

PUERTO RICAN SPANISH: A CASE OF PARTIAL RESTRUCTURING

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1.0 The origin of Puerto Rican Spanish

1.1. Bickerton, Lawton, Otheguy, Holm: four different perspectives

Bickerton and Escalante do not agree with the idea that no true Spanish-based Creole exists in the Western Hemisphere by identifying a dialect of northern Colombia, Palenquero as an authentic Creole. This dialect “may be a survival of a more widely distributed Creole..... the survivor of a Spanish-based Creole spoken in many parts of the Caribbean during the 16th and 17th centuries” (262). In other words, they postulated the existence of a Creole throughout the Spanish Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, during the colonial period, and, consequently of a linguistic situation in no way different from that of the French- and English-speaking areas, except in so far as Caribbean vernacular Spanish had moved in the direction of the superstrate language to such an extent that few, if any, traces of Creole structures survive.

Similarly, Lawton describes Puerto Rican Spanish as a real Creole, even though it did not historically undergo pidginization. The reasons, he claims, lay in the system of colonization used by the Spaniards, whose colonial policies differed from those of the French and English. The Spaniards stressed the early conversion of African slaves to Christianity and permitted their social assimilation. However, Lawton believes that PRS could still be considered a creolized language, even though it developed from a situation of language shift, rather than from a pidgin. The two major contact languages were English and Spanish, producing a creolized language whose intonation is Spanish, whose lexicon is drawn from both English and Spanish, and whose inflectional morphology shares features of both.

Otheguy, on the other hand, highlights on the peculiar phonological and syntactic features that distinguish the Spanish spoken in the Caribbean, namely the merger of /r/ and /l/, the aspiration of /s/, the velar realization of /n/ in word-final position, the lenis articulation of nonsyllabics in syllable-final position, and a widespread tendency towards CV canonic syllabic structure. These are traits that are not found in other Spanish dialects, and characterize, on the whole, the area of the Spanish-speaking world where Africans lived in the greatest numbers from the 16th to the 19th century. The close phonological structural similarities between Atlantic Creoles and Caribbean Spanish phonology suggest that a Spanish-based Creole could have existed in the Caribbean since colonial times.

Reinecke, however, defines the Spanish varieties spoken in the Caribbean as “plantation dialects that had begun to form, but never crystallized, never got beyond the makeshift stage. This happened in Cuba, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries in general” (6). These varieties are semi-creoles that have never undergone a complete restructuring process. According to Holm, in fact, a semi-Creole is a linguistic variety that has “both Creole and non-Creole features, but [the term] does not necessarily imply that they were ever basilectal Creoles since both Creole and non-Creoles can become semi-creoles by borrowing features” (1988: 8). This definition presupposes that:

- a) two different linguistic processes operate to determine the formation of a semi-creole language, namely (1) a partial restructuring of the lexical-source language, or (2) the influence of a Creole on a non-creole language;
- b) this partial restructuring creates different varieties that share many features with the superstrate language.

This hypothesis, however, may not require decreolization with the progressive assimilation of superstratal features by the Creole varieties (basilect, mesolect, acrolect), but it certainly perceives semi-creolization and creolization as two distinct linguistic phenomena. It needs to be pointed out that a semi-creolization process may also depend on particular socio-historical circumstances. First of all, it requires a society that allows frequent interactions between superstrate and substrate speakers. Communities with a demographic preponderance of Africans, and a minimal contact with native speakers of the lexical source language usually lead to conditions more favorable to the crystallization of a creole, rather than a semi-creole. Secondly, it entails the presence of laws that enable the slave population to more easily move from the status of slave to freedman. Thirdly, the number of native population needs to remain comparatively

low with that of non-natives. In other words, the slave population must not outnumber the non-slaves. These theoretical generalizations about the semicreolization process will be used to analyze the development process of PRS in order to better define and describe this particular language variety.

1.2 Socio-historical antecedents

At the time Spanish colonization began, the island was inhabited by a population of Arawakan Indians estimated to number between 50,000 and 70,000. This territory, which they called it Borinquen, was colonized only at the end of the 15th century, even though the conquistadores had been in the surrounding islands for years. In fact, it was only in 1509 that the captain don Juan Ponce de Leon founded the first permanent settlement, originally called “Villa de Caparra”. Located on the north-eastern coast of the island, it was then named Puerto Rico (nowadays San Juan), perhaps for its phonetic resemblance to the Taino term Borinquen. This name, used at the beginning just to designate the city of San Juan, was later used for the entire island. The colonizers came from different regions of Spain: Castilla, Galicia, and the Basque region. Although they spoke their own regional languages, they all used Castilian in San Juan. Accompanying these Spaniards were black slaves coming from the island of Hispaniola, Spain, Portugal and the Canary Islands. They were called *ladinos* or *negros de Castilla* or *de Portugal* alluding to their partial or total assimilation to the two most important languages of the Iberian peninsula.

