

# Afro-Yungueño speech: the long-lost “black Spanish”\*

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**ABSTRACT:** The pidginized Spanish learned by millions of Africans in Latin America had a profound but as yet underexplored impact on the formation of Spanish American dialects. Literary imitations from previous centuries are questionable, and few vestiges of actual Afro-Hispanic language remain. This paper reports on a unique Afro-American speech community in highland Bolivia, possibly the oldest surviving Afro-American variety of any language. The Afro-Yungueño dialect, now spoken in contact with regional Andean Spanish, differs systematically from any other Spanish dialect, and provides empirical evidence of the earliest stages of Afro-Hispanic language in the Americas. It also provides key evidence in the debate surrounding the possible creolization of Spanish and Portuguese in other Afro-American contexts.

**Keywords:** creole language, semicreoles, pidgins, Afro-Hispanic language, Spanish dialectology, Bolivian Spanish

## 1. Introduction: The importance of Afro-Hispanic language in Latin American dialectology

The African diaspora in Spanish America involved more than ten million individuals and spanned more than four centuries. Despite the magnitude of these figures, little is known about the linguistic contributions of Africans and Afro-Americans to Latin American Spanish, beyond a handful of acknowledged lexical items. In contemporary Latin America, notwithstanding racial stereotypes in literature and popular culture, there is in general no ethnically unique “Black

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Spanish,” comparable to vernacular African-American English in the United States (Lipski 1985b, 1999d). In more recent times, the linguistic characteristics attributed to black Spanish speakers have been simply those of the lower socioeconomic classes, without any objective racial connotations. The situation was different in the past, and there exists ample evidence that distinctly Afro-Hispanic speech forms did exist. The greatest obstacle in the assessment of earlier Afro-Hispanic language is the high level of prejudice, exaggeration and stereotyping which has always surrounded the description of non-white speakers of Spanish, and which attributes to all of them a wide range of defects and distortions that frequently are no more than an unrealistic repudiation of this group. One group that did use a “special” language were the *bozales*, slaves born in Africa, who spoke European languages only with difficulty. Literary imitations of *bozal* language began in 15<sup>th</sup> century Portugal and early 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain, and followed the arrival of African-born slaves in the Americas. Extant *bozal* imitations from Spanish America fall into two groups (Lipski 2005). The first consists of early colonial texts from highland mining regions (Bolivia, Peru, central Colombia, highland Mexico), whose language coincides exactly with 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century texts from Spain, and which were probably not accurate renditions of Africans’ approximations to popular Spanish but rather crude literary parodies. The second group spans the 19<sup>th</sup> century—and sometimes the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>—and comes from the regions where the African *bozal* presence represented the latest dates of importation: Cuba (and a few from Puerto Rico), Buenos Aires and Montevideo, and coastal Peru. While many of these texts are also obvious parodies devoid of linguistic legitimacy, others are based on accurate personal observation, and provide some insight into the expansion of a rough Afro-Hispanic pidgin into vehicle for daily communication among Africans sharing no native language, and between Africans and white colonials. To date there are almost no documents from the intermediate period, i.e. the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during which Africans in many highland regions

(Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico) often outnumbered Europeans, yet few *bozales* continued to add their pidginized second-language Spanish to the linguistic mix.

Although most *bozal* Spanish specimens reflect only non-native usage by speakers of African languages, data from some texts—all from the Caribbean region—have given rise to two controversial proposals, which are of great importance to general Spanish dialectology. The first is that Afro-Hispanic language in the Caribbean and possibly elsewhere coalesced into a stable creole (i.e. had consistent structural characteristics and was eventually acquired natively).<sup>1</sup> The second proposal is that this earlier Afro-Hispanic pidgin or perhaps creole extended beyond the pale of slave barracks and plantations, and permanently affected the evolution of a broader spectrum of Spanish dialects, particularly in the Caribbean. The parameters and participants in this ongoing debate are well represented in extant bibliography and will not be enumerated here.<sup>2</sup> A related possibility—one that has not been sufficiently explored in the realm of Afro-Hispanic language contacts—is the formation of a *semicreole*, i.e. a partially restructured version of the input (lexifier) language, in this case Spanish, but without the radical break in trans-generational transmission that characterizes creolization. Holm (2000:10) defines this sometimes slippery term as occurring “when people with different first languages shift to a typologically distinct target language (itself an amalgam of dialects in contact, including fully restructured varieties) under social conditions that partially restrict their access to the target language as normally used among native speakers.” Vernacular Brazilian Portuguese and vernacular African-American English have been put forward as candidates for *semicreole* status. The following remarks will present data on a possible scenario for the former *semicreolization* of Spanish, in circumstances which may provide a prototype for a broader range of language contact environments.

## 2. The search for surviving remnants of Afro-Hispanic language

The debates over the nature of earlier Afro-Hispanic *bozal* and post-*bozal* language are frustrated by the scarcity of verifiable data in surviving Afro-Hispanic linguistic enclaves. In most of Latin America, “black” Spanish is confined to songs and religious rituals, often sung in remnants of remembered or memorized African languages, embellished with onomatopoeic elements felt to be “African.”<sup>3</sup> Thus for example the *negros congos* of Panama’s Caribbean coast, clustered around the former colonial slaving ports of Portobelo and Nombre de Dios, employ a special language—now becoming increasingly deformed by deliberate distortion—during Carnival season and occasionally at other times. They affirm that it embodies the collective memory of *bozal* speech from previous centuries, but in reality is little more than a dimly remembered parody of “broken” Spanish.<sup>4</sup> Practitioners of Afro-Cuban *santería* at times speak what is claimed to be the *bozal* language of their ancestors when possessed by spirits during their rituals, but this is a dubious and non-replicable source of information on earlier Afro-Hispanic language (Castellanos 1990). Some Afro-Cuban ritual songs from the *palo monte* tradition contain fragments of earlier *bozal* language, evidently reflecting the *paleros*’ belief that the voices of ancestors speak during their ceremonies (Fuentes Guerra and Schwegler 2005, Schwegler 2005). In addition to containing admixtures of Spanish and Kikongo lexical items, some of the *palero* songs contain fragments in *bozal* grammar, containing invariant verb forms, derived from the third person singular, as well as the invariant copula *son*, independently attested in Afro-Cuban Spanish (Lipski 1999c, 2002c).

In addition to questionable ritualized speech, a few Afro-Hispanic enclaves remain isolated from the remaining Spanish-speaking population, enabling a glimpse into the final stages of *bozal* speech and the possible retention of post-*bozal* elements in natively spoken Spanish as used by descendents of Africans. Ecuador’s highland Chota Valley provides one case, surrounded by

indigenous communities for whom Spanish continues to be a second language, and where a local micro-dialect of Spanish has evolved that differs in subtle ways from neighboring highland varieties. A few of the oldest residents exhibit occasional traces of what might be *bozal* remnants (lapses of agreement, loss of prepositions and articles), but no one speaks this way consistently, and no one in the community is capable of deliberately switching dialects. Within the community there is no awareness of the existence of a “special” black dialect, and opinions by Ecuadorans from outside the community are routinely erroneous, confusing the essentially Andean Chota dialect with the consonant-weak coastal dialect of Esmeraldas, Ecuador’s acknowledged “black” province, under the assumption that all black Ecuadorans must speak alike.<sup>5</sup> Finally, some of the more isolated villages in the Colombian Chocó, nearly all of whose residents are black, exhibit subtle linguistic traits reminiscent of earlier *bozal* language, but despite rumors of “special” Afro-Colombian cryptolects still in existence, no significant departures from regional vernacular Spanish have been discovered (Ruíz García 2000, Schwegler 1991).

The present study describes a unique Afro-Hispanic speech community, subject to linguistic analysis for the first time, and arguably representing the oldest surviving Afro-American variety of any language. It is found in the Yungas, tropical valleys surrounded by the Bolivian highlands to the northeast of La Paz. Unlike the previously described Afro-Hispanic remnants, the Afro-Yungas dialect differs systematically and significantly from any other variety of Bolivian Spanish, and from any natively spoken Spanish dialect elsewhere in the world. Data from the Afro-Yungueño dialect provide a window into early colonial Afro-Hispanic speech, as well as offering a possible model for the retention of post-*bozal* linguistic traits in other geographically and socially isolated Afro-Hispanic communities.

### 3. Bolivia’s *afrodescendientes* and their environment

Highland Bolivia, known in colonial times as Alto Perú, then the Audiencia de Charcas, was the site of the earliest massive importation of African slaves in Spanish America. The use of African slaves had already been authorized for other areas of Spanish America, to replace dwindling indigenous workers, and African slaves were carried to the highland mines of Bolivia and Peru.<sup>6</sup> Few demographic traces remain of these first African arrivals, for several reasons. Nearly all were adult males, who were deprived of opportunities for procreation. Mortality rates were extremely high; the combination of altitude, cold temperatures, inadequate nourishment and harsh working conditions ravaged the slave population. A small collection of songs and indirect descriptions of Africans' dances and language survives as testimony of a much larger cultural patrimony. As occurred, e.g. in Mexico and central Colombia, the population of African descent blended into the overwhelmingly mestizo population. No documented permanent linguistic phenomena can be attributed to this earlier African population, but the data provided by the early language samples suggests what Afro-Hispanic speech in early 17th century Bolivia might have sounded like to Spanish writers (Lipski 1994, 1995a).

Despite the hardships of colonial slavery and the results of demographic assimilation, there remains a small but identifiable Afro-Bolivian population. Most residents live in scattered communities in the provinces of Nor Yungas and Sud Yungas, in the department of La Paz. A smaller number live in the neighboring province of Inquisivi; a number of Afro-Bolivians have also migrated northward to the adjoining province of Caranavi. In past decades, a considerable number of black Yungueños have left the region, some for La Paz, but most to the eastern lowlands, in the major city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The latter group no longer speaks the Afro-Yungueño dialect, but rather the *camba* dialect of eastern Bolivia. The Yungas are tropical valleys no more than a few thousand feet above sea level, surrounded by some of the most

forbidding mountain terrain in all of South America, with peaks reaching more than 15,000 feet. The torturous terrain, nearly vertical geography, lack of adequate roads and other infrastructure, and frequent mud and rock slides, has cut off the Yungas communities from the rest of Bolivian society. Most communities are less than 150 miles from La Paz, but to reach even the closest settlements one must travel upwards of six hours in crowded and decrepit vehicles along a one-lane muddy mountain road with steep dropoffs and no guard rails (considered to be the world's most dangerous "highway" by travel agents). The region is principally inhabited by an Aymara-speaking indigenous population, while the black Yungueños live in scattered houses on the mountainsides and travel into the villages for goods and services.

