On the Non-Creole Basis for Afro-Caribbean Spanish

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On the Non-Creole Basis for Afro-Caribbean Spanish

by

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0. Introduction

The claim has frequently been made by scholars that Africans in the Spanish Caribbean, deprived of the opportunity for learning the prevailing dialects of Spanish, developed a Spanish-based creole. The most ambitious theories assert that this Afro-Hispanic language permanently affected other varieties of Caribbean Spanish. An accompanying claim is that the postulated creole was built upon an earlier Afro-Portuguese trade jargon, pidgin, or even fully nativized creole, originally formed on the coast of Africa, and learned in the African slaving stations and on slave ships crossing the Atlantic. The present study injects a note of caution, after considering a wider corpus of Afro-Hispanic materials than has heretofore been examined. It is shown that most recurring features of Afro-Hispanic language are common to second-language learners, and that only two or three features link Afro-Caribbean Spanish to creole languages. Moreover, all the features in question come from a small group of 19th century Cuban and Puerto Rican texts. Closer examination of the texts, together with an inquiry into the demographic shifts of black slaves and laborers in the 19th century Caribbean, suggests that the most creole-like features of Afro-Caribbean Spanish may have been acquired from speakers of other Caribbean creole languages, especially Papiamento. In other cases, spontaneous blending of Spanish and African languages yielded combinations which bear a superficial resemblance to creole structures.

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of Latin American dialect differentiation is the African contribution. There exists a tantalizing corpus of literary, folkloric and anecdotal testimony on the earlier speech patterns of Afro-Hispanics, in Spain and Latin America. The greatest obstacle in the assessment of earlier Afro-Hispanic language is the high level of racial prejudice, exaggeration and stereotyping which has always surrounded the description of non-white speakers of Spanish, and which attributes to all of them a wide range of defects and distortions that frequently are no more than an unrealistic repudiation of this group. One group which did use a distinctly Afro-Hispanic language were the bozales, a term referring to slaves born and raised in Africa, who spoke European languages only with difficulty. Bozal language, a halting approximation to Spanish or Portuguese typical of first-generation immigrants, first arose in the Iberian Peninsula late in the 15th century; the earliest attestations come from Portugal. Bozal Spanish makes its written appearance in Spain early in the 16th century, and continues through the middle of the 18th century. Latin American bozal Spanish was first described by writers like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, who imitated the speech of black slaves (brought from Puerto Rico) in Mexico at the beginning of the 17th century. Other surviving documents from the 17th century demonstrate the existence of bozal Spanish in Peru, Bolivia and Central America. Few documents representing Afro-Hispanic speech remain from 18th century Latin America; Cuba and Mexico are among the regions so represented. Beginning at the turn of the 19th century, the last big surge of slave trading, spurred by the sugar plantation boom and by increased urbanization of many coastal regions, resulted in an outpouring of literary representations of bozal Spanish. The geographical distribution of extant Afro-Hispanic texts mirrors the profile of the African slave trade in Latin America. The 19th century texts come principally from three regions: Cuba, coastal Peru, and the Buenos Aires/Montevideo region.
(cf. Lipski 1986a, 1986b). Only the Cuban texts, however, together with a handful of Puerto Rican examples, have been offered as evidence of an Afro-Hispanic creole.

Due to a number of influential studies, the prior existence of a Spanish-based creole in the Caribbean has become widely accepted, and the hypothesis that an earlier Afro-Portuguese creole, such as found in Cape Verde, Annobón, and São Tomé enjoys nearly as much support. The number of Afro-Caribbean texts which have been offered as evidence is, however, very small: fewer than a dozen sources, among the more than one hundred available poems, plays, novels, travel narratives, and anthropological documents which describe the speech of Africans in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Upon considering a wider range of data than has previously been used to state the case, a different picture emerges. The presence of a stable creole, if one existed at all, is overshadowed by a wide range of pidginized varieties, none of which embodies the creole structures which support the 'relexification' of a previously-acquired Portuguese creole. The present study, while not totally rejecting the possibility that some Africans taken to Latin America may have spoken a Portuguese pidgin, nor that Afro-Hispanic modalities may have occasionally stabilized, demonstrates the fragility of the evidence upon which such claims are based. By considering a wider corpus of bozal texts, the idiosyncratic and non-representative nature of some 'key' texts which form the centerpiece for the creole theories is revealed. In the balance, a small number of unique texts has been given disproportionate importance in the evaluation of Caribbean bozal Spanish.

1. Bozal phenomena of non-creole origin

The majority of Afro-Hispanic linguistic phenomena can be accounted for without recourse to controversial theories, and suggest only a gradual approximation to regional varieties of Spanish. The rudimentary attempts of adult Africans to learn Spanish resemble the Spanish still used non-natively in several parts of the world. Africans of a particular language background might lend individualizing touches to this broken Spanish, but in most cases only the lowest common denominators would be expected. By taking a cross-section of West African language families known to have been represented among the Africans taken to Spain and then to Spanish America in the first few centuries of the slave trade, some elementary predictions can be made, all of which are borne out in literary representations of pidgin or bozal Spanish (cf. Lipski 1986a, 1986b).

Due to substantial grammatical differences between Spanish and West African languages, we would predict little attention to inflectional endings in bozal Spanish, together with simplification of pronouns, articles and prepositions, and use of basic strategies like repetition to achieve specific grammatical purposes. Since bozal Spanish represents either the halting attempts of language learners, or the minimal communication strategies adopted by captives forced to use a foreign language, one would expect simple sentences, with minimal subordination or conjunction. A perusal of bozal texts yields a high percentage of structures which need no special explanation, either in terms of theories claiming access to universal aspects of language structure, or as regards the eventual creation of a uniform dialect of 'black Spanish.' If such considerations could exhaustively account for Afro-Hispanic texts, we could simply stop here, by claiming that the situation is similar to
that of immigrant groups elsewhere in the world: first-generation Africans who learned Spanish imperfectly spoke a pidginized or *bozal* form of the language, possibly passing it on to their immediate offspring, but subsequent generations learned Spanish natively, and the ethnic background left no traces other than occasional vocabulary items. This model adequately accounts for Afro-Hispanic language in Spain, Peru, Mexico, and the Río Plata area.

2. Portuguese elements in early *bozal* Spanish

More difficult to tease out of the reconstruction of Africanized Spanish is the Portuguese contribution, in particular the input of stable Portuguese-based pidgins or creoles. During the first two centuries of the slave trade, Spain acquired the majority of its slaves from Portuguese traders, and due to the nature of the Portuguese slaving empire, some of the Africans had acquired a Portuguese pidgin before being transferred to other regions. The Portuguese maintained *feitorias* or slave depots in Angola, São Tomé, Fernando Poo, Cape Verde, Annobón and later Brazil, in addition to supplying some of the market from Africans already resident in southern Portugal. Pidgin Portuguese sprang up as a coastal African lingua franca (cf. Naro 1978), at one time stretching from Senegal, around the Cape of Good Hope, along the coast of India and reaching as far as Hong Kong and Indonesia; this type of speech may also have been used by slaves who spoke mutually unintelligible African languages, although the claims that such populations were deliberately chosen to minimize uprisings have been overstated.

A comparison of texts purporting to represent early pidgin Portuguese reveals some consistent features, nearly all of which made their way into Portuguese-based creoles in Africa, as well as some Latin American creoles. Some recurring tendencies include:

(a) use of *(a)*mi as first person singular subject pronoun;
(b) confusion of *ser* and *estar*, eventually giving rise to the hybrid form *sa* (and occasionally *santar*) for all persons and tenses;
(c) use of *vos* as the second-person subject pronoun;
(d) use of *bai* from the third person singular form of *ir* in Portuguese, as the verb for ‘to go.’

The earliest Afro-Hispanic texts generally follow the same patterns as the Portuguese examples and at first the direct imitation of Portuguese writers is evident. Once literary ‘black Spanish’ became established in Golden Age drama, the linguistic characteristics move sharply away from pidgin Portuguese, and acquire traits typical of Spanish ‘foreigner talk,’ together with considerable phonetic deformation. After 1550, use of *(a)*mi as subject pronoun rapidly disappears (Lipski 1991), as does use of *bai/vai* for ‘to go.’ Unstable gender and number assignment remain, as do incorrectly conjugated verb forms, although use of the uninflected infinitive becomes increasingly rare. Confusion of *ser* and *estar* is still found from time to time, augmented by use of *sar*, and loss of the copula occurs sporadically.
3. Portuguese pidgin as the basis for Latin American *bozal* Spanish?

By all indications, any pidgin Portuguese component in *bozal* Spanish had all but disappeared by the time of the first appearance of Afro-Hispanic language in Latin America. The 17th century texts from Mexico, Peru and Puerto Rico, as well as the 18th century Mexican and Cuban *bozal* specimens, show no Portuguese features. Most 19th century Latin American examples, including the extensive corpus from Peru, Argentina and Uruguay, are similarly nondistinctive in their reproduction of Africans’ approximations to regional varieties of Spanish, and do not point to recurring features which cannot be explained as spontaneous independent developments or as natural learners’ errors.

Although most *bozal* Spanish texts from Latin America do not exhibit strong resemblances with Afro-Iberian creoles, several scholars noted that certain texts from 19th century Cuba and Puerto Rico showed striking similarities with Papiamento, Cape Verde creole and Palenquero, which could not be attributed to mere chance or predicted from the pidginized Spanish of earlier examples. Among the more striking parallels are verb forms based on the particle *ta* plus a stem derived from the Spanish infinitive, and use of an undifferented third person pronoun for masculine and feminine referents. A number of other traits of Caribbean *bozal* Spanish, to be surveyed below, were also cited as evidence of creole origins for Afro-Hispanic pidgin.

One of the earliest investigators to link Caribbean *bozal* Spanish to an earlier Afro-Lusitanian pidgin was Wagner (1949: 101):

*I negri "bozales", cioè frescamente importati, sapevano più o meno il negro-portuguese come si parlava sulla costa occidentale dell’Africa, e lo cambiarono in un primo tempo, come è naturale, con uno spagnolo rudimentale, che rassomigliava molto alle lingue creole; usavano la terza persona del singolare dei verbi come forma generale ... scambiavano i generi ... e non sapevano separare bene le parti del discorso ...*

Wagner’s comments lay fallow until the development of more ambitious theories of creolization and monogenesis. The first attempt to document the presence of an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin among *bozales* in Latin America was Granda (1970)’s analysis of the observations of Sandoval (1956: 94). The latter, a (Spanish-born) Peruvian priest resident in Cartagena de Indias, remarked in 1627 that African slaves from São Tomé spoke ‘con la comunicación que con tan bárbaras naciones han tenido el tiempo que han residido en San Thomé, las entienden casi todas con un género de lenguaje muy corrupto y revesado de la portuguesa que llaman lengua de San Thomé ...’ The reference to some sort of Portuguese-based pidgin or creole is clear, but the implication that slaves from other regions also acquired an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin is not, since Sandoval’s quote continues: ‘... al modo que ahora nosotros entendemos y hablamos con todo género de negros y naciones con nuestra lengua española corrupta, como comúnmente la hablan todos los negros.’ Although Granda interprets Sandoval’s observations to mean that an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin formed a substrate for ALL Afro-Hispanic language in Cartagena (and by extrapolation, elsewhere in the Spanish American colonies), the final sentence seems to indicate the opposite, namely that even Africans speaking the ‘lengua de San Thomé’ eventually acquired *bozal* Spanish.
In any event, by the end of the 18th century, when the critical Caribbean *bozal* texts appear, Spain was acquiring few slaves from the Portuguese depot on São Tomé.

The perceived similarities between Caribbean *bozal* Spanish and Afro-Iberian creoles gave rise to the claim that an Afro-Lusitanian creole once existed in all of Latin America, or at least in the Caribbean region. The same similarities were also used to bolster ‘monogenetic’ theories of creole formation, which postulate that an original Portuguese-based maritime pidgin or lingua franca was relexified and coalesced to form creole dialects of English and French in the Caribbean and Africa; Spanish and Portuguese in Asia; and Dutch in the West Indies, Guyana and possibly South Africa (cf. Naro 1978; Thompson 1961; Whinnom 1965, and the references therein). The importance of reconstructing Afro-colonial Spanish thus rises enormously, for far-ranging issues are at stake. In its most radical form, this theory claims that a single creole underlay virtually all Afro-Hispanic speech over a period of more than three centuries, and therefore was more important than the strictly African element in determining the characteristics of *bozal* Spanish and its possible repercussions in general Latin American Spanish. This hypothesis is clearly stated, e.g. by Granda (1976: 5-6):

> Los esclavos negros establecidos en diferentes áreas de la América Española desde el siglo XVI al XIX manejaron, primeramente junto a sus hablas africanas aborígenes y posteriormente con carácter exclusivo o al menos dominante, un código lingüístico criollo. Esta modalidad de lenguas fue evolucionando ... hacia el español subestándar de las diferentes zonas hispanoamericanas en que el fenómeno se produjo, a través de un continuum post-criollo ...

This creole in turn had its origins in an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin, developed in West Africa (e.g. Granda 1976: 8):

> Las modalidades del criollo desarrollado y empleado en las diferentes zonas hispanoamericanas de población negra derivaron, genéticamente y por lo tanto estructuralmente, del ... protodiasistema criollo portugués de África que constituyó la base de la cual, por diferentes procesos de relexificación ... se originaron aquéllas.

Although Granda (1976) includes data from Afro-Hispanic groups in Colombia and elsewhere in the Caribbean region, he concentrates his remarks on similarities involving Colombian Palenquero, Papiamento, and purported *bozal* creoles in 19th century Puerto Rico (cf. also Granda 1968) and Cuba (cf. also Granda 1971, Perl 1982, 1985, 1987, 1989b). Megenney (1984, 1985a) draws together the triad Palenquero/Papiamento/Afro-Cuban creole to claim a common origin in an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin. Perl (1989a) also provides comparisons which tend to support this view. Álvarez Nazario (1974) supports the hypothesis of a Portuguese pidgin infrastructure for Afro-Hispanic language in both Spain and Latin America, although conceding (p. 128) that *bozal* Spanish, especially in Spain, lacks the characteristic preverbal particles found in Afro-Portuguese creoles.

