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A historical perspective of Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Spanish varieties in the Iberia Peninsula

John M. Lipski

The Pennsylvania State University

This study traces the linguistic history of 15th – 18th century Spanish and Portuguese contact varieties in Spain and Portugal. The plausibility of literary imitations – the sole source of information – is discussed. Several likely common denominators emerge from the discussion, including apparently consistent phonological and morphosyntactic patterns that are also attested in existent creole languages.

Keywords: Afro-Hispanic language, Afro-Portuguese language, language contacts – history, pidgins and creoles

1. Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africans were present in Spain and Portugal during medieval times, mostly arriving via northeastern Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. Their numbers were small and little is known about their speech, although it can be surmised that given their close contact with native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese, no traces of interference from African languages persisted beyond the first generation. With the Portuguese explorations of the West African coast, beginning in the early 15th century, black Africans began arriving in the Iberian Peninsula in ever increasing numbers, first as emissaries and later as enslaved laborers. The first large populations were found in Portugal (Brásio, 1944; Saunders, 1982; Tinhorão, 1988); shortly thereafter, the African presence in southern Spain took on significant proportions, at first arriving via Portugal, and later supplemented by direct contacts between Spain and West Africa. Although many African religious figures trained by Portugal and living in Central Africa became quite proficient in Portuguese (Lipski, 2000b), Africans taken against their will to the Iberian Peninsula often learned only the most rudimentary forms of Spanish and Portuguese, and their halting attempts at speaking European languages earned them the name of *bozal* (*boçal* in Portuguese), a term roughly meaning ‘savage, untamed.’

With the introduction of enslaved Africans into the Iberian Peninsula, human entities designed to be despised, the historical record begins to comment on black Africans' use of European languages. Starting in the middle of the 15th century, Portuguese literary writers imitated the pidginized Portuguese as spoken by African captives and by the beginning of the 16th century Spanish writers were also imitating "African" speech in poems and skits. The treatments were rarely flattering; Africans were depicted as pompous clowns, asserting their African nobility in the midst of demeaning tasks, or as mindless creatures bent only on dancing and lovemaking. A number of texts come from writers who probably had no personal knowledge of *bozal* language, but who had learned the facile stereotypes as part of the cultural milieu of the 16th-18th centuries. On the other hand, a comparison between literary texts and independently documented results of Afro-Iberian linguistic contacts, including borrowings from Spanish and Portuguese into African languages, Iberian-based creole languages, and contemporary Afro-Iberian speech communities, reveals that many early Spanish and Portuguese authors had a good ear for *bozal* language (e.g. Saunders, 1982, p. 99–100; Hatherly, 1990, p. 5 expresses some doubts). The difficulty lies in separating legitimate Afro-Iberian language from mindless parodies, and also in determining how long distinctly Africanized varieties of Portuguese (whether spoken as a second language or natively) continued to exist, and when they faded into a memory kept alive only in anachronistic literary devices (Lipski, 2005).

Given the lack of credible first-hand testimony and the strong undercurrents of racism and parody present in nearly all literary representations of Africans' Portuguese and Spanish, the following questions emerge from a consideration of early Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Spanish texts:

1. Which of the linguistic features attributed to Africans in Portugal and Spain were truly present, and which are due to parody, exaggeration, and stereotyping?
2. What degree of consistency was found in Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic language across time and space?
3. Did anything resembling a stable Afro-Portuguese or Afro-Hispanic pidgin ever coalesce (such that specific features had to be learned)?
4. Is there any evidence that non-Africans in Portugal and Spain ever deliberately adopted pidgin features when speaking with African-born *bozales*?
5. Did an ethnically distinct "black Portuguese" or "black Spanish," acquired natively by European-born Afro-descendants, ever exist in Portugal and Spain?

The answers to these questions represent a far-reaching research enterprise; the present study will present the most salient features of the Portuguese and Spanish spoken by sub-Saharan Africans in the Iberian Peninsula from the 15th century to the 18th, as depicted in literary imitations and occasional non-fiction texts. These observations will be complemented by an attempt to judge the relative veracity of the individual linguistic traits attributed to Africans' Portuguese and Spanish, and the extent to which such features may have survived past the first generation of African involuntary immigrants.