Although there are some differences among the Afro-Bolivian communities, the basic life style and daily activities are nearly identical in the entire region. The typical communities derived from former haciendas consist of scattered family dwellings perched on the steep hillsides; a typical community may have anywhere between 25 and 50 families, many of which are related. Some communities have only a dozen or so families, while there is a scattering of larger communities with a significant Afro-Bolivian presence, such as Mururata. Houses are of adobe or a mixture of adobe and wood, with roofs of metal or occasionally traditional thatching. There are no plumbing facilities of any sort; some of the larger communities have individual or community latrines, but these are not found in the smaller settlements. Only in a few settlements near larger towns is the occasional electrical line found; most Afro-Bolivians continue to rely on lanterns, cook with firewood, and draw water from streams or community *pilas*. Some of the small towns have a public telephone, and celular telephone service from La Paz extends to Coroico (one of the two *municipios* of Nor Yungas province), although only a tiny number of local residents use this service.

Most residents do not travel to La Paz or other highland areas, due to the bad roads, the discomfort caused by the high altitude and cold temperatures of the *altiplano*, and the lack of funds to pay even the very modest cost of transportation. Although the region produces excellent coffee, oranges, and other tropical crops, the prohibitive cost of bringing these products to urban markets precludes their ready commercialization. Since colonial times the region's main cash crop has been coca, grown on terraces cut into the steep hillsides and dried on slabs of locally excavated slate. The coca is purchased at low prices by brokers, ostensibly for the legal Bolivian tradition of chewing coca leaves, but much of the coca finds its way to the clandestine cocaine laboratories of eastern Bolivia. As a result of the social and geographic isolation, residents of the Yungas communities have retained cultural and linguistic traits that have faded from more populated urban areas. Many Afro-Yungueños throughout the region speak Aymara and most of the women wear traditional Aymara clothing. In the Nor Yungas communities, where Afro-Bolivian speech still survives and where the present research is centered, black Bolivians remain linguistically and culturally separate from Aymaras; they have absorbed many Aymara traditions over the generations and currently learn enough Aymara to function efficiently in the Aymara-dominant local markets, but maintain a distinct life style through networks of extended families.

Tracing the arrival of black Bolivians in the Yungas is hampered by the almost total lack of historical documentation. Research by Lema (2005) and Aillón Soria (2005) among others situates black Bolivians in the Yungas and other agricultural regions by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but there still remain considerable gaps in Afro-Bolivian history, including routes of migration and the chronology of arrival in the various communities. By the end of the colonial period (early 19<sup>th</sup> century), Afro-Bolivians were already well established as *peones* on large



*haciendas* owned by usually absentee landholders. Even then the main cash crop was coca; coffee and sugar cane were grown on some estates, and there is occasional mention of oranges or other tropical fruits and vegetables being grown for sale. At least until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Afro-Bolivians were chattel slaves, held under the same working conditions as black slaves in other Spanish American colonies. The first Bolivian constitution, of 1826, officially abolished new slavery and provided a means by which existing slaves could purchase their freedom—at prices that very few would ever attain. Following protests by large landowners, an 1830 law effectively reinstated slavery, although new slavery was again officially denounced in the new 1831 constitution. Once more landowners protested; it was felt that only black laborers could work effectively in the Yungas, by then an area closely identified with Bolivia's black population (Llanos Moscoso and Soruco Arroyo 2004:66). The situation remained largely unchanged until the agrarian reform process begun in 1952.

Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, black Bolivians in the Yungas still worked as virtual slaves on the haciendas. All adults were required to work (without compensation) three days a week for the benefit of the landowner; the remaining four days produced food for the family. There were no rest periods built into this system. Children began working on the hacienda from around the age of 12-15 years. When their parents were temporarily incapacitated, children could work to partially offset the debt created the adults' inability to work. All work was conducted under the supervision of a *mayordomo* or overseer, often an Aymara speaker, who was the trusted employee of the landowner. The *mayordomos* would then appoint a *jilacata* or assistant from among the peons. Both the overseers and the *jilacatas* employed physical punishment to enforce working hours. Whipping with leather bullwhips was the usual punishment, which could result in receiving an *arroba* (25 lashes) or more as

punishment. Particularly cruel were the corporal punishments inflicted by the *jilacatas* on members of their own suffering long-community. Women and elderly peons were also whipped, a punishment which occasionally extended to children.

In addition to the requirement to work three days out of seven for the benefit of the landowner, peons on the hacienda were also required to participate in the systems of *pongo* (for men) and *mitani* (for women); this entailed work in the plantation house, such as providing firewood, cooking, cleaning, and other household chores. In most haciendas peons were forbidden to attend school or study; most older Afro-Bolivians are therefore nearly or totally illiterate. On some haciendas all peons were reportedly required to speak to the overseers only in Aymara, although by all accounts such communication was usually limited to receiving orders and punishments.

After 1952 the hacienda system was abolished. Most Afro-Bolivians remained on the parcels of land that had once belonged to the haciendas, without land titles but free from the requirement to work for a landlord. Many of the Afro-Bolivian communities retain the names of the former haciendas: Dorado Grande, Dorado Chico, Chijchipa, Khala Khala, Coscoma, etc. Beginning shortly thereafter, public education began to arrive in the Afro-Yungueño communities, although to this day some communities only have schools that cover the first two or three grades. To finish elementary school children often must walk for several hours to reach the nearest community in which a more comprehensive school is located. With the arrival of education, Afro-Bolivians in the Yungas were exposed to national varieties of Spanish, as well as with the written language. According to all the individuals interviewed, there were no explicit comments from teachers against the unique Afro-Bolivian dialect, but through the process of hearing and studying Spanish most Afro-Yungueños began to drop the use of the traditional

dialect, assuming by inference that it was inferior to the language of the schools. Many elderly Afro-Yungueños refer to themselves as *civilizados* as a result of education and literacy, and when pressed, also equate the traditional dialect with “uncivilized” behavior.

Tracing the demographic profile of Afro-Bolivians entails a considerable amount of extrapolation, since neither colonial nor post-colonial governments took pains to achieve accurate counts, and for more than a century official census data do not include Afro-Bolivians as a separate category. During the colonial period by 1650 there were some 30,000 Africans (the majority *bozales*) in the Audiencia de Charcas out of a total population of 850,000. Of the later figure some 700,000 were considered indigenous, and presumably spoke little or no Spanish, so that Africans represented 20% of the Spanish colonial population. By the time of the official post-colonial census of 1846, 27,941 “black” residents were counted in a total population of nearly 1,400,000, although the accuracy of a census in 19<sup>th</sup> century Bolivia is open to question. After the abolition of slavery in 1851 blacks were no longer officially acknowledged and counted in Bolivia, thereby complicating the reconstruction of Afro-Bolivian culture. The last census to list a black population separately was the 1900 census, in which 3,945 Afro-Bolivians were officially counted, out of a total population of just over 1.8 million (some 0.2% of the total population). Of this total 2056 were in La Paz department (mostly in the Yungas), and another 930 were in Santa Cruz, with the remainder distributed throughout the nation. A description of the Yungas from the 1940’s—that is, before land reforms following the 1952 revolution resulted in black families occupying former haciendas in the Yungas—estimated the black population of Bolivia as “6.700 individuos de **raza negra**, que cultivan productos tropicales en los pocos valles donde habitan”; for the Yungas region, there were some 8,800 “blancos y mestizos” (i.e. native Spanish speakers), 16,700 Aymaras, 600 members of indigenous groups from the Amazonian

region of Bolivia, and some 900 Afro-Bolivians (Meneses 1945:67-8). According to the sources summarized in Powe (1998:815), by 1883 there were between 5,500 and 6000 black residents of the Yungas. Zelinsky (1949:175) estimated the number of Afro-Bolivians at 6,000 half a century ago, while Leons (1984c) cites a figure of only around 2,000. In recent decades many Afro-Bolivians have migrated from the Yungas to Santa Cruz, eastern Bolivia's lowland boom-town. At least 3000 Afro-Bolivians are estimated to live in or around Santa Cruz (Anon. 2003). Another article (Anon. 2002) asserts that some 30,000 Afro-Bolivians live throughout the country, although without documentation of this figure, since no recent census has included this category. Spedding (1995:320) suggests, based on personal observations, that there may be between 10,000 and 15,000 Bolivians with at least some visible African ancestry in the Yungas region. Angola Maconde (personal communication) estimates the total Afro-Bolivian population to be around 18,000, with most concentrated in Nor Yungas and immediately surrounding areas.

The origin of the black population in the Bolivian Yungas is not known with certainty. Although some Afro-Yungueños believe that their ancestors arrived via Brazil, they were probably only in transit. There is no indication that Portuguese was ever spoken in this area; rather, Afro-Bolivians appear to be the descendents of Africa-born *bozales* who arrived in this region speaking no Spanish or Portuguese, originally to work in the highland mines such as Potosí. According to Leons (1984c), although historical accounts date the presence of blacks in the Yungas at least since 1600, the first official records (deaths, marriages, and other accounts) date from just after 1700. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the historical record is more substantial as regards black slaves on the *haciendas* of the Yungas and other central Bolivian regions. The regional African origins of modern Afro-Bolivians, are uncertain, although the Congo and Angola regions are the most likely for later arrivals. The only African surnames found in Bolivia

are Angola and Maconde . These surnames were given by ship captains and slave dealers, but typically approximate the coastal African areas from which the respective slaves were drawn.

The most important Nor Yungas black communities are Tocaña, Mururata, Chijchipa, followed by Dorado Chico, Coscoma, and Khala Khala. The two *municipios* of NorYungas province, Coroico and Coripata, are also home to many Afro-Yungueños who have moved from their original communities. Other communities contain more Aymara-Afro-Bolivian mixture. In Sud Yungas the principal black community is Chicaloma (now less than 50% black but once the principal Afro-Bolivian community in the region), with black Bolivians scattered in many neighboring settlements.

In the towns and villages of Nor Yungas, Afro-Bolivians tend to know some Aymara, although most claim not to be fully bilingual, less so than their counterparts in Sud Yungas. Angola Maconde states (2003:8-9) that “En todas las comunidades afroaimaras de los Yungas, los descendientes africanos han asumido rasgos de la cultura indígena local como las técnicas agrícolas, vestimenta, pautas de organización social y, en casos, el manejo bilingüe del idioma aimará.” Few have intermarried with indigenous residents, and although daily contacts are cordial and unproblematic, there is relatively little cultural mixing. Afro-Yungueños are clearly aware of their separate status as *negros* (the term preferred by Afro-Bolivians), and have recently begun systematic attempts to draw national attention and to obtain the legal and social recognition as a long-standing (and long-suffering) ethnic minority in Bolivia.

#### 4. Previous observations of Afro-Bolivians and their language

The extremely steep and broken topography of the Yungas, the distance between the *haciendas*, the lack of formal education until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fact that the surrounding populations mostly spoke Aymara, and the difficulty in reaching the closest urban areas provided

conditions in which a distinct Afro-Yungueño dialect could develop from earlier *bozal* Spanish varieties and survive intact through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An additional reason for the continued coherence of Afro-Bolivian culture in Nor Yungas is the fact that unlike their indigenous neighbors, few residents have relatives in the highlands, and therefore travel only infrequently to La Paz (the nearest highland city). The remoteness of this region (currently visited only by mostly foreign “eco-tourists,” most of whom speak little Spanish and have no interaction with Afro-Bolivians) and the traditional marginality of black Bolivians has resulted in a nearly total lack of documentation of their speech and culture.