4. Was Puerto Rican *bozal* Spanish ever a stable creole?

Although Palenquero and Papiamento are undisputed creoles, the corpus of *bozal* Spanish from the Caribbean and elsewhere in Latin America is not as unequivocal as regards
the former existence of a stable creole, rather than a rudimentary pidgin which arose as new arrivals from Africa entered the speech communities.

The existence of a prior stable Afro-Hispanic creole in Puerto Rico is based on a literal handful of texts analyzed by Alvarez Nazario (1974), principally the skit 'La juega de gallos o el negro bozal' (PR-5). Alvarez Nazario demonstrated many parallels between the Puerto Rican texts and Afro-Iberian language from other regions and time periods, although his characterization of Puerto Rican bozal language as a 'criollo afroespañol' may refer to a non-native pidgin, rather than to a nativized creole. That the latter might indeed have existed in Puerto Rico was first claimed by Granda (1968), who notes (p. 194, fn. 4): '... es fácil demostrar el carácter igualmente "criollo" de la modalidad lingüística puertorriquena ...'

From this point forward the claim that an Afro-Hispanic creole was once spoken in Puerto Rico has never been seriously challenged, despite the fact that the case rests on such a small corpus. Among later studies of 'Caribbean bozal Spanish,' little attention has been paid to a possible Afro-Hispanic creole in Puerto Rico, with the latter region usually lumped together with the more extensive Afro-Cuban corpus.

The creoloid structures in the Afro-Puerto Rican texts just mentioned are subject to alternative explanations, to be presented below. There is, however, an important text (not included in Alvarez Nazario’s analysis), which suggests much less consistent bozal language in Puerto Rico. In 1884, the poet/playwright Ramón Méndez Quiñones (1847-1889) wrote the play ‘¡Pobre Sinda!,’ which was never published. This neo-Romantic drama is set in Puerto Rico, in the ‘época de la odiosa esclavitud–1864.’ Among the characters is a ‘esclavo viejo, congo,’ who in the definitive version of the manuscript speaks in normal, even sublime, Spanish, as he delivers his impassioned denunciations of the cruelties of slavery. In unpublished notes, discovered by Girón (1991: 399-411), Méndez Quiñones gives his reasons for not having this African-born slave use bozal language: ‘Hablando en su jerga, no convencería, y en los momentos más patéticos no haría sentir, produciendo con sus exclamaciones de dolor la hilaridad del público’ (Girón 1991: 400). To demonstrate his point, the author adds examples of several scenes which he had originally written in bozal Spanish, ‘y de las cuales prescindí por los conceptos antes expresados.’ These fragments (PR-7) show great similarity with bozal texts from elsewhere in Latin America, but contain few of the creoloid traits which form the cornerstone of Caribbean bozal-creole theories.

For example, there is no consistent alternative verb system; correctly conjugated Spanish verbs alternate with inappropriate forms, and no auxiliary particles signal tense or aspect. Similarly, nouns and adjectives are sometimes inflected for gender and number, while in other cases there are lapses of agreement.

5. Putative creole origins of Cuban bozal Spanish

The existence of a former Afro-Hispanic creole in Cuba has been forcefully asserted by a number of investigators. Wagner (1949: 158) stated that ‘poche e confuse sono le notizie che abbiamo sul negro-spagnolo parlato una volta a Cuba dai negri bozales ... ma sono sufficienti per dimostrare che si trattava anche in questo caso di una lingua creola del tipo del papiamento ...’ Wagner’s case was based on the poem ‘Yo bota lan garafó’ (C-10) and the ‘Diálogo’ between a negro criollo and a bozal (C-7). In a later and more
comprehensive analysis, Granda (1971: 483) offered the claim that ‘... Cuba ha poseído y posee aún entre su población negra rastros y manifestaciones lingüísticas "criollas" ... uniéndose así al "papiamento", al "palenquero" ... y a las manifestaciones puertorriqueñas en la formación de un "corpus" dialéctico "criollo" de superestraeto español ... ’ To prove his case, Granda made ample use of *El monte* by Lydia Cabrera (C-20), originally published in 1954, an anthropological text containing data on religious beliefs among Afro-Cubans, and which includes extensive imitations of *bozal* Spanish. Granda unquestioningly accepts the accuracy of Cabrera’s imitations, given her high reputation in other linguistic and folkloric matters, and suggests that such language, ‘caracterizadores de una estructura "criolla" de lengua, persistían en el "registro" hablado de negros cubanos ... como continuación de la modalidad lingüística adoptada por generaciones anteriores de esclavos ... ’ In this article, Granda did not explicitly link the putative Afro-Cuban creole to the monogenetic Portuguese pidgin hypothesis, but this claim was eventually made in Granda (1976). Lapesa (1980: 560) believes that ‘las postreras supervivencias del criollo español parecen ser el habla "bozal" que se usaba entre negros de Puerto Rico en el siglo pasado y todavía entre los de Cuba a mediados del actual ... ’ Using phonological data from Afro-Cuban texts, Sosa (1974) also offers the claim that an Afro-Hispanic creole once existed in Cuba, and affected popular varieties of Cuban Spanish.

Cabrera’s extensive writings, particularly *El monte*, have figured importantly in most subsequent writings on a putative Afro-Cuban creole. Otteguy (1973) adds to the list of creoloid traits mentioned by Granda, and claims that Cabrera’s work demonstrates the prior existence of an Afro-Hispanic creole in the Caribbean. Perl (1982) also refers to *El monte*, as well as to the brief *bozal* fragments from Miguel Barnet’s *Autobiografía de un cimarrón* (C-14). Perl (1982: 424) asserts that ‘... the Cuban "habla bozal" was no idiolectally determined jargon of the Blacks in the 19th century but a social variety of Spanish comparable with other varieties of Spanish- and Portuguese-based creoles.’ With respect to a possible extra-territorial origin, Perl (1982: 423) suggests that ‘... especially the morphosyntactic features of the "habla bozal" are very suitable for demonstrating the relations to other Iberian-based creoles and the embedding of the "habla bozal" within the Creoles and the "intermediate varieties" in the Caribbean area.’ This line of approach is extended in Perl (1985, 1987).

Perl (1984, 1985) strengthens his claim that an Afro-Portuguese creole was once spoken in Cuba, based on two sources. The first is the ‘baile portugués,’ recorded by García Herrera (1972) in the predominantly Afro-Cuban neighborhood La Guinea in the central Cuban village of Lajas. This song is of undetermined origin, although oral tradition links the song to the ‘portugueses de Africa’ (García Herrera 1972: 160). García Herrera (1972) postulates that the reference is to the Angola/Congo region, given the documented existence of slaves from that zone in central Cuba, and the preservation of some lexical items from the languages of this region. Perl (1985: 195) claims that this song is ‘un ejemplo típico para una forma lingüística criolla más antigua,’ although Perl (1984: 56) states that the text in question is simply ‘una canción que contiene voces como p. ej. "gayina" o "volá" que se puede explicar como palabras ibéricas (españolas o portuguesas).’ The text in question is (García Herrera 1972: 162):
This song is composed of Bantu elements, and rather than demonstrating the prior existence of an Afro-Portuguese creole, is more typical of the incorporation of Portuguese lexical items in a broad spectrum of African languages from the Congo Basin.

Perl (1984, 1989b) also quotes from the anti-slavery treatise of Buxton (1839: 122), who in turn cites a British ship captain who intercepted a Portuguese slave ship headed from Cape Verde to Cuba. The captain claimed that ‘two of the Africans … speak Portuguese …,’ which Perl (1984: 56) interprets as meaning that ‘los esclavos que llegaron a Cuba también tenían conocimientos del portugués/portugués criollo.’

Ziegler (1981) assumes axiomatically that Afro-Cuban bozal Spanish constituted a definable creole, and attempted to write a grammar of this putative creole. Ziegler believes that Cuban bozal creole resulted from 15th century Portuguese, with later accretions from several West African languages, from nonstandard Spanish dialects, and from Jamaican creole English, carried by Jamaicans arriving in Havana in the 18th century. It is known, for example, that during the British occupation of Havana in 1763, tens of thousands of slaves were quickly imported into Cuba by the British (Knight 1970: 7). The minimal traces of Portuguese in surviving bozal texts is, according to Ziegler, due to sustained contact with non-creole Cuban Spanish. Megenney (1984, 1985a) adopts Ziegler’s evidence, and groups ‘Afro-Cuban creole’ together with Palenquero and Papiamento in a comparative analysis of Portuguese-influenced Latin American creoles. Valkhoff (1966: 116) states, without further discussion, that the only surviving Spanish-based creoles are ‘Malayo-Spanish’ of the Philippines (i.e. Chabacano), ‘Negro-Spanish of Cuba,’ and Papiamento. Holm (1989: 305-9) is more cautious, speaking only of ‘restructured Spanish’ in the Caribbean, and noting that while there is ample evidence of a Spanish pidgin in 19th century Cuba, it is not clear that a true creole developed. Speaking of the possibility for creolization of Spanish in Cuba, Reinecke (1937: 269) noted that ‘conditions, one would assume, were eminently favorable for the formation of a Cuban Spanish creole dialect,’ although admitting (p. 271) that ‘the jargon [i.e. the rudimentary speech of first-generation bozales: JML] was there, but there is no indication that it took definite shape.’

An objective look at the Cuban bozal corpus reveals far fewer similarities with acknowledged Afro-Iberian creoles than might be supposed by the research cited above. One of the earliest surviving bozal texts from Cuba is an anonymous 18th century canto de cabildo (C-6):

Dondó jachero
pa un pala.
Palo ta duro.
jacha no cotta.
Palo ta brabbo.
¿qué son ese?
Si pala so jocuma,
yo so quiebrajacha.
Bamo be quie pue ma.
Tu jabla y no conose.
Tambó ta brabbo.

In addition to exhibiting many vernacular Cuban phonetic traits, including gemination of obstruents following the reduction of syllable-final liquids, this text gives the first hint of what was to be a commonly-recurring feature of Cuban bozal Spanish, the use of so(n) as an uninflected copula. In this example, no creoloid features appear.

The first explicit mention of Cuban bozal Spanish comes in the catechism Explicación de la doctrina cristiana acomodada a la capacidad de los negros bozales by the Spanish priest Nicolás Duque de Estrada, written in 1797 (C-55). The author describes bozal speech (Laviña 1989: 67) as ‘aquel lenguaje de q. usan ellos sin casos, sin tpos., sin conjunciones, sin concordancias, sin orden …’ This work contains a few fragments of bozal language, none of which suggest a creole resembling Papiamento:

pa nuestro ta seno cielo (Laviña 1989: 75)
yo soi un pobre esclavo, yo tiene dos gallinas no más, gente tiene suelto su cochino, cochino come mi gallina. Yo ya no tiene con que comprar tabaco ni nada ... ¿yo va andando en cueros? (Laviña 1989: 119)

Many observers (e.g. Martínez Gordo 1982, Valdés Bernal 1978)) have based claims on the creole status of Afro-Cuban speech on the remarks of the Cuban lexicographer Esteban Pichardo (C-57), which accord to 19th century Cuban bozal speech the status of a separate linguistic variety, compared with the French creole of Haiti (Pichardo 1985):

... este lenguaje es comun e idéntico en los Negros, sean de la Nación que fuesen, y que se conservan eternamente, a mémos que hayan venido muy niños: es un Castellano desfigurado, chapurrado, sin concordancia, número, declinación ni conjugación, sin R fuerte, S ni D final, frecuentemente trocadas la LI por la Ñ, la E por la I, la G por la V; en fin, una jerga más confusa mientras más reciente la inmigración; pero que se deja entender de cualquiera Español fuera de algunas palabras comunes a todos, que necesitan de traducción. Para formarse una ligera idea de esto, vertiremos una respuesta de las menos dificiles: "yo mi nama Frasico Mandina, neglito reburjuaro, crabo musuamo fio Mingue, de la Cribaneri, branco como carabon, suita como nan gato, poco poco mira oté, cribi papele toro ri toro ri, Frasico dale dinele, non gurbia dinele, e laja cabesa, e bebe guariente, e coje la cuelo, guanta qui guanta"

Pichardo’s imitation of this ‘special’ language, however, does not show the characteristics of a stable creole, but rather a rudimentary pidgin such as might arise spontaneously in any environment where bozal slaves were rapidly acquiring Spanish. Pichardo’s text bears considerable resemblance to bozal texts from 16th-17th century Spain, as well as from elsewhere in 19th century Latin America, but the similarities with Afro-Iberian creoles are minimal. 2

Another widely-cited example of Cuban bozal Spanish, an anonymous mid-19th century text (C-7) quoted by Bachiller y Morales (1883), bears even fewer resemblances with Papiamento or other Afro-Iberian creoles:
Ah, si oté no lo cubrá,
si oté toviá no fué,
¿pa que buca que bebé?
¿Con qué oté lo va pagá?
Cuando oté lo cubrá, anjá,
antonsi ma qui ti muere
bebé oté como oté quiere,
como oté como dan gana,
y durmi oté una semana
ma que lan tempo si pierie.

Bachiller y Morales notes: ‘no es posible confundir un lenguaje [i.e. the speech of criollo
blacks: JML] con el otro: la supresión de letras, la conversión de otras, no es peculiar de
todo negro …’ Indeed, this example is far less removed from non-African Spanish than
Pichardo’s text, despite the fact that both represent the same time period. The example cited
by Bachiller y Morales (published in Matanzas earlier in the 19th century) contains only two
elements which cannot be analyzed as simply imperfectly pronounced Spanish minus a few
connecting words: the element *tempo* instead of *tiempo*, contains a non-diphthongized root
homologous with Portuguese and Papiamento. 3

With the new perspective of a possible Afro-Lusitanian origin, the focus of
Afro-Hispanic studies shifts away from the search for direct African—American links to the
postulate of an intermediate pan—Hispanic creole stage. This intermediate language, through
contact with European Spanish following the abolition of slavery, gradually came to resemble
regional Latin American Spanish more and more, while perhaps transferring some of its own
characteristics to the Spanish spoken by descendents of Europeans. In this vein, Perl
(1985) proposes a model for the ‘decreolization’ of Cuban *bozal* Spanish, while Megenney (1985)
suggests that even ‘acrolectal’ varieties of Caribbean Spanish bear the imprint of the early
Afro-Hispanic/Afro-Lusitanian creole.