The initial population in Puerto Rico was mainly male, and composed primarily of professional soldiers, church officials, and civilian settlers. About five years after the founding of Caparra, the scarcity of women prompted an official decree in 1514 permitting colonists to marry aboriginal Indian women. These unions reduced the number of pure Indians on the island, creating a new generation of mixed people. This and the combination of diseases, and deaths from the severe labor conditions in the gold mines or from revolts and uprisings led to the almost complete extinction of the aboriginal population and their language. By the end of the sixteenth century, the number of Indians on the island was estimated at around 1,756 (Nazario 76). The colonization of Puerto Rico, however, did not take place as quickly as in the surrounding territories. Widespread poverty, the limited yield of the gold mines, the lack of roads and adequate means of communications certainly dissuaded many settlers searching for immediate enrichment. Furthermore, Puerto Rico was not an important commercial center during this period, and its economy depended mainly on the export of sugar to Seville. And even this was extremely precarious due to the many severe hurricanes and the numerous assaults of pirates. For these reasons, the island was considered by the Spanish Crown more as a military outpost and a supply depot rather than an economically promising possession. This meant that its supply of slaves were very limited. In fact, the first Africans were brought to the island only in 1518. They were pure Africans (*negros bozales*) of Sudanese origin who, from the sixteenth century onwards, were taken as slaves from Nigeria, the Gold Coast or the Slave Coast, and from there shipped to different parts of the world, including Puerto Rico. They spoke various languages belonging to the Niger-Congo family. Other slaves were brought from the Bantu-speaking areas of Africa such as Angola or Zaire and shipped to all over the Caribbean. Many spoke *KimBundu*, and they were called *angolos*.

As coffee and sugar crops grew in importance, especially during the second half of the eighteenth century, the number of slaves also began to grow significantly. In 1794 they reached their highest proportion: 17,500 slaves that represented 13.8% of a total population of 127,133 (Álvarez 76). In 1804, the ports of Puerto Rico were opened to free trade and the population continued to grow. However, in spite of a substantial increase, there was a considerable discrepancy between the percentage of slaves and whites or freedmen. The proportion of slaves never reached that of Cuba or other colonies. Freedmen were always more numerous in Puerto Rico than in the surrounding territories. In fact, between 1775 and 1872, the year of abolition, the average percentage of freedmen was approximately 42% in Puerto Rico whereas in Cuba the figure was only 17%. This was due perhaps to the peculiar Puerto Rican socio-economic circumstances, and to a decision made by the governor of Puerto Rico in 1664 concerning black slaves arriving on the southern shores of the island. He decided not to sell the captured slaves as profit for the Royal Treasury, but rather to free them if they converted to Catholicism and pledged loyalty to the Crown (Álvarez 63). This caused a massive flee of African slaves from the Danish, Dutch, French and English colonies to join the slowly growing free Puerto Rican peasantry.

In any case, the mulatto and black population reached its pre-independence peak in 1827 (50.3%). After that date, however, blacks and mulattoes were gradually outnumbered by whites who were joined by a large number of loyalists to the Crown leaving South American countries and the Dominican Republic, which had declared their independence from Spain. By 1873, the year of emancipation in Puerto Rico, blacks accounted for only 5% (31,635) of the population, compared to the mixed population of 257,709 (42%) and a white population of 328,806 (53%) (Álvarez 78).

2.0 Lexicon: Superstrate/adstrate/substrate languages

The language of Puerto Rico, like that of any other country, is the result of a very long and complex process. Long, because it started more than five centuries ago, and complex, because its development has been affected by several sociopolitical, economic and cultural circumstances. Below are listed some socio-political factors that have shaped its evolution:

- 1) Before its colonization by the Spaniards, Puerto Rico was inhabited by Arawkan Indians speaking the Taino language also used in Hispaniola and Cuba. Locals were completely integrated into the Spanish or ladino population;
- 2) Spanish colonizers (1508-1898) brought their culture to the island, and replaced the aborigines' language with theirs. This colonization was carried out by Castilians and people from the south of Spain who were mostly peasants, soldiers, or people of the lower classes speaking regional varieties of Spanish;
- 3) African slaves spoke their own languages that had certainly an impact on PRS. In 1860, in fact, 48% of the population was made up of mulattoes and Negroes, either free or slave;
- 4) Even though Spanish colonization was invasive, many aspects of the local culture were kept intact, especially among the lower classes;
- 5) The North-American occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898 did not represent a cultural and linguistic exchange, but a political and economic domination which mainly favored the upper classes.