The Bolivian government and many private tourism companies have produced posters and postcards with smiling Afro-Bolivian faces, all the while that the official censuses and ethnic classifications ignore the presence and contributions of black Bolivians (Ceaser 2000). However as the Afro-Bolivian writer Fernando Cajías warns (Anon. 2002): “No hay que musicalizar la cuestión afro.” To this day residents of La Paz recall the greeting *¡suerte, negrito!* said (often accompanied by a pinch) when encountering a black person in the street. This greeting—still occasionally heard but no longer socially acceptable in public—converted a black face into an amulet to be touched verbally for good luck. This may be a remnant of the *estornudo* or feigned sneeze practiced by white residents of Spain during the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries whenever a black person passed by.

Most Bolivians have never visited the Yungas, but even those who describe the region from personal experience almost never mention the black population. Thus, for example Cortés (1875:26) declares that “Bolivia está poblada de tres razas principales: la española, los aborígenes i la que resulta de la mezcla en estas dos”; when speaking of the Yungas (pp. 87-8), he mentions only the indigenous population. In a recent panoramic study, incorporating several

official organisms, Plaza Martínez and Carvajal Carvajal (1985) fail to mention Afro-Bolivians as an ethnic group, although they describe several indigenous communities with fewer members. Nor are Afro-Bolivians mentioned in any of the previous ethnolinguistic surveys reviewed by the above-mentioned authors.

In his studies of the town of Chicaloma in Sud Yungas more than a quarter century ago, Leons (1984b:23) notes that "... Negros are culturally close to Hispanic patterns and [...] Spanish is their primary language ..." and again (pp. 24-5) "The non-agricultural occupations which Negros seek are those in which they utilize their fluency in Spanish and familiarity with Hispanic culture and which will likely lead to intersectional mobility. However, the Negro finds it difficult to merge into a general mestizo culture because of his physical distinctiveness, hence the current emphasis on cross-ethnic marriage "to make the race disappear." ... while cultural distance between Negros and Hispanics in Bolivia lessen, physical distinctiveness remains. These physical distinctiveness [*sic*] may eventually assume social significance as a boundary marker that will continue to define limits of usual social familiarity ... the Negro section of Chicaloma has been transformed from one that is culturally, racially, and socially distinct to a section that is racially and socially distinct." These observations are not strictly true of the contemporary Nor Yungas Afro-Bolivian communities and probably not for Sud Yungas in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they do provide a glimpse into the complex social reality surrounding this nearly invisible minority within Bolivia. However, Bridikhina (1995:100-1) states that many black women from the Yungas region have migrated to La Paz and maintain more contacts outside of the region; as a consequence, she asserts that it is the women of this group who have greater opportunities for racial and cultural mixture than the men, who largely remain in the region to work. Newman (1966:48) indicated that in Mururata, Nor Yungas "the [Afro-Yungueño] is

strictly endogamous”; significantly, this is one of the villages in which the Afro-Yungueño dialect has been maintained by older residents, and where the tradition of an Afro-Bolivian “king” also survives.

Hudson and Hanratty (1991:xxvii, also 62) mention only that “African slaves ... became an Aymara-speaking subculture in the Yungas, which they colonized for coca cultivation.” Meneses (1948a)’s extremely detailed account of the province of Nor Yungas mentions only indigenous inhabitants, including the sharecroppers under the control of *mayordomos*; this despite the fact that many Afro-Yungueños still alive vividly recall working for these same *mayordomos* during the time period in question, just over 50 years ago. In describing Sud Yungas, Meneses (1948b:196-7) does mention the small black populations in both Nor Yungas and Sud Yungas. When speaking of Afro-Yungueños’ purported disdain for indigenous inhabitants, Meneses (1948b:198) quotes the phrase *eyos son di otro Dios; andan cayaos siempre, mascando su oca*. This phrase is unremarkable except for the apparent use of [y] instead of the palatal lateral [λ], found in all Bolivian Spanish dialects. Paredes Candia (1967 t. II:129), asserts that blacks have disappeared from Bolivia “excepto en ciertas parcelas de los yungas cordilleranos,”<sup>7</sup> but vestiges of folklore remain, such as the *negrito* songs and dances, one of which, recovered in Sucre, contained the verse: *re re ré / Tata Romingo / E re re ré / Tata Facico*. This brief fragment contains the conversion of prevocalic /d/ to [r], common in all Afro-Hispanic language from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, and the pronunciation of *Francisco* as *Facico*, containing both onset cluster reduction and loss of syllable-final /s/, both traits of earlier Afro-Hispanic *bozal* language and amply represented in Spanish Golden Age texts (Lipski 1986b, 1988, 1992b, 1995a, 2005).



There is no mention of linguistic traits peculiar to Afro-Bolivians in any study of Bolivian Spanish; in fact the presence of a black population in contemporary Bolivia is never mentioned in such works. Bolivia is always cast as a multilingual mestizo nation, with Quechua and Aymara being the two indigenous languages that have the greatest contact with Spanish nationwide. Thus Coello Vila (1996:172-3) divides Bolivia into three dialect regions, “determinados, en gran medida, por la influencia del sustrato, por el bilingüismo y por las consecuencias emergentes de las lenguas en contacto.” The Yungas subdialect is simply described as a “variedad del castellano paceño [...] influencia del aimara.”

Recently, Afro-Bolivians (whose community leaders now prefer the term *afrodescendientes*) have received coverage in the Bolivian press. In one article (Anon. 2004) their culture is described in traditional terms of dance and clothing, funeral rites, and handicrafts. One interesting allusion to speech is: “Hasta la manera de expresarse es diferente. Su lengua es el español, mas lleva modismos que sólo los negros comprenden. Los jóvenes investigan y creen que su acento es una herencia de los primeros hombres llegados de otro continente para ser sometidos como esclavos.” This affirmation is likely to be true, although the present investigation encountered few Afro-Bolivians who actively comment on the history of their speech modes. A black resident of Mururata (Nor Yungas) laments that “Hemos ido cambiando muchas costumbres de nuestros abuelos, nosotros mismos ya tenemos vergüenza hasta de habla nuestro modismo que es tan bonito. Por ejemplo *jay*, era una palabra que enriquecía nuestro hablar. La juventud actual, ya no quiere seguir practicando nuestra cultura que es muy rica” (Anon. n.d.).

Of the speech of the Afro-Yungueños, Spedding (1995:324), who has spent considerable time with this community, declares—accurately—that “they speak a dialect of local Spanish with

an accent and styles of expression different from those used by Aymara-Spanish bilingual speakers.” This assertion is true even of the non-semicreole Spanish of Afro-Yungueños, which contain little of the Aymara interference traits found among indigenous speakers. In a description of Chicaloma (Sud Yungas) it is said that “El idioma de varias familias negras actualmente es el aymara y el castellano con ciertas variantes fonológicas” (Gobierno Municipal de La Paz 1993). It is true that in Sud Yungas the Afro-Yungueño dialect has little presence, while most speakers are bilingual Aymara speakers, but there are no empirically verifiable “phonological variants” separating black and non-black speakers in this region. Costa Ardúz (1997:76) observes neutrally that in Nor Yungas “Hay también en la región una minoría negra que si bien han adoptado muchos rasgos de su economía y cultura aymaras, mantienen en lo fundamental su lengua materna como el castellano.”

Powe (1998:816), who traveled through the region and visited most of the small Afro-Bolivian settlements, comments that “a curious aspect of Black (and Aymara) speech in this region is the pronunciation of the Spanish “rr” as an English `z’”; this pronunciation in fact stems from indigenous influence and characterizes the entire Andean region, from southern Colombia to northwestern Argentina. At another point Powe (1998:850-1) gives a reasonably accurate transcription of some fragments of Afro-Yungas dialect (in this case from Chijchipa), written in non-Spanish fashion and inaccurately described as Aymara code-mixing: “...Blacks sometimes use Aymara words or grammar when speaking. For instance instead of saying “*Dónde estás yendo*”? (“Where are you going?”) they say “*Andi po teta ondo*?” and for “*Qué estás haciendo aquí*?” (“What are you doing here?”), they say “*ke po teta asi akí*”.” In fact both expressions contain only patrimonial Spanish words, although with considerable phonological and morphosyntactic restructuring:

andi [< *onde* < *dónde*] po(h) [< *pos* < *pues*] oté [*usted*] (eh)ta(h) ondo [< *yendo*]?

qué po(h) [< *pos* < *pues*] oté [*usted*] (eh)ta(h) así [< *hace*, instead of *haciendo*]

The use of *ande* for *onde* (the archaic form of *donde*) is found in many rustic Spanish dialects, including the Canary Islands, northern New Mexico, and parts of Central America, among others. It appears in other non-Afro rustic Bolivian Spanish dialects and is well attested in Bolivian *costumbrista* literature. Similarly *pos* (the archaic form of *pues*) survives in all of rural Mexico, much of Central America, and sporadically elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world. Non Afro-Bolivians sometimes use this variant, which transforms into *pu(h)* in northern Chile and southern Peru. Neither *ande* nor *pos* is typically used by indigenous or mestizo speakers in the Yungas; this suggests that the words in question come from much earlier periods, in which Afro-Bolivians acquired Spanish from uneducated speakers of non-standard dialects.

Montaño Aragón (1992:268) notes that :En cuanto al habla típica de los negros, el castellano pronunciado por ellos recuerda al empleado en el Río de la Plata y también en otras áreas de Latinoamérica.’ No examples accompany this statement, which probably refers to the combination of aspirated /s/ and *yeísmo* (lack of phoneme /λ/, although Afro-Yungueños do not pronounce /y/ as [ž] or [š] as in the Río de la Plata region). Another description of Afro-Yungueño speech is (Montaño Aragón 1992:272): ‘un castellano deformado en la pronunciación y a veces en lo semántico.’

## 5. Afro-Yungueño Spanish in the highland Bolivian context

In order to evaluate the importance of Afro-Bolivian Spanish for theories of Afro-Hispanic language, field work was conducted in June, 2004, August, 2005 and October 2005.<sup>8</sup> Accompanied by Lic. Juan Angola Maconde, a native of Dorado Chico, municipality of Coripata, interviews and recordings were made in Coroico, Arapata, Coripata, Coscoma, Cala

Cala, Dorado Chico, Dorado Grande, Tocaña, Mururata, and Chijchipa in the province of Nor Yungas, and Chicaloma in the province of Sud Yungas.. During these field studies, a total of thirty five Afro-Yungueños were interviewed, men and women, with ages ranging from 50 to 92. The conversations were conducted first in neutral Spanish, by Juan Angola Maconde and the present writer; interviews in the Afro-Yungueño dialect were conducted by Mr. Angola Maconde with only occasional interventions by the author. Given his stature in the Afro-Bolivian community, as an activist and civil rights advocate, speakers demonstrated no inhibitions about speaking their normally hermetic dialect in front of a stranger, nor to having their conversations recorded and subsequently analyzed. The results of these interviews were compared with taped interviews conducted in Mururata in 1995-6 by Mr. Angola Maconde and another Afro-Bolivian fieldworker. No substantive differences in style or linguistic usage were noted, thus providing an additional authentication of the field data collected in 2004-5. In all more than 50 hours of free conversation have been analyzed, the majority representing the Afro-Yungueño dialect.

