

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH, ITALIAN, and PORTUGUESE

RURAL TO URBAN: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON AFRO-CHOTEÑO
SPANISH IN QUITO, ECUADOR

LANDON EVAK

SPRING 2011

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees in
Spanish and Integrative Arts
with honors in Spanish

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

John Lipski
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Spanish & Linguistics
Thesis Supervisor and Honors Advisor

Dr. Paola E. Dussias
Associate Professor of Spanish, Linguistics and Psychology
Faculty Reader

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

Abstract

This paper examines the sociolinguistic trends of the Afro-Choteño population in Ecuador as affected by their migration from the Chota Valley to the city of Quito. In this study, I reveal the current influences behind the ignored and endangered dialect of the Afro-Choteño population in contact with the city. The Spanish of the Afro-Choteños contains identifiable ethno-linguistic traits that currently encounter harsh discrimination when faced with the contrasting culture of Quito.

In this study, I analyze the cultural trends that remain present in the Afro-Choteños who live in the Chota Valley and the cultural trends that are disappearing and/or being recreated in the Afro-Choteños who have had extended contact with the city culture, for the purpose of identifying and documenting the changes in linguistic characteristics of this unique dialect. The cultural and language trends analyzed date from the beginning of the use of Africans on plantations in the Chota Valley to present day. All participants are Afro-Choteños between the ages of 18 and 89.

Three primary research strategies have been used to gather the necessary information: 1) recorded interviews with Afro-Choteños, 2) attendance at Afro-Choteño cultural events and social commentaries, and 3) data gathering from historical texts addressing social, ethnic, and economical issues of the Afro-Choteño population. Observations were made in the traits of Afro-Choteño culture that are maintained as well as those that seem to be disappearing in the city. Observations were also noted concerning the factors that influence such changes in Afro-Choteño culture and language.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
A Brief History of Afro-Ecuadorian in Highland Ecuador.....	3
Recent Trends in Afro-Ecuadorian Migration.....	6
Development of Afro-Ecuadorian Social Movements & Support Group.....	8
Methodology.....	11
Recruitment of Participants.....	11
Process of Interviews.....	12
Location of Interviews.....	12
Structure of Interviews.....	13
Difficulties Encountered During Investigation Process.....	14
Analysis of Data.....	16
Results.....	17
Characteristics of Traditional Afro-Choteño Spanish.....	17
Observations on the Loss and Evolution of Afro-Choteño Linguistic Characteristics.....	21
Observations on the Loss and Evolution of Afro-Choteño Culture.....	25
Reasons for Migration to Quito	31
Discussion.....	34
The Loss and Fusion of Afro-Choteño Culture in Quito.....	34
Maintaining Afro-Choteño Culture in the City.....	37
Conclusion.....	42
Suggestions.....	43

References.....	45
Appendix A: List of Speakers.....	47
Appendix B: List of Original Interview Questions.....	48
Academic Vita	

Introduction

Latin America is filled with incredibly diverse cultures and dialects with influences from indigenous, African, European, and even North American traditions. Many small geographic areas contain the presence of numerous influences, which makes it difficult to discover exactly where each cultures' traditions come from. Few communities remain in Latin America, let alone the world, which are able to represent their ancestors' distinct ethno-cultural influences as they existed hundreds of years ago.

The Afro-descendent population of the Chota Valley in Ecuador has successfully remained united in its culture with little influence from other highland Ecuadorian traditions or any other communities within Ecuador. They represent one of the few Afro-descendent populations in the Americas that live in isolated highland areas, as opposed to the coastal lowlands where most Latin Americans of African descent are found. Their culture and linguistic characteristics distinguish them from other communities in the area as well as other Spanish speaking countries in the world. The Spanish dialect of the Chota Valley region has identifiable ethno-linguistic traits that are stigmatized by the majority population. However, as the search for new and "better" lifestyles seeps into these communities, the rural populations have begun to move towards urban areas, and over time they have started to integrate themselves into the city and its culture.

When moving to urban areas, these Afro-Ecuadorians are faced with the dilemma of maintaining their ethnic identity while facing prejudice based on their racial and linguistic characteristics. This situation is not unlike that faced by rural African-Americans arriving in large urban areas of the United States. The effect that this collision with urban culture has on their culture and speech remains a mystery and has not been

formally studied or documented. Throughout this paper, I will use *Afro-Choteño* to refer to the population of Afro-Ecuadorians that self-identify as such, whether they were born in the Chota Valley or not, and I will use *Afro-Quiteño* to refer to Afro-Ecuadorians who were born in Quito or who self-identify as such.

Only recently has the culture of the Afro-Choteño population been studied in depth, with publications now more widely available to the public. Under a decade ago it would have been difficult to find any formal publication addressing the culture of the Afro-Choteños. Today, the issue is increasingly recognized as a priority as more and more professional publications help show the importance of Afro-Choteño culture and language in its place in Ecuadorian history. John Lipski, Professor of Spanish and Linguistics at the Pennsylvania State University, led a series of sociolinguistic studies in the mid-to-late 1980s when he began investigating the culture and language of Afro-Ecuadorians in the Chota Valley region. More recent publications by John Lipski have further contributed to the documentation and discussion on the sociolinguistic situation of the Afro-Choteño population. Other recent publications on Afro-Choteño culture have been released by Afro-Ecuadorian cultural anthropologists like Iván Pabon, co-founder of the *Federación de Comunidades y Organizaciones Negras de Imbabura y Carchi* (FECONIC), and José Chalá, President of the *Corporación de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriano* (CODAE).

These studies have primarily focused on the aspects of traditional Afro-Choteño culture as it has existed within the Chota Valley itself. This study, however, focuses on the cultural influences of Quito and how they affect the sociolinguistic traits of the Afro-Choteño population. In a culture changing so rapidly, there are a number of factors that

have contributed to the evolution of its characteristics. One main influence is the increasingly more frequent contact with the urban culture of Quito. In this investigation, we discover that certain aspects of Afro-Choteño culture and language are evolving to satisfy urban cultural trends while other aspects are successfully maintained, even in the face of harsh discrimination.

In order to understand how Afro-Choteño culture has evolved over time, we must first understand where it came from. Then, we can analyze how the migration of Afro-Choteños to the city has impacted their traditions and contributed to making them such a culturally unique community of Ecuador, as well as the world.

A Brief History of the Afro-Choteños in High-Land Ecuador

Although the Afro-Choteño population has remained true to their traditions in many ways, they have experienced a form of historical discrimination, denying them their own past in the story of Ecuador's development and existence as an independent nation. It was only when the Afro-Choteño population itself recognized the country's blatant discrimination that they started to defend their traditions and fight to be heard.

By 1773, some 3 million African slaves were brought to the Americas. In Ecuador, they arrived in Guayaquil, Esmeraldas, and the Chota Valley. Originally, most slaves were used as domestic workers, some of which were freed after their services were completed, while others remained enslaved until slavery was abolished in 1852 (Tardieu 2006). The African population was primarily concentrated in the provinces of Esmeraldas, on the coast, and around the Basin of the Chota-Mira River, a subtropical zone within the Andean provinces of Imbabura and Carchi (Mendina, 1996). Not until

the 20th century do we see the presence of migration to other provinces on a large scale.

Throughout the history of slavery in Ecuador, the African slaves located in the Chota Valley experienced periods of harsh treatment interspersed with periods of looser regulations and less violent punishments. Approved by Pope Paul III in 1540, the regulations concerning slavery under the Jesuits seemed to favor the cohesiveness of cultural identity: African slaves were encouraged to maintain a family structure on the plantations, they were allowed to keep names of African origin and marriage was prohibited between *negros* and *indios* or *mestizos* (Chalá, 2006). The true motivation for such regulations being the ability to control racial mixing and to maintain a steady slave population, saving the plantation owners a significant amount of money in slave trade. However, the regulations under the Jesuits may have also contributed to the strength of the Afro-Ecuadorian identity in the future.

Most importantly, under the Jesuits the slaves were given pieces of land to work on and help maintain a level of independence and control over their family structure and cultural traditions. These slaves, in some respect, felt as though they were the owners of these lands. Such lands are what make up the ethnic territories of the Chota Valley—La Concepción and Salinas (Chalá 2006). With less costs and more slaves, the Jesuits had a fairly stable control over the slave population. In 1767, the Jesuits were ordered to leave the Americas due in part to their political maneuvering and economic wealth gained through human exploitation (Bartolicci, 2002). They were forced to leave the *cañaverales* and other plantations. This returned the control over the slavery system back to the King of Spain, who employed temporary *dueños* 'owners' of the plantations to "take care" of the slave population during the period of instability. The administrative tactics of these temporary *dueños* were much

harsher than those of the Jesuits. They were very aggressive and violent, threatening the once fairly stable lifestyle of the slave population under the Jesuits. Many new *dueños* opted to resell the slaves like tools in order to gain the profits. Such a change in the treatment of the slaves produced an even more intense resistance to the conditions under which the slaves lived and the slavery system itself. Ultimately, the increased tension led to enormous rebellions at the plantations (Chalá, 2006). Between 1780 and 1810 there were frequent rebellions at plantations and even formal judicial complaints brought to court. By 1789, many slaves had begun to flee from the inhuman conditions at the plantations to nearby lands creating small communities of escaped slaves known as *palenques*—one of the first successful *palenques* being the community of El Chota (Speaker e).