The Spanish colonization was, undoubtedly, widespread and pervasive. Every aspect of the Indians' socio-political life was impacted by Spanish culture. The language, the religion, the administrative and educational systems were all based on the Spanish model. In a very short period of time, the Taino language was completely replaced by Spanish, which became the only means of communication throughout the entire island. Settlers and Indians were educated only in Spanish by the Dominican and Franciscan friars sent to the colony to convert them. The language used was basically Castilian Spanish, but it did not always match the standard language spoken in Toledo or Madrid in the 16th and 17th centuries. As previously mentioned the Spaniards in contact with the aborigines came from different parts of Spain and were mostly from the lower classes, speaking dialects or regional varieties. In other words, the Spanish the islanders were forced to learn was a sort of koiné with traits traceable to different Spanish dialects, even though it maintained most of the basic norms of the more prestigious variety. This is how Alonso describes this particular language:

“Este coine lingüística que aporta la a de español se congregan y aprovechan ingredientes de distintas génesis: un fundamento morfosintáctico de textura esencialmente castellana central [...] Su pronunciación que consagra los nuevos perf iles que se alcanzan en el castellano meridional en contrast con la norma toledana; [...] Su vocabulario que en su fondo castellano retiene o acoge y generaliza en el habla arcaísmos, meridionalismos, occidentalismos, marinerismos y canarismos” (1930: 51) .

In brief, PRS was the result of a mixing of various language varieties -peninsular, insular and African- whose structural differences had been reduced and dissolved “dentros los cauces de un hablar nivelado y armónico al cual todos se irían asimilado” [within the river beds of a harmonious and leveled language in which every element is being absorbed] (Nazario 8). In other words, the Spanish that formed in Puerto Rico at the beginning of the sixteenth century arose from two opposite tendencies. On the one hand, “se conservan las formas mas antiguas del español bajo forma de arcaísmos medievales castellanos” [forms of old Spanish are preserved in the form of Castilian, medieval archaisms] (Álvarez 167). On the other hand, it had much greater variation in its pronunciation, morpho-syntax and vocabulary than the language spoken in Spain. The transplanted Castilian was deeply affected by the Taino language despite the rapid decline of aboriginal population brought about the end of a brief period of bilingualism,. As a result, many indigenous words referring to the toponymy, flora and fauna, social and spiritual life were

introduced, e.g. caculo ‘water bug’; cucubano ‘firefly’; fatula ‘roach’; guajana ‘cane flower’; tigüero ‘cover for a bunch of coconuts’.

African languages had a minor linguistic impact on PRS lexicon, although expressions of African origin are numerous and widely used. For example,

(a) chevere an adjective denoting something very special, very ‘swank’, ‘cool’ cf. Chikaranga (southern Zimbabwe) cepergwa ‘to stare with admiration (Megenney 245);

(b) ñame ‘yam’ cf. Wolof nyambi ‘yam’ or ñamñam ‘to eat’; cf. Yoruba iya ‘mashed yam’ ;

(c) gandúl ‘a type of grain that is eaten’ person’ cf. KiKongo wandu ‘a small, round bean’, or ‘a lazy or stupid person’ cf. KiMbundu ñigandu ‘crocodile’. This probably has to do with the fact that crocodiles are considered lazy because they spend so much of their time in a motionless position (ibid. 247).

In 1898 Puerto Rico became a part of the United States. This political connection brought about the americanization of Puerto Rican culture, which had also important linguistic ramifications. In fact, although Puerto Ricans have preserved their language, many English words are found in PRS lexicon. Some of them have been introduced with minor orthographic and phonetic changes such as appointment, “attorni” ‘attorney’, norsa ‘nurse’; espiquer ‘speaker’ (Nazario 613). Some others have taken on Castilian morphology: caucho ‘sofa’, jungla ‘jungle’, lonchar ‘to have lunch’. However, according to Del Rosario “ni el género ni el número ni el modo ni la voz ni los tiempos verbales han sido afectados por el contacto con el pueblo norteamericano [neither the gender nor the number, the moods, the voices, the tenses have been affected by this contact with North-American people]” (106).

3.0 Phonology

3.1 Phonotactic rules

PRS phonological system underwent many phonological changes such as (i) the deletion of final consonants, (ii) the simplification of consonant clusters, (iii) the nasalization of vowels, (iv) the reduction or disappearance of [e] in syllable-initial position before aspiration (está > ehtá, htá or tá), and (v) different degrees of openness of the vowels /e/, /o/, /a/ to distinguish singular forms from their plural counterparts. All of these can be attributed to the influence of West African languages converging with that of dialects spoken in the southern part of Spain and in the Canary Islands.