As the following analysis will demonstrate, the Afro-Yungueño dialect in its “deepest” form is a restructured language, as systematically different from other Andean Spanish dialects as, say, Castilian and Asturian (Bable) or Aragonese, or perhaps even Galician. Afro-Bolivians and their neighbors have no word or expression for the distinct Afro-Yungueño dialect, except by imitation of short stereotypical expressions like *cho* or *jay* or with circumlocutions like “the way we used to talk.” In the present study the term “Afro-Yungueño dialect” is used for descriptive purposes, but no such word is used among Bolivians. Among all the people interviewed for the present study none appeared to be truly aware of how “different” their semi-creole dialect is from regional highland dialects. The Afro-Yungueño dialect has been highly stigmatized, and when community members have used this variety in the presence of other

Bolivians they have frequently been mocked and criticized. As a result this dialect—now rapidly declining and shunned by younger Afro-Bolivians—is used only in private settings or in inconspicuous conversations held in public spaces. For this reason there is almost no awareness of the true characteristics of this dialect outside of the Afro-Yungas communities. As far as can be determined no authentic specimen of this dialect has ever been written (except for the brief fragment at the opening of *Angola Maconde* 2000<sup>9</sup> and the mistranscribed notes of Powe 1998:850-1). Folkloric stories purporting to represent “black” Bolivian speech either lean toward the Aymara-influenced speech of Sud Yungas or embody historical stereotypes such as the shift of /r/ > [l] that are not part of any contemporary Afro-Bolivian dialect. Recently Juan Angola Maconde has begun to write poetry in the traditional dialect (temporarily available on the present writer’s web site: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/jml34/Angola.htm>), and it is hoped that other Afro-Bolivians will take up the challenge of committing the traditional dialect to written form.

The lack of explicit acknowledgement of a “separate” Afro-Yungueño dialect, together with the often unconscious avoidance of speech modes that have brought scorn and ridicule at other times complicates the elicitation and study of this unique dialect, and most speakers smoothly interweave standard Spanish, vernacular regional (non-Afro) Yungas Spanish, and the “deep” Afro-Yungueño dialect. It is nonetheless possible in most instances to establish a canonical base form for the Afro-Yungueño dialect, and a few older speakers essentially use only these forms when speaking with other community members; these same residents affirm that in previous generations it was common to hear monolingual dialect speakers who seldom left the area, and acquired no other varieties of Spanish.

The geographical extension of the traditional Afro-Yungueño dialect in its most basilectal form has yet to be determined exactly, given the existence of widely scattered homesteads and communities and the lack of reliable testimony from neighbors and family members. All fieldwork conducted to date, however, has documented the presence of this dialect only in the following Nor Yungas communities: Dorado Chico, Coscoma, Mururata, Tocaña, Chijchipa, and the immediate environs of these communities. Outside of this region Afro-Bolivians explicitly indicate that they are neither familiar with nor speak the deepest form of the dialect, although a few of its traits, such as invariant plurals and some lapses in noun-adjective agreement, are found as far away as Chicaloma (Sud Yungas). All fluent speakers of the Afro-Yungueño dialect are at least 50 years old; a few of these individuals speak the dialect to younger children and siblings, but the dialect is not being transmitted to children. Most younger community residents disavow any knowledge of this dialect, for the reasons mentioned above, although the most casual observation of these closely-knit extended families suffices to demonstrate the considerable passive competence in the Afro-Yungueño dialect possessed by all residents in the aforementioned communities, all of which can be traversed on foot in less than half an hour. It is impossible to estimate the number of fluent speakers of the Afro-Yungueño dialect, but full active competence is probably limited to at most a few hundred individuals, and probably even fewer.

The Afro-Yungueño dialect is so different from all other varieties of Bolivian Spanish that there are few manifestations of continuum or cline-like transitions between the two dialects. Most switches are abrupt and easily perceived; like other forms of code-switching, this bi-dialectal behavior responds to pragmatic cues, individual participants, style, and emotive content. There are also instances of apparently unconscious carryovers from the Afro-Yungueño dialect

when speaking modern Spanish, for example in occasional use of invariant plurals or lack of noun-adjective agreement. There is little intra-sentential switching between the dialects; most switches occur in the presence of external stimuli, such as a change of topic from the home/family domain to official public life, the arrival or departure of specific interlocutors, or the need to introduce a parenthetical remark or direct quote.

Systematic differences between the Afro-Yungueño dialect and highland Bolivian Spanish involve segmental and suprasegmental phonetics, phonological structures, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Even from a distance, when individual words cannot be clearly distinguished, one immediately hears different intonational curves and segmental phonetic behavior. Closer inspection reveals substantial morphosyntactic differences, representing a restructuring of patrimonial Spanish patterns. While some of the phonetic traits are suggestive of “black” Spanish attestations from earlier centuries, none falls completely outside the range of Spanish dialect variation found in regions with no African heritage. The distinctive Afro-Yungueño phonetic traits are of interest primarily because they depart significantly from other regional varieties of Spanish and in some cases from all Bolivian dialects. It is in the area of morphosyntax that the strongest case for a unique Afro-Bolivian dialect can be made. Limitations of space preclude a detailed quantitative analysis of phonetic and morphosyntactic features, but the most robust trends will be presented below.

The Afro-Yungueño dialect must be situated against surrounding non-Afro Bolivian varieties. Highland Bolivian Spanish, particularly as used by Spanish-Aymara bilinguals, has the following characteristic traits:

(1) strongly sibilant syllable- and word-final /s/, that strongly resists aspiration or effacement. Rates of retention of sibilant [s] in highland Bolivian Spanish approach 100%, among the highest in the entire Spanish-speaking world.

(2) the multiple /rr/ is given a grooved fricative pronunciation approximately [ʒ] or more often [z]. The latter pronunciation predominates among Aymara-dominant bilinguals while more educated Spanish-dominant Bolivians prefer [ʒ].

(3) there is some instability of the oppositions /i/-/e/ and /o/-/u/, inversely correlated with fluency in Spanish. This is manifested freely in all tonic and atonic positions. There is no preferred direction; shifts of /e/ > [i] and /o/ > [u] co-occur with the opposite changes: /i/ > [e] and /u/ > [o].

(4) The phoneme /ɲ/ (written *ll*) is always distinct from /y/, and receives a palatal lateral pronunciation.

(5) Phrase-final /r/ is often assibilated. Final /r/ never disappears.

(6) the group /tr/ receives an alveolar pronunciation similar to [tʃ]

(7) there is frequent doubling of direct object clitics, often with the invariant clitic *lo*:  
*cerrámelo la puerta* ‘close the door (for me).’

(8) The pluperfect indicative is used to express indirect evidentiality (second-hand information), while the simple preterite indicates personal knowledge: *llegaste* ‘you arrived (I saw you),’ *habías llegado* ‘you arrived (I’ve been told).’

(9) There is considerable vacillation between the familiar pronouns *tú* and *vos*, as well as in the corresponding verb morphology. While highland Bolivian Spanish almost never uses *voseo* verb forms with indicative or subjunctive verb forms, they are frequently used with imperatives: *sentate*, *decime*, etc.



## 6. Phonetic characteristics of Afro-Yungueño Spanish

The Afro-Yungueño dialect exhibits the following consistent phonetic traits, many of which are shared with other L<sub>2</sub> varieties of Spanish, and most of which are also present in other Afro-Hispanic dialects:

(1) aspiration/loss of final /s/. The switch from highland Bolivian Spanish to Afro-Yungueño speech is immediately noticeable, since in the latter dialect final /s/ is weakly aspirated or disappears altogether. The juxtaposition of the two dialects in the speech of the same individual is dramatic; one can listen to an Afro-Yungueño speak *castellano* for extended periods without hearing weakened /s/. Only a handful of the oldest residents whose command of modern *castellano* is incomplete freely weaken /s/ in all situations. One elderly resident of Tocaña, who is proud of being *civilizado* and speaks Spanish with all sibilant final [s], described the traditional dialect—in words and by imitation—as follows: *la idioma antiga, decían pueh, pueh lo metían como los cambia* [residents of eastern Bolivia, notorious for aspirating all syllable- and word-final /s/]. When speaking *castellano* some Afro-Yungueños use an apicoalveolar pronunciation for final /s/ that is not typical of the region. This may stem from an original desire to maximize the contrast with the traditional /s/-reducing dialect.

(2) loss of /r/ in verbal infinitives. In Afro-Yungueño Spanish all verbal infinitives lack final /r/, and for most speakers 100% of infinitives are pronounced in this fashion. Final /r/ is also lost in *mujé(r)* but not in other words ending in /r/, suggesting that the process was originally phonetic in nature but eventually became lexically conditioned. It may be that verb stems lacking final /r/ were inherited from earlier *bozal* language in which the verb stems were on the way to being restructured. Loss of final /r/ in infinitives is well-documented for Afro-Hispanic dialects in other time periods and regions (Lipski 2005).

(3) Real and pseudo-yeísmo: *familia* > *juamía*. Unlike all other Bolivian Spanish dialects, the Afro-Yungueño dialect has merged the phoneme /ɲ/ with /y/, following the pattern of yeísmo begun in Spain by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The combination /li/ in hiatus with a following vowel, most particularly *familia* > *juamía*, was apparently also reanalyzed as /ɲ/ and further subject to yeísmo in the Afro-Yungueño dialect. The disappearance of /ɲ/ as a separate phoneme is in itself unremarkable in Spanish, but the presence of an Afro-Hispanic *yeista* enclave surrounded by a dialect that maintains /ɲ/ bears a striking similarity to vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, where dialects with a strong Afro-Brazilian presence routinely merge /ɲ/ with /y/ (e.g. *mulher* > *muié*). Use or absence of the phoneme /ɲ/ is a ready phonetic indication of whether the traditional Afro-Bolivian dialect is being spoken.

(4) conversion /f/ > [h<sup>w</sup>] before unrounded vowels: *huamía* < *familia*, *juiscal* < *fiscal*, *cajué* < *café*. Although the change /f/ > [h<sup>w</sup>] is common in rustic varieties of Spanish before the diphthong [u] (e.g. *fue* > *jue*), it only occurs before unrounded vowels in some rural varieties of Spanish characterized by contact with substrate languages lacking either /f/ or the bilabial fricative [ɸ] that apparently instantiated the phoneme /f/ in early colonial Spanish. The most probable source of this phenomenon in Afro-Yungueño Spanish is Aymara- (and possible Quechua-) influenced interlanguage; neither of these languages contains the phoneme /f/ and while most contemporary bilingual speakers articulate Spanish /f/ with little difficulty, the shift /f/ > [h<sup>w</sup>] is well-attested. The shift /f/ > [h<sup>w</sup>] before unrounded vowels is found among Afro-mestizo communities in southeastern coastal Mexico, in Esmeraldas province in northwestern coastal Ecuador, and in the Colombian Chocó, where the African presence was especially strong, and where other linguistic vestiges of earlier Afro-Hispanic language may still

be found (Lipski 1995b). Among Afro-Yungueños the change /f/ > [h] also occurs in onset clusters: *fruta* > *jruta*, *flor* > *jlor*.