6. Opposing views

Although only a handful of texts have previously been used in the discussion of
Cuban *bozal* Spanish, the available corpus is much wider; a representative sample has been
included in the Appendix. The majority of these texts show few creoloid features, but rather
conform to the pidgin/foreigner-talk patterns expected of Africans learning the rudiments of
Spanish as a second language. The remaining creoloid traits may be attributable to a direct
infusion of creoles from elsewhere in the Caribbean, as will be suggested below. Put in this
perspective, the case for a previously existing Afro-Hispanic creole in Cuba is shown to rest
heavily on a single text, Cabrera’s *El monte* (although by extension more of Cabrera’s
extensive writings might also be included), together with ambiguous remarks such as those of
Pichardo. The Afro-Lusitanian theory is based on tenuous evidence of Portuguese
participation in the 18th-19th century slave trade to Cuba, together with similarities between
the putative Cuban *bozal* creole and the acknowledged creoles Papiamento and Palenquero,
for which Afro-Portuguese roots may be more uncontroversially established. For Puerto
Rico, the case is even more precarious, for only two literary texts (for which a possible
imitation of Cuban models cannot be entirely excluded) establish claims of a stable
Afro-Hispanic creole, and the parallels with Papiamento and Palenquero are therefore even more limited.

In view of these considerations, not all investigators have accepted the notion that any stable Afro-Hispanic creole was ever spoken in the Caribbean. Goodman (1987) casts doubt on the notion that many African slaves arriving in Spanish America had acquired a Portuguese pidgin. He observes that in any given slave depot in West Africa, a regional African language usually prevailed as a lingua franca, while the brief passage to the New World provided neither opportunity nor motive for acquiring a Portuguese-based pidgin. Only slaves brought from São Tomé and later Angola were exceptional in possessing knowledge of an Afro-Lusitanian pidgin. Goodman provides alternative explanations for Portuguese elements found in Latin American creoles. Laurence (1974) notes that the proportion of Africans to Europeans was never as high in the Spanish Caribbean as on islands such as Jamaica, Saint-Domingue and Barbados, where blacks at times outnumbered whites by more than ten to one. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, the African population never came to represent more than 50% of the total, even at the height of the sugar plantation boom, and was usually much lower. In the Spanish Caribbean, a larger proportion of slaves worked away from large plantations, in closer contact with native speakers of Spanish. Through the system of coartación many slaves eventually purchased their freedom, and the free black and colored population became significant. All observers coincide in remarking that blacks born in the Spanish colonies spoke Spanish with native fluency. Beginning in the final decades of the 18th century, and continuing through the middle of the 19th century, the rapid expansion of the sugar industry in Cuba created a plantation environment which, if it had lasted long enough, might have provided a fertile ground for creole formation. However, due to the high mortality of the slaves, the proportion of recently-arrived bozales speaking little or no Spanish was always quite high, and after only 2-3 generations the end of the slave trade brought an end to new bozal arrivals. The remaining African-born blacks gradually acquired Spanish, many moving to urban areas and reinforcing contact with natively spoken Spanish (cf. Aimes 1907; Castellanos and Castellanos 1988, 1990; Klein 1967; Knight 1970).

López Morales (1980) finds similar objections to the theory of a former stable Afro-Cuban creole. He notes that Pichardo (1836) and Bachiller y Morales (1883) both stress that blacks born in Cuba spoke ‘normal’ Cuban Spanish, and he interprets the remarks which these two authors made about bozal speech, as well as their imitations, as evidence of a rough pidgin, not a stable creole. As for a Portuguese component to Cuban bozal Spanish, López Morales observes that by the time of the sugar plantation boom in the late 18th century the Portuguese supremacy in the Atlantic slave trade had been replaced by Dutch, French and British dealers. At the same time, he notes a number of lexical items (drawn from Ortiz 1916: 238-9), many of which are common to West African Pidgin English, which he claims formed the true ‘lingua franca’ which bozal slaves used with one another while acquiring Spanish on Cuban plantations. Such words include chapi-chapi < chapear ‘to chop weeds,’ luku-luku < look ‘look, see,’ nami-nami < nyam ‘to eat,’ tifi-tifi < thief ‘to steal,’ etc. López Morales agrees with Otheguy (1973)’s reluctance to accept Cuban bozal texts as examples of a prior Afro-Portuguese pidgin or creole, but he disputes Otheguy’s view that the ungrammaticality and ‘un-Spanish’ nature of many bozal
constructions necessarily point to a prior creole of any sort. Few bozal texts evidence these forms exclusively; nearly all appear counterpoised with unremarkable Spanish morphosyntactic constructions attributed to the same speakers. For López Morales, this represents not a creole but rather ‘un polimorfismo,’ indicador aquí de deficiencias particulares de estos hablantes en su proceso de castellanización . . . ’

7. Preliminary counterexplanations to claimed creoloid features

With the exception of the preverbal particle *ta* and genderless third person pronouns, most features of *bozal* Spanish which have at one time or another been cited as evidence of a pidgin or creole Portuguese basis cannot be accepted as probative of an earlier Afro-Hispanic creole language. Among the more dubious traits are:

(1) Non-inverted questions of the type *¿qué tú quieres?* ‘what do you want?’ (Otheguy 1973). These constructions are common throughout the Caribbean, and may have been reinforced by Canary Island immigration. Afro-Iberian creoles exhibit non-inverted questions, but so do non-Africanized dialects of Spanish, e.g. in the Canary Islands and Galicia.

(2) Categorical use of redundant subject pronouns (Granda 1968, 1971). All Afro-Romance creoles use obligatory subject pronouns, due to lack of verbal inflection. The same occurs in vestigial Spanish lacking a creole basis (Lipski 1985), and in many cases of Spanish as a second language. Given that subject pronouns or clitics are obligatory in nearly all West African languages known to have come into contact with Spanish, preference for overt pronouns in *bozal* Spanish would be predicted without the intermediate stage of a creole.

(3) ‘Personalized’ infinitives with lexical subjects of the type *para tú hacer eso* ‘for you to do that’ (Alvarez Nazario 1959: 46; Megenney 1984). Such constructions are found not only in Afro-Iberian creoles, but also in Canary Island and Andalusian Spanish, in Galician and Portuguese, and throughout Latin America. It is likely that this construction has arisen spontaneously in more than one area, since it results from the reduction of a marked conjugated form to the maximally unmarked infinitive; the same process occurs in Spanish child language (Gili Gaya 1960: 29; 1972).

(4) Loss of common prepositions, particularly *a* and *de* (e.g. by Alvarez Nazario 1959, Granda 1971, Otheguy 1973, Perl 1982). The same feature is found in nearly all foreign-influenced and vestigial varieties of Spanish. In contemporary syntactic analyses, *de* and *a* may not be underlying prepositions but rather superficial case-markers, subject to variable deletion during imperfect learning or linguistic erosion.

(5) Occasional elimination of the copula (Alvarez Nazario 1959, 1974; Granda 1971, Perl 1982). This often occurs in vestigial speech, and given that a large cross-section of West African languages employ ‘verbalized adjectives’ instead of a combination of *VERB +
PREDICATE ADJECTIVE, loss of a copula might be an African areal characteristic rather than a post-creole carryover. In the Caribbean bozal corpus, there is only a tiny number of cases where the copula has been deleted. Much more frequent is the use of a default copula, such as son or occasionally ta.

(6) Loss of articles (Alvarez Nazario 1959, 1974; Granda 1971, Perl 1982). This is also found in vestigial and foreign-influenced Spanish, and in view of the generalized absence of articles in West African languages, could also be an areal characteristic.

(7) Postposed demonstratives of the type piera ese [= la piedra esa/esa piedra] ‘that rock’ (Otheguy 1973). Postposed demonstratives are found in many non-creole dialects of Spanish, as well as in several creoles. Moreover, Latin American bozal texts yield only a couple of examples, all from the works of Lydia Cabrera. It would seem that this construction was never common in Afro-Hispanic language, so no particular value should be accorded to this specific example.

(8) Lack of syntactic complementizers such as que (Granda 1971). Syntactic simplification through reduction of subordinate structures characterizes all reduced forms of Spanish, and is found in Afro-Hispanic, Amerindian-Hispanic and Anglo-Hispanic foreigner talk.

(9) Use of the subject pronoun vos, in bozal texts from the Caribbean, where this pronoun is not normally found. The pronoun (a)bo is found in all Afro-Lusitanian creoles, as well as in Papiamento and Palenquero. In Caribbean bozal examples, vos is found only in a single text, a 19th century Cuban villancico from Camagüey (C-10):

... Francisco mi pariente
dié que ya vos parió,
como yo quería aguáitá
lo que vó había parió,
aquí me tenei, Señá.

The presence of vos in this lone example does not implicate a former creole in Cuba, for vestigial vos, together with diphthongized verb forms, is amply documented for 19th century Cuba in precisely this region (López Morales 1965, Pichardo 1985: 12).

(10) Use of the portmanteau preposition/connector na, found in a few Afro-Caribbean texts, and also found in many Portuguese-based creoles (deriving from the contraction of en + a). A rare Cuban example is (C-35): atrás quitrín pa yegá prisa, prisa, na panadería ‘behind us the carriage is arriving quickly, to the bakery,’ quando yo me piá de na caballo ‘when I dismounted from the horse.’ Brau (1894: 138; PR-4) observed that in 19th century Puerto Rico, ‘cimarrones bozales’ used expressions such as na—cosina, ne—pueblo, na—casa, etc. for en la cocina ‘in the kitchen,’ en el pueblo ‘in the town,’ en la casa ‘in the house.’ This form is very limited in Afro-Caribbean texts, and is not attested for bozal language of other areas.
(11) The use of tener ‘to have’ instead of haber ‘for there to be’ as the existential verb (Megenney 1984, 1985a; Granda 1968). Most Afro-Iberian creoles, as well as African-influenced vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, have replaced existential haber by tener/ter. While use of tener in bozal speech may indeed come from an earlier proto—creole, this is not a necessary conclusion, since use of existential tener is also found in vestigial Spanish of many regions, and even in some Spanish dialects with no demonstrable Afro—creole connection (cf. Lipski 1985). Moreover, use of tener with existential force is quite rare in bozal language; one example (C-25) is: en botica tien de tó ‘in the medicine chest there is everything.’

(12) The frequent Caribbean preposing of más in negative expressions (más nada ‘no more,’ más nunca ‘never again’) instead of the more usual phrase—final position has been claimed as the result of earlier Portuguese—based creole language (Megenney 1985a). A Portuguese connection is quite likely, but the presence of this construction in Caribbean Spanish is more likely due to the heavy Canary Island influence, in which such constructions (apparently due to earlier Galician—Portuguese maritime contacts) are common.

8. Undifferentiated 3rd person pronouns in Caribbean bozal Spanish

We turn now to one of the more clearly creoloid features of Latin American bozal Spanish, the use of third person pronouns undifferentiated for gender. In Afro-Lusitanian creoles, including Palenquero and Papiamento, third person pronouns are reduced to a single variant each for singular and plural. Typically the singular variant has the general form elle, while there is more variation in the plural, including pronouns of non-Romance origin (e.g. Papiamento nan, Palenquero ané). Some Afro-Caribbean texts show third person pronouns similar to those found in Afro-Iberian creoles. The general form is elle or nelle; these words are attested for 19th century Cuba, and sporadically Puerto Rico. Nelle was occasionally used as third person plural. Typical examples include:

Elle estaba en un mortorio. El borbanaó manda prendeslo. Dentra Tondá, elle solito con su espá, coge dos (C-68)

¿Y nella lo muchachito va pendé su Paña de nuté? (C-53)
Eso mimo quiere yo, nelle lo mimo, vamo pa la engresia (C-15)

si yo lo tené uno niño como nelle, yo va murfé de contentamentía (C-34)

yo mirá que nelle tiene sangre, ese simbregüenza mimo se piá detrá la quitríin y arrancá corré. (C-35)

Hora, dipué que nelle coge yebla la gloria, vamo saludá Ocha ... Muñeco con piritu de mueto muchacho, que nelle metía dientro (C-20)

Po que juntó con la mala compañíia y nelle lo pervierte o lo sonsacá. (C-65)

Yo tiene la pecho premió pur nelle. Yo ta nomorá, yo va vé si nelle quié só mugé má pur langresía ... yo pué casá cunelle ... vereme nelle ... nelle toca violín y pone casaca ... tú ta mirando que nelle va llorá tovía ... (C-41)

nelle que lo só intruíyo ... nelle mimo que lo só ... poque nelle ta en la tea ... porque nelle lo gatá ... y nelle mimo disiba que yo só como la miba ... y dimpuqué que diga nelle que yo só bruto ignorante ... (C-40)

noté quie jabla cun nelle ... y disi que va a tumbá mi bují, vereme nelle ... (C-50)
no lo tengo cunelle la mayó cuñusimienta ... nelle lo pue laigá uno lintenaso ... disí nelle que la gente 
lo gutaría uno cumería ne luenga mío ... Cun la güve dielle yo mecá sei lichonsito ... no son 
cosa que ... nelle tené, sino que jilañó dé porelle dieu funsión ... (C-33)
nelle tiene un vapó ... nelle viene, yo le da ... Neye se ñama mujé ... neye va acabá con pacífico 
insurrecto ... (C-26)
tofto neye ta cargá ... cuando neye mira yo ... neye ta mori de risa ... (C-29)
cuando nei ta vení, ya yo no tiene que da vueta ... singá caballo pa neye ve jodienda la Tajonera ...
(C-21)
varón quitá neye ... (C-22)
Neye lo que tiene só un bariga con su yijo lentro (C-54)
yo te ba da un medalló pa que tu luse con eyé (C-10)
luego nelle va viní a comé la buena caliente (C-48)
mucha grasia, sumése, pero nella son honrá {PR-7}
Nelle son mala cabesa {PR-7}
Nella memo ta casando (C-48)
Yo no quisió di con elle {PR-6}

Alvarez Nazario (1974: 185-97), in the only analysis of this form, feels that semantic 
replacement of a preposition plus an article (as in na) has occurred. There is, however, no 
plausible source in the case of (n)elle. The [y] represented by ll is presumably derived from 
ella, ellas and ellos; neither Portuguese élle nor similar forms in Papiamento, Palenquero, 
São Tomense, etc., provide a source for the [y]. In a few texts (e.g. C-48 and P-7), the 
feminine variant nella is found alongside nelle. Elle/nelle may thus be a spontaneous 
Afro-Hispanic development which arose in the 19th century Caribbean. However, the fact 
remains that this pronoun is not attested in the ample bozal Spanish corpus from 16th-17th 
century Spain, from bozal attestions from 19th century Argentina, Uruguay, nor from 
Mexico and Peru in the 17th and 18th centuries. The existence of this element only in the 
19th century Caribbean is thus food for thought.