3.1.1 Change or loss of final /s/ and /n/

The change or deletion of the final /s/ and /n/ are two interesting linguistic phenomena that characterize PRS and other varieties of Caribbean Spanish. According to Poplack (1978:373), the most frequently attested phonetic realizations resulting from these processes are:

/s/	/n/
[s] alveolar sibilant	[n] alveolar nasal
[h] voiceless laryngeal	[N]homorganic realization with following fricative consonant
[ŋ] velar nasal	

The morphemes /s/ and /n/ indicate plurality in the nominal and verbal systems, respectively. For this reason, these changes are not random, but they are regulated by specific semantic and pragmatic norms. According to Terrel (1978) the deletion of the morpheme /s/ is conditioned by two factors: redundancy and number of syllables in the word. If the presence of /s/ is unnecessary, i.e. if it does not carry any important syntactic information, it can be dropped, e.g. comemo < Sp. comemos 'we eat'. It is maintained, on the other hand, in monosyllabic verb forms (e.g. das 'you give'; vas 'you go'), where its elision could lead to confusion with the corresponding third person singular (e.g. da 'he/she gives; va 'he/she goes'). When the morpheme /s/ is retained, it is realized as an alveolar sibilant /s/ or as a laryngeal fricative /h/, i.e. aspirated. The former is always present in absolute final positions, i.e. before a pause, or when it is followed by a stressed vowel, e.g. los únicos 'the only ones'. It is realized as an aspiration n syllable-final position, and before a consonant or an unstressed vowel, , e.g. lah cohtah 'the coasts'.

The deletion of /n/ in final position depends on both phonological and pragmatic considerations (retention of plural marking). More specifically, if in the sentence there are enough disambiguating details, the morpheme is usually elided. On the other hand, if the plural verbal marker is the only means of conveying plurality, deletion is avoided. At any rate, when the morpheme is completely omitted, the vowel preceding the deleted nasal retains a nasal quality, as in ehtá < Sp. están 'you, they are'.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that deletion is just the final stage of a reductive process which goes through an intermediate step of velarization. Before a vowel, a pause or in absolute final position, /n/ is realized as [ŋ], e.g. [kərbón] < Sp. carbón 'coal'; [hardíŋ] < Sp. -jardín 'garden'.

3.1.2 Aspiration of /h/ and /j/

The voiceless laryngeal phoneme /h/ deriving from Latin /f/ was used in old Castilian, but it disappeared in the sixteenth century. It has survived, however, in the dialects of southern Spain and the Canary Islands as well as in Puerto Rico. In fact, words such as hacer 'to do'; hormiga 'ant' are all pronounced with an initial /h/. By the same token, in the sixteenth century the Spanish voiceless palato-velar consonant /x/ and its voiced counterpart /v/, merged into one voiceless phoneme, the orthographic [j]. In PRS, however, it is realized so softly that it can resemble an aspirated /h/. In fact, there is not much difference between the pronunciation of the [j] in joven 'young' and the [h] in huir 'to escape'.

3.1.3 Seseo

The merging of the phonemes: /s/ or /θ/ into just a single voiceless coronal or pre-dorsal sibilant /s/ is one of the main Andalusian features found in Puerto Rico and many other parts of Spanish America since the sixteenth century. It has become so widely diffused and firmly rooted that even the orthography of certain words has changed accordingly, e.g. zumo 'juice' is spelled sumo, and zanahorias 'carrots' is written sanahorias.

3.1.4 Vocalization of /λ/

In general yeísmo is the dephonolization of the palatal lateral /λ/ (in orthography ll) into a palatal fricative /j/ realized in the spelling with a y. It usually occurs at the beginning of words or between vowels. For instance, the terms yave 'key', cabayo 'horse', caye 'street' are the PRS equivalent of the Spanish words: llave, caballo, calle. This phenomenon is very common in many areas including Argentina, Uruguay, the Canary Islands, Andalusia and the oil part of France. Unlike seseo, however, it is not reflected in spelling, where homophones have been kept distinct so that callo 'callus' and cayo 'rock' are written differently.

3.1.5 Alternation of /l/ and /r/

The dephonolization of /λ/ through yeísmo leaves out one possible lateral realization, namely the alveolar lateral /l/. This phoneme tends to lose some of its phonetic features in unstressed, syllable, or word-final position, either assimilating with the following consonant or changing into /r/.

By the same token, the trilled /r/ can undergo a similar articulatory weakening so that it is sometimes realized as /l/. In other words, the two phonemes, through the neutralization of their distinctive features, have an intermediate articulation that makes it quite difficult to distinguish them, e.g. puerta 'door' for puerta; esparda 'shoulder' for espalda. This phenomenon has been phonetically described by postulating two archiphonemes /L/ and /R/ whose distribution is determined by geographical and social factors. /L/, in fact, is mostly encountered in the north-western rural areas, whereas /R/ is recorded among peasants across the entire island. The confusion in the use of these two phonemes is very common in many Atlantic Creoles as well as in Niger-Congo languages in which they can be allophones of the same phoneme. It is also encountered in dialects spoken in the south of Spain, such as Andalusia or Murcia, where pueblo 'village' can be pronounced pedro.