2. The earliest Afro-Portuguese attestations

Although Portuguese contact with Africa had begun in the 1420's, with voyages commissioned by Prince Henry the Navigator, the Portuguese first established permanent contacts with sub-Saharan Africa in 1445, upon building a trading station on Arguim Island, off the coast of present-day Mauritania. Following these initial contacts, Portugal established a permanent presence along the Gold Coast (Ghana) at the fortress of Elmina, and in the Congo Basin. All these contacts engendered greater awareness of the specifics of "African" linguistic interference in Portuguese. Portugal was also acquiring greater familiarity with African geographical and ethnological terminology, albeit with considerable inaccuracy. This developing ethnolinguistic awareness, together with the inevitable fruits of language contact between Portuguese and Africans, emerged in literary imitations of Africanized Portuguese, beginning with a trickle of poems and songs, and culminating in a torrent of popular literature that encompassed the entire Iberian Peninsula.

The first known imitation of Afro-Portuguese pidgin is found in the *Cancioneiro geral* of Garcia de Resende published in 1516 (Guimarães, 1910–1917); it is a poem dated 1455 and written by the court official Fernam da Silveira. The *Cancioneiro Geral* contains three other specimens of Afro-Lusitanian pidgin, the most significant of which is a text by Anrique da Mota written around the turn of the 16th century (Vasconcellos, 1933). The playwright Gil Vicente provides the largest single corpus of early Afro-Portuguese language, in three plays: *Nao d'amores* (1527), *Fragoa d'amor* (ca. 1524), and *O clérigo da Beyra* (1530). Other key 16th century Afro-Portuguese texts are the *Auto das regateiras* (Chiado, 1968) and *Pratica de oito figuras* (Chiado, 1961) by Antônio Ribeiro Chiado; the *Auto da bella menina* by Sebastiao Pires (1922); and the anonymous *Auto de Vicente Anes Joeira* (Anon, 1963). From this point on all the surviving texts are anonymous; these include several 17th century poems (Hatherly, 1990) and songs such as "Sã qui turo" (Anon, 1647).

Beginning in the late 17th century in Portugal and continuing through the middle of the 19th, literary *língua de preto/língua de guiné* 'black or Guinea speech' appeared in numerous pamphlets and broadsides; most of these texts contain a formulaic use of stereotyped elements, much as in other ethnic eye-dialect literature meant for out-group consumption, but their very persistence, side by side with the existence of a considerable black community, attests to at least some real survival of Afro-Portuguese speech forms. The most common manifestations were the equivalent of farmers' almanacs and astrological forecasts, known as *prognósticos* and *lunarios*, known by such names as *Os preto astrologo*, *Sarrabal português*, *Plonostico curiozo e lunario pala os anno de 1804, pelo pleto Flancisco Suzá Halley*. These crude documents were published until the middle of the 19th century, after which the literary use of Afro-Portuguese pidgin disappeared from the Iberian Peninsula (Tinhorão, 1988, p. 215). Lipski (2005, Chapter 2) offers a detailed analysis of most surviving early Afro-Portuguese literary texts.

3. Afro-Hispanic texts: 16th and 17th centuries

By the early 16th century, the Portuguese literary *fala de preto* had spread to Spain, and the corresponding *habla de negro* ‘black speech’ appeared in Spanish literature and flourished until the end of the 17th century, not only in Spain but also among Spanish-born or Spanish-educated writers and composers in Spanish America. The earliest surviving text is a pamphlet containing some *coplas* by Rodrigo de Reinosa (Cossío, 1950), probably written around the turn of the 16th century, and containing many pidgin Portuguese elements. Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, who lived along the corridor along which Africans traveled from Lisbon to southern Spain, wrote several early 16th century skits with more plausible “Africanized” Spanish containing few Portuguese elements; these include *Farsa teologal*, *Farsa del moysen*, *Farsa de la hechicera*, and *Farsa de la ventera* (Barrantes, 1882–1886). The best known 16th century Spanish imitator of Afro-Hispanic pidgin is Lope de Rueda, whose plays *Comedia de los engañados*, *Comedia de Eufemia*, and *Comedia de Tymbria* contain a high proportion of linguistic traits that can be independently correlated with existing Afro-Iberian varieties. The remainder of the 16th century produced only a handful of minor plays in which fragments of Afro-Hispanic language occur, but the early 17th century brought a major surge in literary imitations of pidginized Spanish.