The people of the El Chota have a history of being known as leaders of rebellions and organized revolts. Whereas many other rebellions and attempts to create independent *palenques* failed, practically no one of the Chota community returned back to a plantation once they left. They constructed small *chozas de paja* 'houses made of mud and straw' and maintained a fairly autonomous lifestyle (Speaker E). The first families to settle in El Chota were Congo, Chalá, Gángula, Carabalí, Lucumí, Acosta, Lara, Gudiño, and slowly more arrived (Chalá 2006). Over the years, the Afro-Choteños population has been able to unify their culture even more by the use of some of the traditional African names that were brought to Ecuador by their ancestors.

As the official beginning to the abolition of slavery in Latin America, in 1821 the General Congress of Colombia abolished the trafficking of slaves, freed children of slaves, and set up programs for compensated emancipation. However, many slaves had no other options and were forced to remain as workers for the same plantation owners.

The children had to wait until their 18th birthday to ask for their right to be Baptized and then the owner would decide if they could be freed. Not until 1852 did General José María Urbina officially announce the end of slavery in all of Ecuador. Yet again, most slaves were not truly free as they fell victim to other forms of oppression and *endeudamiento* 'debt'. Many were given no option but to be reemployed by their past owners through a system of *concertaje* where they were paid *salários diarios de miséria* 'horribly low wages' which made it impossible to save money. In fact, they were often fined for other reasons and were forced to repay the owners through their hard work, remaining in eternal debt.

The first true evidence of an independent Afro-Choteño population came with the agrarian reforms in 1964 and 1973. The community organized unions, typically headed by socialist leaders, which were designed to ensure an equal distribution of the newly acquired land to the Afro-Choteños (Speaker h). With the successful distribution of land to Afro-Choteño families, the people started to realize the necessity to stay united and organized in order to ensure the success of their communities (Speaker F). More recently, some have started to sell their land. Many view such an action as turning their backs on the community, given that it introduces more external influences in the area as well as reduces the unity of the people by their geographic location. However, some are not given much of a choice. The land is not producing like it used to—many are barely able to harvest *lo suficiente* and have to find other ways to get food and or money.

Recent Trends in Afro-Ecuadorian Migration

Currently, the provinces with the highest percentages of Afro-Ecuadorians are Esmeraldas, Imbabura, Carchi, Guayas, Pichincha, Sucumbíos, and el Oro (Mendina,

Castro 2006). The top three concentrations of Afro-Ecuadorians are located in Esmeraldas (33.9% of the entire afro population), Guayas (6.56%), and Carchi (5.42%) with a substantial number in Pichincha (3.29%). For every ten Afro-Ecuadorian, at least 4 live in the cities of Guayaquil, Quito, or Esmeraldas (SISPAE, 2007). Ecuador has three very distinct natural environments: the coast, the highlands, and the amazon. We see the Afro-Ecuadorian population distributed among these three areas as 75.9%, 21.0%, and 3.05% respectively (SIISE, 2001).

Results from the INEC VI population census of 2001 tell us that there is a predominance of an urban Afro-Ecuadorian population over the rural: 68.7% reside in the cities while 31.3% inhabit the rural areas (Mendina, Castro 2006). This predominance of the urban population is most likely due to the common rural to urban migration trend fueled by the search of a *mejor calidad de vida* ‘better quality of life’.

Afro-Ecuadorian migration trends show us two different goals: one is for permanent relocation while the other is a temporary stay with the plan never to abandon their communities or places of origin. Although there are many reasons as to why the Afro-Ecuadorians decide to move from the Chota Valley to Quito—permanently or temporarily—it is clear that the overall motivation is associated with the loss of prosperous territory, destruction of ecosystems, and lack of opportunities for work and higher education, among other reasons. The *Corporación de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriano* (CODAE) recognizes that,

“la migración interregional e intraregional[...] ha aumentado como consecuencia de la globalización y subrayamos que las políticas relativas a la migración no deben basarse en el racismo, la discriminación racial, la xenofobia y las formas

conexas de intolerancia” (CODAE, 2008a, p. 4 # 12).

showing that the migration toward the city stems from larger issues of globalization, and that politics on the situation should not be based in racism or any other form of intolerance.

Development of Afro-Ecuadorian Social Movements and Support Groups in Quito

The small communities of El Chota, Mascarilla, and Carpuela used to be very remote locations, however, the Pan-American Highway now passes almost directly through them. The highway has made it easier for the villagers to get to nearby towns and cities like Ibarra. It has also made it easier for workers and migrants to catch buses to Ibarra and Quito. Nonetheless, the easier contact with other cities did not create immediate changes in their involvement in national political, economic, and social decisions concerning the Afro-Choteño population.

Since the days of slavery, the Afro-Ecuadorian population has had a history of being highly underrepresented. Their history has been almost completely absent in textbooks. The lack of visibility of a significant population is devastating to not only the population’s collective rights, but also to their cultural identity. Until recently, there was a common Afro-Choteño saying, “policía o pelota” (Speaker D), implying that an Afro-choteño’s future has two paths: joining the police force, or becoming a *futbolista* for a national team.

The Afro-Choteño population has recognized such problems and are taking actions to fight for cultural diversity and *enfrentar el proyecto homogenizador de la sociedad dominante*, confronting the homogenizing efforts of the dominant society (Chala, 2006, p.

29). As José Chalá notes, one way to defend the Afro-Choteño population is to band together in a communal effort to regain a common collective consciousness and collective memory in order to create a more comprehensive understanding of the population's history. Organizations that are actively part of the Afro-Ecuadorian social movement have helped make their issue a national one. They have helped make Afro-Choteño culture a part of Ecuador's past and present. In the Chota Valley, it was primarily leftists groups who took the first stand to defend the rights of the Afro-Choteños, starting with the distribution of land from the agrarian reform. The creation of workers unions and local cooperatives maintained the unity between the towns and allowed them to begin addressing social and economic concerns of the community. Only later did the church and other non-government organizations participate actively in the defense of the Afro-Choteño population.

In 1979 students of Esmeraldas, Guayas, Imbabura, and Carchi created a *Centro de Estudio Afroecuatorianos* as a space for investigations on the state of the Afro population (Tadeo, 1999). In Quito, we see a strong spark of the specifically female Afro-Ecuadorian social movement. In 1994, the efforts of the Afro-Ecuadorian female group "África Mía" and their history of social projects oriented around basic economic and housing problems of the female domestic workers lead to the creation of the Movimiento de Mujeres Negras de Quito (MOMUNE) as a formal organization to continue similar projects on a larger scale. Another active organization is La Fundación AZUCAR con manos de Ébano, located in a small house near the center of Quito. They are one of the most widely recognized Afro support groups within the City. It started out as a refuge and support group for about eight Afro-Ecuadorian domestic workers. Now it

serves as a cultural space, holding regular workshops on Afro-Ecuadorian issues and traditional events that celebrate Afro-Ecuadorian culture. Groups that are currently active in the defense of Afro-Ecuadorian rights and culture include organizations such as the FECONIC, CODAE, El Centro Cultural Afroecuatoriano, Centro de Investigaciones Familia Negra (CIFANE), and La Casa Ochún among many others. We will see how these groups play a key role in maintaining Afro-Choteño cultural identity in Quito, as well as the Chota Valley itself.

This study will serve as an investigation of the current evolutions of the Afro-Choteño culture in Quito. These evolutions are most visible in their change of speech and their daily lifestyle. We will discover that for some, their language and culture has remained almost entirely intact, whereas the language and culture of others has changed drastically, almost to a point where hints of the existence of Afro-Choteño culture are untraceable.

Methodology

Three primary research strategies were employed to gather the information used for this study:

1. Personal interviews with Afro-Choteños
2. Participation in discussions at events addressing Afro-Ecuadorian culture
3. Information gathering through reading historical and contemporary texts that address social, political, economic, and linguistic issues of the Afro-Choteño population.

Of all the research methods utilized, the personal interviews resulted to be the most valuable. In a culture changing so rapidly, it is nearly impossible to find up to date information in a library or in any publications available on the Internet. It is imperative that personal interviews be conducted to obtain the most up to date information and perspectives. However, the historical texts have helped place the current situation in context with the Afro-Choteños' cultural evolution.

