



/s/ in Central American Spanish

John M. Lipski

Hispania, Vol. 68, No. 1. (Mar., 1985), pp. 143-149.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0018-2133%28198503%2968%3A1%3C143%3A%2FICAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>

Hispania is currently published by American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/aatsp.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

/s/ in Central American Spanish

■ John M. Lipski, *The University of Houston*

Of all the areas of Latin American Spanish, the Central American isthmus is the least studied in terms of dialectological investigations. Early studies¹ lumped all the Central American republics under a general rubric, which at times also included the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, while studies directed at specific nations assumed an exclusively lexicological character.² In recent years, Central America has fared little better, for the area has remained virtually untouched in linguistic studies. The paucity of linguistic investigations becomes even more critical in the phonological dimension, and only quite recently has this area figured in linguistic analyses of Central American Spanish.³

During the Spanish colonial empire, Central America was culturally isolated from the mainstream of Spanish America, with the exception of the capital of Guatemala. As a result, Central American Spanish constitutes a linguistic microcosm with a certain coherency in its own right as opposed to other main currents of Hispanic dialectology, but with the same tantalizingly ephemeral characteristics which form the spirit of Central American solidarity. In some cases Central American dialects have participated in phonological processes common to most of the rest of Latin America, but the historical factors which have led to the unique cultural configurations have also permitted a number of divergent developments and even some innovations.

This article has a double purpose. The first is to offer a concrete description of one facet of Central American phonology, namely the behavior of the phoneme /s/. This choice of operating parameter represents one of the key defining characteristics of Hispanic dialectology, and enables the Central American data to be fitted against the already existing studies of the behavior of /s/ in other Spanish-speaking regions. The second thrust, which in this article will remain subordinated to the first, is to consider the possible diachronic processes which could have given rise to the current configurations, and the theoretical consequences implied by the reconstructions.⁴

In order to observe the details of the distribution of /s/ in Central America, I collected data on the speech of the capital cities. During periods of field work⁵ recordings were made in the five Spanish-speaking Central American republics. In the present discussion, the speech patterns of Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, San José and Managua will be compared. As a prelude to the quantitative presentations, we observe that these data are generally representative of the dialect patterns of the respective countries, and that the internal regional differences which exist are mainly differences of degree of application of certain phonological processes. Naturally, considerable sociolinguistic stratification exists, especially in urban areas, where a broader spectrum of sociocultural groups may be found. Guatemalan Spanish phonology is quite homogeneous, except for the small Caribbean coastal area and part of the Pacific coastal region near the Salvadoran border. The Salvadoran and Nicaraguan dialects are similarly homogeneous, with few regional differences being discernible in either country. Honduran Spanish is much more varied, since the major transitions between the phonetically conservative Guatemalan dialect and the phonetically advanced Nicaraguan region occur within the borders of Honduras. The capital, Tegucigalpa, provides an intermediate point among the various influences; however, the regional differences within Honduras are quantitative rather than qualitative. Costa Rican Spanish is the most heterogeneous, since the central highlands dialect, including the capital, is radically different from neighboring Nicaragua and Panama. However, the northern provinces which border on Nicaragua exhibit phonetic patterns indistinguishable from those of Nicaragua, while the regions bordering on Panama exhibit Panamanian phonetic characteristics. The dialect of the *meseta central* therefore occupies a unique position as a phonological oasis in the midst of two dialects which are characterized by a more advanced degree of phonetic reduction.

For the present study, ten informants were

chosen from each of the capital cities; each had completed at least secondary schooling. This level of education was chosen so the data could be compared with the quantitative studies of /s/ which have already been carried out for other dialects.⁶ Each speaker provided approximately one half hour of interview mate-

rial, in which informal conversational styles prevailed. The results, as exhibited in Table 1, indicate a relatively high degree of homogeneity among speakers of a given dialect, while at the same time demonstrating the diversity which exists among the Central American dialects.⁷