The first 17th century Afro-Hispanic text is Simón Aguado’s *Entremés de los negros* (Cotarelo y Morí, 1911, vol. 1). Just a few years later Afro-Hispanic language figured prominently in a verbal dual between two literary titans: the poet Luis de Góngora and playwright Lope de Vega, which resulted in a series of satirical poems written in a grotesque Afro-Hispanic jargon (Jammes, 1980). Although Lope de Vega held his own against Góngora with equally biting sonnets, he is best known for his many plays (1602–1608) in which extensive passages in Afro-Hispanic language appear; these include *El amante agradecido*, *El mayor rey de los reyes*, *La siega*, *Vitoria de la honra*, *Madre de la mejor*, *El negro del mejor amo*, *El Santo Negro Rosambuco*, *La limpieza no manchada*, and *El capellán de la virgen* (Vega Carpio, 1930). Other relatively well-known 17th century Spanish plays containing Afro-Hispanic speech are *El valiente negro en Flandes* by Andrés de Claramonte (1951); *El negro del seraphín* by Luis Vélez de Guevara (Sánchez, 1979); *La rabia--primera parte*, *Las carnestolendas*, *La pandera*, *La casa de los linajes*, and *La sibila de oriente y gran reyna de Saba* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca; *El negrito hablador y sin color anda la niña*, *El borracho*, and *Sacristanes burlados* by Luis Quiñones de Benavente (Rosell, 1874). The texts by Calderón and Quiñones, all written in the second half of the 17th century, show little morphosyntactic pidginization and are confined almost entirely to a handful of facile and implausible phonetic modifications. In addition there are dozens of anonymous songs and skits from the 17th and 18th centuries in which “Africanized” Spanish appears, in most cases repeating the stereotypes found in the best-known works. The early Afro-Hispanic texts are analyzed in depth in Lipski (1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1988, 1992a, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2005, Chapter 3, 2007b).

4. Major linguistic traits of early Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic texts

The early Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic texts, written during a period in which sub-Saharan Africans were present in ever greater numbers in the Iberian Peninsula, contain many linguistic features that are also found in actually existing Afro-Iberian contact varieties and which probably were used by Africans in Portugal and Spain and rather accurately reproduced by the writers of the time. Other traits are simply those common to all second-language learners struggling with an unfamiliar language under difficult circumstances; there is also a residue of unlikely departures from Spanish and Portuguese that almost certainly were never present in any Afro-Iberian speech community. Recurring phonetic and morphosyntactic traits, which are also found in existing Afro-Iberian creoles and contact varieties and which in all probability actually occurred in Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic speech, include those detailed in Sections 4.1–4.10.

4.1 Prevocalic /d/ pronounced [ɾ] (turo < tudo)

The rapid occlusive realization of prevocalic /d/ instead of the more usual fricative or approximant pronunciation found in Spanish and European Portuguese is perceived as a flap [ɾ] by speakers of Spanish and Portuguese (Lipski, 2007a). This pronunciation is common to many second-language approximations to Portuguese and Spanish (including by English speakers); similar realizations are found in Afro-Hispanic enclaves, e.g. in the Dominican Republic (Meggenney, 1990a; Núñez Cedeño, 1982, 1987), the Colombian Chocó (Granda, 1977; Schwegler, 1991), Panama (Lipski, 1989, 2011), Venezuela (Meggenney, 1989, 1990b), in Equatorial Guinea (Lipski, 1985), and in the Afro-Colombian creole language Palenquero (e.g. *buenoría* < *buenos días* ‘good day’; Friedemann & Patiño Rosselli, 1983). This same pronunciation also occurs in second-language Portuguese spoken in Angola (Inverno 2011) and Mozambique (Jon-And, 2012). Typical literary examples of the change /d/ > [ɾ] are:

- (1) a. Abre oio *turo ria* ‘[I] open [my] eyes every day’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
- b. *turo, turo* sa furtado ‘everything was stolen’ (Chiado, *Auto das regateiras*)
- c. Ra puta *re bosa* magre ‘your whore of a mother’ (Sánchez de Badajoz, *Farsa del moysen*)
- d. *Turo* me lo conozco ‘everyone knows me’ (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de Tymbria*)

4.2 Paragogic and epenthetic vowels (seoro < senhor)

The majority of African languages known to have come into contact with Spanish and Portuguese have no coda consonants; in those languages where word-final consonants occur they are usually obstruents such as /t/ and /k/, rarely liquids /l/ and /r/ or sibilant

