AFRO-BOLIVIAN SPANISH AND HELVÉCIA PORTUGUESE: SEMI-CREOLE PARALLELS

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Introduction

The study of isolated speech communities that have arisen and developed in the absence of contact with prestige norms is an important component of contemporary sociolinguistics. This is nowhere more certain than in the case of Afro-Iberian communities scattered across Latin America. Africans who learned Spanish and Portuguese in adolescence or adulthood (referred to unflatteringly as *bozales*) spoke learners' varieties,, at times exhibiting areal characteristics of specific African language families, and in other cases replicating errors found among L_2 speakers of Spanish and Portuguese worldwide (Lipski 2005a and references therein). The present study will focus on two isolated Afro-Iberian speech communities, both apparently formed in relative isolation from broader language contact situations. One community, now well known among creolists, is located in Brazil, and represents the final stages of the African slave trade and the formation of *bozal* speech communities in Americas: the early 19th century. The other community, whose linguistic features have only recently been described, is located in Bolivia, and in all probability descends from the first large contingents of African slaves taken to Spanish America, in the mid 16th century. A comparison of similarities and differences in the restructuring of the original input languages will potentially shed light on the true nature of early Afro-Iberian language contacts and on the incipient stages of creolization.

The Afro-Bolivian community of Los Yungas de La Paz

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. In Potosí, Bolivia, Spanish America's richest silver mine, African slaves primarily worked in the royal mint (*casa de la moneda*) and as domestic servants; the actual mining was done by indigenous workers. Ultimately, the population of African descent blended into the overwhelmingly mestizo nation, and today only a tiny frac-

tion of the national population is obviously of African origin. 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. Migration from the highland mining regions to the Yungas valleys apparently began in the 18th century and probably reached its peak at the turn of the 19th century. Little is known of the demographic origins of Afro-Bolivians. Few if any words of demonstrable African origin survive in this region, and only two African surnames are found: *Angola* and *Maconde*.

In the area of language, some of the oldest and most isolated Afro-Bolivians continue to speak a fully intact restructured Afro-Hispanic language (spoken alongside highland Bolivian Spanish) that represents the only known survival of what was once the language of some nine million *bozales* (African-born second language speakers of Spanish). This variety is described in Lipski (2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, forthcoming). 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. 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. Until the second half of the 20th century, black Bolivians in the Yungas still worked as virtual slaves on the haciendas. On most haciendas peons were forbidden to attend school or study; most older Afro-Bolivians are therefore nearly or totally illiterate. After 1952 the hacienda system was abolished. 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. 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 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* `civilized' as a result of education and literacy, and when pressed, also equate the traditional dialect with "uncivilized" behavior. The maps (from Angola Maconde 2000) show the approximate locations of the Afro-Bolivian communities in which the traditional Afro-Yungueño dialect can still be found.
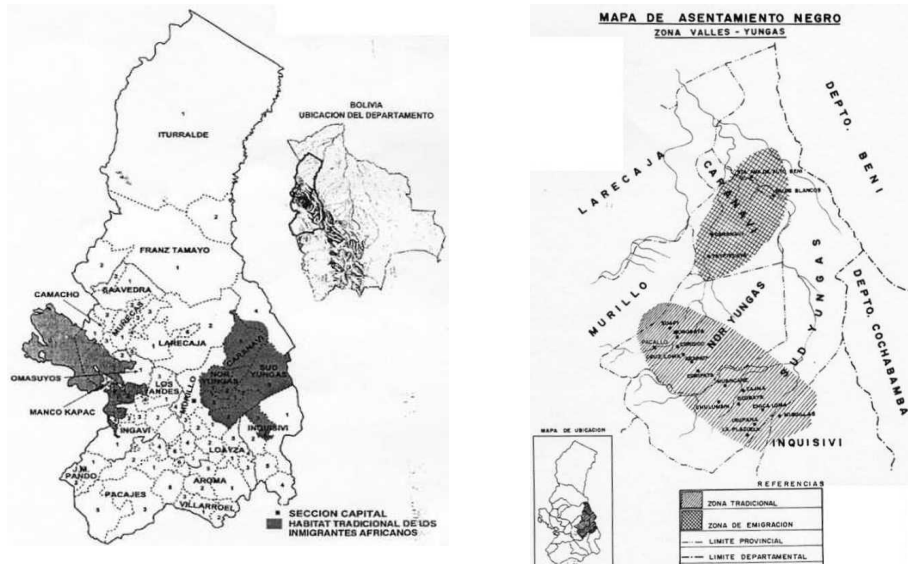
At least the following factors plausibly played a role in ensuring the survival of Afro-Bolivian Spanish into the 21st century:

(1) Geographical isolation. Although today the Yungas are no more than half a day's drive from La Paz, prior to the ready availability of motorized transport few Yungueños traveled to other regions of the country. The mountainous terrain precludes travel by mule or horseback, and on foot several days of hiking and seeking night-time shelter at high altitudes deterred all but the most determined voyagers.

(2) Forced labor on the haciendas. Until the land reform of 1952 black Yungueños were forcibly concentrated on the haciendas and worked as peons or serfs. Like their former European counterparts they were not allowed to travel or change haciendas without the permission of the owners, and although they lived in their own dwellings rather than in barracks the social and linguistic concentration was similar to that found in the 19th century Afro-Cuban slave barracks on sugar plantations. Unlike Afro-Cubans, Afro-Bolivians evidently spoke no African languages by the time they arrived in the Yungas but they clearly brought with them a partially restructured Spanish as a carryover from the period when *bozal* speakers of African languages worked in the highland mining areas.