Table 1: Realizations of /s/ in Central American Spanish (%)

	sC			s#C			s##			s#V̇			s#V̇		
	s	h	∅	s	h	∅	s	h	∅	s	h	∅	s	h	∅
Guatemala	93 (N = 1213)	7	0	62 (N = 1696)	30	8	93 (N = 1025)	3	3	100 (N = 231)	0	0	99 (N = 711)	1	0
Costa Rica	92 (N = 1103)	8	0	69 (N = 1710)	29	2	96 (N = 985)	2	2	98 (N = 254)	2	0	96 (N = 699)	4	0
Honduras	63 (N = 1192)	34	3	19 (N = 1539)	58	23	83 (N = 1087)	15	2	82 (N = 198)	16	2	59 (N = 703)	36	5
El Salvador	54 (N = 1080)	44	2	10 (N = 1813)	65	25	85 (N = 1034)	10	5	46 (N = 356)	43	1	28 (N = 763)	69	3
Nicaragua	13 (N = 1178)	83	4	2 (N = 1786)	86	12	35 (N = 969)	59	6	28 (N = 316)	70	2	7 (N = 824)	90	3

legend: C = consonant; V̇ = stressed vowel; V̇ = unstressed vowel; # = word boundary; ## = pause

It appears that the weakening of /s/, originally restricted to implosive position before consonants (as in *hasta, todos los*) had its origin in southern Spain, but the nature of its transference and spread to Latin America still remains unclear. One hypothesis links colonial seaports with the greatest transference of linguistic innovation, especially from southern Spanish cities.⁸ The Central American data are consistent with this hypothesis, since the weakening of /s/ occurs in its greatest extent in Nicaragua, which was served by the colonial port of Realejo (modern Corinto) and on the Caribbean coast of Honduras, around the port of Trujillo, for a time one of the most important ports-of-call on the Spanish Main. High rates of weakening of /s/ are also found in Honduras' small Pacific region, also a frequent point of contact with Spanish fleets, in El Salvador, which was served by the port of Acajutla, and in the northwestern coastal regions of Costa Rica (Puntarenas and Guanacaste), the only areas in that country which had ports and enjoyed contact with Spanish fleets during the colonial epoch. The hypothesis that the weakening of /s/ was, if not caused, at least propagated by large-scale importation of black slaves, may not be entirely discounted.⁹ In Central America, the largest

slave populations were found in northern Honduras, Nicaragua (including Guanacaste province of Costa Rica, once part of Nicaragua) and the Pacific coastal areas of El Salvador and Guatemala. Today these are precisely the areas of Central America where /s/ is most consistently weakened.

Once transferred to Latin America, the weakening of /s/, in the form of aspiration [h] and subsequent deletion ∅, has become extended and generalized in several dialects, in fashions which reflect evolutionary pressures at times removed from the original process. The most common extension involves aspiration of /s/ when the following segment is a vowel: *los amigos* [lohamiγoh]. In a few cases, aspiration may also occur after consonants, a commonly heard case being [entōhes], which may even lose the entire last syllable.

The first philological evidence of weakening of /s/ in any position occurs in documents from the sixteenth century, at which point a few scribal errors may be found which suggest that /s/ was being aspirated in implosive position.¹⁰ Soon thereafter, Golden Age authors, in their attempts to depict the speech of poor black slaves and freedmen in Spain, gave these subjects a pronunciation in which word-final /s/ was frequently eliminated, particularly in

the verbal disnence *-mos*. Although this pronunciation is only attributed to individuals of the lowest social position, there is no evidence to indicate that black speakers originated this change; rather, they were most probably the recipients of a process that was becoming increasingly frequent among the lower classes of Andalusia, with which the slaves were in constant contact.¹¹

For evidence of a systematic reduction of /s/ in all implosive positions, we have to wait until around the turn of the eighteenth century, although the process undoubtedly started earlier in certain areas among less educated speakers.¹² The first phase of the process was aspiration of /s/ before consonants, and perhaps later in phrase-final position, in accordance with the general hierarchy of syllabic strength, whereby syllable-final position is phonologically the weakest.¹³