9. Verbal constructions with ta

The most indisputably creole element found in some Caribbean bozal texts, which has 
formed the centerpiece for theories which claim a previous Afro-Hispanic creole, is the use 
of ta, in combination with a verbal stem derived from the infinitive lacking final /r/:

¿Po que tú no ta queré a mf? (PR-5)
Siempre ta regalá dinero a mf (PR-5)
Horita ta bení pa cá (C-71)
Río seco ta corre mamba (C-56)
Como que yo ta cuchá la gente que habla tanto ... yo ta mirá gente mucho (C-29)
Primero ta llorá na má. (C-66)
yo ta yorá poque Calota ya ta morí. (C-70)
Sí, pác, yo ta robá un gaña jabá. (C-21)
Como no va ta contenta si uté vovió cuando yo ta acodá mi yari yari que etá en Guinf. (C-21)
Cuando ojo ta llorá a narice toca su parte. (C-25)
Amo ta pedí leche. (C-18)
Ya branco ta debaratá cosa (C-22)
pavo real ta bucá palo (C-20)
This construction, unlikely to have arisen spontaneously from an unstructured Spanish pidgin, is identical to verb phrases in Iberian-based creoles throughout the world, including Palenquero and Papiamentu in Latin America, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Kriol in Africa, Portuguese-based creoles in India, Sri Lanka, Macau and Malaysia, and in Philippine Creole Spanish (Chabacano). Many investigators, including Otheguy (1973), Granda (1968), Megenney 1984, 1985a), Perl (1982), etc. have regarded the presence of ta in Afro-Caribbean bozal Spanish as virtually conclusive proof that an Afro-Hispanic creole, similar to Palenquero and Papiamento, was once spoken throughout the Caribbean, and perhaps even in South America. The existence of ta + V_{inf} in these creoles is a strong bit of evidence in favor of a common origin or at least mutually shared influences (but cf. Lipski 1987a, forthcoming b). In other respects, the verbal systems of these creoles share fewer similarities. In the languages just mentioned, ta is variously used for present/imperfective and durative aspect. For the past/perfective, ya/ja is the most common variant, but other forms are also used; Papiamento, for example uses a, as does the Ternateño dialect of Philippine Creole Spanish. In Palenquero, ba is used as an imperfective marker, although its syntactic properties are different from those of ta. Papiamento and Cape Verde crioulo make some use of Spanish/Portuguese imperfect verb forms. No Latin American bozal text shows consistent use of any past/perfective particle; in particular, ya appears in the same positions as in Spanish.

There is even more variation among creoles to represent future/irrealis: Papiamento has lo (apparently from Ptg. logo 'later'), Palenquero has tan, Philippine Creole Spanish has di or ay, and so forth. Latin American bozal texts, on the other hand, use no particle to signal futurity; either the simple present or a periphrastic Spanish future with va are used. The latter element is never used consistently enough to be considered an innovative particle. This casts considerable doubt on the prior existence of a uniform Afro-Hispanic creole, since only one component of the usual three-particle creole verb system is found in attested bozal language. A re-evaluation of the role played by ta in bozal Spanish is called for.

It is striking that among the scores of Afro-Hispanic texts, from Spain and all of Latin America and spanning nearly 400 years, the combination ta + V_{inf} is found ONLY (1) in a very small number of texts, (2) in the 19th century, (3) in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Even in the 19th century Afro-Caribbean corpus, constructions based on ta alternate with the archetypical bozal pattern of partially or incorrectly conjugated verb forms. No use of ta occurs in the large Afro-Hispanic corpus from Argentina, Uruguay or Peru, nor in scattered texts from other regions. The Dominican Republic, which shares the island with speakers of Haitian creole (which makes ample use of pre-verbal particles, including ta < perfective te + future/irrealis (v)a as conditional), some of whose elements have penetrated into hybrid border dialects, shows no evidence of ever having had ta + V_{inf} or other preverbal particles, despite the existence of other possibly postcreole phenomena (González and Benavides 1982, Megenney 1990).

In a few cases it might be possible to argue that spontaneous developments took place, e.g. where ta is clearly derived from esta(r) acting as either a locative verb or in
combination with an adjective: *Yo no pue * TA *quieto ya* (C-34) ‘I can’t be still now’; *Nángue TA bueno ...* (C-20) ‘The nángue [tree] is good.’ In other instances, phonetic erosion of what was once a gerund, ending in -ando or -(i)endo is also a possibility: *Que to mi cuerpo me ETÁ temblá* (C-26) ‘My whole body is trembling’; *pavo real TA bucán palo* (C-20) ‘the peacock is looking for a tree’; *yo ESTÁ CORTÁ un cañas* ‘I am cutting sugar cane’ (C-31). In other cases, however, the verbs in question are habitual or durative, contexts where Spanish would not use any combination involving *estar*. This residue is among the few sure indicators of an infusion of creole elements into bozal language.

An overview of Puerto Rican bozal texts reveals only a small number of cases of the particle *ta* combined with an invariant verb stem (Alvarez Nazario 1974: 193-4), as compared with other examples in which no non-Hispanic verb forms appear. By far the greatest number of cases of *ta* occur in texts from Cuba, beginning towards the middle of the 19th century, carrying through to the early 20th century. Even in Cuba, numerous bozal texts from the same time period lack any use of *ta*, employing instead the prototypical bozal verbal system in which verbs were reduced to the third person singular or to a bare infinitive (or in the case of the copula *ser*, to *son*).

10. Cabrera’s ‘transcriptions’ and Afro-Spanish hybrids

Given the importance of Lydia Cabrera’s writings, in particular anthropological-religious studies such as *El monte*, to Afro-Caribbean creole theories, it is useful to consider how accurate and representative such texts might be as specimens of bozal speech in Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean. Cabrera’s works are extensive and captivating, and the long segments written in African languages and in bozal and vernacular Cuban Spanish sound so convincing that they seem to be the transcription of actual recordings. For Granda, Perl and Otheguy, Cabrera’s Afro-Cuban anthropological studies are not only the most accessible source of bozal speech, but also the most trustworthy, given the author’s clearly positive attitudes towards Afro-Cuban culture and her avowed intention of describing it accurately. Missing in these writings is the mocking humor which characterized the habla de negros in the Cuban “teatro bufo,” and in other writings from Spain and Latin America (although in such texts as *Francisco y Francisca* [C-21] and *Refranes de negros viejos* [C-25] some glimpses of this tendency emerge). At the same time, many of her writings employ literary techniques of magical realism, complete with possible exaggeration of linguistic usage. For Ortiz (1940: 9):

*estos cuentos [Cabrera’s Cuentos negros: JML] vienen a las prensas por una colaboración, la del folklore negro con su traductora blanca. Porque también el texto castellano es en realidad una traducción, y en rigor se lo dice, una segunda traducción. Del lenguaje africano ... en que las fábulas se imaginaron, éstas fueron vertidas en Cuba al idioma amestizado y dialetal de los negros criollos. Quizá la anciana morena que se las narró a Lydia ya las recibió de sus antepasados en lenguaje acriollado. Y de esta habla tuvo la coleccionista que pasarlas a una forma legible en castellano ... la autora ha hecho tarea difícil pero leal, y por tanto, muy meritoria, conservando a los cuentos su fuerte carácter exótico de fondo y de forma ...*
For Ortiz, then, the bozal language of Cabrera’s writings is (at least) twice-removed from what might have once been an Afro-Cuban creole (cf. also Martínez Gordo 1982: 52). This position contrasts radically with, e.g., Granda’s view that Cabrera’s literary representation of bozal Spanish is as faithful as a tape recording or verbatim transcription. This is not to say that Cabrera used bozal Spanish to represent conversations held mostly or entirely in African languages, although many older Afro-Cubans did use African languages amongst themselves. In personal conversation, the late Lydia Cabrera described to the present writer the manner in which older bozales spoke throughout Cuba (not just in Havana, as Granda seems to imply), but both from her writings and her personal recollections it is clear that no bozal speaker used creoloid forms exclusively. Most combined creoloid, pidgin, and standard Spanish forms, not necessarily because the bozal language was ‘decreolizing,’ but because the creoloid elements often arose spontaneously as African-born Cubans evolved in their acquisition of Spanish.

It is not insignificant that in Cabrera’s writings, as well as in nearly all Cuban literary works in which any Afro-Hispanic language with creoloid tendencies appears (cf. the appendix for a representative list of items consulted for the present study), it is always older, bozal Africans, never native-born Cuban blacks, who exhibit creoloid traits. This fact led López Morales (1980: 109) to question ‘si los hijos de estos hombres ya no son congós, ya manejan un español cubano estándar, desconociendo en muchas ocasiones la lengua africana de sus padres, ¿qué tipo de transmisión es ésta?’ Although there are some creoloid forms in bozal texts, nothing in the texts themselves or in known facts of Cuban history would suggest that these African-born slaves had learned such items from a former generation, either in Africa or in Cuba. If there were a stable Afro-Hispanic creole from which bozales learning Spanish could draw elements, there should be convincing evidence that native-born black Cubans spoke this creole, even more consistently (i.e. to the exclusion of both standard Spanish and pidgin items) than did bozales. Such evidence is entirely lacking.

There is an even more problematic aspect of texts like El monte, which adds another degree of indeterminacy to the reconstruction of Afro-Caribbean bozal Spanish. This involves the fact that, not only are the most creoloid features proffered by the oldest, African-born blacks, but most are an integral part of Afro-Cuban religious rituals, which implies fossilization and transmission in automatistic form to initiates. Thus López Morales (1980: 108):

En estos textos donde los informantes negros hablan de sus religiones, superstiticiones, magias y folklore, hay ejemplos de naturaleza morfosintáctica y léxica ... que han sido tomados con valor de muestra de la pervivencia de una lengua criolla. Sin embargo, sólo se trata de ejemplos de estadios lingüísticos individuales, aunque por fuerza coincidentes en hablantes de la misma lengua materna, que denuncian una adquisición imperfecta del español. Todos ellos aparecen en boca de bozales, ninguno en labios criollos.

Most of the speakers implicated in the use of creoloid items in bozal Spanish were native speakers of an African language, from which they routinely drew lexical elements and morphosyntactic structures when speaking to religious initiates, other Africans with knowledge of the same or similar African languages, or sympathetic listeners such as Lydia Cabrera. Among the linguistic strategies employed by such bozal speakers was the free
creation of hybrid structures, employing a Spanish (or pidgin Spanish) morphosyntactic frame with an African lexical core. Thus in Lachatañeré’s ¡Oh, mio Yemayá! (C-47) we find the Yoruba/Spanish chant:

A la mofilé
Changó tá molé ...

From Cabrera’s writings come:

pa nkamá [enter the religious ceremony], coge huevo ese, pasa cara, pasa cuerpo, limpia bien y cuando te limpio to uté pué cogé Mpego’ (C-17)

¿Por qué tú coge owo Elégbara? Si é mimo díc tú ta olé y é te va agarrá pinado su papalote ... (C-20)

Ese otro yo lo va yéun y a Migué no pasa ná ... (C-20)

Olofi ya okúó, Olofi ta mirando, ya ikú. (C-20)

Olofi no está aro. Olofi está óddara. (C-20)

Cómo va sé mano branco, si ta afé, ta prieto yo ... (C-22)

Vamo siré (C-22)

Ahora ese ewe, to ese palo ta sacramentao ... (C-22)

¡Ay mi marlo! ¡ókó mi, okó mi! (C-18)

Mañana yo ikú (C-22)

From the Afro-Cuban song ‘Elegua quiere tambó’ by Celia Cruz (Castellanos 1983: 57) comes the fragment:

No hay Orisa como Elegua pa la ilé, porque siempre etá afé ... Ochún ta weye weye ... ‘There is no god like Elegua for the [ceremonial] house, because [he] is always watching ...’

These examples show the incorporation of Yoruba elements into Spanish sentences, sometimes slightly modified, and in other cases without modification. Thus owo ‘money,’ yéun (Yoruba jeun) ‘to eat,’ olé ‘thief,’ afé ‘to watch’ (< ó fe ‘(s)he watches’), aro ‘sick,’ okó ‘husband,’ afé ‘dark,’ ewe ‘leaves,’ sírè ‘to play,’ etc. However, the texts also reflect Yoruba morphosyntax, including the at times tenuous or non-existent morphological difference between nouns, verbs and adjectives, and the attempt to create hybrid verbal constructions using Spanish elements to replace Yoruba particles, in conjunction with a Yoruba stem. In several instances, the results closely resemble verbal structures in Afro-Iberian creoles such as Papiamento, Palenquero or Cape Verdian Crioulo, but in which the case for an independent development can be made quite strongly.

Consider, for example, the Hispano-Yoruba hybrid transcribed by Cabrera: ‘Olofi ya okúó, Olofi ta mirando, ya ikú.’ In this combination, ya seems to be acting as a preverbal particle, much as in Afro-Iberian creoles. In reality, however, this sentence embodies a subtle form of code-switching. In Yoruba, the root for ‘die’ is kú. This element can also be used as an adjectival verb, meaning ‘be dead.’ Thus ó kú can mean either ‘(s)he dies/died’ or ‘(s)he is dead.’ When modifying a noun, the adjectival form is kíkú. The corresponding noun is ikú ‘death.’ In the pidginized Yoruba used by the Abakuá/Lucumí Afro-Cuban religious cults, much of this grammatical information has been lost, so that, e.g., ikú can be used as a verb/adjective: mañana yo ikú ‘tomorrow I will die/be dead’ (cf. also Cabrera
When combined with ya, as in Olofi ya okuò ... ya ikú ‘Olofi is already dead/already died,’ there seems to be a prototypical creole formation in which ya operates as a preverbal [+anterior] particle. In many Iberian-based creoles, in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, the [+anterior] particle is derived from Sp. ya/Ptg. ja, almost always combined with an Ibero-Romance verbal stem. In such cases, ya has evolved from a free adverbial to a preverbal clitic particle, always as part of the verb phrase. In the Spanish/Yoruba hybrid constructions transcribed by Lydia Cabrera, the fact of code-switching precludes analyzing ya as a clitic or verbal particle; rather, it is still behaving as an adverbial adjunct.