(3) A surrounding non-Hispanized (until recently) population. Although nowadays almost all indigenous residents of the Yungas speak Spanish with reasonable fluency, this region was essentially a monolingual Aymara speech community until the second half of the 20th century. Black Bolivians arrived in the Yungas speaking

an evidently partially restructured variety of Spanish, which they used for in-group communication against the backdrop of a very different surrounding language, much as Sephardic (Judeo) Spanish survived for centuries while surrounded by Balkan languages, Turkish, and Greek. It is noteworthy than while the non-Afro Spanish used by contemporary Afro-Bolivians in the Yungas shows evidence of Aymara-influenced syntax (e.g. a preference for object-verb word order), the traditional Afro-Bolivian dialect bears no demonstrable Aymara imprint.

(4) STRONG ETHNIC IDENTITY AS *NEGROS*. Awareness of an African past was all but nonexistent among Afro-Bolivians until small numbers of residents obtained higher education, beginning in the 1970's. Even today, few rural Afro-Bolivians have any knowledge of Africa, of the Atlantic slave trade, or of the existence of communities of African descent elsewhere in the Americas. Despite the general lack of knowledge of things African, Afro-Bolivians have always had a strong sense of being *negros* (their preferred term), and of possessing cultural and linguistic values that set them apart from the remainder of their compatriots, indigenous and mestizo. Afro-Bolivians are at least passively aware that the traditional dialect is spoken only by (a subset of) black residents. Even in communities with a high percentage of Afro-Bolivians, such as Mururata and Tocaña, some residents confessed to not using the traditional dialect in the presence of non-Afro Bolivians. This is done apparently not because others cannot understand the dialect, but rather because the speakers only feel comfortable using the dialect freely *entre puros negritos* `only among black people,' as one community member stated.

For the reasons mentioned above, as well as potentially many others, a truly distinct Afro-Hispanic language has survived in central Bolivia unbeknownst to the rest of the world—even to most other Bolivians—until quite recently. As with many minority languages and dialects in isolated societies that experience sudden insertion into the "modern" world through educational reform and improved transportation and communication, the traditional Afro-Bolivian dialect shows signs of disappearing within less than two generations, after having survived for several centuries.

The Afro-Brazilian community of Helvécia

Helvécia in Bahia State, Brazil is one of many surprising linguistic isolates in this enormous nation. Information about this community and its internal and external history is still emerging, more than two decades after the unique Afro-Portuguese dialect was brought to the attention of linguists (by Ferreira 1985), and more than four decades after the original fieldwork (conducted in 1961). As suggested by the name, this colony was originally founded in the late 18th century by Swiss immigrants, speaking an as yet undetermined combination of French and (presumably Swiss) German

dialects. Judging by the information collected by Ferreira (1985), Dutch settlers also arrived at some point. The original name of the settlement was Colônia Leopoldina, which was first mentioned in a document dated in 1818. The first demographic details come in 1858, in a description of the prosperous region, with some 40 *fazendas* (estates), home to some 200 white settlers, mostly Swiss with some French and Brazilians, and some 2000 blacks, mostly Brazilian-born. With the decline of coffee-growing, the estates' principal product, the white settlers gradually abandoned the region, leaving behind a black and mulatto population speaking the final remains of what was apparently a creolized or semicreolized Afro-Portuguese dialect.

The ethnic and geographical origins of African slaves taken to Helvécia cannot be accurately documented. The slave trade data base of Eltis et al. (1999) shows a huge upsurge in slave importations to Bahia beginning at the turn of the 19th century (see the chart), just before the Colônia Leopoldina was founded. These data suggest that most if not all slaves arriving in this colony would be African-born and therefore forced to acquire Portuguese as a second language upon arrival in Brazil.

Slaves embarked
Full time period and Where slaves disembarked = Bahia
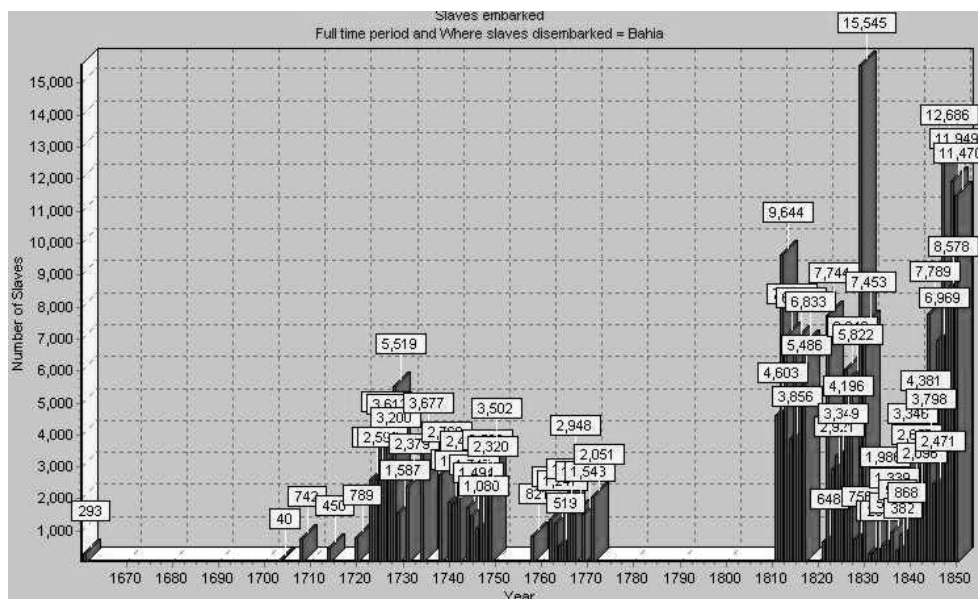
Lucchesi (1998:87) mentions the Kwa and Bantu groups, being by far the largest linguistic families represented among Africans taken to Spanish and Portuguese America. Ferreira (1985:24) describes a resident with the name or nickname *Gêge*, a term usually referring to natives of eastern Nigeria. Baxter (1998:112)