3.2 Phonemic inventory: the vowel system

As noted above, Puerto Rican vowel system is usually represented as a quadrangle instead of a triangle. In that respect, it is very similar to Andalusian dialects or many Bantu varieties. These languages are characterized by "super high" or "super open" vowels usually transcribed with a cedilla (Kenstowicz 475):

i		u
i		u
e		o
e		o
a	a	a

They are higher or more open than their counterparts in Spain. This is due to the fact that, since many final consonants are deleted or aspirated, vowel height serves as an expedient to disambiguate two similar morphological forms, e.g. *tú tieneh* 'you have' vs. *el/ella/usted tiene* 'he/she/has, you [formal] have'.

3.2.1 Low central vowel /a/

The vowel /a/ is realized in three different ways: front, mid and back. Its allophones are conditioned by specific phonological, social and geographical factors. It is usually fronted before aspiration, or for morphological differentiation, whereas it is realized as mid/back in word-final position. Moreover, fronted /a/ is mostly encountered in the urban areas, while its velar counterpart can be heard in the interior parts of the island.

3.2.2 Mid front vowels

As can be seen from the chart, PRS displays two different types of /e/: one closed, and another which is very open. The latter usually occurs before a nasal consonant (as in *entra* 'he is entering', or *tengo* 'I have'); in stressed position, (e.g. *leche* 'milk', *cabeza* 'head'); before j (as in *orej'a* 'ear'), or before aspirated consonants (e.g.: *treh* < Sp. *tres* 'three').

3.2.3 Mid back vowels

These vowels also have open and closed variants. It is open before j: *hoja* 'leaf', reaching its maximum aperture before aspiration (e.g. *voh* < *voz* 'voice'). Furthermore, the distinction between homophonous words like: *dió* 'he gave' versus *dioh* 'god' is determined by different degrees of vocalic openness. At any rate, /o/ merges with a stressed /u/ in words like *sangrú* < Sp. *sangrudo* 'courageous' or *narizú* < Sp. *narizudo* 'person with a big nose'. It is, instead, kept closed in terms with the diminutive suffix -ito, perhaps because of the attraction of the front vowel /i/. (e.g.: *potrito* 'small colt') (Navarro 49).

3.2.4 High front and back vowels

/i/ and /u/ behave like the other vowels: they are more open before the orthographic j, and they tend to almost disappear and be pronounced like their neighboring vowels before aspiration.

3.3 Phonemic inventory: the consonantal system

PRS consonantal system consists of 18 phonemes besides the semivowels required to form diphthongs. They are as follows: the plosives /p, t, k, b, d, g/ the fricatives /s, j, h/, the affricate /č/, the lateral /l/, the vibrants /r, r, x/, and the nasals /m, n, ñ, ŋ/. As we have previously seen, they can undergo the following linguistic changes:

1. yeísmo: [kaɫe] > PRS. *caye*;
2. seseo: [θapato] > PRS. *sapato* "shoe";
3. alternation between /s/ and /h/ in syllable-final position: [estoy] > PRS. *ehtoy* 'I am';
4. aspiration of /h/ instead of Castilian /j/: [joven] > PRS. *hoven* 'young';

5. alternation between /r/ and /l/ in syllable/word-final position: [kantar] > PRS. cantal 'to sing';
6. velar /x/: [karo] > PRS. caxo 'car';
7. velar nasal /ŋ/ in word-final position: [pan] > PRS. paŋ 'bread'.

3.3.1 The plosives

The stops /p, t, k, b, d, g/ are usually realized more softly and with less air 'explosion' than their Castilian counterparts. They are very sensitive to the surrounding phonological environment. In fact, they could undergo partial or total assimilation with the following or preceding consonants.

The alveolar stop /d/ totally disappears after a nasal or a liquid, e.g. granne < Sp. grande 'big', cuanne < Sp. cuando 'when'. It is also elided at the end of words such as: siudá < Sp. ciudad 'city', libertá < Sp. libertad 'freedom'.(Navarro 59).

The voiced bilabial stop /b/ partially assimilates with a following liquid. In fact, it is pronounced with more open lips in: doble 'double', pueblo 'village'.

The voiced velar stop /g/ is completely lost when it occurs between back vowels: awa < Sp. agua 'water', yewa < Sp. yequa 'mare' (ibid.61).

