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Social and Linguistic Factors in Partial Restructuring

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1. Introduction

This paper, based on a book-length study (Holm forthcoming), is intended to demonstrate the usefulness of the concept of partially restructured languages. That linguistic theory has failed to deal with this kind of language up to now is not surprising: they have simply fallen between the cracks of theory, being neither unrestructured overseas varieties nor fully restructured creoles. Each was compared only to varieties of its lexical source language, so it was not possible for any pattern to emerge. It is the comparison of such varieties not only with their source languages but also with one another—focusing on their sociolinguistic histories as well as their synchronic structure—that makes it clear that despite their dissimilar vocabularies they are, in a very important sense, the same kind of language, resulting from the same sociolinguistic processes.

This study compares the diachronic development and synchronic structure of Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese (BVP), African American English (AAE), Afrikaans (AFR), non-standard Caribbean Spanish (NSCS), and the Vernacular Lects of Reunion French (VLRf). It demonstrates that the balance of native and non-native speakers of their source languages during their early formation—coupled with other sociolinguistic factors—led to partially restructured varieties retaining a substantial amount of their source languages' morphosyntax, but also a significant number of substrate and interlanguage structural features.

By contrasting their diachronic development and key features of their synchronic structure (the morphosyntax of the noun phrase, verb phrase, and clauses), this study identifies the distinctive patterns that language varieties of this type share. This provides the social and linguistic data on which the study's conclusion is based: a formal theoretical model of the linguistic processes that lead to partial restructuring.

2. Social Factors in Partial Restructuring

It is clear that sociolinguistic factors play an important role in determining the degree of restructuring undergone by new language varieties that result from contact. If we focus on the demographics of the settings that led to the development of the five varieties being examined here, an important factor in the partial restructuring of languages emerges. Since race was usually an indicator of whether an individual spoke the European lingua franca as a first or second language during the earliest period, it can be inferred that in all of these situations the maximum percentage of native speakers associated with full creolization—i.e. 20% according to Bickerton (1981:4)—was considerably exceeded. If we compare the the

proportion of Europeans in the late 18th century in some speech communities where full and partially restructured varieties developed (Holm 1988-89, forthcoming), we find a considerable discrepancy:

Table 1: Estimated proportion of Whites in various societies in the late 18th century

<i>Colony</i>	<i>Developing Language</i>	
Virgin Islands	Negerhollands Creole Dutch	ca. 6%
Jamaica	Jamaican Creole English	ca. 8%
(rural) Curaçao	Papiamentu Creole Spanish/Port.	ca. 7%
Virginia	African American English	ca. 59%
Brazil	Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese	ca. 32%
Cape Colony	Afrikaans	ca. 47%
Cuba }		ca. 56%
Puerto Rico }	Non-standard Caribbean Spanish	ca. 45%
Santo Domingo }		ca. 34%

In the case of Réunion, the figures on the ethnicity of the population in the late 18th century would seem to be at variance with the above pattern: in 1767 over 80% of the population were slaves and only 20% were free. This apparent discrepancy stems from the unusual circumstances of the early development of the VLRF: the first half-century of settlement had led to an only slightly restructured variety of French that was quite accessible to the slave population. In 1717 Réunion's population was comparable to that of the colonies above where partially restructured languages emerged, being 45% white and 55% nonwhite. The nonwhites had had sufficient contact with the French settlers during the earlier period to learn their language with only minor restructuring and then act as an effective agent in transmitting this local French to the new slaves who arrived in the great influx after 1717, with whom they also had sufficient contact to allow for something approaching normal language learning. Thus, the partially restructured French that had developed up to 1717 remained the island's language, although it surely acquired more non-French features over the next half century, particularly on the lowland plantations. To summarize, partially rather than fully restructured languages developed in societies with a higher proportion of native speakers of the European lingua franca.

This was the single, overriding social factor in the development of African American English, Afrikaans, Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese, Non-Standard Caribbean Spanish and the Vernacular Lects of Réunion French as varieties distinct from both unrestructured overseas varieties of their source languages (e.g. the English of Ontario, the extinct Dutch of New York and New Jersey, the Portuguese of Madeira, the Spanish of Chile, or the French of Quebec) and completely restructured creole languages (e.g. Guyanese Creole English, the extinct Creole Dutch of the Virgin Islands, Guiné-Bissau Creole Portuguese, Palenquero

Creole Spanish, or Mauritian Creole French). That social factor is the demographic balance, during the first century of a new language's development, of native speakers versus non-native speakers of the European source language.