Recruitment of Participants:

All participants were over 18 years of age, with the majority of the participants somewhere between 30 and 50. All are self-identified Afro-Choteños or are decedents of Afro-Ecuadorians from the Chota valley. In many respects, the Afro-Choteño population is a very united people—especially in terms of knowing other families' names, their occupations, and even to some extent, their family history. For this reason, the

majority of participants were found through word of mouth via other Afro-Choteños I met while in Ecuador. The rest were personal contacts given to me by the CODAE, *la Fundación AZUCAR*, as well as my investigation advisor John Lipski. Most participants shared several names and other contact information with me after the interviews were conducted.

Process of Interviews

For the purpose of this study, interviews were first conducted with the elderly population of Afro-Choteños in the pueblos of Mascarilla, Chota, and Carpuela. These interviews provided the majority of the information gathered concerning traditional Afro-Choteño culture and language. These interviews served as a base for understanding how Afro-Choteño culture and language has changed over the years, both in the Chota valley and in Quito. Following these interviews, conversations were held with a variety of Afro-Choteños, some with very little contact with Quito, and some that have been born in Quito and rarely have contact with the Chota Valley. Some remain a relatively balanced contact with both. It is important to note the location of interviews, but it is more important to recognize where the interviewee is coming from, or with which location they have the most contact.

Location of Interviews:

The initial interviews (Speakers a-k) were conducted in the towns of Chota, and Carpuela, located in the province of Imbabura, and also in the town of Mascarilla, located in the province of Carchi. The second wave of interviews was primarily conducted in

northern Quito in the *barrios* of Carapungo, Carcelén Bajo, and Llano Grande (Speakers A-W). Only a few were conducted in other towns such as Tumbaco, a fairly large suburb that is home to the region's hospital, and Ibarra, a city located just around a 30-minute drive from the town of Chota. Although the primary migration of Afro-Choteños is towards Quito, there is a significant population of working Afro-Choteños that live in Ibarra. Although around half of the interviews were conducted in the Chota valley itself, the majority of the interviewees claimed to maintain consistent contact with Quito in some form or another. Since most interviewees work in Quito, the majority of the interviews took place on weekends in the Chota Valley. Many Afro-Choteños residing in Quito return back to the Valley to be with their family on weekends.

Structure of Interviews:

Most interviews lasted between 30 minutes to an hour. Some conversations lasted only minutes and others over an hour. In the interviews, I asked questions concerning Afro-Choteño culture and how it has changed over the years. I then asked questions about traditional Afro-Choteño vocabulary, phrases, history and stories. A few other topics covered in interviews include: the socio-political status of Afro-Choteños, the school system's education of Afro-Ecuadorian history, reasons for the migration towards the city, racial discrimination in the city, and the work of Afro-Ecuadorian social and political movements in the city. The following are the English translations of a few key questions used during the interviews:

- What do you remember about the way in which people used to speak?
- What do you think are some of the key differences between the Spanish spoken in the Chota Valley and the Spanish spoken in Quito?

- Do you see an influence of Quiteño Spanish on Afro-Choteños?
- Why do you think the Afro-Choteños are going to the city?
- Why have you chosen to move to Quito (if applicable)?
- Do you feel that there is discrimination based on dialect and place of origin?
- How has your culture played a role in your work in Quito?

*A list of the original questions used as a base for the recorded conversations can be found in Appendix 2.

Difficulties Encountered during Investigation Process:

Throughout the course of my investigation, the differences between the Chota Valley and Quito became very clear; not only in terms of culture, but in relation to how I was personally able to communicate with Afro-Choteños. Firstly, the pure size of Quito makes organizing a specific interview location very difficult. In the towns of the Chota valley, houses are located within a few strides of each other and most people know everybody in their town, and maybe even in the next town. I was able to use almost every moment of my time in the Chota Valley interviewing or talking with participants. As soon as I finished one interview, the interviewee would introduce me to someone who they viewed as very knowledgeable on cultural issues and the discussion would continue. In the city, there was much more difficulty in successfully finding Afro-Choteños that were able or willing to participate. This is due to a variety of reasons. The city culture is focused on regular work schedules that don't provide much extra time for socializing or other activities. The Afro-Choteños in the city work extremely hard to maintain their families back in the valley, or simply to maintain their new style of life in the city. There is little time for them to take a break for an interview. Most are just as caught up as the rest of the city's population in staying busy and rushing to and from work or work related

events. For that reason, all interviews conducted in the city were conducted near or in their place of work. Sometimes I was able to catch them during a lunch break or before they caught their bus that would take them all the way to their homes. Many make weekend trips back to the Chota Valley to spend time with their family; in some cases, it was easier for me to catch them in the Valley than to try and set up an interview in Quito.

It is not a surprise that many Afro-Choteños are a little hesitant to participate in a formal investigation being conducted by a foreigner. Racial discrimination still has a strong presence in the city and Afro-Choteños often edit what they say and do to avoid being targeted. Those working in public service sectors were very willing to participate, though management was extremely cautious and protective of their workforce. I was unable to continue interviews with workers of the *Hospital de Los Valles* in Tumbaco, most likely due to the fear that I would organize a *sindicato* ‘worker’s union’ and that the workers would ask for a fair salary.

Responses were very different for those who are actively involved in Afro-Ecuadorian based support groups such as the Fundación AZUCAR and La Casa Ochún. They, on the other hand, were more than willing and even excited to participate in the study as it provided them the opportunity to express their feelings and viewpoints about Afro-Ecuadorian culture. Their workplace encourages such activities whereas hospital and domestic workers might fear for their job if they do something their employer finds even remotely suspicious.

Analysis of Data:

The elderly population of Afro-Choteños provides examples of traditional speech while the younger population and those who are living in Quito provide examples of how the language has changed and what modern linguistic fusions are being created from the influence of Quiteño Spanish. Before analyzing this data, I listened to the recordings to organize and compare the responses related to Afro-Choteño culture and identity. Each participant was asked the same questions although some may have been excluded from certain interviews. This information was then placed in context with the historical and contemporary texts that I read. After comparing the differences in traditional Chota Valley culture with the culture of the Afro-Choteños in Quito, I looked specifically at the linguistic characters of each participant to see how they correlated.

Once all of the information from the interviews was gathered and put in context with the historical texts and conversations with Afro-Choteños, I was able to answer my investigation's key questions:

- Which linguistic traits are maintained in the city? Which are lost?
- Which cultural traits are maintained in the city? Which are lost?
- What trends lead to culture and linguistic changes in the Afro-Choteño population?

Results

In order to understand the recent developments in Afro-Choteño Spanish, we must look at how it has been maintained by its oldest living population. The oldest population of Afro-Choteños from the pueblos Mascarilla, Chota, and Carpuela, were interviewed first to obtain their perspective and personal examples of the most traditional Afro-Choteño speech that still remains. It is through them that we can see aspects of their speech that continue to live on in the new generations of Afro-Choteños within the Chota Valley itself, and those who have moved to the city.

Characteristics of Traditional Afro-Choteño Spanish

(1) Lack of plural agreement and loss of word-final /s/.

As shown in the interviews as well as past investigations by John Lipski, the word final /s/ in Afro-Choteño Spanish is lost more often than in any other neighboring highland Ecuadoran Spanish (Lipski, 1986). Typically, the word-final /s/ in highland Ecuadorian Spanish is never lost or even aspirated. This aspect is unique to the Spanish of the Chota Valley. Also, the stripped plural noun-phrases—where the plural marker is found only in the first word—is a highly common trait of Afro-Choteño Spanish.

El río del Chota se llevó *las casa*

Cogíamos *nuestras pala*

Los mayors a *los guagua* (Lipski, 2008)

More recent recorded examples:

Ha sido feo *los pierna* [sic] (Speaker a)

y hacen *sus vida* (Speaker c)

unos hijo (Speaker k)

otros hermano (Speaker b)

las hija (Speaker f)

Que feo *estos animale* (Speaker a)

meter *unas pelea* (Speaker a)

A buscar su trabajo, a buscar *sus vida* (Speaker c)

(2) Use of *ala*

Ala is a phrase generally used to call someone's attention. Often, if the person's name is unknown, *ala* will be used as a general attention grabber.

Ala! (Speakers A, C, & I)

Ala, vení! - (Speakers B, g, M, & N)

(3) Use of *ele*

Ele is an expression used in various circumstances. Usually it is a general exclamation before another statement. Córdova Álvarez (1995) states that it can generally be used as an expression of alarm or surprise. It is also used often when the speaker is disappointed by something they did like spill their drink, drop something, or miss a goal in soccer.

For example:

-*Ele*, que hice? (Speaker A)

-*ele ese!* (Speakers B & N)

-*ele ese! Como ha vestido!* - *Como se ha mudao!* (Speaker B)

-*ele yo ca no* (Lipski, 2008)

-*ele*, qué pasó?