/s/. Paragogic and epenthetic vowels used to break up consonant clusters and yield a series of open syllables of the general form CV (Lipski, 2002b): *boso* < *vos* ‘you,’ *sioro* < *senhor* ‘sir,’ *deoso/dioso* < *Deus* ‘God,’ *Furunando* < *Fernando*, *faramosa* < *formosa* ‘beautiful,’ *Purutugá* < *Portugal*, etc. Active use of paragogic vowels was not likely to have formed part of a nativized Afro-Portuguese vernacular, but the textual evidence suggests that some fossilized forms may have remained, including *dioso*, *sioro*, and possibly *boso*. In support of this assertion is the fact that paragogic vowels were added in the Portuguese-derived creole languages of São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón, e.g. *arroz* > ST *loso*, Ann. *aloso*, P. *urosu* ‘rice’. Palenquero has examples like *servir* > *siribí* ‘to be useful’ and *Dioso* < *Dios* ‘God’; the latter form appears in Afro-Panamanian Congo speech (Lipski, 1989, 2011). The Afro-Iberian creole language Papiamentu has *boso* ‘you,’ while Afro-Bolivian Spanish has items like *ayere* < *ayer* ‘yesterday’ (Lipski, 2008). Portuguese borrowings into African languages also included paragogic vowels, for example (Kikongo) *doutor* > *dotolo* ‘doctor,’ *Cristo* > *kidisitu* ‘Christ’; (Kimbundu) *rapaz* > *lapassi* ‘boy’ (Lipski, 2002b). Many of these same examples exhibit apparent vowel harmony, a frequent process in many Congo-Benue languages. Examples of paragogic vowels in early Afro-Iberian language are:

- (2) a. Jeju, Jeju, *Deoso* consabrado! ‘Jesus, sacred God’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
- b. *Dosso*, tres, quatro juntá ‘two, three, four together’ (Chiado, *Auto das regateiras*)
- c. ¡Pluvieran *dioso*! ‘May it please God’ (Aguado, *Entremés de los negros*)
- d. Por en *Diosa* que no miento ‘by God I am not lying’ (Góngora, “A lo mismo [al nacimiento de Cristo nuestro señor]”)

4.3 Delateralization of /ʎ/ to [j] (*muiere* < *mulher*)

The palatal lateral [ʎ] is a marked sound among the world’s languages, and within the Romance languages delateralization to a palatal glide or approximant [j]/[j̥] is a frequent occurrence. In the Spanish-speaking world, delateralization of /ʎ/ is known as *yeísmo*; this process, first documented in the 17th century, now affects the majority of Spanish regional and social dialects. In Portuguese delateralization of /ʎ/ is found in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, particularly in areas of heavy African influence (Ilari & Basso, 2011, p. 168). Delateralization of /ʎ/ was almost certainly a feature of early Afro-Iberian language, and it may well have survived into Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic vernaculars. Early literary examples include:

- (3) a. home, abre *oio* tu ‘open your eyes, man’ (Anon., *Auto de Vicente Anes Joeira*)
- b. a *muiet* que branca sae ‘the woman who is born white’ (Gil Vicente, *Fragoa d’amor*)
- d. mui gram *trabaio* que tem ‘a great task is had’ (Anon., *Auto de Vicente Anes Joeira*)

- e. Sesu, sesu, *marabiyo* ‘Jesus, Jesus, a wonder’ (Sánchez de Badajoz, *Farsa de la hechicera*)
- f. En apué, ¿no ponemo la oya? ‘And then, don’t we put on the pots?’ (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de los engañados*)

4.4 Loss of final /r/ in infinitives (cantá < cantar)

This trait is common in varieties of Spanish and Portuguese with a strong African influence, and also characterizes verbs in all Spanish- and Portuguese-lexified creole languages (Palenquero, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé, Príncipe, Annobón, Papiamentu, etc.).¹ Early Afro-Iberian examples are:

- (4) a. Muto *comé* muto *bebé* ‘Much eating, much drinking’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
- b. Mim *trazê* pote cabeça ‘I carry the jar on my head’ (Chiado, *Auto das regateiras*)
- c. No *hablá* ningún cagayera ‘no gentleman is speaking’ (Lope de Vega, *El santo negro Rosambuco*)
- d. tenemo de *cogé* a ezte Zamolon ‘we have to catch that Zamolon’ (Calderón de la Barca, *La sibila de oriente*)

4.5 Loss of final /s/ in the first-person plural verbal suffix -mos

Early Afro-Iberian literary imitations provide examples of loss of syllable-final /s/, but with morphological conditioning, being confined to the first person plural verb forms: *vamo* < *vamos* ‘let’s go,’ *temo* < *temos* ‘we have.’ Loss of /s/ in the first-person plural desinence /-mos/ is currently found in many vernacular varieties of Brazilian Portuguese (e.g. Ilari & Basso 2011, p. 151–196) and also occurs in the vernacular Portuguese of Angola and Mozambique. Loss of final /s/ first appears in *bozal* Spanish texts in the first decades of the 16th century, also only in the verbal desinence -mos. Literary examples of -mos > -mo in early Afro-Iberian language are:

- (5) a. não *vamo* paraíso ‘we’re not going to heaven’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
- b. *Nacemo* de hums may donzera ‘we are born of a virgin mother’ (Anon., “Sã aquí turo”)
- c. *fablamo* y *servimo* a buena fe; ‘we speak and serve in good faith’ (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de Tymbria*)
- d. nunca *habemo* comiro ni rormiro con tales pensamientos ‘we have never eaten or slept with such thoughts’ (Aguado, *Entremés de los negros*)

1. Given that loss of word-final /r/ is common in southern Spain, including the city of Badajoz on the border with Portugal, a uniquely African origin for this phenomenon in Afro-Hispanic texts cannot be easily sustained.