(5) Occasional realization of prevocalic /d/ as stop [d] or [r]. Frequent in Afro-Hispanic (and Afro-Lusitanian) literary texts, from the 16th century to the 19th, is the conversion of intervocalic /d/ to [r], as in *todo* > *toro* (Lipski 2005). Judging by the pronunciation of intervocalic /d/ in contemporary Afro-Hispanic dialects, it is likely that the sound that emerged was not always a flap but, sometimes an occlusive intervocalic [d], which Spanish writers accustomed to the usual fricative variant transcribed as /r/. *Bozal* texts from Latin America, from the late 17th to the 19th centuries, follow identical patterns. Currently, the pronunciation of intervocalic /d/ as an occlusive or flap is common in bilingual areas of Latin America where the indigenous language has no fricative realization of /d/, and is found in Afro-Hispanic speech of Equatorial Guinea, in parts of the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, as well as typifying the speech of West Africans who learn Spanish.<sup>10</sup>

(6) neutralization of /r/ and /rr/. The tap /r/ and trill /rr/ are generally distinguished in Afro-Yungueño speech, but there are occasional examples of prevocalic /rr/ realized as [r] or vice versa: *horra* < *hora*, *ahorra* < *ahora*, *careta* < *carreta*. This same neutralization is characteristic of most vestigial varieties of Spanish, as well as of Sephardic (Judeo) Spanish, and the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea.

(7) variable paragodic vowels: *ele* < *él*, *ayere* < *ayer*, etc. The addition of final (paragodic) vowels to Spanish and Portuguese consonant-final words ending in a stressed syllable was a common feature of early *bozal* language, as well as of borrowings into African languages.<sup>11</sup> The scattered appearance of paragodic vowels in Afro-Yungas Spanish suggests that this process was once more widespread, affecting numerous consonant-final words ending in tonic

syllables. By extension, the form *ele* < *él* in Afro-Yungas speech is in all likelihood the result of a phonetic process of paragoge, rather than a remnant of the Portuguese subject pronoun *êle*, as Schwegler (1994) has suggested for the Chota Valley.<sup>12</sup> There are no other demonstrably Portuguese or Luso-creole elements in Afro-Yungas Spanish; most non-patrimonial Spanish forms can be traced to Aymara, or to massive phonetic distortion.

(8) Unstressed final /e/ often emerges as [i], and final atonic /o/ is usually [u] in the traditional dialect: *nochi* < *noche*, *todu* < *todo*. Atonic clitics and articles also exhibit these changes: *lu(s) peón* < *los peones*, *mi dició* < *me dijo*. There are no vocalic shifts in tonic positions, nor do the changes /i/ > [e] and /u/ > [o] occur in Afro-Bolivian speech.

## 7. Morphosyntactic characteristics of Afro-Yungueño Spanish

It is in the area of morphosyntax that the unique status of Afro-Yungueño speech among Spanish dialects is most clearly observed, and where similarities with other Afro-Iberian varieties can be most convincingly analyzed. The most important traits are the following:

(1) invariant plurals (*lu(s) peón* < *los peones*, *lu(s) mujé* < *las mujeres*, *persona[s] mayó* < *personas mayores*, etc.). This is one of the few Afro-Yungueño traits that at times persists even when Afro-Bolivians speak neutral *castellano*. Most varieties of Spanish maintain the morphophonetic distinction singular-plural, although erosion of final and intervocalic consonants may lead to non-canonical combinations.<sup>13</sup> The widespread loss of word-final consonants, e.g. in rustic Andalusian and Extremadura dialects, often leads to phonological restructuring in vernacular speech, resulting in the loss of canonical plural endings: *árbo* < *árbol*, *árboles*; *re* < *res*, *reses*, etc.<sup>14</sup> Non-etymological consonants also appear: *quiqué* > *quiquenes*, *alfile(r)* > *alfilele*, *relo(j)* > *relore*. Schwegler (1996:282, 392; 1999:240) cites examples of invariant plural forms in the Afro-Ecuadoran dialect of the highland Chota Valley, a region whose demographics

and surrounding Andean Spanish dialects bear some similarities to the Afro-Bolivian speech communities.<sup>15</sup> In attestations and imitations of earlier *bozal* pidgin Spanish, nominal pluralization was sometimes marked, sometimes suspended, but never consistently, as befits the second-language nature of *bozal* speech. In creole languages deriving from Afro-Hispanic pidgins, nouns and adjectives remain invariable, in a form derived from the singular (and in the case of adjectives the masculine gender); when pluralization must be indicated it is by means of established plural markers.<sup>16</sup> Afro-Yungas Spanish thus appears to have restructured its nominal morphosyntax in the direction of invariant noun and adjective forms, although the coexistence of some form of non-Afro Spanish in the linguistic repertoire of most Afro-Bolivians results in the occasional appearance of gender and number agreement in Afro-Yungueño NPs.

(2) invariant plural article *lo/lu(s)*:<sup>17</sup> *lu mujé* [las mujeres], *lu peón* [los peones], *lu negociante* [los negociantes], *tres mes*, *cuatro mes*. For most speakers, the only plural article is *lo/lu*, irrespective of grammatical gender. Afro-Yungueño clearly derives from *los*, combining the dialect-general reduction of final /s/ and the shift of final /o/ > [u] found in some other Afro-Hispanic varieties and also among some Aymara speakers; the latter, however, also freely convert /u/ to [o], a trait not found among Afro-Bolivians.. The invariant plural Afro-Yungueño article is unique among known restructured varieties of Spanish and Portuguese. Occasionally, *lo/lu* is used with singular reference: *era lo secretario generá*.

(3) retention of plural /s/ only on first element of plural NP: *recordando esos fiesta*; *loh dirigente*; *en idioma antigo di mis abuelo*; *a los juiscal todito*; *loh guagua jóven*; *no hay catres harto*; *siempre contaba algunos cosa*. Syllable-final /s/ is weakly aspirated at best in Afro-Yungueño speech, but there is a clear tendency to mark only the first element of plural NPs—usually a determiner—with some manifestation of [s]. Although less consistent than in

vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, the use of “bare” plurals in Afro-Yungueño alternates with the invariant plural article *lo/lu*. This form of plural marking stands in sharp contrast to other Spanish dialects, in which no such morphologically conditioned “stripped” plurals occur. As with invariant plurals, the use of stripped plurals often persists when Afro-Bolivians use neutral varieties of Spanish. In these cases, given the prominence of word-final sibilant [s], the unique plural formation is immediately evident. There are clear parallels with other Afro-Iberian dialects, past and present. Among the early Afro-Hispanic *bozal* imitations, beginning with the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century poems of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, we find some of the first consistent cases of bare plurals: *las leina* [*las reinas*], *las melcede* [*las mercedes*], *lus nenglu* [*los negros*], *lo billaco* [*los bellacos*], *las paja* [*las pajas*], etc. (Lipski 1995a). The same configuration is also typical of vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, Angolan *musseque* Portuguese, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century *bozal* Portuguese, and is occasionally found in other basilectal Afro-Hispanic varieties, especially the Chota Valley of Ecuador and the Colombian Chocó.<sup>18</sup>

(4) Null definite articles in subject and object NPs: *tiene su mujé, mujé aprendió tomá; bueno, carro es ciento cuarenta; expreso entra cuarenta mil; mujé murió año pasao; la una, gallo iba cantá; mayordomo pegaba gente, patrón atrás de mayordomo; negro muy poco fue [a la guerra]*. Articles are not systematically dropped in Afro-Yungueño speech, but there are many instances of null articles in constructions that would require definite articles in other dialects of Spanish. The base form of the dialect uses the definite article in subject position only when definite reference is required.

(5) Lack of noun-adjective gender agreement. A reconstruction of the most traditional form of the dialect indicates that only masculine gender was used for nouns and adjectives, and many older Afro-Yungueño speakers continue this usage consistently. Since most Afro-

Bolivians no longer use the traditional dialect extensively and on a daily basis, lapses of gender agreement sometimes unexpectedly produce a feminine form instead of the expected masculine variant. Some observed examples are: *las mujeres altos; siempre contaba algunos cosa; esos fiesta; loh persona mayó; los hombre con camisa blanco; han quedao hartos viuda; unos quince mula; comunidad entero iba, todo los tarde, todito eso hierba, mezclao, esos mora, nochi entero, noticias antiguo, con sebo de vaca negro, no tengo muy buen casa*. Lapses in gender agreement in Afro-Yungueño Spanish are much more frequent than in other vestigial Afro-Hispanic dialects such as the Chota Valley of Ecuador and the Chocó region of Colombia, and at times even penetrate neutral *castellano* as used by Afro-Bolivians.

(6) elimination of prepositions, especially *de*, *en*, and *a*: *[yo] nació [en] Mururata; tengo un hermano allá [en] Coroico; aprendió [a] tomá; en este tiempo di cosecha siempre nojotro va [al] trabajo; he ido [a] Caranavi seis año; cuando gallo canta [a las] seis de la tarde, los patrón vivían [en] La Paz*. These monosyllabic prepositions are subject to erosion and elision in most vernacular forms of Spanish, and also frequently disappear in L<sub>2</sub> varieties, including early *bozal* Spanish.

(7) *In situ* questions. Afro-Yungueño speech exhibits a few questions in which the interrogative element has not been fronted: *¿Ote wuawuay quién pues?* ‘Whose child are you?’ *Bo tiene juamía de quién?* ‘What family do you belong to?’ *In situ* questions are not found in other Bolivian Spanish dialects, but are frequent, e.g. in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese and in Angolan *musseque* Portuguese (Lipski 1995c), reflecting Kikongo and Kimbundu syntax.

(8) use of 3rd person singular as invariant verb: *nojotro tiene jrutita; yo no entiende eso de vender jruta; yo creció junto con Angelino; nojotro creció loh do; ello vivia, ello salía mi avisá aquí; ¿de qué nojotro pobre va viví? nojotro trabajaba hacienda; lo patrón siempre tenía*

*partera; leña no cargaba como nojotro cargaba, lu profesor taba jay marchandu.* This combination recurs frequently in Afro-Hispanic language as well as other second-language varieties of Spanish and Portuguese, due primarily to the fact that the 3s. verb form is by far the most frequent manifestation of the Ibero-Romance verb paradigms. Among early Afro-Hispanic texts (15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries) the lack of consistent subject-verb agreement manifested itself in many different fashions, most prominently the third person singular, the uninflected infinitive, and the first person plural, especially the hybrid copula *samos*. The latter form, if it was every truly used in Afro-Hispanic speech rather than being just a literary invention, disappears from the corpus by the end of the 17th century. Afro-Hispanic language from Latin America most frequently used the third person singular as the invariant verb root; the bare infinitive was also occasionally used.<sup>19</sup> The L<sub>2</sub> Spanish of Equatorial Guinea frequently employs the 3s. (Lipski 1985a), although no speaker uses such forms exclusively, but rather as performance errors during attempts at speaking standard Spanish. Vestigial Spanish speakers worldwide also slip into the 3s. forms occasionally, an indication of gradual erosion of verbal paradigms.<sup>20</sup> When Chinese laborers were brought to Cuba and Peru in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, their approximations to Spanish—often learned from non-native Spanish-speaking Afro-*bozales*, also employed the 3s. as invariable verb. When speaking neutral *castellano* Afro-Bolivians strictly maintain subject-verb agreement; the consistent use of invariant verbs is one of the most striking features of the Afro-Yungueño dialect.

