

5 Variation in Spanish America

The large majority of Spanish-speakers today, perhaps 300 million of them, are to be found in the Americas, in a vast area which stretches from the southwestern United States to the far south of the southern continent, not to mention the large cohorts of Hispanophones to be found in major US cities such as New York. We find, as we expect, geographical variation across this area, although mutual intelligibility among varieties is rarely threatened, and certainly not among educated and urban speakers.

Until recently, detailed linguistic studies of American Spanish have most usually been focused on the language of individual countries, and the linguistic atlases so far published continue to be oriented in this way (see *ALEC* 1981–3, *ALESuCh* 1973, *ALM* 1990–4, Navarro Tomás 1974). Even excellent surveys of the language of the whole of Spanish America, such as John Lipski's (1994) or the collaborative work edited by Manuel Alvar (1996b), are, at least in part, internally organized on a country-by-country basis. The frequent implication (although disavowed in the best studies) is therefore that the features described have boundaries which are co-terminous with those of the country concerned. This is not so; in accordance with normal distribution, each feature observed in Spanish America occupies its own area, which rarely if ever coincides with the area of any other feature, let alone with political boundaries. That is to say that we are dealing here, as in northern Spain and many other parts of the world, with a dialect continuum which is intersected by the frontiers which separate one republic from another. This intersection may be less arbitrary than that which occurs in other parts of the world, such as post-colonial Africa or the Middle East, but it is nevertheless true that, where we have sufficiently detailed information, it can be seen that isoglosses rarely coincide with political frontiers.¹

A further generalization is in order here. With the exception of lexical innovations (loans from Native American languages or from

American English, novel derivative words, etc.), there are exceedingly few features observed in American Spanish which do not also belong to some variety or varieties of Peninsular Spanish, and which are therefore likely to have their origins in Spain. The exceptional cases, mostly recessive, are ones which are observable among bilingual speakers of Spanish with a Native American language, such as the glottal plosives used at word boundaries (e.g., [mi ʔiho] *mi hijo*) in Yucatán Spanish by populations whose first language is one of the Maya-Quiché languages (Lope Blanch 1996: 85), or the three-vowel system used in the Andes by speakers whose first language is Quechua (Lipski 1994: 189, 321).

As in the case of other areas of the world, including Spain, it is among rural varieties of Spanish America that one observes the greatest degree of variation. Urban varieties, and particularly middle-class urban varieties, show rather greater similarity across the Spanish-American world. Whereas earlier studies of Latin American Spanish (like dialect studies in other parts of the world) were most frequently focused on rural speech, information about urban educated Spanish is now more abundantly available. The 'Proyecto de estudio coordinado de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades de Iberoamérica y de la Península Ibérica' (the 'Norma Culta' project, for short) began in 1964 as an undertaking of the Programa Interamericano de Lingüística y Enseñanza de Idiomas (PILEI), and has led to a series of publications describing educated speech in a number of cities in the Spanish-speaking world, with several others in progress.²

However, it is almost certainly true to say that, at all social levels, the degree of geographical variation within American Spanish is considerably less than the variation observable within Peninsular Spanish (as measured by the number of isoglosses which lie between two points the same distance apart). This lessened degree of variation within American Spanish is no doubt the effect of the colonization process which brought Spanish-speakers from Europe, and has its counterpart in the linguistic effects of other colonizing endeavours. Within the Romance language family, there is a considerably greater degree of geographical variation in the territory (namely Italy) from which the ancestor of those languages was originally spread than in the provinces which became Latin-speaking (France, Spain, Romania, etc.). Similarly, it is well known that British English is far more geographically (and socially) varied than the English spoken in the former British colonies (the US, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc.). The reasons for these effects are beginning to be understood, and lie

principally in the phenomenon of *koinéization* (see 5.1.1): the mixing of mutually comprehensible dialects implicit in the colonization process leads to the avoidance of the most marked features of the contributing dialects (see Trudgill 1986: 127–61).³

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A historical curiosity which contrasts World Spanish with World English is that, at the level of pronunciation, it is the consonant system which in Spanish accounts for the large majority of the instances of variation, whereas in English variation is centred on vowel pronunciation. This contrast between the two languages, at the world level, no doubt stems from variation within their respective base territories: almost all varieties of Peninsular Spanish can be seen to share the same five-vowel system and the same allophonic variation within it (the only major exception is the eight-vowel system of some Eastern Andalusian varieties; see 4.1.7.2.5), whereas British English varieties differ from one another mostly on the basis of their vowel structures. It follows that, in the discussion of phonological variation in American Spanish, we shall be exclusively concerned with consonants.⁴

Early-twentieth-century discussions of American Spanish often focused on the putative impact of Native American languages in creating variation in the Americas. One of the most extreme cases was that of Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1921), who denied the Andalusian contribution to the characteristics of American Spanish and accounted for its internal geographical variation in terms of the different impact of specific Native American languages in different areas. However, further information about the distribution of features in New World Spanish has revealed a poor geographical match between the features at issue and the areas where the indigenous languages concerned are or were spoken. Consequently, this kind of explanation has had to be abandoned, and it is today recognized that the impact of Native American languages on Spanish is confined to the vocabulary, with only few exceptions. Some of these exceptions are innovatory and may extend to syntax (e.g., in the bilingual region of Paraguay, where Guaraní is considered to have influenced certain aspects of Spanish syntax). In other exceptional cases, Native American languages are thought to have a conservative influence on Spanish, as when the phoneme /ʎ/ is retained in Andean Spanish (by contrast with other

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areas where it has merged with /j/; see 5.1.2.1) perhaps because the pre-Hispanic languages of this area show /ʎ/ in their inventories of phonemes.

At least some innovations (apart from lexical borrowings from Native American languages, from English, etc.) have had their origins in the Americas, and have therefore never formed part of Peninsular Spanish.⁵ However, as noted above, most of the features which separate one variety of American Spanish from another are also to be found in the Peninsula, where they often also separate one variety from another. This implies that the distribution of features in American Spanish can often be reasonably sought in the processes of immigration from Spain and the patterns of dialect mixing which sprang from these processes. In this respect, the spread of Spanish to America can be viewed as a continuation of the process which, during the Middle Ages, as we have seen (4.1.7.2), led to the extension of central northern varieties of Hispano-Romance down through the centre of the Peninsula, into New Castile, Andalusia, etc., in the wake of the Christian Reconquest of Islamic Spain. This process was still continuing (in the Kingdom of Granada, finally conquered in the same year that Columbus set sail westwards) as the settlement of America began. The extension of Spanish to America is in part also a continuation of the process which led to the spread of Spanish to the Canaries (see 4.1.8), since a significant proportion of those who participated in the settlement of America came from families who had first settled in the Canaries (see Lipski 1994: 55–61).

Only slightly different is the settlement process, in the Ottoman Empire and around the Mediterranean, of the Jews who were expelled (also in 1492) from the newly constituted Kingdom of Spain. These events will be considered in Chapter 6.

In all these cases, it is crucial to understand, as far as possible, the geographical and social origins of the settlers (5.1.1), as well as the social patterns which were established in the newly settled territories (5.1.2). We have already considered (3.1) the linguistic effects to be expected from the mixing of mutually intelligible dialects which occurs under these circumstances.

5.1.1 American Spanish and Andalusian Spanish

The traditional, 'common-sense' view of the relationship between American Spanish and Peninsular Spanish is that the former is in some

sense a continuation of Andalusian Spanish, while central and northern Peninsular varieties represent a slightly different, more conservative outcome of the medieval language. This view is based upon the observation that Spanish-American speech is characterized (among other features) by *seseo* (5.1.1.1), the same feature heard in much of Andalusia (4.1.7.2.1), rather than by distinction of /s/ and /θ/ (3.1.3.1), and by the use of a single second-person plural pronoun (*ustedes*) (5.1.1.2), as heard in much of western Andalusia (4.1.7.2.8), rather than by contrast between formal *ustedes* and familiar *vosotros*. Similarly, observers note that speakers of American Spanish use the masculine singular personal pronoun *lo* both for personal and non-personal referents, as happens in Andalusia (4.1.7.2.7), rather than the standard central and northern Peninsular system, which uses *le* for personal referents and retains *lo* only for non-personal referents (4.1.2.3).

What is more, many (although not all) American-Spanish speakers

- merge /ɾ/ and /j/ (in [j], [ɟ], etc., as in [jáma], [ɟáma] *llama*),
- weaken syllable-final /-s/ (e.g., [é^hto^(h)] *estos*),
- glottalize or pharyngealize the *jota* (/x/) to [h] or [ʰ] (e.g., [húyo], [húyo] *jugo*),
- and allow syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/ to merge, just as most Andalusians do (see 4.1.7.2.2, 4.1.7.2.4, and 4.1.7.2.6).

The assumed explanation of these similarities was that it was predominantly Andalusians who settled in the American Empire in the decades and centuries after Columbus's discovery.

However, this 'common-sense' view was challenged, in the earlier part of the twentieth century, by Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1921, 1932). Using information concerning some 10,000 early colonists, he was able to observe that only a minority (about a third) was from Andalusia, with most of the remainder drawn from all over the other regions of the Crown of Castile and from further afield. He therefore concluded that the similarities between American and Andalusian Spanish were due to processes of parallel development on each side of the Atlantic. Since, when Henríquez Ureña was writing, the chronology of the linguistic processes concerned was far from secure – most were then thought to have taken place considerably later than is now thought – this was a not unreasonable conclusion.