-*ele* la maría

-*ele*, me olvidé.

(4) Use of *mama*

It is a common trait of Afro-choteno Spanish to use *mama* instead of *mamá* or *mami*. This is typically found all across the Chota-Mira basin region.

...como la *mama* (Speaker f).

mama (Speakers j, K, I)

ónde está mi *mama*? (Speaker I)

(5) Examples of Afro-Choteño Vocabulary

Tutir ‘to load, to lift’

Tutele el guagua, vele a *tutir* la guagua breve (Speaker N)

Sorango/a ‘A foolish person, someone who does not understand’

Este *sorango* no me entiende (Speaker B)

pucha ‘pig’

pridio ‘glass’

basudero ‘trashcan’

cuasí – ‘yes, of course’

Magulli ‘I won’t give you, no, definitely not’

(6) Loss of word final consonants

Lunes, el día de destilá [destilar](Speaker f)

va a *comé* [comer] (Speaker a)

Yo no voy a *í* [ir] (Speaker N).

(7) Lack of gender agreement in *mismo*

It is typical of Afro-Chota Spanish to leave the adjective *mismo* in its unchanged masculine form, regardless of any gender agreement differences. Some examples include:

Ella sí *mismo* [misma] se adelantó (Lipski, 2008)

La escuela *mismo* [misma] (Speaker j)

(8) Non-reflexive verb *llamarse*

Como llamaba? (Speaker f)

Ella llama (Speaker f)

Yo llamo... (Speaker c)

Observations on the Loss and Evolution of Afro-Choteño Linguistic Characteristics

(1) The use of *ala*

The use of *ala* appears to remain intact in the majority of older Afro-Choteños who have spent extensive time in Quito. Those who were born in the city to Afro-Choteño immigrants recognized *ala* but would rarely use it in its original context. A second Afro-Quiteño, whose grandparents moved to Quito years ago, recognized the use of *ala* but did not use the word himself. This is usually used only with a relatively close friend or family member. When used with strangers it is considered disrespectful.

(2) The use of *ele*

Ele is almost never used with non-afro-choteños. The Afro-Choteño population in Quito use this expression with each other; many claim to use it as frequently as they would in the valley. Though some claim that it is rarely used in interactions between youth. In my observations, the youth within the three communities still frequently use *éle*. However, those in the city have almost lost it completely from their vocabulary. Only sometimes will it slip out. For instance, one of the dance instructors stated that when people poorly execute steps, he often exclaims “*ele!*” Even though the student probably doesn’t understand him, it is an expression that can be understood based on the intonation used.

(3) The use of *magulli*

The recognition of the use of *magulli* remains widespread in the older (above 50)

population of Afro-Choteños in Quito, even those who have lived the majority of their life in the city and have not visited the valley in decades. The use and recognition of *magulli* in the Afro-Choteño youth in Quito is almost non-existent, though there is some evidence supporting the existence of a new meaning and usage of the word itself. Out of all of the interviews, only two Afro-Choteños recognized the word *magulli* as having a significantly different meaning. For them, *magulli* is something you say that is used to provoke a startle out of an animal (Speaker A, Speaker C). The example given to me was that it's something you say to get a snooping dog away from you. Similar to the use of "hey!" (Speaker A). They usually do not pronounce the entire word, but instead they just say *gulli*. Most likely this transformation occurred due to the lack of contact with its original dialect and its original context. Specifically in El Chota and Carpuela, the children recognize the word and its accompanying gesture (the swiping cutthroat signal), but they do not know how to use it. No interviewees recognized the word as a derivative of the verb *magullar* 'to bruise or mash up' as noted by John Lipski (2008), but a couple suggested that it must be influenced by Ecuadorian Quichua and not just Spanish (Speaker T, Speaker U).

(4) The use of *mama*

Most of the older Afro-Chotenos that have remained in contact with their families in the valley still use the typical Afro-Choteño pronunciation of *mama* instead of the widespread Quiteño use of *mamá* or *mami*. Though, extensive contact with the city generally has changed their usage to *mamá*. In the Chota Valley, most prefer to use *mama* or *mami*.

(5) Salutations:

When asked to discuss the differences between Choteno speech as it was and as it is today, most elderly Afro-Choteños mentioned differences in general salutations. Some common salutations such as *bendiciones*, *buenos días de Diós*, *buenas tardes de Dios*, were expected of the youth. Now such salutations are not as common or “expected,” though most children say *bendiciones* or *buenas tardes de Dios* when passing the elderly (Speakers c, f, E, G, & H).

(6) Vocal Fillers in Carpuela: *áh-aa*

Many interviewees from Carpuela used a very similar form of vocal fillers in their speech. Found throughout almost all of my interviews in Carpuela, the interviewees often finish by saying *áh-aa* after completing a thought or idea. I found it much more common in females of all ages, whereas only the elderly population of men seemed to regularly use the filler. Examples are most commonly noted in interviews with Speakers i, J, T, & U . This characteristic was not found in Quito with interviewees who have a family background in Carpuela.

(7) Use of Estar/Ser

Although not a common occurrence, it is important to mention that a few examples were cited in which *estar* was used in place of *ser*. For instance, when referring to the time, a participant said “*está las nueve*” (Speaker a).

(8) The use of the words *negro*, *moreno*, and *afro*

There is a lot of racial tension associated with the use of the word *Moreno* to refer to a person of color. Most Afro-Ecuadorians know that *Moreno* was a last name and does not have any association with the color black. In the Chota Valley, the majority of Afro-Chotenos use *negro* to refer to their skin color, their ethnicity, and their cultural identity. In the city, we only see this type of *negro* when used between two people of African descent. Quiteños strictly use the word *moreno* to refer to Afro-Ecuadorians, mulatos, or zambos. Often, the use of *negro* by non-*negros* appears in negative representations of the *negros* themselves. We see this in general racist language by Ecuadorians as well as in news and media publications. More recently, we are seeing a conscious movement towards the use of the word *afro*, a topic which we will discuss in more detail a little later.

(9) Linguistic Changes in Female Domestic Workers

Women who have worked in domestic care often will change their way of speaking only during interactions with the members of the household in which they work. All women interviewed who had worked extensively in Quito in domestic services had shown no significant influence of Quiteño Spanish on their idiolect. Most would revert back to their natural way of speaking as soon as the Quiteño accent felt unnecessary (Speakers I & T). The female domestic workers state that there was such a sense of racial tension from their arrival that they were automatically conscious of their language and demeanor, being careful not to draw attention to their race or place of origin.

(10) Involvement with Afro-Ecuadorian Organizations

Those who are more involved with Afro-Ecuadorian support groups tend to be more aware of their speech patterns as well as what it means to have an Afro-Choteño accent. This may be evidence of the Afro-Choteños' ever-growing linguistic self-awareness mentioned by John Lipski. Such awareness shows a significant development to his 1984 fieldwork, during which very few Afro-Choteños recognized a specific Afro-Choteño dialect. Initially, this knowledge was probably spread due to the easy availability to travel around the Chota region and even to nearby cities. In addition, the cultural encouragement from these Afro-Ecuadorian support groups often leads to more respect and understanding of the importance of the Afro-Choteño culture and language. Many interviewees could state specific linguistic differences between Afro-Choteño towns such as the use of *ca* and certain differences in intonation or tone. Those who have little to no connection with such organizations showed significantly less recognition of a Afro-Choteno dialect, and they also lost almost completely their personal use of the dialect.

Some are successfully maintaining culture through organized group activities. Dance and music like the bomba are maintained through the performance of such traditions at culture events, celebrations of the Afro population such as El día de la raza, and even private gatherings. The Afro-Choteños who are involved in such performance groups, although based in Quito, retain typical characteristics of Afro-Choteño Spanish moreso than those who are not involved.

Observations on the Loss and Evolution of Afro-Choteño Culture

The culture of the Afro-Choteño population as maintained in the valley itself has

roots based in the times of the founding of the original *palenques*. Such aspects of culture include their style of dress, the food they eat, their family names, their forms of dance and music, and their stories as passed down from generation to generation.

(1) Style of dress

The style of dress in the Chota Valley was traditionally formal. Even going out to work in the fields, one would generally put on their *batona* ‘dress shirt’ and long slacks or pants (Speaker h). The women always wore long *faldas* ‘skirts’ covering their legs down to their ankles. Today, the Afro-Choteños in the city and the valley itself have almost completely changed their daily casual dress. Most wear normal t-shirts and jeans. The styles of the youth in the Valley do not differ from those typical urban styles found in Quito. Only the elderly women in the three communities (El Chota, Carpuela, and Mascarilla) wear their colorful *faldas* and beautiful head wraps. Some still carry around their *cuero*, reminding the youth of the “tres cuero” rule for when they misbehave (Speaker c). Such traditional dress is not common in the city, however, some of the older Afro-Choteñas will still dress themselves in the *falda* and cover their hair with a headdress of the Chota styles, demonstrating their pride in their heritage (Speakers f & B).