The case of é mimo dicí tú ta olé ‘he himself says that you are a thief/are robbing’ appears to embody ta as a preverbal particle. In Yoruba, olé is a noun meaning ‘thief,’ while the verb ‘rob’ is jalè. Once more, in the pidginized Yoruba used in El monte, this distinction is usually lost, either because the speakers in question were not truly native speakers of Yoruba (whether or not they were born in Africa), or because code-switching between two languages with radically different morphosyntactic patterns resulted in canonical full forms from Yoruba being used when a Yoruba item was inserted in a Spanish sentence. The hybrid combination tú ta olé is thus ambiguous, meaning both ‘you are (a) thief,’ and ‘you steal/are stealing.’ In the first interpretation, ta is used incorrectly as a copula with a predicate nominal, a usage also found in vestigial or semi-fluent usage in other regions. In the second meaning, ta is more clearly derived from the progressive auxiliary está, routinely pronounced as ta in vernacular Cuban Spanish. The resulting configuration, however, is superficially identical to quintessential Iberian-based creole constructions derived from ta plus the Romance infinitive. The combination vamo siré ‘let’s play,’ involves a Yoruba verb used identically to a Spanish infinitive; the superficial form of the Yoruba verb resembles a Spanish infinitive. Many of the other Yoruba items transcribed by Cabrera have the same canonical shape as Ibero-Romance infinitives: ajè, molè, olé, etc. In the hybrid constructions characteristic of Afro-Cuban speech these items are not behaving as verbal infinitives, whether or not derived from a Yoruba verbal stem. Similarly, in the hybrid constructions, ta < está is not behaving as an auxiliary for a progressive construction, much less as a preverbal particle signalling tense, mood, or aspect, as occurs in legitimate Afro-Romance creoles. It is a simple copula, introducing a patently foreign insertion. Despite the analysis of Yoruba-Spanish hybrid constructions in a fashion different from that of TMA PARTICLE + VERBAL STEM found in Afro-Iberian creoles, the superficial similarity with the latter phenomena has led to the inclusion of the hybrid constructions in the ‘evidence’ of a former creole status for Cuban bozal Spanish, as well as to the purported similarities with Afro-Portuguese pidgins and creoles. Among Cuban bozales, purely Spanish constructions based on ta + Vi were used in addition to the hybrid Spanish + Yoruba constructions, but not necessarily as part of a pan-Caribbean creole pattern. It is more likely that, having established a productive hybrid system in which Spanish ta could serve as a copula or generic verb introducing inserted borrowed elements, this same combination was extended to uninflected Spanish verbs (i.e. infinitives), with similar use. In other words, speakers of Yoruba and other African languages in which the noun/adjective verb distinction is marked differently from Spanish, or not at all, would freely combine Spanish verbs, nouns and adjectives with ta to create complex verbs with simple meanings.
The assertion that *ta* was used in Afro-Hispanic language to introduce elements regarded as foreign is difficult to substantiate, given the limited nature of the Cuban *bozal* corpus and the fact that Spanish-speaking observers would not be likely to notice the non-Spanish fashion in which such combinations were being used. One possible method is to look for cases where *ta/está* is combined with verbal stems in which progressive aspect is entirely lacking, perhaps even where a perfective aspect can be assumed. Also, one might look for use of *ta/está* with adjectives in a fashion which could be re-analyzed as a simple verb, as well as combinations involving *ta/está* with the meaning of a simple verb. Some Caribbean *bozal* verbal constructions based on *ta* which lack a progressive aspect, or where the following element is not based on the Spanish gerund, include:

¿Po que tú no *ta* queré a mí? ‘Why don’t you love me?’ (PR-5)
Siempre *ta* regalá dinero a mí ‘He always gives me money’ (PR-5)
Horia *ta* bení pa cá ‘Soon she (will) come here’ (C-71)
Yo ta llorá poque Calota ya *ta* morí ‘I am crying because Carlota died’ (C-70)
la campana *ta* pin, pin, ¡brágame Dios la tragín que lo tiene la criatiano! ‘The bell is going "pin, pin. Good God, how these Christians are dressed up!’ (C-29)
Yo llegá, quitá cachucho, cuchá música bonito ... yo *ta* mirá gente mucho ... ‘I arrive(d), take off my hat, listen to the pretty music ... I looked at all the people’ (C-29)
omos ta mirando neye, neye *ta* morí de risa, ‘The boys are looking at them [the girls], [the girls] are dying of laughter’ (C-29)
Lamo *ta* regañá mí, yo siempre con soramienta no cuchá ... ‘The master always scolds me, annoyed, I never listen’ (C-29)
*Ta* tentá doló en su cabeza. Tié fiebre. ‘He has a headache and fever.’ (C-21)
Sí, pae, *yo* *ta* robá un gaúna jabá, y dipué yo robá una yeegua. ‘Yes, Father, I stole a hen, and then I stole a mare’ (C-21)
Sí, que progrsos son buey, poque cuando nei *ta* vení ya no tiene que da vueta y vueta y vueta lo trapiche ‘Oxen are very dangerous, because when they come, I don’t have to turn the sugar mill’ (C-21)
Ay Dió, cuando mi marfo *ta* juyí, siñó médico dici yo ta embarazá ‘Oh, God, when my husband left, the doctor told me I was pregnant’ (C-22)
Miamo Juan *ta* murí ‘Master Juan (has) died’ (C-11)
soldao *ta* cabró, mambí piliando con machete afilá y cortá cabeza. ‘The soldiers are bastards, Mambís fighting with sharp machetes, cutting off heads’ (C-1)

In all these examples, *ta* cannot be adequately analyzed as indicating progressive aspect. This provides indirect evidence that *ta* was being used neither as a preverbal particle nor as an auxiliary verb, but rather as part of a hybrid form in which *ta* introduced foreign elements. In fact, there is evidence that in the more rudimentary forms of Caribbean *bozal* Spanish, it was the bare uninflected infinitive (lacking final */r/1) that was used as the default verb. In slightly more fluent forms of *bozal* Spanish, the infinitive might be supplemented with ‘auxiliary’ verbs such as (*es)tá and *va*, while in the most fluent varieties of *bozal* Spanish, the 3rd person singular verb form normally acted as the default (although *son* was more commonly used as the default copula), at times in alternation with fully conjugated Spanish verbs. Examples of the bare infinitive in *bozal* speech include:

La vieja Asunción nunca *jablái* (C-63)
yo también me *calentái* ... y cuando *cuchái* campana, yo me va pa la Tamiza (C-29)
No, síñol, yo no matá ninguno, yo sentá atrá quitrín pa yeág prisa, prisa, na panadería (C-35)
yo tindora, ya yo jablá mimo hoy don Ciriacó ... (C-15)
Na dotó, né comé lo chicharró caliente, bebé de l'agua fría, y to la noche pasó de lo catre a lo tibó ...
(C-21)

ya yo no sé si lon gato mató la jutía o si la jutía mató lon gato ... (C-20)
Yo llevá ya mucho tiempo comiendo con mano, y queré dame comé con tendó y cuchillo lo mimo que gente rica, porque viejo no queré morí sin meté pinchacito tendó dentro carne sabroso (C-32).

Cañón pañó no sebá pa ná. Cañón pañó tira tiro paf y se cayá ... (C-72)
yo lo disí po bien suya (C-34)
En la guerra yo pelá ... (C-36)
Bueno, sumesé, siende como disí la niña ... (GC-44)
Yo sabé que ño Rañé son guardiero tu bují ... (C-34)
Uno biyete que yo cumprá la loteri yo me sacá (C-34)
Yo llevá ventidó muerto, aqué va clito ... (C-38)
Torcuato tené que hablé ... Torcuato cogé guerrillero, Torcuato cambiá viejo po bueyes ... (C-52)
si muri, mijó sería (PR-7)

Examples of the use of son as the default copula include:

Cura que no son de acá, ta caramá como chiva (C-29)
tú son dueño e tierra (C-14)
¿qué son ese? (C-6)
Tu boca son la capuyo de la susena fragante (C-10)
Ya yo son libre, yo ta casá (C-34)
porque tú son mis antojos (C-15)
hoy son día grande (C-15)
¿qué cosa mimo son ese? (C-21)
Tú no só congo bruto musulungo, tú só congo luanda (C-21)
¿Tú dicé que yo son tu corazó y no retuece pecuezo pollo? (C-21)
mañana son día corobata (C-24)
¿Tú son chimosa? (C-45)
Papá son ma diablo que yo (C-26)
Calabela to nosotros son de allá, to nosotros son familia africana ... (C-22)
Calamba muje so ruín (C-48)
tú son bruto (C-20)
tú no son valiente (C-13)
¿Y quiéne son noté? (C-50)
Mosotro no son casá por le iglesé (C-68)
Yo que lo son mu agradisí o a la favó que me lo jase ... (C-44)
tú son negro que no pué ta caggao, tu mare no son rico ... (Castellanos 1983)
si tú son cubano, di gabanso, y no te pasa na. (C-37)
tú son criollito sinvegiienza... (C-26)
Usté son muchacho hoy, pero usté son hombre mañana (C-17)
mi padre son coturero, mi madre son coturera (C-38)
ud. son lo mimo que la madrecita pa nosotros (C-63)
lamo son amo brabo ... nella son honrá (PR-7)

Many of the examples given above also illustrate the use of the 3rd person singular verb as the default. This is most often noticeable when the subject is yo. When the subject is tú,
normal Cuban loss of final /s/ cannot be ruled out. The Caribbean bozal corpus contains very few examples of 3rd person singular verbs combined with plural subjects (e.g. nosotros or ustedes), but nothing suggests that verbs behaved any differently in these cases. More examples include:

- yo empeña mi ropa (C-56)
- Yo alebanta sojo (C-29)
- A mí no bebe aguariente, mi ama (C-51)
- Yo sabe lavá, planchá, jase dulce y cosíná (C-9)
- Aquí ta yo. (C-53)
- yo mi nama Frasico Mandinga (C-57)
- yo bota lan garafó (C-10)
- ya yo ta contento (C-15)
- yo no quiere mi compae con pata candelá (C-21)
- yo llama Mayombe sacuré (C-24)
- Yo va con uté, sí señó. (C-20)
- yo no tiene la culpa. (C-67)
- Aguaita que yo mata. (C-59)
- Yo va a na San Savaó a comprar un poco de tasao (C-69)
- Toti pájaro negro, el amo, yo llama Eugenio (C-49)
- Sí, Taita, yo entiende (C-11)
- yo está cortá un cañas (C-31)
- yo va salí pa lamprasa (C-64)
- Yo va preguntá a too la gente si conoce a mi yijo Eulogio (C-65)
- Yo tiene la pecho premió pur nelle (C-41)
- yo va donde está mi capata pa entregalo ese botella (C-50)
- Yo no me nama José, me nama Cirilo (C-68)
- Yo va pa la gallería (C-36)
- si yo sabe, yo disé a su mesé (C-44)
- Yo tiene crupa na ma de to lo que ta pasando (C-34)
- yo va sé uté lo criollo cuento de mi tiela (C-26)
- yo tiene mala cabeza ... (C-55)
- Yo va matá mi matería (C-61)
- yo le da yeba pa quitá anbenenao (C-63)
- yo no puere aguantá má (PR-7)

Examples such as the ones above characterize the vast majority of the Caribbean bozal corpus, in comparison with 'creoloid' combinations involving ta, and show that Afro-Hispanic pidgin in the Caribbean did show evidence of a move toward consistency, but not in the direction of TMA PARTICLE + VERB combinations. Rather, bozal Spanish adopted minimally inflected verb forms, at first based on the infinitive and then gravitating toward the most unmarked conjugated form (3rd person singular).

11. Caribbean bozal Spanish in contact with Papiamento

In partial summary, Latin American bozal Spanish exhibits only one recurring trait which converges with other Afro-Iberian creoles, namely verbal constructions based on ta. Undifferentiated third person pronouns might also fit in this category, although the pronouns
in question do not find as close a match among known creoles. These two traits, however, do not characterize all or even most Latin American *bozal* texts. Rather, their distribution is strikingly limited in both time and space. All known examples occur in 19th century Cuba (together with 2-3 collateral examples from Puerto Rico). Earlier Caribbean *bozal* texts show no signs of the constructions in question, nor do 18th and 19th century Afro-Hispanic documents from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, and Uruguay, not to mention the extensive Peninsular Spanish *bozal* corpus of 16-18th century texts. Reconstruction of the vestigial Afro-Hispanic language spoken by the *negros congos* of Panama (Lipski 1990) also fails to reveal evidence of earlier verbal constructions involving *ta*, nor of undifferentiated third person pronouns. This very limited distribution undermines sweeping claims of a previous stable Afro-Hispanic creole spoken widely throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere. At the same time, the creoloid traits discussed above must be accounted for in the cases where they appear. This dilemma may be at least partially resolved by taking a closer look at the recruitment of the labor force in the 19th century Caribbean, and by offering a closer examination of many lesser-known examples of Caribbean *bozal* Spanish.

In the final decades of the 18th century, the sugar plantation boom caused an unprecedented demand for laborers in Cuba, Brazil, and to a lesser extent Venezuela, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico. The African slave trade had slowed to a trickle, and was rapidly reinitiated without concern for separating slaves speaking the same languages. Slaves were carried *en masse* from West Africa to Latin America, resulting in the existence of Yoruba-KiKongo- and Ewe-speaking groups well into the 20th century. By the first few decades of the 19th century, anti-slavery movements in Europe were strong, and slaving ships en route to the Americas were intercepted and confiscated. A burgeoning contraband slave trade ensued, and the Dutch slave station at Curaçao was instrumental in making up the difference between the slaves coming from Africa and the total needs of the Spanish colonies. For much of the colonial period, the Dutch had maintained an *asiento* on Curaçao, from which slaves were reshipped to Spanish, French and English possessions in the Caribbean. The *asiento* was revoked in 1713, but clandestine traffic from Curaçao and St. Eustatius continued past this point, transshipping African slaves throughout the Caribbean.

The importance of Curaçao in the history of the African slave trade to Cuba and Puerto Rico is well documented. For nearly two centuries, the Dutch slave depot at Curaçao supplied the authorized and clandestine slave traffic to Cuba and Puerto Rico, together with other sources of African labor. There is no indication that Curaçao played a predominant role during the period prior to the 19th century, although the flow of slaves was constant. In the first decades of the 19th century, European (particularly British) attempts to stop the flow of African slaves to the Americas became significant, and the transshipment of slaves from one Caribbean island to another rose in importance, creating a Caribbean-wide shell game which was difficult to interdict in its entirety. Western Puerto Rico and eastern Cuba received numerous slaves from Curaçao, as well as from the Danish colony in the Virgin Islands, and from St. Barthelmy, Martinique and Guadeloupe (Morales Carrion 1978: 39).