lists Yoruba and Gege as probably the most common languages in the original mix taken to Colônia Leopoldina, while Baxter (1992:12) also mentions the "Congo" language, presumably Kikongo. Most slaves taken to Brazil during the final period of the slave trade came from the Congo/Angola region, due largely to geographical proximity (crossing the Atlantic from this region to Brazil represents a substantially shorter voyage than from points further north and west on the African coast) and the presence of large Portuguese slaving stations in this region. The presence of many Kimbundu and Kikongo lexical items as well as more subtle morphosyntactic hints (such as double and postposed negation in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese) reflect the strong Angola/Congo presence throughout the slaving period. However at the turn of the 19th century both in Brazil and in Cuba a huge upsurge in slave arrivals from the Gold Coast and especially the Bight of Benin/Nigeria region occurred. In both Cuba and Brazil remnants of the Yoruba language still survive, not just in Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian ritual language but also in occasional phrases from daily life. Thus the original Afro-Portuguese linguistic contacts in Colônia Leopoldina may have been similar to the Hispano-Yoruba language documented by the Cuban writer Lydia Cabrera (Lipski 2000).

There are a number of important sociohistorical and demographic differences between Helvécia and the Afro-Bolivian communities in the Yungas. The first is time depth. The Helvécia dialect presumably developed between 1818 and 1888, and had all but disappeared a century later. The origins of the Afro-Bolivian dialect cannot be determined with certainty, but *bozal* Spanish is attested for African slaves in Bolivia by the turn of the 17th century and probably existed several decades prior to this point. Working originally in highland mines near Potosí, Afro-Bolivians are documented as having migrated to the Yungas by the middle of the 18th century and may have lived there even earlier. It is most likely that Afro-Bolivians brought some form of pidginized Spanish with them to the Yungas; the non-canonical patterns were kept apart from standard Spanish due to the geographical and social isolation and the immersion of Afro-Bolivians in a largely non-Spanish speaking Aymara speech community.

Helvécia is relatively unique in the annals of (semi)creoles in that the original European settlers were not native speakers of the lexifier language, in this case Portuguese, both of the European variety and the emergent popular Brazilian dialects. This means in effect that Helvécia semicreole Portuguese is likely the product of a symbiotic acquisition of Portuguese as a second language by immigrants and—perhaps a generation or two earlier—by their African slaves. The European settlers may well have learned an already partially creolized Portuguese spoken by their slaves, most of whom apparently did not come directly from Africa but from Bahia. In adding their own second-language traits to an originally L$_2$ Afro-Brazilian dialect, the Swiss settlers

may have set the scene for an even greater departure from canonical Portuguese norms by subsequent generations of slaves. Holm (1992:46) speculates that

German seems likely to have served as a lingua franca among the first genera-tions of Europeans, who may well have learned much of their Portuguese from their slaves in order to communicate with them. If this was the case, the Europeans' Por-tuguese could not have served—as seems likely elsewhere in Brazil—as a model for decreolization. Since the slaves were originally purchased in Bahia in the eighteenth century, they must have already known some Portuguese—apparently in a creolized form sometimes learned as a second language [...] it is possible that the creole was also influenced by the second-language Portuguese of the first generation of Europeans, al-though their children must have become proficient in the Portuguese of their slaves.

Despite significant sociohistorical differences that separate Helvécia and the Afro-Bolivian communities, the linguistic traits of each group coincide to a surprising degree, in ways that reflect the language contact environments during the slaving pe-riod in colonial Latin America. Although Helvécia Portuguese is grounded in the idio-syncrasies of vernacular Brazilian Portuguese and Afro-Bolivian Spanish bears some Andean Spanish traits, the two Afro-Iberian varieties coincide strikingly in two major areas: gender and number marking in the DP, and subject-verb concord in the VP. These areas will be discussed in turn.

The Afro-Bolivian and Helvécia DP: variable gender concord

In the quintessential Afro-Yungueño DP, at least five phenomena distinguish this dialect from patrimonial Spanish dialects: (1) lack of noun-adjective gender agre-ement; (2) invariant plurals, that is, no plural suffixes on nouns, adjectives, or deter-miners; (3) use of a single invariant definite article; (4) elimination of definite articles in generic constructions; (5) frequently, the retention of plural /s/ only on first element of plural NP. In vernacular Brazilian Portuguese (4) and (5) are common traits, (2) occurs at the lowest sociolects, and (1) is almost never found. Helvécia Portuguese adds (1) as a more robust component, although the frequency of non-agreeing DPs among the remaining speakers of the traditional dialect is much lower than among contemporary Afro-Bolivian speakers.