(2) Food

The traditional foods of The Chota Valley are unique in that some of the products are relatively scarce in the markets of Quito. This remains true, even though the Chota fields are not producing like they used to. Some foods include *poroto* and *gandúl*—both a type of bean that is relatively difficult to find in Quito’s markets. Saturdays in Carpuela are days for the community to relax a little, play some fútbol, and enjoy the day. Many

families come out and sell typical dishes like *picadillo*. Now you can even find fried hot dogs and potatoes for sale. In the communities of Carcelén and Carapungo, both of which have a relatively high population of Afro-Choteños, some make the efforts to find the ingredients for the traditional dishes in order to serve them at the local restaurants.

(3) Finances

One very different aspect of culture between the city and the valley is influenced by the differences in socialism and capitalism. The small towns in the Chota Valley are very united in ensuring that no one goes without food, shelter, electricity, or any of the basic human needs. When I asked Afro-Choteños about the differences in culture between the valley and city was usually that the city culture is based around a capitalist, materialist mind-set, while the valley's socialist thinking functions under a more communally based system. In the Chota Valley towns, the Afro-Choteños are the owners of their land and houses. There is no higher power that would threaten to throw you out of your house because you missed a payment. In the city, many have worked over 40-hour weeks, only to come home and have their electricity and water shut off, or even receive the threat of being removed from the house itself. Most of the Afro-Choteños interviewed in the city recalled at least one similar occurrence. One participant from Carpuela who currently lives in Carapungo said "*siempre tuvimos comida en mi casa. Si no la tuvimos nosotros, la tenía mi tío, o alguien de la familia. Aquí en Quito, si al fin de la semana no tienes para salir al [Mercado] te quedas sin comida*" which translates as 'we always had food in my house. If we didn't have it, my uncle or someone else in the family did. Here in Quito, if you don't have money for groceries at the end of the week, you go without

food' (speaker A). If your family ran out of food in El Chota, you can be sure that a relative or a neighbor will help you out and bring some food from their plot of land. The strong sense of a communal lifestyle is usually preferred by Afro-Choteños then the capitalist ways of the city. As stated by an interviewee from Carpuela who had spent a couple years in Quito as a domestic worker but returned to the Valley: *Aqui, yo tengo mi pobreza, pero es mio propio* 'Here, I have my poverty, but [at least] it's mine' (Speaker T).

(4) Music and Dance

The bomba is the traditional music of the Chota valley. Today, bomba dance and music is rarely practiced by the Afro-Choteños in the city or even in its place of origin of the Chota Valley. There are only a few places where bomba music makes regular appearances. One place is at the annual Coangue festival that takes place every February in El Chota during Carnaval. In Quito, there are a few dance groups, organized primarily by women from El Chota, that dedicate their time to learn the traditional bomba style of dance. These groups are often hired to give private workshops or play at cultural events around the cities of Quito and Ibarra. We see that some Afro-Choteño music and dance groups prefer to remain true to their traditions while other prefer to appeal to the newer culture and adapt the rhythms and some movements to more popular modern styles. Four different Afro-Choteño dance instructors in Quito all told me that it is rare to find someone who is interested in learning la bomba. Only during *Afro* parties do they pull out a few bomba recordings. It is not uncommon to only have three or four requests a year to teach bomba dance. The majority of the *extranjeros* and Quiteños ask for lessons in

merengue and salsa dancing. Even in the Chota community you can hear salsa and cumbia music playing from the local dancehall, while you rarely ever hear música bomba. Today, most Afro-Choteños view artistic performance of the bomba as a “show” used only for entertainment (Speakers A, C & D).

The bomba makes appearances in *discotecas* where the rhythms are fused with modern synthesized beats and melodies. In some cases it has fallen into the classification of latin pop music, where styles such as salsa, merengue, cumbia, and bomba all lose their original instrumentation and arguably, their uniqueness. There are many who value this fusion as a crucial part of the evolution of the Afro-Choteño population. They do not see anything as lost but rather new aspects gained which in effect contribute to the contemporary fusion sound.

(5) Recollection of Afro-Choteño Stories and Myths

Every culture has its way of passing down stories and life lessons to the next generations. Oral traditions have, until this day, served as the most natural way to do so. Afro-Choteño culture is full of stories and myths that are used to guide the youth and teach life lessons—some so vivid that they seem impossible to forget. This is shown in the recognition of some of these myths that we see today. Afro-Chotenos who have grown up in Quito and children of Afro-Choteño migrants both recollect several myths as told by their *abuelos* and relatives. Only a few who have grown up entirely in Quito do not recall any stories.

The following are a few examples of the myths and stories, as recorded in the interviews:

Speaker B tells of a traditional way of celebrating the death of a child. The child is dressed up, placed on top of a mini altar, and its head is tied back in such a way that it seems as though it's alive, facing forwards. After one month, the baby is taken down and placed in its coffin:

“Hay muchos mitos no? por ejemplo, en los entierros de los niño, cuando un nino se muere, no le tienen que llorar porquen un nino es un angelito. En vez de llorarle sele bailaba toda la noche, con todos los ninos, con todo eso. Cuando el niño ya se le llevaba al cementerio, se quedaba el altar, del cuerpo austente, cuando cumplía un mes, se volvía a hacer un cuerpito de un niño, se le volvía a hacer, y se le velaba igual. Si? como que estuviese ahi un niño muerto, pero a este nino se lo velaba ya sentado. A los ninos se les velaba sentados, no acostados. Siempre sentados Cuando ya se le iba a enterar, a los ninos se les bajaba de su altarcito, y se les ponía en su caja. Para enterarles. Y de hecho se les ponía una corona de [cellophane]. Y al nino le sentaba en una mesa más una silla, pero el niño tenía que estar siempre alto. Sentado, y con su cabezita asi, amarado hacia la silla, y sentado.”

Speaker A shows us that many myths were used to make the youth afraid of leaving the house at night, often keeping them out of danger or trouble. For example, in the Chota Valley, apparently, if you get too drunk, a pig will appear and seduce you to lay with it.

“Supuestamente, que las personas que se emborachaban asi, totalmente, que ya no poder ni pararse, por que allá, tu tomas una, un trago que se llama puntas y te quedas pero sin poderte levantar, y voz te ibas a tu casa que supuestamente que te

aprecía un chanco, allá se dice una pucha, y supuestamente tu te cayías y ella te comenzaba a besar...pero cosas así que, como se llama, un, le dicen “el cuco” que cuando estabas por las huertas te salió el cuco y que te llevaba cuando tu no eres bautizado, cosas que tu deberías andar con miedo siempre [...] Pero eso es más para que no salgas de la casa.”

Reasons for migration to Quito

When asking the participants why they have moved to the city, the results were fairly consistent for all interviews. The first and most important reason is the lack of work in the Valley, due primarily to the decline in the quality of land for harvesting. When the land doesn't provide for the community like it used to, the people are forced to go elsewhere—to Quito or Ibarra in the Afro-Choteño case—to earn money and to be able to support their families. Many of these workers are young women who travel to Quito who are privately employed as domestic workers for middle-upper class Quiteños. Usually they must live in an apartment which sucks up the majority of their monthly earnings. The following story of a young Afro-Choteña (Speaker I) is fairly common:

She left for Quito alone at 14 years of age as a domestic worker for a white-Quiteño family. She spent over two years there without being able to visit her family back in the valley. Once she came back to her hometown of Carpuela, she started working fulltime as a waitress in Ibarra. She provides the majority of the finances for her household, which includes several siblings, her mom, and her grandfather. In an attempt to graduate with a degree, she is taking Saturday classes at a public school in Ibarra.

The other main reason we see Afro-Choteños in Quito is simply due to family migration. When one moves and establishes a relatively comfortable home, they feel more comfortable bringing their children and other family members to the city.

Many Afro-Choteños believe or at least re-enforce the stereotype that everything about Quito is better, including their speech and the school systems. They view the schools in Quito as being much higher quality because of their access to computers and more “qualified” teachers. Some defend that the education at the Chota elementary school in Carpuela is preferable. The schools in Quito do not address issues of Afro-Ecuadorian history. Joel Chalá, the principle of the Colegio de Carpuela, recognizes that the school systems in the Valley are working hard to help maintain the Afro-Choteño culture, and to help give the children a better understanding of their past, their ancestors. Such lessons do not exist in the cities of Quito or Ibarra. Not too long ago could any child answer the question *por qué hablan español los negros, teniendo raices en África* ‘If they have roots in Africa, why to the blacks speak Spanish?’ (Speaker D). Now, even students at the elementary levels of education are learning the answers to such questions.