Alvarez Nazario (1970) traces the arrival of slave and free blacks from Curaçao in Puerto Rico, during the course of the 18th and early 19th century. This study was the first to appreciate the significance of a text originally published by Pasarell (1951: 124), which
purports to represent the use of Papiamento in early 19th century Puerto Rico. For Alvarez Nazario (1970: 4), the text ‘ofrece pruebas de primera mano que establecen el arraigo definitivo y claro en nuestro suelo por entonces de sectores poblacionales usuarios del papiamento, con raíces que se remontan posiblemente en el tiempo a los siglos XVII y XVIII ... cuando este instrumento expresivo va definiendo y consolidando históricamente sus caracteres de lengua criolla del Caribe ...’ According to him, the language in question represents the vestiges of Papiamento transplanted to Puerto Rico several generations prior to the attestation in question, and partially remodeled through contact with evolving bozal and criollo Spanish of Puerto Rico. The most significant aspect of this discovery, amply recognized by Alvarez Nazario, is the fact that the language of these genti di Corsó was familiar enough to observers in early 19th century Puerto Rico as to require no special introduction or translation. Alonso (1975: 57), in the classic work El jibaro, also referred to the presence of ‘criollos de Curazao’ in 19th century Puerto Rico, evidently an unremarkable phenomenon in his day.10

Granda (1973) extended the scope of the inquiry, tracing the transshipment of Africans from Curacao throughout the Caribbean, and documenting the survival of folkloric texts in Venezuela in a language which is much more transparently Papiamento. In the case of Cuba, Granda points to the observations of the Dutch traveller Bosch (1836: 226), also mentioned by Hesseling (1933: 265-6), who encountered Papiamento speakers in Cienfuegos, as well as in the Virgin Islands. According to Granda’s interpretation, Bosch’s previous knowledge of Papiamento as spoken in Curacao would assure that he was not mistaking a local Afro-Cuban creole or pidgin for legitimate Papiamento. Hesseling himself did not rule out the possibility that Bosch was confusing the Dutch-based creole Negerhollands with Papiamento, although according scant probability to such a hypothesis.11 Given Cubans’ negative attitudes towards the speech of bozales, it is unlikely that many observers had either the experience or the inclination to differentiate the Afro-Hispanic pidgin spoken by African bozales sent directly to Cuba and the already well-established Afro-Iberian creole in use on Curacao.

St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands was often a way-station for shipments originating in Curacao, and according to Bosch (1836) also harbored a population of Papiamento speakers during the 19th century. This provides a dual vector by which elements of Papiamento could enter Cuba and Puerto Rico during the early decades of the 19th century. It is not insignificant that the ‘Papiamento’ text documented in Puerto Rico comes from Mayaguez, a port on the western end of the island where slave traffic with St. Thomas and Curacao was most intense.

The Virgin Islands connection suggests an even more subtle way in which Papiamento elements could have trickled into bozal language of Cuba and Puerto Rico. In the early 19th century, when the (Danish-controlled) Virgin Islands played a key role in the clandestine slave trade to Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Dutch-based creole Negerhollands was still the principal language of the black population. Hesseling (1933) has analyzed many features of 19th century Negerhollands as bearing the earlier influence of Papiamento, stemming from a time when the Dutch also controlled parts of the Virgin Islands, and transfers of Africans from Curacao to St. Thomas and St. Croix were frequent. One of the traits attributed to Papiamento is the extension of bo < na bobo to include meanings far removed from the
original spatial value of 'over'; this extension exactly corresponds to Papiamento *riba* as compared to Spanish/Portuguese *arriba*. It will be shown below that *riba/arriba* occurs in *bozal* Caribbean texts with an expanded range of values comparable to those of Papiamento. Although there is no evidence of Negerhollands ever being spoken in stable populations in either Puerto Rico or Cuba, it is nearly inevitable that some Negerhollands speakers were transferred to these Spanish colonies. In the process of acquiring Spanish, parallel structures from Negerhollands would likely serve as the basis for translation; combinations which had previously been calqued from Papiamento could thus enter *bozal* Spanish from a language twice-removed. The Virgin Islands-Negerhollands connection is worth considering as a potentially, as yet unproved, collateral source of creole-like elements in Caribbean *bozal* Spanish.

12. Other Papiamento elements in Caribbean *bozal* Spanish

Closer scrutiny of *bozal* texts, principally from Cuba, reveals the existence of several other elements which point to a direct Papiamento influence; in many instances, these forms are found precisely in the text which exhibit the benchmark creole features just surveyed. These same items are conspicuously absent in *bozal* Spanish texts from other regions. Among the more salient features which coincide partially or totally with Papiamento are:

(1) The Papiamento word for 'child, son, daughter' is *yiu*, with an intrusive initial /y/ not clearly derivable from Spanish *hijo*. The form *yijo* appears in Cuban *bozal* texts from the 19th century, but is unknown in *bozal* texts from other regions:

Mi *yijo*, gayina negro son mucho, y tosto pone güebo blanco (C-53)
no ta sufrí mi *yijo* (C-63)
*Yija* de mi pecho son (C-15)
Si mañana *yijo* fúúri, ¿quién llora su madrina? (C-24)
ay, *yijo*, yo no tiene carabela aquí. (C-22)
Yo ta compañá to *yijo*. (C-22)
si, *yijo*, es mío el quimbombó (C-20)
mi *yijo* Eulogio, nacio y criao en el Guatao (C-65)
¿Tú no ve uno yegua paría que anda con la *yijo* suyo como quien la tiene orgullo porque saca lotería? (C-60)
Neye lo que tiene só un bariga con su *yijo* lentro. (C-54)
tu son mi *yijo*, arrea, vamo … Yo no tiene mujé, no tiene *yijo* … (C-26)

Considering that intervocalic /x/ is weakly pronounced in Caribbean Spanish, the spelling *yijo* probably represented a word similar or identical to Papiamento *yiu*. It is likely that the frequent combination *mi hijo*, pronounced with intrusive hiatus-breaking and hypocorrect /yl/, is at the root of the transformation of *hijo* to *yiu/yijo*. However, while intervocalic /yl/ is quite weak in Papiamento, it is generally strong in Caribbean Spanish, so that independent parallel development of *yijo* in Cuba is rendered unlikely.
(2) In Papiamento, the word for ‘today’ is awe, which is not easily derivable from either Spanish hoy or Portuguese hoje. Forms similar or identical to Papiamento awe, and with identical meaning, appear in several Cuban bozal texts. Examples include:

Poquitico fatá pa que señora muri agüot (C-35)
Agüe memó, ñamito (C-66)
ahuoy lo va a jásé Pancha ... Ma ahuoy, letó mi corás ... ahuoy bariga yo sabay. vamo ta mosotro como pecá dentro lagua ... (C-33)
ahuoy cun ese cumeria (C-34)
agué día tambó to mundo baila (C-26)
ahuoy mimo po la mañanito (C-34)

(3) In Papiamento, awor is the word for ‘now.’ Among existing or attested Spanish dialects, aguora/ahuora appears only in 19th century Cuba, in bozal texts or as the representation of illiterate rural speakers in areas with a strong Afro-Hispanic presence. Examples of ahuora/aguora in Cuban bozal texts include:

¿Y qué yo dici ahuora, eh? ... ahuora sí mi pecho está girviendo como agua que pela engallina (C-15)
y ahuora que no lo ve ... donde ahuora yo só otra vé congo y trabajare la muelle ... dende ahuora yo só José mimo ... Ahuora a trabajá (C-40)
con toa esa bamba se larga ahuora mimo de aquí ... vamo a ve si ahuora oté me entiende ... ahuora sí verdá que no pue má ... hasta ahuora yo no tení guto pa conocé a noté (C-50)
Prusumpueto que ahuora narie lo habrá diótro cosa ma que de la Jópera (C-34)
... que bravu diese lo pega ahuora como uno pache de brea en la sojo de uno buticaria (C-34)
... la Cula ta gualando, aguola en la cafeta (C-48)
Camina, pícaro, que ahuora tú lo va pagá (C-35)
aguora yo jabla oté (Guayabo, rumores del Mayabeque, 1881; cited in Ortíz 1924: 12).

Although Ortíz and Dihigo suggest that agüé and ahuora both derive from ahora/agora ‘now,’ several texts, including the writings of Creto Gangá (C-34) and El quitrín (C-35) maintain the two separate, with agüé meaning ‘today’ and ahuora in the sense of ‘now,’ just as with Papiamento awe and awor.

(4) In Papiamento, riba (< Sp., Port. arriba) is a preposition meaning ‘on, upon’: Kiko tín riba mesa? ‘What is on the table?’ Arriba is not used this way in Spanish, although the combination arriba de occasionally appears with the meaning ‘above, over.’ Among Cuban bozal texts riba/arriba appears on several occasions as a preposition, with the meaning ‘on, up’:

ya pará riba ténque ... ya pará riba jagüey ... ya pará riba nangüe ... yo sube arriba palo (C-20)
pone cañón riba alifante ... uté sienta riba pelo y va arastrao como en coche ... echó vara arriba
ngombe yo brinca volante ... mi pecho ta roncando, parece toro galano que etá riba la loma
... (C-26)
Ese trepa riba palo (C-21)
Arriba entoto me juran ganga (C-24)
arriba negro, culpa siempre ta guinda (C-25)
Saváo ariba loma. (C-69)
no lo guanta que moja lo para riba su yo (C-33)
Yo sé, moca fueron, mira como ta *arriba* la mesa. (C-37)
lo tiniha lumbaniyo ma pa *riba* la fundiyó (C-34)
Y Rupeto, què negro sientá *riba* la vagaso (C-34)
lo salí cribindo *arriba* Lan Faro Sindurí en luenga mandinga? (C-34)
o había *arriba* de la papé mucho diabro pintao (C-34)

(5) In Papiamento, the word for ‘say, tell’ is *bisa* (< Sp., Port. *avisar*). Among non-African Spanish dialects, *(a)visar* is most commonly used in the sense of ‘advise, warn,’ but rarely with the meaning ‘say tell.’ Dihigo (1946: 199) gives the form *bisar*, whose sole example is the Afro-Cuban text from Santa Cruz (1908: 132), reproduced below. Although Dihigo does not explicitly list this form as pertaining to the Afro-Cuban lexicon, the choice of examples is instructive. Among Cuban *bozal* texts, however, the latter meaning is frequently associated with *(a)visar*:

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Niña Paulita ñamá yo, *bisa* negra pa ni ... *Bisa* André que ta gúeno ... (C-66)
Robé, *visa* mi señora senf que yo ta nel río (C-21)
Don José, yo va ahora mimo a la cabildo pa *avisá* too carabela pa que viene tiempla juna tambor ...
(C-15)

Gente desconfía, peligro siempre ta *avisá* Ay Dió, cuando mi marfo ta juví ... (C-25)
Amo tuyo quiquiribú un día, tú *avisá* mi. ¿Tú entiende? (C-11)
Madre Ocá *avisá* pa que jable con vo. (C-1)
Cuando ley Mechó contendía con ley inglés, né ta sentao en su trono y *visá* que baco inglés ta la bahía ... no *avisá* no, poque hata dipue de mueta yo cuido mi mujé ... si hay malo, *avisá* pa el tú *avisá* pa él. (C-26)

(6) In Papiamento, the first person singular subject pronoun is *(a)mí*, with the longer form being emphatic or contrastive. Since the 16th century, no form of *bozal* Spanish has used *(a)mí* as subject pronoun (cf. Lipski 1991), but this form reappears in a few 19th century Cuban *bozal* texts. Also found in the latter documents is the use of disjunctive *mí* as object pronoun, instead of the usual clitic *me*. This pattern is not found in any monolingual variety of Spanish, but is parallel with Papiamento usage. Found occasionally is the use of *pa mí* ‘mine,’ identical in structure to Haitian *pa-m* (< *pa-mwe*), and possible a calque introduced by Haitian speakers who were especially frequent in eastern Cuba. Examples of these uses of *mí* in Cuban *bozal* texts include:

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*A mí* no bebe aguariente, mi amá (C-51)
Ay, siñora, nigua no deja caminá a mí. (C-35)
Ah, ñamito, perدونa mí ... Mí no sabe, ñamito ... mí no sabe na (C-66)
colazón pa mí ta brincando dentro la pecho como la cuebro (C-15)
No señor, vegenza no e pa mí, e pa amo Tomá. (C-16)
sí, iñó, contramayorá manda mí ... Ta jujú, ta pujá mí, siñó (C-67)
El amo mata mí ... (C-49)
Tú dise mí, yo calla ... Eyo lleban mí una casa. (C-11)
Ay, Flancico, tú perdoná mi ... (C-37)
Nél cré va agarra mí ... (C-26)
la sojo suyo, que lumbras como cocuyo, ta mirando yo namá. A mí no ... Lamo ta regañá mí ... (C-29)
Ecucha Encarna, *mí* no guta eso ... ella dise, mí ba casa ma Cecilia ... (C-12)
In the examples just given, use of *mi* is combined with *bozal* language in which some agreement, verb conjugation, syntactic subordination, etc. can be found. In other words, the level of approximation to Spanish is above that of an incipient pidgin such as might be spoken by a recently-arrived African with no prior knowledge of Spanish.14

(7) Although the undifferentiated third person pronoun *(n)eye* does not have a direct counterpart in Papiamento, the variant *ne*, also appearing in Cuban *bozal* texts, corresponds to a variant of Papiamento *e* (usually found after *que*, in comparative constructions), e.g. *ta un Dios tin y no tin otro mas que nE* ‘there is only one God and no other’ (Hesseling 1933). Examples from the *bozal* corpus include:

¿Qué nimá son ese que *ne* parese majá? (C-4)  
*ne* te mea, *ne* te caga, *ne* te tumba, *ne* te mete rabo la culo, y se va ... Na dotó, *né* cóme lo chicharró caliente ... *Né* tiene un güéquito aquí, un güéquito allá (C-21)  
*Ne* muri jayá tiempo ... *ne* contrá lo río la suete lo rey ekoí, y varón quitá neye ... (C-22)  
Yo va curá *né* cun su mocé. (C-67)  
Cuando ley Mechó contendía con ley inglé, *né* ta sentao en su trono ... *Né* mirá po teojo ... *si né* no tiene serrucho, y manque negro jabla mucho mucha yuca hay que rayá ... ¿hijo de quien *né*? (C-26)

(8) One area in which similarities between 19th century Caribbean *bozal* Spanish and Papiamento may indicate more than a fortuitous resemblance involves vowel harmony. The data are not as extensive and clear as the previously-mentioned phenomena, but the parallels are worth exploring. Papiamento exhibits numerous cases in which etymological final vowels from Spanish or Portuguese were replaced by a copy of the stressed vowel, in a fashion which transcends simple raising of unstressed /e/ and /o/ to [i] and [u] (common in Papiamento but also found in Portuguese and in some regional dialects of Spanish). Typical cases include *ana* < *ano*, *biaha* < *viaje*, *caya* < *calle*, *siboyo* < *cebolla*, *staña* < *estaño*, *paña* < *pañó*, *shinishi* < *ceniza*, *dede* < *dedo*, etc. (cf. Birmingham 1970: 25-6).  
Pretonic vowels were sometimes also drawn into the harmonizing process: *rospóndé* < *responder*, *sosóde* < *sucedér*. There is no indication of the chronology of this vowel harmony in the history of Papiamento, whether it occurred only during the formative stage (when paragopic and epenthetic vowels were also occasionally added), or whether the tendency persisted as an active process in later stages of the language.