In the basilectal form of the Afro-Yungueño dialect, lack of gender con-cordance is always manifested by the masculine gender, the most frequent and presumably unmarked form in Spanish (unlike in Helvécia Portuguese, where non-agreeing feminine modifiers are sometimes found). Whereas the last surviving speakers of the Helvécia Portuguese dialect only failed to effect gender concord some 5% of the time (Baxter et al. 1997:5), there are many Afro-Bolivian speakers who never produce gender concord when speaking the traditional dialect. In par-

tially decreolized speech some combinations with incomplete gender agreement are found, that parallel the data from Helvécia. Examples include: *siempre contaba algunos cosa [algunas cosas]* `he always told some things'; *esos fiesta [esas fiestas]* `those parties'; *loh persona mayó [las personas mayores]* `the older people'; *los hombre con camisa blanco [camisas blancas]* `the men in white shirts'; *unos quince mula [unas quince mulas]* `fifteen mules'; *nuestro cultura antigo [nuestra cultura antigua]* `our old culture'; *ese [esa] mujé que tengo* `that wife of mine.' Some representative Helvécia examples are (Baxter et al. 1997): *terra meu [minha terra]* `my land'; *esses bebida [essas bebidas]* `those drinks'; *tia cego [cega]* `blind aunt'; *umas coisa[s] necessários [necessárias]* `some necessary things'; *as máquina[s] tudo [todas]* `all the machines'; *uma pessoa muito querido [querida]* `a much loved person'; *eu encontrô pessoa ali morto [morta]* `I found the person dead'; *la vende muita[s] coisa[s] caro [caras]* `there they sell things at high prices'; *meu [minha] saúde* `my health'. Lapses of gender agreement are very occasionally found in other vernacular Brazilian dialects (e.g. Callou 1998): *um [uma] coisa* `a thing'; *as coisa[s] muito barato [baratas]* `the very inexpensive things.' In such speech the unmarked masculine form is used (Callou 1998:264).

Baxter et al. (1997) found that gender marking in the Helvécia NP is governed by a partially overlapping set of morphosyntactic constraints. Among those configurations favoring gender agreement are (preposed) possessives and preposed adjectives. Determiners such as articles exhibit more variation, while postposed adjectives and quantifiers such as *tudo* `all' strongly disfavor gender agreement. Moreover the morphological shape of the head noun influences gender agreement. Feminine nouns inflected for gender such as *minina* `girl' (standard Ptg. *menina* vs. *menino* `boy') attract gender concord more than feminine nouns uninflected for gender such as *casa* `house,' as do nouns ending in the prototypical feminine theme vowel –*a* such as *coisa* `thing.' The authors analyze this variability both in terms of syntactic movement and feature percolation and in accordance with a hypothetical acquisition sequence of Portuguese as an L$_2$ during the formative period of the Helvécia dialect.
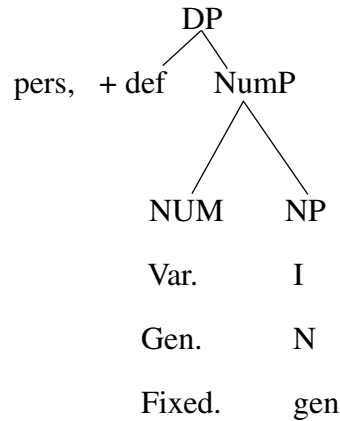
In partially decreolized Afro-Yungueño Spanish there is a robust implicational scale in which determiners and prenominal adjectives inflect for gender more frequently and before postnominal adjectives: *con la gente antigo [antigua]* `with the traditional folks'; *esa casa chico [chica]* `that small house'; *había una curva ancho [ancha]* `there was a broad curve'; *esa gente era malo [mala]* `those people were bad'; *con la cabeza bien bañadito [bañadito]* `with the hair well washed'; *una jornada completo [completa]* `a full day's work'; *la gente era vivo [viva]* `the people were smart.' No instances have been observed of gender marking on postnominal adjectives or predicate adjectives but not on prenominal adjectives or determiners. Although the variational data from Afro-Bolivian Spanish are not yet fully analyzed, there also appears to be a correlation between the inflection of

grammatical gender on the head nouns and/or nouns ending in the canonical word marker –*a* and use of feminine determiners in the basilectal variety: *la novia, la casa, la mula* and so forth are heard to the exclusion of **el/lu novia *el/lu casa*, etc. The same does not hold for indefinite articles: *un mula, un casa, un gaína* `a chicken,' etc. are frequently heard. Other canonical feminine endings in Spanish such as –*dad* and –*ción* do not favor the use of feminine determiners in the Afro-Yungueño dialect, and even many nouns ending in –*a* do not produce gender agreement: *lu taza* `the cup,' *lu juamía* `the family,' *ese tía* `that woman,' *otro cosa* `another thing,' *eje niña* `that girl,' *nuestru medicina di nojotro* `our own medicine.' In the Afro-Yungueño dialect plural determiners almost always take the masculine form, even for head nouns which may take the singular article *la*: *esuh moneda* `those coins,' *esu hierba* `those plants,' *luh persona mayó* `the older people,' *esuh mora* `those blackberries,' *unos quince mula* `fifteen mules.' These examples demonstrate that plural marking is more robust than gender marking, but that both may disappear in Afro-Bolivian speech.

Baxter et al. (1997) analyze the variable behavior of gender concord in the Helvécia DP in terms of feature percolation in expanded DP structures. In more recent work (Lipski 2006b) I have combined a modified DP structure with an Optimality Theory account that mirrors both postulated second-language acquisition during the *bozal* period and contemporary decreolization in Afro-Bolivian Spanish. From a syntactic standpoint, the lack of gender marking across the entire DP is a case of impoverished agreement in the extended projection of the DP, in this case the embedded DP (noun and adjective(s)). Under the usual Spec-head agreement the morphological features (in this case for gender) should percolate to all elements c-commanded by the determiner. There are other cases in syntax of impoverished agreement in extended projections; Samek-Lodovici (2002) has postulated that "agreement within local projections is never poorer than agreement within their extended projections." According to Grimshaw (1991:37-39; 1997), in the DP features percolate up from the noun to the determiner. The marking of gender on the determiner but not on the accompanying DP is not consistent with the usual structure of the DP/NP, but does support extended DP models in which number and variable or purely grammatical gender are projected from a NUMBERPHRASE (NumP), between the DP and the NP (e.g. Di Domenico and De Vincenzi 1995): This is a more ramified version of models such as Ouhalla (1991) which postulate a single AGREEMENTPHRASE AgrP between the NP and the DP.[45]

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45   A number of other researchers have made similar proposals regarding the internal structure of the Ibero-Romance DP, too numerous and diverse to be reviewed here. Picallo (1991) for example posits a GenderPhrase GenP between the NP and NumP, since gender is expressed directly on the noun stem and plural markers are attached outside of gender markers. Bernstein (1993) offered the alternative suggestion of a WordMarkerPhrase, using "word markers" in the sense of Harris (1983, 1991). Ritter (1993) in turn argued that in Romance languages, gender features reside in the functional head Num, together with the noun's number specification.