Beginning two decades later, the effect of Peter Boyd-Bowman's extensive researches (1956, 1963, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1973) has been to provide a firm factual underpinning for a return to the old common-sense view. On the basis of the biographies of some 40,000 early

emigrants to America, he has shown that Andalusian participation in (and influence over) the colonization process was instrumental in establishing a distinctively Andalusian flavour in the language of the first settlements. Additionally, he has enabled us to confirm a specifically western Andalusian, even Sevillian, character in this colonial speech.

Although Boyd-Bowman confirmed that Andalusians constituted a minority of emigrants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, his work, together with that of other scholars (e.g., Menéndez Pidal 1962b, Frago Gracia 1995), has enabled scholars to identify a number of factors which are likely to have enhanced the chances of Andalusian speech-patterns becoming the dominant ones in the new colonies. Three of these factors are particularly persuasive:

- 1 Although after the first two decades Andalusians did not form an absolute majority, they almost certainly continued to form the largest single cohort, compared with groups from areas such as Extremadura, New Castile, Old Castile, and the Basque Country.
- 2 In the period immediately following 1493, Andalusians formed an overwhelming majority of emigrants to the new settlements, in the Caribbean (Boyd-Bowman 1973: 3). They were therefore in a position to set the linguistic tone of these new towns, where later emigrants were bound to stay on their way to other colonies. The importance of this 'founder principle' has been pointed out in other colonial contexts, e.g., in the establishment of Australian English.
- 3 Of the women who emigrated during the first seventy years, the majority were Andalusians, and a significant proportion of these were from Seville. It scarcely needs to be pointed out that women are likely to have a greater impact on the speech-patterns of their children than are their husbands.

Less important, perhaps, were the following factors, which involve linguistic accommodation on the parts of adult speakers. They may nevertheless have had some ancillary importance in the spread of Andalusian features to America:

- 4 Wherever in the Peninsula would-be emigrants came from, they had to make their way to the Casa de la Contratación in Seville in order to gain permission to emigrate and secure a passage. This was a lengthy process and emigrants were obliged to wait for months, and often as long as a year, in the port cities of Seville, Cádiz, or Huelva. We can predict that many emigrants would have begun the process of accommodation to Andalusian (particularly

Sevillian) speech-patterns well before they ever reached America (see 3.1.1). It may also be speculated that those who had decided to take the risk of emigration would by temperament be adaptable, not least in their speech.

- 5 The voyage to the Caribbean took several months, during which time emigrants were in daily contact with the sailors who manned the ships. These sailors were drawn, predominantly or exclusively it would seem, from the ports of western Andalusia: Seville (whence ocean-going ships set out), Cádiz, Palos, Huelva, etc.

We should in any case bear in mind that demographic considerations are not the most important ones in the question of the emergence of *koinés* from situations of dialect contact (see 3.1). As new dialects form, through selection of competing variants from the multiplicity available in communities formed by mixtures of people from different geographical regions, we expect to observe preference for those variants which offer greatest structural simplicity (see 3.1.4). The simplest variants may not originally have belonged to the largest group making up the new society. However, it should be noted that in the new Spanish-American societies, it was the Andalusian contingent whose dialects most frequently offered a simpler variant than those contributed by the speech of other Peninsular regions. This is true of a good number of salient Andalusian features: *seseo* (5.1.1.1), *yeísmo* (5.1.2.1), the merger of syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/ (5.1.2.3), the use of *ustedes* as the sole form of second-person plural address (5.1.1.2), use of the third-person singular personal pronoun *le* exclusively for indirect-object reference (rather than the more opaque system of *leísmo* used by speakers from the northern Peninsula; see 4.1.2.3).

In the following sections (5.1.1.1–2), we shall look at those features of American Spanish which have Andalusian origins and which have become universal in New World Spanish. Other American Spanish features which arguably have Andalusian origin, but whose distribution is limited to lowland areas (see 5.1.2), will be discussed in Sections 5.1.2.1–5.

5.1.1.1 Seseo

It is now all but certain (see Frago 1993: 307–73) that, already at the time of the European discovery of America, the first phase of the reduction of sibilants had taken place in Seville and other parts of western Andalusia. In 4.1.7.2.1, we saw that reduction of the sibilants

in Andalusia takes place in two phases: the first consists of the merger of the dental fricatives /ʃ/ (from earlier /tʰ/) and /z/ (from earlier /dʰ/) with the (dento-)alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ respectively. When, somewhat later, interested observers from outside Andalusia note these changes, they label them *ççeo* and *zezeo* respectively.⁶

The second phase of the process, bringing /ʃ/ and /z/ together as /ʃ/, spread into Andalusia from the north no later than the sixteenth century and possibly earlier. This development is part of the process whereby all voiced sibilants merged with their voiceless counterparts, one which has become universal in Castilian, as well as in Galician, Asturian and other northern Peninsular varieties (see 3.1.3.1).

Both of these changes were carried to America. The first no doubt characterized the speech of all western Andalusians, who formed a decisive component in the first settler communities in the New World (see 5.1.1). The second change rapidly became the norm in all varieties of Peninsular Spanish in the century after the Discovery, and was similarly carried to America. Since, in this case, the change belonged to all classes of emigrants from all the component regions of the Crown of Castile, and since it is a simplifying innovation, there would have been little resistance to it in the dialect mixtures which were gradually being resolved into *koinés* in the various American settlements.⁷

The result of these successive innovations was that the four medieval Castilian sibilants /tʰ/, /dʰ/, /s/, /z/ were reduced to a single phoneme, typically a voiceless dental slit-fricative (/ʃ/), in all varieties of American Spanish.⁸ That is to say that *seseo* is all but universal in Spanish America, since the fronted variant of Andalusian /ʃ/, namely [ʃ⁹], is only rarely reported in America. This fronting (or *ceceo*), today characteristic of southern Andalusian varieties (see 4.1.7.2.1) and some Canarian varieties (4.1.8), appears to have arisen too late to be spread to America.

5.1.1.2 Second-person plural address

A further striking way in which a feature belonging to western Andalusian varieties has been extended to America is in the loss of the contrast between informal and formal modes of address in the plural. Although this contrast is universally observed in Spanish in the case of a single addressee (informal (*tú*) *eres* or (*vos*) *sois* vs formal (*usted*) *es*; see also 5.1.2.5), and although the parallel plural distinction (informal (*vosotros/-as*) *sois* vs formal (*ustedes*) *son*) is observed in the whole of

Spain outside western Andalusia (see 4.1.7.2.8), all American Spanish varieties, apparently without exception, have abandoned the formal vs informal distinction and use (*ustedes*) *son* for all plural addressees.

This unanimity is striking in two ways. Firstly, the form of the pronoun *ustedes* results, as is well known, from a contraction of the phrase *vuestras mercedes*. However, this particular contraction is only one of several competing contractions, from which the form *ustedes* emerged triumphant among all speakers in Spain only in the eighteenth century (Lapesa 1980: 392). Its present universal use in America argues for a much earlier acceptance of this form of address in western Andalusia than in the rest of Spain. Secondly, we should note that, unlike what frequently happens in western Andalusia, the pronoun *ustedes* in America is always accompanied by (or is represented by) a third-person verb. The Andalusian collocation (*ustedes*) *sois* is completely unknown on the other side of the Atlantic, where such verb forms only ever have singular value (5.1.2.5).

5.1.2 Settlement and communication patterns and their linguistic effects

The route that Columbus took in his first voyage of discovery was from Palos (in the province of Huelva), via the Canaries, to Cuba and La Española (its name anglicized to Hispaniola, an island now comprising the two states of Haiti and the Dominican Republic). This route, followed by later discoverers and conquerors, became the normal line of communication between Spain and America and was extended to the northern mainland, when Hernán Cortés gained control over the Aztec Empire between 1519 and 1521 and founded Mexico City, and to the southern continent, following Francisco Pizarro's conquest of Peru (1532–5) and the establishment of Lima as the capital of the newly acquired territory. The Spanish end of this line quickly became the city of Seville, which was granted a monopoly of trade with the American Empire and fiercely protected this monopoly, ensuring that all traffic (of people or goods) between Spain and America was funnelled through its port or through the other western Andalusian ports that it controlled, such as Cádiz and Huelva.

Along the western arms of this branching line of communication were established the first Spanish-speaking settlements in the Americas, in Cuba and La Española, in Veracruz and Mexico City, in

Cartagena and Lima, etc. Places along these routes remained in relatively close communication with Spain, which could be reached in journeys of eight or ten weeks, mostly by sea. By contrast, travellers from settlements established elsewhere in the expanding Empire often required overland journeys of months before they could reach the main line of communication, typically at one of the points just mentioned. A case in point is the territory which later became Argentina: settlement began there in the mid-sixteenth century, by colonists from Peru, and the territory continued to be administered from Lima until the establishment of a separate Viceroyalty in Buenos Aires in 1776. In this period, direct travel by sea between Spain and Argentina was rarely possible, and travellers had to make the enormously long land and river journey across the southern continent, including the Andes, and up the coast to Lima, then linking with the well-established route back to Seville.

What is the linguistic significance of these facts? Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1962b) has examined the way in which, in late medieval and early modern Spain, two rival linguistic norms were established within the Crown of Castile. The most powerful prestige centre in medieval Castile was Toledo, later displaced by Madrid when the latter became the capital in 1561.⁹ This norm was characterized by such features as *leísmo* (see 4.1.2.3), and maintenance of the contrast between dental and alveolar sibilants (see 3.1.3.1). However, this norm was rivalled by another, based upon the linguistic varieties which emerged in Seville. This city, already perhaps the largest in the Peninsula when it was recaptured from the Moors in 1248, grew in economic and cultural significance during the later Middle Ages, and was then enormously enriched by its control over all trade with the American Empire (see above). The features of this Sevillian norm (*seseo*, *yeísmo*, weakening of syllable-final /s/, merger of *vosotros* and *ustedes*, etc.) have been considered in 4.1.7.2.