Relatively few participants gave examples of friends or family members that have come to the city specifically for a university-level education. Many Afro-Choteños are far too familiar with the saying “policía o pelota” implying that they can either be police or athletes (Speaker D). For too long they have been given only opportunities to be police or athletes and now they assume it is their only path for success. Today there are still many Afro-Choteños that represent Ecuador’s finest athletes and many others are policemen/women or firefighters. To some, the city is an opportunity to break from those paths and create a new future with a variety of possibilities. However, unlike other forms

of migration, many have a plan to go back home to help their community. It is very evident that the majority of the population in El Chota, Carpuela, and Mascarilla consists of an older population (at least 50 years of age) and a very young population of children from newborns to 18-year olds. For those that fall between these two age ranges, we see that most have left to go to the city for work or school.

As a result of the organizations' hard work to maintain Afro-Choteño culture in the city, there is a new wave of identity that shows great respect for the traditions of the communities in the Chota valley. Many respect the lessons they learned from the elderly and hope to give back to the community that raised them. Even if they were born in the city, those that still maintain close ties with their family in the valley feel as though the connection need to be maintained from generation to generation.

The following is a list that summarizes the main reasons as to why Afro-Choteños believe such changes are occurring in the population that move to the city.

- They avoid being identified by their language and cultural traditions.
- Many think Quiteño Spanish is more refined and will therefore provide them with better opportunities in their future.
- They lose daily connections with their communities and slowly begin to adapt to what feels most comfortable.
- Young children who have not fully establish their own speech patterns and lifestyles often learn the Quiteño traditions and adapt much faster than the older population.

Discussion

The culture and language of the Afro-Choteño population is constantly evolving in many ways. Although the communities themselves have remained fairly isolated from outside influences in the past, the population is becoming increasingly visible in all areas of Ecuador, especially in Quito. As supported by Afro-Ecuadorian groups like AZUCAR, there is no single Afro-Choteño identity, but rather there are many different reasons why a person will auto-identify themselves as an Afro-Choteño. That being said, we must recognize that the process of maintaining Afro-Choteño culture and language in the city is a process that fuses traditional values with newer values that are primarily found in Quito's city life.

The Loss and Fusion of Afro-Choteño Culture in Quito

How is it possible that a third generation Afro-Quiteño with family roots in El Chota can speak with a thick Afro-Choteño accent while another Afro-Choteño who moved to the city just a year ago has lost almost all signs of having spoken Afro-Choteño Spanish? These interviews have revealed some of the personal motivations behind such drastic changes. These fusions are in some cases very natural, yet in many cases forced by the current racial and cultural tensions between Afro-Choteños and the culture of Quito.

The female domestic workers showed the strongest personal connections to their Afro-Choteño identity in the face of blatant discrimination at their workplaces. They represent a large portion of the first Afro-Choteños that migrated temporarily if not permanently to the city. Often these women arrived in Quito fully aware of the racial

discrimination and were forced to change their speech patterns and general demeanor to appeal more to their employers. Most were often “corrected” in their use of Spanish and were rarely referred to by name. The members of a household often use *morena* or *morenita* to catch their attention. Of the domestic workers that moved permanently to Quito, many still choose to spend their time with family in the Valley. Some mothers even send their children to the schools in Ibarra instead of keeping them in Quito. Others think of the life in the city as an opportunity to better educate their children and allow them to adapt to urban culture.

Although they now have established Afro-Choteño *barrios* in the areas of Carcelén and Carapungo in northern Quito, they do not experience the same sense of unity that is felt in their pueblos in the Valley: the houses are farther apart, they are outnumbered by a mix of other migrants and Quiteños, and the majority of their time is spent working in areas of the city often two or three bus rides away from their town.

Sometimes the age of a person overpowers the effects of the distance from their own culture. For example, an elderly person has already spent so many years naturally developing their identity that it is almost inseparable to their culture. Those who moved to Quito at an older age tend to maintain all aspects of their speech while in the city. The younger population, since they are still developing their idiolects, tends to adapt quicker to their environment and are easily influenced by the surrounding culture. The young adults tend to have greater power over switching back and forth between Afro-Choteño Spanish and Quiteño Spanish when a specific dialect seems necessary.

Many simply avoid the possibility of racial discrimination by speaking a more “refined” Quiteño Spanish. In the workplace, some feel as though such changes may be

necessary to hold their position. To them, facing racial discrimination is not worth the trouble; maybe they will fit in or even become invisible if they change their cultural traditions as well. Many younger Afro-Choteños in Quito experience forms of racial discrimination when they attempt to perform simple acts of courtesy that they were always expected to do in the valley. Helping an elderly person with their groceries may be taken as too aggressive in Quito, simply due to stereotypes of the *negros*. Speaker B claims that all of her Afro-Choteño friends speak with an entirely different intonation when they are in public settings like a café or a bus. They avoid being targeted or treated as the “others.” A teacher of traditional bomba classes for the elderly, Speaker B was once called into her boss’s office after a student complained that she was yelling aggressively at them—the reasoning being only that this person was not used to the volume and tone in which many Afro-Choteños speak. Responding to such a complaint, she now must speak in a softer and warmer tone, so as to not appear threatening to her students. Perhaps if the Quiteño population, or even the Ecuadorian population as a whole were a little more familiar with the Afro-Choteño population, there would be a higher sense of cultural understanding and fewer instances of misunderstanding.

These types of adaptations to the Quiteño culture are avoidable and should be addressed as a common threat to Afro-Choteño culture. This threat is fueled by the general lack of knowledge about the Afro-Choteño people and their history. Most Quiteños still associate the Afro-Choteño population with an uneducated people. Additionally, Quiteños often identify Afro-Choteños with the Afro-Esmeraldeños. The cultures and speech patterns are very different, yet the Quiteños view them on the outside as one in the same. Only when an Afro-Choteño speaks do people realize that they are

not from Esmeraldas. When they hear the thick *serrano* /r/ and the heavily pronounced consonants in their accent they often state, *tú no hablas como un negro* ‘you don’t speak like a black person,’ reinforcing the common stereotype that there is a distinct “black Spanish” all across the Spanish speaking world. This “black Spanish” is primarily associated with the dialects of African slaves who have settled on the coasts and in Caribbean nations. We know that coastal and Caribbean Spanish have many similarities, but is that reason alone to assume that all blacks are from the coast? Or that they have the same beliefs and cultural traditions? The Afro-Choteño population has been so invisible in Ecuador’s classrooms and textbooks that it is possible for such blatant ignorance to occur.

Maintaining Afro-Choteño Culture in the City

More important than age, time spent in the City, or the presence of racial discrimination in Quito on ability to maintain Afro-Choteño culture, is the influence of the sense of community obtained through involvement with the many Afro-Ecuadorian support groups in Quito. The greatest divisions in Afro-Choteños in the city are noted by their participation, in some form, with a ‘micro Afro-Choteño’ community in Quito.

One of the principle organizations that has made ties with the majority of the afro-Choteño organizations in Quito is La Fundación AZUCAR. They hold regular cultural activities, social commentaries, and discussions with leaders from the Afro-Quiteño social movements as well as from Afro movements in other countries. They also have a small library filled with publications related to Afro-Ecuadorian issues and a café where they daily serve Afro-Ecuadorian dishes.

AZUCAR is making sure that younger Afro-Choteños are getting involved in cultural activities. The young children often soak up this information very quickly which

influences their personal identification and belonging to their community. AZUCAR has organized cultural camps where Afro-Choteño youth in the city are taken on a three day retreat with other Afro-Choteños to learn from leaders of important social movements. They are taught about their history and the importance of their solidarity with all Afro-Ecuadorians. Many times they hold discussions on culture, not too different from the conversation I held for this investigation. They also hold very authentic dance and music workshops for bomba and marimba music. All Afro-Choteños interviewed in Quito stated they had attended an event run by AZUCAR, and many actively participated in their cultural celebrations.

AZUCAR is not a strictly Afro-Choteño organization, though it is coordinated and organized primarily by women of Afro-Choteño descent. The organization's members also include many Afro-Esmeraldeñas and women who identify as Afro-Quiteñas.

Few organizations are attempting to stay true to the traditional cultural trends of the Valley. Only a couple music and dance groups—one based in Carapungo and one organized by La Casa Ochún—teach and perform la bomba as it was originally performed in the Valley. However, it has lost its context and serves primarily as a show (Speaker A). More and more Afro-Ecuadorian groups are supporting the idea of the fusion between all cultures, while simultaneously remaining educated and aware of their Afro-Choteño history. Some may say that this is a loss of culture while others view it as a development of a new culture.