Even at this first stage of the aspiration process, there may be nonphonetic factors which influence the outcome. For example, /s/ in phrase-final position (e.g. *llega a las seis*) is typically more resistant than preconsonantal /s/, perhaps since it gives the final consonant prominence in the speech chain. Other phonetic and paradigmatic pressures may also enter into consideration.¹⁴ In each case, however, the constraints modify a general phonetic process, affecting the frequency of application in certain forms but not affecting the overall configurations. The phonological rule depicting the first stage of the weakening would be:

$$(1) s \rightarrow h / \text{---} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} C \\ \# \# \end{array} \right\}$$

or, utilizing the still somewhat controversial inclusion of the syllable boundary:

$$(2) s \rightarrow h / \text{---}\$$$

It is not immediately obvious that the two environments should be collapsed into a single rule, since in most dialects prepausal position is more resistant than preconsonantal contexts, but in phonetic terms, prepausal position is syllable-final, and in view of other processes in Spanish which do not make substantial differences between preconsonantal and word-final prepausal position (assibilation of /r/, loss of /d/, velarization of word-final /n/, interchange or loss of /l/ and /r/), it is probably best to leave the conditioning environments as in (1), subject to the constraining

factors already mentioned. Another question, rarely mentioned in discussions of the weakening process, is whether one need differentiate between word-internal and word-final preconsonantal position. Most accounts implicitly suggest that such a separation is unnecessary, and some investigators have even suggested that aspiration first occurred in word-internal implosive position.¹⁵ Considerations of dialects in which the aspiration/deletion process has reached an advanced state do not allow for a decision, for often little difference is seen between word-internal and word-final preconsonantal positions.

The differential behavior is more pronounced in the Central American dialects of El Salvador and Honduras, where the aspiration is not as categorical; even in Nicaragua, where weakening of /s/ attains the same levels found in the Caribbean, there is a noticeable differential between word-internal and word-final implosive /s/. The differences are numerical, gradations of a single process, and yet in the dialects where the process is not as advanced, the differential behavior suggests that there may indeed have been a precursor stage of weakening not in word internal positions as suggested by previous investigations, but in word-final implosive contexts, in the morpheme *-mos*, in combinations such as *todos los, todas las*, etc., followed by a generalization to word-internal implosive position. Support for this hypothesis is provided by data from Costa Rica and Guatemala, whose capital city dialects are the phonologically most conservative of Central America, with regard to /s/. These data show a decided tendency to weaken word-final preconsonantal /s/, while word-internal preconsonantal /s/ continues to resist aspiration or deletion. Therefore, it is possible to postulate, as a proto-process for Central America at least, a rule originally restricted to word-final preconsonantal position:

$$(3) s \rightarrow h / \text{---}\#C$$

A process of generalization to all preconsonantal positions and then to word-final prepausal position then yields (1), which is operative to some degree in all the Central American dialects. It is also conceivable that the process of preconsonantal weakening of /s/, while originally a phonetic weakening, has taken a slightly different path in various dialects, at different points in history.

In many dialects of Spanish, word-final /s/

is also aspirated or deleted when the following word begins with a vowel (*los amigos*). The rate of aspiration may be somewhat lower before vowels than before consonants, and the rate of deletion even lower;¹⁶ moreover, the presence of a stressed vowel following the /s/ may be a more potent impediment to weakening than an unstressed vowel, particularly when the /s/ forms part of a determiner (*los otros, mis horas*, etc.). These observations are valid for the Central American dialects, which run the gamut from nearly categorical aspiration of word-final prevocalic /s/ in Nicaragua to nearly categorical retention of the sibilant in Guatemala and Costa Rica. The question thus arises as to how to incorporate this new environment into the original rule (1). Since no known speakers of Spanish weaken word-final /s/ only in prevocalic position and not in preconsonantal position, the implicational relationship favors an extension of (1). An obvious motivation is the reduction of allomorphy, since the extension of aspiration of word-final /s/ regardless of the following environment creates the single realization [h] for word-final /s/, at least in informal speech.¹⁷ Typically, it has been assumed that this extension to prevocalic positions is a simple generalization of (1), but detailed attempts to work out the precise mechanism of such a generalization point out the difficulties incurred in conflating the conditioning environment.¹⁸

In view of the Central American data at the very least, it is preferable to speak not in terms of a generalization of (1) to cover additional environments, but rather of the addition of a separate rule, motivated by conditions of paradigmatic regularity, which causes aspiration of word-final /s/ in prevocalic positions:

(4) s → h / ___#V

Such a hypothesis is more in accordance with observed facts, since no phonetic motivation is claimed for (4); it is a morphophonemic rule added to assure paradigmatic regularity on a larger scale. The postulate of separate rules is also suggested by frequencies of application; in no Central American dialect of Spanish has the frequency of word-final prevocalic weakening reached the same order of magnitude as preconsonantal weakening, and in formal situations such as speeches, reading and radio broadcasting, the frequency of prevocalic aspiration falls much more sharply than

does that of preconsonantal aspiration.¹⁹

Although the original motivation of (4) was not strictly phonetic, but rather morphological, the combined effect of (1) and (4) produces a number of canonical sequences characteristic of the phonotactics of Central American Spanish. A pattern is established by means of which the phoneme /s/ in word-final position is realized as [h] (or even as \emptyset) regardless of the following environment; at the same time, for most speakers, the combined application of (1) and (4) is conditioned by conversational style and rapidity of speech, so that the psychological reality of the underlying /s/ is always manifest. It is therefore not beyond the bounds of possibility that the original effect of (4), that of reducing the number of realizations of word-final /s/, might be extended in the direction of achieving syntagmatic regularity as well, by eliminating the phonetic signals of juncture between words. First, if one supposes that (3) preceded (1) in certain dialects or for certain speakers, then we may visualize an early stage in which the combination [hC] signalled the presence of a word boundary between the two segments: [h#C]. This is essentially the case for educated speakers of modern day Guatemala and central Costa Rica, as well as in other Spanish dialects where implosive /s/ is not categorically reduced. The sequence [sC], on the other hand, could be word-internal or could contain a word boundary, since application of (3) is normally not categorical. A generalization to (1) may be considered not only a phonetic generalization to all preconsonantal positions, but also an elimination of the phonetic discontinuity at the word boundary, since the sequence [hC] in a dialect in which (3) is operative, may be word-internal or may contain a word boundary.

The addition of (4) to the phonology of a Spanish dialect creates another differential signal for a word boundary, since the combination [VsV] may be word-internal (*casa*) or may contain a word boundary (*las amigas*), whereas the sequence [VhV] must contain a word boundary, if psycholinguistic awareness of the underlying /s/ has not been lost (i.e. if (4) is not entirely categorical in its application) and/or if the fricative /x/ is not also articulated as [h]. In the majority of cases, the sequence [VhV] will be divided [Vh#V], corresponding to /Vs#V/, but in a few cases the division may be [Vh#hV] corresponding to /Vs#xV/

(*es general*) in dialects where /x/ is articulated as [h]. The paradigm of realizations in word-final position has been partially regularized by the addition of (4), but in the process a new phenomenon has been created, the phonetic signalling of word boundaries, which goes contrary to the general tendencies of *enlace*,

vowel fusion and other phonetic processes in Spanish which obliterate the differentiation of word boundaries.

Consider now the data regarding word-initial postvocalic /s/ and word-internal intervocalic /s/ in Honduras and El Salvador, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Intervocalic /s/ (in %)

	V#sV̇			V#sV̄			VsV̇			VsV̄		
	s	h	∅	s	h	∅	s	h	∅	s	h	∅
El Salvador	99 (N = 432)	1	0	91 (N = 821)	9	0	95 (N = 897)	5	0	89 (N = 1231)	11	0
Honduras	99 (N = 398)	1	0	79 (N = 846)	21	0	91 (N = 850)	9	0	81 (N = 1363)	18	1

legend: C = consonant; V̇ = stressed vowel; V̄ = unstressed vowel; # = word boundary

From these data it may be seen that weakening of initial /s/ before unstressed vowel (e.g. *la semana*) is under way, representing a phonetic innovation. Sporadic cases of aspiration of word-initial /s/ have been signalled for other dialects,²⁰ but the process has not been reported to the extent found in Honduras and El Salvador. In all but the least educated speakers of these two nations, aspiration of word-initial /s/ occurs less frequently than aspiration of word-final prevocalic /s/, but the frequency is high enough to be of potential significance as a phonological variable.