On this basis, we can envisage (no doubt with some simplification) that, in each Spanish-American settlement, there was a struggle between the Madrid norm and the Seville norm. In those localities which were centres of political power (and therefore of linguistic prestige), and in those localities which were in relatively easy communication with the latter, the features of the Madrid norm would have had some weight and could be expected to oust at least some features of the Seville norm. By contrast, in those localities which were distant from the prestige centres, Sevillian features would go more or less unchecked.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the pattern of settlement and of communications within Spain's American Empire can be seen to determine, at least in part, the linguistic development of Spanish America.¹⁰ In each town and city in the New World, a slightly different dialect mixture came about, as a result of the different geographical and social origins of the settlers there, and as a result of the extent to which the Sevillian norm was checked by the Madrid norm.

We have already seen (5.1.1) that the earliest and most crucial contributions to these mixtures came from speakers of western Andalusian varieties. However, in some centres there would have been considerable input into the mixture from speakers originating in the centre and north of the Peninsula. This would be the case in the cities from which the Empire was administered (principally Mexico City and Lima, and to a lesser extent in the major Caribbean towns). Mexico City and Lima became, by the middle of the sixteenth century, the seats of the vice-regal courts and of the colonial administration. Only a little later, the first American universities were founded, in the same two cities, where the Church also set up the headquarters of its powerful missionary effort. Likewise, these cities were a magnet for trade with Europe. As a result, among the population of these cities were crown officials, priests and nuns, academics, traders, etc., drawn from all over Spain, but more likely to aspire to the Madrid norm than to the Sevillian norm. In these places, then, we can predict that the Andalusian flavour would be less likely to totally dominate the dialect mixture, and that the speech of these places, like those in immediate contact with them, would be somewhat closer to the norms of central Spain.

Away from these cultural centres and from the lines of communication which connected them with Spain, the relative rarity of prestigious speakers of central and northern Peninsular varieties would help to ensure that the Andalusian features in the local dialect mixture would go relatively unchallenged. It is for this reason, in all probability, that we find a much more marked Andalusian character in the language of the Southern Cone (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and to a lesser extent Chile), in central America (despite the fact that it is nearer to Spain than is Peru), in certain other less-frequented parts of the Caribbean (e.g., Venezuela), and in those parts of Spanish America which later became absorbed by the United States.

A principle of classification of Spanish-American varieties which one frequently encounters is their division into highland varieties, on the one hand, and lowland or coastal varieties, on the other. In this way,

the speech of the Mexican plateau and of Andean Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia are contrasted with the speech of the Antilles, central America, Venezuela, the countries of the Southern Cone, and the coastal areas of the countries first named. We shall see that some features of American Spanish are indeed distributed in approximately this way: weakening of /-s/ (5.1.2.2); merger of /-r/ and /-l/ (5.1.2.3); weakening of word-final /-n/ (5.1.2.4). It was once claimed that this division was a consequence of the destinations preferred by Spanish settlers: that emigrants from lowland Andalusia preferred to settle in coastal areas, while those from the Castilian Meseta preferred the highland areas of America. However, no data have ever been presented which would support this notion. Neither has any other convincing rationale been provided to account for this distribution of linguistic features, apart from the ideas presented earlier in this section, so that the highland/lowland distinction should be seen as a consequence of the paradoxical fact that speakers in the inland areas of Spanish America often had closer contacts with the central Spanish linguistic norm than those in the coastal regions did, because most of the important political centres were in highland areas.

In the following sections (5.1.2.1–5), we shall consider certain key features of American Spanish whose distribution can be seen to respond to the patterns of settlement outlined in this section (5.1.2). The phonetic features (5.1.2.1–4) will be discussed in descending order of the number of Spanish-American varieties affected by them.

5.1.2.1 *Yeísmo*

Merger of /ɰ/ and /j/ with non-lateral results is as dominant in America as it is in the Peninsula (4.1.7.2.2), since the main Spanish-American varieties that retain the contrast are restricted to those of the Andes (highland areas of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and (until recently) Colombia; Lipski 1994: 188, 319, 248, 210; Alonso 1967a). It is probable that retention of /ɰ/ (and its contrast with /j/) is related to the factors just outlined (in 5.1.2), but it has to be said that absence of this feature from Mexico weighs against this interpretation, as does its presence in lowland Bolivia and in Paraguay.

A probably relevant circumstance which has been identified in this case is the fact that there is a good degree of coincidence between the area where /ɰ/ is retained in American Spanish and the area where Native American languages display /ɰ/ among their phonemes. This is not to say that /ɰ/ is retained merely in the Spanish of bilinguals; in the

areas identified above, lateral pronunciation (/ʎ/) is reported to belong to people of all social and educational backgrounds. At the least, the indigenous languages concerned (Quechua and Aymara) have had a role in maintaining a contrast which is recessive in every other part of the Spanish-speaking world.

In the various territories where *yeísmo* has become established, the phonetic result of the merger is very varied. The commonest pronunciation, the voiced mid-palatal fricative [j], is also the most frequent in the Peninsula, but in Spanish America (as in Spain) there are many alternatives, and the range of variants is greater in America than in the Peninsula. While highland Mexico and Colombia have [j], many Caribbean and central American varieties, as well as those of the Pacific coast, show a sound with much weaker friction, sometimes little more than a glide [j], especially weak after the palatal vowels /e/ or /i/: [kasíʎa], or even [kasía] *casilla*.¹¹ By contrast, Argentina and Uruguay have a much more tense (and instantly recognizable) pre-palatal groove fricative [ʒ], which in Buenos Aires is most frequently devoiced to [ʃ]: [ʒamár]~[ʃamár] *llamar* (Fontanella de Weinberg 1978).

Where the historic phonemic contrast between lateral and non-lateral palatals is maintained (i.e., in the Andean area), the lateral has sometimes been modified to a (non-lateral) prepalatal groove fricative /ʒ/, distinct from the mid-palatal /j/, which is often weakened to [j]. This occurs in the central highlands of Ecuador (Lipski 1994: 248): [ʒamár] *llamar*, [jerno] *yerno*.

5.1.2.2 Weakening of syllable-final /-s/

Just as Spain is divided between those varieties which maintain /s/ as a sibilant in the syllabic coda (most varieties in the northern half of the Peninsula) and those that weaken it in some way, typically to [h] or [Ø] (those varieties used in the Canaries, in Andalusia, Extremadura, and Murcia, and increasingly in New Castile, see 4.1.7.2.4), so Spanish America is also divided. However, in the New World, the division between /-s/-retaining and /-s/-weakening areas is more complex. In some measure, this division corresponds to the degree of closeness of contact between central Spain and the specific American area concerned: those areas which, because of their political and economic importance in the Empire, attracted prestigious speakers of central Castilian varieties are the ones which retain /-s/ most frequently (most of Mexico, much of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). By contrast, the countries in and around the Caribbean, the Pacific coast, and

the countries of the Southern Cone show intense weakening or loss of this phoneme. As we have seen (5.1.2), it is likely that in Mexico City and Lima, and in the areas in closest contact with these powerful centres, the colonial dialect mixture produced varieties which were somewhat closer to the central Peninsular norm than was the case in areas which were more distant from such influences, where southern Peninsular pronunciations were able to dominate the mix.

A difficulty inherent in this argument lies in the pronunciations of /-s/ used in Lima. Today, many speakers in Lima weaken syllable-final /s/ to [h], but do not eliminate it (Lipski 1994: 321–2). However, the data reported by Lipski suggest that this may be a recent development. Middle-class speakers show some tendency to aspirate /s/ word-internally, but not word-finally before a pause or a vowel, while younger speakers also sometimes use [h] in the latter environments. Aspiration in a variety of contexts only becomes frequent in working-class varieties. This distribution has all the appearance of recent change from below (see 3.4.2), and it is therefore likely that, until recent generations, Lima formed part of the /-s/-retaining part of Spanish America.

At all events, weakening of /-s/ is typical of the lowland, island and coastal communities of Spanish America. A good example of this contrast between highland and lowland treatments of /-s/ is provided by Mexican Spanish: by far the greater part of the country comprises highland areas, where /-s/ is retained intact (or as a particularly salient sibilant), while the Pacific coast (e.g., Acapulco), the Gulf coast (e.g., Tabasco and Veracruz), and southern areas adjacent to Belize and Guatemala show weakening in varying degrees (see Lipski 1994: 280–3). Within the various lowland areas of Spanish America, it is in the Antilles and in certain central American countries (e.g., Nicaragua) that the greatest intensity of /-s/-weakening occurs.

As in southern Spain, the realizations of weakened /-s/ are varied, but the range of variation in American Spanish is less than in the Peninsula. There are only infrequent reports of the kinds of assimilation of the aspirate to the following consonant (and of this consonant to the aspirate) which so frequently occur in Andalusia (see 4.1.7.2.4).¹² In most of the American areas where /-s/-weakening occurs, there appears to be a hierarchy of reduction. From most frequent to least frequent, typical realizations are as follows:

- aspiration of syllable-final /s/ word-internally, word-finally (before a word-initial consonant), and phrase-finally: [é^hta^h muhére^h] *estas mujeres*.