(9) Partially restructured subject pronoun system. In the basilectal form the second person singular pronouns *tú* and *vos*, both of which are normally used in highland Bolivian Spanish, do not appear. Only *oté* < *usted* characterizes the traditional dialect, although most Afro-Yungueños also use *tú* and *vos* in their contemporary speech. The plural of *oté* is *otene* <



*ustedes*. In the third person there is no inflection for grammatical gender in the basilectal register; *ele* refers to both 'he' and 'she,' while *eyu(s)* combines the function of Spanish *ellos* and *ellas*.

(10) variable erosion of verbs giving rise to particle-like constructions: *carro ta subí; ta vení de mi casa; eje perro ta ladrá; yo ta tomá mi plato*. In the reconstruction of Afro-Hispanic language by far the most controversial point of discussion concerns the existence of the preverbal particle *ta* + invariant verb stem, found in all Spanish—and Portuguese-based creoles throughout the world.<sup>21</sup> The existence of the particle *ta* in all creoles derived from Spanish and Portuguese has lent considerable support to monogenetic theories based on the notion of a pidginized Portuguese “reconnaissance language.” Thus, for example, Naro (1978: 342) has claimed that *ta* was already part of the Portuguese pidgin “reconnaissance” language, from which it was ultimately transferred to other creoles. However, any such claims must be based on inference rather than direct evidence. The earliest (literary or semi-literary) representations of Afro-Lusitanian pidgin (the *fala de preto* literary imitations), coming in the 15th and 16th centuries, contain no examples of *ta*, but rather use the portmanteau verb *sar* (apparently a fusion of *ser* and *estar*) or *santar* (possibly a fusion of *sentar* and *estar*).<sup>22</sup> Moreover, major differences in the use of *ta* among Iberian-based creoles legitimize the search for alternative, possibly multiple, routes of evolution. Indeed, a creole-like verb structure using the particle *ta* is not present in any Afro-Portuguese pidgin texts, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>, although found in some fashion in all Afro-Portuguese creoles.

Prior to the 19th century, there is no evidence in the *bozal* corpus that any Spanish or Portuguese elements were consistently functioning as preverbal particles, replacing verbal inflection to signal tense, mood, and aspect. Thus for example, no form of *estar* combines with another verbal

root, except in transparently progressive constructions, in which the *-ndo* ending is still present. In the pre-19th century *bozal* corpus, there are no examples of *ta* or *está(r)* used with an invariable verb stem in a fashion suggestive of its use as a preverbal particle. However, the 19th century Cuban *bozal* corpus provides a different panorama, with some apparent instances of *ta* as an aspectual particle, similar to use in Papiamento, Palenquero, Cape Verdian, etc.:

Como que yo *ta* cuchá la gente que habla tanto ... yo *ta* mirá gente mucho (Manuel Cabrera Paz [1973], "Exclamaciones de un negro")

Sí, páe, yo *ta* robá un gaína jabá, y dipué yo robá una yegua (Lydia Cabrera [1976], *Francisco y Francisca (chascarrillos de negros viejos)*)

Horita *ta* bení pa cá (Ignacio Villa, "Drumi, Mobila" [Guirao 1938:183-6])

*Ta* juí, *ta* pujá mí, señó (Anselmo Suárez y Romero [1947], *Francisco*)

Primero *ta* llorá na má. (María de Santa Cruz, *Historias campesinas* [1908])

This has led to claims that Cuban *bozal* Spanish shares with Palenquero and Papiamento (and with Cape Verdian) an earlier Afro-Lusitanian heritage (e.g. Megenney 1984). The particle *ta*, found in nearly all Ibero-Romance derived creoles in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean, is undoubtedly derived from the Spanish/Portuguese copula *cum* auxiliary verb *estar*, most probably the third person singular form *está*, regularly reduced to *ta* in colloquial speech. In Spanish, the auxiliary *estar* combines only with the gerund in *-ndo* to form progressive tenses (e.g. *estoy trabajando*, *estamos comiendo*), and with the adjectival past participle (e.g. *estás equivocado*). In the Afro-Caribbean literary examples, *ta* typically combines with an invariant stem derived from the Spanish infinitive lacking final /r/, an established phonetic reduction which began as early as the 16th century (Lipski 1995a). In Spanish, *estar* never combines directly with the infinitive. Although some investigators have suggested an earlier pidgin/creole Portuguese basis for preverbal *ta* in Afro-Cuban Spanish, the direct evidence is scarce and problematic. A more probable source for some instances of *ta* is Papiamentu, which was present in 19th century Cuba and Puerto Rica as thousands of sugar cane cutters were taken from other

Caribbean islands during the sugar plantation boom.<sup>23</sup> Pockets of Papiamentu speakers are documented for Cuba and Puerto Rico, and other Papiamentu elements penetrated Afro-Cuban Spanish. Another source of *ta* + V<sub>inf</sub> constructions in Afro-Caribbean Spanish is phonetic reduction of the gerund, suggested by such half-reduced constructions as *pavo real ta bucán palo* (Cabrera 1983). Finally, the frequent use of a bare uninflected infinitive (lacking final /r/) in Afro-Cuban pidgin provided a ready foundation upon which preverbal particles such as *ta* could be grafted.

Outside of Cuba and Puerto Rico, *ta* used as putative verbal particle in Afro-Hispanic speech makes only a few ghost appearances, none of which holds up robustly under closer scrutiny. Tompkins (1981:311) cites an older Afro-Peruvian informant in Cañete, who recalled a line from an old song: *Lima ta hablar y Cañete ta pondé*.<sup>24</sup> This suggests that at least some creoloid verb forms may have occasionally surfaced in Afro-Peruvian speech, although apparently never coalescing into a consistent pattern. Afro-Peruvian songs—which today are becoming increasingly popular in the “world music” market—are replete with onomatopoeic (pseudo-African?) expressions, many of which bear superficial resemblance to creole-like structures. In her analysis of vestigial Spanish in Trinidad, Moodie (MS) uncovered one instance of what she believes to be a creoloid construction with *ta*: *la esposa cuasi ta olvidá el español*. According to Moodie “this construction has a very low frequency in the speech of the older generation ...” In the absence of any other examples from Trinidad, however, this isolated examples remains problematic.<sup>25</sup> Thus Moodie’s putative *ta* example may be the result of phonetic erosion not only of forms of the verb *estar* to *ta* (frequent in all colloquial varieties of Caribbean Spanish), but also of the gerund, which accompanies *estar* in progressive constructions: *está hablando* > [es]tá hablá[ndo].<sup>26</sup>

Another possible instance of the construction *ta* +  $V_{inf}$  found outside of Cuba appears in an enigmatic poem by the Afro-Panamanian writer Víctor Franceschi (1956:30):

[...] Si te pica por allá,  
cuando tu *tá* tlabajá  
yo te puee asegurá  
que tu vaj a recordá  
lo que mama *tá* avertí ...

The construction *tú tá tlabajá* ‘you work’ and *mama tá avertí* ‘mother warns you’ are the only known literary examples of the construction *ta* +  $V_{inf}$  outside of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

One final instance where verbal constructions involving *ta* appear in written attestations apart from Afro-Cuban texts comes in some attributions of the pidginized Spanish spoken by Chinese laborers in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba (Lipski 1998c, 1999b). These indentured laborers were recruited from the Portuguese port of Macau, and in addition to their native Cantonese, some may have had at least passive knowledge of Macau Portuguese creole, which employs the particle *ta* in fashions similar to Afro-Iberian creoles. The first Chinese laborers to arrive in Cuba worked as cane-cutters, alongside newly freed Afro-Cubans, some of whom were African-born *bozales* speaking their own varieties of pidginized Spanish, as well as Papiamentu-speaking laborers from Curaçao. In the Chinese-Cuban corpus, there are several indications of *ta* used as a preverbal particle in a fashion similar to that found both in Macao creole Portuguese and in Caribbean *bozal* Spanish:

pa mi no sabe, *ta* *trabajá*, quema carbón (Jiménez Pastrana 1983:110)

Yo *tá* *pelié* (tú *tá* la casa ...! (Jiménez Pastrana 1983:128)

Examples like *yo tá pelié* and *ta trabajá* cannot be readily explained through imperfect learning of native speaker models, and in fact these constructions are identical both to Macao creole Portuguese and to Afro-Iberian creoles, including some attestations of Cuban *bozal* Spanish.

In the Afro-Bolivian corpus the appearance of *ta* + INVARIANT VERB is very infrequent; there are no instances of *ya*, *a*, *lo*, or other Afro-Iberian creole particles. When explicitly queried on this combination, speakers of the Afro-Yungueño dialect do not consider it as a consistent component of their speech, although when presented with specific examples extracted from the corpus all acknowledge the construction as possible. They view the use of *ta* + VERB as a performance phenomenon, and indeed a comparison with the remainder of the Afro-Yungueño corpus points to phonetic erosion in rapid and unguarded speech as the locus of this construction, which is not an integral part of the dialect's verb system. This is amply demonstrated in the following fragment, from a man remembering how acquaintances greeted one another during chance encounters on the road: *¿di ande pue compa ta viniendo? Ta vení di a mi casa; yo ta vení di tal parte; ¿ande p(u)e compa ta indo?* In this example *ta* combines with a rapidly pronounced gerund, which then erodes to a form similar to the infinitive, only to re-emerge as a full gerund a moment later. The free alternation between progressive constructions with a fully realized gerund and eroded combinations that resemble the Spanish infinitive offers a model for how *ta* + INVARIANT VERB structures could arise in emergent Afro-Iberian creole languages. The transitory performance nature of such configurations in Afro-Yungueño speech precludes including the latter in a genealogy of creole languages based on the use of the particle *ta*.