The effect of aspiration of most instances of word-initial postvocalic /s/ would be to reduce the precision of the phonetic signalling of word boundaries, since the sequence [VhV] would now have at least the following possible analyses: /Vs#V/, /Vs#xV/, /V#sV/. Moreover, in rapid speech, when word-final /s/ is followed by an initial /s/, as in *las semanas*, the two /s/'s coalesce into a single [s]. This [s] resulting from the combination /s#s/ is also subject to aspiration with the same relative frequencies as other instances of word-initial postvocalic /s/, so that the sequence [VhV] may also be analyzed as /Vs#sV/. A single canonical pattern is created for the representation of the boundary between two words, one of which contains an /s/ adjacent to the word boundary and the other of which contains a vowel next to the boundary. It is not immediately clear if aspiration of word-initial /s/ is an extension of (4) or an entirely separate rule, but the fact that no Central

American speakers²¹ aspirate word-initial /s/ without also applying (4) makes one suspect a (still highly constrained) extension of (4). In favor of maintaining two separate rules, we note that (4) reduces allomorphy by extending the number of cases in which word-final /s/ is realized as [h]. Aspiration of word-initial /s/ creates more possible phonological analyses of the string [VhV] and reduces the conspicuousness of the word boundary in the spoken chain; at the same time, it does increase word-level allomorphy somewhat.²²

Honduran and Salvadoran speakers exhibit another extension of the aspiration of /s/, in word-internal intervocalic contexts, nearly always before unstressed vowels (*casa*, *presidente*). The aspiration of word-internal intervocalic /s/ frequently occurs at a morpheme boundary (*presupuesto*, *desempleo*) or in words whose superficial configuration yields the appearance of containing a prefix (*presidente*, *decisión*); however, there is no indication that the process originated through aspiration only at morpheme boundaries. In many cases, the presence of two instances of /s/ in the original pronunciation makes one suspect a process of dissimilation or haplology as having influenced the aspiration of one of the /s/'s, since such words as *necesito*, *precisamente*, etc. frequently lose one of the /s/'s, even in dialects where intervocalic /s/ normally remains unaltered. Also included here is the pronunciation of *nosotros* as [nohotros], nearly universal among middle and lower class speakers in Honduras and El Salvador, which accounts for

nearly all instances of aspiration of intervocalic /s/ before stressed vowels.

Reduction of allomorphy in paradigms is not the only global phonological tendency which shapes the generalization of phonological rules, since an increase in word-level allomorphy may act to reduce alternations in other contexts. In the case of Honduras and El Salvador, the extension of aspiration of word-final /s/ to prevocalic positions reduces word-level allomorphy but increases the number of canonical surface patterns and provides a phonetic discontinuity at the word boundary. These discontinuities have been somewhat attenuated through a further extension of the aspiration process. Nothing short of a general rule, aspirating /s/ in all environments, would eliminate both kinds of alternation, but the consequences for the phonotactics would be drastic and probably unacceptable.

Another interesting observation regarding aspiration of word-initial /s/ in Honduras and El Salvador is that in these dialects, the overall rate of aspiration of /s/ in other environments has not advanced as far as in Nicaragua, Panama or the Caribbean nations; thus, the extension of aspiration to environments containing word-initial /s/ is not simply a result of overall level of weakening of /s/. At present, there is no adequate information which would permit the tracing of this phenomenon in El Salvador and Honduras, but one possible avenue of approach lies in the area of lexical extension. In everyday contexts in both countries, word-initial /s/ is very commonly aspirated in the word *centavos* and in the numbers *cincuenta*, *sesenta* and *setenta*, particularly in combinations involving prices, which are shouted out at every point in the market-place environment which characterizes Central American interpersonal commerce: *cincuenta*, *quince centavos*, etc. The Honduran unit of currency is the *lempira*, worth US \$0.50, while the Salvadoran *colón* is worth slightly less; thus fractional combinations involving the numbers 50, 60, 70 and the word *centavos* occur with great frequency, and for many speakers these words have become effectively lexicalized with word-initial [h]. Even the /s/ in *un centavo* is most frequently pronounced as [h].