- aspiration of syllable-final /s/ word-internally and word-finally (before a word-initial consonant), with deletion in phrase-final position: [é^hta^h muhére].
- aspiration of syllable-final /s/ word-internally, with deletion word-finally (before a word-initial consonant) and in phrase-final position: [é^hta muhére].
- deletion in all these positions: [éta muhére].
- aspiration of word-final /s/ before a word-initial vowel (with or without deletion of aspiration in internal syllable-final position): [é^(h)ta hóβra] *estas obras*.
- deletion of word-final /s/ in all positions, including before a word-initial vowel: [éta óβra] *estas obras*.
- extension of aspiration to word-initial /s/: [éta hejóra] *esta señora*.

This hierarchy is not only a frequency hierarchy, but may be correlated with social variants such as socio-economic class, so that, in the lowland areas where this feature occurs, speakers of middle-class background are less likely than members of the working class to use variants at the bottom of the list.¹³

5.1.2.3 Neutralization of syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/

As in southern Peninsular Spanish (see 4.1.7.2.6), syllable-final rhotics and laterals in some varieties of American Spanish are subject to neutralization and/or weakening, including loss. The varieties concerned are all ones used in lowland areas of Spanish America (as defined in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.2.2), but not all such areas show these processes (for example, they are absent from Argentinian Spanish; Lipski 1994: 168), and, where they occur, they are often confined to working-class or rural speech (for example, in Santiago de Chile; Silva-Corvalán 1987). This feature is strongest in the Caribbean, especially in Cuba, the Dominican Republic (Henríquez Ureña 1940), and Puerto Rico.

Although we are once again undoubtedly dealing with a feature which was transferred to America by migrants from southern Spain, the details of the process are not quite identical on the two sides of the Atlantic. Whereas in Spain the dominant solutions are merger in [ɹ] ([áɣo] *algo* = [káme] *carne*) or elimination (especially in word-final position), the most frequent outcomes in American Spanish are merger in [l] ([áɣo] = [káɫne]) or assimilation ([áʎo] = [káⁿne]), especially typical of Cuba, although elimination is not uncommon, and in the Dominican Republic certain rural, recessive, varieties show vocalization of these

segments ([áɣo] = [káɫne]), a variant which has no counterpart in European Spanish.

5.1.2.4 Treatment of word-final /-n/

Weakening of syllable-final consonants also extends to /-n/, but in this case the process does not affect the consonant in word-internal positions, but only in word-final (sometimes also morpheme-final) position.¹⁴ Here the process takes the form of velarization of the nasal, which may then lead to nasalization of the preceding vowel, and to loss of the consonant (with or without loss of the nasal quality of the now word-final vowel): [káɳta^ɳ], [káɳtā^ɳ], [káɳtā], [káɳta], *cantan*.¹⁵

When the following morpheme begins with a vowel, the normal Spanish resyllabification rule ensures that the nasal consonant, unless deleted, will become syllable-initial, the only circumstances in which a velar nasal appears outside syllable-final position: e.g., [me-ðã-ɲás-ko] *me dan asco*. Since this process, for many speakers, is limited to word-final position, it can be claimed that it gives rise to a new phonemic contrast in these varieties (viz. /n/ vs /ɳ/), on the basis of such celebrated, if rather artificial, minimal pairs as:

/pán#amerikáno/ [pá-ɲa-mé-ri-ká-no] *pan americano*
 /pánamerikáno/ [pá-na-mé-ri-ká-no] *panamericano*.

However, since nasalization of the preceding vowel is most frequently present (e.g., [pã-ɲa-mé-ri-ká-no]), it is likely to be this nasality which carries the burden of the meaning-difference.

The same weakening of word-final /-n/ is a well-known aspect of southern Peninsular varieties of Spanish (as well as of northwestern varieties), and was no doubt carried to America by migrants from those areas (defined in Sampson 1999: 170–1). As in the case of other processes of consonant-weakening we have seen (those affecting /-s/, /-r/ and /-l/; see 5.1.2.2–3), the Spanish-American areas affected are especially the lowland/island/coastal zones, although in this case the countries of the Southern Cone are unaffected and retain alveolar /n/, while velarization does occur in some highland areas (Ecuador and Peru; Lipski 1994: 248, 319).

5.1.2.5 Voseo and tuteo

These terms refer to competing modes of second-person singular familiar address. *Voseo* indicates use of the tonic pronoun *Vos* (and/or historically second-person plural verb forms) for this purpose,

although the associated object pronoun is always *te* and the related possessives are *tu* and *tuyo*: (*Vos*) *cantás/cantáis, lo hice para vos, a vos te vi en la calle, (Vos) estabas en tu casa, esto es tuyo*. By contrast, the term *tuteo* refers to the use of the tonic pronoun *Tú* (and/or historically second-person singular verb forms) in the same role: (*Tú*) *cantas, lo hice para ti, a ti te vi en la calle, (Tú) estabas en tu casa, esto es tuyo*.

At the time of the European discovery of America, modes of singular address in Spanish were complex (see Penny 1991a: 123–5). Until the fourteenth century, the late Latin system had survived more or less unchanged: historically second-person plural forms (i.e., the subject pronoun *Vos* and/or a second-person plural verb) expressed deference or distance, while historically second-person singular forms (i.e., the subject pronoun *Tú* and/or a second-person singular verb) expressed solidarity or closeness of speaker and hearer. E.g.,

Non-deferential	Deferential
<i>Tú eres</i>	<i>Vos sodes</i>

However, during the fifteenth century, the type *Vos sois/sos* (< *sodes*)¹⁶ became gradually less deferential, coming to be used among equals at various social levels and therefore often becoming indistinguishable in tone from *Tú eres*. Since society continued to require modes of deferential address, for occasions when one was speaking to someone of higher rank, speakers of fifteenth-century Spanish often remedied the situation by using two-word phrases consisting of an abstract noun preceded by the hitherto deferential possessive: *vuestra excelencia, vuestra señoría, vuestra merced*, etc. Since such expressions were built upon nouns, the accompanying verb necessarily took a third-person singular form. On the eve of the discovery of America, therefore, the forms of address available in Spanish were the following:

Non-deferential	Deferential
<i>Tú eres ~ Vos sois/sos</i>	<i>Vuestra merced (etc.) es</i>

This was the system carried to America and is visible in the written language of all colonial centres for which we have evidence. Leaving aside the trivial changes which affected the deferential mode of address (selection of *Vuestra merced* from among the competing expressions and gradual contraction of *Vuestra merced* to *Usted*, changes which are identical for American and Peninsular Spanish), this system was adjusted differently in different parts of colonial America. On the one hand, those areas which were in closest contact with central Peninsular

norms (see 5.1.2) behaved like the latter in gradually abandoning *Vos sois/sos* and adhering exclusively to *tuteo*.¹⁷ Thus, throughout Mexico (except for the province of Chiapas, adjacent to Guatemala), in almost all Peru, in most of Venezuela, and in the Antilles (Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico) *voseo* is not used.

On the other hand, those areas which were remoter from Peninsular Spanish developments during the colonial period continue to use the older system. Thus, wide areas of Spanish America use *voseo* either alone or in competition with *tuteo*. This is true of the central American republics from Guatemala (together with Chiapas in southern Mexico) to western Panama, and also of most of Colombia (except the Caribbean coast) and Ecuador. Bolivia and the countries of the Southern Cone are also characterized by use of *voseo*.¹⁸

Within the areas in which *voseo* is used, it finds different degrees of social acceptability and use. It is practically universal in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, although in all these countries there is limited use of *tuteo* at the highest sociolinguistic levels (especially in urban varieties). In these countries the appearance of *tuteo* is often defined as belonging to non-spontaneous, school-inspired speech. However, in Chile, *voseo* appears to have receded to some extent in the last century, especially among urban, educated groups, although use of historically plural verb forms, together with *Tú*, is frequent among middle-class, urban speakers (Morales 1972). In some areas of Ecuador and Colombia, *voseo* suffers strong competition from *tuteo*, and in the latter country *Usted* is used in social circumstances of closeness (between spouses, from parents to children) which in other areas would demand *Tú* or *Vos*. In the central American zone, *voseo* is strongly dominant, although in some parts of the area (e.g., El Salvador) it is possible to detect a three-level scheme of second-person address, with *Tú* reflecting an intermediate level of familiarity between *Vos* and *Usted*. Curiously, in Costa Rica, *Usted* can convey greater closeness than *Vos*, being used there by parents to children and among other close family members (Villegas 1965).

The verb forms which express *voseo* have been described above as being historically second-person plural, and this is most frequently the case, although it has to be borne in mind that such forms often present more than one pattern (as well as coexisting, in some areas of *voseo*, with verb forms which are historically singular). The morphological history of the relevant verb forms, those of the second-person plural of various tenses and moods, is described in the following paragraph.

Until the mid-fourteenth century, such verb forms (with the sole exception of the simple preterite) were marked in Spanish by the consonant /d/, and fell into three stress-pattern classes (see Penny 1991a: 138–40):

- 1 paroxytonic (penultimate-stressed) forms: present indicative *cantades*, *volvedes*, *salides*; present subjunctive *cantedes*, *volvades*, *salgades*; future *cantaredes*, *volveredes*, *saldredes*;
- 2 proparoxytonic (antepenultimate-stressed) forms: imperfect indicative *cantávades*, *volviades*, *saliades*; conditional *cantariades*, *volveríades*, *saldriades*; pluperfect (later imperfect subjunctive) *cantárades*, *volviérades*, *saliérades*; imperfect subjunctive *cantássedes*, *volviéssedes*, *saliéssedes*;
- 3 oxytonic (final-stressed) forms: imperative *cantad*, *volved*, *salid*.

From the late fourteenth century, these forms began to lose their /d/, although group (2) forms were not regularly affected until the sixteenth century, while loss of /d/ in imperatives was never categorical, and forms with and without the final consonant (*cantad/cantá*, etc.) coexisted in the Peninsula for several centuries.