The *Corporación de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriano* (CODAE) is another organization that focuses more on the political representation and the collective rights of the Afro-Ecuadorian population. CODAE, alongside many other Afro-Ecuadorian

organizations, had recently been discussing the importance of uniting all Afro-descendants of Ecuador. As mentioned in the introduction, the census of 2001 states that the Afro-Ecuadorian population made up only 4.97% of the national total. This number highly under-represents the Afro-Ecuadorian population. Such under-representation allows their issues to remain on the backburner. Other social and economic issues take priority over the apparently miniscule Afro population, allowing the discrimination to continue—this discrimination being the main cause of the oppression of the Afro-Choteño culture in the City. The 2001 census was conducted primarily by middle-school children who sometimes made their own decisions as to the race of the members of a given household instead of allowing them to answer (Speaker K). When the numbers were added up, only those who were marked as *negros* were considered to represent the Afro-Ecuadorian population, excluding the *mulatos*, *zambos*, and any other person who would identify themselves as *negro* or part of the Afro-Ecuadorian population. In the census of 2011, Organizations like CODAE and AZUCAR worked hard to unite the Afro-Ecuadorian population through taking pride of their ethnic identity. Issues of racial discrimination on all levels of Ecuadorian society raise concerns about the use of the word *negro*.

Ecuador's Afro-descendent population is typically very proud to use the word *negro* to identify themselves. The current discussion, however, questions the use of the word *negro* and what it implies. The word *negro* was given to the slaves by their masters. It was used to represent everything impure, unclean, and lower class. Until just recently the Ecuadorian constitution still used the word *negro* to refer to the Afro-Ecuadorian population. News and other media sources still use *negro* and *moreno* in formal publications. New to Ecuador, a concept has been developed to unify the black

population through using the word *Afro* in place of *negro*. Such a change would imply significant advances in the involvement of Afro-Ecuadorians in all of Ecuador. The Sistema de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE) and the Sistema de Indicadores Sociales del Pueblo Afro-Ecuatoriano (SISPAE) note that out of Ecuador's 12,156,608 inhabitants, only around 2.23% were identified as *negro* and 2.74% as *mulatos* (SIISE-SISPAE, 2006).

In the census of 2011, efforts from Afro-Ecuadorian organizations successfully changed the ethnic identification section of the form to include the following options: afro-ecuatoriano(a), afro-descendiente, negro, y mulato. Their efforts now make it possible to sum up all four groups when counting the Afro population as a percentage of the national total. CODAE and members of the FECONIC suggest that the Afro-Ecuadorian population (including the other three forms of self-identification mentioned) will represent over 10% of the population once all results are documented¹.

This is not to tell the entire population of color that they need to identify themselves as Afro. Many Afros *orgullosamente* considered themselves *negros(as)*, or even *morenos(as)*. Others might use *negro* casually with other *negros*, but they also recognize the social and political implications of the use of the word *Afro*. Speaker B defends her use of the word *negro*, but proudly considers and will always consider herself an *Afro*, no matter where she is or how she eats, speaks, or acts:

“hay que conocer para poder respetar[...] la identidad, para mi, es pertenecer, y saberme que soy una Afro, y sentirme orgullosa de que soy una Afro, y de que

¹ *Una Conversación del Negro en Ecuador y Cuba*. A discussion organized by la fundación AZUCAR in the Casa Cultural Afroecuatoriana con Manos de Ébano.

vengo de un puebo donde mis raices, todos, son Afros, y que eso nadie me lo va a quito. Ni mi manera de comer, ni me manera de hablar, ni mi manera de actuar, yo soy y seré Afro donde quiera” (Speaker B)

It is a strong social stance to unite the population as *Afro*, recognizing the connection to their ancestors and all afro-decedents in Ecuador. A change so significant could have strong political as well as cultural effects on the Afro-Ecuadorian population. There is a stereotype of what a *negro* looks like and represents in Ecuador. Generally, the running thief *negro* pops into peoples heads. Identifying the black population as Afro-Ecuadorian or afro-descendent would help create a new image of the Afro population. It would also generate a more unifying name for the entire population. The pure recognition of the population as a much larger percentage of the national total may help them receive more of the government support that they truly deserve. How is the population going to strive if the support provided for advancements in education and infrastructure is only a fraction of what is truly owed to them?

Conclusion

Afro-Choteño culture is rich with fusions of African and Ecuadorian traditions as well as many ethno-linguistic traits that make the people unique. If we are not aware of the forces that are actively repressing this culture, we may soon find that it has disappeared forever. Inevitably, the culture will evolve with time. The Afro-Choteños however, have a history of being denied a place in Ecuador's history and they have suffered the consequences of discrimination from other Ecuadorians and from the state itself.

We see the majority of Afro-Choteños who migrate to the city tend to change their speech patterns temporarily, if not permanently to a more Quiteño Spanish. Only those Afro-Choteños who remain in regular contact with their family and/or Afro-Ecuadorian support groups tend to hold on to their traditional accent. Other aspects of Afro-Ecuadorian culture such as the music, the food, and the stories seem to be fading away in the city. Only the organizations involved in Afro-Quiteño social movements, such as CODAE and la Fundación AZUCAR, are making strong efforts to help maintain Afro-Choteño culture and identity within the city. More common than the process of losing or maintaining cultural trends is the tendency to create a fusion of Afro-Choteño culture with Quiteño culture. We see influences of city culture creating fusions that mark the true evolution of Afro-Choteño culture. The culture and language themselves will continuously evolve and adapt to their environmental changes, but the identity of the Afro-Chotenos will always remain strong.

Suggestions

We must not fail to recognize that the Afro-Ecuadorian social movement is at a critical point in its continued success. There are very few Afro-Quitenos that recognize the need for newer and younger leaders to get involved in the struggle to defend their people's rights. Leaders of CODAE and FECONIC have helped run leadership workshops, encouraging the youth to take an active stance on Afro-Ecuadorian social, economic, and political issues instead of simply participating passively in cultural events. We need to make stronger efforts to make Afro-Ecuadorian studies available in the schools, and even up to the university level. In Carpuela, the local *colegio*, which receives children from many nearby towns, has made significant changes to their curriculum in order to include more information about the history of the Afro-Ecuadorian population. In a collaborative effort, Iván Pabón, Jorge Espinosa, Barbarita Lara, Olga Maldonado, and Alicia Muñoz created a childrens' school book which was released by the FECONIC under the title of *Nuestra Historia. Documento didáctico pedagógico: una herramienta para la etnoeducación afroecuatoriana* . The authors make their point clear by opening up chapter one with a quote from their first coordinating meeting in the Valley del Chota:

“Ningún ser humano puede vivir sin el conocimiento cabal de su historia, sin la guía y sin la luz de su cultura ancestral.” (FECONIC, 2005).

The book brings up the important history of the Afro-Choteños including their African ancestors, hairstyles, family structures, and religion. The book also takes a breif look at the global African population, addressing questions of geographic location, revolutionary leaders, and orgins of last names. If the history of the Afro-Choteño

population becomes more visible and accessible in all of Quito's school, there will be a higher sense of cultural understanding and coexistence . There will also be an increased interest in becoming involved in efforts to defend the collective rights of the Afro-Choteño community.

CODAE addresses the need for a distinct plan for the Afro population's future. In their *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007-2010*, they outline some of the priorities in order to ensure the Afro-Ecuadorian population is advancing in their efforts to better their quality of life, the most important priority being the creation of a monitoring organization designed to report on all activity related to the advancement of Afro-Ecuadorians and the recognition of their collective rights (CODAE, 2008b). Such an organization would allow Afro-Ecuadorian social, economic, and political changes to be easily documented, making it a national priority to recognize any clear injustices and to act upon them.

References

- Bartolicci, Enrique. 2002. *Historia del Negro en Ecuador*. Instituto de Formación Afroecuatoriana. Quito: Centro Cultural Afroecuatoriano.
- Chalá Cruz, José. 2006. *Chota profundo: antropología de los afrochoteños*. Chota: CIFANE (Centro de Investigaciones Familia Negra).
- Castro, Mary. 2003. *El Movimiento Negro en Quito y su lucha contra la discriminación*. Tesis de Licenciatura. U. Central del Ecuador. Facultad de Sociología y Ciencias Políticas. Quito.
- Corporación de Desarrollo Afroecuatoriano (CODAE): 2008(a). *Declaración y Plan de Acción de la III Conferencia Nudial contral el Racismo, la Discriminación Racial, la Xenofobia y las Formas Conexas de Intolerancia*. Quito: CODAE
- _____. 2008(b). *Pan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007-2010: Pueblos Afroecuatorianos*. Quito: CODAE
- Córdova Álvarez, Pedro. 1995. *El habla de Azuay*. Cuenca: Núcleo del Azuay de la Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana “Benjamín Carrión.”
- FECONIC (Federación de Comunidades Negras de Imbabura y Carchi). 2005. *Nuestra historia: documento didáctico pedagógico de etnoeducación afroecuatoriana*, coordinated by Iván Pabón. Quito: FECONIC.
- Lipski, John M. 2008. Afro-Choteño speech: towards the (re)creation of a “Black Spanish. *Negritud* v. 2, no. 1, pp. 99-120.
- _____. (1986) The Chota Valley: Afro-Hispanic Language in Highland Ecuador. *Latin American Research Review*, v. 22, No. 1, pp. 155-170
- Mendina Vallego, Henry. 1996. *Comunidad Negra y Cambio Cultural*. Ed. Abya-Yala. Quito, 1996. p. 32
- Medina Vallego, Henry and Castro Torres, Mary. 2006. *Afroecuatorianos: un movimiento social emergente*. Quito: Ediciones Afroamérica, La Casa Cultural Afroecuatoriana.
- Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE). 2001. *Etnicidad y exclusión en el Ecuador: una mirada a partir del Censo de Población de 2001*. Quito.
- Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE) and Sistema de Indicadores Sociales del Pueblo Aroecuatoriano (SISPAE). 2006. *Los Afroecuatorianos en Cifras*. Quito: Secretaría Técnica del Frente Social.