#### 8. Lexical features of Afro-Yungueño Spanish

In general the Afro-Yungueño lexicon coincides with rural highland Bolivian Spanish, including a liberal admixture of Aymara words. In daily usage there are no lexical items of demonstrable African origin. The two most characteristic lexical items of Afro-Yungueño Spanish are *cho* and *jay*. Although of Aymara origin, both items are instantly identified with Afro-Yungueño speech, and are used to mock the speech of Afro-Bolivians who use their dialect

outside of their own communities. *Cho* is used as a greeting, similar to the use of *che* in the Guaraní-speaking area and in the Rio de la Plata, but comes from Aymara *cho* or *chuy*, used in similar fashion. *Jay* is used frequently to punctuate utterances. It has no inherent semantic value, but rather behaves like the equally frequent *pue(h)* in Afro-Yungueño speech. Typical examples are: *yo no fue jay*; *aquí levantamo jay temprano*; *ahora días jay corto, hay que avanzar trabajo di madrugada*; *ya murí [murió] jay hace tiempo*; *cuando mis hermana vivía, hacían jay semana ellos cada uno tenía que hacer semana* [los quehaceres de la casa]; *ustedes deben tener jay algo que recordar*; *no sé ustede cómo jay hacían en casa*. *Jay* is an Aymara word meaning “what?” and used among Aymara speakers when something is not heard or understood. Some contemporary Aymara speakers also use *jay* both in Aymara and when speaking Spanish in fashions similar to Afro-Yungueños. This is considered colloquial usage by Aymara speakers and is often identified with market vendors. The latter usage has even appeared in Bolivian dialect literature; from Wilder Cervantes’ play *La sanguchera de la esquina* (2001) comes: ‘Sanguches, niñitos. Con aceite, **jay** son!’ (54) ‘De carne y huevo **jay** son’ (123); ‘de carne imporptada de Viacha, **jay!** son’ (141).

The only Afro-Yungueño lexical items that have at times been regarded as Africanisms are *mauchi*, a traditional funeral song, and the typical dances *saya* and *zemba*. Rey Gutiérrez (1998:188) suggests a Kikongo origin for the word *mauchi*: “MA: prefijo Kikongo que indica la preteneicia. UCNI: es la deformación de UNSI que significa dentro de la tierra, U: dentro, NSI: tierra. Mauchi se refiere a la tierra [...]. ” She also derives *zemba* from a kikongo word meaning “navel” and *saya* from Kikongo *nsaya* meaning communal labor. These etymologies remain to be verified, a difficult task in view of the absence of data on the regional African origins of Afro-Bolivians.

## 9. Sorting out Aymara and “Afro” in Afro-Yungueño Spanish

Given the significant gaps in the oral and written history of Afro-Bolivians in the Yungas, the full extent of Aymara influence on the Afro-Yungueño dialect may never be determined with certainty. Currently Afro-Yungueño Spanish and Aymara-influenced varieties from the same region are quite different; outside observers can easily distinguish the two ethnolinguistic varieties, and both Afro-Bolivians and Aymara Spanish speakers interviewed for the present study acknowledge these differences. It is conceivable that in past centuries (the oldest living memories tapped for the present study, representing an individual born around 1890 and with recollections extending at least half a century before that) Afro-Yungueño speech may have been more significantly altered by contact with the Aymara language or with the Spanish as spoken by Aymara-dominant bilinguals. That Afro-Yungueño Spanish cannot be simply reduced to the residue of Aymara-induced contact phenomena can only be established inferentially, by demonstrating significant features of Afro-Yungueño speech that have never been documented for any other Andean variety formed in contact with indigenous languages, and which at the same time are also found in other Afro-Hispanic dialects, both contemporary and reconstructed from written imitations from centuries past. To a lesser extent one can also point to prominent features of Aymara-influenced Spanish that fail to appear in Afro-Bolivian speech, although such cases are not convincing if taken in the absence of exclusively Afro-Yungueño traits.

Contemporary Afro-Bolivian Spanish shares with Aymara-influenced Spanish at the very least a preference for object-verb word order; this is most frequent among Afro-Bolivians who are also fluent in Aymara. The use of *jay*, vocative *cho*, and very probably the use of *tío/tía* as deferential terms of address directed at older community members also come from Aymara, as does the use of *awicha* ‘grandmother,’ for elderly women (the analogical creation *awicho* at

times appears in Afro-Yungueño speech). The highland Bolivian preference for compound perfect tenses, as well as the evidential use of the pluperfect indicative (e.g. *habías llegado* = I have learned that you arrived vs. *llegaste/has llegado* = I saw you arrive) are also found from time to time in Afro-Bolivian speech, but the latter dialect strongly prefers Spanish simple tenses: present, preterite, and imperfect indicative. Aymara speakers routinely experience difficulties with Spanish nominal and verbal morphology, in fashions similar to other second-language learners. Aymara-interfered Spanish is characterized by considerable vacillation in subject-verb agreement, including the frequent combination of the subject pronoun *usted* with verbs corresponding to the second person singular *tú*. In the Afro-Yungueño dialect, however, subject-verb discrepancies are qualitatively and quantitatively different from Aymara Spanish; gravitation is invariably toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular form, and other discrepant combinations are not found. This reflects the status of the Afro-Bolivian dialect as a native language among the Afro-Yungueños, whereas Spanish is a second language for Aymara speakers. Similarly, whereas noun-adjective agreement in Aymara-influenced Spanish may be unstable, there is no gravitation toward the masculine singular as the unmarked form, as occurs consistently in Afro-Bolivian speech and in Afro-Iberian creoles. No Aymara-induced Spanish interlanguage has ever been known to exhibit bare or invariant plurals or null definite articles, all of which are common in Afro-Yungueño speech. Afro-Yungueño speech exhibits many instances of /o/ > [u] and /e/ > [e], but only in final atonic position or in unstressed determiners and clitics (e.g. the invariable plural article *lu(s)*, *nochi* < *noche*, *tiempu* < *tiempo*). This trait has been documented for other Afro-Hispanic varieties, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> (e.g. the texts and analysis in Lipski 2005), particularly in neighboring Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan speech. Aymara-influenced Spanish interlanguage, on the other hand, freely neutralizes /o/-/u/ and /e/-/i/ in all



tonic and atonic positions, with either the mid or high vowels appearing. Taken together, these facts suggest that in addition to the inevitable results of contact with Aymara-dominant second-language speakers of Spanish, as well as through knowledge of the Aymara language, Afro-Bolivians also use combinations not documented for Aymara-Spanish bilinguals but typically found in Afro-Hispanic speech of other countries and time periods. The following chart summarizes the results of this comparison.

FEATURE	AFRO-YUNGUEÑO	AYMARA-SPANISH	OTHER AFRO-HISPANIC
<i>O-V</i> word order	occasional	frequent	almost never
3 s as invariant verb	consistent	one of many instances of unstable subject-verb agreement	all Afro-Iberian pidgins and creoles, Equatorial Guinea
invariant article <i>lu(s)</i>	consistent	No	Rare
bare plurals	frequent	never	vernacular Brazilian and Angolan Portuguese, earlier Afro-Hispanic
invariant plurals	consistent	almost never	sometimes
null definite articles	frequent	never	vernacular Brazilian/Angolan Portuguese
/o/ > [u], /e/ > [i]	final atonic and clitic only	much neutralization in all tonic and atonic positions	some final atonic in Rio Platense and earlier Afro-Hispanic speech

#### 10. Similarities with restructured Afro-Portuguese dialects

The Afro-Yungas dialect of Spanish bears many striking similarities in both form and history with the semicreole Portuguese dialect of *Helvécia*, Brazil.<sup>27</sup> The *Helvécia* dialect was formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some 2-3 centuries after the Afro-Bolivian dialect, but arose in an isolated plantation environment in which African slaves acquired Portuguese often in contact with other non-native speakers of the target language. Subsequent continued geographical and sociolinguistic isolation combined with linguistic drift and the absence of formal education in Portuguese combined to produce a stable restructured variety of Portuguese that bears many

similarities with the true Afro-Lusitanian creoles of Cape Verde, São Tomé, etc., without a direct genealogical relationship with any proto-Portuguese pidgin or creole. The developmental history of Helvécia Portuguese is similar to that of Afro-Bolivian Spanish; there is even some likelihood that the mix of African substratum languages was comparable in both environments. The grammatical similarities between Helvécia Portuguese and Afro-Yungueño Spanish include: (a) non-agreement between subject and verb, including use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, and gravitation toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular as invariant verb root: *io sabi [eu sei]* ‘I know,’ *io fas [eu faço]* ‘I do’; (b) non-agreement of gender and number in noun phrases: *terra meu minha terra* ‘my land’ (c) bare definite NPs: *quando abri [a] janela* ‘when I opened [the] window.’ These features are not present even in the most non-standard Brazilian Portuguese dialects except for a weakened version of (a), in which the 3s. verb form is used in replacement of the 1 pl. and 3pl. forms, but never of the 1s. (e.g. *nos tem [temos]* ‘we have,’ *êles trabalha [trabalham]* ‘they work,’ but never *\*eu trabalha* ‘I work’). The use of 3s. verb forms with 1s subjects can therefore be taken as a clear diagnostic of the “creoleness” of the Helvécia Portuguese dialect. Among vernacular Spanish dialects—including those with a heavy Afro-Hispanic contribution—these same features are also absent. Non-agreement between subjects and verbs is never found in native varieties Spanish (except as immediately corrected lapses in performance; in vestigial dialects use of the 3s. with 1s. and 1pl. verb forms is relatively frequent.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, among bilingual speakers not fully proficient in Spanish these tendencies may occur (e.g. Equatorial Guinea, and semifluent indigenous speakers throughout the Americas). In a few isolated Afro-Hispanic dialects (e.g. the Chota Valley of Ecuador and some isolated villages in the Colombian Chocó), use of the 3pl. verb with 3s. subjects occurs very infrequently, usually in convoluted sentences or with some reflexive verbs. In addition, the

Helvécia dialect shares with other vernacular Brazilian Portuguese varieties the following traits also found in Afro-Yungueño Spanish: bare plurals, *in situ* questions, and loss of final /r/ in verbal infinitives.

The Afro-Yungas and Helvécia data are also similar to the vernacular Portuguese pidgin spoken quasi-natively in the *musseques* or popular neighborhoods of Luanda, Angola (Lipski 1995c). This dialect was formed in direct contact with Kimbundu, evidently with some contributions from Kikongo; both languages were prominent among African slaves in colonial Peru and Bolivia. As Perl (1989) has demonstrated, the *musseque* data provide valuable corroboration of other Afro-Iberian contact varieties. *Musseque* Portuguese shares with Afro-Yungueño Spanish the following deviations from monolingual varieties of the respective languages: (a) gravitation toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> singular verb form as invariant verb; (b) Lapses in noun-adjective agreement; (c) bare or stripped plurals; (d) The appearance of *ta* + INVARIANT VERB constructions, the result of morphophonetic erosion. In the case of Angolan Portuguese, this arises from the reduction of *estar* to *ta* as well as the continental Portuguese progressive construction based on *estar a* + INFINITIVE (*está a trabalhar*); (e) null definite articles; (f) loss of common prepositions and non-standard use of prepositions; (g) *in situ* questions, much more common in *musseque* Portuguese than in Afro-Yungueño Spanish. As with Helvécia Portuguese, Angolan *musseque* Portuguese offers a relevant comparison with Afro-Yungueño Spanish in having arisen in a similar contact situation independently of any proto-creole language.