Loss of /d/ in words of the first two groups gave rise to sequences of two vowels (e.g., *cantades* > *cantaes*, *cantávades* > *cantávaes*), sequences which were resolved in either of two ways.¹⁹ Thus, before the discovery of America, Peninsular Spanish showed such competing pairs as *cantáis* (in which /áe/ is reduced to a single syllable through glide-formation /áe/ > [ái]) and *cantás* (in which /áe/ is reduced to a single syllable through assimilation /áe/ > /á/). Early in the colonial period, similar processes affected the proparoxytonic verb forms, giving rise to pairs such as *cantabais~cantabas*, *cantarais~cantaras*, from which it will be noted that the assimilated forms (*cantabas*, *cantaras*, etc.) had become identical to those that for centuries had been used in association with the subject pronoun *Tú*. This identity of verbal forms appropriate to *Tú* and *Vos* was no doubt a factor which enhanced parity between these modes of address.

All of these second-person verbal forms, it can be argued, were carried to America as part of the morphological baggage of emigrants from all over Castilian-speaking Spain, although in later centuries, in the Peninsula, the assimilated forms (*cantás*, *cantés*, *cantarés*, *cantabas*, *cantases*, etc.) were abandoned (and those that survived – *cantabais*, *cantaseis*, etc. – were restricted to plural addressees).

In the only tense so far not considered (the preterite), the medieval forms which accompanied (or represented) *Vos* were *cantastes*,

volvistes, *salistes*, and these forms continued in use well into the sixteenth century, and longer in some varieties. Given that the preterite *Tú* forms were often identical to these *Vos* forms, since the former frequently added an /s/ which was characteristic of the *Tú* forms of all other paradigms (thus, *cantaste* > *cantastes*), there were added grounds for speakers to treat the *Tú* and *Vos* modes of address as equivalent, a perception further enhanced among those who deleted word-final /s/. *Cantaste* and *cantastes* both no doubt belonged to the speech of emigrants to America, both associated with either *Tú* or *Vos*. The Peninsular form *cantasteis* developed rather late (not until the seventeenth century), and was never spread to Spanish America.

The competition between the various verb forms associated with the pronoun *Vos* has never been fully resolved, and all the forms discussed in the previous paragraphs (except *cantasteis*) are to be found in areas of *voseo* in America, sometimes in active competition in the same region. A further complication is that sometimes *Vos* is found with historically second-person singular verb forms (e.g., *Vos cantas*, *Vos saldrás*), while *Tú* is occasionally found with verb forms which are historically second-person plural (usually limited to imperatives of the type (*Tú*) *cantá*, *salí*). Full details cannot yet be established, but the broad pattern of the verb forms used in areas of *voseo* can be stated as follows in Table 5.1.²⁰

5.1.3 Other effects of migration from the Peninsula

The features of American Spanish discussed in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 are all ones whose pedigree can be traced to varieties spoken in Andalusia or in central Castile. However, we have emphasized that emigrants to America were drawn not only from these areas, but also from other parts of the Peninsula. Such emigrants, as we have argued (in 5.1.1), could be expected to accommodate their speech to that of the environments in which they found themselves, in many cases adopting Andalusian features, but occasionally (if they settled in the great American administrative centres) acquiring non-Andalusian features characteristic of the central Peninsular norm. However, in a few cases, such speakers contributed northern Peninsular features to the colonial dialect mix which were accepted by others and perpetuated in American Spanish, either locally or more widely. We have already encountered the case of the velarization of word-final /-n/ (5.1.2.4), which arguably has its origins not only in Andalusian varieties, but also

Argentina	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 (but V2 in the northwest, T in Santiago del Estero) V1 (stigmatized, so T also occurs) V1 T
Uruguay	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 (also Tú + V1) V1 and T V1 T
Paraguay	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 T V1 T
Chile	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 and V2 (also Tú + V1 and V2) V1 and T T T
Bolivia	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	T in highlands, V1 in east, V2 in Tarija V1 and T V1 T (<i>tomarís</i> in Tarija)
Ecuador	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 on coast, V1 (occasionally V2) and T in highlands V1 and T V1 T (occasionally V1 <i>harís</i>)
Colombia	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 (V2 disappearing from north) V1 V1 T
Western Venezuela	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 in Andes, V2 in Maracaibo V1 in Andes, V2 in Maracaibo V1 T (?)
Central America	present indicative present subjunctive imperative future	V1 V1 V1 T (sometimes V1)

T indicates a historically second-person singular verb form (present indicative *cantas, vuelves, sales*, present subjunctive *cantes, vuelvas, salgas*, future *cantarás*, imperative *canta, vuelve, sal*).

V indicates a historically second-person plural verb form, either without diphthong in the tonic syllable (V1 = present indicative *cantáis, volvéis, salís*, present subjunctive *cantéis, volváis, salgáis*, future *cantaréis*, imperative *cantad, volved, salid*), or with a diphthong (V2 = present indicative *cantáis, volvéis*, present subjunctive *cantéis, volváis, salgáis*, future *cantaréis*).

Data are taken from Alvar 1996b, Lipski 1994 and Rona 1967.

Table 5.1 Verb-forms used in areas of *voseo*

in those from the northwest of the Peninsula, where this feature is to be heard, still today, in Galician, Asturian, Leonese, and Cantabrian varieties (ALPI 1962: map 11). Other features of northern origin are considered in the following sections (5.1.3.1–2).

5.1.3.1 /tr/ and /r/

In most Spanish American varieties, the group /tr/ (dental plosive + alveolar flap) and the alveolar vibrant /r/ are articulated as described, just as they are in the large majority of Peninsular varieties. However, in rural varieties spoken in Navarre and Aragon, the flap in the group /tr/ (and sometimes also in /dr/) is devoiced and frequently fricativized (acquiring a sibilant character) while the /t/ is retracted to alveolo-palatal position, so that the group has an acoustic quality not unlike that of English /tr/: [tʃ] or [tʃ̠]. Similarly, the vibrant /r/ is often devoiced to [ɾ], and may then cease to have repeated tongue movements, becoming a strong fricative with sibilant quality: [ʃ] (ALEANR 1979–83: maps 1465, 1473).²¹

These pronunciations are also heard in Spanish-American varieties spoken in a number of different areas, as well as a groove fricative realization of /r/ (approximately [ʒ]) which is likely to be a development of a partially devoiced variant of this phoneme. Once again, full details of the distribution of these features are lacking, but the following pattern emerges (derived mainly from Lipski's (1994) country-by-country description).²²

Retracted/devoiced /tr/ is heard (in words like *tren, otro*, etc.) in an Andean area stretching from southern highland parts of Colombia, through Andean Ecuador and the Altiplano of Peru and Bolivia (but excluding the lowland east of this country), and continuing into much of Chile, Paraguay, and northern Argentina. It is also found in a central American area stretching from Chiapas (southwestern Mexico) through Guatemala and Honduras to Costa Rica. It also belongs to traditional rural varieties used in New Mexico (Espinosa 1930) and to the speech of upper- and middle-class women in Mexico City (Perissinotto 1975). In both the Andean and the central American zones, although retracted/devoiced articulations are sociolinguistically dominant, they may alternate with 'standard' [tr] at the highest social levels.

These areas of modification of /tr/ are enclosed within broader areas in which /r/ suffers devoicing and/or assibilation. Thus, in all the regions mentioned most speakers have abandoned the voiced vibrant realization of /r/ and use [ɾ] or [ʃ], sometimes described as similar to

the prepalatal groove fricative [ʒ], in the various words concerned (*rey*, *perro*, etc.). But these articulations of /r/ extend somewhat beyond these areas (into northern and eastern Argentina, and further north through Andean Colombia to reach western Venezuela), and are also found in the Antilles (Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico).²³

In this latter area, the pronunciations of /r/ just described compete with retracted articulations (the uvular trill [R] or a velar fricative, most usually voiceless [x]). These realizations are highly characteristic of the speech of Puerto Rico, and are dominant there, while [R] is also heard in working-class varieties used in central and eastern Cuba.

5.1.3.2 Past tense values

Another feature in which there is similarity between American Spanish, on the one hand, and northern Peninsular varieties, on the other, consists of the aspectual values of the preterite and perfect verb forms (e.g., respectively, *canté* and *he cantado*) and of the relationship between them.

In standard Peninsular Spanish, and in the spontaneous speech of the northeast, the centre and the south of the Peninsula, the main aspectual contrast between these verb forms lies in the speaker's perception of the connection between the past situation described and the moment of speaking (see Alarcos 1947). If the speaker wishes to convey that the past situation mentioned ('situation' here covering actions and states) belonged to a period of time distinct from the one in which s/he considers that s/he is speaking, then s/he selects the preterite form. By contrast, if s/he wishes to convey that the past situation belongs to a period of time which, at the moment of speaking, is still current, then the perfect will be chosen. The matter of the currency or non-currency of the period of time concerned may be made explicit by the adverbials which appear in the clauses concerned; consider:

1 *La semana pasada la vi dos veces*

'Last week I saw her twice'

2 *Esta semana la he visto dos veces*

'This week I have seen her twice'

In (1), the past situation (the acts of seeing the woman concerned) is viewed as occurring in a period of time ('last week') which has terminated before the moment of the speech act. In (2), by contrast, the past situation (in the view of the speaker) belongs to a period of time which is still current at the moment in which the situation is referred to. However, the presence of adverbials is by no means obligatory, and the

verb-forms alone are able to convey the two ways in which the speaker chooses to mentally divide past time. Thus, for speakers in the Peninsular areas defined, the utterances

3 *Lo hice otra vez*

'I did it again'

and

4 *Lo he hecho otra vez*

'I have done it again'

indicate that the speaker either considers, as in (3), that the situation described belongs to a past which is separated from the moment of speaking (e.g., because some other relevant event has intervened), or considers, as in (4), that the situation belongs to an extended present. In each case the verbal action is both past and perfective.