4.6 Retention of /s/ only on first element of plural noun phrases

Spanish and Portuguese both mark plural noun phrases by adjoining the plural morpheme /-s/ to all nouns, adjectives, and determiners. In several Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Portuguese varieties plural /-s/ is only affixed to the first element (usually a determiner): *as casa* ‘the houses,’ *os livro velho* ‘the old books’; when a numerical quantifier occurs, plural /-s/ may be absent altogether: *cinco filho* ‘five children.’ This configuration is very common in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, where several researchers have postulated an origin in Afro-Portuguese language contacts (e.g., Guy, 1981, 1989, 2004, this volume; Holm, 1987), while others attribute “stripped” plural NPs to linguistic drift and the inheritance of vernacular European Portuguese during the colonial period (e.g., Naro & Scherre, 1998, 2000, 2007). Depleted or “stripped” plural NPs have also been described for two Afro-Hispanic varieties, in Bolivia and the Chota Valley of Ecuador (Lipski, 2010), with variational characteristics very similar to those calculated for vernacular Brazilian Portuguese (Scherre, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2001; Scherre & Naro, 1991, 1992, 1998). Similar patterns have been observed in the vernacular Portuguese of Angola (Inverno, 2011), São Tomé and Príncipe (Baxter, 2004, 2009; Figueiredo, 2008), Mozambique and Cape Verde (Jon-And, 2012), and in Cape Verdean Creole (Baptista, 2007, 82f.; Baptista, Mello & Suzuki, 2007, p. 73–74). Literary imitations of “Africanized” Spanish from the same time period do not give evidence of depleted plural marking among Africans in Spain, although the mid-17th century poems of the Spanish-Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1952), whose characteristics coincide with contemporaneous Spanish texts, contain a few examples. Examples from early Afro-Portuguese texts are:

- (6) a. *Vamos o fazer huns fessa* ‘we are going to have some celebrations’ (Anon., “Sã qui turo”)
 b. *Mais vare hun dor dus barriga* ‘it’s better to have a stomach ache’ (Hatherly, 1990)
 c. *estos Parre Mercenaria* *hace una fiesa a su Palre* ‘those mercenary friars have a celebration for their Father’ (Sor Juana)
 d. *A celebrar hoy lus nenglu* *viene a la Iglesia Mayó* ‘to celebrate the blacks come to the cathedral today’ (Sor Juana)

All available evidence suggests that this feature was nearly categorical in later Afro-Portuguese vernacular, and may have been one of the most characteristic features of “black Portuguese” in both Portugal and Brazil.²

2. In the 19th century novel *Os selvagens* (Gomes de Amorim 1875, p. 205) a European in Brazil deliberately speaks *uma meia língua de preto* ‘broken black speech’ in which both loss of /s/ in the verbal desinence /-mos/ and “stripped” plural NPs figure prominently.

4.7 Shift of prevocalic /r/ > [l] (agola < agora, pleto < preto)

The shift of prevocalic /r/ to [l] has been a staple of literary Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic imitations since the 17th century, and is probably the most widely acknowledged stereotype of “black” Portuguese and Spanish. In reality most of the West African languages that were in contact with Spanish and Portuguese through the end of the 16th century do distinguish prevocalic /l/ and /r/. The Bantu family of languages does not distinguish the two liquids, and in most Bantu languages [l] and [d] are in complementary distribution as well. Examples of the shift of prevocalic /r/ > [l] in literary Africanized Portuguese and Spanish begin at the turn of the 17th century, when speakers of Central African Bantu languages were present in larger numbers in the Iberian Peninsula. It is unlikely that this pronunciation survived in Afro-Portuguese or Afro-Hispanic vernacular, given its extremely high level of stigmatization, but isolated forms may have been retained. In Portugal, however, the popular stereotype of /r/ > [l] in “black” speech persisted until at least the middle of the 19th century, in pamphlet literature and almanacs, such as the *Plonostico curiozo* (Tinhorão, 1988, p. 210). Early literary examples include:

- (7) a. *Sã aqui turo zente pleta* ‘all the black people are here’ (Anon., “Sã aquí turo”)
 b. *mia lico sioro rey dos Portugar* ‘my rich lord of the Portuguese’ (Hatherly, 1990)
 c. *Plimo siñolo va enojaro* ‘the lord’s cousin is angry’ (Aguado, *Entremés de los negros*)
 d. *¡Alegramo, nenglo y nengla!* ‘Let’s rejoice, black men and women’ (Lope de Vega, *Vitoria de la honra*)

That the lateralization of prevocalic /r/ was not simply a literary invention is demonstrated by evidence of the same shift in the Portuguese-derived creole languages of São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón (e.g., *loso* < *arroz* ‘rice’), as well as in the Afro-Colombian creole language Palenquero (e.g., *aló* < *arroz* ‘rice,’ *loyo* < *arroyo* ‘creek,’ *pelo* < *perro* ‘dog,’ *calo* < *carro* ‘cart,’ *mblelo* < *bledo* ‘wild amaranth,’ *solo* < *zorro* ‘fox’).

4.8 Hybrid copula sa/ sã (occasionally santar/sentar)

One of the key elements tying together Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic varieties across time and space is the innovative copular verb *sa* (occasionally *sã*) ‘to be.’ This verb evidently derives from a fusion of *ser* and *estar*. In the middle of the 15th century, when the first Afro-Portuguese pidgin is attested, Spanish and Portuguese *estar* was still undergoing the transition from a purely locative verb meaning ‘to stand’ to a more general copular function. The earliest Afro-Iberian attestations took the infinitive form *ssar/esar*, with *sa* appearing shortly thereafter. Of all the Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic morphosyntactic elements appearing in literary imitations, copular *sa* is

likely to have actually been used by Africans in the Iberian Peninsula, and may have become part of ethnolinguistically marked “black” Spanish and Portuguese in subsequent generations. Copular *sa* is found in the Portuguese-derived creoles of São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón, and in the Angolar language of São Tomé in the alternative form *θa*. Given the probable dates of emergence of these creole languages, the copula *sa* may have stabilized in Afro-Portuguese creoles in the early 17th century or even before. In a document by the Spanish priest Joseph de Naxara, who lived in Allada (Benin) in 1659–60 (Naxara, 1672), an African who spoke a Portuguese pidgin is quoted as saying “Não me cheguê à èla, porque *sa* Ramera” ‘I didn’t go to her because she is a harlot.’ Copular *sã* (in nasalized form) made its way (apparently via West Africa) to the Portuguese-derived creole of Macau (Lipski, 1999, 2002a).

In addition to *sa(r)* the verb *sentar/santar* ‘to sit’ was sometimes also used as copula in early Afro-Portuguese literary imitations. *Sendá* can be used as copula in Palenquero, where it can also mean ‘to sit,’ which suggests that the early literary examples were not entirely fanciful. Early Afro-Iberian literary examples with *ssar*, *sa*, and *sentar/santar* as copula include:

- (8) a. a mym nunca *ssar* rroym ‘I am never bad’ (Anrique de Mota; Vasconcellos, 1933)
 b. A mi *sa* negro de crivão ‘I am black as coal’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
 e. cando ba *esar* asno ydo ‘when the donkey has gone’ (Sánchez de Badajoz, *Farsa del moysen*)
 d. Siñora, no responder; piensa que *sa* muerta ‘She doesn’t answer, ma’am; [I] think she is dead’ (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de los engañados*)
 e. Si *sa* crabo o no *sa* crabo, a dioso daremon conta ‘Whether or not we are slaves, we will answer to God’ (Aguado, *Entremés de los negros*)
 f. Fraire franchico *esamo* ‘I am a Franciscan friar’ (Lope de Vega, *El santo negro Rosambuco*)
 g. Tura junta *essamo* aquí ‘We are all here together’ (García Montero Solano, “¡Ah, Flansiquiya!” ca. 1673; Tejerizo Robles 1989, p. 178–179)
 h. Boso *sentar* muto grande bêssa ‘you are a great beast’ (Anon., *Auto de Vicente Anes Joeira*)
 i. Prutugá *santar* diabol! ‘Portugal is the devil’ (Chiado, *Auto das regateiras*)

The appearance of *esamo* in examples (8f, 8g) suggests that the partial fusion of *ser* and *estar* to *essar* still had some viability towards the end of the 17th century. Although *es(s)ar* and *sentar/santar* disappeared from literary texts by the end of the 17th century, copular *sa* appears in literary texts through the end of the 18th century, by which time it had probably disappeared from actual Afro-Hispanic language as might be heard in Spain and Spanish America.