(1)

```
                        DP
                       /  \
        pers,  + def      NumP
                          /  \
                         /    \
                     NUM       NP
                     Var.      I
                     Gen.      N
                     Fixed.    gen
```

In this phrase structure Spec-head agreement will attach gender features to the determiner, but if this feature does not percolate to the extended projection (the NP), then the vernacular Brazilian/Angolan Portuguese and Afro-Yungueño Spanish singly-marked feminine DP configuration results. The Helvécia preference for gender concord before nouns overtly marked for feminine gender cannot be explained by syntactic considerations alone, but involves issues of semantic transparency in sentence processing. By using the constraint **EXTAGR** (agreement across the extended projection: an agreement head H and a DP must agree on feature *f* within the extended projection of H) sugggested e.g. by Samek-Lodovici (2002), the relevant leftmost alignment of [feminine] emerges as a purely syntactic phenomenon, the result of interaction between Spec-Head agreement within the NumP (producing gender marking on the determiner) and agreement across the entire extended projection (including the NP), which when satisfied produces the normal Spanish and Portuguese multiply-marked feminine DP. It is the high ranking of the constraint **SINGLYEXPRESSED (gender)** that accounts for the non-optimal nature of extended agreement in these dialects. This solution eliminates the need for stipulative alignment constraints and highlights the nature of contact-induced grammatical restructuring as the result of imperfectly acquired agreement systems, as shown in Tableau 1, where generic faithfulness constraints have been replaced by the more specific **AGR(gender),**which requires Spec-Head agreement between the determiner and the noun (but not necessarily the following adjective):

Tableau 1

una curva ancha	SINGLYEXPRESSED (gender)	AGR(gender)	ExtAgr_GEN
una curva ancha	!*		
☞ una curva ancho			*
un curva ancho	¡*	*	*
un curva ancha		¡*	*

The same analysis holds for feminine DPs not headed by a determiner, e.g. Afro-Bolivian *nochi entero [entera]* `all night long'; *con sebo de vaca negro [negra]* `with tallow from a black cow.' In these DPs, which contain null determiners, the feature [feminine] appears on head noun but extended agreement to the adjectival phrase does not occur.

Variable plural marking in Afro-Bolivian and Helvécia speech

Vernacular Brazilian and Angolan Portuguese is noted for its use of "bare plurals," in which the plural /s/ is marked only on the first element of a plural DP, usually a determiner: *as pessoa velha* `the old people.' This contrasts with nearly all varieties of Spanish, in which loss of word-final /s/ is primarily a phonetically-motivated process, which sometimes interacts with grammatical configurations. For example in some varieties of Spanish in which word-final /s/ is frequently aspirated or deleted there is a tendency to delete plural /s/ in multi-word DPs if the first /s/ is phonetically realized (Poplack (1980a, 1980b). Thus in a DP such as *las cosas bonitas* `the beautiful things' if the first /s/ is deleted there is a high probability that the second and third /s/ will also be deleted, etc. Epiphenomenally this appears to be similar to the vernacular Brazilian and Angolan Portuguese and Afro-Yungueño Spanish bare plural marking; indeed Scherre (1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 2001) dwells on the similarities between the two systems. The main point of convergence is the effect of preceding elements in the linear string on the realization or deletion of the plural marker /s/. In reality, although similar combinations may arise in Spanish and vernacular Brazilian and Angolan Portuguese the underlying processes are quite distinct.

Although bare plurals are not as common in Afro-Bolivian speech as in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, they occur to a significantly greater extent than has been observed for any other varieties of Spanish. Examples include: *esos fiesta [esas fiestas]* `those parties'; *loh dirigente[s]* `the leaders'; *en [el] idioma antig[u]o di mis abuelo[s]* `in the old language of my grandparents'; *los juiscal[es]* `the government officials'; *loh guagua[s] jóven[es]* `the young children'; *no hay catres harto[s]* `there

are not enough cots'; *siempre contaba algunos cosa [algunas cosas]* `[he] always told some things.' This type of bare plural is not typical of any other Spanish dialect, past or present. Similar plurals occasionally crop up in the Afro-Ecuadoran dialect of the Chota Valley (Lipski 1986, 1987), where just as in highland Bolivia word-final /s/ is normally retained as a clear sibilant [s]: *niñas colegial[es]* `school girls'; *las haciendas vecino [vecinas]* `the nearby plantations.'