Parkvall (2000) is certainly correct in his conclusion that this demographic ratio is not the only social factor that determines the degree of language restructuring: there are other relevant factors, such as an incoming population already having some fluency in a common restructured language brought in from elsewhere, such as the English-Creole-speaking slaves imported into the southern colonies of British North America during the 17th century. Moreover, time is certainly a relevant factor: the importance of a society's final demographic balance can be overridden by the earlier emergence of a common partially restructured language spoken by a population that is fully accessible to a later incoming population, as was the case in Barbados and Réunion.

However, we can conclude from both Parkvall (2000) and the present study that the ratio between native and non-native speakers of the source language during the first century of a new language's development is indeed the most important social factor in determining the structure of that language. Where native speakers made up a strong majority in the new society, unrestructured overseas varieties developed. Where non-native speakers made up a strong majority, fully restructured creole languages developed. Neither process was particularly pretty: it is well known that many plantations that depended on slave labor were in fact death camps that simply consumed the men and women brought there to work. However, the ethnic changes necessary for unrestructured overseas language varieties to flourish (except for those on previously uninhabited islands like Madeira, of course) were not much more attractive: massive immigration of European colonists, who controlled the wealth, government and cultural institutions of the colonies, coupled with the extermination, absorption or retreat of speakers of indigenous languages. Partial restructuring of languages occurred in new societies where neither group--neither native nor non-native speakers, which in the beginning meant neither Europeans nor non-Europeans--were numerous enough to completely overwhelm the other group culturally.

The fact that partially rather than fully restructured languages developed in societies with a higher proportion of native speakers of the European lingua franca is logical: there were simply more native speakers to provide non-native speakers with samples of the language from which the latter could derive the former's rules in speaking it. Despite social stratification, learners still had better access to the target language than they did in those plantation societies where fully creolized languages developed. This led to two defining characteristics of the resulting languages: first, the non-native version of the European language was never as completely restructured as a fully creolized language; second, as the partially restructured language acquired native speakers--often among the descendants of Europeans as well as non-Europeans--it developed into an identifying community language that could draw on features not only from the non-native lingua franca, but also from native-speaker varieties of the European language.

The five partially restructured languages examined here continued to be in contact not only with native-speaker varieties of the European language (either acquired by local whites via normal transmission or brought in by new arrivals from the colonizing country) but also

with the fully restructured pidgins and creoles spoken by newly arrived slaves: by Caribbean and African slaves brought to the American South; by Asians and Africans brought to the Cape Colony; by African slaves arriving via Cape Verde and São Tomé to Brazil and the Spanish Caribbean; and by Africans, Malagasies and Indians brought to Réunion. Furthermore, these partially restructured languages were in varying degrees of contact with the pidgins and subsequent creoles that developed in nearby areas where sociolinguistic conditions were favorable to fuller restructuring, producing the forerunners of Gullah in the American South, Orange River Afrikaans in the Cape Colony, *Helvécia* Portuguese in Brazil, *Habla Bozal* and *Pororó* in the Spanish Caribbean, and the *Créole des Bas* on Réunion.

Thus even after the local pidgin or jargon of the earliest contact period ceased to be used, non-European features could still be borrowed into the version of the local language used by the monolingual descendants of the non-European groups. And, because humans signal their social identity and solidarity with others through their choice of linguistic variables (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) and because the social identities of the descendants of both the European and the non-European groups evolved over time, as did their relationships to one another, the variety spoken by each group would have tended to grow less dissimilar to that of the other through the two-way borrowing of features on all linguistic levels.

3. Linguistic factors in partial restructuring

Unlike the social factors discussed above, the linguistic facts I have surveyed (Holm forthcoming) are so many and various that they lend themselves less readily to generalizations. In order to allow a better overview of the morphosyntactic changes that characterize partial restructuring, Table 2 is presented below.