3.3.2 The vibrant /r/

Navarro indicates three different phonetic realizations of this particular phoneme: alveolar, mixed and velar. The apico-alveolar /r/ is the least common, whereas the back articulations are quite frequent. Mixed /r/ is a "vibrante sonora o fricativa sorda, de articulación que empieza por un elemento fricativo de timbre vacilante (alveolar o velar) y termina en un sonido de /r/ alveolar semivibrante o fricativa [voiced vibrant or a voiceless fricative with an articulation that starts with an unsteady friction of the air (alveolar or velar) and ends with a sound similar to a semivibrant fricative alveolar /r/]" (Álvarez 695). It usually appears in the north-eastern part of the island, including the capital city. The velar realization of /r/ has undergone such a social and geographical diffusion that Puerto Rico is the only Spanish-speaking country where it is not considered a speech defect; but it is generally accepted.

3.3.3 The palatal consonants

The palatal fricative /j/ (in spelling y) as a result of the phenomenon of yeísmo is pronounced with less friction of the air: mayo 'May', cocuyo 'firefly'; yave 'key'; cabayo 'horse'. PRS also has a voiceless alveo-palatal affricate /ç/ (spelled as ch) scattered throughout the island. It is quite different from the equivalent Castilian phoneme. The occlusion, in fact, lasts longer, and the friction is very soft similar to the phonetic realization of /j/. It is usually called 'che adherente' for the fact it is realized with less friction and a closer contact with the palate at the moment of occlusion. This sound can be observed in words like leche 'milk', noche 'night', ocho 'eight' (Álvarez 685).

4.0 Morpho-syntax

4.1 The Verb Phrase

Generally speaking, PRS presents features which correspond to the less prestigious varieties of Castilian Spanish. Many Puerto Rican morphological features are encountered among the peninsular and insular lower classes' jargons such as Andalusian, Murcian or Canarian dialects). The uses of tenses and moods do not reveal major restructurings of the European language, even though sporadic changes and archaic usages can be still observed. The indicative forms of the present, past, present perfect, and pluperfect tenses do not show important discrepancies with their peninsular counterparts. In any case, in Puerto Rico and other Spanish-speaking countries in the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, Cuba and Venezuela) people prefer the preverbal position of the subject pronouns in questions, as in ¿Qué tú dices? vs. ¿Qué dices tu? 'What are you saying?'; ¿Qué usted quiere? vs. Qué quiere usted? 'What would you like?' Some irregular verbs are conjugated following regular paradigms. For instance, in the past tense the verb conducir 'to drive' is conjugated as follows:

PRS	Standard
yo condució	conduje
tu conduisihte	condujiste

The tendency to simplification is also observed in the future tense which displays regularized forms, *habere* < *habré*, 'I will have', *salirá* < *saldrá* 'he is going to go out', and *valirá* < *valdrá* 'it will be worth'. The old use of *haber* for *hacer* in impersonal temporal expressions has disappeared in Spain in the sixteenth century, but it persisted among the islanders, especially in its imperfect tense form, e.g.: *Había tiempo que estaba enfermo* < *hacía tiempo que estaba enfermo* 'He had been sick for long time'. By the same token, the medieval usage of the verb *ser* 'to be' as an auxiliary of intransitive or reflexive verbs still persists in PRS. A sentence such as *Soy nacida en Pedro Alvarez y bautizada aquí*. 'I was born in Pedro Alvarez and baptized here' can be easily heard among middle-aged Puerto Ricans who prefer the auxiliary *ser* to *haber*, which usually occurs in the standard variety.

The Canary Island use of the verb *agarrar* 'to take' in constructions such as: *Un día de estos agarro y voy a casa d'ella* 'One of these day I will just go to her house' is well-known in the rural language of Andalusia and in PRS as well. In Utuado, Lares and Moca numerous instances of gerunds agreeing in gender with the enclitic pronoun have been found: *peinándolo* 'as combing him' vs. *peinándala* 'as combing her'; *muriendose* 'dying (man)' vs. *muriendase* 'dying (woman)'. The periphrastic construction *ir* + gerund is used across the entire island, e.g. *Voy a ir haciendolo ahora* < Sp. *Voy a hacerlo ahora* 'I am going to do it now'; *¡Ve o vete sumando los numeros!* < Sp. *¡Suma los numeros!* 'Add the numbers. (Álvarez 94). It is important to notice that, with regard to the hypothetical constructions, PRS display some interesting usages which do not exist in the peninsular variety. As a remnant of sixteenth-century Spanish (for structures denoting possibility) people tend to prefer forms ending in *-ra* of the imperfect subjunctive in both clauses (*Si tuviera... fuera*), or the present indicative or subjunctive in the conditional clause and the imperfect subjunctive in the consequence (*Si no le molestas (or molestes) ... te dijera*. 'If it did not bother you... I would tell you'), whereas standard Spanish requires the present conditional of the main verb: *Si tuviera . . . sería*. 'If I had...I would be'. In the area of Ponce, however, islanders very often prefer the imperfect of the indicative in the main clause (*Si pudiera, lo compraba* 'If I could, I would buy it'), even though the imperfect subjunctive also occurs (*Si tuviera hambre, comiera* 'If I was hungry, I would eat').