As with the case of variable gender concord, bare plurals can be handled through a series of interacting constraints. The assignment of plural /s/ to the first element of a plural DP is consequently not the result of the interplay of phonetic factors but rather a deliberate morphosyntactic strategy of marking plural only once in the DP, in this case at the very beginning. There are no documented cases in non-contact Romance varieties of a consistent strategy of pluralization in which the plural morpheme is only attached to the first element (usually a determiner) of the DP, with null plural morphemes on the remaining elements. Circumstantially, then the Afro-Yungueño/ Afro-Portuguese first-and-only plural /s/ is more closely aligned with vernacular (Afro-) Brazilian and Angolan Portuguese rather than with /s/-reducing Spanish dialects. The fact that in these dialects plural /s/ either occurs only on the first element or on all relevant elements—but not, for example, only on the last element, or on the first and last of a 3+ element DP—is also indicative of a grammatical constraint rather than simple coincidence. In the case of Ibero-Romance plural /s/ as manifested in Afro-Yungueño Spanish and Afro-Portuguese dialects, several widely applicable constraints are in play and in potential conflict with one another. First is faithfulness of the output to the input, in this case the full realization of agreement of the feature [plural] across all constituents of a plural DP. In complete opposition to this constraint is the refusal to mark any agreement features, i.e. the total lack of agreement in a DP. More often found in the dialects in question is a strategy of marking plural /s/ **once and only once** in the DP. The single expression of plural is a pan-African trait spanning nearly every language and linguistic subfamily known to have come into contact with Spanish and Portuguese. Pluralization is signaled at most once in the DP; when other discourse markers suffice for semantic interpretation, the plural pronoun *cum* plural marker is not used. A strategy in which plural is marked once in a plural DP is broadly consistent with African languages known to have intersected with Spanish and Portuguese, despite the many individual differences among these languages. Guy (2004:131) also suggests a pan-African source for bare plurals in Brazilian Portuguese.

In Afro-Bolivian and vernacular Brazilian Portuguese where bare plurals appear, the constraint SINGLYEXPRESSED (PLURAL) as proposed e.g. by Stemberger (2001) takes precedence over all faithfulness constraints. Left-alignment of the plural /s/ cannot be attributed solely to African languages; instead this alignment reflects both discourse considerations and syntactic structures. From a discourse perspective front-

loading of semantic features is a common strategy and one that can be readily grasped by speakers of a wide variety of languages. From a syntactic standpoint, the lack of plural marking across the entire DP is a case of impoverished agreement in the extended projection of the DP, in this case the embedded DP (noun and adjective(s)). As with singly marked gender, bare plurals can be handled by the constraint **ExtAgr**$_{\text{NUM}}$ (number agreement across the extended projection):

Tableau 2

los guaguas jóvenes	**SinglyExpressed (plural)**	**AGR(pl)**	**ExtAgr**$_{\text{NUM}}$
lus guaguas jóvenes	!*		
☞ lus guagua joven		*	*
lus guaguas joven	¡*		*
lus guagua jóvenes	!*	*	

The same analysis holds for plural DPs not headed by a determiner, e.g. Afro-Bolivian *personah mayó* `older people' (modern Spanish *personas mayores*). In the next stage of decreolization, **SinglyExpressed (plural)** is demoted, and **AGR(pl)** becomes the dominant constraint. This produces plurals like *lus guaguas joven.* Finally, **ExtAgr**$_{\text{NUM}}$ triumphs and the contemporary Spanish fully agreeing plural DP results.

Variable subject-verb agreement in Afro-Bolivian and Afro-Brazilian speech

In addition to the lack of gender and number agreement in DPs, one of the most striking grammatical features of the basilectal Afro-Yungueño dialect is the complete suspension of subject-verb agreement for person and number; a derivative of the Spanish 3ʳᵈ person singular is used as an invariant verb for all paradigms; occasionally what appear to be forms derived from the infinitive are used as invariant verbs. At the same time the array of patrimonial Spanish verb tenses and moods are severely reduced; there are no distinct subjunctive forms and only three tenses are used, derived from the Spanish present indicative, preterite, and imperfect. Examples include: *nojotro tiene[tenemos] jrutita* `we have fruit'; *esus palo no sirvi* `those trees are worthless'; *yo creció[crecí] junto con Angelino* `I grew up with Angelino'; *nojotro trabajaba [trabajábamos] hacienda* `we worked on the haciendas'; *nojotro fue siempre uno nomá* `we were always united'; *¿otene miró [miraron]?* `did you all see?'; *lu patrón siempre tenía[n] partera* `the landowners always had midwives'; *cuando no llové, es tiempo di seco* `when it doesn't rain it's the dry season'; *¿ande pue oté viví?* `where do

you live?'; *¿así disí?* `is that what [they] say?'

At the basilectal level there is no person-number agreement at all in the Afro-Yungueño verb, but in partially decreolized varieties an implicational scale emerges: subject-verb agreement first occurs in the first-person singular, then in the first-person plural, and finally in the remaining forms. In other words there are speakers who say *yo tengo* `I have,' but *nojotro tiene* `we have,' *eyu(s) tiene* `they have,' etc. There are also speakers who say *yo tengo and nojotro tenemos* but *otene tiene* `you (pl.) have,' *eyu(s) tiene* `they have.' However there are no speakers who effect subject-verb agreement in the third person but not in the first person. There are additional subtleties in the decreolization of the Afro-Bolivian VP. For example in the first person singular the periphrastic future *ir a* `to go to' + INFINITIVE frequently retains the invariant form while main verbs exhibit subject verb agreement: the same speaker will say *yo tengo* `I have' but *yo va [voy a] tené* `I'm going to have.' In addition, decreolization is more frequent in the present tense than in the preterite: there are speakers who say *yo voy* `I go' but *yo fue [fui]* `I went.'