Table 2: Key morphosyntactic features in partial restructuring

Sb = relevant substrate language(s) + = attested presence of feature
 infl. = inflection 0 = attested absence of feature
 see also ABBREVIATIONS = not applicable or unknown

-----	AAE Sb	AFR Sb	BVP Sb	NSCS Sb	VLRFB Sb	E D	P S F
Verb Phrase							
<i>Verbal morphology*</i>							
1. Zero 3s PRES infl.	+	+	+	+	0	+	0 0 0 0 0 0
2. Zero 1p PRES infl.	+	+	+	+	+	+	0 0 0 0 0 0
3. Zero PAST infl.	+	+	+	+	0	+	0 0 0 0 0 0
<i>Aux./ preverbal marker</i>							
4. Semantic influence	+		+		+		0 0 0 0 0 0
<i>Negation</i>							
5. Negative concord	+		0		+		0 0 + + +
6. Discontinuous double	0		+	+	+	+	0 0 + 0 +
7. <i>Non-verbal predicates</i>	+	+	0		+	+	0 0 0 0 0 0

	AAE Sb	AFR Sb	BVP Sb	NSCS Sb	VLRF Sb	E D	P S	F
Noun Phrase								
<i>Number</i>								
8. Zero plural infl.*	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0 0 000
9. Unbound pluralizer	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+
10. Associative plural	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+
<i>Gender</i>								
11. No agreement in NP	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+
<i>Possession</i>								
12. [possessor 0 possessed]	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	+
13. [possessed 0 possessor]	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	+
<i>Pronouns</i>								
14. Reduced case marking	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+
15. Zero reflexive pronoun	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+
Clauses								
<i>Word order</i>								
16. QW S-V/Aux (direct)**	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Dependent clauses</i>								
17. Zero subject REL	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+
18. Zero subordinator 'that'	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Total number of +'s	15		9		13		9	14

*refers to spoken, non-suppletive forms only

** with S immediately following QW (non-echo question)

Space constraints have made necessary a good deal of encoding in this table; the following explanation is intended to help crack the code. First, the features are described by number without abbreviations below, followed by examples in Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese (BVP) and Non-Standard Caribbean Spanish (NSCS) wherever possible. When these are not appropriate, examples from African American English (AAE) are given.

1. The absence of an inflection indicating the third person singular form of the present tense:

AAE: *Where Miss Annie...live__now.* (Schneider 1989:65)

2. The absence of an inflection indicating the first person plural of the present tense:

BVP: *nós parte* 'we leave' (cf. SBP *nós partimos*) (Marroquim 1934:115-116)

3. The absence of an inflection indicating past tense:

AAE: *They taught me mighty good, they **teach** me good.* (Holm 1991:235)

It has to be stipulated that the above three features (as well as feature 8, the absence of a plural inflection on nouns etc.) refer only to spoken, non-suppletive forms in order to exclude irregular standard English past forms like *put* or silent standard French inflections like (*il vient* 'he comes'. Of course it is arbitrary to assign the inflection on E *we go__* or F *il parle* 'he speaks' either + or 0.

4. Semantic influence of a (creole) preverbal marker on a (source language) auxiliary verb:
 BVP: *Eli foi dis...* ‘He PAST said....’ (McKinney 1982:6)
 NSCS: *.tú no ta queré a mí* ‘you don't love me’
 cf. S *tú no me quieres* (Alvarez Nazário 1974:190)

5. The presence of a negator before a verb requires the negative form of indefinite determiners, pronouns, etc.
 AAE: *We don' want no six-month investigation!*

Assigning the presence of negative concord a plus in this chart seems to imply that it results from restructuring, which is not at all clear. It is a standard feature in the Romance languages and in earlier, non-standard varieties of English and Dutch (Brachin 1985:22). It is found in Atlantic creoles of all lexical bases (Holm 2000:195-6), but its presence in substrate languages is unknown.

Apropos of double negatives, part of the problem in decoding Table 9 has to do with negative designations for certain features, e.g. 1 (Zero 3s PRES infl.) or 11 (No agreement in NP). This encoding was necessary to avoid the opacity of having the same symbol (e.g. +) randomly encoding both restructuring and the lack of it. As the table stands, + encodes restructuring except in a few cases where the European superstrates (E D P S F) differ among themselves structurally (e.g. feature 11: all except English have gender agreement within the NP). In sum, no negative (or zero feature, such as the absence of an inflection) equals a negative (0, e.g. the absence of the Zero 3s PRES infl. in standard English), while its presence equals a positive (+, e.g. the presence of the Zero 3s PRES infl. in AAE).