4.2 The Noun Phrase

The Spanish determiners *el*, *la*, *las*, and *los* appear in PRS as well. They are used according to the number and gender of the noun they modify, e.g. *el libro* 'the book', *la pluma* 'the pen'. Some archaic nouns apparently inherited from Andalusian dialects where they still persist kept their feminine gender in PRS, even though they have become masculine in the standard variety, as in: *la hambre* < Sp. *el hambre* 'the hunger'; *la azúcar* < Sp. *el azúcar* 'the sugar' (Navarro 116). On the contrary, the term *sartén* 'pan' has become masculine and its use is so widespread that the expression *la sarten* sounds affected. Many nouns describing an action are formed from the first person singular of the present indicative or subjunctive of the verb, e.g. *bofeteo* (*bofetear*) < Sp. *bofetada* 'smack', or *acabe* (*acabar*) < Sp. *acabada* 'finish' (Navarro 117). Some terms acquire a collective meaning with the suffixes *-ada* or *-fa*, instead of *-aje* or *-ío*, e.g. *negrada* < Sp. *negraje* 'group of blacks'; *cauyería* < Sp. *cauyerío* 'cordage'. The suffix *-ía* is also used to imply pejorative meaning: *canallería* < Sp. *canallada* 'dirty trick'; *changuería* < Sp. *chanzada* 'ugly joke'. The consonant cluster *ng* seems to also impart a negative connotation. For instance, we can find: *pendango* 'coward'; *burundanga* 'a despicable person'; *gandinga* 'to break someone into pieces'. With really pejorative meaning we have the suffix *-udo*: *conchudo* 'stubborn'; *fondilludo* 'large-hipped person' (ibid.118). Furthermore, the widespread tendency in many Creole languages to paraphrase in order to avoid the coinage of new words occurs in PRS as well. Many names of trees, in fact, are formed by using the generic term for tree, *palo*, and its specifications, e.g. *palo de papaya* 'papaya-tree'; *palo de mamey* 'mamey-tree'; or *palo de anón* 'Anorna squamosa' (Navarro 119).

5.0 Other function words: adverbs, complementizers and conjunctions

The use of adverbs reveals a widespread English interference. As we know, in compound tenses Spanish do not allow any adverb or adverbial phrase to be interposed between the auxiliary and the past participle of the verb, as it would occur in English. PRS seems to allow such a construction, as shown in *La cantante fue calurosamente aplaudida* 'The singer was warmly applauded.' (Gili 84). Complementizers and conjunctions, on the contrary, seem to mostly follow the Spanish norms. Nevertheless, one may observe an interesting use, shared with the dialects of the Canary Islands and many Latin American countries, of the copulative *y* 'and' in constructions such as *coger y + verb*, or *agarrar y + verb* (e.g. *Un día de estos agarro y voy a casa d'ella* 'One of these day I will just go to her house'). It is also present in the structure *va y + verb* expressing the possibility that something might occur: *Tenga cuidado, porque va y se cae* 'Be careful, because it might fall' (Álvarez 716).

Conclusion

As we have seen, socio-historical factors seem to favor the hypothesis that PRS is more a case of partial restructuring, hence a semi-Creole language, than of a full-fledged Creole. In the island, there never was a demographic preponderance of inhabitants of African origin. In fact, when in the 19th century it was inundated with slave labor, Spanish language had already been established as the language of a mixed and socially mobile population. Moreover, social mobility, in particular the movement from the status of slave to free, was so rapid that there were no ideal conditions for the crystallization of a Creole. Linguistic evidence seems to also support this view. First of all, PRS does not share many features with other Spanish-based Creoles. As we have seen, the verbal system has maintained most of the rich morphology inherited from the European language. In spite of several phonological alterations, -i.e. deletion of morphemes /s/ and /n/ in the second person singular and third person plural of the verb, such reductive processes have never reached the extremes of Creole languages where the verb phrase consists of only a verbal form combined with several preverbal markers to indicate different tenses, moods or aspects. Secondly, PRS does not display any cases of serial verb constructions, which are frequently encountered in Atlantic Creoles. Verbs are usually connected with prepositions or complementizers (a 'to'; *pa(ra)* 'for'; *de* 'of'). The only structure that could resemble these particular constructions would be: *coger y + verb*, or *agarrar y + verb*. However, the presence of the conjunction *y* 'and' between the two verbs and the fact that it is also present in several dialects of the Canary Islands and Andalusia disprove such assumption.