It should be noted that the recency of the past situation is not the criterion which determines the choice between preterite and perfect, since, on the one hand, a very recent past situation may be considered as occurring in a period of time separate from the moment of speaking, while, on the other hand, the period of time in which the speech act takes place may be deemed by the speaker to extend indefinitely into the past and to include situations which began long ago. This can be seen in cases such as:

5 *La vi hace un momento*

'I saw her a moment ago'

6 *Siempre la he escuchado con atención, pero nunca más*

'I have always listened to her attentively, but never again'.²⁴

By contrast with the large majority of Peninsular Spanish speakers, those from the northwest use a different system of contrasts between the preterite and the perfect verb forms. It is usually said that in these areas (Galicia, Leon, Asturias, Cantabria) the 'perfect tense is most frequently replaced by the preterite', so that the perfect is rare or absent (e.g., Lapesa 1980: 476, 487; Zamora 1967: 208). Detailed descriptions of the values of these verb forms in the northwest are lacking, but from the examples typically cited and from the adverbials they often contain (e.g., Zamora (1967: 208): *hoy llovió todo el día*) it can be seen that in these areas the preterite is used to refer to past situations which occur in periods of time still current at the moment of speaking (although the situation itself – in this case the rainfall – may have ceased). On the other hand, no attention is given to the use of the perfect in these northwestern areas, no doubt because, when speakers in these regions use the perfect, they use it in a way that coincides with standard usage, even though the values concerned coincide with only

part of the range of values that this verb form has in the standard. It is likely (but the data to prove this point are lacking) that the perfect in the northwest is used to indicate only those situations which remain in force at the moment of speaking or which are capable of continuing into the future (e.g., standard *Siempre me han gustado los mejillones*).

Martin Harris (1982) describes the development of the perfect in Romance in the following way. The structure *HABEO FACTUM* (whence *he hecho* in Spanish) successively and cumulatively expresses four sets of semantic values: (1) a present state resulting from past action; (2) current relevance of the past situation indicated by the participle (also marked for duration, repetition); (3) past action with present relevance (but unmarked for duration, repetition, etc.); (4) past situations without present relevance. Although some Romance languages (French, some varieties of Italian) have progressed to stage (4), at which stage the perfect becomes identical to the preterite, and usually replaces it, standard Peninsular Spanish has reached only stage (3), which we understand to have characteristics identical with those invoked in our initial definition of the Spanish perfect: that verb form which indicates that the past situation to which it refers belongs to a period of time which, at the moment of speaking, is still current, while not necessarily indicating that the situation is still in force nor that it may be repeated.

Northwestern varieties of Spanish (and also, as we shall shortly claim, American Spanish) have arguably progressed only to stage (2) of Harris's scheme. That is to say that the perfect in these areas obligatorily implies that the past situation continues in force at the moment of speaking and may be continued or repeated in the future. This is certainly what Juan M. Lope Blanch (1961) claims for Mexican Spanish, and this view is amplified, with extensive supporting data from educated usage in Mexico City, by José G. Moreno de Alba (1978: 43–68), while a similar perfect value is reported for Bogotá by Charles Rallides (1971).

It is likely (but, in the absence of further studies, undemonstrable) that this value of the perfect is typical of the whole of American Spanish (Rona 1973). Just as in the case of northwestern varieties of Peninsular Spanish, scholars assign to American Spanish in general the sentence-type *Hoy llovió todo el día*, where the preterite is used 'in place of the perfect' (Lapesa 1980: 587–8, Zamora 1967: 434), implicitly demonstrating that in Spanish America the preterite is normally used to report past situations which occur in a period of time still current at the moment of speaking.

The geographical link between northwestern Spain and Spanish America is provided by the Canary Islands, where the same 'amplification'

of the role of the preterite is reported (Lapesa 1980: 520). Because of the absence from Andalusia of the past-tense values under discussion, it must be assumed that settlers from the Peninsular northwest (of whom we know that there was a substantial contingent) contributed this feature to the Canarian dialect mixture, from the fifteenth century onwards, and that the habitual mediating role of Canarian Spanish (see 4.1.8), between that of Spain and that of America, was responsible for the transatlantic spread of the phenomenon.

Although, as we have seen, the Spanish perfect does not generally progress beyond stage (3) of Harris's (1982) scheme, that is to say that *he cantado* does not generally encroach upon the role of *canté*, nevertheless there are isolated cases of such a development, both in America and in Spain. Alonso Zamora Vicente (1967: 330) reports this encroachment in western Andalusia (Cádiz and Málaga), and Rafael Lapesa (1980: 588) refers to it (via Kany 1945: 162–6) as occurring in northwestern Argentina and adjacent parts of Bolivia. There is similarly some evidence of this change among younger speakers in Madrid (Barrera-Vidal 1972).

5.2 Social variation

Social variation in American Spanish has been very much less well studied than geographical variation (as is generally the case, including Spain; see 4.2). Linguistic variation correlated with social class has been mentioned in connection with pronunciation of /r/ and /r/ (5.1.3.1), where we saw that assimilated pronunciations of these phonemes, in Mexico City, characterizes the speech of at least some middle- and upper-class women.²⁵ We have also seen (5.1.2.5) that even in areas of intense *voseo*, the use of the pronoun *Tú* is almost never completely absent, but has at least some use at the most wealthy and best educated levels of society, as is the case in Argentina and Uruguay, and even more so in Chile and central America. Similarly, where neutralization of syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/ occurs, typically in the Caribbean and other coastal areas (5.1.2.3), it is most intense in rural and working-class speech and is seen to fade the higher up the social scale one observes. And even in areas where weakening of syllable-final /s/ is a strongly established feature (5.1.2.2), the frequency of aspirated and other weakened variants, which may approach 100 per cent at lower social levels, tends to decline in frequency at least somewhat as one examines the speech of more and more favoured social groups.²⁶

These remarks scarcely scratch the surface of a complex issue, but it is interesting to note that in some cases the pattern of variants of a particular variable is similar on the two sides of the Atlantic. This seems to be so in the case of neutralization of syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/, just mentioned, which, in southern Spain as much as in the Caribbean and Chile, is associated with the least prestigious social groups, rural and urban, while in more powerful sectors of society the two phonemes are kept separate. This is also the case of the variable (h), examined in the following paragraph.

5.2.1. Social variation of /h/ (< F-)

In Spain, we saw (3.1.3.2) that use of the glottal fricative /h/ in words of the type *humo, hambre, ahorcado* (< FŪMU, FAMINE, FURCU) is recessive in two ways. Firstly, this feature has come to be restricted geographically, to certain areas (Cantabria and eastern Asturias, western Salamanca, Extremadura, and western Andalusia) which are peripheral to the main focus of /h/-dropping, namely Madrid. But secondly, it has become socially recessive, and is now confined to the least prestigious social groups within the geographical areas just defined. The second of these two patterns (social recessiveness), but not the first, has been carried to America.

When the settlement of America began, use of /h/ in words with the relevant history must have been normal, among all social classes, in western Andalusia (the area whose speech, as we have seen in 5.1.1, contributed most significantly to the dialect mix which arose in the various colonies). The western Andalusian Antonio de Nebrija, when he was writing his Castilian grammar in 1492, makes it clear, without reservation, that *h* represents 'tal sonido cual pronunciamos en las primeras letras destas diciones: *hago, hecho*' (Nebrija 1980: 118). Similarly, when writing his 1517 treatise on Castilian spelling (Nebrija 1977: 139), he allocates three functions to *h*, the first of which is (unequivocally) to represent the initial sound of words like *hago, hijo, higo*.

It was only later, from the second half of the sixteenth century, that /h/-dropping began to become fashionable (see 3.1.3.2), and began to spread rapidly, faster among the social elite than among less prestigious groups, both in Spain and the Americas. The result in Spanish America has been that the competition between educated /h/-dropping and uneducated /h/-retention has persisted across the

continent (Zamora Vicente 1967: 413–14, Lapesa 1980: 574), unlike the result in Spain, where /h/-dropping has reached all speakers in by far the larger part of the territory. Pronunciation of /h/ survives above all in rural American varieties, but sometimes also in lower-class urban speech. In all cases, the same phoneme represents both the descendant of Latin *F-* (as in *humo, horca, ahogar*) and the product of medieval /f/ and /z/ (as in *caja, mujer, junto, jugar, gente*) (see 3.1.3.1). It therefore corresponds both to standard /Ø/ and to standard /x/, but may also correspond to standard /f/, in words like *fuego, fuente, fue*, often pronounced /huégo/, /huénte/, /hué/ in the same social environments (see 3.1.3.2, 3.5), as well as in words which have penetrated rural speech from more educated milieux (e.g., /dihúnto/, corresponding to *difunto*).

Cases of /h/-retention can be seen in rural speech from New Mexico (Espinosa 1930) to Argentina, where it characterizes (or once characterized) the speech of the gaucho, as can be seen repeatedly in the language of the eponymous hero of José Hernández's epic *Martín Fierro*. In territories between these extremes it may go unreported, because it is so socially recessive, but it is clearly in evidence in all rural central America (Alvar 1996b: 103), in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (Alvar 1996b: 59, Henríquez Ureña 1940), in coastal Colombia (Alvar 1996b: 136), in rural Ecuador (Lipski 1994: 248–9), in highland and Amazonian Peru (Lipski 1994: 320, 323), in the rural east and south of Bolivia (Alvar 1996b: 176), and in Paraguay (Alvar 1996b: 201). Despite centuries of stigmatization, pronunciations with /h/ intact cling on everywhere across the continent in the speech of the least powerful.