6. The presence of a negator both before and after the verb:
 BVP: *Ele não sabe não.* literally ‘He doesn't know no.’ (Schwegler 1996)
 NSCS: *Pero yo no me acuerdo na deso no.*
 ‘But I don't remember anything about that.’ (Ortiz 1996:200)
7. The absence of the equivalent of a forms of ‘be’:
 BVP: *Ela ___ loka pur eli.* ‘She [is] crazy about him’ (McKinney 1975:15)
 NSCS: *Yo ___ Bido Dobe.* (Green 1997:185)
 ‘I am a Bido Doble.’ [family names]
8. The absence of a plural inflection on nouns (or other elements of the noun phrase):
 BVP: *o_ meus irmão_* ‘[the] my siblings’ (Holm 1987:417)
 NSCS: *lo_ hombre_* ‘the men’ (Lorenzino in Holm, Lorenzino and Mello 2000:203)
9. A separate word (often meaning ‘they’) to indicate plurality:
 AAE: *them hound_* (Holm 1991:240)
10. The use of a pluralizing word to indicate a person's usual associates:
 AAE: *Felicia an' them done gone.* (Mufwene 1998:73)
11. The absence of inflections indicating gender agreement between a noun and its

modifiers:

VLRf: *mon kaz lé gran* ‘my house is big’ versus F *ma maison est grande*
(Cellier 1985:19)

12. Nouns have no inflection identifying them as the possessor of the following noun:
AAE: *the white folk__ kitchen* (Holm 1991:241).
 13. Nouns do not follow a preposition indicating that they possess the preceding noun:
BVP: *kaza __ Maria* ‘Maria’s house’ (cf. SBP *a casa de Maria*) (Jerslow 1974)
 14. The forms of personal pronouns do not necessarily indicate their grammatical function in the sentence as in the source language:
BVP: *Ela chamou eu.* ‘She called me’ (Azevedo 1989:863).
SBP: *Ela chamou-me.*
 15. Reflexive pronouns required in the source language can be omitted:
BVP: *João cortou __ com faca.* ‘John cut [himself] with a knife.’
cf. SBP: *João courtou-se com a faca.* (Mello 1997:153)
PS *Yo __ lavo.* ‘I wash myself’ (Schwegler and Morton 2003:118)
cf. S *Yo me lavo.*
 16. In direct questions with a question word, the subject can precede the verb or auxiliary:
BVP: *Onde você caiu?* ‘Where did you fall?’ (Lemle 1976:77)
cf. EP *Onde caiu você?* OR *Onde é que você caiu?*
NSCS: *Qué tú dices?* literally ‘What you say?’ i.e. ‘What do you say?’
cf. S: *Qué dices (tú)?* (Holm 1989:308)
- It should be explained that the subject must *immediately* follow the question word to exclude constructions like EP *Onde é que você caiu?* Furthermore, it is a direct question and not the repetition of an indirect question for confirmation, e.g. AAE *Where I can go?*
17. A relative pronoun functioning as the subject of the clause can be omitted:
BVP *u fradi morava nu sobradu { __ era múitu áutu}*
‘The priest lived on-the second-floor, [which] was very high.’
(Jeroslow 1974: 194)
NSCS: *No, ahí hay una __ ta mara.*
‘No, there is one that is bad there.’ (Green 1997:166)
 18. The equivalent of ‘that’ introducing a subordinate clause can be omitted:
BVP *eu se { __ eu ko~jesu a m~aga }* (Jeroslow 1974:199)
‘I know [that] I am familiar with the range.’
NSCS: *Dice ____ jagüey tá chiquito.* ‘He says that the liana is small.’
cf. S: *Dice que el jagüey está chiquito* (Cabrera 1969, cited in Granda 1978:486)

This survey of the salient morphosyntactic features that distinguish these five partially restructured varieties from the standard variety of their source language (which does not imply that the latter was necessarily the most relevant source of the former) focuses on those

features found in a number of the restructured varieties rather than in just one, such as the unbound possessive marker *se* in Afrikaans. This is because the point of Table 2 is to provide an overview of the general structural tendencies of languages that have undergone partial restructuring.

Many of these tendencies can be characterized as structural reduction: reduced morphological marking for person or tense on verbs, for number on nouns and other elements in the NP, or for case on personal pronouns. Sometimes this reduction means the loss of syntactic complexities (such as subject-verb inversion in questions) or the loss of function words (the reflexive pronoun, the preposition equivalent to ‘of’ indicating possession, the subordinator equivalent to ‘that’). However, the loss of these particular features rather than others does not seem to be random: the losses that took place tend to make the partially restructured varieties more like their substrate languages.

