children do have to acquire English proficiency, as no educational facilities beyond kindergarten provide Russian courses in South Florida. For example, Alexandra’s son was born in the U.S., and while she and her Ukrainian husband “try to talk to him in Russian as much as [they] can”, he replies to them in English, as it is the language he uses most commonly at school. Russian-speaking migrants preserve their culture upon moving to South Florida as much as they can; Katherine and Alexandra, when asked about what parts of their culture they have preserved, state that they celebrate all Eastern European holidays they celebrated before upon moving to South Florida, as well as maintaining Russian food culture. Russian music and pop culture is also preserved with Russian-speaking stars’ performances in Miami, such as comedian Maxim Galkin’s 2023 tour or rapper Oxxxymiron’s 2023-2024 tour, which include South Florida as their destination due to their demand. However, Russian-speaking mi-

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grants do miss Soviet art, ballet, and theaters, which played an important role in their and their families' culture. Unlike the availability of French art in museums in South Florida, Russian art culture is rarely preserved in the area, as the population of Russian speakers is lower than that of the other two migrant groups. Regarding the Russia-Ukraine war, news media addresses the situation from various points of view, with some sources, like the Local10, quoting people in Sunny Isles saying that hostility between the two nationalities is absent in South Florida, and others, like the Business Insider, having experts say that division between the two does exist. Nevertheless, political divisions do not get in the way of the interconnectedness of the Russian-speaking community in South Florida.

### **Conclusion: Linguistic Expectations**

Observing the effects that Spanish, French, and Russian-speaking migration and linguistic communities have on business, language, and social life of South Florida provides an understanding of the contemporary distribution of people based on their origin in the area, which furthermore relates the communities between one another and differentiates them from each other. In the news media, these migrant communities are often represented as a uniform mass of conforming participants. Their investment in their language, culture, and domestic lifestyle in a foreign land is seemingly expected of them. With some linguistic communities, like the Russian-speaking one, false representation creates an image of the whole linguistic community that is rarely accurate when addressed on a larger scale; South Florida's news media covers Russian money laundering through real estate in Sunny Isles Beach, yet the existence of two Russian grocery stores, numerous beauty salons, and medical professionals is dismissed in English news media and only mentioned in Russian writing, thus creating a more accurate view of the linguistic community to its participants, but not to local English-speaking Americans, who remain "outsiders" to that community. Similarly, the French-speaking community, specifically in regard to migrants from France and Haiti, lacks representation in South Florida's English news media where only Canadian snowbird migrants are mentioned even though a tightly knit community does exist and has established its roots clearly. Contrary to popular belief which results from a lack of diverse representation, a linguistic community's presence in an area does not signify ultimate conformity to that community, nor does it encompass the degree of participation in that community by its members. The French-speaking and Russian-speaking communities of South Florida are significantly more varied than they are portrayed in news articles and literature. Some migrants choose to abstain from their linguistic communities, as the interviewees did, while others fully submerge them-

selves in it, relying on services exclusively provided by people from their motherland. This diversity of investment in one's linguistic community creates an "insider-outsider" dynamic, where within a certain migrant group, the "insiders" choose to not learn English and not contribute to local businesses all while contributing to the overall economy of the state, while the "outsiders" distance themselves from their motherland by moving away from it and not belonging to its community elsewhere while learning English and relying on foreign professionals. They take their move as an opportunity to reject their heritage and submerge in a new environment. On the scale of acculturation theory, the "insiders" demonstrate a behavior of "separation" from the host culture, while the "outsiders" lean towards "assimilation" into the host culture, though the extent of adaptation to and participation in the new environment varies based on individuals within each linguistic community. In relation to business theory, both cases have a positive effect on the economy, as they provide for both the supply and the demand aspects of services. The "insiders" of the linguistic community leave their mark on local business life by diversifying options available for locals and migrants, while the "outsiders" become clients of U.S. businesses; the newcomers to America do not "steal" clientele. Linguistic diversity in businesses also allows for communication to be established more widely, and as was seen in certain cases above, knowledge of the local language is advantageous to both the client and the owner. Linguistic mixtures occur frequently when English encounters one of the three languages addressed, the extensiveness of which depends on the size of each linguistic community; the Spanish one, being the largest of the three, has been able to establish its language as the basis for the South of Florida and it is heard more frequently than French, whose community is significantly smaller. Due to a lack of information on it in literature, their population size is not being related to linguistic communities' influence, which creates potential for future research. Furthermore, the study was limited on literature on the Russian-speaking community, while an oversaturation of literature on the Spanish-speaking community was present. The study would be strengthened by further research into the idea that language is embedded in expectations and the heterogeneity/diversity of citizenship of communities, such as the difference between Cuban Spanish speakers and Mexican Spanish speakers in the Spanish linguistic community, or the diversity of the Russian-speaking community. Further research into the impact of language policies on linguistic communities in South Florida would strengthen the current study and future studies conducted on similar topics. Another area for future research is the effect knowledge of several languages has on businesses, specifically in the context of South Florida's diversity, as well as the reasons behind migrants' choice to exclude themselves from their linguistic communities in the area. This would provide deeper understanding of

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potential patterns in the “insider-outsider” dynamic of migrant groups.

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