5.3 New dialects: *fronterizo*

The geographical relationship of Spanish and Portuguese in the New World is rather different from their relationship in the Peninsula. In Europe, there is an abrupt transition from one language to the other along that part of the Spanish–Portuguese frontier which stretches south between the River Douro/Duero and the mouth of the Guadiana (see 4.1.3), although the varieties spoken in Portugal are connected to those spoken in Spain through the dialect continuum which extends up through northern Portugal and Galicia into Leon and Castile (4.1.2). However, because Spanish and Portuguese were extended overseas as

the result of separate colonizing enterprises, after the process of standardization had begun in both cases – at a time when the two languages consequently already enjoyed distinct identities – they never formed part of a dialect continuum in the Americas.

In most frontier areas where Brazil adjoins its Spanish-speaking neighbours, the transition between the two languages takes place in sparsely populated regions of the Amazon basin, where there are few speakers of either language and communications across the frontiers are poor. The frontiers themselves sometimes remain undefined, and many of the scattered groups who inhabit these areas do not speak either Spanish or Portuguese as a first language, and often do not know them at all. Only in northern Uruguay, it seems, have communications across the frontier allowed Spanish and Portuguese to come into contact, producing communities in which both languages are used. As a result of this contact, a number of compromise dialects have arisen, displaying varying mixtures of Spanish and Portuguese features, and referred to by linguists as *fronterizo* or *frontereiro* speech.

The territory concerned is a broad swathe of northern Uruguay, adjacent to Brazil, where sovereignty was disputed both by the colonial powers and by their independent successors (see Rona 1963, 1965, and the map in Canfield 1981: 89). Not only were there some Portuguese speakers established south of the frontier, but Spanish speakers were until recently in closer contact with Brazil, for markets and education, than with the rest of Uruguay. No doubt because of the very high degree of mutual intelligibility between the two languages, speakers of Spanish accommodated to the local Brazilian Portuguese, adopting large numbers of phonological, morphological, and lexical features. The result has been a series of interlocking varieties, which, as one moves from central Uruguay towards the Brazilian frontier, might be described successively as 'Spanish', 'Spanish-based *fronterizo*' (i.e., Spanish with a strong admixture of Portuguese features), 'Portuguese-based *fronterizo*' (i.e., Portuguese with some Spanish features), and more or less normal Southern Brazilian Portuguese.

Elaborating on the features listed by Lipski (1994: 342–5), it is possible to describe this transition from Spanish to Portuguese in the following terms, where the frequency of the Spanish feature decreases and the frequency of the Portuguese feature rises as one moves from central Uruguay to the Brazilian frontier:

- 1 At the Spanish end of the spectrum, the vowel system comprises the usual five vowels, with little variation between stressed and

unstressed realizations, while at the Portuguese end (within Uruguay) there are seven oral and five nasal vowels, some with sharply different realizations in unstressed syllables (e.g., /e/ and /ɛ/ raised to [i], /o/ and /ɔ/ raised to [u], /a/ raised to [ɐ]). At intermediate points within the transition area, the number of vowel phonemes in use, and the degree of atonic vowel reduction, rise as one approaches the frontier.

- 2 Central Uruguayan Spanish, like all varieties of American Spanish, has inherited only one sibilant phoneme (/s/; see 5.1.1.1), although it has also acquired /z/ (the local outcome of the merger between /ʎ/ and /j/; see 5.1.2.1), while Portuguese has four: /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/. Different *fronterizo* dialects display two, three, or four sibilants.
- 3 The Spanish system of definite articles, *el, la, los, las* gives way to the Portuguese system, *o, a, os, as*, so that intermediate dialects often combine a Portuguese article with the Spanish nominal (*todo o día* rather than *todo el día* or Brazilian Portuguese [túðu u dz'ia], or vice versa (*la importação* rather than Portuguese *a importação* or Spanish *la importación*).
- 4 Unlike the speech of most of Uruguay (see 5.1.2.5), *fronterizo* varieties prefer *tuteo* as the style of second-person singular informal address. This feature no doubt reflects a transition towards the Brazilian Portuguese spoken beyond the frontier, which (unlike most other varieties of Brazilian Portuguese) makes frequent use of *Tu* (rather than more general *Você*) (Lipski 1994: 343).
- 5 Because local Brazilian Portuguese frequently reduces verbal endings to that of the third-person singular of the paradigm concerned, similar effects may be seen in Uruguayan *fronterizo* varieties (e.g., *nos tinha* 'we had', beside Spanish *nosotros teníamos*; cf. standard Portuguese (*nós tínhamos*) (Rona 1965: 12, Lipski 1994: 344).
- 6 Local Brazilian Portuguese frequently marks plurality only once in a given noun phrase, usually on the first element capable of expressing number, a pattern also to be seen in the varieties under discussion (e.g., *unos tío* 'aunts and uncles', *trinta y sei gol* 'thirty-six goals'; examples from Lipski 1994: 344).
- 7 The vocabulary of these varieties frequently intermixes Portuguese and Spanish elements, so that amid a predominantly Spanish lexical system (although containing many items which

belong to both Spanish and Portuguese), there are many individual Portuguese words in use (e.g., *fechar* 'to close', beside *cerrar*, *janela* 'window', beside *ventana*).

Some of these mixed varieties, mostly spoken by people of humble background, are described as fairly stable (meaning that they have been transmitted from parents to children without major modification, and that they are the only or the main means of communication of the social groups concerned). In the terms that Trudgill uses to describe these varieties (1986: 83–6, following Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), some of them have become relatively *focused* dialects. That is, speakers of some varieties of *fronterizo* are aware of the linguistic code they use as a distinct entity, by contrast with speakers who find themselves in a *diffuse* linguistic situation, in which they mix elements from a variety of overlapping and competing linguistic systems. Now that better communications make them subject to increasing standardizing pressure from Montevideo, it remains to be seen whether these varieties will survive as separate entities.

5.4 Creoles and creolization

The introduction of large numbers of west African slaves into the Spanish American colonies, which began in the early sixteenth century, created conditions under which pidgins were very likely to arise. Any shipment of slaves typically consisted of individuals speaking a wide variety of different languages, usually lacking any medium with which to communicate among themselves or with their owners. Such conditions led to the creation of pidgins, forms of language with dramatically simple grammar and a vocabulary restricted solely to the limited topics required for inter-group communication. Such pidgins, by definition, were always acquired in addition to one or more native languages, and had no native speakers of their own.

Creoles, by contrast, are full languages which typically come into existence when the children of slave parents, learning to speak in a community which only has a pidgin for communication among its adults, construct an elaborated grammar from the pidgin they hear and extend the vocabulary of this language by massive borrowing from all available sources (Romaine 1988, 1994: ch. 6).

Since the Atlantic slave-trade was for two or more centuries principally in the hands of the Portuguese, and since many slaves were first

brought to Lisbon before being transferred to Spain and its colonies, Portuguese was often the first non-African language to which many of these slaves were exposed, and it is likely that the first pidgins contained Portuguese elements, especially vocabulary.²⁷ However, in the case of slaves sold to Spanish colonial masters, it is likely that, as creoles developed, such elements were overlaid with borrowings from Spanish (in those cases where Spanish differed from Portuguese), just as, in other colonial territories, creoles arose which drew their vocabulary and other features from English or French.

When a creole remained in contact with the language from which most of its vocabulary has been borrowed, it was subject to decreolization, a process of gradual adjustment to that language. In slave societies, this process typically led to a spectrum of linguistic varieties, ranging from some form of the prestige language, used by the most powerful, to unmodified creole speech, used by the least powerful, and with intermediate varieties of every degree. Decreolization would have been slow in communities where there were few speakers of the prestige language, or where social conditions made it difficult for creole-speakers to come in contact with them.

In the case of Spain's American Empire, slaves were shipped in large numbers from Seville to authorized points of sale in the Caribbean, at first only three: Veracruz (Mexico), Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), and Portobelo (Panama). This trade must frequently have led to the creation of creoles, but decreolization appears to have taken place more easily and quickly in the Spanish colonies, and their successor states, than in British or French colonies, so that few Spanish creoles have survived into the twentieth century and only two are spoken today: Papiamentu and Palenquero.

5.4.1 Papiamentu

This Spanish creole is spoken in the islands of Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire (also known as the ABC Islands), which are located off the coast of Venezuela and which became part of the Spanish Crown from 1527. After alternating between Dutch, French and British control, they became definitively Dutch and now comprise the Netherlands Antilles. After these territories passed from Spanish control in 1634, decreolization (at least, decreolization towards Spanish) became impossible, and Papiamentu remains the language of the large majority, being used alongside Dutch (the official language), Spanish and English. As well as

	Front		Central		Back	
	Unrounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Rounded
High	/i/ <i>iglesia</i>	/y/ <i>minüt</i>			/u/ <i>mijudu</i>	
Mid high	/e/ <i>péchu</i>		/e/ <i>pober</i>	/ø/ <i>bjis</i>	/o/ <i>loko</i>	
Mid low	/ɛ/ <i>skër</i>				/ɔ/ <i>èmetet</i>	
Low			/a/ <i>akabado</i>			

Table 5.2 Papiamentu vowel phonemes

large numbers of west African slaves, the ABC Islands received substantial numbers of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Sephardic Jews (see Chapter 6), from Amsterdam and Brazil, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century (Alvar 1996b: 68–78; Munteanu 1996).