The Nicaraguan *córdoba*, worth about 40 to the dollar, is rarely used with the word *centavos*, while the Costa Rican *colón*, worth even less, is divided into *céntimos*, whose stressed first vowel would impede aspiration of the pre-

ceding /s/ even in those areas of Costa Rica where /s/ is frequently weakened. The Guatemalan *quetzal*, at par with the dollar, is divided into *centavos*, but the overall resistance of /s/ in Guatemala precludes any word-initial aspiration. In any case, further exploration is called for in order to determine the possible cause(s) of this interesting development which to date has only affected the middle region of Central America.

The preceding discussion, while limited in scope, illustrates the significant variation found within the small Central American region. At the same time, the data illustrate the viability of separate but parallel historical evolution of /s/ in different dialect areas. The relatively isolated Central American area has developed patterns of weakening of /s/ which parallel those found in other Spanish-speaking areas, but which at the same time exhibit essential differences, some of which represent unique innovations. Moreover, since some Central American dialects are apparently at a less advanced stage as regards behavior of /s/, they provide an excellent proving ground for hypotheses regarding the eventual spread of the weakening process. Finally, as a perhaps superfluous epilogue to this brief presentation, I would like to encourage more *in situ* investigations of Central American Spanish which, despite the unfortunate political conditions which have chronically plagued this region, will amply repay all research efforts with data from a fascinating and complex linguistic zone.

■ NOTES

¹For example, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *El español en Méjico, Los Estados Unidos y la América Central* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1938).

²For example, Carlos Gagini, *Diccionario de costarricenseñismos* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1979, 4th ed. [1st ed. 1892]); Alberto Membreno, *Hondureñismos* (Tegucigalpa: Guaymuras, 1982, 3rd ed. [1st ed. 1895]).

³For El Salvador, D. Lincoln Canfield, "Observaciones sobre el español salvadoreño," *Filología*, 6 (1960), 29-76; J. Lipski, "Central American Spanish in the United States: the case of El Salvador," presented at the conference *El Español en los Estados Unidos*, Indiana University, 1982, to appear in proceedings. For Nicaragua, Heberto Lacayo, "Apuntes sobre la pronunciación del español en Nicaragua," *Hispania*, 37 (1954), 267-68; John Lipski, "/s/ in the Spanish of Nicaragua," *Obris* (in press). For Guatemala, Richard Predmore, "La pronunciación de varias consonantes en el español de Guatemala," *Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 7 (1945), 277-80; D. Lincoln Canfield, "Guatemalan rr and s: a recapitulation of Old Spanish sibilant gradation," *Florida State Univer-*

city Studies in Modern Languages and Literatures, 3 (1951), 49-51; Manuel Alvar, "Encuestas fonéticas en el suroccidente de Guatemala," *Lingüística Española Actual*, 2 (1980), 245-87. For Costa Rica, "A generative phonological study of Costa Rican Spanish," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1971; Susan Berk-Seligson and Mitchell Seligson, "The phonological correlates of social stratification in the Spanish of Costa Rica," *Lingua*, 46 (1969), 1-28. For Honduras, John Lipski, "Weakening of /s/ in the Spanish of Honduras," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* (in press); "Inestabilidad y reducción de /s/ en el español de Honduras," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* (in press).

⁴The historical processes are explored in more detail in John Lipski, "Weakening of /s/ in Latin American Spanish," *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik* 51 (1984), 31-43.

⁵The field work was done at various times during late 1981 and all of 1982. Partial funding for the Honduran field work was provided by a limited grant-in-aid from the University of Houston.

⁶Tracy Terrell, "Final /s/ in Cuban Spanish," *Hispania*, 62 (1979), 599-612; "Sobre la aspiración y elisión de /s/ implosiva en el español de Puerto Rico," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 27 (1978); "Aspiración y elisión de /s/ en el español porteño," *Anuario de Letras*, 16 (1978), 45-66; Henrietta Cedergren, "En torno a la s final de sílaba en Panamá," in Humberto López-Morales, ed., *Corrientes actuales en la dialectología del Caribe hispánico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1978), 35-50; Orlando Alba, "Función del acento en el proceso de elisión de la /s/ en el español de República Dominicana," in Orlando Alba, ed., *El español del Caribe* (Santiago de los Caballeros: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1982), 15-26; Rafael Núñez Cedeño, *La fonología moderna y el español de Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Ed. Taller, 1980).