#### 11. The importance of Afro-Yungueño Spanish to Afro-Hispanic linguistics

The Afro-Yungueño Spanish dialect, now found only among what is apparently its last generation of fluent speakers, provides a vital link in the reconstruction of Afro-Hispanic

language in colonial Spanish America. In addition to demonstrating the results of prolonged isolation, sociolinguistic marginality, and varying degrees of contact with Aymara language and culture, the Afro-Bolivian dialect appears to be a direct continuation of colonial *bozal* Spanish pidgin as spoken by native speakers of African languages. By all accounts this is the oldest surviving non-creole Afro-Hispanic language variety, going back at least to the 17<sup>th</sup> century if not earlier. Do the Afro-Bolivian data represent the final stages in the decreolization of an earlier Palenquero-like Spanish creole or the remnants of a stable restructured but not creolized variety of Spanish that co-existed with highland Bolivian Spanish since its inception? A glance at the radically simplified VP and DP of the basilectal Afro-Yungueño dialect suggests that a full-fledged creole once existed here. On the other hand the known historical and demographic data do not offer the conditions typically associated with creolization. Unlike Palenquero and other now extinguished creole languages, Afro-Yungueño Spanish did not arise in maroon communities cut off from continued contact with native speakers of Spanish. The Afro-Yungueño dialect, both in its external history and in the restructuring of Spanish grammar, qualifies as a semicreole using the definition quoted earlier.

The Afro-Bolivian data in themselves do not invalidate claims that Afro-Hispanic language once creolized elsewhere, but they do weaken assertions that most or all Afro-Hispanic varieties share a common ancestor, perhaps a form of pidginized Portuguese. In contrast to creoles descended from the speech of maroon communities or multilingual slaving stations, such as Palenquero and Papiamentu, Afro-Yungueño speech was always in contact with Spanish, but the contact was not intensive enough to prevent the partial restructuring of the originally L<sub>2</sub> Spanish spoken by *bozal* slaves.<sup>29</sup> This partial restructuring is seen most clearly in the structure of the Afro-Yungueño noun phrase, and in verbal morphology. Afro-Yungueño Spanish is the

only natively spoken variety of Spanish containing invariant verbs, bare and invariant plurals, a restructured pronominal system, and lack of gender agreement. Afro-Bolivians were in contact with highland Spanish dialects where plural /s/ is marked with a highly prominent sibilant [s]. The latter consonant is aspirated in Afro-Yungueño speech, but the essential structure of the canonical Spanish plural NP is present. Marking plural /s/ only on the first element was not inherited from Spanish, but—like restructured Afro-Portuguese dialects—represents a compromise between Ibero-Romance pluralization and substratum languages that did not mark plural through suffixes, if at all. The Spanish article is also present in Afro-Yungueño speech, but often omitted in subject position when generic reference is intended. Once more this is a compromise between the canonical Spanish patterns and substratum languages lacking articles altogether: in Afro-Yungueño Spanish the definite article is used only when definite reference cannot be inferred from the surrounding discourse. The presence of invariant plurals and the invariant plural article *lu/lo* are typical L<sub>2</sub> traits that fossilized in Afro-Yungueño speech, together with lack of consistent gender agreement. The Afro-Yungueño verb system is also a hybrid of canonical Spanish patterns and reduced L<sub>2</sub> paradigms. Spanish tense distinctions are normally maintained (although reduced to a subset of present and past indicative forms), while person and number morphology are reduced to the third person singular in most cases, this being the unmarked form in Spanish.<sup>30</sup> Phonetic erosion in rapid speech at times appears to combine preverbal particles with an invariant verb stem, but this is a performance artifact and not part of the Afro-Yungueño grammar.

The Afro-Yungueño dialect provides a miniature prototype of the sort of language that probably characterized most groups of African slaves in rural areas, from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>. The analysis of this dialect in the context of historical

dialectology underscores the importance of analyzing other contemporary linguistic isolates, not just for their curiosity value but as microcosms that replicate more sweeping linguistic encounters, whose direct observation has been lost to time.

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Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> A corollary is the claim that this creole had its origins in an even earlier Afro-Portuguese pidgin or creole, formed in West Africa and surviving in the contemporary creoles of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Annobón, and in Latin America in Papiamentu (spoken in the Netherlands Antilles) and Palenquero (spoken in the Afro-Colombian village of Palenque de San Basilio).

<sup>2</sup> The debate and its protagonists are summarized in Lipski (1998b, 2005). In the Caribbean matters are complicated by the introduction, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of other Afro-European creole languages as contract laborers arrived from other Caribbean islands; some of these creoles (e.g. Papiamentu) were similar enough to *bozal* approximations to Spanish to probably have influenced *bozales*' acquisition of Spanish, and to cause white observers to confuse the 'broken Spanish' of African-born blacks with stable Afro-Atlantic creoles. The only exception is the language of Palenque de San Basilio, Colombia, the product of a maroon community whose language developed rapidly after being cut off from neighboring Spanish-speaking society.

<sup>3</sup> Schwegler (1996) provides a compelling example, in his analysis of the *lumbalú* funeral chants in the Palenque de San Basilio, which contains items felt to be "African" by community members, when in reality these items are highly distorted Spanish or Portuguese elements.

<sup>4</sup> De la Rosa Sánchez (1988), Drolet (1980a, 1980b), Joly (1981), Laribe (1968, 1969), Lipski (1989, 1997), Smith (1975), Tejeira Jaén (1974).

<sup>5</sup> Lipski (1986e, 1987a), Schwegler (1994, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Bowser (1974), Crespo (1977), Cuche (1981), Harth-Terré (1971, 1973), Millones Santagadea (1973), Pizarroso Cuenca (1977), Portugal Ortiz (1977).

<sup>7</sup> Paredes Candia (1967: t. I, 306-7) mentions other Bolivian folk traditions attributed to the former presence of black slaves.

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<sup>8</sup> The fieldwork in 2005 was partially supported by a grant from Penn State's Africana Research Center, for which the author expresses deep gratitude.

<sup>9</sup> The quote in question is (Angola Maconde 2000:13-14):

Cho, hasti tendé huajaya in eje cotencia, nuasti olvida di remira, cumu ta un poco chaypu, no vaya a chojtá, no tengo ni poco pa volia {por favor extiendes un poco de coca en el mantel, no te descuides de observer el tiempo, como está un poco nublado, si le moja la lluvia se pondrá negro, no tengo ni poco para mascar o acuytar]

Hasta que día nojotro va ta in fiesta, eje día qui yo mia dició, yo no fue jay. Quilaya pue tía ta, andi pue ote va anda, ote va vini o no. Ote wuawuay quién pues, di tía pituca ¿lu juamía Flore? [Hasta que día nosotros vamos a estar de fiesta, el día que usted me dijo, yo no fui. Como te encuentras tía, donde te vas a caminar, podrás venir o no, hijo de quien eres, de la tía Petronila ¿de la familia Flores?]

<sup>10</sup> Lipski (1985a, 1985b, 1986a, 1986c, 1986f). Alleyne (1980:62) gives examples from African-influenced creoles in the Americas.

<sup>11</sup> Bal (1968), Martins (1958a, 1958b), Mendonça (1935:116-8), Lipski (2002b). Leite de Vasconcellos (1901:158) and Schuchardt (1888) noted that Kimbundu speakers in Angola still added the paragodic vowels in their L<sub>2</sub> Portuguese as late as the end of the 19th century. Similar developments are found in Afro-Lusitanian creoles, particularly those of the Gulf of Guinea (São Tomé, Príncipe, Annobón). Alleyne (1980:45-8) documents the extensive use of paragodic vowels in other African-influenced creoles. Althoff (1994) encountered a few cases of paragodic vowels in vestigial Afro-Mexican speech, along the Costa Chica of Guerrero state.

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<sup>12</sup> My own fieldwork in this region (Lipski 1986e, 1987a) did not detect this form, evidently not commonly used.

<sup>13</sup> For examples in some rustic dialects of Andalusia, the common loss of word-final /l/ is accompanied by loss of intervocalic /l/; this may lead to a new type of plural formation: *arbol/árboe*, *perá* < *peral/perae*, *animá* < *animal/animae* (Moya Corral 1979:81-84).

<sup>14</sup> Carrasco Cantos (1981:99), Salvador Plans (1987b:40).

<sup>15</sup> My own work on this dialect (Lipski 1986e, 1987a) did not turn up such examples, evidently confined to only some informants.

<sup>16</sup> For example Palenquero preposes *ma*: *ma hende* ‘people,’ *ma kusa* ‘things,’ etc. Papiamentu postposes *nan*, which is also the third person plural pronoun: *kasnan* ‘houses,’ *bukinan* ‘books.’

<sup>17</sup> The final /s/ of the invariant plural article is frequently pronounced in Dorado Chico and surrounding Afro-Bolivian communities, while in Mururata, Chichijpa, Tocaña, and Coroico, sibilant [s] is not heard.

<sup>18</sup> For Ecuador, Lipski (1986e, 1987a); for Chocó, Caicedo (1977, 1992), Mena Lozano (1995). For Angolan *musseque* and early *bozal* Portuguese, Lipski (1995c).

<sup>19</sup> For example Lipski (1993a, 1998b, 2002d).

<sup>20</sup> Lipski (1986d, 1990, 1993b, 1996b, 1998c, 1999b).

<sup>21</sup> The various proposals are summarized and analyzed in Lipski (1986g, 1987b, 1991, 1992a, 1993a, 1996a, 1998a, 1999a, 2002a).

<sup>22</sup> Lipski (1999c, 2002c).

<sup>23</sup> Lipski (1993a, 1996a, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 2002a).

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<sup>24</sup> My own fieldwork in the same region (conducted in 2003) failed to uncover any recollection of this line, or other attestations of *ta* used as particle in Afro-Peruvian speech or song (the informant who had provided the quotation to Tompkins was reported as deceased).

<sup>25</sup> Most of the speakers interviewed by Moodie were not fully fluent in Spanish; my own subsequent fieldwork in Trinidad (Lipski 1990) also turned up many vestigial or semi-speakers of Spanish, who frequently reduced Spanish words through erosion of entire syllables. Thus for example *naranja* > *narang* in vestigial Trinidad Spanish. All Trinidadians, most of whom speak no Spanish, enjoy Spanish-language songs at Christmas time, known as *parang* < *parranda*, an early instance of this type of phonetic erosion.

<sup>26</sup> Moodie also gives the example *un halmano [hermano] ta casá [está casado]*, indicating the type of phonetic erosion that can produce the appearance of a creoloid verb phrase based on *ta*. In the case of the example *la esposa cuasi ta olvidá el español*, the verb *olvidar* does not usually occur in the type of progressive constructions that gave rise to *ta* + VERB in Afro-Iberian creoles; the speaker most likely intended to articulate *ha olvidado el español*; phonetic reduction and an imperfect grasp of Spanish grammar would combine to produce the utterance in question.

<sup>27</sup> Baxter and Lucchesi (1993), Baxter, Lucchesi and Guimarães (1997), Mello et al. (1998), Ferreira (1985), Megenney (1993, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> Examples are given in Lipski (1986d, 1996b).

<sup>29</sup> Unlike what may have occurred in some slave communities—particularly descendents of maroons—there is no evidence that Afro-Yungueños made a deliberate effort to retain non-canonical forms of expression. In Palenque de San Basilio, Colombia, community residents had already learned regional Spanish, and maintained their creole language deliberately, as early as



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the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Friedemann and Patiño Rosselli (1983:45). McWhorter (2000) has suggested similar deliberate retentions for other creole languages.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. Bybee (1985:50-51).