4.9 Use of (a)mi(m) as subject pronoun

Use of *(a)mi(m)* ‘I’ as subject pronoun instead of *eu/yo* was found in several of the earliest Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Hispanic texts, following a practice already begun in the Mediterranean Lingua Franca and influenced by northern Italian dialects in which *mi* had replaced *io* ‘I’ as subject pronoun (Lipski, 1991). This usage was further reinforced by the coincidental similarity of first-person singular subject pronouns across a wide variety of West and Central African languages, from the Senegambia region into the Congo/Angola area, all of the form are *mi/ami/emi*. Subject pronouns based on *(a)mi(m)* are found (often reduced to *m-* or a simple homorganic nasal clitic) in all Afro-Iberian creoles, including Cape Verdian and Guinea-Bissau, São Tomense, Princiense, Annobonese, Papiamentu, and Palenquero. Although this form represented the maximum linguistic distance between “European” and “African” speech, it may have been occasionally used in later Afro-Portuguese vernacular, to reinforce ethnic solidarity. *(a)mi(m)* as subject pronoun disappeared from literary texts by the middle of the 16th century. Early Afro-Iberian examples are:

- (9) a. *mym* andar augoá jardim ‘I was watering the garden’ (Anrique da Mota; Vasconcellos, 1933)
 b. *Mi* bem la de Tordesilha ‘I come from Tordesillas’ (Gil Vicente, *Fragoa d’amor*)
 c. *Mim* não quebrar bosso porta ‘I didn’t break your door’ (Chiado, *Auto das regateiras*)
 d. *A mí* llamar Jorge ‘My name is Jorge’ (Reinosa, “Coplas a los negros y negras”)
 e. En toro oy *mi* no comer ‘I haven’t eaten all day’ (Guete, 1913, p. 155, *Tesorina*)

4.10 Use of invariant bai/vai ‘go’

This third-person singular form of the verb *ir* ‘to go’ appeared in early Afro-Portuguese texts; this verb does not appear in any early Afro-Hispanic texts, but the fact that invariant *vai/bai* was used at least in Afro-Portuguese pidgin is confirmed by the existence of this verb in Cape Verdian Creole, Papiamentu, and Palenquero. Early Afro-Portuguese examples are:

- (10) a. *A mi bai* furta em tanto camisa que sa na muro ‘I’m going to steal all the shirts on the wall’ (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
 b. *vai* vozo a pe ‘You go on foot’ (Hatherly, 1990)
 c. *mim vai* a continuar ‘I am going to continue’ (Anon., “Plonostico culioso, lunario pala os anno de 1819”; Tinhorão, 1988, p. 215)

5. Additional features of early Afro-Iberian language

The early Afro-Iberian texts exhibit a number of other linguistic traits that could conceivably have stabilized in the speech of European-born Afro-descendants; most typify second-language learners' approximations to Portuguese and Spanish.

5.1 Unstable subject-verb agreement: Infinitives

The most common deviation from canonical Spanish and Portuguese is the partial or total loss of subject-verb agreement. The earliest texts in both Spain and Portugal show use of the infinitive instead of conjugated verbs; this may reflect earlier features of the pan-Mediterranean Lingua Franca (Lipski, 2002c). Although the infinitive is not the most common form in natural Spanish and Portuguese speech, reflexes of the infinitive are found in most Spanish- and Portuguese-derived creoles, so some measure of truth must be accorded to the literary texts, examples of which are:

- (11) a. *mym andar* augoá jardim 'I was watering the garden' (Anrique da Mota; Vasconcellos, 1933)
 b. *A mí llamar* Comba de terra Guinea 'My name is Comba from the land of Guinea' (Reinosa, "Coplas a los negros y negras")

5.2 Third-person singular as invariant verb

Also found was use of the third-person singular as invariant verb, a feature occurring in many second-language varieties, since it is the most common verb form in Spanish and Portuguese (cf. Clements, this volume). Afro-Bolivian Spanish has also generalized the third-person singular as invariant verb (Lipski, 2008), and many vernacular varieties of Brazilian Portuguese use the third-person singular for all persons and numbers except for the first-person singular (Lucchesi et al., 2009). Examples include:

- (12) a. *Mi busca* mulato bai 'I'm looking for a mulatto to go' (Gil Vicente, *O clérigo de Beyra*)
 b. *¿yo la tiene* la cara como ximia? 'Do I have a face like a monkey?' (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de Tymbria*).