⁷The comparative details are further analyzed in my article "Weakening of /s/ in Latin American Spanish."

⁸Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "Sevilla frente a Madrid," in Diego Catalán, ed., *Miscelánea: homenaje a André Martinet* (La Laguna: Universidad de La Laguna, 1962), v. 3, pp. 99-165.

⁹Rufino J. Cuervo, *El castellano en América* (Buenos Aires: Ed. "El Ateneo," 1927), pp. 82-5; Manuel Alvarez Nazario, *El elemento afronegroide en el español de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1974); Germán de Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos hispánicos, afrohispanicos y criollos* (Madrid: Gredos, 1978); John Lipski, "Contactos hispano-africanos: el español guineano y su importancia para las teorías africanistas," *Anuario de Letras*, to appear.

¹⁰Rafael Lapesa, *Historia de la lengua española* (Madrid: Gredos, 1980, 9th ed.), § 248.

¹¹Alvarez Nazario, *El elemento afronegroide en el español de Puerto Rico*; Lipski, "Contactos hispano-africanos."

¹²Among the first documentary evidence of widespread aspiration of /s/ are some Dominican documents

of the 18th century, cited by Max Jiménez Sabater, *Más datos sobre el español dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 1975), 34-5.

¹³Joan Hooper, *Introduction to Natural Generative Phonology* (New York: Academic Press, 1976), chap. 10.

¹⁴See Tracy Terrell, "Universal constraints on variable deleted final consonants: evidence from Spanish," *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*, 22 (1977), 156-68.

¹⁵Terrell, "Final /s/ in Cuban Spanish," p. 610, suggests this.

¹⁶See the comparative figures in Lipski, "Weakening of /s/ in Latin American Spanish." In the Caribbean dialects and in Andalusia, word-final prevocalic /s/ is aspirated except when the /s/ forms part of the determiner, and the vowel is stressed; however, in Central America the presence of a stressed vowel reduces the aspiration rate even when the /s/ is not part of a determiner.

¹⁷More recently, it has been proposed by James Harris in his book *Syllable Structure and Stress in Spanish* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983) that aspiration of /s/ is a single process and that its ordering before or after resyllabification or *enlace* accounts for observed differences in behavior of word-final /s/ in prevocalic and preconsonantal environments. This is an intriguing hypothesis which needs to be explored further, but it will have to confront the considerable variability of word-final prevocalic /s/ even at the idiolectal level, in many Spanish dialects. To claim that reordering of major processes occurs so rapidly and reversibly in the course of a single stretch of discourse undermines the putative categorical nature of this postulated phonological process.

¹⁸See Lipski "Weakening of /s/ in Latin American Spanish"; Harris, *Syllable Structure and Stress in Spanish*; Terrell, "Final /s/ in Cuban Spanish"; and Jorge Guitart, "En torno a la sílaba como entidad fonemática," *Thesaurus*, 36 (1981), 457-63.

¹⁹John Lipski, "La norma culta y la norma radiofónica: /s/ y /n/ en español," *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 7 (1983), 239-62.

²⁰Canfield, "La pronunciación del español salvadoreño"; Jiménez Sabater, *Más datos sobre el español en República Dominicana*, 34-5; Rodolfo Oroz, *La lengua castellana en Chile* (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1966); Berta Elena Vidal de Battini, *El español de la Argentina*, v. 1 (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1964), 102-3; Lapesa, *Historia de la lengua española*, § 248; Servio Becerra, "Consonantes implosivas en el español de Cartagena de Indias," in Gary Scavnick, ed., *Dialectología hispanoamericana* (Washington: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1980), 100-12.

²¹There are a few areas where word-final /s/ is normally resistant but where word-initial /s/ is occasionally aspirated; one notable example is the central region of Colombia. See Luis Flórez, *La pronunciación del español en Bogotá* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1951).

²²This argument is pursued further in my article "La discontinuidad fonética como criterio dialectológico," *Thesaurus* (in press).