Lack of subject-verb inversion in the interrogatives, i.e. *¿Qué tú dice?* 'What are you saying?' is a well-accepted and generalized phenomenon. However, this construction is only used with pronominal questions, whereas in Papiamentu CS it also involves noun-phrases, e.g. *Unda e buki ta?* (Maurer 44). Furthermore, the copulas *ser* and *estar* 'to be' are always expressed, even though, sometimes, they might reduce to a simple aspiration or undergo processes of aphaeresis: *estoy > toy* 'I am', or *estaba > taba* 'I was'. In Creole languages such as Zamboangueno (see Santoro, in press), on the other hand, copulas are hardly encountered, except in locative structures where the verb *estar* is reduced to *ta* or even to a simple *t* combining with the appropriate deictic, e.g. *tallí* 'it is there'; *takí* 'it is here'. Emphasis is conveyed by stressing the word or using a structure equivalent to the English 'It's' *Eso's*, whereas many Creoles use syntactic processes such as verb fronting, e.g. Papiamentu CS *Ta traha e ta traha* 'He's working', or predicate clefting (Holm 1988: 179). The nominal system has maintained the basic gender distinction, masculine vs. feminine. Some words have even changed their final vowel -e into an -a, or an -o to better highlight their gender category. In many Creole varieties, on the other hand, inflection morphology is partially or totally lost. For instance, the gender agreement appearing in Spanish Noun Phrases (e.g. *una casa bonita* 'a pretty house') is not found in Palenquero CS as shown in *un kasa bonito*, or in Zamboangueno: *un muher bonita* 'a pretty girl' (Forman 224). As we can see, the adjective or the determiner do not agree in gender with the feminine noun they modify.

In brief, empirical evidence indicates that this variety could be best classified a semi-Creole, instead of a post-Creole or a decreolized Creole. Even though it exhibits some restructuring in its grammar, it has never undergone full creolization. This does not mean that no internal changes have occurred. As we have seen, during its formation and development, many substantial alterations have been observed, profoundly affecting its phonemic inventory. For instance, the deletion of final consonants /s/ or /n/ is very relevant given that these two morphemes function as plural markers for the nominal and verbal systems, respectively. In order to maintain the number distinction, the language uses some

interesting phonetic devices. The vowel may be either realized higher or with a larger aperture than its peninsular counterpart, or may inherit the nasal quality of the preceding sound. Both super high/open and nasalized vowels do not appear to be part of the Spanish phonemic inventory.

Furthermore, the dephonorization of the lateral /l/, process better known as yeísmo, has led to the realization of the palatal fricative /j/, a phoneme which does not exist in the peninsular variety. By the same token, the voiceless alveo-palatal affricate /ç/ is usually realized with a longer occlusion and a softer friction than its Spanish equivalent. For this reason, it has been described as 'che adherente'. Moreover, as a result of seseo, the Spanish interdental fricative /θ/ and the voiced sibilant /z/ have merged into one single phoneme /s/, a change reflected in the orthography as well.

Perhaps the most radical phonological changes are noticed in the use of the vibrant /r/ which, due to an articulatory weakening, could be realized as /l/, or assimilate with the following liquid or nasal, or even, according to its geographical distribution, generate into two other allomorphs, either palato-alveolar or velar. These are phonemes that do not exist in the peninsular variety. At the morpho-syntactic level, many of the grammatical features that have disappeared in the European language have survived in PRS. The most common are: (i) the use of the auxiliaries haber 'to have' for transitive verbs, and ser for intransitive and reflexive ones to form compound tenses, (ii) the preference for the verb haber over hacer 'to make' in impersonal temporal constructions, and (iii) the presence of the simple and compound tenses of the future subjunctive, nowadays practically unknown. Furthermore, regarding the use of verb tenses, PRS shows a preference for the imperfect subjunctive in conditional clauses indicating possibility, and regular forms over irregular ones, especially in the past tense. It also uses the present tense instead of the future tense to indicate future actions. These interesting phenomena suggest an overall tendency towards tense simplification typical of many languages resulted from contact situations. In fact, many PRS linguistic features and processes could be traced back to substratum languages such as African, Creole, Taino, Andalusian, or Canarian dialects. As we have previously mentioned, despite the strong pressure of Spaniards over the aboriginal people and the African slaves to acquire their language, traces of their brief coexistence have survived in the language. Other internal changes have been the result of a long contact with English language whose influence is mainly observed at the lexical level in form of borrowings or calques. In conclusion, the present research has shown that PRS is not the result of a pervasive and generalized process of creolization, but rather of direct and indirect contact with the substratum and adstratum languages. Such linguistic exchanges have resulted in a widespread 'preservation' of old features, and an overall shifting towards simpler forms or structures.

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