The early texts also contain more randomly distributed mismatches between subject pronoun and verb conjugation, which also occur in learners' approximations to Spanish and Portuguese but which probably did not stabilize in any Afro-Iberian ethnolect. The same holds for unstable gender and number concord, which follows no discernible patterns that might have led to complete loss of number and gender inflection such as found in Spanish- and Portuguese-derived creoles.

5.3 Prenasalized consonants

The early Afro-Hispanic texts contain numerous examples of prenasalized voiced stops, common in many West and Central African languages and also found in Portuguese borrowings into these languages (Lipski, 1992b). Since Spanish speakers were unaware of the true nature of prenasalized consonants, these were usually written as the syllabic combination *en-/an-* or with word-final *-n* in two-word combinations. Given the existence of similar prenasalized stops in Palenquero and Afro-Cuban *palo mayombe* speech (Fuentes Guerra & Schwegler, 2005; Schwegler, this volume), it is likely that prenasalized consonants were present in many Afro-Hispanic ethnolects. Some early examples are:

- (13) a. ¡Ay, señor *Jesum Cristo!* ‘Oh Lord Jesus Christ’ (Lope de Rueda, *Comedia de los engañados*)
- b. voto *an Dios* ‘I swear to God’ (Aguado, *Entremés de los negros*)
- c. Bailar como un *andimoños* ‘dance like a devil’ (Lope de Vega, *La madre de la mejor*)
- d. *Sensucliso en sa dolmida* ‘Jesus Christ, she is asleep’ (Lope de Vega, *El santo negro Rosambuco*)
- e. *Quiera en Diozo* que pasemo a España ‘May God wish for us to go to Spain’ (Claramonte, *El valiente negro en Flandes*)

6. Summary: The real and the unreal in Afro-Iberian language

The preceding sections have surveyed the principal linguistic features of early Afro-Iberian language that have the highest probability of having been present in the speech of Africans in Portugal and Spain (cf. also Schwegler, this volume). As to the persistence of any or all of these features beyond the first – African-born – generation, the historical record is unclear. In Spain the literary texts rapidly lose their verisimilitude by the middle of the 17th century, by which time most enslaved Africans were being taken to Spain’s American colonies rather than to Spain itself. At the same time blacks in Spain even when not enslaved were ghettoized and shunned while at the same time participating in social-religious all-black *cofradías* ‘brotherhoods.’ The combination of these factors is consistent with the possible survival of an ethnolinguistically marked “black” Spanish in subsequent generations, although the absence of any mention or imitation of such an ethnolect must be acknowledged.

In Portugal, the presence of sub-Saharan Africans also diminished during the 17th and 18th centuries but rose again as Portugal increased its colonial presence in Angola and Mozambique. There were also numerous Afro-Portuguese brotherhoods (*cofrarias*), which also celebrated processions and reenactments of African rituals (Tinhorão 1988, p. 142–158). This presence is indirectly reflected in the considerable

production of pamphlets and “almanacs” through the middle of the 19th century, in which consistent if sometimes extravagant “black” Portuguese is depicted. These texts raise the probability that some identifiable ethnolinguistic features were retained in the Afro-Portuguese community at least until the early decades of the 19th century and perhaps later. Although some unrealistic traits are carried over (e.g., the massive replacement of /r/ by /l/), there are also indications that a stable Afro-Portuguese speech mode may have existed. This is suggested by the consistent signaling of /s/ only on the first element of plural nouns phrases, by the almost systematic lack of gender agreement, the use of invariant *vai* for ‘go’ and the invariant copular *sa*. Although written imitations of ethnically marked speech varieties may persist in some forms of literature after the groups in question have ceased to use the marked forms, this is rarely the case for pamphlet literature (and such modern-day equivalents as comic books, greeting cards, bumper stickers, and trading cards), which is designed to satisfy the immediate pleasures and prejudices of the masses. In the United States, popular stereotypes of Irish-, Swedish-, Yiddish- and Italian-influenced English disappeared after the groups in question shed their ethnolinguistic identifiers. In Portugal, the thriving market for *língua de preto* imitations until the middle of the 19th century effectively brackets the real use of some sort of ethnolinguistically identifiable “black” traits. Whether these forms were used exclusively, or in parallel with non-African Portuguese (e.g., as an in-group manifestation of ethnic solidarity) is impossible to determine.

While it may never be possible to determine the full legacy of Afro-Iberian language over the centuries, the story cannot be left in the words of non-African satirists and racist commentators. Additional research is needed, to tie together the evidence of existing and recent Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Portuguese speech communities and to extract the most reliable manifestations of Afro-Iberian speech from the detritus of stereotypes and literary meanderings. The ultimate goal – as yet unattainable but not beyond the realm of possibility – is to tell the story in the words of the Africans themselves.

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