Papiamentu is not mutually intelligible with other varieties of Spanish (an observation which begs the question of whether we should consider it a variety of Spanish), and although it shares a good many features with other types of Spanish (*yeísmo* (5.1.2.1), *seseo* (5.1.1.1), neutralization of /-r/ and /-l/ leading to their loss (5.1.2.3), /h/-retention (5.2.1), velarization of word-final /n/ (5.1.2.4), etc.), it displays a certain number of characteristics found nowhere else in the Spanish-speaking world. Among the latter are the following (drawn from Alvar 1996b: 68–78, Munteanu 1996: 191–226):

- 1 It has a phonemic contrast between rising and falling tones, so that /tápaʔ/ (with rising tone) 'to cover' is in opposition to /tápaʋ/ (with falling tone) 'cover (noun)'.
- 2 It has a vowel system of ten phonemes (see Table 5.2).
- 3 The Papiamentu consonant system comprises as many as twenty-one phonemes (Munteanu 1996: 227–62; see Table 5.3).²⁸
- 4 Modification of nasal consonants (possibly as a result of features taken from African languages): *kabaron* (cf. Sp. *camarón* 'shrimp'), *kaminda* (cf. Sp. *camino* 'road'), *hunga* (cf. Sp. *jugar* 'to play').
- 5 Intervocalic /x/ is often lost: *abou* (cf. Sp. *abajo* 'down below'), *orea* (cf. Sp. *oreja* 'ear').
- 6 There is no grammatical gender.
- 7 Use of the plural marker *nan* (which is also the third-person plural subject pronoun): sg. *kas*, pl. *kasnan* (cf. Sp. *casa*, -s 'house(s)'), sg. *buki*, pl. *bukinan* (cf. Sp. *libro*, -s 'book(s)').

Table 5.3 Papiamentu consonant phonemes

	Labial		Dental/alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	/p/ <i>pober</i>	/b/ <i>bunita</i>	/t/ <i>tápa</i>	/d/ <i>duru</i>			/k/ <i>kusta</i>	/g/ <i>amigu</i>		
Plosive										
Fricative	/f/ <i>forki</i>	/v/ <i>alavez</i>	/s/ <i>sombre</i>	/z/ <i>abuza</i>	/ʃ/ <i>ofishi</i>	/ʒ/ <i>zonzofiti</i>	/x/ <i>joya</i>	/h/ <i>huma</i>		
Affricate					/tʃ/ <i>lechi</i>	/dʒ/ <i>djajuna</i>				
Lateral			/l/ <i>laba</i>							
Vibrant			/r/ <i>tera</i>							
Nasal		/m/ <i>machu</i>	/n/ <i>nochi</i>		/ɲ/ <i>kana</i>					

	Singular	Plural
First person	<i>mi, ami</i>	<i>nos, anos</i>
Second person	<i>bo, abo</i>	<i>boso(nan), aboso</i>
Third person	<i>e(l)(e)</i>	<i>nan, anan</i>

Table 5.4 Papiamentu personal pronouns

- 8 Number is marked only once in the noun phrase, either by a modifier with plural sense or by the ending *nan*, applied either to the noun or to an adjective: *tur stul* (cf. Sp. *todas las sillas* 'all the chairs'), *e kasnan bunita* or *e kas bunitanan* (cf. Sp. *las casas bonitas* 'the pretty houses').
- 9 Papiamentu personal pronouns are as listed in Table 5.4. These forms function both as subject and as object pronouns, although the first-cited forms appear to be preferred for subject use. Together with *di*, these pronouns express possession: *e di mi* (cf. Sp. *el mío, la mía* 'mine').
- 10 The forms of the demonstratives are: *esaki* (cf. Sp. *este, esta*), *esei* (cf. Sp. *ese, esa*), *esaya* (cf. Sp. *aquel, aquella*).
- 11 Tense and aspect in the verb are marked by a series of particles which precede an invariable verb form (inherited from the third-person singular form of the Spanish present indicative). Duration/repetition is expressed by *ta* (probably from Sp. *está*): *(mi) ta kanta* 'I sing, I am singing'; past time by *a* (probably from Sp. *ha*): *(mi) a kanta* 'I sang, I have sung'; futurity by *lo* (probably from Ptg. *lôgo* or Sp. *luego*): *lo (mi) kanta* 'I shall sing'. These particles may be combined in a variety of ways: *(mi) ta 'a* (or *tabata*) *kanta* 'I was singing'; *lo (mi) ta kanta/kantando* 'I shall be singing'; *lo (mi) tabata kanta/kantando* 'I would be singing'; *lo (mi) a kanta* 'I shall have sung'.
- 12 Papiamentu makes use of so-called serial verbs, comprising two or more verbs in their (normal) invariable form, with a variety of meanings. Munteanu (in Alvar 1996b: 77) cites: *el a para mira e barkonan* 'he stopped to look at the boats = he is looking at the boats'; *el a bula bisa*, lit. 'he spoke flying', i.e., 'he suddenly spoke'.
- 13 Although the basic vocabulary of Papiamentu is substantially drawn from Spanish and/or Portuguese (about two-thirds on one

count, reported by Munteanu (in Alvar 1996b: 77)), there is a large Dutch component (28 per cent), as well as words borrowed from other sources, including English. Not all borrowings are drawn from non-Hispanic sources; many are drawn from Spanish, because this language has had continuous minority use in the ABC Islands, and because of contacts with the wider Spanish-speaking world.

Papiamentu appears to be firmly established in the areas where it is spoken, being used by the majority and the object of considerable pride. It is increasingly standardized and is used for a wide variety of published material, newspapers, magazines, and books.

5.4.2 Palenquero

Cartagena de Indias was one of the earliest Spanish settlements in the New World, and, as we have noted (5.4), became one of the three largest entrepôts of the American slave trade. As early as 1540, there were cases of groups of slaves escaping from Cartagena and setting up fortified villages or *palenques* in the Colombian interior, and further mass escapes are known during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Despite attempts to suppress these communities, some maintained their effective independence into the twentieth century.

These escaped slaves no doubt spoke Spanish creoles, and in a few cases their descendants continued to do so centuries later, although realization of this fact only came a few decades ago. The most famous instance is that of San Basilio de Palenque, some 70 km south of Cartagena, where creole continues to be spoken, now in competition with non-creole varieties of Spanish (Bickerton and Escalante 1970, Megenney 1986, Montes 1996).

The phonology of Palenquero shows, in extreme degree, all of the features of rural lowland American Spanish: *seseo* (5.1.1.1), *yeísmo* (5.1.2.1), neutralization of atonic /i/ and /e/, and of /u/ and /o/ (e.g. *vitilo, kumé*, cf. standard *vestido, comer*) (4.2.4), weakening of syllable-final /-s/ (e.g., *dehpwé, kateyáno*, cf. standard *después, castellano*) (5.1.2.2), merger and loss of syllable-final /-r/ and /-l/ (e.g., *ákko, kál-lo, kumé*, cf. standard *arco, Carlos, comer*) (5.1.2.3), as well as other features which occur sporadically in such varieties of Spanish: confusion of /d/ and /r/ (e.g., *poré, rebé*, cf. standard *poder, deber*), confusion

		Singular	Plural
First person	subject	<i>i</i>	<i>suto</i>
	object	<i>mi</i>	<i>suto</i>
Second person	subject	<i>bo</i>	<i>enú/utere</i>
	object	<i>bo</i>	<i>enú/utere</i>
Third person	subject	<i>ele</i>	<i>ané</i>
	object	<i>lo/ele</i>	<i>ané/lo</i>

Table 5.5 Palenquero personal pronouns

of syllable-initial /ɾ/ and /l/ (e.g., *kolasó*, cf. standard *corazón*). More strikingly, Palenquero displays pre-nasal oral plosives, a feature probably transferred from a west African language or languages: *ndejá*, *nganá*, cf. standard *dejar*, *ganar*).

It is in its morpho-syntax, as is to be expected, that Palenquero reveals its creole nature. The major relevant features are the following:

- 1 The personal pronoun system rarely contrasts subject forms with object forms, which are simply postposed to the verb. In the first-person singular, however, there is such a contrast, which also operates optionally in the third person (see Table 5.5).
- 2 Among the pronouns listed in Table 5.5, the forms *mi*, *ele*, *suto*, *utere* and *ané* also function as possessives, postposed to the head noun, while the second-person singular possessive form is *si*.
- 3 Grammatical gender is lacking.
- 4 In the noun phrase, plurality is marked only by the particle *ma*, usually placed before the head noun.
- 5 Verbal inflexion is almost entirely absent (a gerund sporadically occurs, as does a past imperfective suffix *-ba*); tense and aspect are marked by particles which precede an invariable verb form, derived from the infinitive. Perfective aspect is marked by *a* (e.g., *i a sembrá un mata maí* = '(yo) sembré una mata de maíz'), durative or habitual aspect by *ta* or *se* (e.g., *pueblo mi ta pelé lengua ané* = 'mi pueblo está perdiendo su lengua'), future time by *tan* (e.g., *eso fue Juan tan asé* = 'eso fue lo que Juan hará'). These particles may be combined in a number of ways: past habitual situations are marked by *a se* (also *a sebá*) (e.g., *a ten maní a sebá limpiá nu* = 'hay maní que no se limpiaba').

6 In the Palenquero vocabulary, a fair number of words of African origin have been recognized, although the very large majority of words have Hispanic roots.²⁹

Palenquero has existed in a situation of diglossia (see 2.5.4) with Spanish for a century or more. Rather than becoming decreolized, it seems that it is being abandoned by younger generations and is therefore threatened with language death.