Of course isolating Niger Congo languages formed an important part of the substrate of most of the partially restructured languages examined here, so it is not surprising that these tend to be more isolating, too. However, it is also a universal in second language acquisition that adults tend, when possible, to isolate grammatical information in unbound morphemes rather than inflections. Yet there is no need to choose one of these linguistic processes over the other in accounting for the structure of the new varieties: each one obviously reinforced the other. Furthermore, the fully restructured creoles of the same lexical base with which the partially restructured varieties may have been in contact bear the mark of their substrates even more strongly, but again there is no need to choose among these three forces pulling in the same direction. In the final analysis, there is no question that the partially restructured varieties bear the stamp of their substrate since they have innovative structures that represent not a reduction of the structure of their superstrate languages but rather an addition to it from their substrate: features 4 (the semantic influence of preverbal markers on auxiliaries), 6 (discontinuous double negation), 7 (non-verbal predicates), 9 (unbound pluralizers), and 10 (associative plurals). And there are many more such features that occur in only one or two partially restructured varieties: the AAE complementizer *say*, the resumptive pronouns in BVP relative clauses, the VLRG agentive subject marker *i*, etc.

Finally, Table 2 confirms subjective impressions about the degree of restructuring which each of these varieties has undergone. Arranging them according to their total number of positive features (indicating restructuring) yields the following hierarchy:

- 15 African American English
- 14 Vernacular Lects of Réunion French
- 13 Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese
- 9 Afrikaans
- 9 Non-Standard Caribbean Spanish

Of course the accuracy of such a quantitative indication of their degree of restructuring depends on the representativeness of the features chosen for Table 2. Still, this hierarchy is confirmed by a comparison of the two varieties with the most closely related source languages, BVP and NSCS. Features indicating restructuring that are not found in NSCS are present in BVP: e.g. features 2, 9, 13, and 14.

4. Linguistic processes in partial restructuring

I have proposed the theory below (Holm 2000) to account for what is known about partial restructuring, based on the results of the research of my students, myself and others. It includes the findings of Mello (1997), who observes that a number of linguistic processes must have combined to trigger the partial restructuring of Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese, and Green (1997), who in her study of non-standard Caribbean Spanish notes that, in addition to contact with more fully restructured varieties, what sets this kind of partial restructuring apart from other kinds of language shift (cf. Thomason and Kaufman 1988) is that it occurs among a shifting population speaking a number of *different* first languages.

If a population with different first languages shifts to a typologically distinct target language (itself an amalgam of varieties in contact, including fully restructured ones) under social circumstances that partially restrict access to the target language as normally used among a minority or weak majority population of native speakers, the following linguistic processes shape the resulting restructuring:

1. **primary leveling**, preserving lexical or structural features that are archaic, regional, or rare in the target language, sometimes extending them to new contexts;
2. **language drift**, following internal tendencies within the target language, particularly phonotactic, morphological or syntactic simplification;
3. **imperfect language shift** by the entire population, perpetuating structural features from ancestral languages and interlanguages in the speech of monolingual descendants;
4. **language borrowing**, incorporating structural features from fully pidginized or creolized varieties of the target language spoken by newcomers or found locally but confined to areas where sociolinguistic conditions were favorable to full restructuring;
5. **secondary leveling**, or the possible loss of features not found in the target language (from any of the above processes) if there is continued contact with the target language and it is perceived to have more prestige.

These processes result in a new variety with a substantial amount of the target language's structure intact, but also with a significant number of substrate or interlanguage structural features, i.e. a partially restructured language.

5. Conclusions

Recent research comparing different partially restructured languages (e.g. Holm, Lorenzino and Mello 1999) clearly demonstrates that insights gained from the study of one can cast light on others. While scholars of NSCS disinclined to accept any external influence on its structure have long resorted to postulating internally motivated phonological rules to account for the loss of inflectional morphology on verbs and within the noun phrase, the similar but more pervasive restructuring of BVP indicates that phonological rules alone are an inadequate explanation, forcing the issue of morphological restructuring resulting from contact. Because of the sociolinguistic parallels in the history of NSCS and BVP, it can be argued by analogy that what led to the reduced inflectional morphology of not only BVP but

also NSCS. was contact-induced morphological simplification rather than just phonological rules, which themselves seem more likely to have been motivated by such contact than random language-internal forces. Moreover, the difference in the degree of restructuring evident in NSCS and BVP, objectively confirmed above, points to a simple but important observation: that restructuring can indeed take place to differing degrees. This issue is now settled.

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