In vernacular Brazilian Portuguese it is frequent for the 3rd person singular verb form to be used for 1st person plural and 3rd person plural: *nós trabalha [trabalhamos]* `we work,' *êles é [são]* `they are.' In most non-isolate Brazilian varieties the 1st person singular is exempt, and subject-verb agreement always occurs. The Helvécia dialect is exceptional in that the 1st person singular pronoun *eu* can also combine with the invariant verb derived from the 3rd person singular, and occasionally the infinitive (Baxter 1992:13-14): *eu tá [estou] cansado* `I am tired'; *eu pega [peguei] Mário e mandou [mandei] ele cortar* `I hit Mario and made him cut'; *eu ficou [fiquei] na casa de Dona Zélia* `I was at D. Zélia's house'; *io comprá [comprei] por mirré* `I bought it for 1000 reis.' Baxter (1992, 1997) demonstrates that additional factors constrain subject-verb agreement in the first person singular in the Helvécia dialect,[46] the foremost being phonetic saliency between the 1st person singular and 3rd person singular forms. Verbs in which the two forms are maximally different, such as *ser* `to be' (*sou* vs. *é*) show more frequent subject-verb agreement than verbs in which the two forms are more similar, e.g. *falar* `to speak' (*falo* vs. *fala*). In Afro-Yungueño Spanish there are speakers who routinely effect 1st person singular subject-verb agreement with verbs whose forms are maximally salient: this includes *ir* `to go' (*voy-va*), *ser* `to be' (*soy-e[s]*), *saber* `to know' (*sé-sabe*). At the same time these are among the most frequent verbs in Spanish, so phonetic saliency may combine with overall frequency in nudging these verbs towards more 1st person singular agreement.

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46   In addition, the absence of an overt subject pronoun slightly favors 1st person singular subject-verb agreement in Helvécia Portuguese, as does the presence of the overt pronoun immediately preceding the verb. There are also noticeable "trigger" effects, for example when asking a question using the 3rd person singular form it is more frequent for a speaker to reply using the same form instead of the expected 1st person singular.

Phonetic salience is a key factor in Helvécia Portuguese in both present and preterite tenses; overall, subject-verb agreement is more frequent in the present tense than in the preterite tense. Guy (2004:132) notes that in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese even in cases where third person singular verb forms are used instead of 3 pl., in irregular verbs and verbs whose preterite forms are considerably different from the present forms (e.g. *fez-fizeram, falou-falaram, é-são*) subject-verb agreement rates are much higher than with regular verbs. Guy speculates that this differential behavior is a leftover from a fully creolized language once spoken in Brazil, in which no subject-verb agreement existed: "Subsequently, speakers who were in contact with standard Portuguese would have learned agreement in the way that is typical of second-language learners: acquire the most obvious features first. It would be highly salient to a standardizing learner that a plural verb form like *fizeram* occurs with a plural subject in place of singular *fez*, but rather obscure that *comem* is required instead of *come*." In Spanish there are no irregular finite verbs—in the preterite or other tenses—that drop the final syllable, as in Portuguese *fiz, fez*, etc. (As a result there are fewer observable correlations in mesolectal speakers between retention of subject-verb agreement and highly irregular verbs. Basilectal speakers of Afro-Bolivian Spanish simply use the 3rd person singular for nearly all verbs, while the rapid shift to a standardized schoolroom Spanish in just over a single generation was too rapid to produce a smooth cline of variable agreement such as found in Brazil. The "decreolization" of the traditional Afro-Bolivian dialect is not occurring gradually and informally as was the case for the putative (semi)creolized Afro-Portuguese dialect of colonial Brazil but rather is suffering rapid displacement and loss under very different sociolinguistic conditions. That there is any variable behavior at all, for example as regards 1st person singular vs. the remaining forms, is a tribute to the tenacity of the non-inflected morphology of the traditional Afro-Yungueño dialect.

Within contemporary syntactic theory, there have been proposals to rank the first and second person verbal forms over third person forms (e.g. Silverstein 1985) based on cross-linguistic comparisons across a wide range of languages. In the case of Afro-Yungueño Spanish and vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, this hierarchy must be refined to not only favor the first person over the remaining forms, but the first person singular even over the first person plural. Early child language in both Spanish and Portuguese also favors the 3s as the unmarked form (Simões 1976:47; Simões and Stoel-Gammon 1979). In both Brazilian Portuguese and the Afro-Yungueño Spanish dialect, grammatically marked second person forms have disappeared: Brazilian Portuguese uses *você/vocês* for the familiar second-person, while basilectal Afro-Yungueño Spanish uses only *oté/otene* for all second-person referents. Thus from a morphological perspective there are only two person markings: first person and the remainder (including semantically se-

cond- and third-person referents). A constraint **FAITH(1-S)** requiring subject-verb agreement only in the first-person singular is needed to discriminate between the obligatory subject-verb agreement in Afro-Yungueño sociolects in which **yo come* `I eat' is unacceptable but *nojotro come* `we eat*,' otene come* `you (pl.) eat,' etc. are grammatical, or the Helvécia speakers and other vernacular Brazilian Portuguese speakers who accept *nós vai* `we go' but not **eu vai* `I go.' The analysis of Afro-Bolivian partially decreolized *yo como* `I eat' is as follows:

Tableau 3

Comer (1 sg. Pr.)	FAITH(1-S)	NoFEAT
☞Yo como		*
Yo come	¡*	

Helvécia Portuguese exhibits another assymetry as regards subject-verb agreement, with 1st person singular agreement being more frequent in the present tense than in the preterite, just as in Afro-Yungueño Spanish. The privileged position of the present tense as regards full subject-verb agreement is also consistent with the prominence of the present tense as the most frequent in ordinary discourse, as well as the first tense to be mastered in both first and second language acquisition. Baxter (1997:281) also proposes the acquisitional order PERSON-NUMBER IN PRESENT TENSE > PERSON-NUMBER IN PRETERITE for Helvécia Portuguese. For Afro-Bolivian speakers who exhibit the assymetrical behavior between past and present tenses, the general morphological constraint NoFEAT disallowing any subject-verb agreement has been refined to NoFEAT-PAST, in which subject-verb agreement is suspended in the past tenses but not in the present; for example the 1st person preterite of *comer* `to eat' which is *comí* in Spanish and *comió* in the Afro-Yungueño dialect is analyzed as follows:

Tableau 4

comer (1-s-Past)	NoFEAT-PAST	FAITH (1)
yo comí	¡*	
☞ yo comió		*

The reduction of patrimonial Spanish and Portuguese verb paradigms to three tenses (present, preterite, imperfect) is found in both Afro-Bolivian Spanish and Helvécia Portuguese, and to a lesser extent general vernacular Brazilian Portuguese. The same reductions are found in some L_2 varieties of Portuguese, including the Xingú region of Brazil Emmerich 1984), and the Tongas of São Tomé (Rougé 1992).

Discussion: the significance of Afro-Iberian linguistic isolates

The preceding sections have demonstrated considerable similarity in the morphosyntax of the DP and the VP in two isolated Afro-Iberian speech communities, in Brazil and Bolivia. More than two centuries separate the emergence of the two dialects, although Helvécia Portuguese presumably included in its input already partially restructured vernacular Brazilian Portuguese dialects, already bearing a strong African imprint. Both involved speakers of African languages attempting to learn an Ibero-Romance language under the unfavorable conditions of slavery, and partially partitioned off from larger pools of native speakers of the target language by other L_2 speakers: the Swiss in Helvécia and Aymara speakers in Bolivia. There are no known historical connections between the two dialects, each of which appears to have been formed in situ. Both dialects are undergoing decreolization of the DP and VP in the direction of national norms; in Helvécia the process is nearly complete, while there are still basilectal survivals of Afro-Yungueño Spanish.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Helvécia and Afro-Bolivian dialects lies in their contribution to the debate on creole monogenesis, as well as the geographical loci of creole formation. A number of scholars insist that all Afro-European creoles found in the Americas were originally formed in West Africa and subsequently transferred to American colonies during the Atlantic slave trade. The case for Portuguese-based creoles—and the putative lack of Spanish-derived creoles—has been made most strongly by McWhorter (1995, 2000). He asserts (McWhorter 2000:203) that plantations themselves did not pidginize input to slaves' and therefore that "… on Spanish plantations, there were not two targets—the local standard and the creole—but just one, the local standard. Therefore, Spanish slaves simply acquired a second-language Spanish, and passed this on to subsequent generations." However, Africans' documented approximations to Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas often contained all the traits normally ascribed to pidgins. McWhorter asserts that only pidgins imported from Africa developed into creoles in the Americas, and plantations were not conducive to pidginization of Spanish or other European languages. The reasoning is circular, however, since the only "evidence" is the fact that creoles did not develop in Spanish American plantations (if indeed they did not). There is nothing inherent in the plantation or post-plantation environment which is qualitatively different than the trading post and castle slave venues described by McWhorter (2000), and no a priori reason why blacks on a plantation should not adopt an L_2 variety of Spanish as an ethnolinguistic solidarity marker (assuming that one can defensibly differentiate pidgins and rudimentary L_2 approximations).

The Afro-Bolivian and Helvécia speech communities stand as counterexamples to monogenetic models, as well as theories of Afrogenesis of all Afro-European creole languages. Helvécia Portuguese was formed in a plantation environment, and while it may have contained some L_2 Portuguese elements through contact with the original

Swiss settlers, there is no indication that African slaves nativized a pidgin brought from coastal Africa. The Afro-Bolivian data provide an even clearer counterexample, since there is no evidence that either Portuguese or any Portuguese-based creole ever entered colonial Bolivia. During the first century of the Atlantic slave trade, Peru and Bolivia relied mainly on Portuguese slave traders; for the 16th century, Bowser (1974) has estimated that at least 75% of the African slaves came from the Senegambia region, while less than 20% came from the Congo-Angola area, the other major Portuguese slaving region. In the latter zone the Gulf of Guinea creoles, including São Tomé creole Portuguese, were to develop, and presumably influenced Afro-Hispanic language in Palenque de San Basilio. However by the time that Palenquero was established as an autonomous language the silver boom of Potosí was over and few African-born slaves were arriving in this remote Andean region. The geographical birthplace of the Afro-Bolivian dialect cannot be determined with certainty, but this dialect probably arose in the highlands and was taken to the Yungas when the black population began its migration sometime towards the end of the 18th century. The social and geographical factors mentioned earlier are responsible for the survival of a partially creolized form of Spanish several centuries after African-born *bozales* were present in Bolivia.

In the balance, Afro-Bolivian Spanish and Helvécia Portuguese demonstrate that the combination of universal grammatical patterns and broad pan-African morphosyntactic commonalities can result in creolization of Spanish and Portuguese. While these findings do not in themselves contradict claims of monogenesis and Afro-genesis for other Romance-derived creoles, they do demonstrate the feasibility of alternative routes of creole formation.

Table 1: Key features of Afro-Yungueño Spanish and Afro-Portuguese dialects

	Afro-Yungue-ño Spanish	Helvécia Port.	Vernacular Brazilian Port.	Angola *musseque* Port.
bare plurals	some	yes	yes	yes
invariant plurals	yes	some	some	some
null articles	yes	yes	some	yes
no gender agreement in DPs	yes	yes	no	frequent
3s. as invariant verb	yes	yes	w/ 1pl., 3pl.	frequent
infinitive from 3s verb	no	*vai < ir* `to go'	no	*vai* rare
present for past	yes	yes	rare	rare

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