- Sistema de Indicadores Sociales del Pueblo Aroecuadoriano (SISPAE). 2007. *El Estado de Los derechos colectivos del Pueblo Afroecuadoriano: una mirada desde las Organizaciones sobre el Derecho al Territorio Ancestral*. Quito: SISPAE II.
- Tadeo, Renán. 1999. Movimiento Negro en Quito. *El Negro en la Historias del Ecuador: esclavitud en las regions andina y amazónica*. Ed. Centro Cultural Afroecuadoriano, Conferencia Episcopal Ecuatoriana.
- Tardieu, Jean Pierre. 2006. *El Negro en la Real Audiencia de Quito (Ecuador): Siglos XVI-XVIII*. Quito: Abya-Yala.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: List of Speakers

- Speaker a: Female, 68 years, born and lives in Carpuela
Speaker b: Female, ~50 years, born and lives Carpuela
Speaker c: Female, > 70 years, born and lives in Carpuela
Speaker d: Male, > 70 years, from El Chota
Speaker e: Male, 65 years, from El Chota
Speaker f: Male, 84 years, from El Chota
Speaker g: Female, 63, from El Chota
Speaker h: Male, > 60 years, from El Chota
Speaker i: Female, > 80 years, from Carpuela
Speaker j: Female, ~ 50 years, from Carpuela
Speaker k: Female, 18 years, from Carpuela, domestic worker in Quito
- Speaker A: Male, 25 years, from Carpuela, lives in Quito
Speaker B: Female, ~55 years, born in El Chota, spent over 40 years in Quito
Speaker C: Male, 25 years, born in Quito, grew up in Ibarra
Speaker D: Male, 29 years, born and raised in Quito
Speaker E: Male, >60 years, born and raised in Mascarilla
Speaker F: Male, > 60 years, born and raised in Mascarilla
Speaker G: Male, > 60 years, born and raised in Mascarilla
Speaker H: Male, 65 years, born in Carpuela, worked 31 years in Quito
Speaker I: Female, 18 years, born in Carpuela,
Speaker J: Female, 42, born and raised in Quito
Speaker K: Female, 35 years, born and raised in Quito
Speaker L: Female, > 60, from El Hato de Chamanal, Carchi
Speaker M: Female, > 60, from El Hato de Chamanal, Carchi
Speaker N: Female, >60 years, from Cuajara, Imbabura,
Speaker O: Female, > 60 years, from Estación Carchi, Carchi,
Speaker P: Female, >60 years, from Salinas
Speaker Q: Male, 36 years, born and raised in Quito
Speaker R: male, 22, Born and raised in Quito
Speaker S: male, ~55, Born in Carpuela, worked in Quito
Speaker T: Female, 35 years, from Carpuela, domestic worker in Quito.
Speaker U: Male, > 50 years , from Carpuela, lived in Quito for 8 months
Speaker V: Male, 40 years old, from Chota, studied in Quito, lives in Ibarra
Spekaer W: Male, 30-35 years old, from the Chota Valley, lives in Ibarra

Appendix B: List of Original Interview Questions

1. Qué recuerda usted de cómo hablaban antes?
2. Según usted, cómo ha cambiado la forma de hablar de los choteños?
3. De acuerdo a su opinión, cuáles son las diferencias principales entre el español hablado en el Valle del Chota y el de Quito?
4. Se puede ver una influencia del español quiteño sobre el choteño? Cómo afecta esto en la pronunciación y el uso de palabras?
5. Se fija en el uso de nuevas palabras o frases de los choteños quienes han pasado mucho tiempo en Quito? Pueda dar algunos ejemplos?
6. Cómo ha cambiado la manera en que los jóvenes tratan a la gente de edad?
7. Qué piensa usted sea la razón por la cual los choteños van a la ciudad?
8. Qué opina usted del estado social de los afro-choteños?
9. Qué fue la razón por la cuál usted se mudó a Quito? Por qué cree usted que cada año hay más Choteños que se mudan a la ciudad?
10. Cuáles son las diferencias lingüísticas entre los Quiteños y los Afro-Choteños?
11. Cree usted que existe discriminación hacia los Afro-Choteños por su forma de hablar o su lugar de origen?
12. Qué rol tiene su cultura en su vida diaria?
13. Cuáles aspectos de su cultura se han mantenido? y cuáles se han ido perdiendo?
14. Cómo se mantiene la cultura Afro-Choteña dentro de la ciudad?
15. Qué rol tienen para usted los grupos de apoyo para la comunidad negra en Quito?
16. Qué opina usted acerca del punto de vista que tiene el público ecuatoriano hacia los Afro-Choteños?
17. Puede explicarme como les afectó la reforma agraria?
18. Cómo les han ayudado los sindicatos del Valle?
- 19.Cuál es su opinión acerca de las escuelas públicas de Ecuador?
20. Cómo se representan los Afro-Choteños en los textos de historia?
21. Qué importancia tiene la música para los Afro-Choteños de hoy en día?
22. Se acuerda de algunos cuentos, mitos, o leyendas Afro-Choteñas?
23. De dónde vino la gente del Valle del Chota?
24. Cuáles productos/víveres mantenían al pueblo antes? Cuáles fueron importados y exportados? Y ahora, cuáles productos mantienen al pueblo?
25. Diría usted que habla con un acento Quiteño o Choteño? Una mezcla?
26. Cómo afectó a los Afro-Choteños la reforma agraria?
27. Qué significa para usted la identidad Afro-Choteña?

Landon John Evak
Academic Vita

1235 Charles Street
State College, PA 16801
landonevak@gmail.com

Education:

The Pennsylvania State University, *University Park, PA*

- Schreyer Honors College student in Spanish
- B.A. in Spanish Linguistics (May 2011)
- B.A. in Integrative Arts-Music Technology (May 2011)
- Thesis: "Rural to Urban: A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Afro-Choteño Spanish in Quito, Ecuador"
- Study Abroad Experience: One year in the Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador

La Universidad San Francisco de Quito, *Cumbayá*, Ecuador (09-10 Academic year)

- Student of Percussion and Music Production

Honors:

- Schreyer Honors student in Spanish
- Student Marshal for the Department of Integrative Arts in the College of Arts and Architecture.
- Recipient of the Whole World Scholarship for Fall 2009-10
- Recipient of the John W. White award for academic excellence in Spanish.
- Selected student candidate at the United States Embassy in Quito, Ecuador.
- Recipient of the Keystone Research Center's Susan Eaton Award as a member of the Penn State United Students Against Sweatshops (2010).

Activities:

- President of Penn State's Chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops
- Co- President of Penn State's NOMMO Performing Arts Company
- Co-founder of Penn State's Progressive Student Alliance
- Conguero of the Orquesta de Salsa del Instituto de Música contemporánea de la Universidad de San Francisco de Quito.
- Musical engineer for the Orquesta de Salsa del Instituto de Música Contemporánea de la Universidad de San Francisco de Quito.

Language Skills:

- Native speaker of English
- Proficiency in spoken and written Spanish.
- Experience in Spanish-English and English-Spanish Translation

Work Experience:

- Volunteer for the Organization FEVI in Ecuador
- English Tutor (Cumbayá, Ecuador)
- Docent at the Boalsburg Mansion and Columbus Chapel
- Penn State Golf Course – Ground Maintenance

Research Experience:

- Principle Researcher for "Rural to Urban: A Sociolinguistic Perspective of Afro-Choteño Spanish." Honors Thesis for Schreyer Honors College.
- Research Assistant for "Processing of Subjunctive Mood in L2 Spanish." Principle researcher: Giuli E. Dussias. The Pennsylvania State University.