A comparative study of *bozal* Spanish from earlier time periods (16th-18th century), in Spain and Latin America, gives evidence of both vocalic epenthesis and occasional vowel harmony, typified by the frequent occurrence of *siñoro/siolo* < *señor* and *Dioso* < *Dios*. In the 19th century Caribbean, however, vocalic epenthesis rarely occurred; widespread elimination of syllable-final consonants created the appropriate syllabic structure (usually consisting of a single consonant+vowel combination) without recurring to additional vowels. In the 19th century *bozal* corpus from Cuba and Puerto Rico, however, there are several interesting instances of final vowel harmony which cannot be explained by unstressed vowel raising. This is in addition to the dozens of examples where final /o/ is raised to [u] and pretonic and postonic /e/ is raised to [i], creating configurations very similar to those of
Papiamento. Among the instances of possible vowel harmony gleaned from the Caribbean bozal corpus are:

\[\text{bángama} < \text{válgame} \text{ (C-35); beye} < \text{hella} \text{ (C-19); botelle} < \text{botella} \text{ (C-50); buene} < \text{buena} \text{ (C-21); bunite} < \text{bonito} \text{ (C-68); caserite} < \text{cas(er)ita} \text{ (C-68); clava} < \text{esclavo} \text{ (C-68); costo} < \text{costita} \text{ (C-34); cuel} < \text{cuela} \text{ (C-50); custu} < \text{costita} \text{ (C-15); diquelle} < \text{de aquella} \text{ (C-34); dielle} < \text{de ella} \text{ (C-34); dínele} < \text{diner} \text{ (C-57); dínera} < \text{diner} \text{ (C-68); enierro} < \text{entierro} \text{ (C-68); Franci} < \text{Francisc} \text{ (C-68); grese} < \text{iglesia} \text{ (C-29); hierro} < \text{hierro} \text{ (C-68); linde} < \text{linda} \text{ (C-68); meme} < \text{mismo} \text{ (C-68); tigui} < \text{tigre} \text{ (PR-2).}\]

There are not enough examples to base a strong claim of Papiamento carryover, but the examples just cited all appear in texts in which other Papiamento-like elements occur. When added to the other features just enumerated, they strengthen the notion that direct contact with Papiamento played a role in shaping 19th century Cuban and Puerto Rican bozal speech.

(9) One final trait of many Cuban bozal texts also reminiscent of Papiamento is also worth mentioning, as it may help illustrate the type of influence which a well-developed creole might influence on the pidginized Spanish of newly-arrived African slaves. Papiamento is known for its creation of nouns from verbal stems through use of the suffix \text{-mento}, e.g. papiamento 'language, speaking' < papiá 'to speak,' etc. (Lenz 1927: 292-3; 1928). Similar forms are of course found in both Spanish and Portuguese, and indeed one or both of these languages provided the model for Papiamento itself. In the latter language, however, greater flexibility is found in creations with \text{-mento}, including many combinations not found in Spanish or Portuguese. Among bozal Spanish texts from 19th century Cuba a number of nouns in \text{-miento} are found which do not correspond to etymological Spanish items, and which are not to be found in bozal texts from other regions or time periods. These include:

\[\text{alegramiento} \text{ (C-40); avisamienta} \text{ (C-34); bautizamiento} \text{ (C-39); butisamienta} \text{ (C-34); cagamiento} \text{ (C-34); calenturiamento} \text{ (C-34); chiflamienta} \text{ (C-26; C-33; C-34); cumpañamienta} \text{ (C-34); cumentamiento/cumentamiento} \text{ (C-34); didicamienta} \text{ (C-34); digutamiento} \text{ (C-34); dormiento} \text{ (C-39); gopiamiento} \text{ (C-34); güisamienta} \text{ (C-34); imbrujulamiento} \text{ (C-34); pidimienta} \text{ (C-34); presiamiento/presiamiento/prisiamiento} \text{ (C-33; C-34); pravechamienta} \text{ (C-34); relamibiaacceptable} \text{ (C-33; C-50); simprisionamiento} \text{ (C-34); sincuntansamiento} \text{ (C-34); sofocamiento} \text{ (C-34); soramienta/soramiento} \text{ (C-34; C-36); titulamiento} \text{ (C-34); trivimiento} \text{ (C-33).}\]

13. A model for bozal-Papiamento linguistic contacts

The trustworthiness of the bozal texts analyzed above varies widely, although despite the wide range of motives which apparently prompted the works to be written, and the attitudes towards Africans displayed in the works, there is surprising homogeneity of linguistic details. Among the most accurate observations were those of the late Lydia Cabrera, who respected Afro-Cuban culture and whose abilities as a transcriber of other linguistic manifestations of Afro-Cubans enabled her to penetrate many subcodes used during the last century. Significantly, every one of the possible Papiamento traits enumerated above
appear in Cabrera’s extensive writings; hers are in fact the only texts in which all traits converge. Fernando Ortiz was another sympathetic and meticulous observer; although he did not offer extensive transcriptions of Afro-Hispanic language, the descriptions he did offer coincide with independently-documented Afro-Hispanic linguistic manifestations, and can be assigned a high degree of credibility. The aristocratic Emilio Bacardí Moreau was also an accurate and objective observer of bozal speech. Even such obviously burlesque work as the writings of ‘Creto Ganga’ reveal an almost complete coincidence with more objectively described Afro-Cuban language. A comparison of the texts in which Papiamento-like elements occur reveals a tendency for the clustering of two or more such features in each work. This provides a partial verification of the hypothesis that direct transfer of Papiamento elements may have contributed to the development of Caribbean bozal Spanish.

The influence of Papiamento on Afro-Caribbean Spanish could never have been intense or dominant; otherwise the bozal corpus would reveal ‘purer’ instances of Papiamento instead of a scattering of isolated forms. Even the putatively Papiamento text from Puerto Rico shows few unmistakably Papiamento forms. The raising of final unstressed /o/ to [u], although typical of most Papiamento dialects, is not unknown in other Spanish dialects, and is found in bozal Spanish from 17th century Spain and in Latin American bozal language from the 17th-19th centuries. The same holds for the pronunciation of de as di, and of gente as genti (indeed, the Papiamento word is hende). Papiamento has tur ‘all’ corresponding to Spanish todo. In other bozal texts, flapping of intervocalic /d/ has given turo or turu. The word turo in the ‘Papiamento’ text from Mayagüez may be a hybrid of Papiamento and Afro-Hispanic forms. Julandes does correspond to the Papiamento pronunciation (cf. Spanish holandes), although archaic aspiration of Spanish h is also common in bozal language. The text is very Hispanized, and was evidently produced by second- or third-generation speakers of Papiamento, or by a mixed group of Spanish- and Papiamento-speaking singers.

By the time of the bozal Cuban and Puerto Rican texts which contain the Papiamento-like forms, it can be assumed that few if any monolingual Papiamento speakers were to be found in these areas. The Papiamento forms surveyed above seeped into Caribbean bozal Spanish over as much as a century, presumably spurred by the linguistically privileged position which Papiamento-speaking slaves or free laborers would have in comparison with African-born bozales. The latter would speak only the barest rudiments of Spanish, and would be at the mercy of interpreters or commands presented in the simplest terms. Regardless of the possible existence of a Portuguese-based pidgin among earlier generations of African slaves, bozales brought to Cuba and Puerto Rico in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were usually whisked out of Africa by legal or illegal means. Few were held in Portuguese slaving stations such as São Tomé or Cape Verde where they would have acquired a Portuguese-based pidgin. In addition, by the 18th century the Portuguese primacy in the African slave trade to Spanish America had been superceded by British and Dutch entrepreneurs, in whose slaving empires there is no evidence of pidgin Portuguese. An African captive arriving in Cuba or Puerto Rico would then have to rely more heavily on intercommunication with speakers of the same African languages, an increasingly frequent phenomenon in the latter decades of the slave trade. A speaker of Papiamento, on the other hand, would experience fewer difficulties in understanding Spanish; some may have already
been in contact with (Venezuelan) Spanish on Curaçao. This would give Curaçao natives an advantage in the slave communities which could well be translated into positions of relative authority and influence within slave groups in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Bozal Africans acquiring survival-level Spanish would most naturally turn to fellow laborers whose abilities in some variety of ‘Spanish’ were superior to their own; indeed in many instances this might provide the only contact with Spanish on a regular basis.

Since many Papiamento forms are so similar to Spanish as to attract little notice, it is impossible to determine the precise Papiamento contribution to Caribbean bozal Spanish. For example, although Papiamento has no nominal/adjectival inflection for gender, the variable appearance of noun-adjective agreement in bozal texts does not rule out Papiamento influence. Bozal speakers covered a wide range of fluency in Spanish, and while those in closest contact with Spanish might well acquire a partial concordance system, those whose contact with Spanish was minimal would develop the sort of haphazard and precarious agreement found among currently-existent Spanish pidgins and vestigial varieties. If a bozal Spanish speaker were to encounter Papiamento nouns and adjectives in which agreement was totally missing, this would not be noticed, since the ‘basilectal’ bozal pidgin speaker would not have an accurate standard of comparison. Thus a single speaker might learn some Spanish words from native or near-native speakers, with correct or nearly correct Spanish agreement, and other words from Papiamento speakers in which all agreement was absent. Only if a bozal speakers became totally fluent speakers in Papiamento would all inflection be eliminated, and such individuals were obviously very few in number. Since all descriptions and imitations of bozal speech were written by native speakers of Spanish with no apparent knowledge of Papiamento, the subtle differences between the variable concordance of bozal Spanish and the uniformly agreementless Papiamento might escape notice.

Papiamento elements would potentially be borrowed by bozal Spanish speakers in direct proportion to the structural similarity with (vernacular varieties of) Spanish. Thus, for example, verbal combinations based on $ta + V_{inf}$ sound similar to those of vernacular Spanish in which $está$ is reduced to $ta$ (Lipski forthcoming, a). In modern Papiamento, $ta$ is sometimes followed by the Spanish gerund (thus converging with the Spanish progressive forms) instead of the usual uninflected stem derived from an earlier infinitive; if such alternation is not just the result of recent partial decreolization, but has always characterized Papiamento, then bozal speakers would identify $ta + INF$ and $ta + GERUND$ constructions, using both as free variants. Both forms, as well as several intermediate varieties, are found among the texts of the Cuban bozal corpus.

In a similar vein, $awor/ahuora$ vs. $ahora$ and $awe/agüe$ vs. $hoy$ have identical function in Spanish and in Papiamento/bozal speech, and a bozal speaker would not likely notice identify the forms as belong to two separate languages. Putative Papiamento forms identified in bozal Caribbean texts are convergent with equivalent Spanish forms, in both syntax and general phonological shape. Papiamento features which are not shared by Spanish are not attested in the bozal corpus. For example, the marking of nominal plurality by postposing of the third person plural pronoun (e.g. $homber$ ‘[the] man’ vs. $hombernan$ ‘[the] men’) is a process totally at odds with Spanish pluralizing strategies, and is not found in even the most creoloid bozal Spanish texts. Future/irrealsis in Papiamento is marked by $lo$, which
is placed before subject pronouns (e.g. \textit{lo mi bai} ‘I will go’), and between a subject full NP and the verb (e.g. \textit{Maria lo bai} ‘Mary will go’). Although Papiamento \textit{lo} is plausibly derived from Spanish \textit{luego}/Portuguese \textit{lôgo}, this identification is lost in modern Papiamento, and a \textit{bozal} speaker would not likely notice this subtle and syntactically variable particle, which does not converge behaviorally with any single Spanish element. In \textit{bozal} Spanish, future, when signalled at all, is based on the Spanish periphrastic construction with \textit{ir}, usually via the form \textit{va}. Papiamento signals past/perfective with preverbal \textit{a}, which structurally occupies the same position as Spanish auxiliar verbs. However in spoken Papiamento, \textit{a} frequently fuses with subject pronouns (e.g. \textit{mi a vini} > \textit{ma vini} ‘I came’), so that its existence as a separate element is often obscured and would not likely be noticed by a \textit{bozal} speaker. \textit{Bozal} texts show no consistent signalling of past/perfective. Usually just an unconjugated verb is used, and occasionally a Spanish perfective or preterite form appears.

14. Summary

The preceding discussion is not intended as a total rejection of a possible creole origin of \textit{bozal} Spanish in the Caribbean, but includes a call for caution in not underestimating the complexity of the ethnolinguistic environment in which Afro-Hispanic language evolved in the 19th century Caribbean. Written attestations of Afro-Hispanic language are varied and at times misleading, including accurate reproductions of \textit{bozal} speech and humorous exaggerations. Basing claims of a previous creole basis on a small and non-representative sample of texts yields conclusions which suggest that a stable creole was once spoken in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The evidence surveyed above, however, points to a much different conclusion. Caribbean \textit{bozal} Spanish always represented a pidginized version of regional vernacular Spanish, with the latter varieties already characterized by considerable phonetic and morphological reduction. Superimposed on this common \textit{bozal} language was an infusion of true Afro-Hispanic creole, in the form of Papiamento structures used by laborers imported from Curacão. The combination of historical demographics and textual attestations renders the possibility of fortuitous similarities extremely unlikely. The Papiamento-like features found in the Cuban and Puerto Rican \textit{bozal} corpus are not found in other Spanish-speaking regions, even in Afro-Hispanic language, and are not found in all Caribbean \textit{bozal} texts. These features generally cluster in the \textit{bozal} texts in which any one of them occurs. The time and place also coincide: creoloid Papiamento-like features are found only in 19th century Cuban and Puerto Rican texts, precisely at the time when Papiamento speakers were known to have been living in these two countries. The Papiamento contribution may on occasion have been supplemented by calques from French Creole and even Negerhollands, given the documented presence of speakers of these languages in 19th century Cuba and Puerto Rico.

\textit{Bozal} speakers in contact with Papiamento may have used items from the latter language to extend their own pidginized Spanish, and in some cases a restructuring of \textit{bozal} in the direction of a more Papiamento-like creole may have occurred. In general, however, the creole influence on Caribbean Spanish appears to have been discrete, contributing words and occasional verbal combinations but never completely recasting the authentically local \textit{bozal} dialects.
Also contributing to the notion that Caribbean *bozal* Spanish was a stable creole with Afro-Lusitanian roots were hybrid African-Spanish combinations, often involving a Spanish auxiliary verb such as *(es)tá or *va* plus an unassimilated African element. The resulting configurations often bear a superficial similarity with Afro-Iberian creole *PARTICLE + VERB* constructions, but are better analyzed as code-switches or unassimilated borrowings. The same analysis, it has been suggested, can also be extended to *bozal* verbal combinations involving only Spanish elements, in which the 'verb' is employed as an unanalyzed morpheme, combined with the rudiments of an auxiliary system, or used alone. The presence of 'particle + verb' constructions in prominent *bozal* texts such as those of Lydia Cabrera has created the impression of a much more sophisticated and creole-like verbal system in Caribbean *bozal* Spanish than is warranted.

To further refine the hypotheses presented here, the search must be extended, to bring to light more *bozal* texts from Cuba and Puerto Rico, and also from Venezuela, where transplanted nuclei of Papiamento speakers are known to have arisen. Much remains to be done before the reconstruction of Afro-Hispanic language in the Caribbean can be considered complete; the preceding remarks are offered as a contribution to the ongoing enterprise.
Notes

1 Megenney (1985b) gives one example of a 17th century Afro-Mexican text in which Portuguese elements predominate. However, later bozal texts from Mexico contain only Spanish items.

2 The word nan, in nan gato, is identical to the Papiamento plural marker and third person plural pronoun; Alvarez Nazario (1959, 1974: 167, 185-87) considers the use of nan in some Afro-Caribbean bozal texts as related to a possible common African substrate underlying both bozal Spanish and Papiamento. Wagner (1949: 158-9) comes to a similar conclusion with respect to the item lan used in Cuban bozal texts. In Papiamento, however, pluralization is marked by placing nan after the noun to be pluralized; prepended nan has no function in this language. Moreover, in the example cited by Pichardo, it is likely that what is written as nan was actually a prenasalized stop on the following word: como ngato 'like [a] cat.' This process is well-documented for bozal language (Lipski 1992), as in the formation of generic comparatives by como + NOUN, where other Spanish varieties would prefer an indefinite article.

3 The 'article' lan, like nan, has been considered by Alvarez Nazario to reveal an African origin, possibly related to KiKongo or Kimbundu elements in the Gulf of Guinea Afro-Portuguese creoles. Alvarez Nazario (1974: 167, 185-197) postulates that the original form was nan, and that the change nan > lan took place through the influence of the definite article la. In Puerto Rican bozal Spanish, both lan and nan are found, but in Cuban texts, lan (with occasional variant lon) occurs almost exclusively. If the occurrence of lan/nan in Cuba and Puerto Rico stems from a common extraterritorial source, then the existence of both forms in Puerto Rico and the predominance of the former in Cuba would suggest an evolution lan > nan, initiated and only partially completed in Puerto Rico. The opposite development would be suggested only if it could be demonstrated that lan/nan was attested in Cuba significantly before appearing in Puerto Rico, having undergone the putative evolution nan > lan before the latter form was transferred to Cuba, via an as yet unattested route of linguistic transplantation. However, a comparative search of Afro-Hispanic texts from Spain and Latin America (Lipski forthcoming a) shows that lan occurs from the early 17th century on, both in Spain and in Spanish America, including Puerto Rico. The almost total restriction of nan to 19th century Puerto Rican texts thus suggests a route of evolution opposite to that suggested by Alvarez Nazario, namely lan > nan, if in fact the two items are related etymologically. Regardless of the relationship of nan and lan, the analysis proposed in Lipski (1987b, forthcoming a) views lan as merely an article followed by a prenasalized obstruent at the beginning of the next word. No Papiamento or other Afro-Iberian creole element is required in this equation.

4 Thus for example Granda (1972: 12) discloses that 'estaba a punto de abandonar mi búsqueda ... cuando el extraordinario libro El monte, de la gran investigadora Lydia Cabrera ... me proporcionó, al fin, los datos que ya desistía de conseguir. Cantos de carácter religioso y, sobre todo, trozos de conversaciones mantenidas por ancianos negros
habaneros con la autora son transcritos por Lydia Cabrera con toda fidelidad y, sin lugar a
dudas, ofrecen características lingüísticas criollas, aún más puras que los textos
puertorriqueños ... en Cuba, todavía el habla criolla más auténtica y menos desnaturalizada
... era usada corrientemente, no hace aún veinte años, por las generaciones negras ancianas
en la propia capital y de modo totalmente espontáneo y normal.'

Perl (1989b) explicitamente defiende el uso de un par de textos presumiblemente auténticos
como El monte y la exclusión de un corpus de literatura, incluyendo el cubano ‘teatro bufo’ y
más novelas, cuentos y poemas, dado el tendencia a exagerar y estereotipar en
la literatura. Aunque este cuidado no duda es honrado, no todos los observadores son tan pessimistico
sobre el valor histórico de textos de lengua africana. Así, por ejemplo García et. al.
(1981) y García González et al. (1984), ecoando las opiniones de Leal (1975: 18), hallar
considerables niveles de autenticidad en el ‘teatro bufo,’ en términos de boza1
habla y en el otro

6 El sujeto de uno- o es probable una combinación del sujeto clítico de, el núcleo kú,
y el pronombre final -o, común en la lengua Yoruba.

7 Este mismo proceso es observable, e.g. en Ese otro yo me lo va yéun ‘I will eat that
other one.’ En Yoruba jeun es un intransitivo verbal que significa ‘eat.’ Como tal, no puede
ser combinado con un objeto clítico o NP, como en el ejemplo citado por Cabrera. El transitivo
verbal ‘eat’ es je; sin embargo, en el español-Yoruba, el más largo intransitivo ha sido
adoptado. Alvarez Nazario (1974: 216) observa que ‘negros criollos’ (i.e. los nacidos en
América española) generalmente no están óptimos de las estructuras de explotación de Yoruba y
y otras lenguas áfricas, y que ‘los descendientes de los antiguos esclavos emplean en
expresiones mixtas el español y el análogo [ = Yoruba: JML]: “me voy pa(ra) el inle” ...

8 El patrón es similar a las construcciones basadas en hacer + ENGLISH WORD, at
 veces encontradas en el español de mexicanos de California: hacer fix ‘to fix,’ hacer
type ‘to type,’ etc. (cf. Reyes 1976).

9 El texto en cuestión viene de un folleto que describe actividades festivas realizadas en
el sur de Puerto Rico en 1830, celebrando el nacimiento de la heredera al trono de
Fernando VII, quien se convertirá en Isabel II. Entre las canciones y danzas descritas en
el folleto es la siguiente canción, atribuida a los ‘mulatos holandeses que residían en el Sur’
(Pasarell 1951: 124):

Tutur genti de Corsó
Celebrado Rey Fernandu
Mambatindu ha tambur
Di contentu boy bailandu.
Comparsa di Julandés
Celebra a Reyna Cristina
Nan Princesa naroyna
Novo astro boy miré.
The language of the text, while clearly written in a type of ‘jerga’ (the term used by Pasarell), is not Papiamento, although bearing a number of resemblances to the latter language, as will be seen below. However, the attribution of this text to natives of Curacao, and the references to Curacao and its history in the song itself, suggest that some form of Papiamento was once to be found among the ‘mulatos holandeses’ residing in Puerto Rico.

A more contemporary example, from a poem published in 1947 (Rodríguez de Nolla (1947: 63; PR-8) is:

Año nuevo dándé, año tabini

This latter example is reminiscent of Papiamento ta bini; dándé finds no ready explanation. Puerto Rican bosal texts provide no examples of undifferentiated third person programs or other creoloid features.

There are other indications, however, that Papiamento was not widely known in 19th century Cuba, at least by that name. The attestations just mentioned come from the eastern end of the island, which was sparsely populated during most of the 19th century, and where cultural contact was very limited with Havana, the center for cultural diffusion and writing. Most educated Cubans of the time period were familiar primarily with life in urban areas, particularly Havana, and were not aware of the speech of peons on remote sugar plantations. Thus the Havana resident Bachiller y Morales (1883: 102–3) noted that ‘en mi dilatada vida, ni oí hablar del papiamento, ni hubiera conocido su existencia a no haber salido de Cuba’ [in all my long life, I never heard of Papiamento, nor would I have learned of its existence if I had not left Cuba]. Since Bachiller y Morales’ (1812–1889) period of observation would have begun just shortly after the visit of Bosch, this indicates that caution must be used in claiming widespread use of Papiamento in 19th century Cuba. A mitigating circumstance is that the term Papiamento was rarely used by outsiders to describe the speech of Curacao; terms such as español arañado or español degenerado were more common.

Birmingham (1970: 21) proposes that Pap. awe developed from Spanish hoy ‘... involving ... the breaking of a diphthong ... the Spanish diphthong [oj] is broken into two separate syllables [o] and [i], and further, that the [o] has opened to [a] and the [i] to [e]. The semiconsonant [w] is then produced to facilitate pronunciation. This process is not at all unlike the one that is observed in certain varieties of American English, particularly in the South, in which the word hoy is pronounced [ˈbowl].’ This may be a possible route of evolution, but unlike in the Southern dialects just mentioned, where breaking is generalized and not confined to specific lexical items, Papiamento awe is unique in the breaking of a Spanish diphthong. Ortiz (1924: 11) gives the form agüé, with the meaning ‘ahora.’ Dihigo (1928) refers to this item as a ‘forma adverbial que lleva en sí la característica del habla vulgar en boca de la clase de color,’ proposing a step-by-step evolution from ahora. In nearly all the examples in which the form occurs, however, it is possible to substitute hoy, especially since at the vernacular level in many Spanish-speaking regions (particularly in Central America), hoy is used in the general sense of ‘now.’ Ortiz (1924: 11) glosses ahuoy
as ‘hoy,’ suggesting the influence of Congo (i.e. KiKongo) guau or oguau ‘now.’ In Palenquero, the word for ‘today’ is also agüé, a fact which reinforces theories which link these two creoles to an earlier common source. Schwegler (1989: 17), rejecting earlier claims of an African etymology for agüé, correctly recognizes the word as of Ibero-Romance origin, and cites the variant güé in Asturian-Leonese, as well as Ortiz’ mention of Cuban Spanish. In Cuba, however, this word was exclusively found in Afro-Hispanic speech, usually among bozales but sometimes extending to native-born Afro-Cubans. In the case of Caribbean bozal Spanish, the influence of archaic dialectal forms from the Iberian Peninsula is quite unlikely, while direct transfer from Papiamento is a more plausible explanation.

13 Birmingham (1970: 29) suggests an alternative variant *aguora for the Portuguese/Old Spanish agora. Maduro (1960: 11) cites the Murcia variant agua [awa] ‘now’ in connection with Papiamento awor, although without explicitly claiming the former word as an etymon. Ortiz (1924: 12) suggests KiKongo guau/oguau ‘now’ as a possible contributing factor. The variant aguola (exhibiting intervocalic shift of /r/ > [l], typical of Afro-Hispanic pidgin) is also attested among Afro-Cubans (Ortiz 1924: 12; Dihigo 1928).

14 At least one example of the latter type of speaker also appears in the bozal corpus, in the story ‘Los chinos’ by Alfonso Hernández Catá (C-46). In these short fragments, use of mí as subject pronoun is also found:

mí no importar guardias. mí tener un machete y mater todos de noche, igual que en matadero. mí saber bien.

The use of mí in this case could indicate an initial contact with Papiamento, an acquaintance with an Afro-Lusitanian creole, or a carryover from West African Pidgin English. By the 19th century, the Portuguese contribution to the Cuban slave market was minimal, and there is no evidence of arrivals, e.g. from São Tomé, but rather directly from the African mainland, or via other Caribbean islands such as Curacao and St. Eustatius. On the other hand, the transfer of West African Pidgin English forms to 19th century Cuban bozal Spanish has been well-documented, e.g. by Ortiz (1916) (cf. also García 1973: 350), so yet another source of creoloid structures in Caribbean bozal Spanish might be postulated.

15 Such a situation appears to have obtained in Cape Verde, where vestiges of Portuguese agreement are found, whether through more recent decreolization or as long-standing traces of the original Portuguese system. The same holds for Palenquero, where Spanish-like agreement on some elements may suggest recent re-borrowings from Spanish or a trait which has carried over from the earliest stages.
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Appendix 1: List of Cuban bozal texts

Acosta-Rubio, Raúl (1976). *Quiquiribú Mandinga (se lo llevó el diablo)* {C-1}

Anon.

‘Cantar para matar culebras’ (Guirao 1938) {C-2}
‘Canto congo de cabildo’ (Guirao 1938) {C-3}
‘Canto de comparsa ta Julia’ (Guirao 1938) {C-4}
‘Canto funeral’ (Guirao 1938) {C-5}
‘Cantos de cabildo’ (Guirao 1938) {C-6}
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Appendix 2: List of Puerto Rican bozal texts

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‘Nanqui toy ma mákinley’ [Puerto Rico, 1898] (Mason 1918: 361) {PR-1}
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